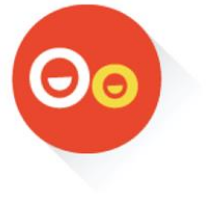


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A Spotlight on the Working Conditions of the Early Childhood Workforce

Hosted by:



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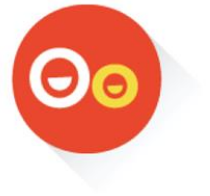
A Spotlight on the Working Conditions of the Early Childhood Workforce



Four Questions:

1. What **working conditions do members** of the early childhood workforce **face**?
2. To what extent are **challenging** working conditions a **barrier in recruiting and retaining** the early childhood workforce?
3. To what extent do working conditions **influence the quality** of service delivery?
4. What efforts have been taken in **different countries to improve** the working conditions of **various categories** of early childhood workers?

A Spotlight on the Working Conditions of the Early Childhood Workforce



Panelists:



Sara Bonetti, *Associate Director of Early Years*
at the Education Policy Institute, UK



Oliver Liang, *Head of the Private and Public Services Unit*
at the International Labour Organization (ILO), Switzerland



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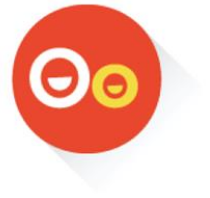
Kennedy Odhiambo Oruenjo, *County Director of Health*
in Siaya County, Kenya

Moderator:



Mihaela Ionescu
Program Director, ISSA – The International Step by Step Association, The Netherlands

What do we mean by “working conditions”?



- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Wages-Staff-child/family ratio-Maximum group size-Working hours, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Non-financial benefits-Team-work-Manager’s leadership-Organizational climate-Workload, etc. |
|---|--|

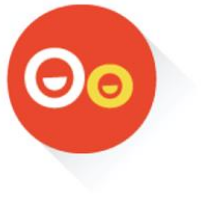
Factors that can influence the ability of professionals to do their work well and their satisfaction with the workplace, work tasks and nature of the job.

Source: OECD (2012) Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), Research Brief: Working Conditions Matter.



General considerations

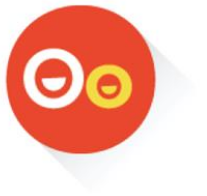
- Improving qualifications, training and working conditions of the EC workforce has been identified by OECD (2012) as an effective policy for improving the quality of services.
- Emphasis is paid on how to “improve” the EC workforce in terms of increasing their qualifications and training
- Less emphasis has been given into improving the working conditions of the staff
- The majority of the professional groups working in EC programs (educators, caregivers, social workers, home visitors, etc.) seem to share equivalent working conditions.



Question 1: What **working conditions** do **members** of the early childhood workforce **face**?

Salaries

- EC workforce is one of the most underpaid professional groups and there are great variations in terms of wages across EC workforce professions.
- In the USA (2018 Early Childhood Workforce Index), at times the wages are so low that numbers of staff report food insecurity, worry about housing, and postponement of education and medical treatment.
- In Peru, although when joining the Cuna Mas Program the compensation seemed attractive to regional staff and community actors, “the long hours, significant travel, challenging contexts, and job insecurity detracted them from the initial appeal”. (Josephson, Guerrero & Coddington, 2017).

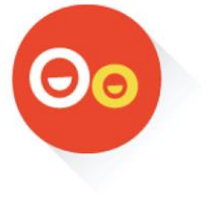


ILO guidelines on the promotion of decent work for ECE personnel



ILO findings

- Lowest levels of qualifications
- Lowest wages, longest hours of work
- Highest gender disparities
- Low levels of CPD and career progression
- Low unionization, high levels of privatization
- Diffracted coordination



Question 1: What **working conditions** do **members** of the early childhood workforce **face**?

Salaries

On average across countries with available data for 2005 and 2017 reference years, salaries **increased by 11% at pre-primary level**, 8% at primary level, 7% at lower secondary level and 5% at upper secondary level.

The increase exceeded 20% in **Poland** at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels and also in **Israel** (pre-primary, primary and lower secondary), **Latvia, Luxembourg** (pre-primary and primary), **Norway** (pre-primary) and **Turkey**.



Context and Working Conditions

ENGLAND

- Mixed-market provision – significant differences among providers
- Low average pay
 - £8.20 childcare workers v £13.20 female workers v £17.90 teachers
- Pay decreased by 5% in real terms since 2013
- High reliance on state benefits
 - 44.5% of childcare workers v 37% female workers v 29.7% teachers
- Low and decreasing proportion of staff working towards higher qualifications
 - 22.7% in 2008 v 17.2% in 2013 v 14.9% in 2018
- No compulsory induction outside the school system (no parity with QTS)

Question 2: To what extent are **challenging** working conditions a **barrier in recruiting and retaining** the early childhood workforce?



Across the globe there are calls for finding solutions in order to retain well-qualified staff in the EC sector.

This indicates that there are concerns about the impact of high workload, levels of stress, and poor working environments on professionals themselves and on the quality of their work.

Question 2: To what extent are **challenging** working conditions a **barrier in recruiting and retaining** the early childhood workforce?



Retention of the **social service workforce** is a challenge in both developed and developing regions, due to:

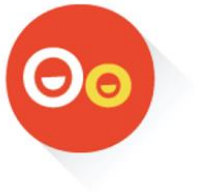
- low salaries,
- high caseloads,
- low professional status (partly shaped by cultural views),
- lack of resources and
- issues of burnout and secondary trauma.

(Source: Jini L. Roby (2016). [The Evidence Base on the Social Service Workforce: Current Knowledge, Gaps and Future Research Direction](#), Global Social Service Workforce Alliance)



Preparation, recruitment, deployment

- Practicum
- Diploma, ideally master's level
- Publically financed
- Standards for training institutions
- Rural, urban and remote
- Background checks, vetting
- Induction
- CPD
- Reflective practice
- Mobility

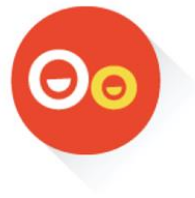


Working conditions



- Pay equivalent to primary education
- Overtime
- Disciplinary procedures
- Part-time work
- Family responsibilities
- Child-staff ratios
- Health and safety
- Violence
- Social security

Question 2: To what extent are **challenging** working conditions a **barrier in recruiting and retaining** the early childhood workforce?



Siaya County –Kenya

- The disparities vary within levels like managerial where we have a larger workforce with a **ratio of 1-200 and above** and on other levels of service delivery like home visitors, the **disparities are bigger** in terms of number of children that are to be seen visited by the home visitors (bearing in mind that they would engage the children in play sessions and milestone developmental assessment).
- The reason for this happening is that we have a structure where **each home visitor** whom we refer to as Community Health Volunteers has a jurisdiction of **100 households** and this means she/he takes care **of all the children** within those households.



Recruitment and retention issues ENGLAND

- High turnover rates and staffing instability:
 - 14% for group-based providers
 - 8% nursery in school-based settings
 - 9% reception
- Ageing of (highly qualified) workforce
- Decreasing number of providers with highly-qualified staff and strong regional disparities
- Difficulties recruiting:
 - In summer 2017, 45% of providers were recruiting for 246,000 posts
 - 84% of providers recruiting found vacancies hard to fill

Barriers in *recruiting and retaining* the EC workforce



INDIA

Systemic barriers

- No recognition of care work as a professional work
- Low salaries, no salary raise
- No recognition, rewards, appreciation



Barriers in *recruiting and retaining the EC workforce*



Cultural barrier:

- Perceived as ‘dirty job’
- Care is the woman’s responsibility



Physical barrier

- Long distances with lack of public transport facilities



Barriers in *recruiting and retaining* the EC workforce

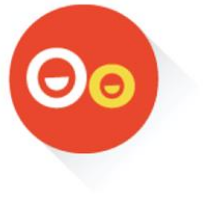


Physical Barriers:

- Lack of infrastructure, electricity, water, toilets, safety is an issue

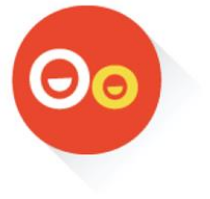


Question 3: To what extent do working conditions **influence the quality** of service delivery?



Too little research is focusing on the working conditions for the early childhood workforce and its correlation with the quality of service.

However...



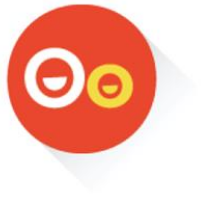
Question 3: To what extent do working conditions **influence the quality** of service delivery?

- Positive associations were found between salaries, the centre's organizational climate, and staff-child interactions, but the number of studies that have included these aspects is somewhat limited.
- Preliminary evidence suggests that provisions for higher-paid staff and more team collaboration in centres with children from 3 to 6, and for children under the age of 3, provided higher quality staff-child interactions.

(Source: OECD (2018) *Engaging Young Children: Lessons from Research about Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care, Starting Strong*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264085145-en>)

Question 3: To what extent do working conditions **influence the quality** of service delivery?



Home visitors have heavy workloads which affect their effectiveness and the quality of their work. (Josephson, K., Guerrero, G., and Coddington, C., 2017)

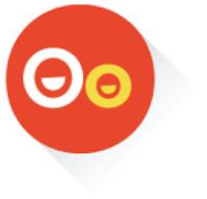
(Source: Josephson, K., Guerrero, G., and Coddington, C. (2017). Supporting the Early Childhood Workforce at Scale: The Cuna Más home visiting program in Peru. Washington, D.C.: Results for Development.)



Question 3: To what extent do working conditions **influence the quality** of service delivery?

Siaya County –Kenya

- The lack of clear policies and guidelines regarding the training, qualifications and career development when working with volunteers within our context has jeopardized the quality of care provided by home visitors. They feel insecure on their job and this could limit certain decisions that could improve the quality of care.
- The organizational culture related to social norms, organizational climate (including provider perception), and the physical environment like the distance that home visitors have to make in a day for providing the services to people, can compromise the quality of services offered to children.



Impact on quality

ENGLAND

- High turnover rate and instability:
 - 18% unqualified staff
 - 21% level 3
 - 12% level 3+
- National Minimum and Living Wages are a positive development for workers but will have an impact on providers' costs, parents' fees and quality of provision
- Increasing reliance on unpaid staff
- Increasing expectations for early childhood education staff but lack of connections with health/mental health sector



Question 3: To what extent do working conditions influence the quality of service delivery?

INDIA

- Opted by illiterate or semi-literate women
- High attrition within in literate and professional staff



- High personal burden because of heavy domestic responsibilities other than ‘Care work’



Question 3: To what extent do working conditions **influence the quality** of service delivery?

- No ongoing supportive supervision
- No refresher training - loss of knowledge and innovation



- Low self esteem
- Leading to poor motivation for quality of own work



Question 4: What efforts have been taken in **different countries** to improve the working conditions of **various categories** of early childhood workers?

Country efforts – India



At Mobile Crèches:

Provided **decent work place** with all basic amenities - safe drinking water, electricity, adult toilets, strong and stable building/rooms



Strictly following norms for **minimum wages**, with annual increase

Country efforts – India



Social protection benefits:

- Annual health services,
- Family health insurance
- Maternity benefits
- Four weeks annual paid leave
- Support to family in case of death or disability
- Retirement support



Country efforts – India



- Culture of motivation, appreciation, rewards, and recognition
- Acknowledgement of knowledge and experience by involving them in various platforms



Annual retreats at tourist destinations – sometimes their only holiday/break from domestic responsibilities – developing friendships

Sumitra Mishra and Neeru Bhatnagar – Mobile Creches, India

Country efforts – India



Training and mentoring

- Trainings for ECD workforce – pre-service, incremental, refresher workshops
- Training conducted internally by MC master trainers and through external experts



- Clearly defined **non negotiables** for running quality childcare service
- Clear job roles and expectations

Country efforts – India



At policy and systems level:

- Advocating for recognition of care work as ‘decent work’ with minimum wages, recognition and rewards/benefits



Established minimum norms for quality ECD

- Affecting ECD training programme outcomes
- Minimum qualifications
- Ongoing supervision and refresher courses

Country efforts – India



Working within government systems

Strengthen knowledge, attitude and skills, service provisions



- Demonstrating best practices
- Demonstrating costing model for ECD workforce training



© Mobile Crèches

Country efforts – India



Working within government systems

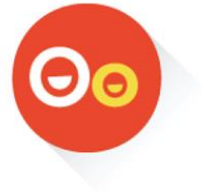
Using laws, policy levers to raise awareness about

- need for quality ECD
- need for trained ECD workforce



(Using Maternity Benefit Act 2016 as a lever)

Country efforts - County of Siaya (Kenya)



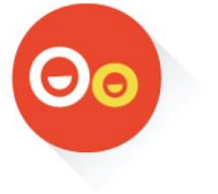
- **Formulation of policies**

The County Government is currently debating a Bill in the County Assembly on Community Health Services that if passed would strengthen community health services by legalizing their pay as a stipend. There are also efforts by the National Government of motivating the CHVs through a proposed Bill to be presented to the National Assembly for consideration.

- **Capacity building of the workforce and support on their day to day work**

CHVs are trained using a standard curriculum; Basic training takes 10 days with 1 extra day for practical exercises, refresher trainings take 5 days, and technical modules which also take 5 days or more depending on the specialty areas. All these program are ongoing.

Country efforts - County of Siaya (Kenya)



- **Continuous monitoring and assessment of the programmes**

The County conducts supportive supervision at both levels managerial and service delivery on a periodic manner, mainly monthly, quarterly, bi-annually and annually accompanied by reports of each exercise. Coaching and mentorship is also provided to the CHVs.

- **Continuous quality improvements**

Data quality improvements are conducted through data quality audits done bi-annually. Performance improvement plans are developed to monitor the improvements and they are disseminated during in-charges meetings and shared during social accountability fora, like dialogue days and action days with the community to strengthen community health systems. Reporting is also done on a monthly period from community to the national level.



Country efforts – England

- National Minimum Wage, National Living Wage and pension auto-enrolment scheme
- March 2017 – government Workforce Strategy but no follow through on main topics (e.g. parity to QTS)
- Government support for staff who wants to obtain early years teacher status (EYTS)

BUT

- Low funding rates and increasing financial strain are hindering providers' ability to improve working conditions and focus on quality of provision
- Limited information and/or awareness of government support
- Variety of available CPD does not necessarily translate into more choice

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in Siaya County, Kenya

Moderator:



Mihaela Ionescu, *Program Director*,
ISSA – The International Step by Step Association, The
Netherlands

If you want to send any feedback
related to the content
of today's webinar, please contact:

Dr. Mihaela Ionescu
Program Director, ISSA
mionescu@issa.nl



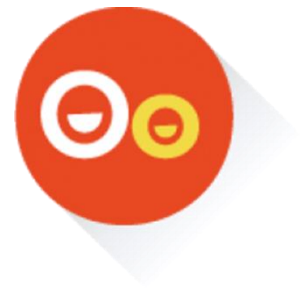
Check our latest country study:

[Community Health Workers and the Expansion of First 1000 Days Services in South Africa](#)

Stay tuned for the soon-to-be-launched:

- *Six Country Briefs* focusing on how specific workforce challenges have been addressed and how such experience may be relevant for other countries.

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