

Seminar Report

Open Access Resourcebook and Online Journal on African Child Development and ECEC Research

An invitational half-day seminar on *Open Access Resourcebook and Online Journal on African Child Development and ECEC Research* held at the Oslo University College (OUC) on November 4th 2010, convened by Professor Jan-Erik Johansson of OUC and visiting scholar in the Erasmus Mundus International Master in Early Childhood Education and Care (IMEC), Prof. Bame Nsamenang from Human Development Resource Centre (HDRC)/University of Yaoundé 1, Cameroon. Twelve high-ranking scholars and child rights watchers from various institutions and countries with research and rights interests in Africa or proficiency in Open Access publishing participated in the seminar (see attached list).

Deliberations focused on three core presentations identified below and a “Clinic” on the Resourcebook proposed to hold in Cameroon in 2011 for Authors and Partners.

1. **Prof. Bame Nsamenang:** Overview of African Child Development Research & ECEC.
2. **Prof. Nils Pharo:** Introduction to Open Access Publishing
3. **Dr. Ragnhild Dybdahl:** Resources for an Open Access Resourcebook

Resolutions derived from concerned awareness that “Children in Africa are victims of a double invisibility; both from being children and from living in Africa” (Jonsson, 2009) and paucity of user-friendly ECEC resources/tools. Seminar participants were alert to the state-of-the-art buzzword “evidence-based” policy and programming in face of African childhood being the world’s least researched and the bulk of policy-based research on African children having been produced by foreigners but such databases neither readily available nor easily accessible to Africans in exploitable language and form. With promise to inspire reconceptualisation of a context-sensitive and culturally-appropriate framework and research agenda to move forward evidence-based policy development and programming for the early years of human development in Africa, participants resolved and/or clarified:

1. Early human development (EHD) refers to all dimensions of childhood, thus any approach that is not holistic, integrative and interdisciplinary can only capture an incomplete picture of early human development.
2. We set ourselves the task of undertaking a multiphase project: African Early Human Development (AEHD), beginning with charting a broad Project Vision Platform (PVP) in an *Open Access African Early Human Development Resourcebook*. Authors and Development Partners will critique and fine-tune the Framework and chapter outlines at an Invitational Orienting Resourcebook Clinic (IORC) in Cameroon in May or December 2011. The research, knowledge/tools generation, and dissemination phases are: (a) Research of African EHD, (b)

African Online EHD Journal, (c) Open Access documentation of African Universities' Theses and Dissertations and EHD Practices, and (d) an African Open Archives on early human development; they will be bolstered by timely targeted advocacy.

3. HDRC, Cameroon, leads the Project; regional sites across Africa are in view. OUC hosts the Open Access Platform. Lead coordinators are Prof. Bame Nsamenang (Cameroon) and Prof. Jan-Erik Johansson (Sweden-Norway). Coordinators for the French language blog are Prof. Oumar Barry (Senegal) and Dr. Jean Cyril Dalais (Mauritius); other language blogs in view.
4. The HDRC is to apply for "Basket Funding" for various phases of the Project identified in (2) and fundraise with the following organizations, among many others: Nordic International Development Networks (NORAD, SIDA, DANIDA, FINIDA), the World Bank, ADEA, CGECD, Save the Children, Jacobs Foundation, Bernard van Leer Foundation, Aga Khan Foundation, Erasmus Mundus, Childwatch International, NGOs, NGO-Academia, ELDIS, INASP, AJOL, UNICEF, UNESCO, IFS, Mauritius initiative, UBS, Nestle, and many more.
5. A **Nordic African Early Childhood Study Network**, open to all interested parties, has as foundational members the attendees of the seminar. It is a Reference Group that will proffer to the Project Team technical/procurement support and alliance with own networks and Development Cooperation Partners whenever and wherever necessary and feasible.
6. We will not lose sight of basic research but prioritize practice-based research methods and longitudinal, systematic lifespan research that is conspicuous by its scarcity, if at all available anywhere, in Africa. In so doing, we will enlist the participation of different constituencies and communities of practice engaged in research and policy for the early years of life and position for nutrition, education, care, and all other facets that connect early human development to positive local practices, such as stimulation, play, intergenerational responsibility and child reading approaches (see Heather Montgomery).

Sign:

Project Leaders

Oslo, November 4, 2010

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Initiating Project Leader

Nordic Network Focal Point