



*A Seamless Education System (SES) for  
The Ministry of Education,  
Trinidad and Tobago:*

*Support for the Development of an Early Childhood  
Care and Education (ECCE) Strategy*

*Final Report on Strategy  
For ECCE*

*Richard J. Moore  
Prepared under Contract  
IDB/GORTT Loan # LO 2138/OC-TT*

*June 4, 2010*

# An Institutional Strategy for the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Division



## Acknowledgements

This consultancy would not have been a success without the untiring support of the Director of the ECCE, Mrs. Ann Thornhill. Her enthusiasm, commitment, and devotion to education and the children are responsible for much of the advancement that has occurred and will occur in the Division and the overall ECCE effort. My thanks to her for making possible the activities of this consultancy and for her guidance in much of the analytical work. To Mrs. Anastasia Rose and to the Coordinators within ECCE – Mr. Clarence Leach, Mr. James Solomon, Mrs. Charlene Ross-Quamina, and Mrs. Nicole Knights – my gratitude for their participation and assistance throughout.

Without the active participation and support of the staff of ECCE, the Field Officers, the Administrators and teachers in the centers, my own understanding of the challenge of early childhood education would be less than complete.

Finally, my thanks to the staff and managers of the Seamless Education System (SES) project. In particular, my gratitude to Mr. Maurice Chin Aleong and Mrs. Jennifer Hussein for their support.

From all I have learned much.

This report is dedicated to the children of Trinidad and Tobago, the future for economic and social development of the nation, and the reason why we are here,

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
1. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES .....	5
2. A VIEW OF STRATEGY TO GUIDE ACTION .....	6
3. A STRATEGY FOR ECCE: ELEMENTS .....	7
A. VISION 2020, MOE'S CORPORATE PLAN 2008-2012 AND ECCE .....	7
B. ECCE VISION AND MISSION .....	10
C. INA: KEY DIMENSIONS TO INFORM STRATEGY .....	11
1. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE, STRUCTURE AND PROCESSES .....	11
2. IMPROVING QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND MANAGEMENT STYLE.....	13
3. IMPROVING HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT.....	15
4. SUPERVISION, MONITORING, FACILITATION AND THE ECCE CENTERS .....	20
5. STRENGTHENING TECHNOLOGY .....	21
6. STRENGTHENING FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT IN ECCE .....	23
7. THE CHALLENGE OF INFRASTRUCTURE .....	24
4. CONCLUSION .....	25

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: A TENTATIVE WORK PLAN .....	28
APPENDIX 2: ACTION PLAN BY SEMESTER .....	37

## Chapter 1. Introduction and Objectives of the Consultancy

The principal objective of this consultancy and of this final report is to develop an ECCE Strategy that focuses on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Early Childhood Care and Education Division and reduces the gap between supply and demand of ECCE education. While not specified in the TOR, it is implicit in this strategy statement that there be a principal focus on educational quality as well, or “Excellence in Education,” in line with the Corporate Plan 2008-2012. However, here the focus is institutional, not pedagogical.

This report focuses on the requirement for the establishment of an overall institutional strategy for early childhood care and education (ECCE) for the MoE. Within this report the reader will find for documents: (1) this final strategy report; (2) a tentative work plan for the implementation of recommendations of this strategy report over the period 2010-2013; (3) the final version of the Institutional Needs Assessment for ECCE; and (4) the presentation from the workshop on institutional needs assessment attended by the staff of ECCE and relevant stakeholders from the Ministry of Education.

With the backdrop of the Institutional Needs Assessment, we have a much clearer conceptualization of where key areas for this overall strategy lie, as well as a guide for the development of an Action Plan to respond to many of the shortcomings identified. In the INA report, recommendations focused on seven dimensions that require attention. In this Strategy Report these key dimensions will be discussed at some length as elements of the strategy, and in the Action Plan, specific activities and a timetable will be introduced.

Throughout the conduct of this consultancy, every effort has been to make the elements of strategy a truly participatory endeavor. Individual and group interviews with ECCE staff, Coordinators, Field Officers, Administrators, and personnel from the existing schools shaped many of the thoughts expressed here, and the final product. Similarly, our half-day workshop has proved very useful for the organizing of many of these participatory inputs. Field visits to ECCE centers – both new and existing – have added a real world view as to issues seen from that perspective. Reviews of various versions of each of the included documents by management have made them more complete products and, hopefully, a better guide for action.

**Action.** That is the essential outcome from these efforts that we look for. To take recommendations, when deemed appropriate and useful, and turn them into action is how the ECCE will get from “here to there”. But with action comes the requirement of **flexibility** in the face of a changing internal and external

environment and context. A **learning organization** does just that: learn and adapt, and act. The ECCE of tomorrow will better serve its principal vision, mission and objectives, and will better serve its only client: the children.

**Early Childhood Education is a Team Effort.** Actions and flexibility to achieve objectives requires a different modality of work: together, in teams, with a reliance on horizontal linkages within the ECCE to assure needed flows of communication and information and the delegation of authority and responsibility.

**Results, Outcomes and Achievement.** If action is the route to improvement, the ECCE of tomorrow is prefaced on a focus on outcomes and results, not inputs, process and procedures. A dominance of the latter handicaps efforts to achieve the former, and the outcome is delayed if achieved at all.

The challenges for the ECCE are many, ranging from the need to improve the organization and management of resources in the Division to assuring the appropriate organizational, informational, technological and managerial links to the ECCE centers, to the assurance of continued progress in quality improvements at the centers and the Division, to strengthening community/parent/center integration, and to continued progress to achieve the goal of access for the approximately 30,000 children who will be the axis of the system and the construction and staffing of some 600 centers.

A final introductory note: much of this document is written as a Strategy document and not simply as a consultant report. The decision to present the document in this format (from Chapter 3 onward) is to allow the Division to present more easily the Division's final Strategy document, after modification, exclusion, or addition of perceptions and perspectives of the Division and its management.

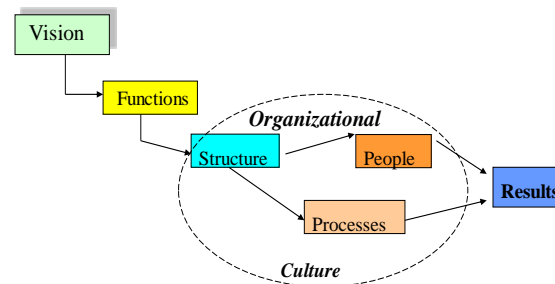
## **Chapter 2. A View of Strategy to Guide Action**

Simply put, strategic planning and strategy determine where an organization is going over the next year or more and how it's going to get there. In this strategy document we have chosen the period from today (2010) through 2013 as the time frame for action on the assumption that to go beyond that period is to travel in uncharted waters over which our control may be limited and circumstances require alteration. Flexibility as we move forward will be one of the hallmarks for ECCE as a learning organization. Typically, the process of the development of a strategy or strategic planning is organization-wide, or focused on a major function such as a division, department or other major function. In the case of ECCE, as a Division within the MOE, strategy incorporates and is somewhat dependent upon the larger organization strategy, but the effort is to provide more specific strategic vision, mission and priorities for the Division with clear and specific functions.

For ECCE we begin with the identification of elements of the Vision and the Mission for the Division, identify key priorities within these (drawn from the prior Institutional Needs Assessment), and provide an action plan to carry out these priorities and dimensions.

In Figure 1 we identify the relation between these various elements of strategy, strategic planning, and working toward results.

**Figure 1:**  
**The Sequencing of Elements in Strategic Management**



### Chapter 3. A Strategy for ECCE: Elements

The strategy for ECCE as presented here draws on a number of resources, some of these from the larger context of the Seamless Education System for Trinidad and Tobago. The most salient of these resources external to the ECCE Division are the MOE Corporate Plan, 2008-2012 and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago's overall strategy document, Vision 2020.

#### A. Vision 2020 and the MOE's Corporate Plan 2008-2012 as Backdrop

During the past decade, the Ministry of Education has provided key direction for educational transformation in Trinidad and Tobago. The current Corporate Plan 2008-2012 builds on earlier initiatives, and especially the Education White Paper (1993-2003), Vision 2020, and the Corporate Plan, 2002-2006.

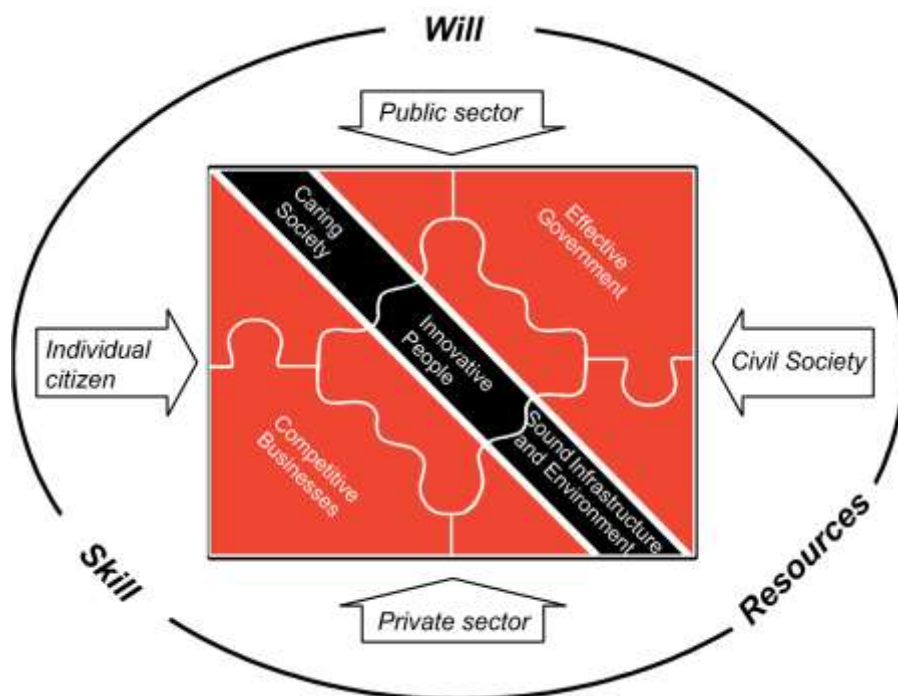
The Corporate Plan 2008-2012 draws on the five development priorities that serve as the focus for Vision 2020, and sees these as essential to the strategic objective of "A highly skilled, well educated people aspiring to a local culture of excellence that is driven by equal access to learning opportunities." While the Corporate Plan assumes that the earlier Corporate Plan 2002-2006 has achieved

its priority of access and equity, this holds true principally for primary and secondary education. For ECCE, the strategic objectives of access and equity remain principal concerns. Five key pillars drive Vision 2020 and the Corporate Plan:

- Developing Innovative People
- Nurturing a Caring Society
- Governing Effectively
- Enabling Competitive Businesses
- Investing in Sound Infrastructure and Environment

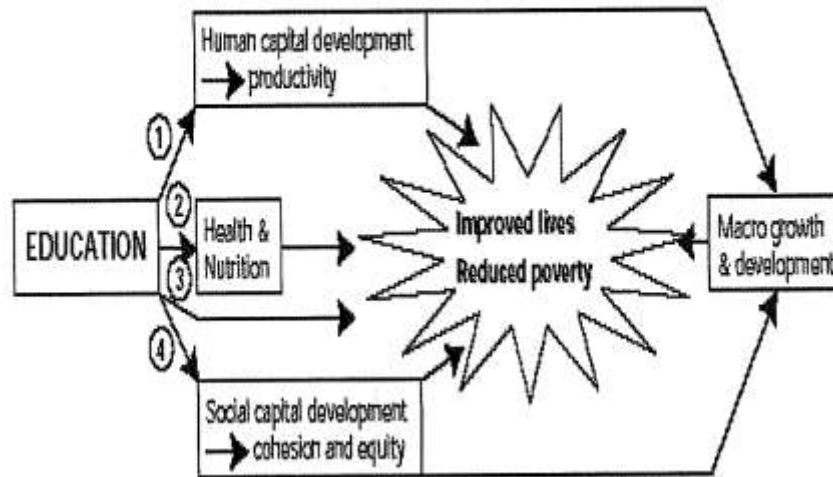
In turn, these five pillars provide the foundation for the developmental model for Trinidad and Tobago.

**Figure 2: Vision 2020: A Model for Development**



From GORTT, *Vision 2020: Draft National Strategic Plan*, p. 62

At the center of these five pillars is what is seen in both documents as the core pillar of the model for national development, the element that in many ways drives economic growth, human development and sustainable social development: Developing Innovative People. Thus, a Seamless Education System is at the center for national development.

**Figure 3: Contribution of Education to Other Spheres**

From GORTT/MOE, Corporate Plan, 2008-2012, p. 4

Within the context of this vision of education at the core, the Corporate Plan focuses on three strategic priorities:

- Focus on the Schools
- Change the Ministry
- Involve the Community

As ECCE develops its strategic vision, mission, priorities, and objectives, the Division clearly incorporates and extends these strategic priorities, and the dimensions that direct the Division strategy are derived directly from these MOE priorities.

These priorities defined in Vision 2020 and in the Corporate Plan, 2008-2012 are consistent with the adoption in 2000 by 189 member States of the United Nations of targets to achieve measurable improvements in people's lives by the year 2015. In turn, these eight time-bound goals provide concise and concrete benchmarks for tackling extreme poverty in all of its dimensions. Goal #2 directly relates to efforts to achieve universal education. In addition, the commitments reached at the Dakar, Senegal meeting of the World Education Forum set out goals and targets for the achievement of Education for All (EFA), reaffirming the World Declaration on Education for all of 1990.

## B. ECCE Vision and Mission

The ECCE vision and mission are derived from the overall vision and mission for the MOE as identified in the Corporate Plan 2008-2012. That vision statement focuses attention on Excellence in Education: “To develop imaginative, intellectual and spirited learners to facilitate the creation of committed, enterprising citizens and global leaders.”

Quality is indeed part of the vision from the ECCE. However, the vision also continues to include high priority for the concerns for access and equity, issues that may have been resolved at higher levels but not in early childhood education. The current efforts to expand the number of centers to 600 by 2015, to staff these centers with qualified teaching professionals, and to promote new approaches, models and actions of the ECCE throughout Trinidad and Tobago are evidence of this continued concern.

**The ECCE vision is that quality education in a center- and community-focused program of early childhood development is to be achieved with improved access and equity to engage all children in the educational endeavor.**

Our **Mission** also incorporates and expands the MOE mission statement of the educational system:

- A student-centered educational system endowed with a high quality curriculum
- Strengthening alliances and partnerships, with the community and with the private sector
- The induction, cultivation and building of high quality staff through permanent focus on staff training and organization learning
- Building closer ties to the community and parents in the educational system.

As has been noted universally, “It takes a village to raise a child.”

## C. Contribution of INA to Strategy: Key Dimensions of Strategy

Our Institutional Needs Assessment and the Workshop to develop a SWOT analysis have identified seven key dimensions that inform the strategic priorities of ECCE. Here we identify these key dimensions and explore specific areas where the focus will be taken for each. **In Appendices 1 and 2 we provide a detailed**

analysis of each of these dimensions with activities incumbent upon their completion.

1. **Organizational Change and Structure.** Over the past several years ECCE has made a concerted effort to identify the appropriate structure and personnel necessary for the efficient and effective conduct of its education role. The dynamic role of the ECCE in an environment of rapid change means flexibility is necessary. A focus on organizational change and flexibility is indicative of the fact that the ECCE, indeed MOE, should be seen as learning organizations. A learning organization is one that grows and interacts with its internal and external environments, and by “learning,” changes. While the structure of the Division predominantly meets the needs for both internal Divisional effectiveness and efficiency and for interaction with new ECCE centers, this strategic focus for the Division is to improve organizational structure, process and procedures, and three key thrusts:

- **Modification in the Current Structure** is required to accommodate several roles that fall short within the Division. Currently, mid-management consists of four Coordinators (Administration, Curriculum, Quality Assurance, Family and Community Services). However, a key area for strengthening the Division as a learning organization requires attention. This priority dimension calls for the creation of a Research Coordinator and the replacement of the ECCE Specialist position as proposed in the current organizational structure. This Research, Planning, Evaluation and Dissemination Coordinator (RPED) will join other mid-level managers and will have responsibilities for several aspects of a learning organization. These include: (a) basic research and dissemination of best practices for ECD that are applicable for Trinidad and Tobago’s growing pre-school population and for continuing teacher development; (b) building a statistical data base from the centers through the Field Officers and Coordinators to assure a better understanding of the status of the ECCE system. This data collection, consolidation, analysis and dissemination activity will work in close collaboration with efforts carried out in the MOE in relevant Divisions, and particularly with the Policy Planning Division; (c) conduct overall evaluations of the functioning of the ECCE centers, in collaboration with the Coordinators and their field staff; (d) responsibility for dissemination and “social marketing” for the ECCE in an effort to promote greater enrollment, involvement and commitment to early childhood education.

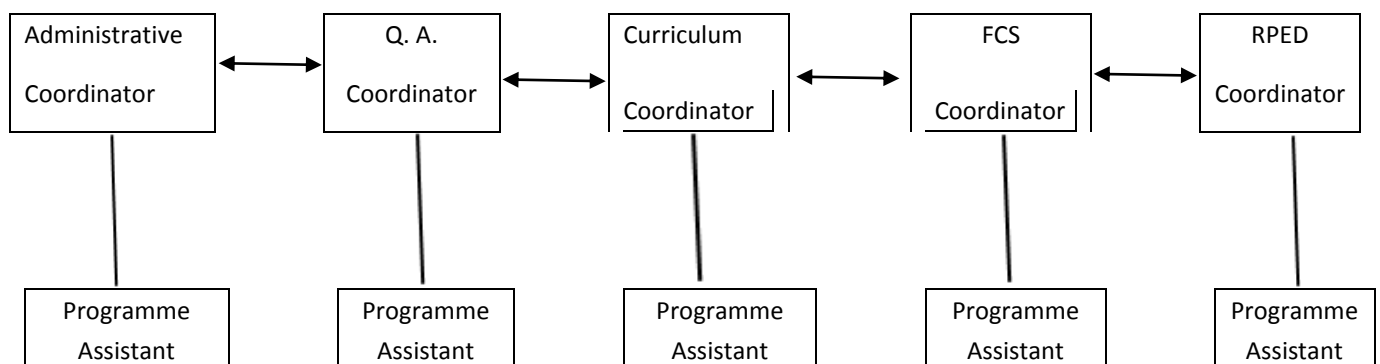
**The definition of this position, and the appointment of the incumbent, are activities that should occur sooner rather than later. During the third quarter of the current year this set of activities will take place. Beyond simply the definition of the position and the recruitment of the appropriate person, the**

development of a work plan for the remainder of 2010 and for the forthcoming three years is a critical activity for this period. In addition, the strengthening of the relationship among existing Coordinators and the newly appointed Coordinator for RPED requires activities to build horizontal coordination, team building, and the increased commitment to a common purpose as defined in this strategy. In a larger sense, the creation of the RPED is an attempt to bring macro-strategy together with individual Coordinator work plans in the short and medium term.

Social marketing is an important dimension of the activities of the RPED in his/her role in dissemination. But the RPED is not alone in this activity. This promotional and social marketing function should and will be actions that directly involve the NCECCE, the FCS Officers and Coordinator in communities, center Boards, and the centers and their Administrators as well. It is not simply the pursuit of greater funding within communities and for schools, but also the promotion of a message: universal access, high quality, and the future of our children. **During the fourth quarter of 2010, the ECCE will design a strategy for social marketing that incorporates these principal stakeholders as well as the general public.** While this activity will be a principal responsibility for the RPED and senior management, the involvement of Coordinators and other actors within ECCE in this design is imperative. This will require an active campaign of the Division to create a truly participatory event, and sets of workshops for these additional stakeholders will be conducted during the final quarter of 2010.

The RPED Coordinator will have a Program Assistant as part of the new structure to assist in this endeavor. Here we offer the modification in structure required.

**Figure 4: A Modification of Structure**



- **Building a team approach and avoid compartmentalization** for the Division, breaking down organizational barriers that separate and isolate, particularly as organizational complexity increases with demands and volume. While the need for functional division of labor and specialization (especially in the organizational streams for Coordinators) exists, efficiency and effectiveness are better served through an organizational alignment more horizontal than vertical. Work teams will predominate: through more frequent interaction among Coordinators, through the utilization of the Program Assistants as a pooled resource with some Coordinator-specific priorities but utilized as a Team, and by strengthening an existing team approach among field officers in Districts. In addition, the Division will institute a bi-weekly team meeting of mid-level management with the senior management, centered on an issue-oriented agenda. The conclusions or results of these team meetings will be disseminated among staff. In addition, there is a need for training to build a team approach. This training will focus initially on Organizational Culture, Organizational Development, and on Building Teams in Organizations.

- **Streamlining processes and procedures** to reduce the focus on bureaucratic rules, written procedures, multiple unnecessary steps to accomplish outcomes, and strengthening communication across the Division. While the need for formalized procedures is necessary, the effort will be to reduce the steps required to achieve responsive outcomes, and will attempt to reduce the need for multiple instances of bureaucratic approval to accomplish this. Nothing impedes dynamism and innovation more in an organization than excessive reliance on procedures, excessive approval stages, and the resultant unwillingness to move to action. An initial step is to identify the relevant processes and procedures extant and flow processes (a mini-reengineering exercise with work flow analysis). A second step is the simplification of steps in processes and the reduction of unnecessary (formal and informal) processes to simplify actions. A third is to alter the organizational cultural attitude that endures, and where every action requires multiple steps of procedure and approval in classic bureaucratic fashion. Breaking or changing this organizational culture is no easy task, and the effort must be continuous and unyielding if a change in organizational culture is to occur.

The analysis of work flows and procedures and processes will require the efforts of an external (local) consultant for a period of some two months. The adoption of recommended changes is an activity for 2011.

Our objective is an organization focused on results, a staff that embodies merit, initiative, innovation, and achievement above inputs, procedures and process, and an outcome of improved educational results for children.

**2. Improving Quality Management and Management Style.** The ECCE is dedicated to assuring Total Quality Educational Management (TQEM) both within the Division and at the ECCE centers. This high sense of commitment requires that management constantly assures that operational effectiveness results from Leadership and Management Style. Many of the changes in improving management style are simply a matter of commitment and will, and do not require investments in structural change or equipment. In particular, the focus is on middle management to strengthen both the skill level and to assure the assumption of appropriate responsibility to conduct operations critical to the success of ECCE. This will require some specific training for the Coordinators, the content of which will be determined in situ. **Most activities related to the alteration of the levels of delegated authority are actions that simply are taken by management. The exception is assuring increased levels of training for Coordinators and management in organizational development, team building, and some specialized training in specific areas of expertise.**

- **Establishing a Division with Appropriate Delegation of Authority** and responsibility to assure improved capacity to respond. In particular, ECCE is strengthening its second-level Management (Coordinators) at the Division to assure more effective capacity to respond in each of the five areas: Administration, Curriculum, Quality Assurance, Family and Community Support Services, and the recommended Research, Planning and Evaluation. Delegation means assumed responsibility, and an orientation to achieving results, not relying on procedures as a means for avoiding this responsibility.

- **Avoiding the Pitfalls of Top-Down Management Style** and continuing the message of Deconcentration and Decentralization. In the face of a relatively centralized Ministry of Education the challenge is not only to deconcentrate to units/Divisions, but to reduce the concentration of authority within the ECCE Division. Both of the above actions simply require decisions by Management and the assumption of responsibilities by mid-management (Coordinators)

- **Strengthening the Administrative Capacity in ECCE Centers** and more direct links of Administrator to the ECCE Division for the transmission of (administrative) information directly to Division Coordinators, freeing Field Officers to focus on facilitation, mentoring and other activities. The essence of monitoring is not control, but rather should be seen as a means for strengthening delegated action. This thrust will be encouraged through increased delegation of authority to Administrators/Teachers and through professional development of the Administrator/Teacher. In particular, these well trained educational experts require

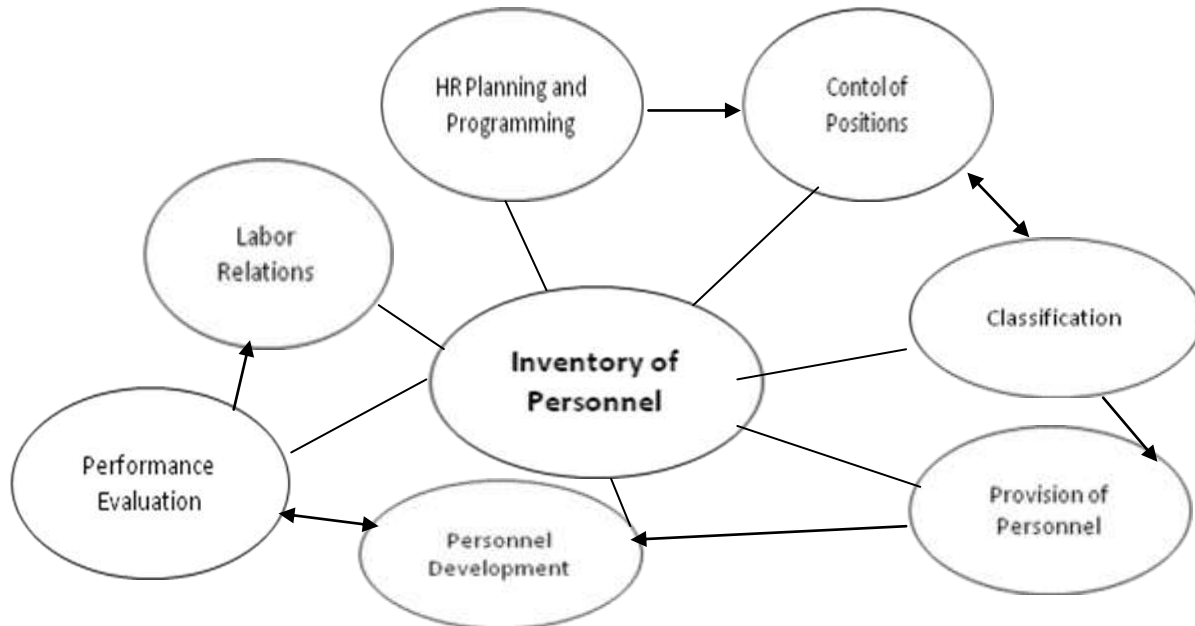
training in various areas of administration (finance, operations, and information technology).

**3. Improving Human Resource Management in ECCE** through the introduction of key HR management functions. HR Management improvements present the arena for potentially the most profound changes in the organization and management of ECCE. An organization is effective and sustained based upon its human capital.

A full HR Management system (for MOE) contains the following modules: inventory (and payroll), planning, professional development, control of positions, performance evaluation, classification, provision of positions, and labor relations. At the level of the ECCE Division, only several of these modules are within the purview and will be developed: HR Planning for ECCE, Performance Evaluation, Personnel or Professional Development, and the adoption of the inventory module from MOE. The graphic below describes how these modules relate to the basic module – inventory and payroll – and the interrelatedness among modules begins with HR planning and programming.

The development of each of these areas within ECCE is contingent upon the contracting of a Human Resource Officer whose responsibility will be to design, plan, and implement each of the modules. In Appendices 1 and 2, specific activities to be carried out for each are described. Most of these activities will be conducted during 2011 and 2012.

Figure 5: Graphic Representation of HR Management and HRMIS



• **Establishing an Effective Performance Evaluation System** to assure the appropriate quality of personnel and an orientation to results. While in form such a system is in existence, it is not utilized nor is it complete. The absence of an effective performance evaluation system affects virtually every aspect of human resource management. Quality assurance, professional development, individual performance, incentive systems, and educational planning are all affected by the presence of a well-developed Performance Appraisal or Evaluation System (PAP). The MOE has developed a PAP system that remains to be implemented. In the ECCE, the effort will be to advance this process, adapting the MOE/HR system to ECCE needs. The new Performance Appraisal system will consist of five stages:

- **Planning 1:** Identify and communicate objectives to be achieved and their relationship to the organizational mission and policy: Institutional Management Agreements (IMA) or alternatively an agreed upon Annual Operating Plan (AOP). The AOP is a complementary document to the budget statement for ECCE annually. The IMA, if adopted, is simply the translation of the AOP into specific goals and objectives for the year.
- **Planning 2:** Formulation of objectives and key behaviors to be realized by individuals through consensus with the evaluator and in

relation to the AOP: Individual Commitments (IC). However, this individual commitment to objectives is accompanied by ECCE commitment to provide the appropriate resources (material, equipment, training, etc.) to achieve these objectives. One without the other is not functional.

- **Monitoring, Support, Revision:** Partial evaluation of achievement of objectives to define actions of support, modification of objectives, and development of skills. This exercise of staff with appropriate management will occur semi-annually in order to fine tune objectives, to identify problems areas, and to assure necessary levels of support are forthcoming.
- **Evaluation:** Measurement of achievement of objectives in a fixed period of time and behavior in relation to objectives. This end of year exercise is intended for individual evaluations (for incentives, etc.) and also as a mechanism to inform overall objectives.
- **Feedback:** Planning for the future is based upon current achievements (results, skills, objectives) in line with overall ECCE objectives. This critical final link in the process informs where ECCE stands in relation to objectives, informs professional development needs, and provides a means for disseminating to MOE and stakeholders the current situation for ECCE.

These five steps in the performance evaluation process provide the critical link to other HR management processes as well as the continuous monitoring of action toward results. The positive nature of these exercises is intended to assure that staff and managers no longer view evaluation as a system of sanctions, but rather as a means for assuring an achievement oriented organization. These are graphically represented in Figure 5 below.

The development and adoption of the PAP are critically important for improving other modules of HR, and for improving the overall sense of results-oriented action within ECCE. While a consultant will be required to conduct the redesign or adaptation of PAP elements from MOE, these activities will be targeted for 2011.

• **Establishing a Program for Professional Development and Training that** assures that existing and potential skill gaps among personnel are reduced and eliminated. A system for planning and conducting training needs is a means for assuring that personnel who require upgrading are upgraded. In many systems, the structuring of programs for training planning occurs at a central level; in others, no rules or system exists and training becomes ad hoc. While some resources for training may be available, the current approach relies upon individuals to initiate (and often pay) for on-going and in-service training that is necessary for the ECCE. Often the result is that a few staff members gain virtually all the training opportunities, while those who may need the training are left in the

cold. In both cases, the organization suffers. The basic objective of professional development is the set of actions oriented toward systematic, continuous and organized improvement of knowledge and abilities of personnel through the development of policies and strategies based on equality and equity, the design and execution of training plans and programs resulting from analysis of individual and institutional needs and objectives. Again, this is critical for a learning organization.

Particularly relevant here is continuous training for Teachers, FOs and Administrators in centers. This orientation will be a programmatic, regular and continuing effort to assure ongoing training for effectiveness. While most personnel within the ECCE system are contracted, this does not alter the need for continuing upgrading of skills, and for the programmatic structuring of skills improvement in line with organizational objectives and individual advancement.

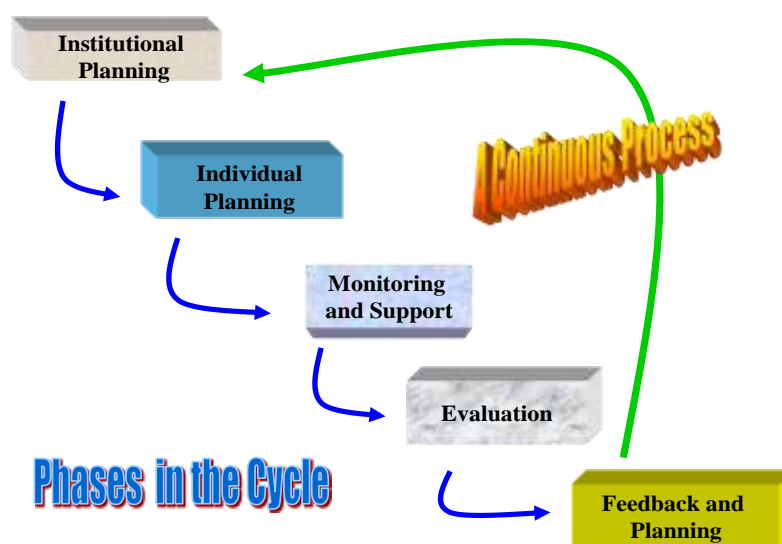
The importance of a program for professional development is also important for the recruitment process. In addition to providing incentives during employment, a successful professional development program can serve as an inducement for employment, making ECCE a more attractive place to work. The issue of recruitment is concerning for ECCE, particularly for the needed Field Officers that fall short of the current – let alone future – needs. While PD serves as one inducement, other strategies for increasing the pool are required. Simply put, the number of candidates with ECCE degrees is limited. Active encouragement through promotion, internships, and other techniques with degree-producing institutions is necessary. In addition, in at least two of the three areas for FOs, it is not clear that the pool of candidates is that of those with ECCE degrees. Active promotion in these other areas (social sciences generally) should be encouraged.

Professional development and recruitment are not issues solely for the staff of ECCE, and in particular for field officers, but are major issues and concerns as the number of ECCE centers expands over the course of the next several years. Simply put, the pool of qualified, graduated (with ECCE degrees) students does not, nor will it, meet the demands for teachers in the centers. With a total of 600 centers, and four teachers plus one Administrator per center, there is a need for 3,000 teachers and Administrators. Of this demand, no less than 1200 are to be graduated ECCE teachers, a number beyond the reach of the current supply-creation mechanisms. While the number of qualified graduates grows through various promotional and incentive schemes in collaboration with universities, the ECCE will have to rely on the existing body of teachers to add to the supply for centers. This may require some short term rethinking of the ambitious program for ratios of qualified graduated teachers to experienced, qualified, yet not fully graduated teachers in the centers. An ambitious program of upgrading and of

programs to provide incentives to existing teachers to complete degrees with financial assistance may be part of the answer. In any case, this pool of teachers is a resource that must be thoroughly tapped, upgraded, and subjected to the same criteria of performance evaluation as others in the system.

- Appointing three (3) key Officers to the Division Staff:** While every effort will be made to contain the growth of the ECCE Division at the center and to emphasize the focus and growth on centers themselves, there is a definitive need for three positions in ECCE: (a) an ECCE Research, Planning, Evaluation and Dissemination Coordinator to conduct appropriate research, design program and Division evaluations, and to disseminate best practices within ECCE and beyond. In particular this RPED Coordinator will be responsible for liaison activities with other units within the MOE (Planning Division, and others) as well as entities outside the MOE related to research, data collection and planning ( e.g., census) ; (b) a full-time Human Resource Development Officer to design and apply appropriate HR management instruments and functions at the level of ECCE. This HRD Officer is responsible for liaison with HR at MOE both to receive information and guides/mandates, but also to assure that HR/MOE involves the Division in human resource planning and development activities; and, (c) a full-time Accounting Officer to bolster the capacity of ECCE to carry out expanding financial management – especially budget and accounting functions, and to assist field officers and Administrators in the conduct of the finance function. **Each of these positions should be filled during the second semester of 2010, as noted in the Appendices.**

Figure 5. Stages in Performance Appraisal



4. **Improving Supervision, Monitoring, Facilitation and a Focus on the Centers are efforts** to build on an already vibrant new system with the creation of Field Officers and Coordinators, and the dramatic changes in the management and skill level of personnel at the centers. However, as the number of new centers grows the choice for ECCE in its supervision role is both to grow and to modify the system of supervision. The nature and content of the supervision system, indeed the nature and role for Administrators, is in flux as it should be. Change should be embraced as the growing supply of centers and capacity for increased access involve alterations in the system itself. Three key elements are significant in these modifications:

- **Empowering Administrators** to carry out more of the administrative aspects of monitoring and supervision and utilizing technology for the transmission of relevant administrative information directly to the Coordinators at the ECCE Division (assuming that PCs for Coordinators are provided). This empowerment at the centers is in line with the overall MOE objective of decentralization. Their role as Administrators implies the need for expanded activities such as performance evaluation of teachers, assuring filling skill gaps (theirs and teachers through professional development, and the increasing development of EMIS for efficient transmission of basic administrative information to the Division. The thrust toward decentralization applies equally to ECCE as it does to other educational levels. While School-based management may not be the objective at this level, greater self-reliance and self management is. This empowerment argues not only for greater Administrator authority to match increased responsibility, but also for greater direct involvement of parents and the community in actions taken at the center level. Clearly, the creation of the FO for Family and Community Support has this objective.

- In order to strengthen the decentralization process and to assure adequate supervision and coordination at the level of the centers, an earlier report has recommended the creation of a **Hub and Cluster system**,<sup>1</sup> with Hub centers of leadership at the core of each within each District. The ECCE strategy embraces the Hub Model and Cluster, and the concept of an initial pilot Hub to be replicated in the remaining districts of Trinidad and Tobago. The careful selection of the initial pilot can take place even as the new centers are being created, while replication may wait for the addition of a substantial number of new centers. As ECCE moves forward in the creation of these Hub Centers, the criteria for selection (of both the pilot and of the remaining six) will be further developed. At a base minimum, these

---

<sup>1</sup> EDC Report, pp. 83- 94.

Central Leadership Hubs will involve the selection and training of personnel (Administrators, FOs) for their special role in the integration of centers in their districts. In addition, the provision of appropriate equipment for these Hubs is critical. Finally, a criterion for selection is to be the proximity (physical/intellectual) of primary schools where the modifications of the “transition” in SES becomes apparent. **The development of the Hub system is a medium term activity and will require support both in design and implementation of consultant activity. This support is noted in the Appendices.**

- Many of the elements of this strategic dimension point to the need to constantly involve the ECCE in the process of change. One of these changes that will occur with the growth of the new centers and the establishment of a Hub Model will be a modification in the role that the FOs currently play at the level of the centers to increase supervision, but more importantly to augment mentoring and facilitation and to reduce their activities in monitoring Administrators in their administrative role. The creation of a Hub and Cluster system will also impact upon the role of FOs for the future. **A review of the current role and function of FOS is foreseen as a set of activities for the short and medium term,. First, a review of the current role, and second a review in light of the adoption of an alternative supervision model will be required. The second of these is an activity likely to occur in 2012.**

**5. Strengthening Technology** is a *sine qua non* for effective and efficient Early Childhood Development in Trinidad and Tobago. The emphasis on technology is evident in the Corporate Plan, and is a key dimension for ECCE as well.

- The MOE is embarking on an effort to implement an Educational Management Information System, particularly to improve the capacity for School-based management at the primary and secondary levels. The ECCE embraces this effort and will endeavor to introduce a variation on EMIS for the centers and ECCE Division, and every effort is to be made to adapt and adopt the software and database management required for a variety of administrative tasks: Student Record Management, Teaching Delivery Management, and Center and Division Administration Management.

- Among the components of the introduction of appropriate IT for ECCE is the need to accompany the introduction of new and improved HR management with technology. At MOE the development of IHRIS has proceeded, but slowly, and currently serves as an inventory and a payroll system. The implementation of additional modules is the thrust at MOE, and the introduction of the HR management modules for ECCE will proceed apace. While the entire HR

management system (Figure 5) resides in separate locations in MOE (HR/MOE, Divisions, Schools and Centers) three modules in particular are served well through IT at the level of ECCE and centers: Policy and Planning, Performance Appraisal and Professional Development.

- Much of the introduction of IT clearly depends upon the presence of adequate equipment and training in the use of this equipment. ECCE will expand the number of Desktop or laptop computers to accommodate several internal audiences: (a) Coordinators each need a desktop computer (5); Field Officers need at least one desktop computer per District to be located at an office allocated at the District Office for their interaction and communication, and on each for the different Coordinator Areas per District (7 + 21); (c) all Administrators require a desktop computer and internet access as part of their administrative responsibilities. This includes the current 29, but as each new center is inaugurated, a computer for the center should be part of the equipment provided. During the remainder of 2010 the objective is fifty centers inaugurated (in various stages of inaugurated or under construction). In addition some 31 centers currently have been tendered and awarded<sup>2</sup>; (d) In addition, there is a need for several desktop computers within ECCE for staff (3). The implication for 2010 is the addition of some 62 desktop and 21 laptop computers for the year. With the planning for inauguration of centers for the years 2011-2013, the costs and provision of additional computer resources will be incorporated. While the overall cost of this provision may seem high, it is an absolute necessity for the efficient and effective functioning of the ECCE system.

- In addition, the ECCE Division will improve other equipment deficits currently experienced, including at least one additional quality printer and an additional photocopier. But perhaps no area of the deficit of equipment is more felt than access to telephone land lines. Currently, ECCE has one, an impossible situation given the volume of telephone traffic. At least two and possibly three lines in the Division are necessary: a direct line for the Director, a dedicated fax line and an additional telephone line.

- The physical presence of a computer is not enough. Staff and Administrators and Teachers require training in IT to assure the efficient and effective use of technology. The existing staff at the Division and within the centers will be upgraded in terms of skills, and as new centers come on line, these too will receive appropriate IT training.

## **6. Strengthening Financial Management in ECCE.**

---

<sup>2</sup> Data provided by the Planning Division of MOE.

- In earlier sections we have noted that the addition of an Accounting Officer will strengthen financial management at the Division level, but as importantly, for Administrators and centers. This Accounting Officer will also serve as a trainer/mentor for the existing Accounting Clerks and center Administrators to reduce errors and speed accounting and cash management systems. In an effort to strengthen the Division's overall control, the strengthening of financial management (budget planning, accounting, cash management, etc.) is a good beginning, although it is clear that the dependence upon MOE will remain.

- An additional aspect of financial management and decentralization is important, and also has been noted earlier: the need to increase the cash transfer to centers and to the discretion of Administrators and Boards. An increase to at least TT\$3,000 is a partial answer to the shortfall. Finally, at the level of centers, financial resources available for emergency and minor needs on a regular basis are few. Currently the only financial resource available for centers is the \$TT 2,000 cash transfer quarterly.<sup>3</sup> This sum is too small for even minor operational activities, and ECCE strives to increase this transfer to at least TT\$3,000 quarterly to cover materials, immediate small maintenance needs, materials and supplies not provided directly by MOE, and other immediate and short term necessities in schools.

- With the addition of a Financial Accounting Officer (noted above) the overall capacity, efficiency and reduction of errors in the accounting system will be reduced. This Officer not only serves to strengthen the immediate capacity and efficiency of the accounting function, but among his/her roles is the need to serve as mentor for accounting clerks in ECCE and for Administrators in centers.

- Finally, existing thresholds for procurement are extremely low and lead to long delays in the acquisition of relatively small and simple purchases. Every effort will be made to raise these thresholds, although procurement rules lie outside the purview of a Division.

## **7. The Challenge of Infrastructure.**

- The new centers provide an excellent environment for learning. The relatively simple design has been developed with the children in mind. The distribution of the use of space for various activities allows for children to focus on one activity while others are engaged in other activities. The design is in keeping with a new curricular approach that emphasizes greater choice and greater involvement of the children in their own cognitive development. Similarly, the

---

<sup>3</sup> Some new centers have complained that they have not even received this existing transfer on a timely basis and in one case for two transfer periods.

furniture, the technology, and other equipment and materials provide for small group interaction and social learning provides an excellent environment. The same is not true for some of the existing centers visited, where the need for more and better space and construction is evident when and where these centers are to be utilized in the transition to new centers in the future. While some require simple refurbishing, others need to be replaced altogether. At the ECCE Division the space and its distribution (in modular form for most staff) is adequate, although if central staff grows significantly (and we hope not significantly!) there may be an issue in the future.

- If there is any issue for possible concern in the future it is with the issue of maintenance of new schools. Of course, centers are new, and major maintenance issues are not the norm. But minor maintenance issues that require EFCL intervention do exist, and it is their responsibility. Generally, the EFCL seems reasonably responsive, but there is a need to strengthen the linkage to EFCL at the District level (where EFCL has offices) and to assure that at that level—not the ECCE Division – the responsiveness is adequate. Strengthening this tie is simply a matter of strengthening communication in Districts and strengthening the pro-active role of Quality Assurance Officers as key intermediaries at the local level in this process.

- The goal of establishing 600 new centers by 2015 is very ambitious from several perspectives. Currently there are some 28 centers and the number has been growing relatively quickly in recent days and weeks. In addition, there are some 50 centers at various stages of construction and 31 centers that are on line because tenders have been awarded. However, in addition to the number of centers to be constructed in this timetable, the issue of the continued availability of government land to site these centers may well impact on the process, and the obtaining of land is an issue that ECCE, together with Planning and EFCL, are addressing. The acquisition of suitable government land is critical and troublesome for the timetable. Finally, the staffing of new centers implies the need to pick up the pace for new teachers and Administrators who are qualified. This tri-partite challenge is being addressed currently, but the challenge reminds all that the ambitious goals require other actions to proceed apace.

- An additional issue related to infrastructure is the need for office space for FOs to meet within Districts at the District Office. While communication among FOs within a given District has achieved a positive pattern over the past year and one half and works, there continues to be a need to strengthen further this cohesion and interaction. This horizontal communication at the field level will be greatly advanced through the provision of space at the District level.

## Chapter 4. Conclusions

This Strategy for the Early Childhood Care and Education Division has focused on principal dimensions that ECCE has incorporated to assure quality, universal access, and equity in a Seamless Educational System for early childhood development. At the core the children are the central emphasis and axis for all else in ECCE. The children are the client and the center of the system.

The Strategy recognizes the need for excellence, as espoused in the Ministry of Education Corporate Plan, 2008-2012, but it also places great attention on the continuing goal of universal access and equity. In addition, the Strategy stresses the need to change ECCE to a learning organization, and one that emphasizes results and outcomes over process and procedure.

This effort was developed and refined against a backdrop of a thorough examination of the context and the internal dynamics of the extant ECCE as a means to enhance and facilitate a more efficient and effective organization. The Vision and Mission of the ECCE provide direction to strengthening a cohesive and committed Division that builds on the seven key dimensions of a more dynamic, flexible, client-oriented and results-focused organization.

Together with the Ministry's Corporate Plan, the ECCE places prominence in its Vision and Mission through:

- A student-centered educational system of high quality through improved standards of curriculum for staff and Administrators in the centers;
- A focus on the educational centers and the need to build on the advantages gained from the new Quality Educational Model adopted in these centers with a supervision system that facilitates, mentors and monitors quality assurance;
- A quality Education Model that creates an infrastructure and physical environment conducive to learning with the addition of world-class centers for the growth of participation to some 30,000 children;
- Building closer ties to parents and community as the principal stakeholders in the educational outcome for their children;
- Changing the ECCE Division through an emphasis on an improved organizational structure, management style, human resource base and management system, better use of technology, the management of financial resources.

The challenge for the ECCE is to implement these changes and to live up to the elements of this Strategy to prepare children for entry and participation in the Seamless Educational System, and their eventual role as productive and complete individuals for societal development.

**Appendix 1. A First Approximation to Achieving Objectives: An ECCE Work Plan, 2010-2013**

**Appendix 2. Action Plan with Calendar by Semesters, 2010-2013**