WAYS FORWARD

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This volume began with a call to honour 'other ways': other ways of understanding children's care and development; other ways of supporting communities, from local to country levels; other ways of promoting capacity; and other ways that scholars and tertiary institutions can contribute to children's and societies' well-being. For the lead author of this book, the past 25 years, starting with the First Nations Partnership Programs in Western Canada and since 1994 in sub-Saharan Africa, has been a process of becoming ever more open to, and encouraging of, those 'other ways.' Part of that openness has been motivated by a growing uneasiness with the biases and limitations of 'traditional' Euro-Western understandings of children and development, as reflected in the perspectives expressed in chapters 1 and 2 of this book, which offered a brief critique of capacity-building and child development in international development. But most of that openness has come from an appreciation of the importance of local knowledge and local knowledge holders— knowledge and holders intertwined in ways that communities derive a sense of inherent capacity that externally driven capacity building often deplete or undermine. Such an approach requires an appreciation of many knowledges, and a wariness of the uni- of universal and other singularities. In the experiences recounted in this volume we have found such approaches can indeed effect changes 'on the ground'—some, like policy development in Malawi, are surprisingly fast; others are less dramatic but typically feature a level of sustained commitment over time (like TECDEN in Tanzania) that is often missing in externally driven projects. In that spirit, we continue to work on ECD initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa, guided not only by specific 'plans,' but, more importantly, by a set of overarching, guiding principles gained and tested over the years:

- Recognize the importance of not knowing, and not taking on the power 'to determine';

- Recognize and reinforce communities' strengths;

- Focus on identifying and supporting local, appropriate leaders and stakeholders;

- Work to achieve a sense of 'family' amongst child and family supportive leaders;

- Support knowledge holders to become knowledge sharers, not just within their communities but more globally;

- Support continuing quests for 'new knowledge' and its sharing;

- Encourage interactions across communities and networks;

- Encourage many ways of seeing and understanding and an openness to others;

- Fade away, but work to ensure impacts remain and approaches are sustained.

In the spirit of these principles, this concluding chapter highlights current extensions of ECD and ECDVU work that focus largely on the importance of re-envisioning post-secondary institutions in sub-Saharan Africa as *knowledge generating* institutions capable of providing leadership that is at once contextually meaningful and effective. To date, most post-secondary education in SSA is descended from colonial institutions featuring *knowledge transfer* approaches, with knowledge bases and socio-historical origins external to the continent. Despite decades of self-rule, post-secondary institutions in SSA, as in most of the rest of the world, have not engaged in transformative contextualization. The insights and possibilities of the local have been consistently eclipsed by 'evidence' from the West—too often such 'evidence' is a function of power masquerading as 'truth.' One result (among a plethora of examples) is a failure to significantly advance an African-led and Africa-sensitive science of ECD and child development that can not only guide developments in Africa, but also be a respected global contributor.

While developing a proposal to explore and address this concern, Marfo & Pence (2008) echoed Arnett's position regarding developmental psychology (2008): "…that research on the whole of humanity is necessary for creating a science that truly represents the whole of humanity" (p. 602). Even if the concept of 'knowledge universals' retains some merit, much greater value accrues when 'universal' perspectives engage and interact with local knowledges, which

can in turn be assessed for their individual and combined contributions and effectiveness. The principle *engagement of knowledges,* with each respectfully learning from the other, is central to all the initiatives described in this volume. That principle resonates throughout a more recent set of activities, the African Scholars and Institutions (AS&I) initiative (see www.ecdvu.org), described below. African scholarly leadership is absolutely central to consolidating gains in ECD development in SSA that have taken place over the past two decades and to opening up new avenues of research and leadership in SSA and globally.

Partnerships with Post-secondary Institutions

From its inception in the late 1990s the ECDVU did not envision itself as a continuing presence in Africa, but rather as a transitional tool supportive of individual and institutional development on the continent. As part of that objective, ECDVU has engaged with universities in three sub-regions of SSA (West-Central, Eastern, Southern) regarding the development of undergraduate and graduate programs. To stimulate program development in those regions, ECDVU makes freely available the ECDVU generative curriculum materials and online experience, which can be adapted to the needs of new host institutions. This transition process is most advanced with the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, which launched a collaborative delivery with ECDVU of its own ECE/ECD online Graduate Diploma program in April, 2015.

At the undergraduate level, a number of ECDVU participants have developed ECD/ECE education programs in their home countries.[9] Lesotho was among the first to do so, but others have followed, including Tanzania, Ghana, Liberia, and Nigeria. Edith Sebatane, an ECDVU graduate, has led the Lesotho post-secondary education efforts. For her final project in the SSA-1 delivery, she developed a strategic plan to engage tertiary institutions in Lesotho in advancing ECD at the national level. Initially, that 'roadmap' was realized through a certificate program; development of a diploma program began in the early 2010s. In Tanzania, Daphina Libent drew on her experience in the SSA-2 ECDVU program to design a Bachelor-level ECD distance learning program for her institution, the Open University of Tanzania. In Nigeria, some members of the ECDVU SSA-3 and SSA-4 cohorts were associated with Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs), many of which are in the north of the country. During the ECDVU program, these cohort members focused on expanding training opportunities for ECD frontline teachers.

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[9] It is also interesting to note that one of the Nigerian participants used her participation in the ECDVU as an opportunity to develop a PhD program at her institution.

This expansion was necessary to support Nigerian federal policy changes that called for the joint development of new pre-primary and primary programs. In both the SSA-3 and SSA-4 deliveries, one of the face-to-face seminars took place in East Africa, allowing visits to progressive ECD Madrassa programs initiated through the Aga Khan Development Network. These Madrassa programs differed substantially from those found in northern Nigeria, inspiring some cohort members to create progressive programs in their home states (see World Bank video: *Brain Gain: Leadership Development for Africa's Children,* 2011).

Surveying Post-secondary Institutions in sub-Saharan Africa

Through the African Scholars & Institutions initiative, surveys were conducted in 2010 (East & Southern Africa, with UNICEF) and 2012 (West & Central Africa, with UNESCO) to identify ECD and child development programs at post-secondary institutions across sub-Saharan Africa (Pence & Fleury, 2012). The survey results highlight a significant growth in such programs but a skewed geographic distribution: 16 of 18 countries in East and Southern Africa have or are planning ECD/ECE education or training programs (89%), versus 8 of 19 in West and Central Africa (42%) (see Table 9.1). With respect to institutional language, 18 of 22 Anglophone countries either have or are planning ECD/ECE education or training programs (82%), versus 3 of 12 in Francophone countries (25%) (Table 9.2). This skewed development may reflect, in part, the absence of an ECDVU program in French—an objective long sought by ECD leaders in sub-Saharan Africa.

Table 9.1 Overview of Survey Responses by Region

Region	ECE/ECD programmes				
	In place	Planned	Courses only	Unknown	Total
East & Southern Africa	11	5	2	0	**18**
West & Central Africa	5	3	6	5	**19**
TOTALS	**16**	**8**	**8**	**5**	37

Table 9.2 Overview of Survey Responses by Language

Language	ECE/ECD programmes				
	In place	Planned	Courses only	Unknown	Total
Anglophone	13	5	4	0	**22**
Francophone	1	2	4	5	**12**
Lusophone	2	1	0	0	**3**
TOTALS	**16**	**8**	**8**	**5**	**37**

Scholarly and Research Development: Workshops, Networks and Publications

Any institution or organization that works extensively with children in Africa is aware of how little of the research employed has been conceptualized and led by Africans. This is a problem for Africa—but it is also a problem for knowledge and scholarship globally. This lacuna was apparent even before the development of the ECDVU program—during the ECD Seminars period of the 1990s. The development of the African Scholars and Institutions Initiative was largely an outcome of this long-standing concern. Below we describe a number of related activities, for most of which we are currently seeking financial support.

Scholars' Workshops

In 2008, while seeking funding for their proposal for the African Scholars and Institutions Initiative, Marfo and Pence became aware of a series of a 'small-group workshops' initiative developed and funded by the well-respected, U.S.-based Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD). The workshops sought to advance an appreciation that: "…an understanding of development requires 1) the perspectives and methods of multiple disciplines; 2) cultural and contextual diversity…, and 3) international perspectives…" (SRCD, 2008). Marfo and Pence submitted their proposal to the SRCD, but without much optimism that it would be supported. The SRCD had long been associated with strongly Western—and more specifically American—understandings of child development. If the SRCD announcement of the funding opportunity was a surprise, it was an even greater surprise when Marfo and Pence learned their somewhat 'critically framed' proposal was one of only four of 70 to be funded. Marfo and Pence (2008) had noted in their proposal:

This project is an invitational conference designed to help advance a science of child development that opens up to other

populations and to other ways of thinking about childhood and child development… Often marginalized, contextually significant issues and perspectives in the majority world (the so-called developing world) rarely find their way into leading dissemination outlets in our field. This project focuses on Africa because African voices—as contributions driven by unique African conceptions and realities—are woefully underrepresented in a global knowledge base dominated by Euro-American conceptions of child development and developmental inquiry.

Funding provided for the workshop was not large, but with supporting funds from ECDVU, nine key international and African scholars convened in Victoria, B.C. for a week of discussions in 2009. Those discussions led to the publication of six articles in a special section of *Child Development Perspectives* (2011). The titles in the special section reflect the concerns and foci of the workshop:

- Strengthening Africa's Contributions to Child Development Research: Introduction (by Kofi Marfo, Alan Pence, Robert A. LeVine, & Sarah LeVine)

- Early Childhood Care and Development Research in Africa: Historical, Conceptual, and Structural Challenges (by Alan Pence)

- Think Locally, Act Globally: Contributions of African Research to Child Development (by Charles M. Super, Sara Harkness, Oumar Barry & Marian Zeitlin)

- Social Responsibility as a Dimension of Intelligence and as an Educational Goal: Insights from Programmatic Research in African Society (by Robert Serpell)

- Bridging Culture, Research, and Practice in Early Childhood Development: The Madrasa Resource Centers in East Africa (by Peter A. M. Mwaura, Kofi Marfo)

- Envisioning an African Child Development Field (by Kofi Marfo)

At the top of the participants' minds was the need to secure sufficient funds for a predominantly African group of scholars to participate in a similar workshop in Africa. It took a few years, but eventually the initiative went forward with support from the Open Society Foundation and the Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa (OSISA). The Africa-based follow-up workshop was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in February 2013, with 23 African scholars from 18 SSA countries in attendance.

Preparations for the Johannesburg workshop were led by a team who had participated in the earlier Victoria Workshop (Alan Pence, Kofi Marfo, Bame Nsamenang, and Robert Serpell). Before the Johannesburg workshop, the team distributed the six articles published in *Child Development Perspectives* as background information. In addition, Serpell initiated a pre-workshop online forum that posed various questions for the invitees to consider and discuss. One question asked each invitee to identify and rank priorities for ECD-related research in SSA. The top-ranked responses, in order of priority, included: Indigenous language, knowledge and play; Indigenous child-rearing practices; involvement of the local community; issues involving parents; developmental assessment; and identification and inclusion of children with special needs. After the Johannesburg workshop, a sub-group of scholars from Southern Africa met in Lusaka to plan a joint, multi-country proposal for collaborative research. The priority areas in the proposal largely reflected those identified by the larger group before the workshop.

It is noteworthy that top priorities identified by African-based researchers are not the same as those typically described in the international ECD community, with its much greater focus on Western-based issues and approaches, such as cost-benefit analyses, school readiness, and early brain development, to name a few. It is also important to note that despite the work by African scholars at both the Johannesburg Workshop and the follow-up workshop in Lusaka to establish research priorities, the very minimal funds required to support participants to complete full proposals for that research have been extraordinarily difficult to secure. However, many other donor-driven projects have moved forward for implementation in SSA over the same time period. Those difficulties underscore a point made by Marfo & Pence in their 2008 submission to the SRCD:

> Current global realities in the field, as reflected in research funding, publications, conferences, and other means of professional/academic gate-keeping, virtually ensure the marginalization of intellectual agendas contemplated outside academia in the Western World.

Networks

The intensive, small-group, multi-country workshops described above have yielded a way forward for specific research contributions from African scholars. That same networking process can promote more effective and comprehensive long-term ECD capacity for SSA, if these scholarly networks have opportunities to interact with country-level and regional networks of ECD professionals, such

as those formed through participation in the ECDVU program. Many professional networks, such as the Tanzanian Early Childhood Development Network (TECDEN, discussed in chapter 7), are in turn connected with district and local leaders in ECD. Such cross-network interactions are critically important for Africa-based ECD research to play a maximally relevant and constructive role for ECD's holistic and comprehensive development in Africa.

This approach—interactions across networks, some of which are research-focused and others with civil-society or government orientations—was implemented in a recent research project in Tanzania initiated by the Aga Khan University Institute of Educational Development (AKU-IED) and the UVic-ECDVU. In that project, TECDEN (civil society with government participation) was invited to participate as a key member of the project's steering committee and in the data collection. Both researchers and civil society gained through this inclusive process, which revealed information sources, such as those in the 'grey literature,' that presented valuable possibilities for further collaborative work in the future.

Journal and Newsletter Publications

It is important for the work supported through the African Scholars and Institutions Initiative to have academic visibility. SRCD Newsletter summaries (2008, 2009) and the special section of Child Development Perspectives (2011), noted earlier, helped to achieve this goal. However, the Johannesburg workshop highlighted the need for a larger, ongoing venue for academic visibility—a journal focused on sub-Saharan Africa. While development of a refereed journal was beyond the nascent nature of the scholars' network at Johannesburg, an opportunity to create a hybrid "News-Journal" arose through UNESCO-BREDA and the SSA Working Group on ECD (WGECD). The resulting *Africa ECD Voice* distributed four issues between September 2013 and October 2014, serving to better connect the professionals associated with the workshops, the ECDVU, the WGECD, and other SSA-related organizations. Future issues depend on the availability of funding. Workshop leaders will continue to pursue the larger issue—the creation of an ECD- and Africa-focused scholarly journal—over time.

The ECD Literature in sub-Saharan Africa

The African Scholars and Institutions Initiative has also sought to identify and better understand the existing ECD literature in sub-Saharan Africa. Some effort had already gone into identifying the 'grey literature' through the Tanzania-based AKU-IED/ECDVU project noted earlier. The ECDVU sought to

extend that work by creating a 'Compendium' of the e-accessible literature for SSA, particularly for the less developed countries served by the ECDVU (thus, the relatively substantial literature from South Africa was not an initial part of the work, but was undertaken later–see Pence & Ashton, 2015). The result of this research highlighted the dearth of Indigenous, African-led publications over the decades. The majority of authors—and especially lead authors—were from outside SSA.

Such patterns call into further question the dominant approach to capacity development, which emphasizes *knowledge transfer* over Indigenous knowledge generation. With knowledge transfer, the movement is from the West to 'the Other.' Indigenous knowledge generation focuses on promoting local capacity, where 'the local' spans from village, to country, to the whole of SSA. It is only since 2007 that one can see a noticeable and steady increase in the number of Indigenous African authors publishing in the internationally accessible literature. More often than not, the topics of interest for those authors are 'local': failings in policy implementation, education/training needs, contextually sensitive programming, Indigenous language issues, and related topics with a strong local/country focus (Pence & Ashton, 2015).

It is interesting to note both the timing and the topics associated with the increase in African ECD literature. Starting in 1999 with the 1st African International ECD Conference, awareness of the need for ECD policy development steadily grew. An ever-increasing number of political leaders participated in the conferences and politically-focused advocacy intensified, as evidenced by communiqués issued from the conferences in 2002, 2005 and 2009. The conferences also featured a growing number of professional leaders associated not only with government, but with NGOs and civil society as well—and many of those leaders emerged from the ever-increasing ranks of graduates from the ECDVU program deliveries. As evidenced by the case information from Tanzania and Malawi, those graduates shared many key goals: to address policy development needs; to bridge silos within and between governments, NGOs, and civil society; to create multi-sectoral and multi-level networks; and to address education and training needs across the country. Momentum on these and related issues grew throughout the early 2000s. The development of ECD policies offers an example: as noted by UNESCO, in 2000, only a few countries had ECD-related policies, but "as of December 2008, 19 countries had adopted ECCE policies, [and] 20 are preparing them…" (UNESCO-BREDA, 2010, p.13). Given such momentum, it is perhaps not surprising that scholarly publication numbers begin to increase in the late 2000s, many of them focusing on issues of 'local' or country concern.

While the good news of broad ECD capacity development in SSA needs to be appreciated and celebrated, it is also important to pay attention to how those advances relate to 'local stories,' 'local heroines and heroes,' and 'on the ground' advances whose energy is fed by forces inside Africa. For the most part, these advances, this energy, are compatible with Western ideas. Indeed, a central argument of this book is that it is through a respectful engagement across diverse sources of ideas that sustainable achievements can be realized—that new and innovative 'other' possibilities can be generated.

As cited in chapter 3, a student in the First Nations Partnership Programs once noted that: "We love to learn what researchers have found…, and we love to learn more about our own culture." Years later, this young woman's comments were echoed at an ECDVU seminar in Africa by a participant who held a very senior position in his government. At the end of an activity in which the group shared proverbs from their childhoods, he noted that in all his years of education and in all his years in government, no one had ever suggested that words and sayings from his childhood in a small, remote village had any place in his education or his work. While this man seldom showed his feelings, there was a tear in his voice as he noted that he would take this lesson back to his ministry and never forget its importance.

The lesson repeated throughout this book is not to reject a single knowledge, but to cultivate a deep appreciation of multiple knowledges. This lesson resonates with the FNPP experience: we cannot create in today's complex and multi-faceted world durable and effective education, service systems, programs or policies across contexts with just one 'battery.' The lesson from the African experience is similar—to paraphrase Rumi and to encircle science and belief: "God created Truth with many doors, to welcome all who come there." For the children, families and communities of Africa, and indeed from anywhere in the world, we must create such welcoming places.

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