

## Information Technology

### IMPACT—Information Management Project for Action, Communications, and Training

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*To strengthen and increase local capacity to collect, maintain, and use ECD data for program planning, decisionmaking, and advocacy across Africa*

*To support ECD programs at different levels with information systems as planning and monitoring tools*

*To create country-level ECD knowledge bases and web sites in 10 to 15 African countries*

*To create National ECD Information Resource and Training Centers with the ability to collect, manage, and disseminate information on ECD and to conduct ECD training courses*

*To use electronic resources to track and develop programs for especially vulnerable children, such as orphans and children affected by HIV/AIDS*

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<b>Status</b>	Active
<b>Duration</b>	2000–02
<b>Cost</b>	US\$800,000–900,000 (total) (US\$60,000–70,000 per country)
<b>Funding</b>	Year 1: Norwegian and Dutch governments/World Bank (US\$0.38 million start-up funds for 6 to 8 countries). Participating countries will assemble their own resources and will seek co-funding at the country level (about 50 percent of total project costs)
<b>Target population</b>	African ECD policymakers, program managers, and practitioners of government and nongovernmental agencies that plan and deliver services for children of pre-primary school age; emphasis on data collection on children in difficult circumstances (e.g., HIV/AIDS orphans)
<b>Partner agencies</b>	U.N. agencies, international foundations, national and local government and nongovernmental ECD agencies, ECDNA Project implementation: <i>Centre de Ressource pour l'Emergence Sociale Participative</i> (CRESP), Senegal (Program Director: Dr. Marian Zeitlin)
<b>World Bank project manager</b>	Susan Opper, Senior Education Specialist (AFTH4)

In light of the growing demand for ECD programs throughout Africa, governments, the World Bank, multilateral donors, and local ECD agencies have joined together to develop an Africa-wide ECD knowledge base documenting the situation of children ages zero to eight years. Although decisionmakers need accurate information to design effective and targeted large-scale ECD programs, and implementers need basic data to monitor services in the field, many government and nongovernmental agencies in Africa lack the technology and skills to gather, organize, and use the required baseline data.

Over three years, the Information Management Project for Action, Communications, and Training (IMPACT) supports the creation of national information resource and training centers with electronic knowledge and databases related to ECD in 10 to 15 African countries. The resource centers manage national ECD web sites presenting information on policies, research, statistics, programs, and services. These databases and the ongoing training in data use that the resource centers provide will strengthen and increase local capacity to use ECD data for decisionmaking, planning, and advocacy and will, in addition, support ECD programs at different levels with information systems as strategic planning and monitoring tools. The project will help African governments and nongovernmental ECD agencies to create and maintain an electronic record of policies, programs, services, and research related to the situation of pre-primary school-age children.

In each participating country, the project brings together local technicians and ECD experts for a series of training sessions and workshops during which the databases are created. African ECD specialists support these resource centers, databases, and web sites, taking into account all relevant issues of access, confidentiality, attribution, and intellectual property. Special attention is given to document local knowledge on care-giving and child-rearing practices, the situation of children in vulnerable circumstances such as children affected by HIV/AIDS, AIDS and conflict-related orphans, and children with special needs. This information will provide a solid basis for ECD advocacy, policy formation, program design, and training.

The program and training activities are designed to be inclusive of all ECD stakeholders at different levels who are delivering health, nutrition, education, and social services to improve the condition of young children, targeting especially those in vulnerable circumstances. The “product,” an ECD electronic MIS in the form of web pages for easy data access, is disseminated to a wider group of ECD stakeholders and NGOs for ECD program development and training purposes first and foremost in the respective countries. The project also pursues wider regional and international dissemination of the knowledge base via country web sites to facilitate information sharing and peer support across the Africa Region.

As it builds skills, both centrally and locally, to manage information and plan ECD programs, the IMPACT project also builds local capacity to initiate and implement such programs. It provides an electronic forum where all Africans interested in ECD can meet and exchange information. Dedicated web sites allow ECD agencies and those in the private sector to develop and disseminate their own resources and give program managers, communities, and caregivers access to relevant information. IMPACT supports in-country training, technical assistance, and ongoing professional advice.

The IMPACT initiative uniquely links local capacity building and training with information management and ECD planning and programming. The added value of the series of training activities is that they also provide a cross-cutting forum within countries and eventually across the Africa Region for discussions, networking, and ECD program coordination, underpinning the multisectoral nature of ECD programs. The project builds sustainable capacity in that ECD agencies, in collaboration with the private sector, assemble their own resources and groups of sponsors for creation and maintenance of the knowledge bases and web sites. With very few exceptions, project funding will be used for in-country training, technical assistance, and ongoing professional advice only.

Further information on this project is available at the World Bank's ECD web site at <http://www.worldbank.org/children/africa>. This site includes information on ECD policymaking, case studies, HIV/AIDS, ECD in post-conflict situations, links to agencies sponsoring ECD projects in Africa, and the different country-level ECD information created through IMPACT.

## PROPOSED STRATEGY

### ECD KNOWLEDGE BASES AND BASELINE DATA

- Create country-level ECD electronic knowledge bases for four or five African countries per project year with data on:
  - The condition of young children (health and nutrition status, family situation, children in difficult circumstances)
  - ECD policies
  - Private and public services available to children
  - Descriptions of ECD projects and programs
  - In-country and external ECD agencies.
- Create a comprehensive ECD knowledge base for each country, which can be integrated into an online profile of ECD throughout Africa.

### INFORMATION MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

- Conduct a four-week technical training for national delegates to create the initial database and in-country training capacity to train program managers on how to interpret ECD information for advocacy, ECD program development, implementation, and monitoring.
- Provide software installation and staff training for production and maintenance of a national-level ECD knowledge base.
- Set up National ECD Information Resource and Training Centers with the ability to collect, manage, and disseminate information on ECD and to conduct ECD training courses.
- Introduce new ECD training programs and materials by CD-ROM and online resources.
- Support coordination with other Internet training programs such as the ECDVU.

### ECD WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT

- Create each country's introductory ECD web page by using an adapted manual from international materials.
- Promote this site as an electronic forum for networking, research, and discussion.
- Create, in collaboration with the private sector, a national page of childcare advice for parents and caregivers.
- Provide technical assistance and continued support to help countries maintain and use their created knowledge base.

- ECD WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT (continued)
- Provide ongoing assistance for:
    - Management of information systems
    - Additional training in database development and use of online training materials
    - ECD studies, baseline surveys, data collection, and analysis as well as policy interpretation and application to programs (in collaboration and coordination with country-based researchers and the ECDVU program).
  - Provide links from the ECD web site to the ECDVU and other institutions of higher learning, training, and research.
- NETWORKING
- Support a forum for networking between ECD agencies and stakeholders within and among African countries
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Source: World Bank, February 2000. *IMPACT—Project Description and Action Plan*.

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*Contact:*

Dr. Marian Zeitlin, Centre de Ressources pour l'Emergence Sociale Participative (CRESP), ONG, B.P. 8873, Dakar-Yoff, Sénégal, Phone : 221-820-9200, e-mail: [mzeitlin@refer.sn](mailto:mzeitlin@refer.sn).

Susan Opper, The World Bank, 1818 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20433, USA, Phone: 1-202-473-9332, e-mail: [sopper@worldbank.org](mailto:sopper@worldbank.org).

Web site: <http://www.cresp.sn/impactcentral/>; <http://www.worldbank.org/children/africa/index/html>.