Arab Regional Agenda for improving Education Quality (ARAIEQ)/
Arab Program for Early Childhood Development (APECD)

Reference Document for Deploying and "managing"
The Arab Network for Early Childhood for ECD (post 2014)

Introduction

In the context of the Arab Program for Early Childhood Development (APECD)[1], the Founding Forum of the Arab Network for Early Childhood Development (ANECD) was convened by ALECSO and ARC on 15-17 December 2014 in Amman, Jordan. Representatives of ministries of education and social affairs, childhood councils, NGOs and academia, as well as individual experts attended the Forum. They came from 15 Arab and foreign countries.

The Forum declared the meeting as the "Founding Assembly" of the Arab Network for ECD and mandated the steering team to act as a Follow up Committee. A document was produced by the Founding Forum, summarising the outcomes of the meeting and establishing a roadmap for the deployment of ANECD (Appendix 1).

This Founding Assembly requested the production of a "Reference Document" in order to facilitate the elaboration of the concept, role and structure of ANECD.

The present document is the required reference document , and it is based on the roadmap agreed upon.

- It develops APECD's networking function during the next three years
- It is prepared to trigger consultations among members of the Founding Assembly, the Follow up Committee and other actors who have a stake in the deployment of ANECD.

The document contains two sections:

Section 1: Asserting the importance of ECD and defining the global and regional context and strategic priorities.

Section 2: This section has 3 parts:
1. Concept and structure
2. Towards a program of work
3. Funding and budget

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[1] APECD is hosted by the Arab Resource Collective (ARC), under the umbrella of the Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education Quality (ARAIEQ) based at the Arab League's Education, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO).

Section 1 - The importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Investing in care and development of young children has been recognised as a central component in human and social development, and has been included as a distinct element in all international conventions and agendas adopted in recent decades.

The evidence is based on scientific research in developmental psychology and on the steadily increasing ECD practice around the world. It has been confirmed by current research on the economics of early human development, as well as on the development of the brain in the early years.

1.1 ECD and the Sustainable Development Goals.

As the level of achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education For All (EFA), both spanning from 2000 to 2015, are being assessed, the process of elaborating a new agenda for the next fifteen years is well under way at the United Nations.

1.1.1 The elaboration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The preparation of a new agenda for development for the post-2015 period had made significant progress under the new title of Sustainable Development Goals. The Open Working Group on SDGs distilled the work into a report to the UN General Assembly and in December 2014, UN Secretary General issued a Synthesis Report under the title "*Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet*".

The overall approach aims at integrating six essential elements:
1. Dignity: to end poverty and fight inequalities
2. People: to ensure healthy lives, knowledge, and the inclusion of women and children
3. Prosperity: to grow a strong, inclusive and transformative economy
4. Planet: to protect our ecosystems for all societies and our children
5. Justice: to promote safe and peaceful societies, and strong institutions
6. Partnership: to catalyze global solidarity for sustainable development.

The concrete agenda has been detailed in 17 specific goals by the Open Working Group, which were included in the SG's Synthesis Report (Appendix 2).

1.1.2 Early Childhood and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Throughout the process of elaboration of the SDCs, the global early childhood movement has organized a number of initiatives in order to:
- Identify the priorities for advancing ECD in the next 15 years, and formulate goals that can be integrated in the SDGs,
- Lobby relevant instances, including the Open Working Group to ensure that early childhood is given the attention it requires within the emerging SDG system.

This work has led to noticeable success: In addition to being mentioned twice in the six essential elements, children are expected to benefit from any achievements in any of them, and also in any of the 17 SDGs as they are currently formulated.

More technical work is presently focusing on designing indicators to monitor progress on strategic ECD priorities. One example of such work has been

produced by a consultation convened by UNICEF in January 2015 and attended by experts from UN agencies, NGOs and academia.

The top indicators recommended by the meeting came under **Sustained Development Goal 4**:
"***Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all***".

They are proposed as Indicators for "Target 4.2":

Child outcome indicator	Percentage of children under age 5 who are developmentally on track in the following areas: language/literacy/numeracy, physical, emotional and cognitive domains
Access to Services indicator	Percentage of children under age 5 attending an early childhood education programme
Environment indicator	Percentage of children under age 5 experiencing responsive and stimulating parenting

It is important for the early childhood movement in the Arab countries, both within governments and civil society, to take part in the process. An active ANECD is the ideal platform for
- identifying the strategic priorities for early childhood in the Arab national and regional contexts for the post-2015 agenda, and
- coordinating the regional contribution to the global initiatives for raising the status of ECD in the SDGs' emerging system.

1.2 ECD in the Arab regional context.

1.2.1 Background
Early Childhood Development has emerged gradually in recent years as an important component in the approaches to human development of Arab Governments.

A prominent guiding principle has been **Goal 1 of Education For All** adopted in 2000 globally and by Arab countries, and regularly monitored since:
Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

More recently, and more relevant to APECD is the unfolding of the Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education Quality (ARAIEQ) in implementation of the Doha Declaration on Quality of Education in the Arab World, adopted by the Doha Ministerial Colloquium on Quality Education For All on 20-21 September 2010. The Arab Program for ECD was designed as one of its five pillars.

It is noteworthy that a good number of other regional events since 2010, convened both by governments and civil society, including within APECD, have identified both achievements and challenges in knowledge, capacities and practice in the ECD field[2].

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[2] Two relevant examples are:
- The regional workshop on Advancing the ECCD Agenda in the Arab Region convened by the Arab Resource Collective in Amman on 22-25 March 2010.
- The Regional Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, convened by UNESCO in Damascus on 20-22 September 2010.

1.2.2 ECD strategic priorities in the region.

As part of its Think Tank function, APECD has distilled an overview of the situation of early childhood[3].

Both for mapping the field of ECD and for selecting its programmatic priorities, two inter-linked conceptual frameworks are used: The Holistic/Integrated Approach and the Four Cornerstones (see appendix 3).

The following is a brief summary of the programmatic priorities in order to place the objectives of the emerging Arab Network for ECD within their context. They are identified by
- a) age categories and
- b) generic approaches.

a) Challenges by age category:

It is a commonly accepted approach to distinguish the specific development characteristics of young children by three broadly delimited age categories. Programmatic priorities for each age are then defined accordingly.

A summary of the principles and the situation in Arab countries related to each age category has been placed in Appendix 3. The following table presents only the highest programmatic priorities:

Conception to 3 yeas	4 to 5 years	6 to 8 years
General approach: Integrated services, namely by the ministries of health, social affairs and education.	**General approach**: Expanding nurseries and KGs will ensure a continuum of care from home to enrolment in basic education.	**General approach**: The ministries of education give top priority to the quality of teaching and learning in the early grades.
In practice: i. Strengthen mother and child care in the health system, and adopt a holistic approach to the science of child development in the training of health personnel. ii. Partnerships should be developed between the ECD and the health sectors to implement pre- and peri-natal projects for young mothers and fathers. iii. Structured parenting programs are the right response and they are being developed in various contexts in Arab countries, but they remain limited and should be urgently expanded.	**In practice**: i. Standards should be introduced through legislation and administrative practice by ministries. ii. In successful integrated systems, formal pre-schooling receives from 10% to 20% of the education budget. iii. Specialized teacher training for KGs is developing. Much more is needed, as this sector is expanding rapidly. iv. The private sector has an impressive capital of expertise and should partner with the public sector to disseminate quality. v. Out-of-school structured and affordable programs involving parents can reach out to the 80% who are not enrolled in order to prepare them for entry into primary.	**In practice**: i. The most qualified teachers have to be allocated to the first grades, contrary to common practice. ii. Linked to that, the status and salaries of teachers in the first grades should be raised. iii. Enhance the knowledge of current teachers of the early grades in the science of child development and train them on effective and active methods of teaching reading and writing. iv. Strengthen the content on the science of child development and active learning in teacher training. vi. Produce attractive reading materials in Arabic for this age. vii. Prioritize the primary in educational reforms. vii. Engage parents in the running of the primary schools

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[3] The report of the regional workshop convened by APECD on 22-24 November 2012 in Amman provides a comprehensive overview of ECD approaches, achievements and challenges in Arab countries. It's available on request from ARC or ALECSO.

b) Challenges by generic approaches.
The approach by age categories should not divert attention from both the holistic approach to child development, and from the necessity to ensure that every child is engaged in a continuum of care from conception to age eight and beyond.
Generic approaches help in ensuring coherence and integration in the provision of services. Nine approaches have been identified to select strategic priorities for the ECD movement in the Arab countries. They also help in programming for the three functions of ARAIEQ/APECD: Think Tank, Networking and Resources & Tools Production.

Approach	Remarks
1. National ECD policies and implementation strategies, including child-friendly budgets.	Only a handful of Arab countries have succeeded in implementing a sustained process, but they are good examples to follow.
2. Collection, compilation and analysis of segregated data.	This is indispensable for planning and programming, but there are no effective systems in Arab countries. The World Bank's "Systems Approach for Better Education Results" (SABER), designed for benchmarking the policy and practice of ECD can be implemented in all Arab countries.
3. Inter-sectorial coordination.	There should be one structure, with appropriate authority, to coordinate the early childhood departments in the ministries concerned, and link their work to national development policy, strategies and budgeting.
4. Engaging the parents in the continuum of care for their children.	Parenting programmes are developing in several Arab countries: a practical basis for engaging parents in the structured care for their children up to age 8 and beyond.
5. Quality and standards.	They ensure that the ECD sector improves continuously, particularly as expansion is accelerating. Applicable systems exist, including in some Arab countries.
6. The capital of knowledge in each country and in the region.	Two components, for each of which a coherent strategy at the regional level is necessary. - Knowledge resources and training tools in Arabic are being developed at a quick pace, but they need to be utilized, and overall needs remain enormous. - The pool of competent human resources trained in ECD is already impressive, but still very far from being adequate to respond to the increasing demand.
7. The urgency of equity.	Far too many children and their families are excluded from structured ECD services in the Arab countries. Accelerating the expansion of the ECD sector is a question of justice, and works in the national interest.
8. Collaboration among Arab countries.	Conferences are held and resolutions made, but little is done in practice. ARAIEQ/APECD is a beacon of hope!
9. Networking and advocacy.	The launch of the Arab Network for ECD is timely and should develop into an effective mover for the early childhood sector in the Arab region.
10. Care, education and protection in emergencies.	Endemic conflicts in the region have thrown huge numbers of young children and their families in precarious situations of displacement. Quick response programs to provide care, education and protection have become a quasi-permanent generic priority.

1. The concept and structure of ANECD
The Founding Forum's Concluding Document included both initial definitions and guiding principles for ANECD. They constitute the basis for this section.

1.1 **The concept of ANECD**.
The following elements have been agreed in the Founding Forum:

Vision:
The development potential of the young child is realized with support from families, communities and states in all Arab countries.

Mission:
The Arab Network for ECD will mobilise expertise and resources for the full development of every young child and for a better future.

General objective:
ANECD will produce and disseminate knowledge, share best practice and advocate for policies that support the care and development of young children.

Status and role:
The Arab network wants to be a community of knowledge, information and practice, and a professional platform for consultation, cooperation and advocacy.

It will implement the networking function of the Arab Program for ECD, and will be used for disseminating knowledge, promoting policies and using the materials produced by the program's think tank and resource functions.

1.2 **Membership of ANECD**

ANECD will have a voluntary non-remunerated membership and will be inclusive of significant actors in the ECD sector who wish to join. Its membership will include both institutions and individual experts with a record of accomplishment in ECD.

Currently, the **Founding Assembly** of ANECD has the **48 members** who attended the Founding Forum in December 2014. During Phase 2 of APECD, membership will expand to include the countries that are not yet represented and major ECD actors who could not attend the Founding Forum (see details in appendix 5). Until the next formal general assembly of ANECD, the new members will join ANECD through a consultative process facilitated by ALECSO and ARC.

1.2.1 **The League of Arab States**:

- As host and manager of ARAIEQ, ALECSO plays a lead role in the deployment, governance and activities of ANECD.
- The Department of Woman, Family and Childhood at LAS has regularly participated in APECD's activities and will be an advisory member of ANECD.

1.2.2 Membership of **governmental representatives**:
- Within each country, membership is open for any government agency that has a mandate of care for young children (pre-natal to 8) and their families.
- If several government agencies become institutional members of ANECD, they will appoint a "focal point" to coordinate the matters related to ANECD.

1.2.3 Membership of **civil society organisations and academic institutions**:
- ANECD membership is open to local, regional or international civil society organisations and networks, as well as academic institutions, who have sustained ECD activities.
- Should there be several members in any one country, they will select a focal point to coordinate the matters related to ANECD among civil society actors in the country.

1.2.4 Membership of **individual experts**
Professionals of early childhood are entitled to be members of ANECD when they have a record of more than five years of active involvement in ECD work and are not employed by an institution member of ANECD.

1.2.5 **Special status membership**

UN and multilateral agencies will also be advisory members of ANECD, with the right to participate in all the network's activities:
- The World Bank has been the funder and an active actor within ARAIEQ, including APECD in its phase I (2012-2014) and is expected to continue engaging with ANECD.
- UNICEF and UNESCO's regional offices have been invited to APECD activities, including the Founding Forum, but have not attended regularly.

1.2.5 **Funding Partners**
Agencies who provide long-term funding will be advisory members, with the right to participate in all the network's activities.

1.3 **Governance and management of ANECD**

ANECD's structure will remain light and will operate as the networking function of APECD, gradually operationalizing the structure that emerged from the Founding Forum.

1.3.1 **The Founding Assembly**.

Members of the FA (see 1.2 above and appendix 5) will be regularly informed and consulted on the major steps related to the deployment of the network, namely regarding the membership, governance and structure of the network, and their translation into by-laws.

They will also receive information about project implemented by APECD to
        a) encourage participation from their country in the activities and
        b) facilitate the implementation in their national context when appropriate.

1.3.2 **The Follow-up Committee**

A steering team was formed at the Founding Forum by asking participants to volunteer and a large number of them joined the members of APECD's Advisory Group who convened the Forum. The steering team finalised the agenda, agreed methods of facilitation, met regularly during the forum and participated in running it. The concluding document mandated the steering team to become a Follow-up Committee (FC), without detailing its specific terms of reference.

The FC will be the first instance to which all matters related to the deployment of the network will be referred for feedback, before they are submitted to the Founding Assembly.

By the end of APECD phase 2, the committee will be replaced by an "executive body", to be decided upon and elected at the first general assembly and according to the by-laws.

1.3.3 **The Secretariat of ANECD:**

Until the next general assembly, the secretariat of ANECD will be included within the mandate of the director of APECD, and will be based at ARC's offices in Beirut. Regular coordination with ALECSO will be maintained about the deployment of the network, as part of the overall management of APECD within ARAIEQ.

The secretariat will perform two types of tasks related to the deployment of the network:
- Initiate the steps required to deploy the network after canvassing the views of the membership about them, with the Follow-up Committee in the first instance, and when appropriate leading to their adoption by the Founding Assembly.
- Keep the regular flow of information within the network about APECD's outputs and activities, and more generally, about major developments within the ECD sector, globally and in the Arab region.

Funding permitting, ARC's General Coordinator/APECD's director will:
- allocate staff time to perform effectively the secretariat's tasks,
- ensure that appropriate tools are developed to keep a regular flow of consultation and information, including a dedicated web page, and an electronic newsletter.

1.3.4 The road to the **Constitutional Assembly of ANECD.**

The aim is to convene a constitutional event towards the end of APECD phase 2 in 2017, in which the governance bodies will be established, and any other appropriate measures taken to consolidate the institutionalization of ANECD, its general assembly, Executive body and secretariat, and including its by-laws, and administrative base as part of the networking function of APECD.

2. Towards a program of work for ANECD
As a mechanism of the networking function during phase 2 (2015-2017), ANECD will be mobilized for the implementation of activities that are in line with its own vision, mission and objectives. Those activities are also articulated to the other two functions of APECD: think tank and resource production.

The long-term strategy of the network will be developed through consultations engaging its membership and will take its final shape when the institutional structure of ANECD will be established at the end of Phase 2.

This "Reference Document" recommends an initial set of activities and can serve a multiple purpose:
- Engaging all stakeholders in a collective reflection towards the elaboration of ANECD's strategy and program, at the same time that the network builds its membership and structure.
- Initiating concrete activities and a method of work during phase 2.
- Being a source of ideas for submitting project proposals to funding partners.

Five distinct tasks are recommended, which may help to better define the role and objectives of ANECD.

2.1 ANECD as distiller and disseminator of knowledge and good practice.

The knowledge and practice within the ECD field are continuously innovating and expanding, including through APECD's think tank and resource production within the region. The network will contribute to disseminating them through two interlinked methods:

2.1.1 Thematic working groups
ANECD is an appropriate structure to organize specialized working groups that allow members who have a common interest to work collectively on developing and disseminating knowledge specific to this interest and linking it to practice.

The working groups will emerge in response to common priorities identified by members and should be organised by the members themselves. They will be lightly regulated under the supervision of ANECD's governing bodies and supported by the secretariat.

The added value of the network is that it will provide:
- the possibility for the working groups to organize and take advantage of the program of events organised by ANECD and APECD,
- the platform through which their outputs will be disseminated: website, newsletter, etc.

2.1.2 A regional forum every three years[4].
This is a long shot proposal and is to be proposed to the FC to adopt as a regional activity of ANECD. ANECD can adopt the practice of organizing an "Open Forum on ECD" once every three years. The following are examples to illustrate the purpose of such an event:
- Raise the profile of ECD in the Arab region.
- Bring together practitioners and decision-makers in the ECD field to share their achievements, plans and concerns.
- Allow the working groups (see above) to develop their collective work and share their findings and policies with a wider audience.

Such an Open Forum could be financed through sponsorships, collecting participation fees and requiring those who attend to cover their own expenses. However, ANECD should also have a special fund to:
- be able to sponsor invited Governments participants
- be able to invite key speakers and resource persons to ensure that pioneering and attractive knowledge is provided to the audience,

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[4] This is inspired broadly by the model of the World Forum of Early Childhood.

- sponsor significant ECD actors, particularly network members who cannot afford the expenses to take part.

2.2 **ANECD as developer and promoter of national policies.**

ANECD's activities have to be relevant both to its membership and to the needs in the field by addressing urgent regional priorities, such as those defined in section 1 of the APECD's concept paper. Given the resources and tools available for immediate implementation at this stage, the network can start by mobilizing expertise in the region and/or globally to facilitate processes related to two inter-linked priorities:
- Promoting **national policies** and their implementation strategies in an increasing number of Arab countries.
- Promoting and contributing to the collection, compiling and analysis of **segregated data related to early childhood**.

a) A pre-condition to establishing informed national policies is to have a good knowledge of all components of the early childhood sector within every country. It is well known, however, that reliable data in most Arab countries are sketchy at best. The implementation of the World Bank's "Systems Approach for Better Education Results" applied to ECD (SABER-ECD) can be used to
- establish a baseline of data for each country, and define realistic/achievable benchmarks upon which a national policy and implementation strategy can be based,
- establish an in-country system and the necessary expertise to sustain and systematise the collection and compilation of data.

SABER-ECD is already either partially or fully implemented in a small number of Arab countries and new ones are planning to do the same[5]. This approach assumes that countries can count on the technical support, and possibly funding from the World Bank.

b) In parallel, the network will promote a collective process engaging the stakeholders in individual countries in the elaboration of the national policy. There are good examples in Arab countries that can be emulated. ANECD can organize a pool of consultants who would be able to provide the expertise needed.

c) Embarking on a cumulative process of work in several countries, ANECD will advocate and support the establishment of a regional system of data collection, which can be hosted within the relevant department of ALECSO. This process which was started during the 2012-2014 APECD activities of establishing an ECD

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[5] For example:
- SABER-ECD has started to be implemented in Tunisia, as an effect of APECD
-The Higher Council for Childhood in Lebanon has taken the decision to implement SABER-ECD following discussions at the Founding Forum.

database for experts, a bibliography of research and a survey on in-services ECD programs

2.3 ANECD as a **contributor to the capital of knowledge** in each country and in the region, both in terms of disseminating resources and tools in Arabic and training competent human resources.

This of course is a vast field of activities, which involve a number of actors. Most of the members within the network would have a contribution to make in this field.

The resources and training material that were produced by ARC & APECD during 2012 -2014 activities, and categorized in the ECD fields of:
  – **The Science of ECD** (the short course in Arabic originally produced by Red River College, Canada)
  – **The in-service training of KG educators**
  – **The responsive** parenting curriculum designed to Arab families

ANECD will be in a good position to coordinate with APECD in organizing training events through its in-country members or focal points. In the long term, ANECD with acquire its members capability to scale up the delivery of the course.

2.4 ANECD as **advocate for ECD**

2.4.1 Articulating the global and regional ECD agenda
As indicated in section 1 of the APECD proposal, important work is being done in 2015 and 2016 to establish the emerging global approach to development under the name Sustained Development Goals (SDGs). ANECD should engage with the process in two ways:
  - Nurture the flow of information among its members about developments at the global level, both within the UN structures and about the work done by the global movement for ECD.
  - Disseminate this information within the Arab countries and interact with the national governments to nurture their knowledge and commitment to ECD.

2.4.2 Advocate and work for the **development of national policies** for ECD. ANECD should equip, organize and support its members to become advocates for the urgency of such work within the appropriate government ministries and agencies by continuous face-to-face or on-line training, and nurturing their needs for such priority.

2.5 ANECD as a **platform for sharing information**.
Three media can be developed for this purpose:
  - A website
  - A regular digital newsletter for sharing events, 3 issues per year
  - plan for an annual knowledge-oriented Arabic ECD journal

3. **Funding and budget**

3.1 ANECD will aim to be light-footed and to develop a credible program of concrete projects for fundraising that will help to sustain its management and administration through an economy of scale.

Nevertheless, the network should ensure at least part of its core budget through ALECSO's support, in addition to an appropriate formula for collecting annual membership fees except for members who are formally representing Governments. Members can also be required to cover their expenses for attending the regional events organised by ANECD.

APECD will include ANECD in its fund-raising initiatives to provide
- core support,
- sponsorship of the regional networking events,
- grants for programmatic activities.

3.2 An annual budget should be ring-fenced for ANECD, to ensure what is required to build its institutional base.

Activity	1st year	1,000 US$	**ALECSO**	2nd year	1,000 US$	3rd year	1,000 US$
Deployment of the Arab Network for ECD	Follow up Ctee mtg (25 part.): - Work on SDGs - concept & program of ANECD - Promoting SABER-ECD	35	**35**	Follow up Ctee: Progress review and appropriate action on ANECD's deployment and program	35	Constituent Assembly of ANECD	60
ECD data compilation in 4 Arab countries every year	Directory of programs, networks and experts	40		Directory of programs, networks and experts	40	Directory of programs, networks and experts	40
	SABER-ECD	40		SABER-ECD	40	SABER-ECD	40
Training of trainers (20 each year)	Delivering condensed course on Science of ECD	35		Delivering in-service training of KG teachers	35	Delivering parenting curriculum to mothers & fathers	35
Website (technical support)	- Interactive platform - Uploads	12	**12**	- Interactive platform - Uploads	12	- Interactive platform - Uploads	12
Electronic newsletter (3 /year)	Compilation, editing and dissemination	18	**18**	Compilation, editing and dissemination	18	Compilation, editing and dissemination	18
Coordination, experts, logistics, accounting…		36	**20**		36		36
Total (in 1,000 US$)		219	**85**		219		244

Appendix 1 – ANECD Founding Forum Final document

Arab Program for Early Childhood Development
The Regional Founding Forum of the Arab Network for ECD
Amman, Jordan, 15-17 December 2014

By invitation of the Arab Program for ECD (APECD), hosted by the Arab Resource Collective (ARC), under the umbrella of the Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education Quality (ARAIEQ) based at the Arab League's Education, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO), the Founding Forum of the Arab Network for Early Childhood Development (ANECD) was convened on 15-17 December 2014 in Amman, Jordan. Representatives of ministries of education and social affairs, childhood councils, NGOs and academia, as well as individual early childhood experts attended the Forum. They came from 15 Arab and foreign countries.

After a program of presentations and debates, the participants adopted the following document for the deployment of the ANECD :

<u>**Introduction and definitions:**</u>
1. The early childhood development sector is marginalised in most Arab countries.
2. There is preparedness at the political level to give the ECD sector the importance it requires. This was stated at the Conference of Arab Ministers of Education held in 2010 at Doha: "Towards Improving Education Quality". ALECSO implemented the Conference's recommendations by creating ARAIEQ with its five program components, including the Arab Program for ECD (APECD).
   - There is a conviction that it is necessary to search for the appropriate measures to establish a network that would include representatives of governments, civil society and academia, as well as individual experts. All the participants in the Founding Forum expressed their commitment to establishing such a network, for the crucial and useful role it can play in promoting the ECD sector and supporting the activities required to improve the network's role at the Arab regional and national levels.
   - Under the Umbrella of ALECSO, APECD has already initiated networking among relevant partners in the sector by setting up a think tank, which carried out research and convened thematic and training workshops, and by producing needed resources and tools. In doing that, it paved the way for building the Arab Network for ECD.
   - APECD, hosted by ARC as part of ARAIEQ and in partnership with ALECSO, has accumulated the expertise required for hosting the Arab Network for ECD.
   - APECD has also built solid partnerships with the actors engaged in the ECD sector in the Arab countries.

The Arab Network for Early Childhood Development (ANECD)

Vision:
Towards a better future with an Arab network mobilising expertise and resources in ECD.

General objective:
The Arab network will produce and disseminate knowledge, share best practice and advocate for policies that support ECD

Operational measures and a roadmap:
1. The Founding Forum declares that the participants constitute the Founding Assembly of the Arab Network for ECD.
2. The Founding Assembly mandates a Follow up Committee made up of the members of the steering team of this Forum.
3. The Founding Assembly mandates the Arab Program for ECD to manage the communications between the Follow up Committee and the Founding Assembly, and with ARAIEQ.
4. APECD is requested to submit to the Follow up Committee and the Founding Assembly, as well as the Scientific Advisory Board of ARAIEQ, by mid-February at the latest, a draft of the following document:

The "Reference Document" for ANECD detailing the following headlines:
i. Early Childhood and the Sustainable Development Goals post-2015
ii. The relevance and necessity of ANECD for defining the needs and addressing the challenges at the regional level, and proving support at the national level
iii. The composition and tasks of the Founding Assembly of ANECD
iv. The basic principles for the membership of governments (including the possibility of membership of more than one government agency in a given country), and the criteria for voluntary membership which will give governments the right to establish "focal points" in the future.
v. The basic principles for the membership of civil society organisations and academia, and the criteria for voluntary membership which will give APECD, in consultation with ARAIEQ/ALECSO, the right to select future members.
vi. The program of work of the network in its current phase.
vii. The methods and sources of funding.

A roadmap and a proposal for funding based on what has been agreed in the Founding Forum

5. APECD receives the feedback from the Follow up Committee and the Founding Assembly by the end of February 2015
6. The Founding Assembly will promote the Reference Document and lobby governments in order to obtain their formal approval where possible.
7. Prior formal approval by individual governments will enhance the opportunity of its adoption by ALECSO's governing bodies, as well as acceptance by funding agencies.

8.The General Secretary of the Higher Council for Childhood in Lebanon has volunteered to convene a meeting for relevant partners, representatives of ministries, civil society organisations and academia in Lebanon, to reach approval of the draft. She suggested that members of the Founding Assembly do the same in their respective countries.

9. The Reference Document will be shared with the agencies who attended the Founding Forum and other partners, for consultation and support, namely the World Bank, Save the Children, ANERA and ACEV.

10. ALECSO will present the Reference Document to its governing bodies in 2015, for validation.

Appendix 2 – The Sustained Development Goals proposed by the General Assembly's Open Working Group and included in the Secretary General's Synthesis Report (December 2014)

Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 2	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries
Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
Goal14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
Goal 15	Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
* Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.	

Appendix 3 – Two conceptual frameworks for Early Childhood Development:

1. The holistic/integrated approach to Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD).

(The following is a brief summary of "From Principles to Practice", the first chapter of the manual: Adults and Children Learning, published by ARC in Arabic in 2003).

The **holistic/integrated approach** is rooted in developmental psychology and child rights.

Studying behavioural changes in the individual from infancy to old age, **developmental psychology** helps to explain and predict the course of human development. It puts emphasis on the process of learning through experience in the early years, in which the nature and quality of interaction between children and adults is crucial. The role of adults is to understand the factors affecting a child's behaviour and facilitate the process of learning as the child's capacities grow. In doing this, adults themselves must become learners.

The International **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (CRC) recognises children as subjects of rights. Most people are used to thinking of children as having needs, but the CRC frames those needs as rights. The articles of the CRC are indivisible, but four of them represent the underlying principles or 'pillars', which support the whole Convention.
- Right to survival and development (article 6).
- Right to non-discrimination (article 2).
- Right to Participation (article 12).
- Principle of the 'best interests' of the child (article 3).

The approach is '**holistic**' because it is based on a vision of the child as a whole being, made up of a wide range of needs, characteristics and experiences, all of which are important to their personal development.

Once this is recognised, the approach is '**integrated**' because it needs to integrate all services and provisions relating to children. When attending to a specific need, integrated services recognize the overall needs of the individual child.

The following 14 principles underpin the holistic/integrated approach to ECCD. Initially based on the 10 principles for play developed by Tina Bruce in her book "Time to Play", they were translated to Arabic, adapted and expanded collectively by a team of early childhood professionals in regional meetings in 1995, 1997 and 1998.

They are a conceptual framework which can help practitioners and policymakers analyse and improve ECCD provision.

The 14 principles of the holistic/integrated approach	
Three FUNDAMENTAL principles (First cluster)	1. The child is a whole being, important in all dimensions that are interrelated and affect each other 2. Childhood is an important stage in life, and not just a 'preparation' for life 3. A child's development occurs in stages which can be predicted – at each one the child's readiness to learn certain things is at its peak
The ENVIRONMENT cluster	4. Interaction with other people (adults and children) motivates, reinforces and encourages children in their learning processes. 5. The child's development is seen as an interaction between the child's own capacities and his/her environment 6. Developing the child's cultural identity (mother tongue, accumulated cultural wisdom, collective memory, history etc.) is central to the child's healthy and integrated development.
The PROGRAMMES cluster	7. The inner life of the child emerges and flourishes under favourable circumstances. 8. Individual differences between children should be valued and celebrated. 9. Intrinsic motivation is of central importance for the development of the different aspects of the child's personality, and child centred programmes value this. 10. Encouraging the development of self-discipline in the child will help her to achieve personal freedom with responsibility. 11. Children have an in-built resilience, and develop coping strategies and survival skills when living in especially difficult circumstances. They require appropriate support to maintain and strengthen these skills, and to overcome long-term traumatic effects. 12. A focus on what children can do (rather than what they cannot do) is the starting point in quality programmes for children. 13. Integrated programmes and provisions respect the holistic nature of the child. 14. Valuing the role of the parents, the extended family, and the community, in the care and development of children is essential in quality programmes for children.

2. The Four Cornerstones

The Four Cornerstones of ECD were developed by an international group of early childhood actors (including ARC) convened by the Consultative Group on ECCD in connection with the launch of the Education For All General Monitoring Report (EFA/GMR) on early childhood in 2007. They are a convenient framework for programming and have been regularly updated since and translated by ARC into Arabic.

They are:
- **Start at the beginning** (prenatal to 3 years): including early stimulation, responsive parenting, holistic child development and early intervention
- **Get ready for success** (4 to 5 years): with a focus on access, equity, quality and professionalism in the learning and education of young children and their transition to formal schooling
- **Improve primary school quality** (6 to 8 years): for greater continuity with early learning and education and in keeping with the principles of child friendly schooling
- **Include early childhood in policies** (generic): both sectorial and inter-sectorial policies in health, education and welfare, at the international, national and sub-national levels, and ensure that early childhood is integral to planning and budgeting for development and in macroeconomics.

Appendix 4 – Summary principles and situation of ECD in the Arab countries by childrens' age categories

Conception to 3 yeas	4 to 5 years	6 to 8 years
Principles: a. Children at this age have a right to responsive parenting, good primary health care, a nutritious diet, a safe and stimulating environment. b. Support from family and community is crucial for optimal development. c. Recent brain research has confirmed knowledge based on experience that consistent care and stimulation in the first years, as well as protection from risk factors, are crucial for optimal development of the child.	**Principles:** a. Children of this age have the right to a safe and stimulating environment at home, in school and in the community. Their capacity to learn evolves rapidly. b. They develop their intellectual and social potential best in a play-based and interactive environment, and gain from organized early learning activities. c. Studies in the field indicate that ensuring two years of quality, organized pre-schooling is a sure predictor of success in primary and further education, as well as in adult life.	**Principles:** a. This age is solidly within the mandate of the education systems, but ECD approaches are crucial in the first years of the primary. b. The characteristics of child learning and development in those years still follow the same patterns as in early childhood. c. A successful transition into "schooling" should consolidate the learning patterns acquired through play-based and interactive approaches practiced in pre-schooling. d. As children are made "ready for school" in pre-schooling, schools have also to be "ready for children" coming from home or KGs.
Situation: i. There is progress in caring for the health of mother and child, but also deficiencies: a significant level of low birth weight, malnutrition, etc. ii. Stimulation for a holistic growth of the child, as well as social protection	**Situation:** i. Nurseries are expanding, but information is scarce. They are likely to be limited to the elite and high-income families. However, achievable approaches are possible to expand this sector. ii. The KG sector has become part of the education systems in	**Situation:** Coverage has improved in Arab countries: 90% gross enrolment, but only 84% net enrolment in 2008 (EFA/GMR 2012). Some 6 million children are still out of school, 58% of them females. Gender parity is almost achieved in the primary. The ratio students/teacher is generally high in the public

Conception to 3 yeas	4 to 5 years	6 to 8 years
from the impact of deprivation, is left to families. But many families are in no position to provide appropriate care. iii. There is very little in terms of organized services and programs, whether by the community or the public sector, in support of fathers and mothers in their role as principal carers.	legislation and policy in most countries. iii. However, statistical data indicate a wide range in practice, from about 1% to 70-80% enrolment. The average is 19% (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012). iv. Pre-schooling providers are multiple: public, private (mostly for profit), but also by NGOs and community-based programs. v. There is a nascent movement of out-of-school structured programs to prepare children for schooling.	sector. But what is not known with useable data are aspects related to quality and effectiveness: Information about repetition and drop-out is lacking. There are indications that rates of completion of the primary are growing. No data about the level of readiness at entry into primary, or of achievements at completion. It is accepted that a high number complete basic education with a low level of literacy and numeracy.

Appendix 5 – Composition of the "Founding Assembly" of ANECD

1: The members who attended the Founding Forum in December 2014 :

* Governmental representatives from 11 Arab Countries:
- Egypt (Cairo University),
- Jordan (Ministry of Education and National Council of Family Affairs, 2),
- Lebanon (Ministry of Education and Higher Education and Higher Council for
  Childhood, 2),
- Libya (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs),
- Mauritania (Council of Early Childhood Development),
- Morocco (Moroccan Institute for the Development of Primary Education),
- Oman (Ministry of Education and Teaching),
- Palestine (Ministry of Education and Higher Education),
- Sudan (Centre for Early Childhood Development),
- Tunisia (Ministry of State for Woman and Family),
- Yemen (Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood).

* Regional NGOs and networks:
- Arab Campaign for Education for All
- Arab Council for Child Development
- Arab Resource Collective
- Welfare Association

Observer: Arab NGO Network for Development

* Local NGOs and networks
- Palestine 2: Centre for Teacher Creativity and Palestinian Education Alliance
- Jordan 2: Jordan River Association and Queen Rania Academy for Teacher
Training
- Lebanon: NGO Alliance for Children's Rights in Lebanon

* International Agencies:
- Save the Children, Jordan
- American Near East Refugee Aid, Palestine
- International Paediatrics Association, Lebanon
- Mother and Child Education Foundation (ACEV), Turkey

* Academia:
- ECD Team, Lebanese University, Lebanon
- Nursery of the Exceptional Stage, Jordan

* UN agencies
- UN Population Fund (UNFPA), Jordan

* Individual experts: 3

* ARC / APECD coordinators and experts: 5

* QRTA /APTP : 1

* ALECSO: 2

2. Agencies invited or considered but could not attend the Founding Forum:

* Governmental Representatives
- Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi Council for Education
- Dubai, United Arab Emirate, Ministry of Education
- Egypt, Ministry of Education and National Council for Motherhood and Childhood

* The Arab League, Department of Woman, Family and Childhood

* Local and regional NGOs, Foundations and networks:
- AGFUND
- Doha International Family Institute, Qatar
- Makassed Schools, Lebanon
- SOUL, Yemen
- Tufula Centre, Palestine

* International agencies:
- Aga Khan Development Network
- Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood
- Consultative Group for ECCD
- International Step-by-Step Association
- Open Society Foundation, the Early Childhood Program

* Academia:
- Yale University, Child Study Centre, USA

* UN:
- UNICEF regional office, Jordan
- UNESCO regional office, Lebanon
- World Bank, Washington

* The hosts of the other 3 programs of ARAIEQ (CNTE, UNESCO Beirut and InjazalArab)

Appendix 6 – Composition of the <u>Follow up (EC) Committee of ANECD (members of the previous Advisory group in APECD 2013-2014)</u>

Governments Representatives:
1. Morocco : Aziz Kayshouh
2. Lebanon : Rita Karam
3. Palestine : Suheir Afaneh
4. Jordan : Alia Arabeiat
5. Yemen : Lamia Al-Ariani
6. Libya : Zahaa Al-burousi
7. Oman : Amer Al-Aysari
8. Mauritania : Mohammad Amin Almustapha
9. Egypt : <u>consult National committee: member from ministry of Education or HCC</u>
10. Sudan : Asmaa Fadel
11. Tunisia : Fawzia Chabaane
12. Dubai (UAE) : Sheikha Mulla

Academia:
1. Lebanon : Fadia Hoteit
2. Egypt : Atef Zakhari

NGO's
1. Palestine : Welfare Association : Maha Sader
2. Lebanon : Associations Forum for Child's Rights : Alice Kayrouz

Experts
1. Ghanem Bibi
2. Youssef Hajjar

<u>Advisors</u>

Arab World
1. LAS
2. ACCD

International
1. HEART program: Sara Hommel (also ARAIEQ SAB member)
2. ANERA: Suleiman Mleihat
3. SAVE THE CHILDREN-Regional : Muna Abbas
4. ACEV :Suna Hanouz
5. YALE : James Leckman

UN Agencies
1. UNICEF (keep a place..)
2. UNESCO (keep a place..)

Secretariat
ARC General coordinator, (APECD Director)