

FOSTERING ALL ROUND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN FOR SCHOOL READINESS

An Evaluative Study

Submitted to:

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Report**

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Acronyms

DDC	District Development Committee
DEO	District Education Office
DOE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECED	Early Childhood Education and Development
EFA	Education for All
FCHV	Female Community Health Volunteer
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
I/NGO	International/Non-Government Organizations
KII	Key Informant Interview
MOCSW	Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOFALD	Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development
MOHP	Ministry of Health and Population
MToT	Master Training of Trainers
NCED	National Center for Educational Development
PPC	Pre Primary Class
SGNDS	Seto Gurans National Child Development Service
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School Management Committee
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VDC	Village Development Committee

Executive summary

Seto Gurans National Child Development Services (SGNCDS) has been playing a key role in providing access of ECD opportunities to young children aged 3 – 5 by expanding quality ECD programs across the country. Through an Early Child Development Project Partnership Cooperation Agreement with UNICEF, SGNCDS aims to implement and strengthen the integrated and multi-sectoral ECD programming primarily at the district level. It also aims at policy advocacy in the area of ECD at the national level. This study aims to undertake an evaluation assignment to assess relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of project activities with specific goal of knowledge generation, exploration of good practices and improvement in the ECD policies and programs. The scope of this study includes 1) system and policy developments at the national level, 2) integrated and multi-sectoral ECD plans at the district level, 3) effectiveness of the ECD training, 4) minimum quality and standard of ECD centers, and 5) learning and development of children.

This study employed a mix-method design, using both quantitative and qualitative strategies for collecting and analyzing data. Four districts – Achham, Bajura, Rautahat, and Saptari - were selected with the consultation of SGNCDS. The major basis of the district selection was the coverage of the various ECD programs in the districts. From the each district selected, 4 ECD centers were selected randomly to undertake the fieldwork. Altogether, 12 KIIs were conducted with the District Officials (DEO official, members of District ECD committee and Seto Gurans District Official), along with 16 questionnaires filled up by 16 ECD facilitators. The observation checklists were administered at 16 ECD centers, whereas 16 FGDs conducted with parents, each in 16 ECD centers. Finally, case study of two successful ECD centers were undertaken.

The summary of the findings of this study are as follows.

Central level policy development: SGNCDS took an active initiation and leading role in establishing and strengthening the national system for ECD programming which contributed to ensuring ECD rights in the new constitution, Constitution of Nepal 2072 which was promulgated in 20th September, 2015. Working closely with a small group of parliamentarian (also known to be the ECD caucus of the (ex)parliamentarian), SGNCDS played an affirmative role in establishing a National Steering Committee of ECD under the chair Vice Chairman of National Planning Commission, and including the secretaries of the concerned Ministries. SGNCDS working closely with the parliamentarian group also lobbied for the constitutional guarantee of the overall development of the children. This group

organized a series of discussions with lawmakers and also submitted memorandum to the parliamentary committee. As a result, lawmakers in the parliamentary committee agreed to ensure ECD right as the fundamental right in the constitution, which has now been appeared in the new constitution.

District level development: The integrated and multi-sectoral ECD plan were developed in four study districts involving all concerned agencies and organizations having stake in the ECD sector. The major organizations involved in the development of integrated ECD planning were: District Development Committee, District Education Office, Resource Center, District Health, Women Development, Municipality, Seto Gurans and other concerned NGOs. This joint work helped each party take ownership of the ECD plan and the involvement of all concerned organizations helped to make the district plan more relevant and transparent. The coordination among different organizations and implementation of integrated ECD planning, however, was found challenging.

Training: Both *MToT* and *ToT* were found effective to produce ECD trainers and practitioners in all districts. Various ECD-related trainings received by facilitators helped them organize the ECD classes effectively though there were difficulties and constrains to translate the knowledge and skills of the trainings in the local ECD contexts. The *Basic and Refreshment Training* helped the facilitators equipped with general contents of ECD requiring to conduct the ECD class as well as to manage the day-to-day activities of the ECD center. The *Peace Education Training* provided the ECD facilitators with knowledge of child psychology and importance of peaceful environment for learning and development of children. The *Local Material Construction Training* helped facilitators prepare instructional materials that suit to the interest of the children.

Children's learning: Children with ECD exposure were found to have better learning and behavioral development. The fundamental outcome of the ECD opportunities included: the children's ability to recognize alphabet and letters, count the number, build vocabulary, and develop cleanliness habit. According to the parents interviewed, children were also able to learn and develop various behavioral skills that contributed to their all-round development.

ECD Budget: The investment in ECD programs through multi-sectoral and integrated ECD planning had been increased along with the better realization of the children's all-round development opportunities by concerned stakeholders. Various organizations working in ECD areas were found committed to contributing to the ECD basket fund, a piloted

intervention of Seto Gurans, during the ECD planning. However, all such commitments had not been fully materialized.

Role of local media: The local FM radios and newspapers provided information about ECD enrolment, statistics and concerns. However, local FMs and newspapers were found reporting the ECD news and broadcasting related programs as long as they were provided with financial support to run the programs.

Peace education: Peace education training in Rautahat district, a pilot intervention of SGNCDs, made facilitators aware of the importance of vulnerable characteristic of children, peaceful resolution of conflict, and shaping key characteristics of the child's moral behavior. As a result, they were found treating children with respect and care and encouraging parents to do the same. The facilitators were found aware of the principle of tolerance and justice while treating the children.

Health and Nutrition: The ECD opportunities, combined with health and nutrition programs, resulted in notable improvement of health, sanitation and safety of children. Together with regular ECD activities, children got various opportunities at ECD centers, e.g. Polio drop, medicine for round worm.

ECD center management: ECD Management Committee or School Management Committee were found fulfilling their responsibility to manage the ECD center, though some community-based ECDs did not have management committees for some months and years which had been run by facilitators with the support of RPs and District officials.

Outdoor facilities: Although a majority of the ECD centers had play grounds for outdoor games, lack of outdoor playing facilities in most of the ECD centers was prevalent. Out of 16 ECD centers observed, only 4 centers (25%) had outdoor playing facilities.

Infrastructure: The minimum conditions of ECD infrastructure were improved with the assistance of the government and non-government organizations, such as Seto Gurans, Plan Nepal, and UNICEF. However, a majority of ECD centers still lacked minimum standard of building, furniture, toilets and drinking water supply.

Learning materials: Most of the ECD centers were found equipped with various learning materials, and most of them were locally collected and constructed. Materials such as charts, pictorial printed materials, kid box were provided by Seto Gurans, UNICEF, and other NGOs. Construction of local materials were found effective in most of the ECD

centers. Facilitators prepared materials using local materials to carry out the day-to-day ECD activities.

Preparation for primary schools

The ECD programs helped children prepare for primary schools in many areas, including:

Recognizing alphabet, letters: Most of the children participating in the ECD classes were able to recognize alphabet and letters.

School adjustment: Children with ECD experience had easy adjustment in the school environment at primary level.

Painting/coloring/picture making: Children with ECD experience were prepared to make drawing and coloring.

Group work and sharing: Children at ECD center also learned to work together and help each other in playing activities.

Cleanliness and sanitation habits: Children cleanliness and sanitation habits were found improved thorough ECD exposure which helped them better adjust at primary grades.

Record keeping: The record keeping practice at ECD centers were improved, though records of children's daily learning and achievement were found absent or poorly managed in most of the ECD centers.

Parents' learning: Parent orientation as a part of the ECD program was found contributive to the children's attendance, nutritional habits and cleanliness. Parents learnt about the importance of the ECD programs, so they were encouraged to send their young kids regularly to ECD classes. Parents started sharing their ideas and experience with their children, with increased realization of children learning opportunities through positive communication. Parents developed positive attitude towards sports and started providing children permission to play different games who previously thought gaming is not good for learning. Mothers were found familiar with nutritional foods and now they found preferring cooked foods rather readymade junk foods available in the market. Parents were found to be aware of cleanliness and sanitation habits of their kids.

FCHV orientation: The FCHV orientation is a pilot intervention of SGNCDs and this program is recommended to expand as a core ECD program. Female Community Health

Volunteers (FCHVs) became increasingly aware of early development and care of children and they began counseling mothers on the subject of ECD.

Case study lessons: The case study of two successful ECD centers suggested that the community management is key to the successful early childhood programs. The physical environment and facilities are important for the better ECD environment. The qualification, skills and dedication of facilitators with caring and loving attitude towards children help make the ECD learning and experience of children better and effective. Effective classroom management, child-friendly seating arrangement, indoor and outdoor playing facilities and sufficient pictorial materials contribute to the better opportunity for early childhood development and learning. The case study also suggested that child development should be taken holistic and physical aspects of survival (health and nutrition) are not to be separated from emotional, psychological and cognitive aspects.

Challenges and issues: A number of challenges and issues were observed and reported regarding the physical requirement, management and functioning of the ECD centers. The major problems the facilitators shared are unsuitability of the toilets for small children, lack of out-door playing facilities, and insecurity of children from domestic animals due to the open compound of the ECD centers. Congested classroom and playground, low incentive salary for the facilitators and ineffective parenting education are other problematic issues shared by the facilitators.

Recommendations:

- National Resource Center: The National Resource Center should be established with the aim of establishing a library and resource center in Kathmandu or in other cities with all ECD-related policies, learning materials and reference materials. This center would create a forum for ECD researchers, expert, advocates, government officials and I/NGO workers for sharing knowledge, materials and experiences and publishing information and materials related to ECD.
- A multi-sectoral ECD council at the national and district level should be established with ECD policy and strategic plan that reinforces other sectoral and multispectral policies, fills in gaps with new strategies and services, provides service expansion and improvement, and harmonizes elements of policies and services.

- The existing dominance of direct instruction and teaching to young children at the ECD centers should be discouraged. This could be a part of the contents of the refresher training.
- The ECD learning should be integrated into adult education curricula.
- The integrated and multi-sectoral ECD planning should be extended to the VDC and community level.
- Minimum qualification and competency standard for ECD facilitators should be ensured.
- A strong policy and budgetary measure should be established to increase and retain qualified early childhood practitioners.
- A minimum standard guidebook providing a detailed recommendations for ECD providers, managers and facilitators to explore and manage local resources as well as to ensure minimum quality standards of the ECD center should be published and provided to each ECD center.
- A national survey of ECD centers should be undertaken to categorize the ECD centers on the basis of their potentialities and requirements. In accordance with the result of the national survey, national planning and support mechanism should be established for the equitable development of each of the 34000 more ECD centers across the country.
- The scale and coverage of peace education training and ECD orientations to FCHVs should be extended, making increased number of parents and facilitators equipped with the knowledge and strategies of peaceful resolution of conflict and adequate number of FCHV across the country being aware of their increased role of supporting parents for the early childhood development and care.
- The facilitators should be trained adequately to set up learning corners in the classroom and the partner organization should provide material support to the center for effective use of learning corners.

- Further on-site training to facilitators should be provided demonstrating the application of training. And, efforts are required to strengthen the transfer of knowledge and skills acquired through training to applications in the workplace.
- The scope and coverage of parent education program should be extended ensuring access of parents to the program particularly from the backward and underprivileged communities. The participant parents should be provided with hands-on knowledge on young child's requirement – nutritional; health, sanitation and immunization; parental love, respect and care; playing and other motor requirements.
- The ability of facilitators to collect and maintain data for maintaining records of achievement, financing, resources and learning and playing materials, and other developmental check-ups should be enhanced through refreshment training.
- As facilitators in some ECD centers were found teaching children read and write letters and alphabets similar in the primary school, they should be trained on activity-based and play-based pedagogy suitable to the early year children.

Introduction

Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) has been a key priority of the Government of Nepal with a realization that young children need opportunity to develop their innate potential to the fullest extent, as expressed in a well-known quotation - “Child shows the human as morning shows the day”. Holistic early childhood development is the foundation of a good education and healthy social development. Nepal’s government through its EFA Plan of Action and School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) has underscored the need for fostering children’s all-round development by laying a firm foundation for basic education and aims at expanding access to quality ECED services for children of four years of age to prepare them for basic education (see Box 1 below). The government’s Department of Education (DOE) has been implementing the ECED program in collaboration with I/NGOs and community based organizations and local bodies. According to the Flash I report 2013-14, there are altogether 34,622 ECED/PPCs throughout the country with a continual progress in young children’s GER over last few years, reaching from 41.4 in 2006/7 to 76.7 % in 2013/14 (Flash I Report 2006-07 and 2013-14).

Box 1. ECD-related policy development: timeline of key policies

ECD-Related Policy Development: Timeline of Key Policies	
1997	MOE opens pre-primary classes under its Basic and Primary Education Programme
2000	Nepal adopts EFA Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO 2000)
2003	National Plan calls for provision of training, curriculum development, and monitoring for community-based ECD centers (MOE/UNESCO 2003)
2004	National Strategy for ECD provides operational guidelines for ECD centers, a framework for an Effective Parent Service Programme, and goals for national ECD programming (MOE/UNESCO 2004)
2009	SSRP sets enrollment targets for ECD centers, calls for expansion to disadvantaged areas, and promotes community-based approaches to ensure equitable access to programming (MOE 2009)

Seto Gurans National Child Development Services (SGNCDS) is an Non Governmental Organization (NGO) that has been contributing greatly to the advocacy, policies and programs of ECD at the national, district and community level. With a partnership of more than a decade with Save the Children and other INGOs, SGNCDS has been

implementing various ECD programs across the country. In 2013, SGNCDs made an Early Child Development Project/Partnership Cooperation agreement with UNICEF with the aim of strengthening the national system for ECD programming primarily at district level but also at national level for advocacy. This 24-month project (2013 – 15) designed activities to strengthen the system on integrated ECD planning and quality implementation of ECD centers through institutionalizing the ECD facilitators training system, parental education, capacity development and mobilization of VDCs and district ECD committees to generate local resource. This study undertakes an evaluative research of the programs under this agreement.

Objectives and Scope of the Study

This study aims to assess relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the ECD program activities with the specific goal of knowledge generation and improvement in the program management and exploration of good practices. The objectives of this study include:

- Assess knowledge generation and improvement in the program management
- Explore good practices and document case studies.

The scope of evaluation work includes the analysis of system and policy developments at national level and the roles of ECD committee to promote ECD activities in the districts. This work also assesses the roles of National ECD Steering Committee, ECD facilitators' training system and programs implemented districts. In addition, this work includes the study of peace education and role of ECD parliamentarian group (ECD parliamentary caucus) in establishing constitutional and policy foundations of early childhood policy and program at the national level. In short, the scope of this work include the following:

System and policy developments at national level

Integrated and multi-sectoral ECD plans at district level

Effectiveness of the ECD training

Minimum quality and standard of ECD centers

Learning and development of children

Peace education

Parental education

Methodology

This study employed a mix-method design, using both quantitative and qualitative strategies for collecting and analyzing data. Using survey and check list instruments, the quantitative study looked at more specific and observable information while qualitative strategy searched for more subjective and process-related data. In addition, the study used secondary information/data to support the findings obtained from the empirical studies.

Four districts were selected purposively with the consultation of central executives of SGNCDs. The districts were selected on the basis of the coverage of the ECD programs (see Table 1 for ECD programs in each district) - two from Hill region and two from Tarai region. The district representing the Hill region are Achham and Bajura and the districts representing Tarai region are Saptari and Rautahat. Four ECD centers were selected from each district – two from community-based ECD centers and two from school-based centers, totaling 16 ECD centers from the selected four districts. Thus there were eight community-based ECD centers and eight school-based ECD centers selected for the study. The SGNCDs-supported programs in each of the study districts are as follows.

Table 1. ECD Programs in four case Districts

Eco-belt	Districts	ECD programs
Hill	Achham	MToT, ToT, Integrated ECD Planning, PE and Toy Making Training
	Bajura	MToT, ToT, Integrated ECD Planning
Tarai	Saptari	MToT, ToT, Integrated ECD Planning, PE and Toy Making Training, ECD facilitators' refresher training, ECD Orientation to FCHV
	Rautahat	MToT, ToT, Peace Education, Integrated EDC Planning

Participants

The participants for this study were district officials (DEO staff, Seto Gurans staff and members of the District ECD Committee), ECD facilitators, parents, and SGECDs Central level officials. The study team consulted SGECDs to make final decision about the participants to include in this study as informants.

Data Collection Tools

The following tools and techniques were used for data collection.

Key Informant Interview (KII)

The study team reviewed different literature and documents to prepare KII schedule. Different themes were prepared and put them into a semi-structured interview schedule which was used to collect information regarding the implementation and effectiveness of various ECD programs in the district. The KII participants were DEO official, member of the District ECD committee, and Seto Guras District staff from each case district. There were altogether 12 KIIs (3 each in 4 districts) conducted in the study. A sample of the interview question is presented in Appendix B.1.

Questionnaire for ECD Facilitators

A structured questionnaire for ECD facilitators was prepared to assess the relevance and effectiveness of ECD programs as well as to assess the extent to which the program prepared the children for starting primary schooling. One facilitator from each ECD center filled up the questionnaire, altogether 16 from four the case districts. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix B.2.

Observation Checklist

An observation checklist was developed for assessing the extent to which the ECD centers were run with minimum facilities and requirements. Sixteen ECD centers were observed and the observation data were recorded using the checklist. The observation check list is presented in Appendix B.3.

FGD with Parents

One Focused Group Discussion (FGD) from each ECD center was conducted among the parents to solicit the opinion and experiences of ECD of their children. The guiding questions for FGD are listed in Appendix B.4.

Case Study (good practice)

Two high performing ECD centers, one from Bajura and another from Rautahat, were selected for drawing good practices and in-depth case study undertaken using observation, informal interviews and reviewing documents/records. The case study guideline is presented in Appendix B.5.

Central Level Key Informant Interview

A discussion program with the SGNCDs officials was organized in Kathmandu and a guideline, presented in Appendix B.6, was used to solicit the required information from the participants.

Data Collection

Three senior (two from the study team) and three assistant fieldworkers administered the survey and interviews in the selected four districts. They collected data using data collection instruments as mentioned above and the guidelines provided by SGNCDs. The team leader was responsible for carrying out interviews at the central level and other members at the district level. Due attention was paid to ensure that the fieldwork was sincere and rigorous and that the information were free from any subjective influence and bias.

Document Review and Data Analysis

The national level ECD-related policy documents, including the ECD training policies and programs, were analyzed. The quantitative data were analyzed using statistical calculations and cross-table deliveries. The qualitative data were thematically analyzed, using methods such as transcribing, coding, categorizing and theme generating. A constant comparative method was also applied for comparing and analyzing the data.

Quality Assurance

The research team considered all measures and implemented all possible strategies to ensure quality, credibility and rigor of the study. The noteworthy strategies are following:

- The research team worked in close collaboration and consultation with the SGNCDs officials to set the quality criteria in both process and product of this study.

Box 2. Study procedure: Summary

Four sample districts, two from Hill (Bajura and Achham) and two from Tarai region (Saptari and Rautahat), 16 ECD centers

Participants

- Seto Gurans Central Official, Executive Director and Members
- DEO staff, Seto Gurans staff and members of the District ECD committee
- Facilitators, parents

Tools

- KII for Central and District officials
- Questionnaire for ECD facilitators
- Observation check list
- FGD with parents
- Case study

- The tools for data collection was reviewed by ECD experts at Tribhuvan University.
- The members of the study team developed the data collection instrument involved in the fieldwork.
- The data were cleaned and reviewed, responding adequately to the risk of error and bias.
- The statistician was responsible for analyzing the data using SPSS statistical software and producing the cross-table deliveries. Double-check and verification were sought in every step of the quantitative analysis.
- The team leader provided leadership and supervision from the beginning to this stage of the study to ensure quality and rigor of the study.
- Comments and feedback were sought from SGECDs and UNICEF ECD Unit before submitting the final report.

Ethical Assurance

This study considered all measures and strategies to ensure ethical requirements for this project, particularly with regard to safeguarding the interest of parents and children. The following measures were considered:

- Informed consent was sought from all research participants while ensuring that all understand that they can refuse to take part or withdraw at any time.
- An environment of mutual understanding and trust was built up before doing surveys and interviews.
- The researchers tried to follow the local rules and customs. The power relation between the researcher and researched was managed.
- All data were kept confidential, removing all personal identifiers and assigning pseudonyms where appropriate.
- Interview took place in a comfortable setting, ensuring no disturbance, threat, and artificial environment.
- A commitment was expressed to listening to and including the perspective of children and teachers in the research.
- Feedback on the research process and outcome was provided to all who have a stake in the project (e.g. sending a copy of the summary reports to participating schools).

- Data were securely stored and the files be delivered to SGECDs, guaranteeing that the data will not be provided to any third party, nor be used for other purposes.

Limitations of the study

The study's findings and recommendations must be understood in the context of three important limitations.

1. *Timing.* Because the study includes one round of data collection during May/June 2015, the conditions at multiple points in time were not addressed. This limitation diminishes the study team's ability to ascertain the extent of development and change that may have occurred in ECD activities and results over time.
2. *Representativeness of field visit sites and ECD centers:* The data collection included visit and observations and interviews in four districts and sixteen ECD centers. Because field visit sites were selected at random, this may not be representative of ECD throughout the country.
3. *Stakeholders as primary data sources.* The analysis relies largely on reports from DEO officials, members of District ECD Committee, facilitators, parents, and children. Although many individuals offered frank assessments of the ECD's strengths and weaknesses, as well as its outcomes, it is possible that affiliation with ECD activities skewed respondents towards positive assessments.

Findings

System and policy developments at the national level

SGNCDS took an active initiation and leading role for establishing and strengthening the national system for ECD programming and for ensuring the ECD rights in the constitution. Working closely with the ECD caucus of the (ex)parliamentarian, SGNCDS played an affirmative role in establishing the National Steering Committee of ECD under the chair Vice Chairman of National Planning Commission, and including the secretaries of the concerned Ministries.

Although this high-level body meets rarely and is not very active, this body has played an affirmative role for necessary coordination and convergence and to integrate the ECD programs separately launched by the Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MOCSW) and the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development (MOFALD) that have been individually launching program targeting children below five years of age. Given the failure of government agencies to separately implement programs for Early Childhood Development (ECD), four of the concerned ministries have agreed to take an integrated approach and agreed to create a basket-fund and adopt one-door policy in ECD investments. With emphasis on ensuring child rights and wellbeing, this commitment has now been translated into national strategies in children's development sector and some of such affirmative strategies are now incorporated into the government's current periodic plan – The Thirteenth Plan (2070/71 – 2072/73 BS) (Box 3).

Box 3. Strategies for ensuring child rights and wellbeing proposed in the Thirteen Plan

१. आफ्नो धारणा बनाउन सक्षम बालबालिका तथा किशोरकिशोरीहरूलाई निजसँग सम्बद्ध सबै विषयहरूमा आफ्नो वीचार अभिव्यक्त गर्न पाउने अवसर दिई विकास र सामुदायिक तहको निर्णय प्रक्रियामा बाल सहभागिता अभिवृद्धि गरिनेछ । (१)
२. सबै किसिमका बाल अधिकारहरू र आधारभूत स्वतन्त्रताको पूर्ण उपभोगको प्रत्याभूतिका लागि कानुनी एवं संस्थागत व्यवस्थालाई प्रभावकारी बनाइनेछ । (१)
३. बेचबिखनमा परेका बालबालिका तथा किशोरकिशोरीका लागि राहत, पुनःस्थापना, पारिवारिक पुनर्मिलन र कानुनी तथा मनोवैज्ञानिक परामर्श सेवाका कार्यक्रमहरू लागू गरिनेछ । (१)
४. बालबालिकाहरूको जन्म दर्तालाई अनिवार्य गरी प्रारम्भिक बालविकास प्रक्रियालाई व्यवस्थित गरिनेछ । (१)
५. अन्तर्देशीय तथा आन्तरिक धर्मपुत्र धर्मपुत्री व्यवस्थापन सम्बन्धी कार्यलाई थप व्यवस्थित र पारदर्शी बनाइनेछ । (१)
६. बालगृहहरूलाई आवासीय बाल गृहहरूको सञ्चालन तथा व्यवस्थापन मापदण्ड, २०६९ अन्तर्गत बनाइनेछ । (१)
७. गर्भावस्थामा शिशु र आमाको सुरक्षाका लागि पोषणसम्बन्धी कार्यक्रम सञ्चालन गरिनेछ । (२)
८. सबै बालबालिकाहरूलाई आधारभूत शिक्षा प्रदान गरी तिनलाई विद्यालयमा टिकाई राख्न स्थानीय निकाय र समुदायसँग प्रभावकारी सहकार्य गरी कार्यक्रमहरू सञ्चालन गरिनेछ । (३)
९. बालबालिका तथा किशोरकिशोरीहरूलाई उनीहरूसँग सम्बन्धित विषयहरूमा शैक्षिक संस्थाहरूमा परामर्श दिने प्रणालीको थालनी गरिनेछ । (३)
१०. बाल संरक्षण समिति र बाल क्लब सञ्चालन र परिचालनका लागि बाल क्लबहरूलाई सहयोग पुऱ्याइनेछ । (३)

Seto Gurans working closely with the parliamentarian group (ECD caucus) has also lobbied for the constitutional guarantee of the overall development of the children which is possible only through the ECD. This group organized a series of discussions with lawmakers and also submitted memorandum to the parliamentary committee. As a result, lawmakers in the parliamentary committee agreed to ensure ECD right as the fundamental right in in the constitution and ECD right has been incorporated in draft Constitution 2015¹. The comparison of Interim Constitution 2006 and Draft Constitution 2015 in relation to the rights of children is made in the following table.

Table 2. Rights of children in Interim Constitution 2006 and Draft Constitution 2015

Interim Constitution 2006 Article 22. Rights of children	Draft Constitution 2015 Article 44. Rights of children
<p>(1) Every child shall have the right to his or her own identity and name.</p> <p>(2) Every child shall have the right to be nurtured, to basic health and social security.</p> <p>(3) Every child shall have the right not to be subjected to physical, mental or any other form of exploitation. Any such act of exploitation shall be punishable by law and any child so treated shall be compensated as determined by law.</p> <p>(4) Helpless, orphaned or mentally retarded children, children who are victims of conflict or displaced and street children at risk shall have the right to receive special privileges from the State to ensure their secure future.</p> <p>(5) No minor shall be employed in factories, mines or in any other hazardous work nor shall be used in army, police or in conflicts.</p>	<p>1) Every child shall have the right to his or her own identity and name.</p> <p>2) Every child shall have the right to education, health, nurture, appropriate care, sports, entertainment and personality development.</p> <p>3) Every child shall have the right to early childhood development and child participation (प्रत्येक बालबालिकालाई प्रारम्भिक बालविकास तथा बालसहभागिताको हक हुनेछ)</p> <p>4) No minor shall be employed in factories, mines or in any other hazardous work.</p> <p>5) No minors shall be subject to child marriage, trafficking, kidnapping or bondage.</p> <p>6) No child shall be admitted or used in army, police or armed groups or mistreated or neglected in any way in the name of cultural or religious tradition or exploited</p>

¹ The Constitution of Nepal 2015 has been passed by Constituent Assembly and scheduled to promulgate on 20th September, 2015.

	<p>physically, mentally, sexually or used in any inappropriate way.</p> <p>7) No child shall be punished physically, mentally, or of any kinds at home, school or in any other place or in any situation.</p> <p>8) Every child shall have the right to child-favored justice.</p> <p>9) The helpless, orphan, disabled, conflict victim, displaced, and vulnerable children shall have the right to get special protection and facilities from the State.</p>
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In addition, SGNDS has taken a leading role in coordinating and partnering with Department of Education and other I/NGOs to develop better policies, programs and resources for enhancing the quality of ECD centers, ECD program delivery and better outcomes of the ECD services. As a recent example, SGNDS developed a pictorial books of minimum standard of ECD centers which has been published partnering with UNICEF and Department of Education. The distribution of this book in the country's more than 34,000 ECD centers are underway.

The national officials and executives of SGNDS suggested that national ECD center be established in Kathmandu with the aim of establishing a library and resource center with all ECD-related policies, learning materials and reference materials. This center could establish a forum for ECD researchers, expert, advocates, government officials and I/NGO workers for sharing knowledge, materials and experiences and publishing information and materials related to ECD. This center would also work for documentation and dissemination of ECD-related materials, organization of workshops and trainings for ECD professionals, provision of regular support to researchers and students. This center also coordinates and links early childhood initiatives in the country and can generate knowledge for ECD by periodic survey and study which also forms a basis for developing indicators and targets of ECD.

Multisectoral and integrated ECD plans and programs at the district level

The integrated and multi-sectoral ECD planning, which was developed involving concerned agencies and organizations with stake in the ECD sector, had been in place, in the case districts, though coordination among these organizations and implementation of integrated plan is found challenging. Until a few years ago, there had been sectoral programs of children in the areas of education, health, nutrition, sanitation, child protection and juridical protection and there was a lack of integration of such programs due to the lack of appropriate policy of the government. As a result, there was duplication and overlapping of the ECD-related programs in each district. The organizations working in the ECD fields are working without The recent policy developments resulted in the integrated and multi-sectoral ECD planning at the district level with the inclusion of education and other sectors such as health, nutrition, sanitation and child protection The District ECD Committee, chaired by Local Development Officer with District Education Officer as the member-secretary, takes leadership role in developing the integrated ECD planning. This committee also have members from multisectoral representing bodies. The committee meets as required coordinating among various organizations and agencies and make decision collectively. Different governmental organizations, and I/NGOs like Save the Children, UNICEF, Plan Nepal, Seto Gurans, put their ECD programs into the district ECD planning. The DEO is charged with multisectoral coordination, analysis and endorsement of EDC plans.

This study observed that organizations such as District Development Committee, District Education Office, District Health Office, VDCs/Municipality, Seto Gurans and other concerned NGOs were involved in the development of integrated ECD planning. This joint work helped each party take ownership of the ECD plan and the involvement of all concerned organizations helped to make the district plan more relevant and transparent. The district plan, as reported by the district respondents, include programs related to early childhood education and development, sanitation and hygiene, immunization, parent education, child protection and rights, advocacy, media coverage, monitoring, supervision and knowledge generation. The plan also specifies the role and responsibilities of different organizations working in the field of ECD.

Despite the multisectoral and integrated ECD planning is in place in the case districts, coordination among the organizations working in the field of children's education, health, and rights and implementation of the district plan is found challenging. The DEOs that are

charged with this responsibility informed that they lacked regular coordination mechanism and adequate human resources to monitor the progress. Other stakeholders informed that DEO focused fundamentally in school sectors and expected active role of the local bodies and I/NGOs in the ECD sector. This study has noted that due to the lack of coordination and follow-up mechanism, some of the commitments made by different organizations at the time of ECD planning has not been materialized. “Commitment comes from various organizations during the ECD planning, but some organizations do not fulfil their financial commitments”, District Coordinator, Seto Gurans in Rautahat informed. Despite such problems, the district respondents shared that effective coordination has produced good result in integrated program of immunization (such as polio and Vitamin A) and hand washing with soap and water supported by WASH (Water, Sanitation and Health) program.

Training

MToT and ToT were found effective to produce trainers and practitioners to effectively run the ECD programs. Various kinds of ECD trainings received by facilitators helped them organize the ECD classes effectively, though there are difficulties and constrains to translate the learning of the trainings in the local ECD contexts. The persons who received MToT had responsibility to provide training (ToT) to ECD trainers, partner NGOs and VDC secretary (Bajura). With MToT experience, they also had to organize occasional workshops for the district stakeholders in the ECD-related issues. The persons who received ToT had responsibility to provide training to ECD facilitators. Most of the local Seto Gurans staff (e.g. Bajura) informed that they received ToT in addition to the staff of local partner NGO (e.g. Peace Win - NGO that works and funds in ECD sector and works in partnership with Seto Gurans in Bajura district)

The contents of both MToT and ToT cover all aspects of ECD pedagogy, material development, management, record keeping and others. The number of people receiving MToT are few in numbers in each district, one each in Rautahat and Bajura, for example. A member of District ECD committee, who herself had taken MToT admitted, ‘the trainings provide sufficient knowledge and skills to effectively run the ECD classes and they are also helpful for developing learning materials in the local context’. As shared by the facilitators and parents, they received different trainings (Table 3), focusing on the different aspect of ECD center management and young children’s learning and development:

Table 3. Type and nature of training as shared by the participants

S.N.	Name of training	Given by	Duration	Focused area
1.	Basic Training	DEO, Seto Gurans, Unicef	14-16 days	Knowledge related to ECD, puppet making, local level material construction, pedagogical aspect, all-round development of children
2.	Refreshment training	Seto Gurans, Peace Win	2-3 days	Preparing operational calendar, construction of teaching materials, teaching method, child psychology, six learning corners
3.	Peace education	Seto Gurans	5 days	Children as zone of peace, child friendly environment, conflict management
4.	ECD training	DEO	2 days	Daily activities management
5.	Parent education	Seto Gurans, Unicef	6 days	Empowering parents, ECD training for parents, parent awareness
6.	Local material construction training	DEO, Seto Gurans, Peace Win	3-5 days	Local material construction and utilization

The different trainings provided by Seto Gurans and other partner NGO helped the facilitators learn various areas of child development, care and ECD management. However, the transfer of training is limited with a number of constraints and limitations. The basic training and refreshment training provided the ECD facilitators with general contents of ECD requiring to conduct ECD class and manage the ECD centers. Peace education training provided them with the fundamental knowledge of child psychology and importance of peaceful environment for learning and development of children. In addition, material construction training helps facilitators develop basic knowledge and skills to utilize local low cost and no cost materials to develop learning materials in the ECD classrooms. While each of these training has positive outcomes, there are significant problems attached to each training which limit the transfer of training in practical

situation. For example, some facilitators shared that trainings were based on the theoretical contents and provided them with few hands-on skills for singing, dancing, drawing, toy making. Few others suggested that transferring training was limited because this required materials and financial support (e.g. material construction). The following table summarizes the aspects of learning facilitators shared and the problems attached with them.

Table 4. Training learning and problems as shared by facilitators

S.N.	Name of training	Learning	Problems/difficulties
1.	Peace education	Knowledge of child psychology, importance of environment in learning, peaceful resolution of conflict	Piecemeal and short, too theoretical,
2.	Basic training	ECD related knowledge, ECD teaching method	More theoretical, trainer is inefficient, difficult to grasp knowledge and skills from training, difficult in delivery
3.	Refreshment	Six learning corners, local material construction	Time of training is short, training materials are limited
4.	Local material construction training	Material construction and utilization	Lack of budget, no material support, limited knowledge for material selection and construction, trainer not fully skilled to construct materials

Peace education

Peace education training in Rautahat district, a pilot intervention of SGNCDs, made facilitators aware of the importance of vulnerable characteristic of children, peaceful resolution of conflict, and shaping key characteristics of the child's moral behavior.

As a result, they were found treating children with respect and care and encouraging parents to do the same. The facilitators were found aware of the principle of tolerance and justice while treating the children. As the facilitator in one ECD center in Rautahat district said, "When children quarrel and blame each other over the paly materials etc. I do not scold them but try my best for the peaceful and fair resolution of their conflict and try to

choose best option to meet each other's need and expectation". As the facilitators informed they also encouraged parents to be less or no abusive to children and treat them with love, care and respect. As a result, a number of parents started using 'nani', 'babu' and other caring words to address the children and reducing the practice of beating or punishing children for their mistakes and misconducts.

FCHV orientation

Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) orientation towards ECD services and opportunities, a pilot intervention of SGNCDs, made them aware of the early childhood development and care and they began counseling mothers on the subject of ECD. The FCHV orientation was provided in Saptari district and this has been making a positive change both on the FCHVs' knowledge and understanding about early childhood development and care and on their practice of supporting mothers to rear children based on their developmental needs. However, the coverage of this training was found poor as only a small number of FCHVs were found oriented in this area.

Financing/budget

The investment in ECD programs has been increased along with increased emphasis on children's all round development opportunities. The pilot project of Basket funding was found effective to pool the ECD budget. For example, in the last fiscal year DDC contributed NRs 1,00,000 and Seto Gurans provided NRs 75,000 for implementing the district ECD plan in Achham district. Locally, VDC also began to contribute to ECD centers (e.g. carpeting and wall painting cost in Rautahat districts). The DEO provided miscellaneous expenses. Plan Nepal and UNICEF also contribute fund for the construction of ECD centers, trainings and material support. At the local level, occasional fundraising is held by playing *Deusi* and *Bhailo*. Community provided in-kind and labor support to the development of ECD center. In some communities, door-to-door visit program is organized for enrolment and fund raising. The ECD budget is spent mainly on expanding ECD programs and upgrading the quality of ECD centers.

Major learning and behavior of children developed through ECD programs

Both parents and facilitators provided adequate information suggesting that children with ECD exposure have better learning and development. The fundamental outcome of the ECD opportunities include the children’s ability to recognize alphabet and letters, count the number, build vocabulary, develop cleanliness habit. According to the parents interviewed, children also able to learn and develop various behavioral skills that help for their all-round development. The Table 5 summarizes the major learning and behavior children developed through ECD programs as informed by both facilitators and parents.

Table 5. Children’s learning and behavioral development as shared by facilitators and parents

Facilitators	Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize alphabet and number • Adjust in their peer group • Count numbers • Develop speaking skills • Join concrete learning material • Learn dancing skill • Talk to each other • Keep mutual relationship with ECD facilitator • Respect their seniors • Learn to be hygienic • Give shape of particular object by using puzzle box • Being habituated to go at school regularly • Being free from fear and shyness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to play skillfully • Obedient towards bathing • Able to speak the name of father, mother, ECD, facilitator including their own name • Wash hands before and after the meal • Conscious about their healthy life • Left to play with dust • Favoring to get bathed • Wash their hands and mouth own selves • Wash their legs before sleeping • Conscious about going to school and being a good student • Development of their way of talking and interacting • New development habit towards writing, singing and dancing • Well known to play in group • Interact with their parents about school activities • Able to sketch pictures • Interest in writing when provided with pen and copy • Demand toys and playing stuffs with their parents • Have the habit of going to ECD

Health, sanitation and safety

The ECD opportunities, combined with the health and nutrition programs, resulted in greater awareness among parents about health and wellbeing of their children and improvement in health, sanitation and safety of children. Together with regular ECD activities, students are provided polio drop and other immunization and medicine (e.g. round worm) from the District Health Office. Because of the ECD orientation class, parents started providing additional care of children, asking them to wash hands with soap, showering them at least once a week and sending children at ECD centers with clean. making them neat and clean. The facilitators also exposed children in various sanitation activities which helped them develop habits such as hand washing with soap before and after eating, and after using toilets and taking off shoes and slippers to enter into the room. As the facilitators informed, children also began asking parents to wash their clothes and send them to ECD center neat and clean. The facilitators participating in this study, however, suggested more options to improve children's health and nutrition. For example, they suggested that day meal is to be provided, health check-up of children should be done regularly, and parents are to be made familiar with timely immunization and polio vaccination. Further suggestions furnished were to develop and maintain a safe environment (e.g. fencing the compound) including checking for physical hazards and maintaining/implementing safety standards/protocols.

Role of local media

The local FM radios and newspapers provided information about ECD enrolment, statistics and concerns. There were, for example, four FM radio stations in Achham and each broadcasted program relating to child development and delivered key message about ECD. DDC and I/NGOs provided funding to run these programs. Occasional interviews of the ECD personnel, ECD-related articles, news, reports, and data were published in local newspaper. For example, Achham DDC allocated NRs 200,000 for awareness program about child-friendly local government through local FMs. 'Shaikshik Diyalo' was a radio program about ECD in Bajura. Information about enrolment campaign was disseminated ECD related program was disseminated from Ramaroson Radio Station in Acham. Some FMs also conducted the parent education program. The concern raised by ECD workers in the district was that local FMs and newspapers would report the ECD news and broadcast related programs as long as they were provided with financial support to run the programs.

Infrastructure

The minimum conditions of ECD infrastructure had been improved with the assistance of the government and non-government organizations, such as Seto Gurans, Plan Nepal, and UNICEF. This study using an observation checkliss looked at the extent to which the condition and quality of building, furniture, windows and air circulation, classroom space for activities, furniture, toilets and drinking water is excellent (with optimum quality), satisfactory (minimum conditions fulfilled) and poor (lower than expected). Among the 16 ECD centers observed, only 5 (31.2%) buildings were found poor (Table 6). Regarding the provision of windows and air-circulation in the classroom, only 4 ECD centers (25%) were found poor while a majority (62.5%) were found with proper windows to circulate air (Table 2). The classroom space for doing sufficient activities was found poor only in 2 ECD centers (12.5%) while a greater majority of the ECD classrooms (75%) had minimum space required for the classroom activities. The provision of child-friendly toilet was found poor in a majority of ECD centers (62.5%) while only 6 (37.5) have toilets that met minimum quality conditions for children under age of 5 (Table 2). Drinking water facility was found satisfactory in a majority of ECD centers (56.2%), while a greater number of centers (31.2%) had problem of regular supply of purified drinking water (Table 2). The infrastructural problems reported by facilitators were: limited furniture, unavailability of cushion for sitting on the floor, lack of safety building, unavailability of toilet and drinking water supply.

Table 6. Status of infrastructure and other physical facilities

Infrastructural facilities	Excellent		Acceptable		Poor	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Buildings	5	31.2	6	37.5	5	31.2
Windows/ air circulation	2	12.5	10	75	4	25
Classroom space for activities	2	12.5	12	75	2	12.5
Quality standards for toilet	0	0	10	62.5	6	37.5
Drinking water	2	12.5	9	56.2	5	31.2

Outdoor environment and facilities

There was a lack of outdoor playing facilities in most ECD centers, though playground facility existed in a majority centers. Out of 16 ECD centers observed, only 4 centers (25%) were found with outdoor playing facilities as shown in the adjacent picture. Childhood and outdoor play are almost synonymous. For the emotional and physical development ECD outdoor facilities such as swing and other sport materials need to be provided. As far as possible, the ECD centers should be established in an open, secure and spacious location.



Teaching learning materials

Most of the ECD centers were equipped with various learning materials, and most of them were locally collected and constructed.



Materials such as charts, pictorial printed materials, kid box were provided by Seto Gurans, UNICEF, and other NGOs. Construction of local materials were found effective in most of the ECD centers. Facilitators prepared materials using local materials (see Picture above) to carry out the daily ECD activities. Materials such as watch, measuring instruments, *maadal*, flag, and ball were found common in majority of the ECD centers. The constructed and painted materials were displayed beautifully in the classroom. However, there were lack of audio and visual materials. According to the observation survey, the availability of teaching learning materials in 16 ECD centers are summarized in the following table (Table 7).

Table 7. Status of teaching learning materials

Materials	Sufficient		Few in numbers		Not available	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Locally made teaching materials	13	81.25	3	18.75	0	0
Audio materials	0	0	1	6.2	15	95.8
Play items	1	6.2	13	81.25	2	12.5
Audio visual materials	0	0	1	6.2	15	95.8
Musical items	0	0	13	81.25	3	18.75
Pictures	3	18.75	13	81.75	0	0
Learning blocks	4	25	10	62.5	2	12.5
Picture books	2	12.5	6	37.5	8	50

Record keeping

The record keeping practice in the ECD centers had been improved, though recording of children's daily learning and achievement was far from satisfactory.

In most of the ECD centers (68.8%) children's enrolment were recorded. Most centers had separate records for financial activities, with the details of both income and expenditure, though only 5 centers (31.2%) had a systematic record of the financial transaction. The daily attendance of teachers and students were recorded systematically. This study has observed that children's personal files were created in only in a few ECD centers for recording their learning achievement and progress. Record of learning materials and physical properties were not properly maintained in majority of ECD centers. The registers required for keeping records are provided by the partner NGO. For example, Peace Win, a Bajura-based NGO has provided such materials to the ECD centers in Bajura district. The following table (Table 8) provides the quantitative information about the record keeping practice and status of 16 ECD centers.

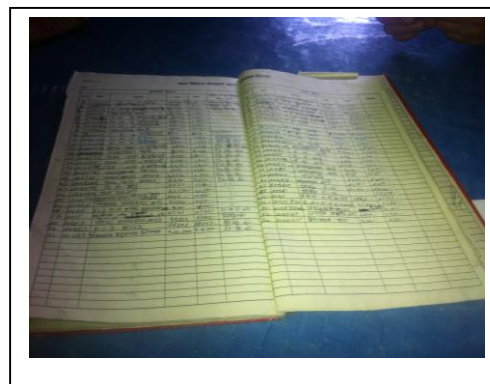


Table 8: Status of record keeping

Records	Excellent		Acceptable		Poor	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Student enrolment	5	31.2	6	37.5	5	31.2
Student attendance	4	25	12	75	0	0
Student development and achievement	1	6.2	5	31.2	10	62.5
Facilitators' attendance	5	31.2	9	56.2	2	12.5
Financial records	0	0	5	31.2	11	68.8
Physical properties	1	6.2	3	18.8	12	75
Learning materials	1	6.2	3	18.8	12	75
Meeting minutes	3	18.8	4	25	9	56.2

Preparation for primary schooling

Children with ECD experience were better prepared for primary schooling and they developed a number of preparatory skills for schooling. As the facilitators and parents participating in this study informed and also observed in some ECD centers, a majority of children were able to acquire following learning and behaviors that would help them for the better transition into primary school:

Recognizing alphabet, letters: Most of the children participating in the ECD classes were able to recognize alphabet and letters. Most of the ECD centers had chart and printed materials displaying alphabet and letters with colorful pictures and objects denoting them. Participating in learning and playing activities and encountering with these materials, they were able to identify *Devanagari* and English alphabets and digits both in *Devanagari* and English. As the researchers observed in some ECD centers, there was a 'teaching culture' whereby children had been taught to read and write the letters which is against the ECD principles and philosophies. As the researchers asked the facilitators about the reason behind this practice, they informed that parents expected, if not persuaded them, to have their children some learning on alphabet and letters.

School adjustment: Children with ECD experience had easy adjustment in the school environment at primary level. As the facilitators and parents informed, children felt happy to go the school who have ECD experience, as they were already familiar with the school environment. Parents in FGD informed that their children ‘made friends in the school’, ‘informed the parents about activities (competition, winner, etc.) conducted in the school’, ‘didn’t feel shy to talk to adults’, and others. Children also felt comfortable to stay longer in the school, familiar with curricular activities such as reading and writing and participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

Painting/coloring/picture making: Children with ECD experience were prepared to make drawing and coloring. For example, they learnt skills to use pencil and paper and draw picture of different shapes and likes at ECD centers. They were also able to color them and give them a beautiful look. Children expressed joy over such achievement. As some parents in Bajura informed, such learning and ability helped children excel at primary level.

Communication: Children with ECD experience were reported to have better communication skills that help them to do better at Grade 1. As ECD facilitators and parents informed, children’s vocabulary was increased as they expose in various activities at ECD centers. Children have also developed their understanding and speaking skills.

Group work and sharing: Children at ECD centers also learnt to work together and helped each other in playing activities. The ECD facilitators were found using group activities among children and children were found helping their peers in many ways. In some ECD centers in Bajura and Rautahat, children were found working in group through play activities and helping each other to perform certain activities and skills. This kind of group work and playing activities are helpful for children to adjust at primary levels.

Cleanliness and sanitation habits: Children cleanliness and sanitation habits were found improved thorough ECD exposure which would help them better adjust at school. As mentioned earlier, most of the children in the observational study were found tidy with their clothes clean, face washed and hair with oil and combed. In some ECD centers, children were asked to clean their hands and feet with soap and water. As parents informed, some kids also encouraged their elders to be nice and well-dressed. One mother of an ECD children at Achham, for example, said, ‘my kid don’t allow me to go to the ECD center wearing dirty clothes, he always want me to wear new dresses’. Such behaviors of the children helped them not only to prepare for primary schooling but also for their well-being and all round development.

Parental learning

Parent orientation, which has been a major component of ECD program, produced desirable result in terms of the parental attitude and practice towards providing young children with better learning and development opportunities. As shared by the research participants, parents' knowledge, attitude and behavior are being supportive to the children' learning and development. The noteworthy results are following:

Attitude and behavior: Positive parental attitude was observed towards sending small children at ECD center regularly. Parents were aware of the vulnerability of children and need of expressing love and care for their all-round development. Mothers' Meeting (*Ama Vela*) is the opportunity for some mothers to share knowledge and experiences. The radio programs, which sometimes broadcast interviews with ECD practitioner, also helped them become aware of the need of treating children with love and care. Consequently, as mentioned earlier, parents started to express affection to their children and call them using adoring adjectives such as *nani* and *babu*. Parents were also being less abusive and polite to their children.

Communication: Parents started communicating with their children enthusiastically realizing the positive communication as a means of cognitive and social development of children. Parents who previously ignored children's queries and concerns, started giving importance and responding positively to them. One mother in Rautahat shared: "Children now talk a lot and we also talk to encourage them" and on the other hand. Mothers shared that their children talked about their teachers and friends after they returned to home from school.

Play: Parents developed positive attitude towards sports and they started giving permission to children to play different games. Many of them used to think that children get spoiled if they play. One mother in Saptari said "I used to think playing is not good for children's development. Now I have realized that play is as necessary as food". Many parents shared that they started to buy low-cost play materials for their children. The play materials they managed for children are toys, dolls, balls, whistles, and other locally available materials.

Feeding: Mothers are now increasingly aware of nutritional needs of children and familiar with nutritional foods available at home. As they informed in FGDs, they preferred cooked foods rather than ready-made or processed ones available in the market. Some parents

shared that they fed children including all kinds of meals necessary for their growth and development. When asked, one mother in Rautahat answered, “Children needs balanced nutrition and this means providing all kinds of foods, including grains, milks and fruits to children”, which indicate the knowledge gained after participating their children in the ECD class.

Hygiene and Sanitation: As the ECD facilitators informed, there had been gradual improvement in personal hygienic behavior of children. Many parents sent their children to ECD centers with oiling and combing hair, cutting their nails and washing their faces and hands. As parents shared, they realized the importance of keeping children clean, so many of them started giving their baby a bath twice a week, washing their clothes as they get dirty, wash their hands and feet every day and trimming their nails as needed. They also started giving more importance to make their surroundings clean.

Case study of ECD centers: summary of good practices

The case study of two effective ECD centers - Gautam Balbikash Kendra: Badimaalika Municipality Paninaaula, Bajura and Seto Gurans Namuna Bal Bikas Kendra, Chandrapur - 4, Rautahat – provided a number of good practices from which a number of points can be drawn as lessons for the effective operation and management of other ECD centers (The case summary of each ECD center is presented in Appendix A).

- The community management is key to the successful ECD centers. Both of the ECD centers are well managed by the community, from the establishment to day to day operation of the centers.
- The physical environment and facilities are important for better ECD environment. Both of the centers are located in a peaceful environment, with better quality of school buildings, furniture.
- Qualification, skills and dedication of facilitators with caring and loving attitude towards children help make the ECD learning and experience of children better and effective. The facilitators in each centers are equipped with knowledge, skills and attitude to perform their roles and they enjoy working and playing with the children.
- Effective classroom management with sufficient learning and playing materials with designated learning corners create a joyful environment. Both of the case ECD centers have better managed classrooms with six learning corners - Math, language, creative arts, role play, science and construction.
- Child-friendly seating arrangement with comfortable carpet, cushion, round table and resting beds to take occasional naps, as managed in both ECD centers.
- Both indoor and outdoor playing facilities together with musical instruments contribute to the better opportunity for ECD activities.
- Printed materials, pictorial books, stationary for coloring and drawing, managed creatively contribute the better opportunity for identifying and recognizing alphabets and letters.
- Demonstration of good behavior – such as hand washing, teeth brushing, clean clothing etc. – integrating into the daily activity help children build good behavior through ECD exposure.
- A systematic recording of the attendance of student and facilitator, daily learning and achievement of the children, children’s work and accomplishment, physical

facilities and learning materials, and details of income and expenditure are examples of the effective ECD management.

- A non-threatening, loving, respecting and caring environment, with the understanding of the vulnerability and peaceful nature of the children, contribute to the essence of peace education in the ECD center.
- Good parenting education by which parent regularly visit the center and provide support and care to the children, and focus more on their nutritional and sanitation habit are also good example of the successful ECD centers, as demonstrated in the two case study center.
- Child development is taken as holistic. Physical aspects of survival (health and nutrition) are not separated from emotional, psychological and cognitive aspects. In Bajura center, mothers are invited regularly and they are made aware of this fact together with the understanding that positive healthy child development is best achieved by working with the children's own families and communities.

Challenges and issues

A number of challenges and issues have been observed and reported regarding the physical requirement, management and functioning of the ECD centers. The major problems the facilitators shared are unsuitability of the toilets for small children, lack of out-door playing facilities, and insecurity of children such as from domestic animals due to the open compound of the ECD centers. Congested classroom and playground, low incentive salary for the facilitators, ineffective parenting education are other problematic issues shared by the facilitators. The following points summarize the problems and issues observed and shared in each ECD centers.

- *Unavailability of separate toilet for small children:* This had been a serious issue and challenge as most of the ECD centers were found lacking child-friendly toilet. Some ECD centers even lacked toilet facilities for children. There had also been a problem of safe drinking water for children in most of the ECD centers.
- *Unavailability of out-door play materials:* Most of the ECD centers had in-door playing materials, though these materials are not sufficient in numbers in proportion with the number of children in the ECD centers. Out-door playing facilities were not available in most of ECD centers and this problem was highlighted by most of the ECD facilitators.
- *Lack of school compound:* Most of the ECD centers lacked compound wall and, as a result, there was danger of children exposed to external threat such as
- *Congested space for ECD activities:* Most of the ECD centers were run ECD programs in a congested classroom, with lack of adequate and in-door and out-door space for learning and playing activities.
- *Parental reluctance to attend the parent education class:* As ECD facilitators suggested, some parents were reluctant to attend the parent education class and this had been a serious challenge in some rural areas.
- *Low remuneration:* All ECD facilitators complained over low incentive amount provided to them against their full-time responsibility. They demanded ECD quota with minimum salary equivalent to that of primary school teacher.
- *Teaching culture:* In most of the ECD centers, students were taught to read and write letters and alphabets, and this is against the principle of ECD pedagogy. This seems that training to ECD facilitators needed to encourage them to create activity-based learning environment.

- *Children's absenteeism:* There had been a serious problem of children' absenteeism mostly at the time of local cultural ceremonies (festival, marriage, etc.). This problem is alarming Tarai districts.
- *Poor governmental support:* The facilitators complained that the governmental agencies paid little attention towards the ECD programs due to their greater reliance on I/NGOs for the expansion and coverage of ECD programs.
- *Closure of the center as facilitator absent:* ECD centers conducted mainly by communities got closed when facilitator became absent due to the illness or other personal reasons. As suggested, a vice-facilitator should be managed at ECD level.
- *Insufficient pictorial learning and playing materials:* Children were found well responsive towards pictorial learning materials and play objects but due to the lack of sufficient items, facilitators struggled to provide each child with playing and learning opportunities.
- *Lack of sleeping bed:* As a childhood requirement, children wanted to have a nap during the day time but due to the lack of sleeping bed in the centers children were forced to sleep over the mat on the ground.
- *Health-related issue:* As suggested by facilitators, some of the children had serious health problems, requiring regular check-up of children preferably at ECD centers. Health and nutrition related training should be provided to parents.
- *Child-unfriendly sitting arrangement:* In some ECD centers, children were sitting on the mat over dusty floor. Such centers are in need of carpet, cushion, mattress, round table, bed to make their sitting comfortable.

Recommendations

National resource center at the central level: As the central level interviewees suggest, a national ECD center be established in Kathmandu with the aim of establishing a library and resource center with all ECD-related policies, learning resources and reference materials as well as establishing a forum or meeting point for ECD researchers, expert, advocates, government officials and I/NGO workers for sharing knowledge, materials and experiences and publishing information and materials related to ECD. This center would also for documentation and dissemination of ECD-related materials, organization of workshops and trainings for ECD professionals, provision of regular support to researchers and students. This center also coordinate and link early childhood initiatives in the country. This center can generate knowledge for ECD by periodic survey and study which also forms a basis for developing indicators and targets of ECD.

Multi-sectoral ECD council at the national level: This study has suggested the importance of integrated care to promote optimal child development. Addressing only on area of development without others can prevent children from reaching their full developmental potential. For this purpose, a policy at national level should be established for a network services to work together to reduce cost, expand services and improve child development. A multi-sectoral ECD council at the national level would be established with 1) ECD policy and strategic plan that reinforces other sectoral and multisectoral policies, fills in gaps with new strategies and services, provides service expansion and improvement, and harmonizes elements of policies and services, 2) policy implementation promoted, 3) policy advocacy planned and conducted, 4) focused research on integrated ECD services, and 5) regular annual reports, reviews, budgeting and work plans prepared.

ECD pedagogy: Observation of various ECD centers in this study suggests most of the activities are focused on education and teaching whereby children are taught to write alphabets and letters, and provided books and printed materials to recite and copy. This kind of direct instruction and teaching should be discouraged through refreshment training and children learning and behavioral development be enhanced by exposing them in recreational activities.

Integrating ECD into non-formal education curricula: This study has noted that parents attending adult education classes were not exposed to ECD orientations and lessons. This suggests that adult education and other non-formal program should have an ECD

component and parents and child care givers in particular are provided with education and support through non-formal education, including systematic curricula and training opportunities that use active strategies to show and promote ECD learning and practice (e.g. nutrition, health, sanitation etc.) and caregiving behaviors (e.g. practice, role play, parent-child interactions).

Integrated ECD planning and programs at VDC and community level: This study has found the practice of inter-sectoral and multisectoral ECD planning at the district level, which has been effective to the expansion and coverage of integrated ECD services (education, health, nutrition, safety, legislation etc.). This kind of planning and programs be extended at the VDC level and the inclusion of education and other sector (such as health, nutrition, sanitation and child protection) should be ensured in services for pregnant women, young children and parents through informal and formal programs and coordination. Under the coordination and leadership of VDC, all concerned organizations and individuals (e.g. schools, NGOs, government bodies, civil society network, and political activists) should be involved to prepare integrated ECD planning focusing on the following ECD services:

- Education services: parent education, child development and preschools
- Health care services: prenatal and maternal/child health
- Nutritional services: rehabilitation, feeding, micronutrients
- Sanitation and hygiene services: potable water, waste management
- Child protection services: vulnerable children and mothers.

An integrated community committee could be given responsibility for leadership, monitoring, evaluation, oversight, reporting and planning.

Minimum qualification and competency standard for ECD facilitators. This study has noted that the qualification and competency of ECD facilitators vary significantly, some with university degree in education, others with SLCs or low. Some are found motivated to serve children, with greater willingness to volunteer ECD-related programs while others describe their work as a job to support their earning. Some are found competent and highly trained to perform activities such singing, dancing, drawing while others are not. Some facilitators are married with children rearing experience while others are single with lack of child-rearing experiences. The facilitators with such experience were found better prepared for supporting children for their learning and development. This suggests that ECD facilitators are to be selected ensuring their minimum competencies in ECD sectors.

The major requirements may include: 1) A balance of child centered practical experience and understanding of early childhood development and able to apply knowledge on-the-job, 2) open, willing and committed to ongoing learning and implementing new approaches and strategies, 3) A passion for working with, an ability to positively interact with young children, 4) responsible, respectful, strong language skills, and a good communicator, and 5) healthy and able to create a loving, stress-free, educational environment for young children.

Measures to increase and retain qualified early childhood practitioners: Working as a facilitator in ECD centers in Nepal is totally a volunteering job, not a career. Although the Government provides little incentive (NRs 3000) to the facilitators, this is not even sufficient for their lunch and travel cost. As a facilitator shared, ‘this incentive is not sufficient for my daily subsistence expenditure. I am working just to keep myself engaged. I am seeking for a better opportunity’. This statement suggests there is little possibility of retaining qualified and competent ECD practitioners unless they goal is to volunteering in the ECD areas. The facilitators surveyed shared that the incentive amount were often not paid on time, they had little flexibility or breaks as they didn’t have support staff, and had limited job security. The requirement is to provide each ECD center a government quota (*darbandi*) equivalent to the primary school teacher. Facilitators participating in the study said that there are three main factors that would encourage them to stay in the field: 1) better wages and benefit with full job security, 2) more training and professional development opportunities, and 3) more value placed on early childhood work.

Minimum standards guidebook: Some ECD centers in this study were found lacking minimum enabling conditions in terms of learning and playing materials. The facilitators were also not fully aware of the possibilities to use locally available low cost and no cost materials to enrich the quality standards of the center. The minimum standard guidebook which provides a detailed recommendations for ECD providers, managers and facilitators to explore and manage local resources to ensure minimum quality standards of the center. The recently published pictorial book about the minimum conditions of ECD center by Seto Gurans is a good beginning and this should be accompanied by detailed guidebooks which help all concerned, including individuals and organizations working in this area,

National survey of ECD centers: Among the 16 ECD centers surveyed, 7 centers have classrooms and other infrastructural at the level of minimum quality standard, while others require to upgrade the quality of the building, classroom, toilet and drinking water. The ECD centers have varied strengths and requirements. Some have, for example, sufficient

learning and playing materials, while others have few. Some ECD centers are effectively managed with a full support and participation of the local community. This suggests that every ECD center is unique, with their particular requirements and potentialities and for their development they require different kinds of support from the government and partner organizations. A national survey of ECD centers could categorize the ECD centers in terms of their potentialities and requirements, and accordingly national planning and support mechanism can be established for the equitable development of each of the 34000 more ECD centers across the country. This survey could also provide data for mapping ECD centers in all districts and develop the database for use by regional, district and community officials and stakeholders.

Extending the coverage of peace education and ECD orientations to FCHVs: The pilot interventions of SCNCDS such as peace education and ECD orientations to FCHVs are recommended to expand across the country. Peace education training conducted in Rautahat district was found effective for treating young children with respect and care, avoiding abusive strategies to get rid of their disciplinary problems and peaceful resolution of conflict that may occur between/among children both in the ECD centers and at their homes. Both the facilitators and parents are aware of the vulnerability of the children and need of protection, care, respect, love and peace for the wellbeing and all-round development of children. The training to FCHVs for their increased role of counseling and support to the pregnant and maternal mother about the health, nutrition, safety, and psychosocial development of the children was also found effective in Saptari district. However, the scale and coverage of this training to be extended, making increased number of parents and facilitators equipped with the knowledge and strategies of peaceful resolution of conflict and adequate number of FCHV across the country being aware of their increased role of supporting parents for the early childhood development and care.

Material and management support to realize the goal of learning corners: Although most of the ECD classrooms have six learning corners, the proper use and effective management of these corners are found ineffective in most centers due to the unavailability of adequate materials required in each corner and also due to the lack of proper knowledge and skills on the part of facilitators to organize and use the corners effectively. The facilitators should be trained sufficiently to organize and use of corner-wise resources and the partner organization should provide material support to the center for effective use of six learning corners.

Training: Despite the facilitators received 16-day basic and 3-day refresher training, most of them are found struggling to link their training knowledge and skills into their daily works. This suggest that they need some hands-on sessions focusing more on how the training materials and learning can be applied in the real-life situation. For this purpose, a new round of training is to be provided at ECD centers demonstrating the application of training. Notably, efforts are required to strengthen the transfer of knowledge and skills acquired though training to applications in the workplace. This might be addressed thorough a practicum component that is supported by mentors, more visual demonstrations, and more onsite 'hands-on' opportunities to practice and receive feedback in non-threatening ways.

Parenting education: The focus group discussions with parents suggest that participation in parenting programs helped them realize their roles in supporting young children's growth and development, as well as in strengthening or modifying their attitudes, beliefs and practices in relation to caring for a child. However, the scope and coverage of the parent education program should be extended ensuring access of parents particularly from the backward and underprivileged communities and providing them with hands-on knowledge on young child's requirement – nutritional; health, sanitation and immunization; parental love, respect and care; playing and other motor requirements. As also mentioned above, parent education on childhood development requirements are to be integrated into non-formal, adult education curricula.

Record keeping: Although records of attendance of children and facilitators was found in most of the ECD centers, the ability of facilitators to collect and maintain data for maintaining records of achievement, financing, resources and learning and playing materials, and other developmental check-ups should be enhanced through further refreshment trainings. The facilitators are also to be equipped with resources and ability to log daily activities in a systematic manner.

Way forward

This report has presented both optimistic results and constraints of the ECD programs implemented by SGNCDs that had been supported by UNICEF. As SGNCDs is a key organization advocating the ECD rights and policies and supporting local NGOs to expand ECD services across the country, SGNCDs has to draw lessons from this study and review its policies and programs, keeping in view of positive outcomes, limitations and recommendations of this study. SGNCDs should continue to advocate the integrated and multisectoral ECD policies and programs and expand the piloted programs such as peace education training, ECD basket fund, MCHV orientation as all of these bring significant results both in the policy and implementation sectors. In addition, SGNCDs should increase its support to the district NGOs (Seto Gurans) to expand the quality ECD services at the local level and work closely with governmental organizations and other I/NGOs working in the area of ECD to fulfil the broader goal of preparing children aged 3 -5 years for primary education and later development, through ECD opportunities.

Appendix A. Summary of case ECD centers

Case 1. Gautam Balbikash Kendra: Badimaalika Municipality Paninaaula, Bajura

Gautam Balbikash Kendra is a community-based ECD center which was established in 2065 BS in Badimaalika Municipality Ward No. 7, Paninaaula, Bajura with the initiation, contribution and labor support of the local people. Later, this center has been supported by UNICEF and Setogurans. This center cater ECD service to the children of two wards – Ward no. 7 and 8. This ECD center is located on the bank of Budiganga river. The peaceful environment of the ECD center has contributed to the better learning environment. The key features of this center are following:

- The center has concrete building with a room with 2 doors and 4 windows.
- The center has a playground adjacent of the building.
- The floor of the classroom has a wood floor with a thick and comfortable carpet.
- It has sufficient locally developed materials, indoor and outdoor play materials, block learning design, dolls, letter cards,
- This center has sleeping beds for the children, and cushion to sit.
- The center has library with sufficient children books.
- A wooden bicycle has been constructed using local materials and this has been used as a learning materials.
- There has been a good facility of drinking water and toilets.
- Local management committee is active, with female participation.
- Facilitators is active, hardworking and dedicated, who use variety of methods such as stories, poem, play.
- Children in this center developed school-going habit, sanitation and cleanliness behavior, toilet going habit, communication skills, ability to recognize letters and alphabets, teeth-brushing habits, garbage keeping in proper bin, able to singing, dancing, story-telling and poem reciting.
- The classroom is beautifully decorated with local and printed materials that help them letter and alphabet recognizing to develop skills in singing, drawing, poem reciting, drawing, block designing.



- Teeth-brushing facility at the ECD center with brush stand for individual child.
- Record-keeping of the attendance of students and facilitator, physical properties and financial transaction – income and expenditure – of the center.
- Outdoor playing facilities.
- Mothers are invited every week and facilitators discussed with them about the problems and possibilities for their all-round development, including the health and nutritional habit of the children. Mothers are also realized that the positive healthy child development is only possible by joint work of ECD facilitators and their families and communities.

Case 2. Seto Gurans Namuna Bal Bikas Kendra, Chandrapur – 2, Rautahat

Seto Gurans Namuna Bal Bikas Kendra was established in an ethnic and *Dalit* community of Chandrapur – 2, Rautahat in 2065 BS with the initiation of local community, then VDC, Community Forest Organization and the existing building has been built by Plan Nepal. This center has 2 rooms, one of which has been used for ECD class and another for storing learning and playing materials. In its 7 years of operation, several I/NGOs has supported this ECD center, including SGNDS, UNICEF and Plan Nepal.



With one facilitator, this center has been catering ECD education for 25 children with the following ethnicity (Table ..). Initially, Plan Nepal organized a parent education class which helped parents aware of the importance of early childhood learning, development and care. This center has following major characteristics:

Table. Number of children by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Number of children
Janajati	10
Muslim	2
Dalit	4
Other	9

- This ECD center was established and managed by local community.
- This center has adequate furniture, learning materials, and other necessary physical resources.
- Classroom is well managed with child-friendly seating arrangements.
- Classroom with six learning corners – creativity, construction, mathematics, language, science, act
- Different register for enrolment, attendance for children and facilitator.
- Individual record file of children with their achievement and portfolios.
- The individual record file of the children will be handed over to the school they enroll later.
- Children choose the one learning corner as they get in the classroom and work or play with the materials they like from this particular corner. Girls tend to choose acting and boys construction.

- Children take off shoes outside the classroom, clean their hands and feet. They sing the national song first, have some prayers, and perform activities as planned earlier.
- Children have developed a number of habits after enrolling the center, enclosing self-dependent on selecting learning and playing materials, adjusting to the ECD environment, playing together.
- Adequate number of locally developed materials are managed in different corners.
- The beauty of the classroom is added by a dummy structure of Himal, Hill and Tarai.
- Children feel happy to go to the ECD center every day and develop a number of skills that help to excel at primary schools.

Appendix B: Research instruments

Appendix B.1

Key Informant Interview (KII) for District officials

- Could you share your experience about the planning and implementation of ECD programs in your district?
- What about the multi-sectoral and integrated ECD planning in your district?
- In what ways do you establish inter-sectoral ECD coordination system in your district?
- What kinds of ECD programs are delivered in your district by different organizations? How different ECD organizations are coordinated?
- What is your experience about the role of MToT and ToT in human resource preparation for the ECD programs?
- How do you assess the overall investment in ECD from the government and non-government sectors?
- How do you assess the role of NGOs (central and local) in promoting ECD programs in your district?
- Do you have information if local media have ECD-related programs?
- To what extent do ECD centers in your district have improved their quality in terms of
 - Infrastructure
 - ECD Center management
 - Human resource
 - Health, sanitation
 - Learning materials
 - Record keeping
 - Recreation environment (indoor and outdoor)?
- Could you share some resulting successes and challenges in the implementation of ECD policies and activities in your district?
- What suggestions would you like to furnish for the development and implementation of ECD policies and activities in the district?

Appendix B.2

ECD Facilitator Questionnaire

Name:

Gender:

Qualification:

1. How long have you been involved as ECD facilitator?

..... Years

..... Months

2. Do you have experience of ECD-related training?

Yes

No

If yes, list the training(s) you received (e.g. ECD Facilitators refreshment training, PE and toy making training, Peace education facilitators training, etc.)

No	Name of the training	Provided by	Duration	Areas of knowledge and skills learnt
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

3. How do you assess the ECD training in terms of the learning and the problems and difficulties experienced, if any?

No	Name of the training	Learning 😊	Problems/ difficulties 😞

1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

4. Do you feel a need of further training in the ECD learning?

Yes No

5. If yes, list the knowledge and skills you want to acquire/update.

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

6. Could you provide the statistical data of the children enrolled in your ECD center within the past three years?

Year	No. of children			No. of marginalized children (lower caste, ethnic and marginalized community)	Remark
	Girls	Boys	Total		
Current (2071)					
2070					
2069					

7. List the major learning and behavior children developed through the ECD programs?

8. What are the major parental expectation from the ECD programs?

9. To what extent the parental expectations are met by the ECD programs? Which expectations are not still met?

10. Could you share the ECD-related support/facilities 😊 and problems ☹️ you've experienced in your ECD center? Share your experiences in the following areas.

a. Governmental support

Support and facilities 😊	
Points to improve ☹️	

b. NGO (Seto Gurans) support

😊	
☹️	


c. Financing of the program

😊	
☹️	

d. Infrastructure and physical facilities

😊	
☹️	



e. Teaching learning materials



f. Community support



g. Parental support



h. Children's enrolment, regularity, and learning



i. Health, nutrition, safety and sanitation

j. Outdoor environment and facilities

k. ECD management committee

l. Facilitator incentives/Human resources

😊	
☹️	

11. In which areas are children prepared for primary schooling, (for example, vocabulary, reading and writing of number and letters, painting, communication, adjustment etc.)?

12. How do you keep record of the center’s administrative, financial and academic activities and outcomes?

13. Did the ECD programs help parent improve their skills, knowledge and practice in the following area? If yes, mention what they learnt and brought changes in their practices. Share your experiences in relation to the following ECD activities.

- a. Early stimulation
- b. Communication
- c. Play
- d. Feeding
- e. Hygiene
- f. Sanitation practices

14. Do you have any information if the local media (FM radios) have reported ECD issues? If yes, write your experience.

15. Do you have some successful stories, if any, at your ECD program; something that is worth sharing?

16. Please mention any issues/examples you want to share with us about your ECD-related experiences.

Appendix B.3

Observation Checklist

Please rate appropriately after observing the ECD center (Excellent/sufficient – for all requirements fulfilled with effective results; Acceptable – minimum conditions met, Poor – very rare or no existence with minimum or no results)

Physical aspect

No.	Characteristics	Degree of appropriateness			Remarks
		Excellent	Acceptable	Poor	
1.	Building				
2.	Classroom temperature and air circulation				
3.	Classroom space for activities				
4.	Furniture size and comfort				
5.	Toilets for children				
6.	Drinking water				
7.	Canteen facilities				
8.	Other (Specify)				

Teaching learning materials

No.	Characteristics	Degree of availability			Remarks
		Sufficient	Few in number	Not available	
1.	Audio materials				
2.	Play items				
3.	Audio-visual items				

4.	Musical items				
5.	Pictures				
6.	Learning blocks				
7.	Picture books				
8.	Others (Please specify)				

Record keeping

No.	Characteristics	Degree of appropriateness			Remarks
		Excellent	Acceptable	Poor	
1.	Record of student enrollment				
2.	Record of student attendance				
3.	Record of students' daily learning				
4.	Record of student achievement				
5.	Record of facilitator's attendance				
6.	Financial record (income and expenditure)				
7.	Record of physical properties				
8.	Record of learning materials				
9.	Record of Meeting Minutes				
10.	Directives and other official documents				
11.	Other (specify)				

ECD management

No.	Characteristics	Degree of management			Remarks
		Excellent	Acceptable	Poor	
1.	Physical management				
2.	Classroom management				
3.	Parental participation in ECD management				
4.	Financial management (record keeping, resource mobilization)				
5.	Other (specify)				

Sanitation

No.	Characteristics	Degree of sanitation			Remarks
		Excellent	Acceptable	Poor	
1.	Sanitation at classroom				
2.	School environment (outside the classroom)				
3.	Cleanliness of children				
4.	Cleanliness in toilet				
5.	Other (specify)				

Recreational environment

No.	Characteristics	Degree of availability			Remarks
		Sufficient	Few in number	Poor	
1.	Indoor recreational facilities				
2.	Outdoor recreational facilities				

3.	Other (specify)				
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Children's participation and learning

No.	Characteristics	Learning			Remarks
		Excellent	Acceptable	Poor	
1.	Children are playing and having fun				
2.	Facilitators providing good care of children				
3.	Materials are in good use				
4.	Cleanliness in toilet				
5.	Other (specify)				

Appendix B.4 FGD with parents

Issues for discussions

- Your overall experience about ECD learning of your children.
- Children’s learning and behavior changed after attending ECD program.
- Your expectations; met and not met.
- Improved knowledge, skills, and practice through behavior change
 - To what extent are you aware of child’s early stimulation
 - How do you communicate with children? Any change after ECD experience?
 - What is your knowledge about providing children with playing opportunity?
 - Hygiene and sanitation practices changed.
- What is their overall experiences of ECD program?

Appendix B.5 Case study

2 ECD Centers (One from Achham and another from Rautahat) using observation, informal interviews and reviewing out-come based documents/records. (Observing classroom activities, noting the types of educational and play materials available, assessing the overall classroom environment, observing interactions between the children and facilitators, and reviewing records and documents related to ECD program)

Information/data are sought in the following areas:

- Context (Location, history, forces etc.)
- Program inputs (people, program, materials and physical environments)
- Good practices (management, learning environment, activities and process)
- Outcomes (in terms of children activities, learning and behavior)
- Strong and weak points observed
- Lessons

Appendix B.6

Key Informant Interview/discussion at the national level

The major discussion issues include:

- National system of ECD planning and quality implementation
- Integrated and multi-sectoral ECD policy and national guideline development
- ECD rights through national laws
- Role of NCED in preparing ECD facilitators, Institutionalizing the ECD facilitators ECD facilitators
- Coordination and monitoring of ECD activities of various organizations
- Role of I/NGOs, local bodies (Municipalities and VDCs)
- Capacity development