

**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
**RENCP ECCD WORKING-GROUP**  
**DECEMBER 2011**

**BACKGROUND**

**Every child deserves the best start in life** - Learning during the critical early stages of life - between three and six years old- has a lasting impact on children's health, education and success in life. In this period, children's bodies and brains grow rapidly, language skills develop, and their future health and lifelong learning and social skills are shaped.

If a child's development is not nurtured during this early stage, the opportunity is lost and their early years learning cannot be recaptured.

International evidence shows that good quality Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) leads to better social, emotional, and educational outcomes for children - particularly for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Children who participate in ECCD programmes are better prepared for school, becoming better students and more active learners. They are more likely to plan their families, have higher household incomes and educate their own children.

ECCD also increases the effectiveness and efficiency of a government's educational expenditure, by reducing drop-out. As a result, ECCD programmes boast some of the highest rates of return on investment.

**ECCD IN RWANDA:** Rwanda has made great strides in improving the number of children enrolling into primary school - with 95% enrolment rate in 2010 - and has an ambitious goal of increasing the primary school completion rate to 80% by 2012. However, in 2010 up to a quarter of children are dropping out, repeating grades or don't complete primary school, often because they are not ready when they start school. This goal will be difficult to obtain with only 6.1% of children between the ages of three and six currently attending ECCD centres<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Presentation by MINEDUC at August 2011 ECCD workshop – Possible strategies for moving forward.

In 2006, the President of Rwanda declared that all children between the three to six years old should attend ECCD centres. From 2006 to 2011 enormous effort went into the development of a comprehensive policy framework for ECCD - in September 2011 the ECCD Policy and Strategic Plan were endorsed by the Cabinet and an ECCD curriculum was developed by the National Curriculum Development Centre.

Communities have taken it upon themselves to develop ECCD centres. However, the quality is poor due to lack of resources, technical support and poor parental awareness on the importance of early childhood education.

*'Lack of training in ECCD is the biggest challenge implementation of the ECCD curriculum is facing. Current ECCD teachers actually teach reading, writing and numeracy skills as if they were teaching in primary schools'*

– Prof. Nzabairwa – Dean of Education, Kigali Institute of Education<sup>2</sup>

The Government of Rwanda, through the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) is actively looking to civil society organizations to help achieve the national vision.

The RENCP ECCD working-group is established within this framework.

## **MISSION OF THE WORKING GROUP**

The RENCP ECCD working group aims to support the implementation of the ECCD Policy and its strategic Plan through sharing of best practices and lessons learnt among Civil Society Organizations, including the development of joint activities and advocacy campaigns on ECCD.

## **PARTICIPATION**

- Civil Society Organizations working in the field of ECCD in Rwanda (national and international) – also members of RENCP
- UNICEF
- MINEDUC on an ad-hoc basis
- KIE on an ad-hoc basis

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<sup>2</sup> August 2011 ECCD workshop – Possible strategies for moving forward.

## **COORDINATION AND REPORTING**

The ECCD working group will be chaired by Save the Children throughout 2012 and then the working group will decide who will further lead.

The Chair organization role is to call for the ordinary meetings of the working-group, preparation and circulation of meeting minutes and drives for the working group to be active.

## **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- Stronger ECCD Capacity is built among the working group through advocacy, joint training opportunities, sharing of information, guidelines, tools and study visits exchanges.
- Appropriate Linkages and Complementarity with MINEDUC-led ECCD working group/task force.
- Main ECCD challenges and opportunities in Rwanda are identified and discussed. Actions are taken at member organizations levels and recommendations are advocated with other relevant stakeholders.

Annual plans for the working groups will be developed on an annual basis.