Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) can be defined as the support for children’s survival, growth, development and learning from birth to the time of entry into the primary school in formal, informal and non-formal settings. Many of these facilities are called “Day Care Centers”, “Kindergarten Schools”, “Nursery Schools” and “Crèches”. In 2007, UNESCO Global Monitoring Report titled “The Strong Foundation” was dedicated to ECCE. The report was clear on the fact that pre-primary education lays the foundation for later learning, which cannot be achieved without virile and well trained management and personnel. The understanding of and approaches to early childhood vary depending on local traditions, cultures, family structures and the organization of primary schooling. ECCE covers both the care and the education of young children. The term ‘care’ generally includes attention to health, hygiene and nutrition within a nurturing and safe environment that supports children’s cognitive, social and emotional well-being. The use of the term ‘education’ in the early childhood years is much broader than pre-schooling, capturing learning through early stimulation, guidance and a range of developmental activities and opportunities. In spite of the differences in approaches to ECCE provision, it is clear that Africa is still facing many obstacles in the effort to improve early childhood education. Some of the issues that continue to pose the most challenge include: lack of resources, inequitable access to services, especially to the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in local communities, and absence or insufficiency of mechanisms to ensure quality in training and provision of the service, as well as the low status of early childhood educators and carers. Other constraints include: poverty, conflicts and the prevalence of killer diseases (which include malaria, malnutrition and HIV/AIDS), which make the region particularly vulnerable and obstruct the building of a sustainable and quality early childhood care and education programmes. As a result, African governments are increasingly mobilizing more private, voluntary and community-based partners to promote and strengthen early childhood education. Some UNESCO Member States are already taking excellent steps that could provide good practice for others to emulate. As the only UNESCO Institute working in the area of teacher development and management in Africa, IICBA has carried out a number of interventions, and the following paragraph discusses the summary of IICBA’s activities in the last four years.

II. Summary of IICBA’s Programme of Intervention:
Given the importance of a virile and quality personnel to the development of the provision of ECCE, UNESCO-IIBA sought, between 2007 and 2008, for experts and researchers in selected African countries (Burkina Faso, The Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Lesotho and South Africa) to prepare country-case studies to examine, among others, how teachers are prepared for early childhood care and education. Upon the completion of these studies, UNESCO-IICBA organized a three-day workshop in September 2008 with the overall objective of providing evidence that will inform on-going debate on the quality and competence of childhood care and education in Africa. Specifically, the objectives of the validation workshop were to: Provide opportunity for consultants to present their report; share ideas and validate the findings of each of the country-case studies; propose recommendations for stakeholders, including ministries of education in Member States, teacher training
institutions and associations; non-governmental organizations and partners including those in the United Nations Organizations working in the area of ECCE; and begin the process of a summary report that would synthesize the six country reports into one.

At the end of the workshop, participants that cut across senior education ministry officials, ECCE experts from the academia responsible for the country case studies, and IICBA staff jointly achieved finalized versions of the six country-case studies; drafting of a policy brief on ECCE teacher developments for Africa; adopted a matrix as a framework for a synthesis report and drafted a compendium of some good practices for the development of ECCE teachers and care givers in Africa.

The summary report highlighted the experiences of the selected countries against various criteria such as:

- access to pre-primary education, programmes of intervention for improving the progress and achievement of children in pre-primary schools in selected countries and an assessment of current challenges and the national strategies for addressing these challenges;

- approaches for training management and teaching personnel and evidence of the expected outcomes of the current pre-primary education programmes in the countries by elaborating on the strengths and weaknesses of each strategy adopted;

- efforts at training of teachers and care givers to ensure pupils’ access to qualified teachers/care givers and quality learning environments and education by addressing issues relating to sustainability of quality, curriculum planning, coverage and management;

- existing legal framework for protecting the rights of children in benefiting from this form of care and education and for protecting them from possible abuses or exploitation;

- national, state or local government policies for training and retraining of teacher at the pre-primary level of education with specific budgetary provisions to cater for their career development, provision of facilities, curriculum development, safety, sanitation, inspection and administration; measures taken to prevent any existing violations of the rights of the child at this level of education?

- steps undertaken, if any, to increase the competencies of management and teaching force to protect children from the behaviour of educators and care givers who may be predisposed to the scourge HIV/AIDS and other health issues, and to cope with inevitable shortages of skilled human resources that will arise as a result of morbidity and mortality among the teaching personnel

Based on the findings of the IICBA’s study in the six selected African countries, the following policy recommendations were made:

- **Policy I**: Specific budget be allocated to ECCE to ensure teacher training and improvement in the quality services offered

- **Policy II**: Government, NGOs, CBOs, International organizations among others should work in concert to support centre-based courses

- **Policy III**: An autonomous body for managing, coordinating and monitoring of ECCE activities should be established in each country
• **Policy IV:** Adequate data generation and management should be ensured through the establishment of a viable Educational Management Information System (EMIS) or District Education Management Information Systems (DEMIS)

• **Policy V:** Before granting licences, government must ensure suitability of the environment of the centres and carry out regular supervision and inspection all ECCE premises

• **Policy VI:** Government must establish good and attractive working conditions for teachers and care givers

• **Policy VII:** On health issues, a general health management guideline for ECCE workers should be developed and implemented

Some of the good practices identified from the six country-case studies and from Mauritius and Senegal that participated in the validation workshop which took place in 2008 include the following:

• **Burkina Faso- Bisongos** for the poorest of the poor, but needing more government investment and private sector involvement

• **Congo- Espace d’eveil** provides opportunities for children of mothers working in the fields so that their children are well taken care of as their mother are involved in economic activities

• **Lesotho- Home-based approach** enables parents from poor homes to be trained to give the care and education to their children in designated centres that gives the comfort of the home to children being cared for

• **Mauritius- Parental Empowerment Programme** is being practiced to train young parents to be more productively involved in the care and education of their children

• **Nigeria- Child care centres in workplace** for proximity of standard ECCE centres to working nursing mothers and the centres serves as models to private ECCE providers

• **Senegal- The Mbour** involves parents and community participation in the provision and management of ECCE facilities, and using local materials to ensure sustainability

• **South Africa-** NGOs like **Ntataise** partner with the University of Pretoria to offer enrichment programmes to parents, caregivers and teachers on HIV/AIDS awareness & management among others


The dissemination of research results as contained in the Summary Report was shared through channels such as websites of IICBA and those of partner organizations, and through the distribution of print copies to all stakeholders in Africa and beyond. Some of these include faculties of education, ministries of education, teachers’ colleges, relevant UN and UNESCO partner offices, UNESCO National Commissions, African Union Commission, and participants at various workshops in which IICBA was represented. Key among these workshops is as follows:

• First World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (WCECCE) captioned “Building the Wealth of Nations” which took place in Moscow from 27-29 September, 2010. It was organized by UNESCO and the Russian Federation and attended by about 1000 participants from 193 UNESCO Member States among whom were policymakers, researchers,

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1 Read the full report of the IICBA Summary Report on www.unesco-iicba.org
2 Ibid
professionals and representatives of intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, civil society organizations, bilateral and multilateral donor and United Nations agencies. IICBA’s summary report was presented to participants during a special event on the theme “**Ready for Success in School: Quality Teaching Practices for Scaling up Inclusive and Innovative ECCE Programmes**”.

- In April 2011, IICBA disseminated the findings of the Summary Report to the Member States in Africa by actively participating in the African Regional Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education organized by Organization Mondiale pour l’Education Préscolaire (OMEP). IICBA’s collaboration with OMEP, otherwise known as “World Organization for Early Childhood Education”, was due to its mandate that seeks to address issues relating to how best to work towards a better future, both individually and collectively, with and for all children; how to work together to develop cultural identities with a daily concern for ecology and the society; and how to support a culture oriented towards a democratic and sustainable society. The Republic of Benin chapter hosted the conference at the INFOSEC Centre in Cotonou, Republic of Benin, from 27-30 April 2011. The theme of the conference was “**Children – Citizens in a Challenged World -The African Experience**”. The conference marked the 6th African Regional Conference of OMEP. The conference was attended by one hundred and thirty (130) delegates from eight (8) African countries. IICBA was represented at the conference to raise awareness of delegates about the situation of ECCE teacher policy in Africa; popularize some good practices in ECCE provision and teacher development; and strengthen partnership for improving the development of ECCE teacher and care-giver in Africa.

**III. Enhancement of IICBA’s Delivery Capacity for ECCE Advocacy and Backstopping Activities:**

Given the wide dissemination of the research output in global and regional conferences, it was time for IICBA to build its capacity to enhance its delivery capacity for ECCE advocacy and backstopping activities. This was the principal reason for IICBA’s participation at the 2011 World Forum on ECCE in Honolulu, Hawaii. Another reason was to understudy what others are doing in relation to ECCE curriculum design and this informed IICBA’s participation in the tour of two schools: an indigenous and a mainstream city and county school in Honolulu. The tour gave visiting delegates the opportunity to explore two distinct pre-school systems of curriculum design and implementation. It was quite an amazing and powerful time for the 850 delegates from 74 countries to be together to focus on issues for children around the world.

The rich learning experience provided by the Forum strengthened IICBA’s capacity to support African states willing to improve ECCE practices, either through the mainstream type ECCE or the local/indigenous model. The Forum featured inspirational *provocations* at plenary sessions, and 72 concurrent sessions such as discussions on curriculum designs and implementation, lessons learned on advocacy, making a financial case for ECCE and public policy - to which IICBA presented some good practices in teacher development from Africa’s perspective. It was clear from the practical exhibitions, presentations and learning tours and interactions among ECCE experts that children can be positively guided to learn and develop in all domains - cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and interpersonal. The ideas learned from the tour IICBA participated and the entire activities during the Forum formed the bases for the planned workshop on ECCE curriculum design and the drafting of the outline for the preparation of modules for improving the quality of ECCE delivery in Africa as a whole with special

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3The mainstream model refers to the conventional practices in more formalized ECCE centers or those attached to primary schools; while the indigenous/local model refer to those designed to use indigenous practices, approaches and cultural values for child stimulation in the planning and delivery of ECCE Programmes.
emphasis to local/indigenous teachers and care givers in the region. It is hoped that the workshop will draw experts working in the area of ECCE curriculum development for Africa.

IV. Role of Higher Education in Achieving EFA Goal 1 on ECCE

According to UNESCO, “Progress towards wider access (in ECCE) remains slow, with children from disadvantaged backgrounds more likely to be excluded from ECCE services. A child in sub-Saharan Africa can expect only 0.3 years of pre-primary schooling, compared to 1.6 years in Latin America and the Caribbean and 2.3 years in North America and Western Europe. In many developing countries, ECCE programmes are staffed by teachers with low qualifications”. As earlier mentioned, ECCE includes a variety of programmes and they all directed towards the physical, cognitive and social development of children before they enter primary school, which is generally agreed to be the age range from birth to age 7 or 8. The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) defines pre-primary education or ISCED level 0, as comprising programmes that offer structured, purposeful learning activities in a school or a centre (as opposed to the home) to children aged at least 3 years. Such programmes are normally held to include organised learning activities that occupy on average the equivalent of at least two hours per day and 100 days per year.

However ECCE is highly diverse. Learning opportunities range from formal pre-school, to informal home based activities where, care, play and education go hand in hand. As Sharma (2005) have noted, in India the programme starts from the age of six months. For most countries, it is also a new area of learning and the importance of this field is only being known recently because of the following reasons.

- There is a growing understanding that the period from birth to the start of primary education is a critical formative stage for the growth and development of children
- The learning outcomes – norms and values, knowledge, skills- of primary education are stronger when learning takes place in the years preceding regular schooling.
- Early learning improves the child’s chances of enjoying good health, finding employment later, social inclusion and crimeless life. This was the rationale for making it one of the EFA goals.

Since ECCE is an emerging area of learning, there are many unknowns and the programmes of higher education can explore these unknown by paying attention to the above concerns as much as possible. Specifically, the role should focus among others on the following issues.

1. Conduct research towards achieving the goals of ECCE- Since it is an established fact that better child care for children of preschool age is associated with better cognitive and social development, the research programmes of the institutions of higher education can help expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education’ in the following ways among others.

2. Identify the target groups, their numbers and their characteristics through diagnostic research (statistical surveys) conducted by the Statistics or Social Science Department of the institution as a regular programme of research. This identification is essential for estimating the resource needs in terms of human, physical and financial.

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4 UNESCO (2005) : ibid, p. 16
6 Sharma, Neerja, ibid.
3. Design training, playing and caring programmes, which would make ECCE more effective in particular contexts.
4. Identify inputs in the form of training materials, caring and playing equipment, physical, human and financial resources to run the programme effectively.
5. Examine the effect of nutrition and health in early childhood on their cognitive development in later years.
6. Explore alternative strategies to obtain the ECCE goals effectively with the application of simulation models.
7. Identify suitable characteristics of teachers and caregivers to make ECCE effective in particular contexts.
8. Identify factors that inhibit and promote participation, retention and progress in the ECCE programmes and how to reduce the influence of the inhibiting factors and augment the influence of promoting factors with attention to disadvantaged and disabled children.
9. Identify factors that would improve quality of the ECCE programmes measured through the quality of physical environments, staff training and qualification levels, numbers of children per class and per caregiver and if possible through the quality of organisation and management, educational process and clarity of curricular goals.
10. Analyse the impact of ECCE on future educational and employment career.
11. Develop a strategic action plan for ECCE in particular contexts.

The above programmes can be undertaken directly by the institutions of higher education in their regular research programmes in the faculties of education, social and human sciences (including departments of child development and home science) and science or in the centres set up for the specific purpose of obtaining EFA goals set for ECCE. These can also be carried out by the institutions of higher education indirectly associating their faculty members with non-governmental organisations, and with government ministries dealing with child welfare. The indirect linkage can also be observed in the participation of the faculty members with donor agencies at bi-lateral and international levels, especially the UNICEF, World Bank, UNDP and UNESCO.

V. Role of Extension service in achieving the goals of ECCE

According to Bikas C Sanyal in UNSCO (2005)\(^7\) institutions of higher education can set up extension centres to develop ECCE in the following ways.

- Organise and/or facilitate meetings with community leaders, NGOs and the officials of the relevant government ministries to explore ways and means for the institutions of higher education to be of service to the cause of ECCE;
- Organise and/or facilitate meetings with parents to apprise them about the benefit of ECCE;
- Organise and/or facilitate meetings with NGOs and potential donors to finance programmes of the ECCE;
- Organise evening in-service courses for pre-school and day care centre managers inviting extension lecturers on management of ECCE;
- Devise programmes related to ECCE for the media addressed to the parents;

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• Institutions of higher education in certain cultural context may explore the possibility of introducing credit based service of the students, especially girls during holidays;
• Organise parental meetings on HIV/AIDS and the protection of children; and
• Organise meetings with the Ministry of Education, Social Welfare and other relevant government ministries, NGOs and bilateral and international donor agencies for fund raising.

It was also suggested that some of these events can be directly organised by the institutions and in others they may act as facilitators with an indirect linkage. While these efforts can be carried out by higher education towards the realization of EFA Goal 1 on ECCE, IICBA intends to make its contributions to the improvement in the quality of ECCE delivery in Africa in collaboration with experts in the field of ECCE.

VI. Call for Draft Curriculum and Proposals on Outline of ECCE Modules for Teachers and Care Givers

IICBA is therefore calling for experts in ECCE curriculum design to submit draft proposals of curriculum that would meet the needs of indigenous peoples living in local communities in Africa. The proposals submitted should be accompanied by the author’s CV, which indicates his/her achievements in the area of ECCE. IICBA has planned to invite curriculum experts, who would provide module outline that best meets the objectives of the proposed workshop for a discussion and validation process from the 11-14 October, 2011. Deliberations during the meeting must produce an agreed standard curriculum and an outline for the set of modules to be drafted by selected experts at a later date. The standard curriculum must be adaptable to local communities in Africa in spite of the fact that these communities could have their peculiarities in terms on culture and values.

VII. Objectives of the Workshop

The overall objective of the workshop is to provide opportunity for experts in ECCE curriculum design in Africa to elaborate and agree on the contents and measures for standardizing indigenous curriculum and to draft outlines for modules which will be developed after the workshop. The modules will be used for building the capacity of local teachers and care givers to expand and improve comprehensive ECCE services with special attention given to the vulnerable and disadvantaged population in Africa as reflected in EFA goal 1\(^8\). Specifically, during the workshop, participants will be given the opportunity to:

• present their curriculum and outlines of training modules
• synthesize the ideas presented by participants to arrive at an agreed set of contents and measures for standardizing indigenous curriculum for ECCE delivery to local African communities
• agree on the outline of modules for training quality ECCE teachers and care givers in the use of local and indigenous model
• identify a team of ECCE experts for finalizing the draft standard curriculum and drafting of agreed modules
• determine tentative dates for the pilot testing of the finalized modules in early 2012

The proposed modules should be capable of being delivered in not more than two weeks of continuous face-to-face training. It is hoped that the open and distance learning on-line version will be prepared

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\(^8\) Education For All (EFA Goal 1)-“Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education (ECCE), especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children”
after the module has been tested. However, all proposals should follow the standard practice of module writing by clearly indicating the following:

- The learning objectives,
- The content of the module,
- The delivery methods, (including, plenary, group work, synthesis sessions for follow up for on-site training; or individual reading, group discussions,
- The concluding session that indicates the strategies and lessons learned,
- Procedure for course evaluation
- A short accessible bibliography at the end of the proposed module

VIII. **Methodology for the Workshop and Post-Workshop Activities**

IICBA will liaise with UN and non-UN partners, donors and experts in ECCE curriculum design in faculties of education and colleges of education, teachers associations, NGOs etc for the delivery of the workshop. IICBA will adopt the following methodology for this purpose:

- Geographical coverage of workshop participants will essentially include countries in which the country-case studies were conducted by IICBA in 2007/2008
- UN and other partners and donor agencies in the area of ECCE will support the participation of experts to the planned curriculum design workshop
- Participants will be selected from implementing teacher training institutions, curriculum experts for universities, officials from the Ministry of Education and relevant ministries responsible for ECCE delivery, and teacher associations in Africa
- Expected outcomes of the workshop will be an agreed standard ECCE Teacher and Care Givers curriculum and the outline of the modules for training ECCE teachers and care givers
- Identification of ECCE experts to finalize the validated draft curriculum and preparation of the agreed modules
- Implementation modalities/strategies will be determined during the planned workshop
- Thematic areas in the area of ECCE will be decided during the planned workshop
- Discussions on the characteristics and number of the short and long run beneficiaries of the pilot test in early 2012
- Participants’ evaluation of workshop
- Implementation work-plan for post workshop activities will be determined by participants. This would include the drafting of the modules; drafting of the delivery guide and tentative date, venue, profile of participants for the pilot in early 2012

**Proposed Timeline**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>August 25- September</td>
<td>Call for ECCE curriculum experts to send draft curriculum designs;</td>
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<tr>
<td>14, 2011</td>
<td>draft module outlines and CVs to IICBA for pre-workshop selection</td>
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<td>By 15 September, 2011</td>
<td>Compilation of draft curriculum designs submitted to IICBA by ECCE</td>
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<td>experts</td>
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<td>September 16- 30,</td>
<td>Selection of successful draft designs by a team comprising IICBA,</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>BREDA ECCE focal Point, UNESCO Addis liaison office, and UNICEF Ethiopia</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 11-14, 2011</td>
<td>Curriculum design workshop</td>
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### Activity Schedule

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>By 31 October, 2011</td>
<td>Workshop report and agreed standard curriculum and draft curriculum outlines shared with participants and partners for further inputs</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 30, 2011</td>
<td>Finalization of standard curriculum and drafting of modules and implementation guidelines by selected team of experts</td>
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<tr>
<td>By 15 December, 2011</td>
<td>Draft modules and implementation shared for on-line comments and finalization</td>
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<tr>
<td>By 31 December, 2011</td>
<td>Submission of final draft modules and implementation guidelines for pilot testing in early 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between January and February 2012</td>
<td>Preparation for and pilot testing of modules as agreed in the October workshop</td>
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### Activity Details

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Expected Results</th>
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| 1   | Workshop to Draft standard curriculum and module outline for ECCE Teachers and Care Givers in Local and Indigenous Communities in Africa: A project on the “Enhancement of IICBA’s delivery Capacity for ECCE Advocacy and Backstopping Activities” | The overall objective of the workshop is to provide opportunity for experts in ECCE curriculum design in Africa to elaborate on a standard curriculum and draft the outline for modules that would build the capacity of local teachers and care givers in providing ECCE services particularly to the vulnerable and disadvantaged population in Africa. Specifically, during the workshop, participants are expected to:  
• present their curriculum and outline of modules  
• synthesize the ideas presented to arrive at an agreed curriculum standard for ECCE delivery to local | - Experts will be able to use the drafted ECCE teacher curriculum as a framework for teacher training in local communities in their respective countries  
- Quality of teachers and caregivers local communities in Africa will be improved for providing quality ECCE services to larger percentage of disadvantaged and vulnerable children in their localities  
- IICBA capacity to carry out backstopping activities in the provision of quality ECCE teachers and caregivers among member states in Africa enhanced  
- IICBA’s partnership with funding agencies and partners within the UN towards the expansion of ECCE services with special reference to the most vulnerable and | - Number of teacher in Teacher training Institutions; Faculties of Education using the designed modules for training  
- Report of the pilot study conducted  
- Availability of standard curriculum and modules for training local teachers and care givers through face to face and open and distance education modes |
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<th>African communities</th>
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<td>•</td>
<td>agree on the outline of modules for teacher and care giver development</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>identify a experts for the finalization of standard curriculum and drafting of agreed modules</td>
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2. Finalization of draft modules and presentation guidelines for a pilot test in early 2012

- The validated modules and guidelines are effectively utilized by teacher training institutions and ministry of education technocrates to improve the quality of delivery of ECCE services to local African communities

- Number of reports from experts from the respective countries in which training is used regarding the expansion of ECCE services to the all children especially to the vulnerable and disadvantaged population

- Number of request to IICBA for the modules to be delivered to teachers in teacher training institutions; teachers associations and others interested groups through face-to-face or distance training modes

- To ensure that the validated modules are properly presented for use in improving quality of ECCE teachers and care givers

- To draft a guideline for module presentations for perspective teachers or facilitator of the modules using the face-to-face or distance mode of delivery

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