

Republic of Somaliland

Ministry of Education and Science

Early Childhood Education Policy and Institutional Framework

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Forward

Article Fifteenth, clause (1) of the Somaliland Constitution, Education Act (XEER LR.77/2018) and the National Education Policy 2015-2030 provide the rights and legislation for providing basic education to all children in Somaliland. It is the duty of the education sector to uphold these rights and equip all the young people in Somaliland with requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes so as to promote their personal, social and economic development.

The Government of Somaliland is committed to developing early childhood education and this commitment is reflected in the current Education Sector Strategic Plan 2017-2020. However, it is well known fact that early childhood programmes are not well developed and fully integrated into the education system. Due to limited financial and technical resources most of the previous education policies and programmes were focused on providing free compulsory primary education as per the directive of previous president/government that come to power in 2010. Nevertheless, currently, there is a great realisation that quality primary education cannot be effectively delivered without young children experiencing good quality and developmentally appropriate preparatory school readiness programme.

Therefore, this ECE Policy and Institutional Framework 2020 present the first major step to systematically develop pre-primary education in the country and move towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4: target 2 which obligates the government to ensure that by 2030 all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

This ECE Policy and Institutional Framework covers board policy statements and implementation strategies that include six focus areas of access and protection; equity, equality and wider inclusion; quality and relevance; governance and accountability; monitoring, evaluation and research and financial partnerships. The development of these policies and strategies were deeply consultative, inclusive and are well thought by all the stakeholders. Great attempts have been made to examine what Somaliland can learn from global, regional and East African perspectives. As a result of this initiative our policy framework is aligned to the principles of international policy frameworks that promote child rights thus will play a significant role in childhood education and development for children aged between four to five years.

It is acknowledged that challenges exist to implement all the policies and strategies highlighted in this policy, however, the Somaliland Government; MoES; other relevant government ministries; donors and implementing partners; communities and parents are committed to working together to make sufficient progress in the desired policy goals. We will adapt a combination of multiple approaches such as annexing pre-primary schools to the existing government primary schools; integration of Quranic Education System into the formal ECE programmes; exploring of pilot mobile ECE centres and creating links between all these approaches to promote harmony and cohesiveness.

The government will emphasise the importance of partnership, coordination and collaborative practices in the provision of holistic services to children aged between 4-5 years before they transit to primary grade one. In order to promote and fast track these approaches, the stakeholders and partners will create Early Childhood Development Committees at national, regional and district levels. Effective implementation of this approach will help create synergy among players and stakeholders and facilitate implementation of ECE strategies at all levels.

I appeal to all stakeholders and partners in the education sector to use this policy for the implementation of ECE programmes. I also urge partners to support the implementation of the policies and strategies which are highlighted in this policy framework.

HE Ahmed Mohamed Diiriye

Minister of Ministry of Education and Science



Acknowledgement

On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Science, I would like to express my appreciation to all those who worked tirelessly towards the production of this policy. The leadership and the engagement of this ECE policy dialogue has been excellent. The process of developing this policy begun with the review of education and legislative documents that govern the education sector, followed by deep consultation processes that involved interviews and discussions with senior MoES officials at national, regional, district and ECE school levels.

First, MoES appreciates the leadership, technical contributions and logistical support provided by the Directorates of Policy and Planning, Basic Education and ECE Unit for the entire period of developing this policy. Profound gratitude also goes to the Directors of Secondary Education; NFE/TVET; Human Resources; Gender and Administration and Finance Departments for their insight technical contributions at central level.

Secondly, special thanks go to the officials of the MoES at the decentralised levels of education. The REOs along with their key senior regional education officials provided invaluable contributions to the key issues that shape and are outlined in this policy. More so, the development of this policy has been made possible through collaboration with Local Government officials, in particular, the Social Development Affairs Committees.

Thirdly, this policy has also benefited from the experience, expertise, reflections and thoughts of the grassroot level providers of ECE in both private and public streams. This included ECE headteachers, centre managers and teachers. My special gratitude goes to all the grassroot participants from the sample schools.

The field mission also involved consultations with lectures of the faculties of education from Hargeisa, Amoud and Burao Universities and lecturers from the newly established National Teacher Training College. My special thanks go to teacher educators who gave up their valuable time to provide technical contributions to enrich important issues of this policy in regard to ECE teacher development.

Gratitude is also expressed to the external partners such as SCI, UNICEF and Pharo Foundation and the wider Education Sector Coordination Forum for sharing their experience and expertise in ECE programmes. Particular thanks go to GPE programme and implementing agency (SCI) for providing financial resources to develop this policy. I also take this opportunity to thank participation from other ministries such as Ministry of Health & Development and Ministry of Religion and Endowment for their collaboration and technical contributions.

Special gratitude goes to Dr Hassan S Ahmed who has led the process of developing and finalising this policy and the small technical team that worked with the consultant to reach the final consensus decisions in regards to some critical aspects of the policies that were under consideration.

The Ministry is also indebted to all the MoES staff who were not mentioned but worked behind the scene to support the development of this policy.

The development of this framework is of great significance for the development of ECE in Somaliland. I urge all sectors to treat this policy document as an important tool in the provision of ECE programmes. I also call on all parents, communities and stakeholders to provide continuous support to implement this policy.

Mr Ahmed Abokor Mohamed

Director General Ministry of Education and Science

Acronyms and abbreviations

ABE:	Alternative Basic Education
ANPPCAN	African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child abuse and Neglect
ASAL:	Arid and Semi-Arid Land
CESA:	Continental Education strategy
CESVI	Coperazione E Sviluppo
CSO:	Civil society Organisation
D.G:	Director General
DEO:	District Education Officer
DICECE:	District centre for early childhood Education
ECDE:	Early Childhood Education and Development
ECE:	Early Childhood education
ECED:	Early Childhood Education Development
EMIS:	Education Management Information System
ESA:	Education Sector Analysis
ESSP:	Education sector Strategic Plan
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
GER:	Gross Enrolment Rate
GPE:	Global Partnership Education
HAVAYOCCO:	horn of Africa Voluntary Youth Committee
IQE:	Integrated Quranic Schools
JPLG:	Joint Programme for Local Governments
JRES:	Joint Review of Education Sector
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education Rwanda
MOES:	Ministry of Education and Science
MoF:	Ministry of Finance
MoHD:	Ministry of Health and Development
MoJ:	Ministry of Justice
MoLSA:	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MORE	Ministry of Religion and Endowment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NTTC	National Teacher Training College
PSS	Psychosocial Support
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
QAS	Quality Assurance and Standards
SCI	Save the Children International
SDAC	Social Development Affairs committee
SDG	Sustainable development Goals
SL	Somaliland
SNEP	Somaliland National Education Policy
SSA	Sub- Saharan Africa
SOAS:	School of Oriental African Studies
SOYDA:	Somaliland Youth development Association
TWG	Technical Working Groups
UNICEF	United Nation Children Fund

Definition of terms

ECE: Early Childhood Education (ECE) is a term used herein to describe any type of educational program that serves children in their preschool years aimed and designed to develop their cognitive, social and personal development, including, in the Somaliland context, their moral and spiritual development

ECD: Early Childhood Development encompasses a more holistic concept of development from pregnancy to the age of 8 years and includes health, welfare, and physical development often incorporated into the context of whole family care within the community.

Executive summary

In this policy, ECE refers to any type of educational program that serves children in their preschool years, i.e. before they enter primary school. It can include a range of activities designed to aid in the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of pre-schoolers, including, in the Somaliland context, their moral and spiritual development.

The policy represents the first systematic thinking of developing early childhood education in Somaliland context by MoES and other stakeholders. The mission of developing this policy was informed by the need to:

- Improve access to high quality early childhood education
- Improve the quality and relevance of the ECE programmes
- Improve the equity, equality and wider inclusion aspects of ECE programmes
- Improve the governance, accountability and institutional structure of the ECE delivery
- Improve the monitoring, evaluation and research of ECE programmes
- Improve the finance and partnership strategies of ECE programmes

The MOES's vision is to provide quality ECE that will provide a wide range of developmental activities for all children aged between four to five years prior to the beginning of their primary school experience so that they can develop to their full potential. The vision informs the mission of the Ministry which is to ensure equitable access to quality and relevant ECE services for holistic development of all children aged between four to five years. It is expected this policy will set the direction and guidance for achieving the above vision and mission.

The process of developing this policy has been well coordinated by the existing and the established structure of the **Education Sector Coordination System**. Although the central level of the MoES has led the consultation process, the inputs from the decentralised levels of the MoES has been remarkable. This included technical contributions from the regional education officials, district level education officials, ECE headteachers, teachers, parents and centre managers.

In addition, the consultation process involved the engagement of a wider range of stakeholders such as relevant personnel from Ministry of Religion and Endowment (MORE); Ministry of Health & Development and Ministry of Interior and Local Governments, private sector, NGOs and CSO. These participants were key in analysing the current ECE situation and setting the future vision, goals, policies and strategies of this policy. Furthermore, the deep stakeholder consultation process has benefitted from documentation review of relevant documents and other literature relating to ECE. The information from the different sources were triangulated to construct this policy.

Section one of this policy captures brief overview of the country's context such as geographic, political, socio-economic and education background information. This information was mainly obtained through literature review of relevant documentations. Overall, the findings indicate that Somaliland is a poor and unrecognised country characterised by low socio-economic indicators. Although the country has moderately recovered from previous civil war there are still elements of fragility in the wider political economy.

Section two of this policy provides deep diagnostic analysis of the findings which were obtained through combination of documentary reviews, consultations with stakeholders and through field trips. This section concludes with a summary of the current performance of the ECE subsector. The findings indicate a strong political will and prioritisation of early childhood education. The Constitution of Somaliland, Education Act 2018; SNEP 2015-2013, ESA and ESSP 2017-2018 all provide evidence of MoES's commitment to develop the ECE sub-sector of education.

However, the implementation of the above ambition is hindered by inadequate financial and technical resources to develop the ECE sub-sector thus leading to poor institutional capacity; inadequate physical infrastructure; low access status; unavailability of government owned and validated curriculum; lack of appropriate teaching and learning materials; poor coordination among the stakeholders; concerns of quality and relevance of the few existing

provisions and inadequate integration and provision of basic essential services such as education, protection, safety and nutrition.

Section three of this policy examines the global, regional and east African perspectives of ECE. In particular the ECE discourses and priorities promoted by the global partnership for education (GPE), UNICEF, World Bank and the African Union are examined. The aim was to create an inspirational scenario for ECE policy learning and lesson drawings so as to make an informed decision of improving the different themes of ECE which are covered in this policy.

Section four of this policy covers the rationale for developing this an early childhood education policy. In this section international research and reports that provide evidence about the importance of ECE are drawn to justify the need for the MOES to invest and develop the ECE subsector. The education, social and economic arguments presented by the observed research and reports greatly support the need to systematically develop and invest in a high quality ECE programmes.

The final section five of this policy address the MoES's intents of developing ECE in terms of goals, policy statements and strategies of achieving the stated policy statements. The thematic areas covered by this policy include access and expansion; equity, equality and inclusion; quality and relevance; governance, accountability and institutional framework; research, monitoring and evaluation and financial partnerships.

1.0: Introduction

1.1: Context of Somaliland

Somaliland covers an area of 137,600 km of land and shares broader with Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia. Hargeisa is the political and commercial capital and the country has six main regions though there are other eight emerging regional areas. Somali language is the official government language as well as the mother tongue language for all the population in the country. Somaliland is an Islamic state and Somalilanders are officially 100% Muslims. The influence of Islam throughout Somaliland is profound and faith plays a major role in everyday life.

The population of the country is estimated about 3,508, 180¹ with an annual population growth rate of 3.1% per annum. 52.9% of the population reside in urban towns while 44.8% live in rural areas. The majority of the people living in rural areas practice nomadic/pastoralist life styles. 2.4% of the Somaliland population is classified as internally displaced people. Over past years the proportion of the population living in urban areas has increased over those living in rural areas.

Generally, Somaliland is a poor, unrecognised country characterised by high level of poverty and seasonal droughts. The Somaliland Ministry of National Planning and Development II (2007-2021)² estimates that Somaliland has an average GDP of US\$1.558 billion in nominal prices. The first pillar of the current NDP II is Investing in people through improved social services (especially education, health, water and sanitation) to save lives and to raise human skills, and actions to address the needs of specific vulnerable groups such as women, children and the disabled.

The right to quality education by all Somalilanders is enshrined in **Article 15: Education, Youth and Sports of the Somaliland constitution**³. However, according to the latest available ESA 2012-2016⁴ the education system in Somaliland is characterised by low investment, low capacity and high demand. **Article 9 of the Somaliland Education Act (XEER LR.77/2018)**⁵ sets out four levels of formal education: pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary and higher education. Generally, education resources are distributed fairly among the regions though the nomadic regions lack behind due to their nomadic life styles.

1.2: Back ground to the pre-primary education policy

Over the past 25 years Somaliland has maintained peace, security and political stability thus contributing to improvement in children's wellbeing and cognitive development. However due the prevailing country, community and family poverty levels access to quality education system is very limited. The pre-primary education sub-sector of education is least developed compared to the other sub-sectors of education.

The Somaliland National Education Policy 2015 – 2030⁶ envisions education as a means to prepare all learners to become life-long learners equipped with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to be successfully productive citizens. The mission of the National Education Policy of Somaliland is to provide a quality and relevant education that will prepare every student to be successful in life with partnership of its parents and communities.

Pre-primary or Early Childhood Education (ECE) is one the main Somaliland's education system and sector profile along with the primary, secondary, vocational, and higher education. The MOES has adopted ECE as a strategy for promoting lifelong learning among children since the development of the first five-year of Education Strategic Plan from 2012 to 2016, however, due to resources and technical challenges the ECE achievements in this period were dismal as evidenced by the Joint Review Education Sector (JRES) 2018/19 Report⁷.

¹ ESSP 2017-2021 referencing UNDP statistics

² Somaliland National Development Plan 2017-2021

³ Somaliland Constitution

⁴ ESA 2012-2016

⁵ Education Act (XEER LR.77/2018)

⁶ SNEP (2015-2030)

⁷ JRES Report 2018/19

Education research and grey literature from the international community involved in the education sector shows that ECE encourages the holistic development as well as confidence and self-esteem of the child, and yields significant long-term benefits such as regular attendance; cognition and academic achievement; grade progression; and completion of the school cycle, among other benefits⁸. However, in Somaliland context, the sub-sector is not yet fully integrated into the formal education system and most children access ECE through only Quranic Schools that provide children with spiritual and moral education through the understanding and teaching of the Holy Quran. The majority of children attending Quranic Schools are of school age and often attend alongside with primary education. The Quranic Schools though critical to the lives of children pay limited attention to promoting areas of holistic child development such as numeracy and literacy, social and emotional competencies required for effective learning in early grades of formal education.

During the life span of the previous Education Sector Strategic Plan 2012-2016, UNICEF has piloted some Integrated Quranic Schools which were categorized as an alternative basic education schools (ABE). It was reported that these schools have since transformed into formal schools and it was not possible to find any formal evaluation reports to determine key success factors or lessons learnt from this pilot project. In a more recent case, the MoES in collaboration and partnership with Pharo Foundation has piloted ten public pre-primary schools. The details of the Quranic Schools, pilot public pre-primary schools and private sector owned pre-primary schools are covered under section two of this policy.

1.3: Methodology

Documentation reviews and extensive field trip stakeholder consultations were done to develop this policy. The objective was to gain an insight and understanding of the current situations and landscape of pre-primary education context in Somaliland. The participants included senior Ministry of Education and Science officials from the central to school levels; tutors of teacher education institutions; ECE centre managers and teachers; officials from local government authorities who are in charge of social development affairs committee; personnel from I/NGOs and UN agencies that are engaged in pre-primary education; relevant personnel from the Ministries of Health & Development and Ministry of Religion and Endowment,

After the field trip consultations, a one-day diagnostic workshop was conducted to present preliminary findings to the main stakeholders and further review and reflect upon key issues regarding the development of this policy. This workshop was critical in identifying bottlenecks and potential pathways for improving the pre-primary education sub-sector. The final thoughts were presented to the Education Sector Coordination Forum held on 27th January 2020. Finally, the document was fine-tuned by the consultant in consultation with a small technical team selected by the MoES. The following section two covers summary of the overall findings of the consultation process.

⁸ World Ready to Learn Report (2019)

2.0: Situation analysis and key findings

Article fifteen, clause (1) of the Constitution of Somaliland states that: “The state shall pay particular attention to the advancement, extension and dissemination of knowledge and education as it recognises that education is the most appropriate investment that can play a major role in political, economic and social development”. Overall there are eight clauses in this article but of particular interest to this policy are the following articles:

(5). The state shall accord a first priority to primary education, and shall endeavour to spread primary education to the regions and the districts.

(6). The eradication of illiteracy and the (provision) of adult education is a national obligation, and the efforts of the public and the state shall be combined to fulfil this obligation.

(7). The national policy is that primary education shall be free.

(8). In order to ensure a healthy physical and mental growth of the young, and to improve their wellbeing and maturity, the state shall give special attention to the promotion and encouragement of physical education and sports which will be recognised as one of the basic subjects in the educational curriculum of both state and other schools

In relation to the above constitutional article and the associated clauses when the stakeholders of this policy were asked whether pre-schooling was free and compulsory their opinion was divided into “yes” and “no” categories. However, there was consensus and agreement that there was a constitutional provision for free and compulsory primary education. Despite this contestation of the interpretation of the constitution the overwhelming opinion was the need to urgently promote access to public pre-primary schooling in order to develop children and improve their school readiness. This means providing young children with range of experiences that will help their overall development and thus enable them to be ready for school. Some of the respondents suggested the enactment of free compulsory pre-primary education while others cited resources and technical constraints to implement such enactment.

In addition to the provisions of the Somaliland Constitution, the Somaliland Education Act (XEER LR. 77/2018 (which is written in Somali Language only- yet to be translated into English language) Article 10 defines the management of ECE centres and the roles, responsibilities and mandates of relevant ministries; Article 11 specifies the objectives of the pre-primary education; Article 12 stipulates the regulatory mechanisms of operating ECE centres and Article 13 details the mandatory curriculum and the language of curriculum instruction for the ECE sub-sector. The provisions of this policy are consistent with the requirements of the Somaliland Education Act (XEER 77/2018).

There are also significant evidence and coverage from other Somaliland education policies such as ESSPs, ESA and SNEP regarding recognition of the importance of ECE sub-sector and political commitments. However, at policy practice level, public pre-schools are very underdeveloped and limited to only ten pilot schools run by a non-governmental organisation.

Overall, the documentation reviews, the diagnostic interviews, focus group discussions, field visits and workshop conducted for the purpose of developing this policy have suggest that under Education Act 2018 and the Local Government Act⁹ district administrations, who are under the authority of Ministry of Interior and Local Government have the legal responsibility to delivery of pre-primary education and primary education services. However, our consultations reveal that the extent to which the Ministry of Interior and Local Governments have influence at the district levels is very much determined by the level of interest and priority afforded to pre-primary education by district executives, particularly by the social development affairs committees because district development plans determine priorities and where resources are allocated. Currently education is part of the JPLG project which is implemented by a consortium of UN agencies in partnership with five regions and districts of Maroodijeex, Awdal, Togdheer, Sahil and Gabiley. Most of the respondents of this policy consultation process have indicated that the JPLG project has improved the systems and structures of the participating local government authorities. More so additional funding has been raised from both internal and external sources to promote basic essential services

⁹ Respondents referencing Somaliland Local Governments Act; JPLG documentations and evidences from the decentralisation policy

such as education. As a result of this, it was reported that there is an increased opportunity to harmonise MoES priorities and Local Authorities priorities and possibly include ECE in local authority's annual development plans thereby improving the expansion, efficiency and effectiveness of public ECE delivery.

Despite the above observed positive note about the JPLG project, it was generally observed that majority of the local government authorities do not have the financial resources or the capacity to develop the pre-primary education. In fact, their awareness of ECE and its importance is new to the majority of the local government social development affairs committee members as they seem to be caught in surprise that they have some roles and responsibilities in regard to pre- primary education. All the respondents of this fieldwork were critical of the limited role of the local governments with the exception of Sahil region where the local government has made some progress to support education. It was recommended that there was a need to review and make it more explicit the role of the local governments in promoting pre-primary education

Financial resources: Financial resources are key challenge hindering effective implementation of the pre-primary education. Diagnostic interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders have indicated that both the central Ministry of Education and Science and Local Governments do not have any budgets for pre-primary education. The MoES budget allocation from the Ministry of Finance is about 12% of the GDP in absolute nominal figures this translates to only about USD 9.4 m¹⁰. The bulk of this financial allocation is absorbed by teachers' salaries which represent more than 66% of the annual budget. The remaining percentages of the education budget mainly focuses on running costs such as fuel, transportation and stationaries. There are no specific percentages or amounts delineated to specific sub-sectors of education such as pre-primary, primary, secondary and tertiary education. Similarly, there are no specific budgets allocated to developmental activities such school improvement services, construction, renovation, extension of schools and other essential schools' infrastructure¹¹.

The inadequate funding of education implies that there are no planned resources to create and expand public pre-primary schools. Discussions with a wide range of stakeholders have confirmed that in urban town such Hargeisa, Burao and Borame there is an emerging private pre-primary school which is mainly owned by individuals and faith organisations. However, these schools remain unregulated and there are concerns of quality of pre-primary education experienced by the children. Consultations and visits to these private pre-primary schools have confirmed that these institutions have adopted multiple curricular from different countries such as Sudan, Kenya, Australia and many other countries. More so the quality of the teachers and centre managers require urgent review. Currently there are no provisions to determine the unit costs and the fees charged by the private pre-primary schools.

The MoES lacks the technical capacity to develop pre-education schooling: Discussions with key Ministry of Education and Science officials have confirmed that there are only three pre-primary personnel with unspecified responsibilities at central MoES level. The governance structure at lower levels such as regional and district levels is non-existent. Generally, there is an urgent priority to develop the human resource personnel that is critical to leading, managing and developing the pre-primary education sector in Somaliland. This should comprise both technical and managerial staff at all levels capable of successfully planning and implementing ECE activities. In addition, the stakeholders have recommended the need to reinforce a sense of ownership and ensure ECE programmes are monitored and evaluated.

ECE curriculum: The documentation reviews and consultations with the stakeholders have evidenced that unlike the primary education sub-sector there are no national pre-primary education curricula, syllabus, teacher guides and students work books. However, the Head of the MoES, Pre-primary Unit stated that in collaboration with Pharo Foundation and HYDA they have created a provisional curriculum that covers draft students' books in Somali language and handwriting guidelines. These resources are used by the ten government pilot schools which are annexed to the existing government public primary schools.

¹⁰ Discussions with MoEST Directorates of Finance and Policy and Planning. Teachers salary is the greatest priority

¹¹ The observations of the Directors were reiterated by the Director General (D.G), MoES

The current Education Sector Strategic Plan 2017-2021 prioritises the development of a unified comprehensive pre-primary curriculum owned and validated by MoES. The new curriculum is expected to cover and be used by both public and private ECE schools. Discussions with the stakeholders have reiterated the need for this priority. Under the Somaliland GPE programme SCI have stated that there are financial resources available to cover the pre-school curriculum development. While doing this mission of pre-primary policy development the terms of reference for developing the pre- primary school curriculum has been advertised and the process of procuring experts was ongoing. The development of the curriculum is expected to facilitate the writing of teaching and learning materials and training of pre-school teachers.

The population of Somaliland is generally homogenous in terms religion, culture and language but the economic ways of life differs. There are purely nomadic pastoralists communities, sedentary farming communities, coastal communities and more urbanised societies that inhabit big towns. During the consultation process the stakeholders were asked about their views regarding whether it was better for Somaliland to have one unified comprehensive pre-school curriculum or specific regional based curricula are to be developed. The respondents' feedback overwhelming supported the idea of adopting a common unified curriculum that reflects and represents all regions and communities.

There was variation of respondents' views about the language of pre-primary curriculum instruction both in terms of pre-school classroom teaching and training of teachers. While most of the respondents agreed that pre-school teachers must deliver curriculum in Somali language there was concern among the teacher educators that because teacher training materials are written in English and there is inadequate development of relevant ECE terminologies in Somali language teacher training courses and lessons should be delivered in English language

Article 13 of the Somaliland Education Act 2008 specifies that all ECE centres must teach a curriculum which is developed and approved by MoES. Clause 4 of the same Article states that such curriculum must include Somali and Arabic languages. Clause 5 of the same Article exempts foreign children from Somali language and recommends foreign children to be thought in their own mother tongue language. However, a permission and approval must still be sort from MoES.

ECE teachers and teacher education institutions: The stakeholders have identified that there are no specialised pre-school trained teachers in Somaliland with the exception of some foreign teachers who teach private ECE centres. Similarly, none of the faculties of education of the three public universities visited and the newly established National College of Teacher Education had any training provisions for pre-primary teachers. When the teacher educators were asked about the ideal or the desired qualification of the future pre-school teachers the most common view was that they need to be recruited from secondary level graduates and have to undertake two-year diploma teacher training course, followed by continuous systematic professional development opportunities.

However, to bridge the gap, the teacher educators have a recommended short in-service course to the existing primary school teachers that covers key aspects of ECE teaching methodology so that they can be deployed to ECE centres on an interim period. The immediate critical issues regarding the deployment of the existing teachers include conducting training needs assessment to identify pedagogical weaknesses and needs and thereafter use the findings to prepare a comprehensive professional development and training plan in all the thematic areas of ECE. It is important that the teachers who receive these training are monitored and their performances evaluated against the training courses they have received.

More importantly, there is need to establish teaching communities among the existing ECE teachers. The MoES needs to create a forum where ECE teachers can regularly share information and ideas and support one another to overcome challenges and concerns. The ECE teachers should also be connected to the lower cycle primary school teachers, particularly grade one teachers of the schools that the majority of the ECE learners' transit to. This practice will not only facilitate smooth transition but the information shared can be used to improve classroom practices and student learning. Pharo Foundation had already piloted a similar teacher information sharing network for the ten schools that they manage on behalf of the MoES. It was reported that this pilot model has already resulted some positive impacts on ECE teachers' professionalism. The MoES need to reinforce and develop further this initiative.

Majority of the stakeholders have suggested that the newly created National College of Teacher education (NCTE) was the ideal place for training future pre-school teachers. However, there were other views suggesting using public universities as the ideal decentralised venues for future ECE teacher training. There was also an overwhelming opinion to ensure that more than 70% of teacher trainees should be female. The fact that the newly established NCTE does not have any accommodation facilities and it is usually difficult for married women with children to move from their homes it is recommended that the training of ECE teachers should be decentralised.

Perception of importance of ECE and integration approach: The field mission has observed a mixed view regarding parents and community's perception about the importance of pre-primary education in Somaliland context. **Majority of the stakeholders have stated that there is good awareness and recognition about the importance of ECE. Both the headteachers and centre managers of the public and private ECE centres visited stated that there is high demand of formal pre-primary opportunities.** However, some respondents suggested that in mainly rural areas parents and carers might be unwilling to send their children to pre-primary schools because they prefer young children to first read and memorise the Holy Quran. When asked about the integration of formal ECE and Quranic Education System the respondents expressed both challenges and opportunities. Distance, gender, protection, safety, devaluation of the Quranic System and operational and implementation issues were the most common challenges raised about the approach of integration.

The field mission has observed that the scalability of the UNICEF's integrated pilot ECE and Quranic system has been slow. UNICEF staff stated that previous funding streams that has supported these schools has ceased and the integrated schools were handed over to the MoES. It was difficult to determine the benefits and the impacts accompanying the pilot integrated model because it has not been studied comprehensively as a result there is no adequate information about the status of the previously piloted integrated ECE and Quranic schools. However, discussions with the stakeholders have demonstrated good level of society-community acceptance of the integration model. It is also worth noting that UNICEF integration concept was based on primary education level rather than pre-school level. More so the coordination with the MoES and MORE has not been deep and consultative.

The current consultations with a wide stakeholder of pre-primary schools still support the idea of integrated ECE and Quranic Education System. However, for this approach to succeed stakeholders have suggested:

- Greater collaboration and coordination between the MoES and Ministry of Religion and Endowment
- Conducting of advocacy visits to the right stakeholders with constructive messages for the parents and communities to create opportunities for changing minds on IQE where there are elements of suspicion or resistance
- To ensure sustainable working relationships and improve impact of IQE, the MoES and MoRE should sign and develop joint a work plans to support children to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills in existing Quranic Schools
- Quranic teachers and trained ECE teachers to teach together where the existing infrastructures support such approach
- There were also suggestions of orienting Quran teachers on basic literacy and numeracy in Somali language
- Sensitisation of parents' carers and communities about the importance of pre-primary education
- Enhancing the technical and resource capacity of MoES to engage with parents, carers and communities
- Systematising strategies, data and information about parents' engagement
- Raising the literacy levels of parents and communities

Access and Expansion of ECE: The expansion of public ECE development has been slow. Over the past four years the MoES and Pharo Foundation have managed to add only three pre-primary schools to the initial seven pilot schools. Despite this slow expansion, the key success factors of the ongoing pilot project include:

- Close partnership and collaboration between MoEST and Pharo Foundation
- The schools generally provide safe learning environment to young children
- Though not adequate, there is some basic services integration such as education, health and nutrition.

- Some teachers are paid by the government, in addition small incentives are provided by Pharo Foundation(the organization that runs the schools on behalf of the MoES). The support provided by Pharo Foundation constitutes more than 50% of the teachers' salary.
- Key focus areas of literacy, numeracy, play, handwriting are integral part of the curriculum delivery
- Children are not subjected to any written tests as a form of assessment
- Schools are annexed to existing public primary schools and transition to grade one is well managed
- Unlike private ECE centres the curriculum is delivered in Somali Language
- The Head of Education, Pharo Foundation has expressed a strong future commitment to continue support ECE development.

Mandates and insitutional frameworks: ECE sub-sector of education comprises educational activities that take place under the governance and mandates of several ministries. Of these, MoES is the Lead Ministry for the pre-primary education with the responsibility for policy formulation, regulation and setting norms and standards for the subsector. The ESA 2012-2016 has noted the following statutory mandates, roles and responsibilities of different ECE and ECED actors in Somaliland context:

- Ministry of Education and Science (MOES): develop ECE policy and service standard guidelines; collaborate with Ministry of Religious Endowment (MORE) to develop Integrated ECE Islamic curriculum; appoint and support training of ECE trainers; develop ECE teachers remuneration guidelines
- Ministry of Health and Development (MOHD): implement health and nutrition project; feedings at MCH; maternal and child health service; reproduction health education
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA): ensure respect of children rights; develop child rights and protect policies
- Ministry of Religion and Endowment (MORE): develop policy regarding Quranic Education System; promote religious instructions, good morals and ethics
- Ministry of Justice (MOJ): Administer justice to child victim of abuse
- Ministry of Interior (MOI): In collaboration with MOLSA, develop policy and guidelines on child rescue; rescue children who are trafficked, separated, abandoned or unaccompanied children
- Ministry of Finance (MOF): member of multi-sectoral training, supervision and M&E teams; mobilise and allocate resources for ECE
- Community Education Committees (CEC): ensure parents enrol children in ECE;
- Communities: establish and manage ECE centres; support ECE teachers in the development of play and learning materials from locally available resources
- Families: provide care for pregnant and lactating women; encourage breastfeeding and complementary feeding
- Religious Institutions /Mosques: promote spiritual and moral development of children aged 0-8 years; promote family unity and stability through counselling

It is important to note that the ESA analysis of 2012-2016 has not mentioned the primary role of the local governments in terms of being legally responsible for the development of the ECE.

The documentation reviews and stakeholders' diagnostic interviews and focus group discussions reveals that there is a need to strengthen the overall ECE policy dialogue and implementation practices between relevant government ministries and institutions. For example, although the MoES is identified as the key line Ministry of ECE it was reported that the Ministry of Religion and Endowment does not recognise and disputes the leading role of the MoES. Particular conflict between MoEST and MORE is the management of the Quranic Schools such Malcamas and Maxads which primarily focus on Quranic and Islamic studies teaching. Overall the stakeholders have suggested that the lack of clear institutional framework to oversee the development and implementation of pre-primary education has contributed to:

- Inadequate and lack of proper communication and coordination of the various ministries and agencies involved in providing early childhood education
- Unclear and lack of vision and focus on how to improve pre-primary education
- Duplication of efforts and unnecessary overlaps in the provision of pre-school services
- Lack of proper planning and synergy of resources leading to ineffective operations
- Lack of comprehensive properly analysed and synthesised information relating to pre-primary education.
- Inadequate clear monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the existing provisions for children aged between 4-5 years

Quality assurance: Quality Assurance is defined as a system to support performance according to standards. It implies a systematic way of establishing and maintaining quality improvement activities as an integral and sustainable part of systems or organisations. In the education systems, this includes all activities that contribute to the design, assessment, monitoring of standards agreed upon by all stakeholders and improving access, retention and overall enrolment rate, quality of teaching/learning processes and effective monitoring and supervision¹².

The Quality Assurance and Standards Officers interviewed for this policy assert that the primary and secondary education QAS are fairly developed. However, according to them there is inadequate standards and monitoring tools for both the existing private and the few public pre-primary schools. In addition, there is insufficient qualified and competent quality assurance personnel trained to monitor, inspect and support the ECE sub-sector. This limitation is further complicated by the unclear roles and collaboration practices between relevant ministries and the observed uneasy relationship between MoES and the private schools.

According to Article 10 of the Education Act 2018, the MoES is the designated Lead Ministry mandated to manage both formal ECE centre and Quranic Schools. The Article further specifies the role of MORE as being in charge of the supervision of the Quranic Schools. Despite this clarity, MORE does not acknowledge this role specification. During the consultation process we were told the existence and references to another law: the law of demarcation of roles between ministries which contradicts the stated leading roles of MoES in regard to Quranic schools. It was not possible to verify or secure the availability of this policy. It is recommended that this issue be addressed and solved at higher inter-ministerial level.

The observed quality assurance gaps have compromised the ability to monitor and inspect the quality of the pre-schools. As a result, stakeholders of pre-schools including parents and carers are not aware of the effectiveness and the impacts created by the existing ECE provisions. Quality assurance officers have also stated that they are not familiar about the foreign curriculums followed by most of the private schools, therefore they do not have the expertise to monitor and advice such institutions. In more general terms the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards lacks the funding and logistical support to monitor all categories of schools. Some QAO stated that it is not their mandate to monitor, supervise and inspect private pre-primary schools and Quranic schools. The stakeholders have recommended the need to build the capacity of the existing QAOs and establish a system in which the ECE standards are enforced and applied through a logical operational implementation plan.

Attitudes towards gender: Generally, education policies in Somaliland promote gender, inclusion and equality. This includes policies and strategies to include the most vulnerable children such as children with disabilities and special needs. Observations of the latest available EMIS data indicates that approximately equal number of girls and boys are accessing the ECE opportunities in Somaliland. For example, of the overall enrolment of 13434 children 6554 are female¹³ Similarly, out of the 667 ECE teachers the female representation is 423. The latest EMIS data indicates ECE Gender Parity (GPI) of one (1) signifying that equal number of boys and girls are accessing the current opportunities.

¹² MoES (2014) Quality Assurance Standards for Primary and Secondary Schools

¹³ Republic of Somaliland, MoES (2019) Education Statistics Year Book 2018/2019: EMIS Report 2018/2019

Attitude towards disability: A sample visit to the existing public and private ECE centres shows that all categories of children with disabilities are not included in the current ECE provisions. The main reasons given for the exclusion practices are:

- Lack of technical expertise including specialised trained teachers and personnel to attend to these children
- Some circumstantial, social, and cultural factors including inadequate level of awareness of parents, carers and communities on the need to bring out to school any children with special needs
- Physical infrastructure barriers to participation and learning are not removed
- Teaching methodologies and curriculum provisions are not accessible and appropriate to children with disabilities
- Unavailability of reliable database regarding children with special needs to form a basis for effective planning
- Lack of facilities and equipment's required for effective teaching and learning for the pupils with special needs

The above challenges facing inclusion require the need for the MoES to take a rights-based approach to disability and inclusion; addressing the physical, communication, legal and attitudinal barriers that all children with disabilities face. The governments principles, approaches and strategies aimed to solve the inclusion issues should be grounded on deep engagement, empowerment, exercise and joy of children's fundamental rights and evidence-based understanding of the scale and nature of disability-related exclusion and what works to improve outcomes for children with disabilities in Somaliland context.

More so, realising the vision of inclusion requires a culture and behaviour change across parents, society and generally to ensure all pre-primary stakeholders mainstream disability inclusion systematically. All stakeholders are expected to meet a set of minimum standards and achievements across their organisation's culture in their engagements with all children with disabilities and in all areas of their programming.

Protection and safety context: Research have demonstrated that children exposed to violence, abuse and neglect are more likely to suffer psychosocial problems including toxic stress as well as internalising and externalising behaviours. This has been shown to affect the learners self-regulatory and executive functioning which are key to school readiness skills¹⁴.

This pre-primary education policy includes a child protection and safety component. The aim is to ensure that young children in pre-primary schools have access to quality child protection and safety in schools and communities. It is the responsibility of the MoES and other relevant ministries identified in the institutional framework section of this policy to make sure that their staff, operations and programmes do not harm children as defined by both national and international frameworks of child protection.

The unrecognized status of Somaliland is a key challenge to county's ratification of international child right agreements and thus cannot join the community of nations as a state party. However, the country has expressed continuous pronouncements and commitments to children rights. More so it has aligned its child right policies to those of the international standards¹⁵.

Most of the stakeholders interviewed for this policy agree that Somalilanders are very good in parenting skills and that Somali culture and traditions are at par with international standards. Despite these positive notes a Joint Review Report on Somaliland's Children Rights (2010) funded by SCI, UNICEF, CESVI and ANPPCAN and conducted by SOYDA; CESVI; SOS Children Villages; HAVAYOCO; ADRA; SL Ministry of Justice and SL Ministry of Labour and Family Affairs found that:

- Schools continue to use corporal punishment as a form of discipline
- Children don't enjoy adequate opportunities and space for recreation
- High rates of school drop outs
- Concerns of low-level child participation

¹⁴ SC (2017) Invisible Wounds: The Impact of Six Years of War on the Mental Health of Syrian Children: http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/images/Invisible_Wounds.pdf

¹⁵ MoJ and MoLSA (2010) Somaliland Child Rights Report

- Inadequate mechanisms to ensure children's best interests
- Piecemeal approaches to children's rights to survival and development
- Some levels of discrimination based on HIV status

The findings from the interviews and focus group discussions have demonstrated that there is an urgent priority need to train teachers, headteachers, centre managers, school inspectors and all personnel involved in pre-primary education on key issues of child protection and safety. Most of the interviewees from the public and private pre-schools visited by the consultant stated that they did not experience any child protection training and did not demonstrate adequate understanding, knowledge and skills regarding issues of child protection and safety including the need to provide psychosocial wellbeing support to children. More so there was an apparent unavailability of relevant protection and safety materials for reference. Majority of the respondents have overwhelmingly acknowledged the importance of child protection and safety issues and have welcomed any training or provisions of literature relating to these matters.

High-level staff competencies are required to undertake and address the list of protection and wellbeing interventions which are described above. In ECE context, child protection issues intersect with many areas such as school's construction standards; teacher training; nutrition; water sanitation and hygiene; gender; stakeholder's engagement initiatives and overall education system strengthening. It would be unrealistic to expect teachers and other education officials to be experts in all these areas, therefore, the focus should be more about inter-ministerial collaborations as well as understanding of the importance and awareness of who to go to for expertise in these areas.

All teachers, care givers and child protection teams are obliged to ensure that children enjoy their prescribed rights in all settings and are well trained on their responsibilities as per their involving capacities. The stakeholders have identified the following key protection and safety priorities.

- Training of teachers on child protection and safety
- Enhancing teacher's capacity to handle children with special needs
- Training of teachers on developmental needs and milestones of child growth and development
- Training of QAO on child protection and safety
- Training all school support staff including drivers on child protection and safety
- Training of school governance boards on child protection and safety
- Integration and harmonization of child protection and education tools
- Making schools safe spaces for children
- Utilisation of the existing child protection structures and mechanisms within schools and communities. This includes working more closely with school staff, community leaders, health practitioners and others operating in roles that intersect with the provision of child protection.
- mainstreaming of psychosocial support (PSS) into training of teachers

Health, nutrition and wash status: Provision of health, nutrition, drinking water and good sanitation services are important for the physical, social and mental development of young children irrespective of whether they access ECE or not. The provision of these essential basic services is enshrined in all the international child right agreements, Somaliland constitution as well as articulated by the Somaliland National Education Policy. For the children who access pre-primary education, the implications of poor health include increased absenteeism from school and poor learning capacity.

Article 17 of the Somaliland constitution¹⁶ covers the rights to health care by all citizens. The provisions state as follows:

1. *In order to fulfil a policy of promoting public health, the state shall have the duty to meet the country's needs for equipment to combat communicable diseases, the provision of free medicine, and the care of the public welfare.*
2. *The state shall be responsible for the promotion and the extension of healthcare and private health centres.*

¹⁶ Ibid

Despite these proclamations, the latest available Multi Indicator Cluster Status (MICS 4)¹⁷ survey report reveals that Somaliland has one of the worlds' worst health and nutrition indicators. The following are few key highlights about the situation of children in Somaliland.

- Mortality rate of 91/1000. Indicating that one in every ten children will die before they celebrate their fifth birthday
- Only 39.9% of the children aged between 6-59 months received high doses of Vitamin A six month prior to the MICS 4 survey
- Children immunisation remains unacceptably low with only 2% of all children receiving all recommended vaccinations by their first birthday
- Only 21.9% of children under the age of five slept under an insecticide treated nets (ITN)
- Diarrhoea, Pneumonia and malaria remain the major childhood killer diseases
- Only 41.9% of the households use improved sources of drinking water
- 51.1% of household members use improved sanitation facilities which are not shared
- 76.8% of the households stated that they had designated place for hand washing where soap and water were available
- Child malnutrition rates are very high, particularly in rural areas and poor urban areas.

Somaliland's Ministry of Health is legally mandated to provide health care services to children and mothers. Consultations with relevant ministry officials confirmed that the ministry does not have ECE school health programmes and previous attempts to sign Memorandum of Understanding with other ministries that work with children such as MoES and MoRE has not been successful. The Ministry's official's current thoughts and evidence from the Ministry's own administrative data on health and nutrition status of children in Somaliland were similar to those observed by the MICS 4 report.

Consultations with teachers and centre managers of the sample public ECE centres managed by Pharo Foundation and the Head of Education of Pharo Foundation suggested that through external programme funding arrangements children in public pre-primary schools receive health snacks in every school day at around 10.00 am. This comprises of milk, banana and sandwich. There are also provisions for vitamin A and deworming tablets and other aspects of general health checks. It was also reported that there are future plans to include eye tests. It was noted that more of the poorest and most disadvantaged children had access to public ECEs. It is these children, who are often the least healthy and most malnourished, who have the most to gain educationally from improved health and nutrition. The situation was different for the private pre-primary schools where children were required to come with their own packed snacks.

Ensuring that pre-primary age children are healthy and able to learn is an essential component of an effective early childhood education system. This is especially relevant to efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4, target 2. More so, health interventions at pre-school level will benefit to later stages of education. Therefore, this policy strongly recommends the principle of basic services integration for all children attending both public and private ECE centres in Somaliland. This can only happen when relevant ministries and other stakeholders which are mandated for child education and development collaborate in an effective manner.

The introduction of school health policy will positively contribute towards child education and development and meeting the compelling health needs of the children in Somaliland. However, it is acknowledged that there are considerable resource and technical constraints which can only be overcome through effective collaboration and coordination mechanisms by the ECE stakeholders.¹⁸

2.1: Summary of the pre-primary education subsector performance

Consultations with the stakeholders indicated that in Somaliland context, pre-school education is not compulsory and not yet fully integrated into the education ladder, more so there has never been a systematic evaluation of the

¹⁷ Somaliland MICS 4 Report: 2011

¹⁸ https://www.unicef.org/somalia/SOM_resources_childrensomaliland.pdf

performance of the pre-primary schools in Somaliland. In fact, the 2018/19 was the first time the national EMIS system has included and captured data regarding ECE. It was unclear from the documentation reviews, KII and FGD what the official period of the pre- primary education is in terms of age groups targeted and the number of the years covered by the pre-primary education curriculum. It was reported that most of the private schools provide three years of ECE experience ranging from 3 to 5 years, while the few existing government schools provide one-year school readiness programme for children aged between 4-5 years.

Overall, access to formal public pre-primary education is very low as there are only 10 public pre-primary schools which are all concentrated in Hargaisa, Maroodijeex region. The total number of children benefiting from these schools are 650. Discussions with the Directorate of MoES Basic Education Department, Head of the MoES ECE Unit and the Head of Education for Pharo Foundation (the INGO that runs public pre-primary schools on behalf of the Ministry) indicated that there were plans to increase the number of public pre-primary schools so that more children access public pre-primary education.

This shortfall of ECE is partially offset by a relatively active private pre-primary schools' sector. According to the latest EMIS statistics report 2018/2019 the GER and the NER rates of the pre- primary school sector are 3% and 2% respectively and there are 143 centres across all regions of Somaliland serving a population of about 13,434 children. The recorded number of the serving teachers are 549¹⁹. The indications are that the public pre-primary education is very unlikely to grow in the next five years as the government infrastructure and resources are inadequate to support substantial growth of formal public pre-school centres.

The available 2018/19 pre-schools enrolment EMIS data by region shows a great regional disparities thus raising concerns of geographic equity and inequalities. For example out of the 14 regions, Buhodle, Hawd, Odwayne, Salal and Saraar regions didn't report any ECE related information. 80% of the ECE enrolment was from three regions: Maroodijeex East, Maroodijeex West and Togdheer. The gaping disparity demonstrates the rich households in urban towns have access to pre-school education opportunities mainly through private settings while the poor and rural areas are disadvantaged.

The 2018/19 EMIS data does not report information about disability inclusion, our visit to schools have confirmed that children with disabilities do not participate ECE provisions due to lack of appropriate infrastructure and expertise to handle them. However, on a more promising note the latest EMIS data shows pre-primary education Gender Parity Index of 1, signifying equal boys and girls' participation.

More importantly, quality pre-primary education is paramount for the realisation of holistic development of young children. The observed EMES data shows that the PTR of the regions ranges between 46 to 18. Sahil region had the highest PTR of 46 children per teacher. The national PTR ratio for 2018/19 was 24. This relatively moderate average ratio was in contrast to our field trip observations to the private ECE centres where we observed large number of children crowded in relatively small classrooms. Our observations of the public schools that we visited suggested that the PTR was better compared to the private settings. Generally, the physical infrastructure of both the private and public pre-primary schools visited was safe even though there were inadequate play grounds. The centres were clean and children had access to drinking water and gender separate toilets.

The observed 2018/19 EMIS data shows that there are 549 teachers serving pre-primary schools of which 420 (77%) have diploma qualifications. In addition, out of the total teachers in ECE 350 (65%) are female. Consultations with the stakeholders have suggested that none of these teachers were trained on ECE teacher training specialisation, most of teachers were re-deployed from primary schools. Most of the stakeholders reported that there was need to improve the pedagogical practices and the motivational level of the teachers serving both public and private pre-schools.

The lack of standardised curriculum and use of foreign languages to deliver curriculum in ECE was seen as a key challenge. Only the government owned ECE centres stated to use the mother tongue of the children in their centres.

¹⁹ EMIS Report 2018/19

In Somaliland context, the landscape of ECE education is more complex than the above descriptions of formal pre-primary education. Parallel to formal ECE there are traditional Malcamas or Dugsis officially referred to as Quranic Education System. Of more recently, there is also the introductions of Maxads which are more modernised forms of the traditional Malcamas. The core curriculum of these institutions is to teach the Holy Quran through either memorisation and or Arabic language literacy so as to read the Holy Quran which is written in Arabic language. Discussions with the Ministry of Religion and Endowment (MORE) Directorate of Mosques and Malcamas confirmed that they have done formal registrations of all the Quranic Schools, teachers and students in four out of the six official regions of Somaliland and are planning to conclude the remaining two regions within the next six months. The remaining two regions are Sool and Sanaag.

The registration exercise of the Ministry has revealed that overall there are 1050 Quranic Schools and 185,523 children enrolled in these Quranic schools of the four regions covered by the ongoing registration process. The number of teachers serving these centres are 4592. It is important to note that most of the children who access Quranic education also attend formal education system. While Malcamas only focus on teaching the Quran the Maxad's have adapted more integrated approaches of Quranic teaching and formal education including the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills, mainly in Arabic language.

Overall consultations with the stakeholders highlight that parents and Quranic teachers of children attending only Quranic education systems are interested in children gaining access to secular education although there is the possibility of pockets of resistance in rural areas which is mainly based on self-protection of livelihoods of the Quranic teachers as well as thoughts of the integration concept undermining or diluting the Quranic Education System.

Though challenging to implement, the integration approach presents a new pathway of expanding ECE education in Somaliland context. A critical element of the integration approach is the complex and challenging relationship between MoES and Ministry of Religion and Endowment.

3: International, Regional and East Africa Perspectives

In Somaliland there is no adequate information, policies and guidelines concerning about early childhood education. Therefore, it is important that this policy seeks an understanding of the discourses that shape the global and regional perspectives of early childhood education, in particular the policies and practices that inform ECE development in Sub-Saharan African countries are of a particular interest. The aim is to incorporate lesson drawing and policy transfers in the national ECE policy making process so as to make informed decisions.

Policy learning and policy change are intertwined together. Thus, policy learning is about the use of comparative knowledge and analysis from elsewhere to refine the ideological basis of the new policy proposals. Therefore, it makes sense to say that the departure from the old or the existing policy requires policy learning on the part of the policy makers.

Policy transfer and lesson drawing strategies have been used to improve the policy making processes of many countries²⁰. Literature review for this policy has observed that UNICEF; World Bank; GPE; AU Agenda 2063; AU Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 policies and guidelines about ECE can present beneficial opportunities for policy learning for Somaliland's ECE sub-sector. These epistemic communities provide a global market of knowledge about ECE policy formulation and development thus can trigger aspects of policy learning which might enable Somaliland to look beyond the traditional norms and values of child education and development. In addition, the following international frameworks also provide good basis for constructing early childhood education policy:

- Sustainable Development Goal 4.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 1948. Provides a framework for a common standard and understanding of achievements for human rights for all people and all nations
- International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) 1966 which provides for recognition of inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.
- International Convention of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) 1966. Article 10 provides special measures for care and education of dependent children.
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989 provides for appropriate legislation, administration, social and educational measures to protect children.
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) grants persons with disabilities the right to enjoy their rights including early education.
- Millennium Development Goals
- Dakar Framework for Education for All
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999): This charter reaffirms the rights and welfare of the African child with a special emphasis on: parents' rights and roles; child rearing and child development; child care services for working parents; clothing, housing and services for health, nutrition, breastfeeding, hygiene, environmental sanitation, child protection and safety.

In addition to the above international frameworks, the new global focus on early childhood education and development is reflected by a recent call of action by the international community which envisages a common united vision of a world where all children enter school with the skills to learn, succeed and prosper²¹. This declaration is stated as follows:

²⁰ Ozga, J. and Jones, R. (2006) The Travelling and Embedded Policy: The Case of Knowledge Transfer, *The Journal of Education Policy*, Vol.21, No. 1, 1-17; Dolowitz, D and Mash, D (2000) Learning From Abroad: the role of policy transfer in contemporary policy-making, *Governance: An International Journal Of Policy and Administration*, Vol.13, No.1, 5-24

²¹ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/call-action-early-childhood-education>

“the African Union, the Global Partnership for Education, UNICEF, the Africa Early Childhood Network, the World Bank and Global Citizen are calling on world leaders and the global community to take collective and complementary action to achieve transformational and cost-effective change for young children and nations”.

The above call to action recognises that investing in the foundations of learning in quality early childhood education for all is a proven solution to closing learning gaps, strengthening education systems, providing a solid foundation for human capital development and supporting countries goals for economic growth and development. In their call to action statement, they invite world leaders to take action on five interlinked areas crucial to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal 4: target 2 for universal access to quality pre-primary education by 2030²²:

- Raising the profile of early childhood education at high-level globally
- Making early childhood education a priority in education sector plans
- Increasing domestic and international financing for early childhood education
- Committing to improve early childhood education systems' and quality
- Targeting and aligning their investments in early childhood education to galvanise political support and resources and align their efforts to deliver on SDG 4 target 2.

There is also emerging awareness and awakening among the African Countries about the importance of ECE. For example, the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) clearly states that Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) is the pillar for future learning and identifies it as the next frontier if Africa is to realize sustained quality education and training. CESA 16-25 identifies pre-primary education as a neglected sub-sector that deserves special attention. The CESA ECED Cluster was therefore established to strengthen this critical sub-sector.

To achieve the objectives of the CESA ECED Cluster, four (4) Working Groups (WGs) were operationalised, namely: Policy, Advocacy and Communication; Access to Quality ECED Programmes and Services; Governance and Accountability; Knowledge Generation, Documentation and Dissemination. Overall the TWGs make the following key recommendations for member states²³:

- Prioritise ECED in line with national commitments to CESA and SDG 4 target 2.
- Ensure sound ECED policy in alignment with overall education development and overall care and nurture of children;
- Establish multi-sectoral National Technical Working groups on Early Childhood;
- Champion the work of the cluster at the highest political levels;
- Prioritize effective planning and allocation of resources for sustainable programming, while taking advantage of local contexts and financing;
- Strengthen Education Management Information Systems that include ECED, and mainstream data collection for knowledge-based planning and management;
- Prioritise the establishment of a professional ECED Workforce and better working conditions for the ECED workforce;
- Harnessing digital and emerging knowledge and technology to ensure innovation in ECED.

In the African countries' education context, CESA strategy acknowledges that pre-primary education is the pillar on which future learning and training are grounded. However, it is a neglected area in terms of policy and investment. The sub-sector is therefore characterized by disparities, poor management and lack of coherent

22 <https://www.globalpartnership.org/content/call-action-early-childhood-education>

23 <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20190322/continental-education-strategy-africa-cesa-16-25-early-childhood-education>

curriculum and linkages with primary education. It is a sub-sector that deserves a special attention in CESA 16-25²⁴.

CESA Strategy observes that although there has been improvement in this sub-sector in the last decade, pre-primary enrolments in Africa are far below than those in other regions. Enrollment is about 20% on average in SSA for the age-cohort. However, it is much higher in Northern African countries such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Although policies and strategies in some cases exist, implementation in terms of infrastructure, teacher development and materials has been generally very slow.

The CESA Strategy further highlights that the quality and equity in this sub-sector suffer from poor planning, limited allocation of resources, poorly trained teachers and inadequate materials. Glaring inequalities exist in pre-primary education provision in many African countries. Differentiation in provision of facilities and quality by rich and the poor, rural and urban areas is unambiguously manifested. Private sector is a major provider which clearly indicates the limited involvement of the public sector and calls for regulatory frameworks to monitor quality and relevance.

As a result of the underdeveloped ECE provisions, many African children go to primary school unprepared and thus discontinuities between the home and classroom environments are prevalent. Africa is the only continent where the language of instruction is more often than not a foreign language, making it difficult for children to cope with a new language and structured approaches to teaching and learning. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is therefore the next frontier if Africa is to realize sustained quality education and training. The child's readiness to learn in school, the school's readiness to accommodate children with different abilities and the capacity of families and communities to collaborate with schools (to enhance learning) are essential ingredients for a successful educational journey in Africa.

In Sub-Saharan perspectives, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda ECE Policy Frameworks were examined to provide specific models of policy learning and lesson drawings. The Kenya case was selected because of the country's relative good ECE sub-sector performance. In addition, in Kenya the Somali region (North Eastern Province) presents a similar context to Somaliland's socio-cultural identity though the wider political economy is different. Rwanda and Uganda were selected because of their ability to recover from deep civil war and humanitarian situations through a strong focus on education and peace building initiatives.

The Kenyan MoEST in collaboration with other line ministries has developed a revised ECD policy in 2017. This policy framework was designed to provide a tool for reference and coordination mechanisms that explicitly defined the roles of the various ministries, including parents, communities, relevant government ministries, agencies, development partners and other stakeholders. The key inspirational features of the Kenyan 2017 pre-primary education system and subsector performance include²⁵:

- Ratification of SDG goals and more specifically SDG 4, target 2 which obligates the government to ensure that by 2030 all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.
- Existence of service delivery guidelines to operationalise the 2017 ECE policy.
- Deep focus to ensure that infrastructure of the schools is safe, non-violent, inclusive and gender sensitive
- Adaption of the AU agenda 2063, '*the Africa we want*' that requires all states to expand universal access to quality early childhood education
- Existence of national school health policy 2009 that calls for the integrations of health and nutrition in ECDE
- Provision of community support grants to target areas of ASAL and pockets of poverty to revamp the provision of ECED education services in ASAL regions
- Provisions of capitation grants for all public pre-primary schools that supported provisions of instructional materials and augmented early childhood development teacher remunerations
- Training policy for early childhood education teachers and other personnel especially the introduction of external evaluations and certification of ECED teachers by the Kenya National Examination Council

²⁴ Ibid. CESA Strategy

²⁵ Kenya, MoEST, State Department of Basic Education (2017) National Pre-primary Education Policy:

- Existence of presidential circular no 1 of 1980 mandated MoEST to coordinate all functions of ECDE in the country. The ministry established the management and coordination structures in the directorate of basic and quality assurance for the provision of ECDE services
- Establishment of National Centre of Early Childhood Education in 1984. In 1985, district centres for early childhood development education DICECEs were established in all the districts and were coordinated by DEOs
- Localisation of the curriculum, training of teachers and mobilisation of the local communities to support ECDE and offer necessary supervision

The Ugandan and Rwandan ECE policies share most of the above provisions, however of particular interest is their early childhood education in context of previous fragility, conflict and violence. For example, within a short period of time, Rwanda has recovered from civil war and genocide and has made a significant progress in all sub-sectors of education. The country has an ambitious policy agenda of providing a three-year school readiness programme. The Rwandan Early Childhood Education Policy 2011 and the Integrated Early Childhood Development Strategic Plan 2011-2016 provided a framework for delivering the Rwandan ECED agenda. This commitment is further articulated by the Rwandan ESSP 2017-2022. There are multiple ministries and agencies which are mandated to implement the integrated Rwandan ECED Policy. However, MINEDUC has the official mandate and is the Lead Ministry for pre-school policy and planning and the Regional Education Bureaus' (REB) have the implementation responsibility²⁶.

The challenges facing the Rwandan ECE subsector are similar to those described in the African context and include, the cost of construction and payment of teachers. Both the integrated *Early Childhood Development Policy* and accompanying ECE Strategic Plan recommend the strategic approach of using community-based integrated pre-primary schools. A key feature of this model is the use of existing buildings i.e. community halls, churches etc. as an approach which will allow the government and the development partners to supplement the central funds for pre-primary education to be earmarked for teachers' salary payment rather than invest in expensive construction. Policy actions which are recommended include the construction of more pre-primary schools and provision of salaries for pre-primary teachers. As part of the drive for universal access to pre-primary education, government primary schools are encouraged to open pre-primary classes²⁷.

Review of the Uganda pre-primary education sector²⁸ presents similar picture to the Rwandan and more generally the African status of pre-primary education. The sector is relatively small and provisions are mainly dependant on non-governmental organisations and the private sector. This limits access with high disparities between urban and rural areas and among different socio-economic levels. Access is largely limited to upper and middle-income classes and two job families and only partially available to working poor.

The Ugandan government does not provide any subsidies to private pre-primary schools. In poorer areas where there is no lucrative business for the private sector, the ECE centres are established and owned by community and faith-based organisations. These organisations are central to the delivery of pre-primary education in Uganda. These Non-governmental organisations promote both standalone centres and centres that are attached to the existing primary schools²⁹. Particular success factor of the Ugandan model is the increased focus on ECED rather than ECE. This leads more service integration for children. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social development is the leading implementing partner of ECED programmes.

Review of Ethiopia's ECE Policy, ESSP V and the Strategic Operational Plan³⁰ indicates that ECE is a great priority and the focus is an integrated service of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The government strategies encourage private investors, faith-based organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) into the delivery of ECCE. The country has established a National Steering Committee, Regional Councils and Woreda

²⁶ Observations from the Rwandan ECE Policy 2011-2016 and ECE Strategic Plan 2011-2016

²⁷ Ibid observations from Rwandan ECE Policy and Strategic Plan

²⁸ The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy Action Plan (2016-2021) of Uganda

²⁹ Uganda ECE Policy and evidence from GPE documentations regarding Uganda ECE initiatives

³⁰ Ethiopia, Federal Ministry of Education (2015) Education Sector Development Programme 2015-2020; ECE Operational Plan

Technical Committees to promote rapid expansion of access to O-Classes as a reception year prior to Grade 1. These structures function in collaboration with other relevant ministries, with a view to coordinate, support and monitor the involvement of stakeholders in ECCE. They have provided a foundation from which rapid expansion of ECCE is possible. These efforts have allowed the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for pre-primary to reach 34% in 2013/14, of which around a quarter is in three-year kindergarten and the remainder one-year O-Class and Child-to-Child instruction.

4: Rational for developing the early childhood education policy

The rationale for developing this policy is based on the importance of ECE. International research and reports provide evidence of why all the stakeholders of this subsector of education have to strive to develop and improve this sub-sector of education. For example, The World Ready to Learn Report (2019)³¹ presents the following significance for investing and prioritising quality early childhood education:

- Quality pre-primary education sets a strong foundation for learning by enabling children to start school ready to learn and succeed and by advancing successive learning achievements
- Universal pre-primary education helps make education systems more effective and efficient by increasing primary completion rates and tackling system inefficiencies by reducing over enrolment and repetition rates
- Investing in early child childhood education yields a strong return for all levels of education
- Equitable pre-primary education is an effective strategy for economic growth as it reduces achievement gaps and inequalities; builds skills for future employment thus contributing to national economy.

The World Ready to Learn Report (2019) has demonstrated that attending an early childhood education programme is one of the strongest predictors for supporting children's readiness for school regardless for school, household type or income level. Similarly, the report's data analysis illustrates that countries where more children attend pre-primary programmes, more children attain minimum competencies in reading and mathematics by the end of their primary education³².

A similar study conducted by UNICEF present a significant economic argument that ECED interventions have proved to be the foundation for later learning, academic success and productivity. A study on increasing pre-school enrolment in 73 countries found that investing USD \$6-17 per child has the long-term benefits which range from USD\$11 to USD\$34 billion (UNICEF).

The importance of establishing literacy and numeracy in the early years is critical, as it is these skills that provide the foundation for all future learning. Without this basis, learners are unable to progress through the system and continue into the world of work and thereby cannot contribute to the nation's economy.

In many parts of the world, particularly in Subsaharan Africa many children enrolled in the early grades do not progress beyond P1 and P2 because they fail to grasp the basic skills, and their progress in learning has not been monitored. Because literacy is fundamental to academic learning, it is not surprising that evidence shows children who learn to read and write are much more likely to stay in school ((Nag *et al.*, 2014)³³

Pre-primary schools strive to provide the appropriate conditions for the development of the child physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually and socially, in accordance with the child's abilities and needs. Pre-primary education aims to develop children's capacities for interaction, communication and encourage them to discover their environment, and provide them with social and moral guidance in a safe environment.

International research³⁴ has clearly shown that early childhood learning creates a foundation for school success which, if missed, is difficult or impossible to redress. Newer research is indicating that a poor transition from pre-

³¹ World Ready to Learn Report 2019

³² Ibid:

³³ Nag S, Chiat S, Torgerson C, Snowling MJ (2014) Literacy, Foundation Learning and Assessment in Developing Countries: Final Report. Education Rigorous Literature Review. Department for International Development

³⁴ Global Partnership for Education (2019) A Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) Discussion Paper

primary to primary education can seriously undermine the benefits of ECE. Similarly, it is clear that those youngsters who do not get a strong enough grasp of the basics in the early years—arithmetic, reading, reasoning, social, and communication, have a much more difficult time achieving success in subsequent levels of education. Increased attention to early grade success from pre-primary to grade three is essential for improving the efficiency of the overall education system.

The concepts and theories of child development, psychology and learning are extensive and support the belief and understanding that early years of human development establish the basic architecture and functions of the human brain³⁵. It is in this first years of life that children establish the cognitive, emotional and social foundations important for their future well-being and lifelong learning. Therefore, any developmental gaps in this stage jeopardize the child's potentiality to succeed in future. In contrast it is thought that any positive programs and activities aimed to stimulate child's brains at this stage contribute to increased critical thinking, innovations and future learning capacity. Therefore, the impact of the child's earliest experience and environment, particularly the family, community and schooling in which the child is raised is profound³⁶.

More urgently, the rationale for investing and developing ECE is justified by the historical perspectives of Somaliland. Although Somaliland has relatively maintained peace and stability for the past two decades the surrounding region of Somalia is characterized by insecurity and humanitarian crises. More so within its own borders are also dynamics of fragility and conflict which can have immediate and long-lasting impacts on young children's learning, wellbeing and ability to develop to their full potential in life. Therefore, shaping young children's minds to virtues of peaceful co-existence and social cohesion is a great political priority of the country.

It is anticipated that good quality early childhood education will equip the young children with requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes for building future peace as well as values for constructive intra and inter-personal relations at the national and international levels. Although Somaliland is not a signatory to international treaties and conventions that advocate peaceful and harmonious co-existence among people of all nations such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) article 26(2) which states that education should promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, at internal policy and practice level the country has shown strong commitment of peaceful co-existence with its neighbouring countries. This policy will contribute actualisation of this commitment.

Due to the country's previous fragility, inadequate economic resources and lack of prioritisation the public early childhood education provisions barely exist in Somaliland context. Therefore, this policy presents the first opportunity to critically think about the best way forward for developing pre- primary education. The policy will explicitly state the national objectives and strategies for developing early childhood education so that children in Somaliland can experience good quality education which is more inclusive and better coordinated.

This policy will also act as an overarching guide in the delivery of early childhood education in Somaliland context. It will specify the different roles of the key stockholders and will promote effective and productive partnership practices to ensure that ECE services are delivered in the most effective and efficient way. Implementing ECE program at scale requires the involvement of the full range of stakeholders as partners.

The key areas that this policy and the associated minimum standards which are annexed to this policy will inform include: ECE infrastructure development; training of ECE teachers; ECE curriculum development; development of teaching learning materials and comprehensive integration of basic essential services for children such as education, health, nutrition, protection and safety.

More importantly, this policy will act as a tool and methodology for promoting and achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal 4: target 2 that seeks to ensure: by 2030, *"all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education."*

³⁵ Piagets, Vygotsky theories of child development

³⁶ UNICEF (2014) Building Brains: new frontiers in early childhood development.

<https://www.childrenandaids.org/sites/default/files/2017-04/Building%20Better%20Brains.pdf>

The SDG Framework explains that SDG 4 target 2 goal is critical to ensuring children's long-term development, learning and health. It outlines how investments in young children, particularly those from marginalised groups, yield the greatest long-term impact in terms of developmental and educational outcomes. It also enables early identification of disability, which can lead to better interventions and better learning outcomes³⁷.

The following section spells out Somaliland MoES vision; goals and policy statements that will guide ECE development in the coming ten years.

5.0: Somaliland ECE vision, goals, policies and strategies

Below stated vision, goals and policy strategies are consistent and aligned with those highlighted in the Somaliland National Education Policy (SNEP 2015-2030), Special Needs Draft Education Policy and ESSP 2017-2021³⁸. However, further inputs are added through wider and deeper consultations with the stakeholders.

5.1: Guiding principles

- Young children are right holders; therefore, this policy affirms these obligations and respect those rights.
- Holistic approach that promotes basic services integration, coordination, partnership and collaboration among all the stakeholders
- Secure and all-round foundation
- Quality, consistency, appropriateness and relevance
- Equity, equality and inclusiveness
- Integrity, transparency and accountability
- Child friendliness and participation

5.2: Vision: the MOES's vision is to provide quality ECE education that will provide a wide range of structures and options for all children aged between four to five years at the beginning of their school experience.

5.3: Mission: to ensure equitable access to quality and relevant ECE services for holistic development of all children aged between four to five years. It is expected this policy will set the direction and guidance for achieving the above vision and mission.

5.4: Expansion and access

Goal: to increase and expand access to two years free pre-primary education for all children aged between four to five years

Policy statement: within the next ten years, the government will undertake to expand access to free quality pre-primary schools by ensuring that every public primary school has an annexed/attached ECE Centre that is well connected to its lower primary cycle.

Strategies: to implement and achieve the above policy, the Local Authorities in collaboration with the National Government and through MoES will:

- Allocate adequate recurrent and development budgetary support to finance pre-primary education services.
- Establish pre-primary schools in every existing public primary school. Where the primary schools are far from each other the government will create standalone ECE centres so that young children do not travel far distances. This includes the provision of all relevant physical facilities as specified by the ECE Minimum Standards.
- Encourage the private sector, religious organisations, INGOs, communities and families to invest and expand ECE centres.

³⁷ SDG Framework

³⁸ *ibid*

- The government will provide special incentives including tax exemptions and teacher training opportunities for the private ECE centres that provide free enrolments to the socio-economically disadvantaged children.
- Encourage Pharo Foundation to support the MoES to scale up the existing ten model pilot ECE centres that are owned by MoES but managed by Pharo Foundation.
- The National Government will provide special funding mechanisms to category C and D Local Authorities in order to invest and expand ECE centres in their areas of jurisdiction.
- The Local Governments through their respective regional and district education offices will ensure that established ECE centres have all the facilities to promote access to ECE provisions to all categories of learners, especially children with special needs, street children, orphans, children from rural areas and those from urban socio-economically disadvantaged areas.
- Promote family, community and national awareness of the importance of ECE and child rights through all types of media.
- Integrate access to pre-primary education with issues of school-based child protection, safety and nutrition.

5.5: Equity, Equality and Inclusion

Goal: Increase access and learning for all vulnerable and disadvantaged children, including children with special needs

Policy statement: within the next ten years, the government will ensure that all public and private pre-primary schools will promote equitable and inclusive pre-primary education. This will ensure that all categories of children, in particular special needs, marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable children successfully complete two years of quality pre-primary schooling.

Strategies: to implement and achieve the policy of equity, equality and wider inclusion for all vulnerable and disadvantaged children the Local Governments in collaboration with the Central Government and through the technical support of MoES will:

- Ensure that access to both public and private schools is inclusive for all categories of learners specially for children with disabilities
- Acknowledge and recognise that while inclusion and mainstreaming are the best practices in Somaliland context, there is need for different approaches such as special ECE schools and other community settings
- Increase awareness and educate to change cultural issues and attitudes towards educating children with disabilities
- Examine, regularly review and monitor effectiveness of its education system, policies and tools that are used to achieve education inclusion
- Ensure that the EMIS system is effective for inclusion planning by linking the standardisation of data with oversite quality assurance system of education inclusion
- Utilise the financial and technical expertise from the external actors of education to improve the wider inclusion and enhance the technical capacity of the national actors
- Create a national education disability champion as a good way for improving access to education by all
- Regularly review the impact of education inclusion strategies
- Encourage technology companies and generally the private sector to support the provision of disability gargets, and appropriate teaching learning materials for the children with disabilities
- Upgrade teachers' and parents' capacity in SNE skills
- Ensure schools are SNE friendly
- Establish school-community links to enhance and safe-guard SNE in all pre-primary schools
- Remove barriers of distance by establishing schools closer to residential areas.
- MoES in collaboration with partners will promote the development and use of Somaliland sign Language

- MoES and partners will provide funds for adaptation of infrastructure and facilities in learning institutions.
- MoES and partners will provide and fund forums for learners with special educational needs to participate in co-curricular activities so as to enhance their social integration.
- Teacher education curriculum will be reviewed in order to impart skills and competencies in teaching learners with special educational needs.
- MoE will enforce affirmative action in admission for learners with special educational needs at all levels.
- Integrate early identification of children with special need training modules in the teacher training curriculum
- Establish mechanisms of early identification and interventions for children with special needs

5.6: Quality and relevance

Goal: to increase the quality and relevance of pre-primary education for all learners aged between 4-5 years that equip them with developmentally appropriate competencies to realise their full potential.

Policy statement: the Local Governments in collaboration with the Central Government and through the technical support of MoES will develop a high-quality pre-primary education for all learners aged between 4 to 5 years

Strategies. To achieve the above policy the government will:

- Fully integrate pre-primary education into the national education system and ensure seamless transition of learners from pre-primary to grade one
- The government will put in place mechanisms of recruitment, training, developing, deploying, managing and remunerating ECE teachers
- Develop, validate and approve a comprehensive early childhood education curriculum. Foreign curricular will only be taught with permission and approval from MoES
- Ensure that ECE curriculum is delivered in Somali language and includes Somali sign language However, foreign children in Somaliland can be taught in their own language
- Develop and strengthen relevant and appropriate ECE teaching materials
- Develop Minimum Standards guidelines for all pre-primary education levels that will ensues that all ECE centres are safe and conducive places for learning
- Build the capacity of the pre-primary education programme officers' teachers and other care givers
- Build capacity of parents, carers, community, head teachers, ECE centre managers and other education officers involved in ECED.
- Establish ECE resource centres to improve teaching and learning capacity as well promote ECE research
- Integrate child protection, safety and psychosocial support to ECE curriculum
- Ensure provision of appropriate physical facilities, play and learning resources to support learning in pre-primary schools including children with special needs
- Establish mechanisms that will ensure provision of nutritious meals, clean adequate water and appropriate sanitation facilities including child friendly toilets for boys and girls and washing facilities
- Ensure all personnel working in pre-primary schools are certified and registered by relevant government institutions

5.7: Governance, accountability and institutional frameworks

The Goal: strengthen the governance and accountability of pre-primary education to make implementation more efficient and effective.

Policy statement: The local government in collaboration with the national government will improve the governance, leadership and management of pre-primary schools in order to support the implementation of quality ECE.

Strategies to achieve the policy statement: the government will:

- Define the mandates, roles and responsibilities of the national, local governments and non state actors of ECE stakeholders
- Improve the linkages between the national government, local government, MoES and other relevant ministries that are delivering ECE programmes
- Create effective coordination and strong collaboration and partnership among all actors of ECE
- Create an institutional framework for the effective implementation, management and coordination of pre-primary education sub-sector at central, regional, district and school levels
- Improve the leadership competencies of ECE head teachers and teacher managers
- Improve the public-private partnerships and encourage the private sector to expand cost effective provision of ECE infrastructure
- Facilitate resource mobilisation to support ECE programmes implementation
- Enhance the effectiveness of the communication and information management within the ECE sub-sector
- Adapt the national pre-primary education Minimum Standards that further inform these strategies

5.7.1: Institutional framework: This policy shall be implemented through the following structure and specified roles

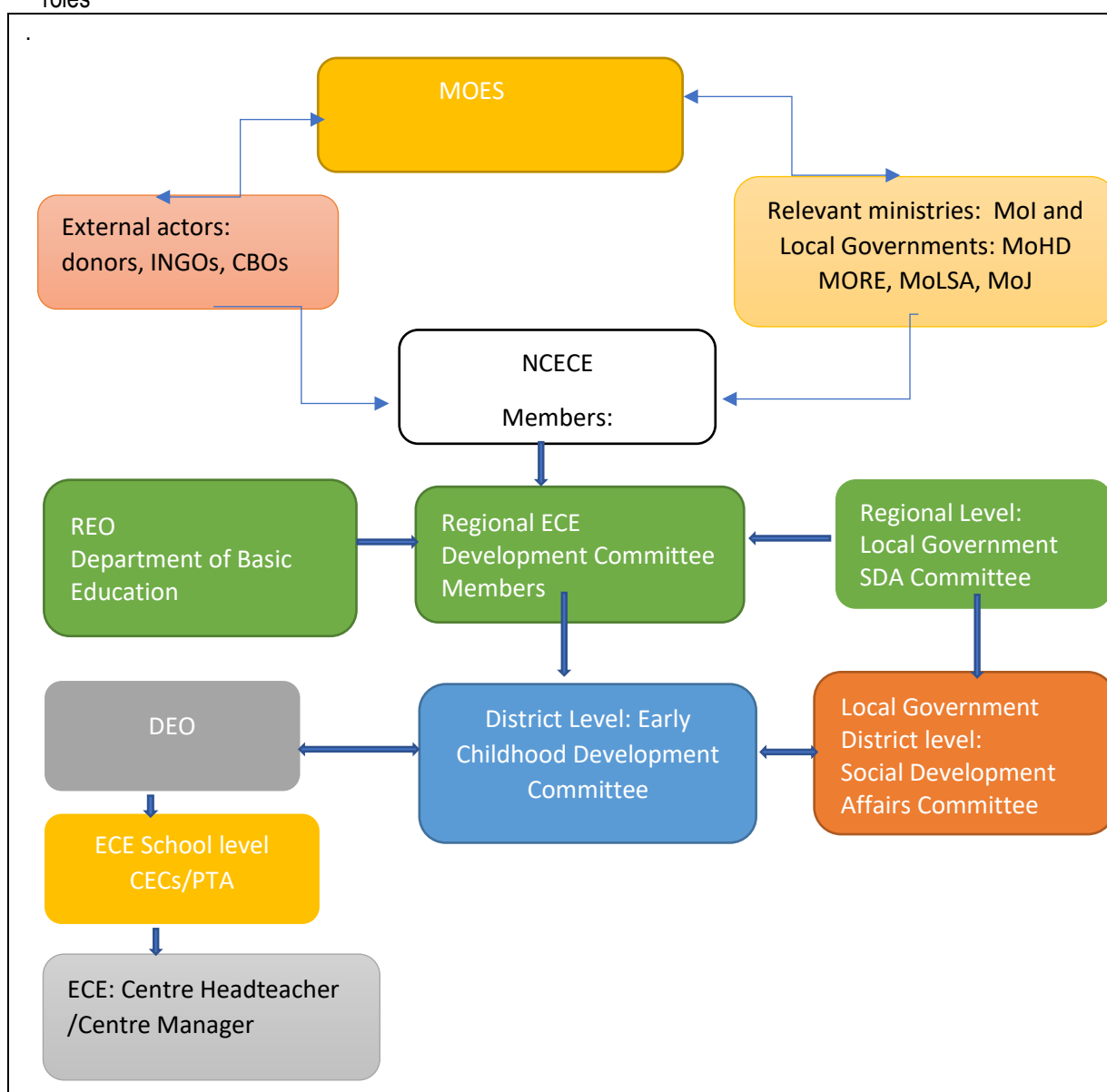


Diagram one: ECE delivery infrastructure

The roles of the different actors as defined by NEP, Education Act and Somaliland Constitution

MoES

- Develop ECE policy; curriculum, service standard guidelines, including professional standards of ECE teachers; leading and guiding on learning assessments; facilitate staff development; appoint and support training of ECE trainers; develop ECE teachers remuneration guidelines and collaborate with Ministry of Religion and Endowment (MORE) to develop Integrated ECE Islamic curriculum.
- The Minister of Education and Science in consultations with the D.G shall appoint a Head of Unit for ECE programmes at central level to strengthen system and structures that support ECE delivery
- The D.G. MoES shall oversee the implementation of this policy
- The role of the ECE Head of Unit at the Central MoES shall be to offer technical advice to the national and local governments and provide policy directions in the implementation of pre-primary education programmes across the country
- The ECE Unit shall work with other directorates dealing with pre-primary education such as teacher education as well as work and coordinate with all the other relevant ministries that provide services to children aged between 4-5 years.
- The REOs in collaboration with DEOs shall establish District Level Early Childhood Development Committees to promote basic services integration. Members shall be drawn from the above institutional framework partners.

Ministry of Interior and Local Governments

- Local Governments will have responsibility for developing and licensing of pre-primary schools, buildings and facilities on the basis of responsibility for the education, health and safety of the children.
- At local district government level, the Social Development Affairs Committee member in charge of education shall be responsible for the management and coordination of pre-primary education
- The local governments will not have any responsibility for overseeing the educational content or quality of the services provided to the children in pre-primary schools. The Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Religion and Endowment will be responsible for the quality and content of the curriculum and teaching in these schools.
- The Districts will play a key role in the delivery of pre-primary education providing the link between national policy and strategy and local schools
- The districts will articulate ECE programmes in their district development plans and implement through MoES, REO and DEOs. This will include overseeing the recruitment of ECE headteachers, centre managers, teachers and support staff
- At local district government level early childhood education development committee shall be established comprising of line ministries, key departments and other stakeholders in the country.

National and Regional Committees of Early Childhood Education

- The national, regional and district level committees shall be coordinated by MoES, Director General; REO and DEOs respectively. The roles of the committees should include;
- Liaising and coordination of ECE policies and strategies and promotion of effective quality implementation practices
- Facilitating the best practices of service integration for young children
- Mapping of both state and non-state actors supporting ECE programmes
- Mobilise resources for ECE programmes including promoting of community and private sector participation
- Ensuring the ECE Minimum Standards are adhered to by all ECE providers
- Building the capacity of pre-primary education service providers on management and strategic leadership
- Ensuring only approved pre-primary education curricular and programmes are implemented

Roles of other relevant ministries

- Ministry of Health and development (MOHD): implementation of school health and nutrition project; feeding at MCH; maternal and child health service; reproduction health education
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA): ensure respect of children rights; develop child rights and protect policies
- Ministry of Religion and Endowment (MORE): Supervision of Quranic Education System; promote religious instructions, good morals and ethics
- Ministry of Justice (MOJ): Administer justice to child victim of abuse
- Ministry of Interior (MOI): in collaboration with MOLSA, develop policy and guidelines on child rescue; rescue children who are trafficked, separated, abandoned or unaccompanied children
- Ministry of Finance (MOF): member of multi-sectoral training, supervision and M&E teams; Mobilise and allocate resources for ECE
- Community Education Committees (CEC): ensure parents enrol children in ECE;
- Communities: establish and manage ECE centres; support ECE teachers in the development of play and learning materials from locally available resources
- Families: provide care for pregnant and lactating women; encourage breastfeeding and complementary feeding
- Religious Institutions /Mosques: promote spiritual and moral development of children aged 0-8 years; promote family unity and stability through counselling

This policy acknowledges and adapts the roles of the DEOs, Headteachers and ECE Centre Managers as specified by the MoES Human Resources guiding document on mandates, roles and responsibilities.

Public private partnership

In order to improve the quality of pre-primary education the government will strengthen partnerships with relevant stakeholders including the private sector, NGOs, CBOs, and donors. Effective implementation of pre-primary education requires rapid information exchange mechanisms, systems and recognition of linkages. The national, regional and district level coordination committees will provide effective coordination and information exchange mechanisms as described by their specific roles in this policy.

Role of the non-state partners

- Supporting MoES in ECE system level strengthening, including policy and strategy development
- Providing financial and technical support to train ECE teachers, headteachers and centre managers
- Providing financial and infrastructure support to create and expand ECE infrastructure
- Support the MoES strategies aimed to promote equity, equality and wider inclusion of ECE programmes as described by this policy
- Support the MoES policies and strategies aimed to improve quality and relevance of ECE programmes as described by this policy
- Support the MoES policies and strategies aimed to improve governance and accountability of ECE programmes as described by this policy
- Support the MoES policies and strategies aimed to improve research, monitoring and evaluations of ECE programmes as described by this policy.

5.8: Monitoring, evaluation and research

The Local Governments in collaboration with the National Government and through the technical support from MoES Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards shall be responsible for the monitoring, evaluation and research activities of ECE programmes:

Goal: To strengthen monitoring, evaluation and reporting system for improved pre-primary education

Policy statements: The government at both national and local levels shall ensure regular monitoring and evaluation of pre-primary education

Strategies:

To implement this policy, the MoES will

- Develop and implement appropriate ECE inspection tools which are based on this ECE Policy Framework and associated Minimum Standards
- Establish systems for regular inspection of ECE schools and the reporting of outcomes;
- Train inspectors in the implementation of ECE Minimum standards, inspection system, tools and reporting
- Utilise the monitoring and evaluation reports to improve the quality of pre-primary education
- Document best practices and lessons learnt in all ECE programmes
- Compile data for pre-primary education (schools, teaches and infrastructure)

Research

Goal: to generate evidence-based information for policy and decision making in all matters regarding to ECE

Policy statements

The government at both central and local levels shall collaborate with relevant research institutions to enhance relevant research in pre-primary education so as to inform policy and promote best practices

Strategies

- Strengthen classroom support and supervision systems and link this to research activities
- Create enabling environment for research in pre-primary education
- Establish linkages and collaboration in research with all relevant institutions and organisations
- Develop a reporting framework for pre-primary education research findings
- Establish a feedback system for stakeholder engagement
- Publish research findings through different media and promote knowledge management
- Utilise research findings in decision making and developing appropriate interventions
- Integrate ECE data management and utilisation with the national EMIS system
- Ensure measuring of quality early learning and quality outcomes

5.9: Finance and partnership in pre- primary education

Goal: to provide adequate and sustainable financial resources for the support of pre-primary education.

Policy statement: the local governments in collaboration with the central government will mobilise adequate financial resources to develop the pre-primary education

Strategies:

The local government in collaboration with the national government and key stakeholders shall:

- Create subsidies for pre-primary education services and equipment

- Mobilise parents and communities to assist and subsidise the development of pre-primary education services (pre-primary education will be free but voluntary financial and non-monetary contributions will be encouraged)
- Provide salaries and wages for teachers and support staff in the pre-primary education
- Determine and review the unit costs of providing pre-primary education
- Provide capitation grants for children in public pre-primary schools
- Provide infrastructure support grants to pre-primary schools
- Provide special need support grants to public pre-primary schools
- Support publishers to provide quality curriculum support materials
- Support private funding streams from philanthropists, trust funds, corporates and other donors to enhance access to quality pre-primary education programmes.

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ECE policy development: KII& FGD participants list

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47	Nimco Ayaanle Osman	Teacher	Smart KG	0633614261	

48	Abdishakur A Maalin	Teacher	Smart KG	0633439893	
49	Kawsar Cali Mohamed	Teacher	Al-Najuum KG	0634813181	
50	Farhiya Yassiiin Ahmed	Teacher	Al-Najuum KG	0634266481	
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