LEVERAGING ON THE POWER OF MEDIA TO PROMOTE ECD IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

• Media plays a crosscutting role in its duty to inform, educate and entertain
• Without media, there would be no governance or interventions
• Thus, media covers all the components of ECD and promotes integration when the media players are empowered do to so
• Advocacy about policy should be accompanied by awareness for citizens to place demand; justice should be seen to be done
BACKGROUND TO THE ZAMBIAN EXPERIENCE

• In Zambia, the provision of ECCDE/ECD/ECE was mainly through the private sector which was guided by pre-independence legal systems

• In 2008, the government was formed by a political party that elaborated access to ECCDE/ECE in its manifesto

• It promised to “provide and facilitate early childhood education centers and teachers in all local government wards in Zambia”

• Directorate of ECE, harmonized curriculum and centers in various primary schools opened

• However, media in Zambia is hugely politicized and civil society in ECD do not know how to engage them though some improvements are there
As the world establishes itself in the information age, media is increasingly becoming a dependable source of information, education and entertainment.

The introduction of digital media has further broken physical barriers that analogue media was affected by.

In order to contribute to improved access to ECE, MNCRD, as a member of the ECCDE thematic committee of ZANEC partnered with the Ministry of (Education) to sensitize people on the importance of ECE through bus campaigns, ran radio shows, has produced a documentary, which was aired on TV stations and is working on producing IRI with DODE (EBS).
BACKGROUND TO THE ZAMBIAN EXPERIENCE, CONT’D

• From 2012, media, civil society (ZANEC), musicians mobilized to conduct sensitization, (district levels) and advocacy (national)

• Courtesy calls were made to government officials, traditional leaders, local government officials, and district education senior staff before public shows

• Journalists covered the shows; CSOs spoke to government, traditional leaders, general public, and on local radio/television programs; musicians entertained and spread messages during public rallies;

• Commitment cards were shared with all target groups, including policymakers, for their pledge to support ECDE
Apart from the radio shows that were done alongside the bus campaigns, a number of radio shows were done on Radio Two, Radio One and Radio Phoenix.

Radio Two targeted the people that understand English but are spread across the nation.

Radio One targeted people in remote areas that may not understand English.

Radio Phoenix targeted people in cities where decision makers are found.

There was an overwhelming response particularly with Radio One were out of 21 programs, over 100 calls would be recorded for a 40 minute program.
RESULTS

• Increase in coverage in print and electronic media has resulted in increased awareness; relationships created between ECD actors and media

• Over 1,000 signed the commitment cards handed to the Ministry of General Education

• Coordinated civil society to ensure continuously pressuring government through media (enhanced relationships between media and CSOs)

• Campaigns contributed to the increase in demand, access and budgetary allocations to ECE – it is a topical issue
RESULTS, CONT’D

• The media has been able to influence people’s attitudes and actions
• The media has reached the most vulnerable sectors of society with ECE messages through local languages
• Buy-in from MPs to enable rural children to connect to radio through national coverage (planned private members’ motion)
• Further engagements with the Ministry of Education for the production of Interactive Radio Instructions/IVI
• Sustained reminders/interactions with government to fulfil promises (accountability)
LESSONS LEARNT

• Mass movements can move politicians to fulfill their promises
• Use of local languages on through radio and public forums can create a mass of supporters that can demand for services and move policymakers to act on their promises
• Two tier approach – messages/channels for duty bearers (advocacy); messages/channels for rights holders (awareness)
• Civil society dealing in development issues should compete for space in media
• Education gets less attention because of less publicity of its importance (Compare with health)
NEXT STEPS

• Promotion of EBS Radio to cover the whole country (MPs already engaged)
• Provincial media bus campaigns
• Calls for financial increased support to ECD
• Translation of lessons to cover all the main languages in Zambia
• Mobilization of media players to promote ECD
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Galvanizing media, civil society, government, musicians, drama groups to engage the public to ensure that they understood the messages from different perspectives

• This was done after capacity development for the partners involved to speak with one voice

• Evidence, non-provocative approaches can make technocrats work with CSOs to place demand on politicians

• Use of correct messages for particular audiences (demographics)

• Communication strategy is key to achieving results
RECOMMENDATIONS, CONT’D

• Social media is a platform where political players can be engaged
• Produce newsworthy press statements
• Use of global media can only be possible if we engaged global leaders (sources, newsmakers) – prominence
• Form media networks within countries to promote child rights especially ECD
• BUDGET, BUDGET, BUDGET
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

• Holy writ says:

• “How can they hear if they are not preached to?”

• We say, “How can they use the nurturing care framework if it is only shared amongst ourselves?”
• A people informed is a people reformed and a people not informed is a people deformed
Obrigado
Merci beaucoup
Asante
Thank you