

## Leadership Development: ECD Virtual University

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*To deliver an accredited master's degree program in ECD using new technologies and face-to-face seminar formats*

*To strengthen regional capacity to plan, implement, and evaluate ECD in selected African countries*

*To enhance ECD leadership and networking in Africa*

*To link African ECD leaders with each other and with international experts to promote communication, idea sharing, and capacity building in Africa*

*To encourage and demonstrate the use of new technologies in promoting ECD in Africa*

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<b>Status</b>	Active
<b>Duration</b>	2000—development 2001–07 – two deliveries
<b>Cost</b>	US\$0.28 million—development US\$1.9 million—two deliveries
<b>Funding</b>	Norwegian government (development); Norwegian government, the World Bank, and other partners (two deliveries)
<b>Target population</b>	African ECD professionals and future leaders
<b>Partner agencies</b>	U.N. agencies, international foundations, national governments, ECD NGOs, employers of participants, ECDNA, African educational institutions, the African Virtual University, and the Global Development Learning Network of the World Bank
<b>World Bank project manager</b>	Project Coordination: University of Victoria, B.C., Canada (Program Director: Dr. Alan Pence) Marito Garcia, Lead Economist (AFTH1)

Concern about children's early development is perhaps nowhere greater than in Africa, yet many countries have only limited means to respond even to young children's very basic needs. In each African country the World Bank has engaged in ECD discussions, the need for building creative and committed leadership in this field has been cited. Indeed, ECD projects in Africa cannot move forward successfully without significant capacity building, training, and leadership development.

Building on the strengths and the experiences of the various ECD institutes and the Kampala International ECD Conference, the ECD Virtual University (ECDVU) offers a master's degree in ECD, allowing African course participants to study with internationally recognized instructors without having to leave their jobs or homes. By combining face-to-face seminars and on-the-job application of learning with

web-based and video-conferencing technologies, the ECDVU offers participating students a unique experience of educational support to help ensure the future well-being of children in Africa. This leadership cohort and affiliated organizations will help ensure that investments in early childhood programs in Africa will have a far greater potential for success and sustainability.

The ECDVU builds on successful experiences over a number of years in creating learning environments that understand children and families holistically, appreciate the necessity for intersectoral collaboration, and promote community and family involvement in program development and delivery. This is essential in achieving child well-being and sustainable program development. The approach encourages partnerships among institutions, governments, employers, NGOs, and learners and teachers. As the World Bank continues to increase its support for ECD initiatives (estimated at more than US\$1.40 billion globally since 1990), partnerships to achieve intersectoral collaboration and holistic programming become ever more essential.

At the core of the ECDVU is an initial cohort of 30 committed professionals from across Africa selected by a country-based ECD committee. Although all students (usually three or four per country and representing different sectors) will be continually engaged with the ECDVU faculty and other course members, they will also facilitate the interaction of ECD country-based networks with the ideas shared and generated through the program. Typically, all course assignments (and final research projects) will relate to the information and developmental needs of ECD in the participants' home countries while also making major contributions to the evolution of African ECD literature.

The ECDV will include:

- **Web-based learning.** Computer courses will account for approximately 60 percent of the students' coursework.
- **Teleconferencing.** Participants will receive approximately 5 percent of their instruction via televideo interactions with authorities from different parts of the world. These broadcasts can also include larger country-based audiences.
- **Face-to-face seminars.** International seminars of 12 to 15 days will account for approximately 35 percent of content covered and will bring participants into direct contact with each other, with faculty, and with special guest presenters.

The IMPACT project has a synergistic relationship with the ECDVU, and both projects can be seen as keystone elements for other ECD capacity-building activities in Africa. To a significant degree, the ECDVU course participants will be important advocates, users, and creators of the IMPACT country-level ECD knowledge bases. They will also play a key role in ensuring that other forms of web-based information are channeled into rural and outlying areas in their countries. Similarly, future ECD African conferences and institutes will benefit greatly from the expertise, leadership, and networking ability found in the ECDVU. Through cohort contacts with local universities and training colleges, it is anticipated that ECD training and program capacity will increase within those institutions.

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## ECDVU STRUCTURE For a Master's Degree in ECD

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ECD INSTITUTES (6 credits –1.5 credits each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four, 12–15-day seminars will be held during the three-year duration of the program. The seminars will be held in different regions of Africa and will feature components of the core courses as well as additional ECD topics.</li> </ul>
CORE COURSES (12 credits –1.5 credits each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective Leadership in ECD: Case Studies and Current Literature</li> <li>• The Past, Present, and Future of ECD: Constructions of Children, Families, Programs, and Communities</li> <li>• Child Development in Context: Appreciating the Holistic Child</li> <li>• Program Development in a Community Development Context</li> <li>• ECD in the Majority World: Current Directions in U.N., NGO, Funders, and Related ECD Organizations</li> <li>• Research in ECD: Quantitative Approaches</li> <li>• Research in ECD: Qualitative Approaches</li> <li>• Directed Studies in ECD (preparatory for thesis proposal development)</li> </ul>
THESIS OR MAJOR PROJECT (4.5 credits)	Typically, a local university faculty member will join an ECDVU faculty member on the student's supervisory committee.

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*Source: World Bank. 2000. Early Childhood Development Capacity Building in Africa: Introducing the Early Childhood Development Virtual University (ECDVU)—An ECD Leadership Initiative. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.*

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