

# Strengthening child rights education for professionals in East Africa

27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> October 2010  
Pan Africa Hall



**Workshop Report**

**MS-TCDC,  
Arusha, Tanzania**

***“Rights are of no use if one is not aware of them.”  
Awich Pollar***

## **Introduction and Background**

The Committee on the Rights of the Child in its recent report recommended to **Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia** that they should introduce systematic child’s rights training for all professionals working with children. CRED-PRO (Children’s Rights Education for Professionals), the MS-Training Centre for Development Co-operation, in Arusha, Tanzania and The Open University (UK) approached the Oak Foundation to discuss a proposal for and was successful in receiving funding for a jointly hosted conference in Tanzania to support implementation of this recommendation in the four above countries plus **South Africa**.

The aim of the conference was to provide an opportunity to share experiences across the region in the provision of child rights education for professionals, and to explore ways of scaling up and strengthening current efforts in the future. The funding also enabled mapping of existing provision of child rights education for professionals across each of the four countries as well as adding inspiration from CRED-PRO initiatives in South Africa and Southern America.

Bo Damsted from MS-TCDC welcomed participants and led a session in which everyone introduced themselves. Gerison Lansdown, from CRED-PRO, introduced the conference and its objectives, and outlined the program for the three days. Participants expressed expectations of what they would like to gain from the event, including the opportunity to share experiences on issues of child rights education, develop networks and collaboration, gain experience in how to scale up programs and share good practice around organizational effectiveness and the implementation of theoretical and conceptual models into professional practice.

## **Day One: Sharing information on current development in child rights education across the four participating countries.**

### **The Case for Child Rights Education (CRED)**



Awich Pollar, from United Nations (UN) Committee on Rights of the Child (CRC) gave a presentation on the case for child rights education. He emphasized that it is an obligation on governments, based on Article 42 of the CRC, to disseminate the principles and provisions of the CRC widely to adults and children. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has recommended to all governments that they strengthen child rights education for professionals.

*Picture 1- on the left: Awich Pollar presenting the case for CRED*

### **Emerging issues**

- Few governments have yet taken action to provide training for all professionals working with children.
- The reports to the Committee by States Parties may not accurately present or represent the reality on the ground. Governments often present only the most favorable perspective. It is therefore important that shadow reports by coalitions of civil society organizations are also presented to the Committee.

## Child Rights Education for Professionals (CRED-PRO)

Gerison Lansdown made a presentation on the initiatives of Child Rights Education for Professionals (CRED-PRO). The initiative was established in response to the lack of progress by governments in introducing training programmes for professionals. CRED-PRO seeks to build partnerships with stakeholders at national level within the professions, government, civil society and academia to develop culturally relevant education programmes focusing on helping to change individual professional practice, and well as institutional change and advocacy towards greater respect for children’s rights. It is currently working in Latin America, North America, Eastern Europe, and Africa, with plans to extend into South East Asia, Western Europe and the Caribbean.

~~~ **Observation** ~~~

Participants portrayed a sense of motivation as they actively participated in discussion, especially on issues relating to CRC, the four states and legal provisions for protection of rights of children and the gaps, which exists in domesticating international conventions. Generally speaking, participants demonstrated that they have in depth knowledge on the subject in question.



Picture 2- standing: Gerison Lansdown presenting on CRED- PRO.

### Emerging issue:

- Most rights trainings focus on the content of the CRC and not its implication for practice.
- Child rights need to be integrated to professional training, not just provided as a ‘one-off’ training.

## The Open University (OU) and its activities in the CRED-PRO

Lesley-Anne Long, from the OU (UK), made a presentation of initiatives of OU. OU is committed to delivering high quality child rights education training. The institution has on-line materials, some of which are open educational resources, which can be used for training professionals. She concluded that the e-learning programs and open content modules developed by OU will help tremendously to reduce the costs of developing child rights education materials for professionals as the materials are freely downloadable and can be adapted for local context as long as users acknowledge the source of the original materials. Institutions will only have to meet adaptation costs, which is less than the costs of training experts and developing the materials from new.



Picture 3- above – second from left: Lesley-Anne presenting initiatives of OU.

## International case studies in the development and implementation of Child Rights Education

### *a. CRED-PRO South Africa*

Lori Lake, from the University of Cape Town made a presentation on child rights and child law for health professionals, a course being developed in partnership with CRED-PRO at the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town. The course demonstrates how children's rights can be used as an effective tool to improve the health and wellbeing of children and their families, and also to equip health professionals with the knowledge and skills to realize children's rights in their practice.

### *b. Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI)*

Peter Masesa of REPSSI made a presentation on the background of REPSSI and the need for Psychosocial Support (PSS), together with the REPSSI agenda, achievements and challenges. The TOT approach of training professionals being used by REPSSI has an inbuilt mechanism to ensure quality is ensured. REPSSI has a structure of operation which guarantees the quality of the training it offers and the success of its training.

## Findings of a mapping exercise on the status of Child Rights Educations for Professionals (CRED-PRO)



*Picture 4 above: Kate McAlpine presenting findings of the mapping exercise*

Kate McAlpine, a consultant, presented the findings of a mapping exercise in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Ethiopia. Although there were differences in status of training for professionals across the four countries, some common themes emerged. Child rights education initiatives tend to be fragmented and ad-hoc. They are provided in the form of workshops, primarily by NGOs. There is no common standard of provision, and no follow up or assessment of impact. The academic institutions have not yet appreciated the need for child rights education. Professional Associations tend to be weak or non-existent in the region. Although most of the governments have introduced child rights legislation, they have not fully embraced the role of child rights training across all the relevant professions in order to ensure the implementation of those laws.

### ***Emerging Issue:*** 'Quick-fix'

technical interventions are not the best approaches, as their impacts are not lasting. There is need for government buy-in, and a commitment to recognition that change will not happen without training. More effort needs to be focused on collaboration between government, academic institutions and the professions. There are still cultural barriers to child right issues, which have to be addressed.

*"Children are still not being considered as human beings but as human becoming or parental possessions" Stefan van der Swallow – Africa Child Policy Forum*

## Summary of the plenary session- Participants' views on Challenges, Opportunities, needs and Priorities

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Challenges</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limited resources</li> <li>- Negative traditional practices and beliefs</li> <li>- Lack of awareness</li> <li>- Lack of coordination</li> <li>- Few champions of the right of a child</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Opportunities</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ratifications</li> <li>- Legislations on child right</li> <li>- Existence of institutions of learning</li> <li>- Resources at international levels</li> <li>- Integration of Legislation Assemblies (East Africa)</li> </ul> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Needs</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strengthened capacities at grassroots</li> <li>- Translation of documents</li> <li>- Engagement of visionary leaders and professionals</li> <li>- Move from training to awareness creation</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Priorities</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mobilize and empower change agents</li> <li>- Create momentum, passion with less of a legal approach</li> <li>- Politicians to prioritize children's rights</li> <li>- Evidenced based advocacy</li> </ul>                      |

### Day two: Identifying how to improve the quality, impact and scope of child rights education

Gerison Lansdown opened the session and introduced the program for the day. Gerison, Lesley-Anne and Lori Lake were the main facilitators for the day.

#### ***a. African Center for Childhood (ACC) – Supported Situated Distance Learning***

Fiona Bulman from ACC made the presentation. ACC has been running courses in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. In Tanzania, ACC works in collaboration with the University of Dar es Salaam, Social Work department. In the experience of ACC, the course module on human rights and child protection has often been most challenging. It has developed a quality assured distance learning program which has reached a large audience of individuals who would not otherwise have had access to professional education.

#### **Emerging Issues:**

- There is a need to ensure quality and standards in curriculum, as well as to integrate the views and the opinions of relevant stakeholders.
- The development of a curriculum should not be left to the government and the responsible ministries alone.
- Practitioners need not wait for the curriculum to be approved before they can use it to train professionals.

#### ***b. HEAT Training in Africa-***

Lesley-Anne presented the initiative of Health Education and Training (HEAT) program in Ethiopia. HEAT works to improve the lives and health of children through a simple, direct and large-scale program. By building long-term capacity in Ethiopia and across Sub Saharan Africa, HEAT creates significant change for now and the future. Heat offers an online knowledge bank of highly structured, comprehensive, text and audio multi-media and multi-lingual curriculum materials covering core areas of healthcare, a comprehensive collection of open educational learning resources and resources and toolkits with relevant case studies, activities and guidance for health educators.

**Emerging Issues:**

- There is a positive link between child right education, policy change and reforms.
- Education for professionals not only creates awareness, but is also a call to action towards changing practice on the ground.

***c. CRED-PRO South America:  
 Southern Core Initiative on Child Rights and Health***



*Picture 5; Gary (first left) and second Miguell presenting experiences of Southern Core*

Gary Robinson from CRED-PRO gave a prelude to the presentation, highlighting alternative ways in which CRED-PRO was implemented in the participating countries in South America to achieve common objectives. In Paraguay, they took a regional health approach. In Columbia, CRED-PRO worked with medical association of pediatrics, and in Chile, it worked with public policy stakeholders. Miguel Cordero Vega, CRED-PRO representative at Ministry of Health, Chile, made a presentation featuring Southern Core initiative on child rights and health.

**Emerging issues:**

In Chile, the initiative partnered with the Municipality to undertake evaluations to make a case for the return on investment in child health. There is significant benefit in exploring ways of demonstrating the returns on investment associated with children’s rights; such data would be of benefit to other related programs.

*“There is more than one way to get to the same end”  
 Gary Robinson – CRED-PRO*

**How to improve the quality and scope of child rights education**

Lori Lake, assisted by Lesley-Anne, led a plenary discussion on the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to improve the quality and child rights education. The plenary also discussed what change in professionals’ practice one would expect to see. The plenary started with identifying specific categories of people that need to change, including, among others, parents, government staff, NGOs, local and opinion leaders and professionals. Outcomes of group discussions are as below.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Group 1</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All policies need to address the right of children</li> <li>- Practitioners view children from a right’s friendly lens</li> </ul>                                  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Group 4</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Listen to children, give information, identify resources</li> <li>- Observe children and identify evidence of violation of rights</li> <li>- Know their responsibilities and respect the child</li> </ul> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Group 2</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Changes in how we view children</li> <li>- Birth rights</li> <li>- Children viewed as today, not tomorrow</li> <li>- Listen and make informed decisions</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Group 5</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Non discriminatory for all professionals</li> <li>- Awareness of child rights</li> <li>- Listen to child’s needs</li> <li>- System for identifying and reporting</li> </ul>                               |

| <b>Group 3</b>                                                                                                                                  | <b>Group 6</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduction of corporal punishment</li> <li>- Teach human rights as part of school curriculum</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Best interest of the child</li> <li>- Basic issues, minimum standards (e.g play ground, public services etc)</li> <li>- All rights have to match the stages of development of a child</li> </ul> |

### **Building the environment for strengthening the development of child rights education**

The session consisted of group work and a plenary presentation. Gerison Lansdown introduced the group work. Five groups presented on (i) Content and competencies; (ii) Means of delivery; (iii) Who to target; (iv) Resource requirements and (v) Evaluation of CRE training

**Emerging Issues:**

- Attitudes are difficult to change. There is a need for tools which enable trainees to experience different approaches to addressing problems, and to gain insight into the rights violations faced by children. Group work and exercises can be used to change attitudes.
- There is core training content on children’s rights, which can be relevant and applicable across all categories of professionals.
- There is need to adopt a training delivery to the particular group being trained. For example, depending on the professional group, there may be no need to mention or quote the articles of the CRC and their legal provisions. Rather, they can be approached by addressing the principle or implications of what the articles entails. One needs to understand the underpinnings and entitlements of the articles without knowing the article number.
- Although collaboration, especially with government, can often slow things down, there is need to have a cross-section of stakeholders. It is important to involve partners from different constituencies who will provide different and complementary skills and knowledge.
- It is important not to re-invent the wheel. There are many very successful training initiatives across the region which can be built on, and utilized to create new training opportunities and extend into a wider range of professions

*“When looking for partners, bring in the unusual suspects. They help set the external environments ”*  
*Stefan van der Swallow – Africa Child Policy Forum*

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Lesley-Anne led the plenary discussion on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). A key question was: What do we want to achieve and how will we know if we have succeeded?

**Emerging issues:**

- Evaluation of impact should be viewed from the point of view of the communities engaged in and affected by programmes, not from donors’ perspective.
- In designing an M&E tools, there is need for dialogue with a cross-section of people so that the indicators reflect the interests of all relevant participants.
- A good M&E tool needs to be clear, specific, unambiguous and easy to understand - When designing a curriculum, M&E should be considered from the outset.
- There is no need to “re-invent the wheel”. A lot of work has already been done and there are many materials available to draw from when designing M & E for a project or program.
- Baseline analyses are important as they provide information on the situation before the project is implemented.

## Day three: Sharing information on current development in child rights education across the four participating countries.



Picture 6 - Bo Damsted facilitating the workshop.

Bo Damsted from MS-TCDC, the lead facilitator for the day opened and highlighted the program for the day. To focus participants, he posed key questions:

Where do we want to go and what do we want to achieve?

How are we going to get there?

Is it child rights education or are we using child rights education as an entry point for improved services and livelihoods for children?

Many opportunities to build on have been highlighted, although there are also many challenges. Are we challenging ourselves enough?

Based on the discussions arising from the previous two days, the conference co-ordinators proposed a possible strategy for moving forward. The idea was to establish a regional secretariat involving representation from each of the four countries participating in the conference, as well as South Africa. This regional body would have responsibility for supporting country initiatives and facilitating dialogue and collaboration. Each country would establish its own network of key stakeholders, which would develop a detailed plan for strengthening child rights education. At the regional level, the secretariat would have sub-committees on curriculum development, quality assurance, M&E, research and dissemination, technology and implementation.

It was proposed to hold a follow up regional meeting to take place in February 2011 in order to develop a more detailed proposal, select the members to the panel and come up with a strategic plan for building infrastructure, content development, training and implementation and evaluation.

### Discussion points on the proposed plan

- It is a good start, but it needs to explore the links between regional initiatives and initiatives on-going at the country levels. The key question here was how to relate the issues to the current East African Community (EAC) regional forum;
- Structure, leadership and agreed tasks for each country will be important;
- It was observed that the structure being formed through the workshop is moving faster than that of the EAC. The initiative being formed through the workshop can be linked to the ongoing initiatives at the EAC later;
- The driver for the proposed structure should be the change we would like to see. The perceived change should dictate the structure of the initiative;
- It would be useful to link the ongoing initiative with the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of Children;
- UNICEF should have a role in facilitating the national teams in their home countries to carry forward the agenda;
- If the countries are looking at collaboration, there is need to differentiate first, then integrate later, once they have a clear plan or vision for integration;



- For Kenya, the government would need to be brought “on board”, as there was no representation of the government in the workshop;
- There is need to spend some time in the countries to further map ongoing initiatives and build on these. It is not necessary to make the initiative in question a completely new activity. For example, in Tanzania, there is a Human Rights Education strategy being formulated, which also provides for training for human rights issues;
- Participants agreed to discuss the way forward in their groups and plan the way forward in country specific contexts.

***Outcomes of group discussions***

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Group 1</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to acknowledge individually enthusiastic groups (in country contexts)</li> <li>- Where is Rwanda and Burundi?</li> <li>- Call the movement CREATE (Child Rights Education in Africa Training and Empowerment)</li> <li>- CRED-PRO to support the movement</li> <li>- Country focal point persons are necessary</li> <li>- UNICEF and UNESCO should be involved</li> <li>- Face to face meetings between stakeholders are important</li> <li>- Leadership and advocacy roles need more clarification</li> <li>- Funding and fundraising sub committee is necessary</li> </ul> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Group 2</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is need to clarify the change the initiative is trying to achieve.</li> <li>- Let the need for change drive the structure and the strategic plan</li> <li>- Go back to the countries and think</li> <li>- Understand what drives the change</li> <li>- Need for more expertise in policy advocacy and resource mobilization</li> <li>- The proposed framework looks logical although there is need to conceptualize best way of moving forward and it should be broken down into long, medium and short terms goals and specific objectives,</li> </ul> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Group 3</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need to understand what different countries need</li> <li>- Need for standard setting (for curricular)</li> <li>- Regional coordination is necessary</li> <li>- There is need for mobilization of resources</li> <li>- Quality assurance mechanisms need to be there</li> <li>- M&amp;E system needs to be at a regional level</li> <li>- Composition of a regional body is welcome and the regional body should have government representation and should take enhance accountability</li> </ul>                                                                                 | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Group 4</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Timeframe for next meeting-</li> <li>- Child rights education for Professional working with children in East and South African Region Countries (ESARO) should be the name of the movement</li> <li>- Advisory panel should have CRED-PRO, OU, MS-TCDC, REPSSI, UNICEF, and UNHCR.</li> <li>- The advisory body should supervise curriculum development, quality assurance, research, technologies, and implementation</li> </ul>                                                                                                                             |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Group 5</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The plan is not perfect but provides a foundation</li> <li>- By February 2011, develop first draft of country plans</li> <li>- Consider elements of the core curriculum</li> <li>- Call the movement CREAT (Child Rights Education in Africa Training and Empowerment)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

**Emerging issues:**



- There is an immense energy that has been built up and there is need to sustain the momentum and transmit it to other partners.
- The focus of training should be on professionals working directly with children. There was discussion about the important of policy makers, as well as parents, volunteers and local community members, but it was agreed that we needed to provide a focus and not seek to draw the net too widely at this stage
- Participants have the power to make change and power to influence and there is need to take and use that power.
- Kenya stakeholders will meet on 29<sup>th</sup> November to brainstorm on the way forward and they aim to have a plan by February 2011.
- Uganda participants will meet on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2010 and 22<sup>nd</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> November, with a wider group of stakeholders in order to map a way to come up with country plans
- In Ethiopia, there is a national coordination body and a five-year strategic plan. The team agreed to share the strategic plan, study it and see the entry point. No date was set yet but a meeting will be scheduled later in the year.
- For South Africa, there are only two representatives and they did not have a mandate at this time to commit to any decisions and timelines.
- The countries should be guided by the national contexts.
- CRED-PRO, OU and TCDC are committed to supporting the country initiatives
- Provisional dates for the next meeting are Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> to Friday 25<sup>th</sup> February or Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March to 4<sup>th</sup> March.

The facilitator closed the workshop with congratulations to the participants