



**COLLABORATIVE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN
THE PROVISION OF QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN
ZAMBIA**

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Declaration

“I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my own research. It contains as its main content work which has not been previously submitted for a degree at any university”,

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ABBREVIATIONS

CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
FBOs	Faith Based Organisations
IEC	Information Education Communication
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MECCDF	Mulumbo Early Childhood Care and Development Foundation
MESVTEE	Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education
MMD	Movement for Multi-Party Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic and Co-operation Development
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
PF	Patriotic Front
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
ZANEC	Zambia National Education Coalition

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the role that the government should play to enhance Early Childhood Development (ECD) collaboration in Zambia. The government as a duty bearer of a nation has a major responsibility to ensure that it develops policies and programmes that enhance collaboration among the various ECD stakeholders, such as parents, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and international donors. I have argued that collaboration in ECD is possible if certain measures are put in place. These measures include improved government commitment towards ECD, better leadership, improved governance to ensure transparency and accountability, enhanced government engagement with key stakeholders such as CSOs, the parents, donors, and the formation of networks and coalitions. Communication and information is also a key factor to enhancing collaboration because people need to understand ECD and why they need to give it the attention. It is important that in seeking these reforms the focus should not only be on the gaps and challenges but focus should also be on what is already working and how to make it better using the existing structures and models that are in place. The theoretical framework that has been used is the Bronfenbrenner (1979) Ecological Theoretical Framework, a theory that examines the influences of the environment in which children live. I have also argued that as much as it is the responsibility of the government to coordinate ECD, there is need for non-state actors to become pro-active and advocate for ECD policies and programmes and make the government accountable if change has to occur. The donor agencies should also be firm and give conditions that funds allocated for ECD should include the aspect of collaboration.

INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on the important role that the government must play in collaborating with key stakeholders in the provision of quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Zambia. The government and other key stakeholders such as parents, caregivers, community members, the church and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) all have an important role to play in the provision of quality ECD (Buizer 2011). Early childhood development is internationally defined as the important period from 0 to 8 years when the child's language, cognitive, social, emotional and physical skills develop. The ages between 0 to 3 years are even more critical as this is the period when the neurons in the brain develop the connections, making the external environment in which the children grows even more important (Irwin et al. 2007). The environment in which children grow and the support that they receive from the family, community, government and different sectors of society has an impact on the quality of ECD (Mustard 2006). On this basis, quality ECD is defined as ECD programmes that are designed to meet the developmental, educational and cultural needs of children from 0 to 8 years and their families in ways that enable them to thrive (Hyde and Margret 2003). Although parents have the responsibility of taking care of children, they cannot solely provide a strong nurturing, stimulating environment without the help of local, regional, national and international agencies. These agencies need to collaborate and work together to foster a conducive environment in which the children can live and thrive (Irwin et al. 2007).

This thesis argues that the government, as a duty bearer of a nation, has a major responsibility of developing policies and programmes that can enhance ECD collaboration among various stakeholders in Zambia. ECD, being a complex sector that brings together aspects of health, nutrition, stimulation, nurturing, education, care, and social protection in addressing the needs of a child, requires stakeholder collaboration with the government taking a key role in the process (Kaneneka 2013). This can be achieved if the government is proactive and shows leadership in prioritising ECD through policies, funding, and programmes that bring together the different stakeholders (Queensland Government n.d). There is also need for the non-state actors such as NGOs to advocate and lobby the government to take a lead in ECD and put in place such policies and programmes that would enhance collaboration among ECD stakeholders so that ECD provision can improve (UNICEF 2006).

Thesis Structure

In this thesis, Chapter One will set out the context of the study by describing the key contextual characteristics and challenges that have major implications for the provision and collaboration of ECD in Zambia. I have also detailed the context in which ECD is provided by focusing on issues related to the Zambian economy, the health sector, education, legislation and laws regarding the provision of ECD. Chapter Two begins with an examination of ECD best practices and the justification for ECD investment and why ECD should be on the top of the agenda of both developed and developing countries. Chapter Three elaborates on ECD collaboration in Zambia by highlighting the stakeholders that are involved in ECD in Zambia. This chapter makes reference to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Theoretical Framework with its particular emphasis on the role of government in promoting collaboration both at micro and macro systems levels in terms of policy frameworks, collaborative programmes and community involvement programmes. Chapter Four discusses the measures that the government has to put in place to improve ECD collaboration in Zambia. Measures such as leadership, governance, and ECD policy as well as the need for ECD networks or coalitions will be discussed.

Significance

This study is significant because I believe it will contribute to the body of knowledge related to the provision of quality ECD in Zambia, with particular emphasis on the role that the government and other stakeholders should play in ECD. Some of the information in this thesis will be used in advocating for government policies and programmes that would enhance collaboration among ECD stakeholders.

Theoretical Framework

This study makes reference to Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1989) Ecological Theoretical Framework in analysing the importance of collaboration and networking in the promotion of ECD. Bronfenbrenner's theory, which was developed from the Ecological Systems Theory, is useful in developing ECD programmes that reflect the needs and expectations of the community and the culture in which the children live. The theory is comprised of five environmental levels – the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem and Chronosystem – all of which have different levels of impact on a child (Onwuegbuzie et al.

2013). It has been argued that the theory is relevant to early childhood development because the relationships that are built and maintained through the ECD programmes have long term impacts in improving the lives of the children (Wilder, 2009). I describe the different levels of the systems in more detail in the next chapter.

In addition, this study has applied the concept of ‘good enough governance’, developed by Grindle (2004), to argue that in seeking governance reform, it is ineffective to only focus on the gaps and challenges which exist relative to adopting international best practice. Rather, change can happen by analysing the prevailing situation with a major focus on what is already working or what is already in place in order to improve on it and make it sustainable. This approach is more realistic and more practical in analysing ECD and developing workable recommendations in the Zambian context.

CHAPTER 1

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT IN ZAMBIA

This chapter will highlight the context of the study. It will describe some contextual characteristics and challenges that have major implications on the provision of ECD and the issue of collaboration among different ECD stakeholders in Zambia. It will provide details about the context in which ECD is provided by focusing on issues related to the Zambian economy, the health sector, education sector, the laws and legislations that have implications on the ECD sector. These characteristics, I will argue, pose some limitations on the provision and collaboration of ECD in Zambia.

1.1 Country Profile

Zambia is a landlocked country and is located in Sub-Saharan Africa. As a former British colony, Zambia gained its independence on 24th October 1964 (Mwanza 2013). Zambia is rated as one of the countries with the fastest growing populations in sub-Saharan Africa as it has recorded a population growth rate of 2.8 per cent per annum between 2000 and 2010, with the total population standing at over 13 million. Of this population, 60.5% is in the rural areas and 39.5% in the urban areas. With the rapid increase in population, Zambia has continued to have a young population with 45.4% of the total population being below the age of 15 years (Central Statistics Office 2012). This rapid population increase continues to pose a challenge to the country in terms of service provision to children such as health, education and other social services. Despite this child population increase, there have been no coherent programmes or integrated policies to address the well-being of children, particularly those aged 0 to 8 years. To address this gap in service provision, concerted effort is required from all stakeholders to meet the challenge of the younger population (Central Statistics Office 2012).

1.2 Economic Situation

Zambia recorded an annual improvement in the Growth Domestic Product of about 7% in 2013 (Exim Bank 2014). However, the economic growth that the country experienced has not translated into significant reductions in poverty or improved the living standards of most Zambians (Republic of Zambia 2011). About 68% of the Zambian people are identified as

poor and are living below the income poverty line of less than \$1 per day (United Nations Development Programme Report 2013). The Human Development Index, which is a reflection of a country's economic standards, education outcomes, life expectancy, mortality rates and poverty, shows Zambia to be among the lowest level in the world. For instance, in 2010, Zambia was ranked 163 out of 187 countries in the Global Human Development Index (United Nations Development Programme Report 2013). The high prevalence of poverty affects children and prevents them from enjoying their early childhood because they are deprived of the basic needs such as food, education, quality health care, protection among others. This results in children living miserable lives and suffering from malnutrition or other illnesses that retard their development (Ministry of Youth Sports and Child Development 2006).

Studies have shown that young children who are deprived of a good upbringing usually perform poorly at school and this reduces their chances of being employed or being productive citizens, a situation that contributes to the high poverty levels (Buizer 2011). On the other hand, children who have had access to ECD are likely to complete school and become productive citizens. This argument is supported by the evaluation of a U.S based ECD project known as High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, a longitudinal study that focused on the effects of compensatory pre-schooling for at-risk children. The study involved following and assessing a group of children living in poverty who received a high quality pre-school programme at the ages of three and four plus home visits to families. The findings were that, at the age of 40, the adults who had attended the preschool programme had higher earnings, were more likely to hold jobs and committed fewer crimes (UNESCO 2007). Therefore, there is need for the government to collaborate with other stakeholders in order to improve and increase ECD accessibility so that the future economy could improve and poverty could be eradicated (CARE 2006).

1.3 Early Childhood Development and HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in Zambia in the adult population stood at around 14.3% in 2007, falling from 15.6% in 2005. Despite this reduction, the new infections are estimated to increase from 67,602 adults in 2006 to 72,019 in 2015 due to population growth. It is estimated that 16% of women and 12% of men in the country are living with HIV (Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service 2011). The prevalence of HIV and AIDS has affected children and their development in different ways. For instance, HIV and

AIDS has claimed the lives of parents and other family members, a situation that has resulted in some children being orphaned and left with no one to take care of them. The illness of a family member, death and orphaning, all have economic and psychological impacts on children. Children, who are either affected or infected, face stigmatisation and discrimination, and this affects their childhood development (United Nations Children's Fund 2006). In addition the children who become orphaned and vulnerable as a result of HIV and AIDS face poverty and are unable to access basic services and this has a deplorable effect on their child development and wellbeing (Ministry of Youth Sports and Child Development 2006).

HIV and AIDs has also affected early childhood development because of the increase in the number of children who are born HIV positive or those who contract HIV through their mothers while breast feeding. However, it is important to note that Zambia has Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) services available to HIV pregnant mothers in the quest for them to have safe delivery. The number of HIV pregnant mothers accessing PMTCT services has increased from 54% in 2008 to 60.9% in 2009. The major challenges that are hindering the PMTCT services are the lack of the male involvement due to the cultural belief that the PMCT are services for pregnant women. The other challenge is the limited access to health services, particularly in rural areas (Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service 2011). All these conditions have health implications that affect early development of children and addressing this challenge will require a collaborative effort of different stakeholders.

1.4 Early Childhood Development Provision

The policies and legislation in Zambia are guided by long term planning instruments such as the Vision 2030 which sets the country's long term objectives and targets to be achieved by the year 2030. These plans are then integrated into five-year national plans, such as the Sixth National Development Plan of 2011-2015, which is currently under implementation. The policies are also guided by international goals and commitments that Zambia has committed to, such as the Millennium Development Goals, (MDGs), Education for all Goals (EFA), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Early childhood sector is one of the EFA goals to which Zambia is a signatory and has been included in the Sixth National Development Plan as a sector that needs to be improved. Despite this commitment, early childhood provision is still lagging behind and access to quality ECD remains a significant challenge (Ferla 2010).

Prior to 2004, the Ministry of Local Government and Housing had the mandate of providing early childhood services through government-funded community welfare halls. The services provided included infrastructure development, provision of learning and teaching materials, as well as provision of food for the children. However, due to financial constraints and priorities, the early childhood centers were closed down and ceased to operate. The Local Government and Housing Ministry Authorities then decided to lease out the ECD buildings to the private sector to run them on a commercial basis while others were leased out to be used as churches and some as bars. However, also in 2004, the Government of the Republic of Zambia decided to give the mandate of coordinating ECD to the Ministry of Education (Royal Norwegian Embassy 2007).

Although the Ministry of Education was given the mandate to coordinate ECD, there has been minimal progress because the government has not seriously spearheaded its coordination role and has not taken any responsibility for running or operating ECD centers. The ECD centers are run by NGOs, Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and the private sector that charge exorbitant fees that majority of the poor Zambians cannot afford (Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education 2013). For instance, 64.2% of early learning centers are mainly in the hands of the private sector targeting the middle class, 19.2% are run by the NGOs, and 12.3% are run by FBOs. The ECD centers run by the NGOs mainly rely on financial support from international donor agencies, such as Danida, UNICEF and Plan International, which in most cases are not adequate to meet the demands of the growing number of young children (Kanenka 2013; Ferla 2010).

The provision of ECD services in Zambia has remained undeveloped and uncoordinated with only 17.1% of children enrolled in basic schools (Grade 1-9) having had some form of organised early childhood experience. It is asserted that the number of children having access to ECD is very low, especially in the rural communities and among the low income urban dwellers (Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education 2013). Furthermore, the quality of ECD provision, even among the few children accessing ECD is very poor. This is because there is lack of proper infrastructure, inadequate ECD funding, lack of an ECD policy, limited awareness of the importance of early childhood education, uncoordinated ECD activities among the ECD providers and a lack of a mandatory standard ECD curriculum (Matawali and Munsaka 2011)

In addition, the increase in the number of various stakeholders involved in the development of young children, such as families, NGOs, the church, and private providers, poses a challenge in terms of collaboration and coordinating quality ECD services. There are no national standards set to guide the provision of quality ECD and no monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the ECD services being provided by either the private sector or the NGOs are meeting the international standards essential for the development of a child (United Nations Children's Fund 2006). There are instances, in some ECD centers, where children learn in unsafe, makeshift buildings, or under trees, without proper toilets and adequate water supply, a situation that poses a threat to the children. Matafwali and Munsaka (2011) argue that the government needs to develop some standards and put in place proper monitoring regulatory mechanisms to ensure that the standards essential for the development of young children are followed by the ECD providers.

Another factor hindering the ECD sector is that ECD is not adequately mainstreamed in the Ministry of Education programmes. The funds allocated to the sector are inadequate to meet the demand in ECD, despite it being mentioned in the Sixth National Development Plan as one of the approaches for eradicating the intergenerational cycle of poverty (Republic of Zambia 2010) According to the National Implementation Framework, some of the challenges that hinder the Ministry of Education from achieving its ECD goals in an efficient and effective way is that early childhood teacher training is only offered in three out of fourteen colleges of education and this poses a challenge when it comes to the recruitment of few ECD trained teachers. Most are mainly recruited by private schools (Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education 2011).

In 2011, Zambia experienced a change of government from the one led by the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) to one led by the Patriotic Front (PF) Party. When the PF Party assumed power, they assured Zambians that they were committed to changing the welfare of the young children by promoting and investing in ECD based on their party manifesto. They expressed concern at the low number of children accessing ECD services in the country and made a commitment that they would provide early childhood educational services in all primary schools, train ECD teachers, design the curriculum and establish a directorate for ECD (Patriotic Front Manifesto, 2006). The PF Party also changed the education ministry name from Ministry of Education to Ministry of Education, Science,

Vocational Training and Early Education. They added the words ‘early education’ to show that they are committed to early learning.

However, regardless of all the pronouncements and name changing, little has been done because the levels of children accessing ECD are still very low and there is still no national ECD policy to harmonise the coordination of ECD. The government’s proposed plan of providing ECD in primary schools could be a good idea but the challenge is that there are still few primary schools in the country, meaning only a few communities with the privilege of having a near-by school will access ECD. It is worse in the rural areas where there are only a few primary schools located in remote places and children have to walk long distances to reach the nearest school (Bwalya 2012).

Some scholars are opposed to investment in ECD in Zambia, stating that it is unreasonable to call for the improvement of early childhood development programmes in this country when other education sectors such as primary education are still facing some financial and management difficulties (Thomas and Thomas 2009). Hence, the promotion of ECD in Zambia could be premature and potentially damaging to the already weak primary education system. Thomas and Thomas (2009) argue that as primary schools face challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, overcrowding, a lack of teaching and learning materials, the promotion and introduction of ECD by the government would just add pressure to the already seriously stretched education sector. It has also been argued that most of the research that has been used to foster the promotion of ECD is based on studies done in the United States, where there is a totally different educational system with significantly higher levels of resources.

1.5 Decentralisation System

The Zambian Government had recently undergone decentralization to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness of its work. This has involved the devolution of power to the lower levels such as the provincial, district, community levels while the central offices still retained responsibilities in areas such as technical support and monitoring (Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education 2013). This decision, it was hoped, would strengthen ECD coordination because district offices and schools could have been used as entry points to promote collaboration among ECD stakeholders at local or community level. However, this has not been the case because there are still challenges in

coordinating ECD at all levels. It is argued that promoting ECD collaboration requires devolution of tasks, not just as a concrete acknowledgment of the rights of families and local communities, but also for practical management reasons (Royal Norwegian Embassy 2007). This is because if there are numerous ECD providers and fragmented ECD provision, it is difficult for the central government to coordinate the provider's activities and monitor the quality of ECD being provided (OECD 2006).

Devolution of powers is also important because it includes issues of democracy, parental rights, community responsibilities for children, as well as participation and ownership. Local authorities are well positioned to ensure they engage parents, educators, community bodies and other stakeholders in decision making, hence, creating a more democratic organisation and management of services as well as broad public support for ECD services (OECD 2006). It has also been argued that while decentralisation is one of the factors that can help improve ECD coordination, there is no guarantee that decentralisation can in fact lead to effective coordination because countries like Zambia that have initiated the decentralisation process still have coordination challenges, at national, provincial and district levels. This is because it is always difficult to change peoples' mind-set with a strong belief in the central system. There are always strong political and institutional objections to decentralisation (Royal Norwegian Embassy 2007)

1.6 Integrated National Early Childhood Development Policy in Zambia

In Zambia, there is no integrated national ECD policy to help regulate the provision of ECD and this means that even collaboration among the ECD stakeholders is a significant challenge (Zambia National Education Coalition nd). It is important to acknowledge that Zambia has various child-related policies addressing the basic needs of children, implemented by different institutions and ministries such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Community Development Mother, Child and Health, Ministry of Education. These ministries work in isolation and implement their own policy and practice based on the domain of the child's need. There is no integrated or holistic approach to meeting the needs of the child. For instance, the Ministry of Health may only focus on the health aspects of children, while the Ministry of Community Development may just focus on child protection, making the issue of collaboration difficult. The practice of individual sectoral planning and a budgeting system based on the government structure does not encourage collaboration or facilitate ECD

integration (Ferla 2010). Table One below shows the different policy frameworks that target Zambian children aged 0 to 8 years (Ferla, 2010,10).

Table 1: Policy Frameworks targeting Children aged 0 to 8 years in Zambia (Source: Ferla 2010, 26)

Policy Frameworks	Aim of Policy
National Policy Framework on ECD (Draft)	The draft policy aims at promoting integrated ECD for children from 0 to 6 years and emphasizes on the involvement of all key stakeholders in the provision of integrated services to all Zambian children. Once finalised, it will be the first policy document targeting children from 0 to 6 year olds. The drafting of this policy document has been happening for the past 10 years and is still in draft form to date.
National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Policy (2005)	The policy aims at coordinating multi-sectoral responses to HIV and AIDS and identifies Orphans and Vulnerable children (OVCS) as vulnerable groups that need urgent support. The policy also places emphasis on the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission as a way of protecting the unborn child from contracting HIV and AIDS as well as on the right of children to access care and treatment including access to antiretroviral drugs.
The Education Policy 'Educate Our Future' (1996)	The policy acknowledges the importance of early childhood education in supporting holistic development of children. However, the policy makes it clear that funding and provision of ECD will be the responsibility the private sector, families and the civil society organisations.
National Food and Nutrition Policy (NFNP), no date	The policy's objectives aim at providing nutritional support to children and eliminating all forms of child related malnutrition in children. However, the policy is viewed as a general document whose emphasis is on all ages, hence it does not have sufficient information on the specification of children's nutritional aspects particularly the ECD age group.
National Child Health Policy (2008)	The policy provides guidelines on addressing the child health situation in Zambia.
National Child Policy (2006)	This policy was reviewed in 2006 and has incorporated other important areas including OVCs, children with disabilities, homeless children, and HIV/AIDS. The policy aims to addresses children's rights on the basis of the UNCRC and has been aligned with the overall national development goals of other sector policies and programmes.

Day Nurseries Act (1957)	The act sets standards for all public and private institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care and protection of children, to ensure that they conform to standards in areas of health, safety, and the number of children, among others. This act is outdated and its focus is mainly on education provision and does not consider other areas of child development. Since the act is outdated, it does not incorporate the many new aspects affecting the welfare of the children today.
The National Policy on Disability, no date	This policy addresses the issues of disability in general but does not have programmes to address the specific needs of children with disabilities.

Although the ECD sector in Zambia is facing policy and stakeholder collaboration challenges, it is important to acknowledge that there are some ECD models at community levels spearheaded by some NGOs that have been successful and have made a difference. Mulumbo Early Childhood Care and Development Foundation (MECCDF) is one such organisation that can be used as a model by the government due to its best practices in relation to the ECD programme coordination. MECCDF is a community-based organisation that runs community early childhood centres using a holistic approach involving different stakeholders (children, parents, community leaders, government institutions, and faith-based organisations) in the operation of its ECD programmes. The Foundation implements programmes on early learning, child health, child protection, water and sanitation among others. Its ECD approach is cost effective and has been successful because it has drawn support from various stakeholders, including the government at the district level (Mulumbo Early Childhood Development Foundation Report 2012). It is recommended that the government work with such organisations, by examining how stakeholders in a community-integrated ECD approach work, and decide on the models that they think could help improve ECD provision in Zambia.

In addition, improving ECD collaboration requires an analysis of the existing structures, policies, legislation and ECD models to assess what the government and service providers are already doing in the area of ECD in order to improve the current situation. This approach is more realistic as it can help in developing recommendations that can work in improving collaboration and improving the quality of ECD provision. This approach is consistent with Grindle’s (2004) analysis of ‘good enough governance’ where it has been argued that it is important to focus on what is working and learn from that instead of just focusing on the

governance gaps in relation to international best practice. Thus, as much as it is vital to review the gaps in the country's governance system, it is also important to consider the present occurring improvements – and the conditions under which such improvements are happening – so as to learn from them and develop interventions that would enhance the performance (Grindle, 2004).

This chapter has discussed some of the contextual characteristics and challenges that have major implications on the provision of ECD and the issue of collaboration among different ECD stakeholders in Zambia. It has provided details about the context in which ECD is provided by focusing on issues related to the Zambian economy, the health sector, education sector, the laws and legislations that have implications on the ECD sector.

CHAPTER 2

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The need for investment in ECD has increasingly gained global momentum over the past decades and has become a core policy priority in many developing and developed countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2006). ECD has been integrated into larger goals of a number of global initiatives aimed at improving the education of young children. These global initiatives include agreements made during world conferences and meetings such as the World Declaration on Education for All, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) among others. In 1990, the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) highlighted ECD as an important component for meeting the needs of the young children and for enhancing their readiness for school and made it EFA goal number one (CARE 2006). In addition, ECD is framed by the UNCRC which sets out legal obligations of national governments to abide by to enable children to realise their social, economic, civil, cultural rights (UNICEF 1989).

In this chapter, I will argue that as governments develop ECD policies and programmes, it is important for them to understand and appreciate why ECD should be on the top of their agendas (UNICEF 2006). This is because the interventions and policy choices that are made today will have future impacts on whether millions of children will be able to reach their full potential, or will be left to face a future of worsening inequity, poverty and marginalisation. Early childhood is an important tool that can be used to bring about transformation particularly in developing countries that are struggling economically (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs 2004). It has been internationally agreed that there is no more compelling argument than that. I have provided the scientific, economic and social justifications for why government should prioritise ECD (Rees et al. 2012).

ECD should be on the top list agenda of all governments, regardless whether a country is developed or not, because every child – whether rich or poor – should have access to adequate ECD services that offer physical development, cognitive improvement, social stimulation, adequate nutrition and proper care (UNICEF 2006). However, in developing countries like Zambia, there is a gap because ECD is still not prioritised and coordinated by

the government as this is evident from the low number of children accessing ECD and the uncoordinated nature in which it is conducted. To realise the benefits of ECD policies and programs for human capital formation and economic growth, there is an urgent need to close this gap (Young 2007). ECD should also be prioritised because it is important in supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as it contributes to the reduction of poverty (responding to MDG 1), reducing child mortality (responding to MDG 4) and combating infectious diseases like HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis (responding to MDG 6) (CARE 2006). The integration of ECD in global agreements has contributed to the globalisation of early childhood development with a major emphasis on the holistic development of the child (OECD 2006).

It is important to note that the dilemma often raised by some policy makers, particularly in low income countries, is the question of giving priority to investing in young children when countries are increasingly faced with other pressing and competing needs such as a high burden of disease, low rates of child survival, poor school performance in primary school, as well as limited infrastructure and resources (Thomas and Thomas 2009). It has, however, also been pointed out that it is in these low income countries that ECD should be given priority to ensure there is child survival, provision of clean and adequate water supply, adequate nutrition and immunisation strategies (Young 2010).

2.1 Justification for investing in ECD

There is a growing body of research showing that investing in ECD can yield a range of positive benefits ranging from economic, social and the general well-being of the child and learning outcomes (Calman 2005). This thesis discusses four major arguments justifying the need to invest in ECD. These arguments are based on scientific, economic, social equity and gender inequality factors.

Firstly, it is scientifically argued that investment in early childhood has positive impact on the overall development of the child (Wilder 2009). Various scientific studies have shown that mental growth, which is development of intelligence, personality and social behaviour, rapidly occurs in human beings during their earliest years (Alderman 2011). It has also been estimated that half of the intellectual development potential usually happens in a person's life by the age of four and that the brain responds mostly to early experiences based on the environment to which the child is exposed to. The brain's development before the age of one

is quite rapid and extensive. Although the formation of brain cells is believed to be almost complete before birth, brain maturation does continue after birth. It is believed that during this process, the brain development is more vulnerable to the influence of the environment and if a child does not have access to adequate care and nutrition before birth and during the first early years of life, it would seriously affect the brain development (Wilder 2009). This could result into the child developing neurological and behavioural disorders, as well as having learning disabilities, a situation that would affect their future productivity and quality of life (Young 1995).

Research shows that brain development is influenced by the quality of the environment that the child is exposed to considering that even small interruptions in the development process can lead to long-term impacts on the structure and functional capacity of the brain (Rees et al. 2012). In addition, Alderman (2011) asserts that the low levels of cognitive development in children have negative consequences. These children are likely to repeat grades, perform poorly in school and drop out of school a situation that reduces their chance of being employed or being productive (Alderman 2011).

It is therefore important for the government to coordinate with key stakeholders to ensure that children are provided with the necessary support services required for their optimal development (Irwin et al. 2007). For instance, on the one hand, children should have access to health care, nutritional programmes, education and ECD services and on the other hand pregnant mothers should have access to antenatal services as a way of protecting the unborn child. In addition, inadequate nutrition, neglect, health care and lack of access to ECD have a negative effect on the educational achievement and attainment which can reduce life time earnings and contribute to disruptive social behaviour (Bing Wu 2012).

Secondly, ECD programmes for children aged 0 to 8 years have economic benefits as it is an investment in the future labour force and a cost effective means of promoting economic growth. The increase in public expenditure on ECD which can translate into benefits for children has a positive impact on economic growth (Anderson and Hague 2007). The integration of stimulation, health, care and comprehensive ECD for children can ultimately contribute to effective participation in the labour force and to the economic and productive development of a nation. Economic growth by itself, however, cannot reduce poverty and inequality. Investment in human development and an improvement in accessing services are essential for the maintaining economic growth (Bing Wu 2012). In addition, well-targeted

ECD interventions could contribute to children performing better in schools, engaging in less risky activities and becoming more productive adults (Naudeau et al. 2011)

Thirdly, investment in ECD is seen as a powerful social equaliser as it helps in reducing social inequity that exists among the disadvantaged communities (Irwin et al. 2007). The provision of quality ECD programmes enables children with special needs and those from poor households and communities to be able to maximise their potential, minimise their disability progression and get out the poverty cycle. Jaluo (2013) argues that when disabled children and those children from disadvantaged backgrounds access ECD services, their school performance, retention and completion is enhanced. This is because they are more likely to start school at the right time, successfully complete and be able to get better paying jobs a situation that would improve their living standards and reduce the inequity (Jaluo 2013). Closing the inequity gap is realistic and doable so long as the focus is more on a comprehensive approach to the early years of life as equity from the start (Irwin et al. 2007).

Finally, the promotion of affordable early childhood programmes does help minimise gender inequality. This is because girls who access early childhood programmes have a higher chance of starting primary school at the age of 6 or 7, and successfully completing (Naudeau et al. 2011). This is also partly due to the reason that ECD usually targets parents and families who tend to benefit from awareness messages, such as the importance of taking their girl child to school, as well as the idea of providing the girls with the same learning opportunities as boys (Jaluo 2013). ECD can contribute to the economic and social empowerment of women by improving girls' school success, which helps keep the girls longer in school, thereby extending the age at which the women marry and have their first child (AIDSTAR-One 2011).

In this chapter, I have argued that investment in ECD has increasingly gained global momentum over the past decades and has been integrated into global initiatives that include the EFA goals, MDGS and the UNCRC among others. Research has shown that investing in ECD can yield a range of positive benefits such as economic, social and the general well-being of the child and learning outcomes. I have discussed the four major arguments justifying the need to invest in ECD which are based on scientific, economic, social equity and gender inequality factors.

CHAPTER 3

INTEGRATIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

Although many nations recognise that investment in ECD is a major pathway for attaining the nation's future prosperity, policy makers are still faced with the task of deciding what kind of ECD intervention will transform their nation (UNICEF 2006). The design of policies and programmes for young children can be complex due to the integrative nature of ECD which requires the need to incorporate aspects of education, health, nutrition and social services in ensuring holistic development (Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs 2007). Designing ECD programmes can also be complex because there is no one size fits all strategy when all nations and societies have different political, cultural, social and economic considerations (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization 2007). Therefore, an effective ECD system is one that builds on the existing strengths and assets rather than one that focuses on the problems (Commonwealth of Australia 2009). Nevertheless, Zambia can learn from some OECD countries that have adopted an ECD integrative model and apply some of the strategies based on the prevailing situation. In this chapter I will argue that the most effective ECD approach is one that is integrated and draws different stakeholders to collaborate and work together. In this discussion I will make reference to the Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Theoretical Framework which views the process of human development as being shaped by various stakeholders through the interaction of an individual with his or her environment (Ringsmose and Müller 2013).

3.1 Effective ECD Approach

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (2007), it has been internationally agreed that the most effective ECD approach that can transform a nation is one that is integrated, comprehensive and focuses on the total development of a child. Comprehensive ECD is defined as an approach that combines programmes on care, health, nutrition, education, social protection as a way of improving the welfare of young children. The needs of a child as earlier pointed out are many and cannot be addressed by one particular individual or institution but would require concerted effort of various stakeholders (CARE 2006). The provision of ECD is a responsibility of everyone and could be related to

the African Proverb which says “it takes a village to raise a child”. This African Proverb has been extended to global community in developing programmes targeting children (Marfo et al. 2004). The responsibility of raising children extends to all levels of government, communities, non-governmental organisations and businesses because families on their own are unable to provide a strong nurturing environment for the children without support and assistance of these stakeholders (Irwin et al. 2007).

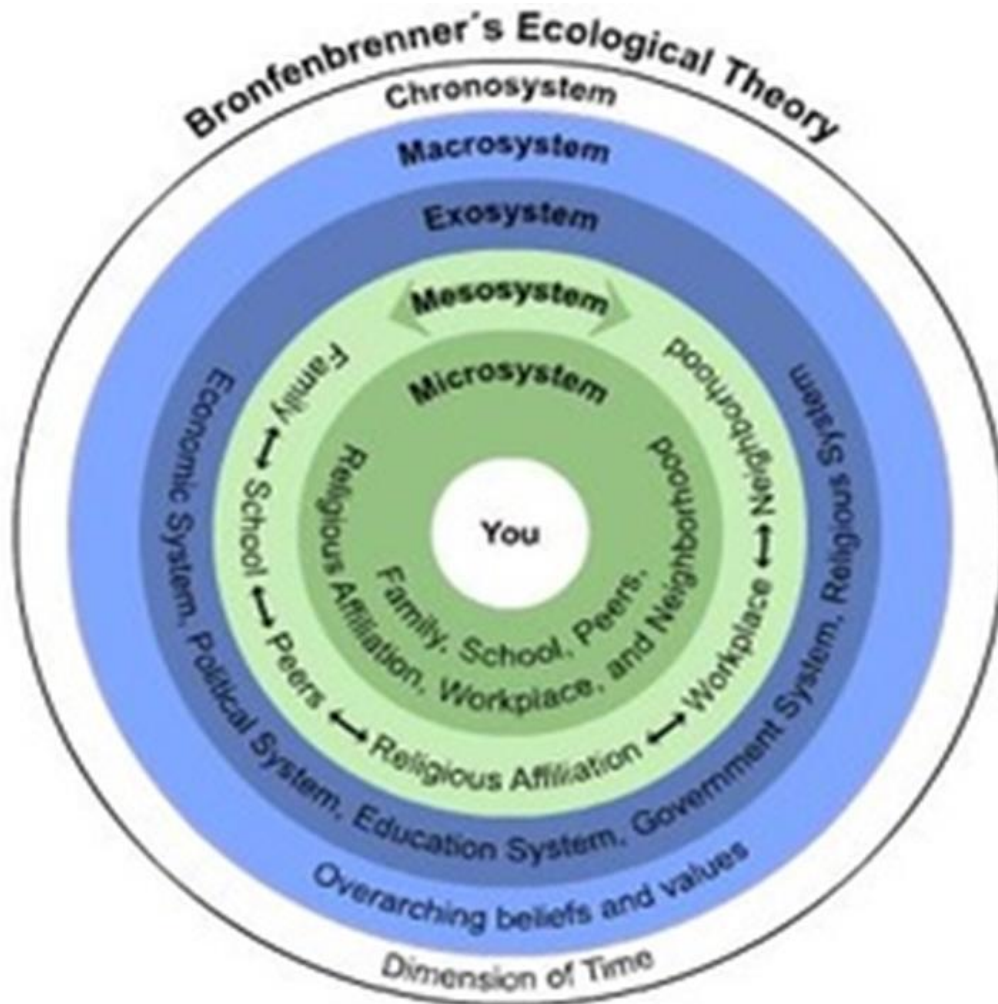
3.2 Roles of ECD Stakeholders

According to the Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Ecological Theory, the child is placed at the centre of attention, as an active participant of the society who is influenced by the parents, friends, school, government, and the prevailing culture, among others (Ringsmose and Müller 2013). These influences on the child are categorised into 5 levels – Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem and Chronosystem – all with different levels of influence on child development and nested together as the social ecology of development – see Figure One (Weisner 2008). I will briefly explain what these sub-systems are, however, for the purpose of this discussion I will only elaborate below on two of them – the Microsystem and the Macrosystem.

The Microsystem is defined as all the roles, activity patterns and interpersonal relations that are experienced by a child in a particular environment with particular physical and material characteristics. This includes the immediate environment that the child closely interact with, which includes the home, family, neighbourhood, religious institutions, classroom and recreation centres. These relations are important as they have a direct effect on the development of a child (Weisner 2008). The Mesosystem is defined as the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing child actively participates and these include the relations between school, home and the neighbourhood. In other words, this is the level of the interactions and relations among the Microsystems. The Exosystem consists of environmental elements that have an influence on a child's development, even though the child is not directly involved with them. The Macrosystem is the highest level involving the cultural context such as ideologies, norms, policies, laws, community surrounding and societal belief systems. Finally, the Chronosystem identifies the time frames of events and experiences that the person faces during the life time, such as major changes in a person’s life and some historical events. The Chronosystem influences child development in different ways (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2013). Gabriel et al. (2010) argue that the effective coordination

of all the systems affecting a child such as individuals, institutions, services, physical setting, values and beliefs can contribute to the effective delivery of ECD.

Figure 1. Model of Ecological Systems Originally Proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979).



3.2.1 The Individual Child

According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model, the child is at the centre of all systems and his or her biological make up is unique because each child faces a different set of variables that affect his or her life and development (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2013). Thus, when planning for integrated ECD programmes it is important to consider that each child is unique, with different beliefs, values, behaviours and achievements. It should be noted that the environment is not the only factor influencing the child as the child also brings a lot to the development process. This includes their unique temperament, biological make up, and learning style. The events that affect young children include those involving face to face interaction such as bonding and play and these proximal processes of interaction are the primary engines of development (Gabriel et al. 2010).

Although the primary beneficiary of ECD interventions is supposed to be the individual child, most ECD interventions tend to focus more on the process and output indicators to measure progress. Understanding the impact of ECD requires one to measure the impact on children's physical, socio-emotional and cognitive development, using validated and culturally relevant tools and indicators. This data, if combined with standard health and nutrition indicator data, can contribute to the knowledge base of approaches and interventions that have proven to have the most meaningful impact on the development of a child (CARE 2006). Achieving this requires a collaborative effort among different stakeholders and government should take a leading role in creating this collaborative environment.

3.2.2 Microsystem Level - Role of the Parents/Families

Intervention of integrated ECD programmes at the Microsystem level is important because this is the level where there are many stakeholders (parents, families, caregivers, teachers, churches, school) that have a direct influence on the child (Weisner 2008). Developing integrated ECD can be a complex process and requires the government to take a leadership role to help bring together different disciplines and services into a more comprehensive service delivery system that is underpinned by a common purpose. It is, however, believed that through structuring, collaboration, partnerships and networks, autonomous organisations can work together to deliver specific community outcomes that in some cases potentially reduces the duplication of services and enables the sharing of resources – a situation that promotes efficiency in the provision of ECD (Queensland Government nd). It is therefore the responsibility of the government to develop policies and programmes that promote collaboration among the families, NGOs, churches because of the influence that these stakeholders have on child development.

The family/parents being an influential institution on child development should be targeted as the starting point of collaboration because, from the time the child is born, he or she is dependent on parents, caregivers and the community to meet his or her basic needs. Child development can be impacted either positively or negatively and hence the intervention by policy makers should be one that is done in the context of the family, community, and culture (Nelson 2013). Apart from providing basic needs for the child, the family usually plays a role in inculcating family values, language and culture (Gabriel et al. 2010). Irwin et al. (2007) divides the resources provided to the child by the family into two – these are social resources

and economic resources. The social resources include parenting skills, education, and health status of the family members, cultural practices and intra-familial relations. The economic resources provided by family include wealth, occupational status, housing conditions among others. It has been argued that the economic status of the child's family is the most powerful explanation for the differences that exist in the wellbeing of children in societies (CARE 2006). It is also important for children to spend time in a warm responsive environment that protects them from harm and enable them realise their full potential. Children need opportunities to explore their world, to play, learn how to speak and listen to others (Irwin et al. 2007). As much as families would like to provide these opportunities for their children, they cannot always do it entirely on their own, they would need support from the community and government at all levels. There is thus, a need for the government to play a role in developing programmes that would promote coordination and collaboration among different ECD stakeholders to support families requiring assistance.

3.2.3 Macrosystems – Integrated ECD Policy Frameworks

The intervention of ECD at Macrosystems level is important because this is where there is likely to be the political will and commitment to develop integrated ECD policies and frameworks that could promote collaboration (Ringsmose and Müller 2013). At the macrosystem level, the government has a major responsibility of developing ECD policies that are holistic and inclusive of various stakeholders with clear roles and responsibilities. The literature confirms that there is a strong linkage between having an ECD policy and having networking structures. Putting in place an ECD policy framework with a key element on collaboration can compel various stakeholders to be involved in the promotion of ECD (Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education 2013). The best ECD polices, such as the Ghana Early Childhood Care and Development Policy, emphasise the need to collaborate and clearly identifies the stakeholders and the role that the government and various key stakeholders would perform to address the rights and needs of the young children in a coordinated and comprehensive manner (Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs 2004).

An effective national ECD policy should be one that is multi-sectoral, multidisciplinary and developed strategically with a view to prioritising the well-being of young children aged 0 to 8 years, their families, communities and society as a whole (Irwin 2007). The policy should reflect a holistic and integrated approach, as well as address the different age cycles and

developmental levels, supported by adequate human and financial resources provided by the government in partnership with the parents, the communities, the private sector, the NGOs and some international agencies. To be inclusive, the policy should also make special provision for children who are vulnerable, those in rural and urban areas, as well as those from different cultural groups (Garcia 2008). In addition, a policy that encourages collaboration is one that uses the participatory approach both in its formulation and implementation process. This is because, for a policy to achieve its objectives it has to involve different stakeholders such as children, parents, communities, private sector, NGOs, the church and the line ministries (Vargas-Barón 2005).

The ECD policy framework is also important in regulating the standards, quality and the cost of ECD being provided, particularly by the private sector and NGOs. Most ECD services provided in Zambia are privately owned charging exorbitant fees that limit accessibility to only those that can afford. The ECD policy would help regulate ECD provision by ensuring that affordable and quality ECD services are provided and at the same time ensuring that the most vulnerable children access the ECD services through the public sector approach. This suggests the government needs to set up public-funded and run ECD centres, which goes beyond regulating the sector (Naudeau et al. 2010).

3.2.4 Government Role in ECD Collaboration

Effective ECD collaboration programmes can be enhanced if governments develop networking programmes that enable stakeholders in the community to build partnerships that help to improve the physical environment and enable programme delivery through collective action and expanding the base for social and political negotiations (Irwin et al. 2007). The government can for instance develop programmes that would enable different ECD players in the community to collaborate and work together because stakeholder involvement is one way of promoting necessary values, strengthening already existing formal and informal networks of cooperation and utilising existing human, physical and monetary resources (UNICEF.nd). Maintaining stakeholder relations is also important because it is a source of gender socialisation, both equitable and non-equitable and it is embedded in the larger socio-political context as such reciprocal engagement with other relational groups, civil society organisations and governmental institutions as a means of addressing the interests and needs of their members (Irwin et al. 2007). It is important to note that sustaining the benefits of ECD programmes is highly dependent on the support provided by the caregivers, community

leaders, and local authorities. In addition, the government can play a role in mobilising stakeholders by creating a forum where different actors are encouraged to participate in the welfare of the young children such as involving them in the parent teacher associations, volunteer programmes, health and nutritional programmes, and awareness raising programmes on children's issues, among others (CARE 2006).

Promoting community engagement programmes requires government to prioritise and develop ECD communication strategies that are local, national and regional and come up with processes that help to ensure that parents receive a balanced mix of neuroscience messages which includes all aspects of ECD and provide clarity about ECD practices that some parents may not be familiar with (Australian Services 2010). In addition, the government should develop parent and community engagement programmes that would help improve the quality of parenting in the home environment as well as enhance the learning standards at the ECD centers. It is believed that the continuity of children's experiences across different environments is greatly enhanced when the ECD centers cooperate and mutually interact with the parents and the communities and are able to adopt consistent approaches to child development. This could for instance involve the ECD staff regularly sharing information with the parents about child welfare and health (Taguma et al. 2012).

It is also the role of the government to provide social protection and ensure that the households where the children live are economically empowered and families are provided with the needed support that can enhance child development. Families can be provided with capacity building skills in microfinance, income generating activities, adult education parenting classes, child rights, health and nutrition, among others (CARE 2006). Nations that engage parents and the wider community as strategic partners in integrated ECD help to ensure broad public support and a multi-perspective contribution to decision making (Taguma et al. 2012).

In this chapter I have argued that the most effective ECD approach is one that is integrated and draws different stakeholders to collaborate and work together. I have made reference to two elements of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory's which are Microsystem and Macro-system in discussing the stakeholder role in ECD collaboration. At Microsystem, I have discussed the influence and role that parents and families have in ECD collaboration and at

macrosystem, I have discussed the role of government in developing an integrated ECD policy that promotes collaboration.

CHAPTER 4

HOW TO IMPROVE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATION IN ZAMBIA

There is need to improve ECD collaboration in Zambia as this is evident from Bronfenbrenner's Theory where it is argued that the interest of the child is best addressed by assessing the child's environment, the key stakeholders and how they interact with each other (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2013). Zambia has great potential to improve its ECD collaboration if the government initiates programmes that build on what is already there in terms of ECD structures, programmes and practices. In this chapter I will first identify the key stakeholders that are involved in ECD in Zambia and then discuss how the government can draw these stakeholders together and include them in the collaboration process. I will then discuss the measures that should be put in place to improve collaboration - these include improved leadership, engagement with CSOs and international donors, creation of networks, parental family involvement, policy development, and awareness programmes aimed at enhancing collaboration among various stakeholders. It should be noted that I had difficulties in finding literature that captured all the specific stakeholders involved in the provision of ECD in Zambia, therefore, the discussion is only focused on the stakeholders that have been mentioned in the literature that I had reviewed.

4.1 ECD Stakeholders in Zambia

In Zambia, the implementation and resourcing of ECD programmes is predominantly carried out by CSOs, private institutions, faith-based organisations, community-based organizations and international NGOs (Ferla 2010).

4.1.1 Civil Society Organisations

There are a number of CSOs that are involved in the provision of ECD in Zambia that need to be drawn together to collaborate so as to effectively improve ECD provision (Ferla 2010). Table 2 shows the major CSOs involved in the provision of ECD and the different approaches that they use. CSO are an important stakeholder in ECD because most of their programmes are community-based and they tend to have staff that are more committed, experienced and sensitive to local needs, thereby allowing them to function as intermediaries.

In some cases, CSOs also act professionally because they have to perform well in order to attract donors and to please the communities they serve (Mwanza 2013).

The CSOs also have an advocacy role to play to influence policy and hold the government accountable for their failure to fulfil their obligations related to ECD provision (Sprechmann and Emily 2001). If well planned, advocacy can be a powerful tool that CSOs in Zambia can use to make the government become proactive. CSOs can decide to establish coalitions so as to advocate and influence agendas and decisions of the government bodies in relation to ECD (Verger and Mario 2011). For example, the CSOs in Zambia can come together and operate under the existing coalition involved in promoting education, known as Zambia National Education Coalition (ZANEC), or they can form a separate coalition to specifically address issues of ECD and advocacy. The formation of such a network can make advocacy more effective because the larger the group the stronger the advocacy voice. Some of the issues that should be factored when planning for effective advocacy include gathering policy and political information, assessing the risk, building strategic relationships, establishing credibility as an advocate as well as linking advocacy to national priorities (Sprechmann and Emily 2001). It is important that CSOs advocating for ECD policies and programmes are credible, have done their research and have adequate information before they put across their advocacy case. It is also important that what is being advocated is aligned with the international and national commitments that Zambia has made (Verger and Mario 2011). For instance, CSOs when developing advocacy strategies can make reference to the ECD related commitments that the Zambian government made towards the EFA goals and the MDGs, as well as commitments made in the ruling political party manifestos, the Sixth National Development Plan among others.

Table 2 CSOs Providing ECD Services in Zambia (Source: Ferla 2010, 26)

Organisation	Model of Approach	Comments
Plan International	Community-based model	Empower communities through technical and financial support to run ECD programmes
Save the Children Norway	ECD Centres attached to basic schools	Provides technical and financial support to the District Education Boards in their implementation of the programme. The aim is to ensure that all community and basic primary schools that Save the Children supports are able to establish ECD centres.
Child Fund	Community-based model	Affiliate with various community based organisations to provide ECD services targeting 0 – 6 years through home and centre based activities.
Project Concern International	Community-based model	Works in partnership with NGOs, CBOs and FBOs located in communities and provides technical support to ECD programmes.
Child Sentinel Trust	Cluster model	The ECD centres exist nearby basic schools and they are coordinated by the school managers with support from community caregiver coordinators.
Mulumbo Early Childhood Care and Development Foundation	Community-based model	Empower communities through technical and financial support to run ECD programmes
Child Hope	Community-based model	Empower communities through technical and financial support to run ECD programmes
Maureen Mwanawasa Initiative	Market-based model	Empowers marketers to provide ECD support at the market place. Only targets marketers' children. Only one child from a household can enrol at the centre
The Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA)	A Government institution which has formed partnership with MoE and UNICEF to develop ECD materials	Develops various play materials for ECD centres. TEVETA is yet to develop standards to help these technical colleges when manufacturing play materials.
Zambia Preschool Association (ZPA)	Teachers Training College	ZPA works in collaboration with the Curriculum Development Centre under the Ministry of Education to develop various ECD materials. ZPA registers, certifies, and monitors all affiliate preschools and preschool teachers training institutions to ensure that they reach standards and quality provision.
Education Broadcasting Services (EBS) -	Government Radio Programme	EBS has established an ECD pilot programme in Eastern Province of Zambia with UNICEF support to provide ECD activities through community Radio.
Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs)	Various churches provide ECD services	The majority of these faith-based facilities provide ECD services at a minimal fee.

4.1.2 Families and Parents

Parents and families are important stakeholders in ECD that the government needs to include in the collaboration process if ECD quality is to improve in Zambia (Benevolent 2010). The involvement of parents and family in ECD is important because, according to Bronfenbrenner (1979), they belong to the Microsystem level where they have direct influence on the development of a child (Ringsmose and Müller, 2013). In Zambia, for example, some parents and families particularly those in rural areas are not fully involved in ECD collaboration programmes because some of them still do not understand the importance and benefits of ECD. To change the situation, there is need for the government through the Ministry of Education to be involved in developing parenting programmes that would sensitise families about the importance of ECD and draw them together so that they could coordinate and share ideas on ECD (Naudeau et al. 2010). Research has shown that ECD programmes that target families are sustainable and when parents, teachers, and schools work together to support children in learning, children tend to perform well, stay longer in school and there is an increased likelihood of them completing school (Wilder 2009).

Parents are also viewed as a good source of knowledge, resources, skills and expertise when it comes to child development which could be shared among various stakeholders. Through parenting programmes, parents and families could also acquire new skills, knowledge and attitudes that will help them improve their own lives and that of their children (Benevolent 2010). The programmes can also encourage and provide opportunities for parents and the community to develop other options of child care that would enhance child development, such as parent-child clubs, neighbourhood play games, among others. These kinds of networks would ensure that stakeholder's views and experiences, including those of children and parents across the country, are equally represented despite their location (Association for the Development of Education in Africa 2003).

The involvement of parents and other stakeholders in the provision of ECD is important for sustaining ECD programmes. This is because most NGOs that are providing ECD are not funded by the government and therefore rely on donor funds, which are not given forever but only for a limited period of time. With the phasing out of donor funding, organisations are increasingly initiating community-based income generating activities (IGA) as a way of sustaining the ECD programmes. These income generating activities can only be successful if

there is coordination among the key stakeholders, including the parents and the community in which the ECD operates. For instance, Mulumbo Early Childhood Care Foundation, a local NGO which operates seven early childhood centres in Zambia has managed to sustain some of its early childhood centres through the IGA without entirely depending on donor support because of the collaborative relations that have been created between the ECD providers and the local community. The community is supportive of the IGA initiatives that are done by the NGOs, which include buying the products made by the ECD centres such as uniforms, clothes and food among others. The parents also have a rotational programme where they volunteer their time with the cleaning of the ECD premises. This kind of community involvement instils a sense of ownership and ensures that people including parents from poorest families are included in the programmes so that together they can contribute positively to the promotion of ECD (Mulumbo Early Childhood Care and Development Foundation 2012). Fostering partnership with the communities by way of voluntary labour encourages community participation and financial contributions to the community-oriented child development projects and programmes (Ministry of Sports, Youth and Child Development 2006)

Most families in Zambia face unique challenges and require a holistic response that cannot always be resolved by one single institution but require the concerted efforts of various stakeholders (Mulumbo Early Childhood Care and Development Foundation 2012). Developing such collaboration programmes by the government would help facilitate a holistic response to children and families, making it easier for them to access multiple services for themselves and the children in a cohesive way. It would also maximise the impact of different early childhood disciplines with a clear focus on the child within the context of their family and community. It is important to point out that ECD collaboration programmes can only yield positive results if they are responsive to community needs and are guided by clear goals, values and mission to bring together people and institutions with a common purpose (Naudeau et al. 2010).

4.1.3 Development Partners (Donors)

International donors are an important stakeholder that the government needs to target and involve in the collaboration process if ECD in Zambia is to improve. Some of the major donors that are providing support to Zambia in the area of ECD include the Netherlands Embassy, Royal Danish Embassy, UNICEF, UNESCO, Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, among others (Beyani 2013). These donors are highly influential and have the potential to support collaborative efforts – provided the government is committed – and effectively engage with them to make them understand the need and benefits of ECD collaboration. For instance, the government can write proposals and develop strategic plans with a clear road map on how they would draw other stakeholders into the collaborative process as well as how this collaboration will benefit the children. It is also important to point out that donors nowadays are more comfortable to invest their resources in countries that have effective governance structures to ensure there is transparency and accountability in the use and management of resources (Braütigam and Knack 2004). However, it should be mentioned that there is always politics at play when it comes to donor aid. This is because most of the donor aid given to countries including Zambia is tied and is given with conditions. Governments have to be strategic to convince the donors to invest in ECD collaboration.

On the other hand, these donor agencies should also require that funds earmarked for ECD support should embrace a component of collaboration. In addition they could also engage CSOs by providing them with funds for advocacy. The CSOs can then develop advocacy programmes to lobby the government to provide support for ECD collaboration and improvement. These partners are well positioned to put up such conditions because they work as overall multilateral cooperating partners in conjunction with the government on ECD delivery. This decision could make the government committed and accountable to ensuring that the various stakeholders are involved (Ferla 2010).

Although these stakeholders are all involved in the provision of ECD, collaboration is a challenge because of the diverse views and different responsibilities that each stakeholder has. Indeed, the different values and visions of each stakeholder may at times be a barrier to ECD integration and collaboration (Garvis 2012). Regardless of these differences, the advantage is that they are all somehow involved in ECD. The government has the major role

of developing ECD coordinating programmes that would ensure that all the ECD stakeholders are drawn together to collaborate. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory, it is argued that at macro-level of national development planning and social policy formulation, the approach to ECD must be an integrated systems-oriented process that places as much emphasis on strengthening communities and improving the quality of life within them as it does on child-centered curricula activities designed to promote optimal development in young children directly (Marfo et al. 2003).

4.2 Reforms required to transforming ECD Collaboration in Zambia

4.2.1 Governance and Accountability

Transforming the way ECD collaboration is conducted in Zambia requires that the government prioritise ECD and put in place effective governance structures that are transparent and responsive to the emerging issues. Governance has been identified as a critical element of integrated ECD as it helps in planning for effective ECD coordination (Britto 2014). Zambia can learn from countries like Australia that have a well-coordinated ECD system spearheaded by the government (Commonwealth of Australia 2009). This process would have to take into consideration issues related to ECD management, funding, knowledge management and innovation. Neuman and Devercelli (2012) argue that coordinating ECD can be a complex process that requires numerous and diverse government and non-governmental organisations to work across a range of responsibilities. It is important that governance mechanisms are streamlined in terms of administration and payments processes at national and local levels so that there is transparency and clarity on the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder involved in ECD. This could also foster effective decision making process as well as joint planning. Governments can sometimes receive funding of programmes from multiple sources and the onus is on the government to ensure that there are accountability mechanisms to help capture this complexity and ensure there is transparency in the way funds are used (Commonwealth of Australia 2009). Transparency and accountability in the use of ECD funds by the government is also important to ensure that funds meant for ECD are used efficiently and effectively without shifting budgets and priorities from the initial plans (Royal Norwegian Embassy 2007)

4.2.2 Leadership

Managing ECD collaboration can be a complex task that requires influential, committed and effective government leadership to drive the change process (Queensland Government nd). Collaboration in ECD in Zambia can improve if the government leads the process of coordinating the efforts of the existing partners (Association for the Development of Education in Africa 2003). Leadership is crucial for supporting the aspirations, building understanding and supporting opportunities and conditions that enable collaboration (Simbulo and Ferla 2008). In Zambia, the government can provide leadership by developing policy frameworks, and spearheading the establishment of ECD management committees and boards, both at local and national level, (Queensland Government, nd). The notion of government taking a leadership role in ECD collaboration gives them responsibility to develop policies, curriculum frameworks, quality assurance standards, funding to support families and other child and family programmes. The government play an important role in shaping the way ECD services are delivered (Chinunda 2009).

In Zambia, it is possible for the government to show commitment and spearhead the ECD coordination process because their presence is represented throughout the country by a number of ministries, departments and agencies that are already involved in the welfare of children. For instance, as earlier discussed in the first chapter, there are currently a number of institutions that provide ECD related services – these include Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth Sports and Child Development, Ministry of Community Development, Ministry of Gender among others. Through the Ministry of Education, the government can utilise the existing ministry structures, provide leadership and incorporate non-state actors to improve ECD instead of creating new structures (Chinunda 2009).

Hence, the decision by the Zambian government to designate ECD to the Ministry of Education is a move in the right direction towards ECD integration and collaboration. The designation of ECD into a particular ministry is sometimes due to the long standing leadership and expertise in areas related to ECD (Neuman and Devercelli 2012). It is argued that giving responsibility of ECD to a single ministry gives legitimacy to the field of ECD and opens up to a comprehensive approach that embraces the concerns of all the related ministries and departments that have a strong focus on child development and education of young children (Choi 2003). The designation process does not just end there; there is a need

for the Ministry of Education to take up the leadership role and create a national coalition or network that would promote collaboration and networking among various ECD stakeholders. The national coalition or network as a coordinating body can have representation from other government ministries and non-state actors. It is important that the Ministry of Education, as the overall coordinator of ECD, is pro-active and accountable for taking lead responsibilities so that progress towards improving ECD sector in Zambia can be made (Ferla 2010). There is also need to build the expert capacity of the Ministry of Education officials that are in charge of the ECD sector so that they can enhance collaboration and coordination among ECD stakeholders.

Zambia can learn from some OECD countries like Sweden and Finland that have integrated ECD services. The integration process involved the induction of expert staff trained in ECD to develop a critical mass of policy expertise, particularly in the initial stage, to take on the task of creating a systematic approach to ECD provision (OECD 2006). This included common service mapping and needs assessment, common regulatory and funding regimes, the bringing together of licencing procedures, pre and in service training, curriculum development programme evaluations and quality assessments. It also involved the integration of experienced administrators from the various child related ministries into the Ministry of Education (Neuman and Devercelli 2012).

In addition, giving the Ministry of Education the lead responsibility in ECD facilitates linkage and continuity between early childhood and primary education and encourages a smooth transition and successful schooling later. This provides an opportunity to develop a coherent policy framework for regulation, funding, training and service delivery across the different stages of education system. The other advantage of selecting the Ministry of Education is that it is equipped with many of the subsystems necessary for a quality ECD system such as training and pedagogical support, curriculum design, monitoring and evaluation. All these effects of integration promote collaboration and networking among different stakeholders because no one single ministry can work in isolation but would depend on other ECD sectors (Kaga et al. 2010)

Since ECD is designated to the Ministry of Education, schools can be a strategic entry point of ECD coordination at local levels because, in most cases, school authorities work with local leaders such as area councillors, religious leaders, members of parliament, village headmen or chiefs. These leaders are influential and tend to know the ECD organisations operating in

the area, a situation that can ease the process of bringing stakeholders together so that they could network and share ideas (Mulumbo Early Childhood Care and Development Foundation 2012). Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the government to take the leadership role, provide direction, and develop programmes that would promote stakeholder involvement and coordination. The Ministry of Education through schools can work with the local leaders to carry out a mapping exercise that would help to identify and develop an inventory of organisations that are providing ECD in Zambia. The establishment of an inventory of ECD stakeholders can enhance coordination, harmonise ECD programmes and avoid the duplication of ECD services (UNICEF 2006).

4.2.3 Funding

The coordination of ECD among stakeholders is only possible if the government allocates adequate funding for ECD sector. Over the past years Zambia had inadequate funds allocated to ECD and this makes coordination difficult. For example, though the government made a commitment towards the ECD subsector under the Fifth National Development Plan of 2006-2010 (Republic of Zambia 2005), it was only allocated about 0.01% of the overall budgetary allocation. This is because most of the resources were directed towards universal primary education (Zambia National Education Coalition n.d). The needed financial resources can be mobilised from various sources: through national budgetary provisions, multi-lateral and bilateral cooperation agreements, NGOs and private sector support through the provision of micro financing services aimed at improving the economic security of a child (Ministry of Sports, Youth and Child Development 2006). The donor agencies such as UNICEF, that are providing financial support to ECD programmes in Zambia should be firm and develop conditions for the government that funds ear marked for ECD support should embrace a component of collaboration. UNICEF is well positioned to put up such conditions because it is one of the donor agencies that work as an overall multilateral cooperating partner in conjunction with the government on ECD delivery. This decision could make the government get committed and accountable to ensuring that the various stakeholders are involved (Ferla 2010).

4.2.4. Early Childhood Development Policy

In Zambia, collaboration and coordination of ECD can improve if the government shows commitment by developing an integrated ECD policy framework that would guide ECD processes and programming (Mulumbo Early Childhood Care and Development Foundation

2012). The lack of an ECD policy hinders the provision and quality of ECD. In 2006, the government in Zambia initiated a consultative process to formulate an ECD policy, but to date the policy remains in draft form. This means that the stakeholders are implementing ECD without any guiding framework and there is no proper coordination of ECD provision among various stakeholders (Zambia National Education Coalition 2013). As much as it is well known that policy development is a long process, the ECD drafting process in Zambia has taken way too long considering the urgency of ECD to development.

It is argued that policies can be effective and could be enacted in a timely manner if they are spearheaded by experts with authority because policy decisions are authoritative and are made by people with legitimate power in the systems of government (Althaus 2013). It is, therefore, important that during the initiation stage of policy development, careful selection of ECD experts to work on the policy document should be done to avoid enactment delays. In the case of Zambia, there is need to revisit the ECD policy development process to ensure that the ECD officers working on the policy are competent and committed towards ECD policy planning. For instance, the officers responsible should also have skills in leadership, team building and team management, as well as be diplomatic yet firm. Furthermore, the planning team working on the policy should be ECD specialists with representation from relevant ministries with proven track records of collaboration and consensus building and should be committed to an integrated approach to ECD (Vargas-Barón 2005).

To be a good working document, the ECD policy would need to provide broad guidelines for coordination and harmonisation of quality ECD services across all social sectors and other major ECD providers (Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education 2013). An early childhood policy is an important framework that can promote collaboration among various ECD stakeholders considering that the impact of intervention is greater when the approach is multi-sectoral and integrated. This approach can provide young children and their families with holistic programming to ensure that all children have equal opportunity to realise their full potential (Neuman and Devercelli 2012).

While the government has a major role to play in developing an ECD policy, non-governmental organisations, the private sector and community groups should be participants in the process and advocate for the speedy enactment of the ECD policy that has been in the drafting process since 2006 (Zambia National Education Coalition 2013). The government

has been resistant to enact the ECD policy and this could be partly due to the fear of being held accountable for not providing ECD services to the children. There is need for the government to change the way they treat ECD and begin to prioritise ECD and this change can occur if the civil society organisations becomes actively involved in advocacy and begin to lobby the government for the speedy enactment of the policy. This is because without policy it is difficult to hold the government accountable for not being involved in ECD.

NGOs can individually or collectively advocate for an ECD policy because they are essential intermediaries between the citizens and the government (Benovent Society 2010). Collective advocacy in form of alliances or network is particularly important as it can have greater effects and make change happen more quickly than individual organisation advocacy. This inclusive and participatory approach by different stakeholders would help influence policy and help to build broad public support for ECD (Court et al. 2006). It is important that non-state actors make the most of existing links by getting to know other ECD actors, working through existing networks and coalitions, as well as identifying key personalities who can help generate new linkages and partnerships with likeminded individuals and organisations. Collective advocacy, if well planned, can put pressure on the government to realise the importance of having an ECD policy framework (Benevolent Society 2010; OECD 2006).

4.2.5 Formation of Coalition or Network

Furthermore, a coalition or network of stakeholders in ECD can also be established at a both national and community level. This can be spearheaded by the government departments and NGOs operating in the area through formation of boards. This network is essential for bringing together the government ministries or departments, NGOs, faith-based organisations, the private sector, the parents and local leaders so that they could share knowledge and ideas on ECD at local level (Zambia National Education Coalition 2013). For the networks to be successful, the stakeholders need to be involved in the planning process and need to collectively agree on the vision and leadership structure to avoid conflict of interest. Vargas-Barón (2005) argues that responsibilities among the network members could be shared by assigning some to be involved in policy and advocacy, public education, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation. The objective and the role of the network need to be clearly stipulated and understood by all stakeholders for ECD to be collectively promoted (Vargas-Barón 2005).

4.2.6 Education and Communication

The government can improve ECD collaboration by developing communication campaign strategy targeting ECD stakeholders with a set of activities to generate specific outcomes among the large number of individuals and agencies involved in a specified period of time (Naudeau et al. 2010). The aim of the campaign would be to improve the attitudes, knowledge and child practices of caregivers and other community members so as to enhance their collaboration and partnership in child development. Communicating information to members of the public about the importance of ECD and the need for key stakeholders to collaborate can play an important role in the coordination process. For instance, assorted information education communication (IEC) materials on ECD including discussion papers can be produced and distributed to the target audiences to stimulate interest and debate on ECD. It is important that the communication strategy that is developed and implemented is culture-sensitive to facilitate acceptance of the ECD and generate a collective effort among diverse stakeholders to allow them to work towards the common objective of young children (Garcia, 2008). IEC materials could include posters, articles, fliers, brochures among others. As well, documentaries, public discussions, dialogue meetings and workshop could be some other forms of medium that could be used to channel the information. Engaging the media in the communication process is an effective strategy because of its wider coverage. Zambia has a number of public and private television stations, community radio stations and print media which the government can use to reach a large audience. It is also important to take into consideration the remoteness of the areas particularly the rural areas which could be hard to reach and the issue of translating the messages into local language that would make it easy for the people to understand (Naudeau et al. 2010).

4.2.7 Integration of Culture

It is recommended that government develop ECD collaboration programmes by taking advantage of the African culture where people believe that it takes a village to raise a child. (Marfo et al. 2004). This culture is embedded in people's way of life and referring to it in developing ECD programmes is essential so that what is being proposed is not foreign to the Zambian context. It is believed that as much as it is the responsibility of the parents to raise a child, the parents cannot entirely provide all the essential needs but need to rely on both the community and the government to provide the best environment for nurturing children. It is, however, argued that bringing up a child is a shared responsibility of the extended family

network and it requires shared management of child caretaking and socially distributed support (Pence and Nsamenang 2008)

5.0 CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have argued that the government as a duty bearer of a nation has a major responsibility to develop policies and programmes that will enhance ECD collaboration among various stakeholders in Zambia. ECD, being a complex sector that brings together aspects of health, nutrition, stimulation, nurturing, education, care, social protection in addressing the needs of a child, needs to have strong collaboration with the government taking a key role in the process. There is need to transform the way ECD collaboration is conducted in Zambia by the government taking a leading role in the formation of ECD networks and drawing all the key stakeholders into the collaboration process. I have argued that collaboration in ECD is possible if certain measures are put in place. These measures include improved government commitment towards ECD leadership, improved governance, active engagement of the government with key stakeholders such as CSOs, the parents, donors as well as formation of networks and coalitions. There is also a need for the government in Zambia to speed up the enactment of the ECD policy that has been in draft form for almost 10 years. The ECD policy would help improve collaboration because integrated ECD policy implementation requires a multi-sectoral approach that would involve the engagement of different stakeholders. I have also argued that, as much as it is the responsibility of the government to coordinate ECD, there is also a need for non-state actors to become pro-active and advocate for ECD policies and programmes and make the government accountable if change has to occur. The donor agencies should be firm and give conditions that funds allocated for ECD should embrace the aspect of stakeholder involvement considering no single institution can tackle ECD as it requires the efforts of everyone.

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Appendix 1

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT POLICY BRIEF

2014

The Collaborative role of Government with other key stakeholders in the provision of Quality Early Childhood Development in Zambia

Introduction

The need for investment in Early Childhood Development (ECD) has increasingly gained global momentum over the past decades and has become a core policy priority in many developing and developed countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2006). This is because the ECD interventions and policy choices that are made today will have future impacts on whether millions of children will be able to reach their full potential, or will be left to face a future of worsening inequity, poverty and marginalisation (Ministry of Women and Children Affairs 2004). However, in Zambia, the ECD sector still lags behind as it has not been prioritised by the government and still remains uncoordinated.

What is the problem?

- The provision of ECD services in Zambia has remained undeveloped and uncoordinated with only 17.1% of children enrolled in primary school having had some form of organised early childhood experience.
- There is a lack of an integrated ECD policy.
- ECD services in Zambia are only provided by the private sector and civil society organisations as government does not provide any ECD services.
- ECD services are costly for the majority of Zambians to afford.
- The provision of ECD is unstructured and uncoordinated.
- Inadequate funds are allocated for ECD by the government.
- There is a limited awareness on the importance of early childhood education.

- There is lack of monitoring mechanisms to assess the quality of ECD provided by the service providers.

What should be done?

- ECD is a complex sector that brings together aspects of health, nutrition, stimulation, nurturing, education, care, social protection to address the needs of a child. It therefore needs to be well coordinated with the government taking a key role in the collaboration process.
- Government should prioritise ECD and develop an integrated ECD policy that would promote collaboration among the key stakeholders such as parents, community, leaders, NGOs, churches, international donors among others. .
- Government need to development a complete inventory of stakeholders involved in the provision of ECD.
- Government should take a leadership role in ECD and develop programmes and strategies aimed at engaging with key stakeholders.
- Government should put in place governance structures that would allow for collaboration.
- Adequate funding should be allocated to the ECD sector.
- Government should take a lead in the formation of both national and local ECD networks.
- CSOs need to be proactive and advocate for the speedy enactment of an integrated ECD policy.