



MINISTRY OF GENDER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE

**ACTIVITY REPORT**

ACTIVITY TYPE/NAME

**LEARNING VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA AND UNITED KINGDOM ON POLICY  
REVIEW AND LAW DEVELOPMENT**

SECTION/DEPARTMENT: **DEPARTMENT OF CHILD AFFAIRS**

REPORTED BY:

NAME:

JUSTINE HAMELA- DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR CHILD AFFAIRS

THOKOZANI MTAPAONGA- DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
AND PRINCIPAL FOR MAGOMERO COLLEGE

PAULINE SIMWAKA - CHIEF CHILD DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

ESAU MWAMBIRA- UNDER SECRETARY FOR MINISTRY OF GENDER, COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE

DATE REPORTED: 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023

## **1.0 Introduction**

In fulfilment of the CRC obligation, Malawi is implementing Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) program. Early Childhood Development is a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from conception to eight years. It encompasses early learning and stimulation, health, education, nutrition hygiene and sanitation.

Over the past decade, Malawi has made good progress with the ECD programme despite ECD's low profile and limited resources being invested to support the programme. In terms of governance and coordination there has been formulation of essential national guidelines such the National ECD Policy (2003), the ECD National Strategic Plan (2009-2014), the Advocacy and Communications Strategy (2009) and the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) (2010) and the National ECD Curriculum. These continue to guide the implementation of IECD in Malawi. The current guidance however, is not only silent on how ECD is to be operationalised at grassroots level but also on regulation of ECD services at all levels.

It is based on this that the Malawi government undertook the study visit to United Kingdom and South Africa to learn how the two countries have devolved and professionalized the ECD services in their countries. It was envisaged that the outcome of this learning visit will guide the process of policy review and development of legal and institutional framework for ECD. This is in a bid to create an environment that acknowledges ECD as an investment.

## **2.0 Objective of the Activity**

### **3.0**

- Understand the ECD law implementation and enforcement mechanism in addressing challenges faced in the implementation of ECD.
- Appreciate the enforcement and adherence mechanism for the ECD law and policy guidelines
- Appreciate the roles of various partners including the CSO in implementing ECD and collaboration with government ministries and departments.

### **3.0**

### **3.1 South Africa**

The team had a meeting with OSISA, Ministry of Education and the Law Society. In South Africa, the following were findings:

#### **3.1.1 Ministry of Education:**

- ECD is still in transition phase whereby the activities for grade R that were being implemented by the Department of Social Welfare are now being implemented by both Department of Social Welfare and Department of basic education until then when basic education can fully scale up ECE component.
- ECD Services for children 0 to 4 are under Social Welfare
- They have a cost for each child such that funding for ECD depends with the number of children.
- They have a professional teacher with diploma qualification to teach grade R
- Other age groups are handled by Social Workers with certificates in ECD
- South Africa has accreditation system that regulate teaching qualification

#### **3.1.2 OSISA**

- There is restructuring at OSISA (Open Society Initiatives foe Southern Africa to OSA (Open Society for Africa).
- This meant that they have scaled down in terms of scope and capacity.
- OSA will continue to support educational initiatives expect curriculum development.
- Encouraged Malawi to take advantage of the process to start regulating the services.

### **3.2 United Kingdom**

#### **3.2.1 General Observation on ECD Law Implementation and Enforcement Mechanism.**

- United Kingdom has a law that regulates provision of services that are either provided as Early Years or Reception class.
- The general ECD services are usually known as early years' services while the early education component is known as Reception class

- There is a regulator of early years known as Ofsted. To register a private institution, the school has to strictly follow the ofsted guidelines on teacher pupil ratio, general operations and child protection
- Ofsted is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. It inspects services providing education and skills for learners of all ages and also regulates any services that care for children and young people.
- Service providers in early years are licensed. For one to be licensed had to acquire a training according to the level of operation with the school.
- It is an offence for service providers to fail to comply with learning and development requirements.
- There is a nationally agreed upon early year's foundation stage curriculum focusing on the seven learning areas of: language and communication development; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; literacy, mathematics; understanding the world and expressive art and designs. Each and every provider complies with this without diversion because ofsted strictly inspects the services.
- The curriculum has set goals which summarizes the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should gain by the end of the reception year
- It has well raid assessment requirement, that is, it answers the question: when and how practitioner must assess children's achievement and when and how they should discuss the children's progress with parents.
- There are safeguarding and welfare requirements that include: child protection, personnel suitability and
- There are specified qualifications for any person working with early years and beyond. Teachers range from degree holders to certificate holders depending on the stage of operation (child minders, teacher and head teachers).

### **3.2.2 Think Equal Program (UK based CSO)**

- Think Equal Program is Non-governmental program that focuses on equality between gender and race to minimize in equalities in the society. The program has good teachers guide that complements the government teaching environment by helping teachers create the skills necessary for children to be able to identify and manage their emotions, develop

care and concern for others, make responsible decisions, establish and handle interpersonal situations effectively.

- This program was born after realizing that the social emotional development has a strongest bearing on the learning of children and should never be underrated in the education settings.
- Think Equal ECD's approach focuses on the whole child not just numeracy and literacy concepts of education.
- The Malawi team expressed a desire to work in partnership with Think Equal as the program responds well to our programming.
- Malawi wishes to work closely in collaboration with Leslee as she is very influential and has passion for ECD in Africa.
- It was planned that Leslee could accompany the First Lady to the United States in the quest to mobilize resources for ECD as the United States has one billionaire who has shown interest to invest in ECD in Malawi. There was a proposal that Leslee could be our international ECD ambassador while working in close collaboration with Her Excellency Madam Monica Chakwera who is the ECD Ambassador in Malawi.
- The meeting with Leslee agreed that there is a need to bring on board the Minister of Finance alongside the new Honourable Minister Madame Jean to improve financial allocation to ECD.
- Think Big promised to volunteer in ECD awareness by getting the first lady on board as an advocate.

### **3.2.3 St Saviour's School**

- It was reported that the school serves the dynamic, diverse and deprived community in London. It has the highest rates of child poverty and highest rate of anti-social behavior and top violent hot spot in the southern England.
- However, the school strictly follows the Ofsted standards and is one of the Ofsted outstanding providers.
- Children are prepared for school in the reception class where the pupil teacher ratio is highly observed and inspected by Ofsted.

- The school uses variety of play based and structured, adult lead learning sessions which happens both indoors and outdoors.
- School feeding is prime at the school
- The school sets pathways of children's development in broad ages and stages while considering the uniqueness of each child.
- Child protection guidelines are strictly observed

### **3.2.4 Edge Hill University**

- Met the department of Teacher education with diverse expertise in early years and beyond.
- Malawi story was told and UK story was also presented.
- It was highlighted that the university has guidelines for the early year's foundation stage which clearly stipulates principles of early years' foundation stage, characteristics of effective learning; relationships that support development and learning; types of environment for learning and area of learning and development.
- The university prepares teachers that work with children in the surrounding schools.

### **3.2.5 Early Childhood in Salford Great Manchester (Nursery School)**

- The school is also serves children from deprived community but the school has all the teaching and learning materials needed to make children learn to their fullest potential.
- Teachers are well trained with passion for children's learning and development.
- Classrooms are well demarcated with visible evidence that learning is progressive from one stage to another.
- The school advocates for the use of locally available materials like old tyres, forests, sand pits, gardens.
- It exposes children to real life experiences through play.

### **3.2.6 Hospital Nursery School in the great Manchester**

- The school is resourced for all levels of early years
- Has special teachers to take care of needs of all children
- Child teacher ratios are very low

- Visibly clear that children's needs are taken care of.
- Provides psychosocial care to children in need of it through play therapy.
- Has strong parenting component where parents are encouraged to come and play and read with their children.
- Also used local available materials

### **3.2.7 The Virtual School**

- This is a statutory body of the North York County Councils.
- The responsible for monitoring and supporting education for all Children in Care in the Local Authority aged 0-18.
- Through Virtual School Heads, the school makes sure children in need of care have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential.
- The virtual school prepares Personal Education Plans (PEPs) which are done termly to look at the key areas to children's education experience including what's working well, what they are worried about and next steps.
- Each Local Authority has their own structure for a Virtual School.
- Their role is to encourage learning homes and schools by helping those institutions to understand how to use their relationships to support a child with their learning.
- Nurtures looked after children and young people to develop the life skills and aspirations they need to succeed
- Help children to use online platform safely
- The school focuses on children in care because data shows that children in care have significantly poorer educational outcomes than children not in care throughout primary and secondary school, with the gap widening as children get older.

### **3.2.8 Meeting with Malawi Nurses Association in United Kingdom**

- Malawi ECD story was told
- Nurses were inquisitive to understand how communities are mobilized, who is involved in ECD implementation and why are communities not committed to provide better structures for children's learning.

- The Nurses then promised that they will get mobilized to support or adopt one or two centers to make them school of excellency.

#### **4.0 Achievements/lessons**

- Re- affirmed commitments by Leslee to support ECD programming through Think Equal
- Re- Affirmed Commitment from Think Equal to continue resourcing for ECD services in Malawi.
- Assurance from Nurses Association of the UK to adopt ECD centres in Malawi.
- Assurance of resources from Nurses Association to directly support victims of Freddy cyclones.
- The need to have a quality assurance body to regulate service provision like ofsted,

#### **5.0 Conclusion**

It can be concluded that the study was successful as it accomplished and had responses for everything on the checklist that guided the delegation. Some of the checklist issues included: inquiry on concepts used in ECD practices; registration and licensing requirement; standard that a service provider must comply; penalties for breaching the regulations; designation responsible for registration; quality assurance; curriculum and qualification of service providers and coordination arrangement, among others. This results will surely shape both the drafting process and prepare the enforcement process of ECD law. The Ministry will likely improve on service provision and funding channeled to ECD services in Malawi.

#### **6.0 Recommendations/way forward**

- Re engage the first lady on advocating for ECD and resource mobilization.
- Brief the honorable Minister on the upcoming Think Equal program and possible engagement with Leslee.
- Brief the consultants and stakeholders on the outcome of the visit and what could possibly be replicated in the Law.
-

Signature.....