

ABSTRACT

SUB THEME: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

TITLE:EMPOWERING PEOPLE IN RURAL AFRICA FOR 2015 AND BEYOND
THROUGH ECE

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This paper attempts to assess the progress on the implementation of the MDGs by African countries to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015 and beyond. UNESCO (2010), reported that Africa's diverse countries vary dramatically in size, economic structure, level of development and the type of education systems. The continent faces similar challenges while trying to address problems of providing basic education and more so the Early Childhood Education. In line with several governments' commitment to international declaration protocols and conventions arrived at in World Conference of EFA at Jomtien Thailand (1990) and follow up in Dakar, Senegal (2000) and by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) many primary schools have opened ECE classes. However, in most countries ECE is not free and this compounds the problem of access and retention among other problems like poverty, education levels of parents, parenting styles, HIV/AIDS concerns etc. It has therefore become increasingly evident that Africa has to meet the challenge of offering quality ECE. Then, policies have to be put in place to train teachers as well as measures to eradicate poverty to empower parents. The development of National ECE policy framework is a crucial step in teacher training and allocating adequate resources in ECE programmes in order to enhance enrolment and retention. The nature of rural poverty is in such a way that people in Africa in most households, labour is the primary source of income. Some are small scale farmers, pastoralists, casual labourers etc. The UN convention of the Rights of the Child (1991) lists various rights that are accorded to all children all over the world among them right to education, play, association, non-discrimination etc.