Research Question:

What is known with regard to policies and programmes on Early Childhood Education/Development in (West) Africa/Liberia from sources such as NGOs, multilaterals, bilaterals and national governments?

World Bank. (2010). *Liberia - Education for All-Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund Project*. **Washington D.C. - The World Bank.**

Abstract:

The objective of the Education for All-Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund (CF) Project for Liberia is to increase access to basic education, with a particular focus on poor areas, to improve conditions of teaching and learning, and to improve school management and accountability. There are three components to the project. The first component of the project is increasing access and equity in rural areas. This component will support the construction of classrooms, taking into consideration the special circumstances of remote and hard-to-reach areas, by using two different approaches. The first approach will be a delegated management approach whereby a competent firm will be hired for the management and supervision of the construction program (24 primary schools and 20 junior high schools), while the second approach will be a community driven development (CDD) approach for the construction of about 16 primary schools in hard-to-reach areas where it is difficult to find contractors. The second component of the project is improving the quality of teaching and learning. This component will include: (a) provision of learning materials to both students and teachers; (b) provision of grants to schools after a rigorous strengthening of the existing system; (c) support for early childhood development (ECD) models with a focus on community-based ECD provision in rural areas and systems development; and (d) school health, including de-worming of children in eight counties. The third component of the project is strengthening management capacities and developing a framework for institutional capacity building with a focus on monitoring and evaluation. Under this component, the CF support will strengthen the Ministry of Education (MOE) structures at central and school levels. Activities under this component will include: (a) the establishment of a Project Support Team (PST) to assist with the day-to-day management of the CF project; the Project Support Team (PST) will include a project coordinator and financial management and procurement specialists; (b) capacity building for the departments of planning, administration, and instruction; (c) training of District Education Officers (DEOs) and school directors for monitoring and tracking school level data in close collaboration with European Union (EU)-funded project, as well as training of DEOs and teachers on the use of learning assessment instruments; (d) technical assistance (TA) for the design of a national assessment instrument; and (e) TA to strengthen personnel and payroll management.

This paper is accessible at:
http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2010/09/13736226/liberia-education-all-fast-track-initiative-catalytic-fund-project

Mtahabwa, L., & Rao, N. (2010). Pre-primary education in Tanzania: Observations from urban and rural classrooms. *International Journal of Educational Development, 30*(3), 227-235.

Abstract:

This study examined the relationship between pre-primary educational policy and actual practice in Tanzania. Policy relevant to pre-primary education was analysed and 15 pre-primary lessons from two urban and two rural schools were videotaped. Although the national educational policy specifies the same standards for pre-primary education regardless of location, there were considerable differences across schools. Compared to urban classes, rural ones had considerably less space, larger group sizes, less favourable teacher/pupil ratios, fewer instructional resources and less qualified teachers. Teacher professional qualifications appeared to influence the quality of classroom interaction more than the physical setting and resources.

This paper is accessible at: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0738059309001333

Nganga, L. W. (2009). Early childhood education programs in Kenya: challenges and solutions. *Early Years, 29*(3), 227-236.

Abstract:

Early childhood education in Kenya serves the critical purpose of preparing young children for primary education. Notwithstanding the associated benefits for society as a whole, the government of Kenya is involved minimally. Indeed, parents are responsible for planning, developing and managing different early childhood programs. Consequently, problems such as funding and lack of program consistency are common. Because early childhood programs are essential, the government should be involved actively in the development and implementation process.

This paper is accessible at: http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09575140902984400

Mtahabwa, L. (2009). Parental demand, choice and access to early childhood education in Tanzania. *Early Child Development and Care, 181*(1), 89-102.

Abstract:

This study examined parental demand for early childhood education (ECE) in relation to choice and access to early childhood programmes in Tanzania. Extensive analyses of both Government and privately written documents over the past decade were used to determine parental demand, choice and access to ECE. The literature revealed that although parents in Tanzania have a high demand for ECE, they have limited choices for their children's education despite existence of the early childhood programmes. Despite problems associated with quality, access was found to be in favour of older children and those in urban areas. The article argues that unless parents have a wider range of choices informed by thorough knowledge about programme operations, the programmes attended by children will merely serve as 'hostage camps'. In the light of this, the article concludes that parents in Tanzania hardly find early childhood programmes suited to their expectations. Policy implications are drawn.
This paper is accessible at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03004430903271012

Pearson, E., & Degotardi, S. (2009). Education for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood Education: A Global Solution to Local Concerns? *International Journal of Early Childhood, 41*(2), 97-111.

Abstract:
This paper makes the case that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) offers the field of early childhood a valuable base upon which to begin addressing some substantial contemporary concerns. In the paper, we outline key recent developments in the field of early childhood, particularly those related to globalisation and the spread of European American ideals. Yet ESD promotes the incorporation of local and indigenous understandings in formal education. We propose that, given; (i) broadening appreciation of the reality that early childhood education is characterised by diversity in early values and practices across sociocultural contexts, and; (ii) global interest in and commitment to early childhood education, the field is not only in need of, but also well-placed to adopt this key principle of ESD.

This paper is accessible at: http://search.proquest.com/docview/194778833#

Kholowa, F., & Rose, P. (2007). Parental or policy maker misunderstandings? Contextual dilemmas of pre-schooling for poverty reduction in Malawi. *International Journal of Educational Development, 27*(4), 458-472.

Abstract:
With the move towards achieving universal primary education, focus is increasingly shifting towards early childhood development. Within this, debates are apparent between those who view education at this stage holistically, with concern that it should not be directly linked with primary schooling, and those who view it more explicitly as contributing towards achieving universal primary completion by ensuring that children will be appropriately prepared for studying at this level. Moreover, it is apparent that views of different stakeholders vary. Evidence from Malawi indicates that national policies are closely linked with the international agenda, with a focus on holistic approaches. However, parents view pre-schooling in a narrower way, as an important step towards preparing their children for studying successfully at the primary level. Rather than considering this as parental 'misunderstanding', we argue that this perspective shows a greater awareness of local realities and is, therefore, more likely to support an escape from poverty.

This paper is accessible at: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0738059306001246#

Garcia, M., Pence, A., & Evans, J.(2008) Africa's Future, Africa's Challenge: Early Childhood Care and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa, World Bank

Introduction:
Much is written about Africa today, and much of it is not hopeful. Daily, the world hears stories of disease, despair, and death. Such a litany of misery is not unfounded—but there are also stories of hope, promise, and potential. They too are a critically important part of the complex story of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in the first years of the 21st century. Just as multiple stories exist, so are multiple perspectives needed to understand, envision, and plan a hopeful future for Africa's children. This book seeks to achieve a balance, describing challenges that are being faced as well as developments that are underway. It seeks a balance in terms of the voices heard, including not just voices of the North commenting on the South, but voices from the South, and in concert with the North. It seeks to provide the voices of specialists and generalists, of those from international and local organizations, from academia and the field. It seeks a diversity of views and values. Such diversity and complexity are the reality of Sub-Saharan Africa today.

This book is accessible at:
https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/6365/427000PUB0Afri1sclosed0Feb025020081.pdf?sequence=1

Pence, A., & Nsamenang, B. (2008) A case for early childhood development in sub-Saharan Africa. Working Paper No. 51. The Hague, The Netherlands: Bernard van Leer Foundation.

Part of executive summary:
This essay explores the reasons behind such a reduction in diversity, factors that are often considered to be a necessary part of progress. The authors conduct an overview of relevant critiques in the literature of early childhood development (ECD). The paper focuses on international ECD since the UN adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and presents a review of key ECD developments in Africa since the early 1970s.

The second part of the essay represents an effort to move beyond the singular image of the 'global child'. The authors address the need to support and promote local perspectives, questions and issues, and trace the 'triple heritage' of ECD in Africa.

This paper is accessible at:
http://www.web.uvic.ca/~eyrd/pubs/Pence_Nsamenang_BvL_WP_51_2008.pdf

Pence, A. R., & Marfo, K. (2008). Early childhood development in Africa: Interrogating constraints of prevailing knowledge bases. *International Journal of Psychology* **(iFirst Article), 1-10.**

Abstract:
The past two decades have been characterized by renewed attention to the importance of early childhood development (ECD) policies and services in the world's richest and most industrialized countries. During the same period, we have witnessed unprecedented efforts to place ECD policies on the national development planning agenda of the economically less advantaged countries of the Majority World. This paper is premised on the concern that the purposes that have led bilateral and multilateral international agencies to promote and support ECD services in Africa may also be paving the way for uncritical adoption of program and service delivery models grounded in value systems and knowledge bases that may not be appropriate for the continent. We present two critiques to highlight the dangers of ignoring the sociocultural contexts of the knowledge bases that inform ECD policies and practices. We describe one capacity-building effort, under the auspices of the Early Childhood Development Virtual University (ECDVU), to promote culturally relevant knowledge and prepare leadership personnel for Africa's emerging ECD movement. Finally, based on an exercise designed for an ECDVU cohort to engage and reflect on critiques of mainstream research and theorizing on child development, we share insights that are suggestive of the ways in which African perspectives can contribute to and enrich a global knowledge base on child development.

This paper is accessible at:
http://www.web.uvic.ca/~eyrd/pubs/Pence_Marfo_ECD_Africa_Constraints_2008.pdf

Martinez, S., Naudeau, S., & Pereira, V. (2012). The Promise of Preschool in Africa: A Randomized Impact Evaluation of Early Childhood Development in Rural Mozambique. Washington: World Bank and Save the Children.

Excerpt from introduction:
In this report we present initial results of what, to our knowledge, is the first randomized evaluation of a pre-school intervention in a rural African setting. By any measure, access to and a recent Systematic Review on the impact of daycare programs in developing countries, conducted by the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (Leroy et al., 2011), identified no evaluations of daycare in the African context that met the review's inclusion criteria. Of the six studies included in the review (all in Latin America), none were experimental. Enrolment in preschool in Mozambique is very low. By available estimates, only 4 percent of children enrol in preschool, and the vast majority of these are in urban areas and amongst the more affluent populations (The World Bank, 2011). This low participation rate likely reflects a combination of supply-side constraints (i.e., lack of available programs for parents to enrol their child) and demand-side constraints (including lack of information among parents about the benefits of ECD). Starting in 2008, Save the Children implemented a center-based community driven preschool model in rural areas of the Gaza Province of Mozambique. The project financed the construction, equipment and training for 67 classrooms in 30 communities, at a cost of approximately $2.47 dollars per student per month.

This paper is accessible at: http://www.savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/MARTINEZ_NAUDEAU_PEREIRA.MOZ_ECD_REPORT-FEB_7_2012.PDF

UNESCO. (2010). Early Childhood Care and Education Regional Report: Africa. Dakar: Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (Breda).

Excerpt from executive summary - ECCE policy and planning:
As of December 2008, 19 countries in SSA had adopted ECCE policies, 20 are currently preparing them, and 12 had not yet begun. In all, 76% of countries in SSA are engaged in ECCE policy planning or implementation. Clearly major effort needs to be continued to develop more ECCE policies and to include ECCE in other multisectoral and sectoral policies and strategic plans. However, greater emphasis must be placed on policy advocacy and implementation. To date, 26 countries have included ECCE in their sectoral or development plans (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, Millennium Development and Education for All goals, targets for education and health SWAPs, and national policies for education, health, nutrition, protection, and sanitation). Eleven countries have included ECCE in the FTI Action Plan. The preparation of ECCE policies and strategic plans affords all African countries a golden opportunity to plan for increasing investments in services for young children.

This paper is accessible at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001894/189420E.pdf

Cianca, S. (2012). Cross-Age Reading Buddies and Cultural-Sensitive Literature: Student-Centered English Language Instruction in an Ethiopian Budget School. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 26*(4), 392-417.

Abstract:
The Ethiopian government has called for educational improvement, emphasizing the employment of active, student-centered pedagogy. One way of maximizing an interactive learning approach involves blending a cross-age reading buddies program with high-quality, culturally relevant children's literature. Employing descriptive, mixed-method research, this study explored the effectiveness of books and buddies on English language use, motivation, and active learning in an underresourced, 'budget' school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The report includes a comparison of traditional workbook exercises to the reading of real books. It gives criteria for choosing literature for children of poverty in a developing country, and it describes a process for preparing older students to share second-language books with younger schoolmates. The results of the study suggest that a limited number of well-chosen books used in the context of cross-age reading buddies can have a positive impact on the frequency of English language usage, as well as on students' motivation to learn English.

This paper is accessible at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2012.686472

Sandfort, J., Selden, S. C., & Sowa, J. E. (2008). Do Government Tools Influence Organizational Performance?: Examining Their Implementation in Early Childhood Education. *The American Review of Public Administration, 38*(4), 412-438.

Abstract:

This article explores whether the multiple tools used by government to implement social policy influence organizational performance. This analysis focuses on three tools—grants, contracts, and vouchers—and their use in the field of early childhood care and education. Through analysis of a field-based study of 22 organizations, the authors explore qualitative evidence and examine the relative consequences of each tool using multivariate modeling. The authors conceptualize organizational performance along four dimensions—management capacity, management outcomes, program capacity, and program outcomes—to better explore how government tools influence organizations delivering publicly funded services. Findings reveal that the different tools the government uses to implement early childhood programs have distinct consequences; grants have the most significant, positive consequences on a variety of desirable outcomes.

This paper is accessible at: http://arp.sagepub.com/content/38/4/412.abstract

King, K. (2007). Balancing basic and post-basic education in Kenya: National versus international policy agendas. *International Journal of Educational Development, 27*(4), 358-370.

Abstract:

The article traces the policy history of Kenya over more than 40 years (1963–2006) in order to tease out the tensions between the key themes of its own national agenda and the priorities of its principal development partners. The national concerns with the education-and-employment connection and with the orientation of schooling towards skills for work in the formal and informal economies can be contrasted with the aid agency priorities on quality and on education-for-poverty reduction. Equally, national preoccupations have been with the whole of the education and training system—from early childhood, to technical, to university. By contrast, external donors have frequently prioritised a particular sub-sector such as primary schooling. In the most recent period, 2002–2006, the paper identifies the emergence of common ground between the national and external agendas. Thus the international education agenda, as marked out by the UN Millennium Project, the Commission for Africa, and the World Bank's most recent education policy paper, is not dissimilar in its priorities to the latest Kenyan education agenda, as expressed in the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme. There is also an agreement that the education sector, on its own, cannot deliver the many benefits so often associated with schooling; rather, there needs to be an enabling environment in other sectors of the economy, if the investment in education is to be most productive. The one area where there is serious divergence, between the Government of Kenya, and, at least, its principal Western donors is on the treatment of corruption. At the point of writing, the extent of corruption remains a major threat to the external funding so necessary to Kenya's large educational ambitions. Though the article is primarily concerned to analyse the tension between the national and the international policy agendas in terms of Kenya, arguably a similar case could be developed for many other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, and not least those which are most donor-dependent.

This paper is accessible at: http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0738059306001258

Research Question:

What is known on the practice of Early Childhood Education/Development in (West) Africa/Liberia in terms of research, evaluation, progress reports?

Ken, M. L. (2009) *Assessing the Readiness for Early Childhood Education in Liberia*, **Master's Thesis, University of Cape Coast, Ghana**

Abstract:
The purpose of the study was to assess Liberia's readiness for implementing Early Childhood Education (ECE) as an integral part of the educational system of the country. A sample size of 67 respondents, comprising of educational policy makers and stakeholders were selected from Montserrado and Margibi Counties to participate in the study. Data were collected through questionnaire and interviews. Results of the study showed that the problems affecting Liberia's readiness for the implementation of this new educational policy for children include lack of trained manpower, lack of specific designed curriculum for the Early Childhood Education programme, lack of infra structural development and inadequate public awareness. The findings further showed that majority of the respondents indicate the need for trained manpower, and new curriculum to be designed specifically for the Early Childhood Education programme. The findings also indicated that only 13 (22.4%) out of the 58 pre-schools were owned by government which cannot accommodate the growing population of young children within the two counties mentioned in the study; hence, these schools are experiencing class over-crowdedness. Finally, Government has not put into place even 25% of the measures intended for the implementation of the ECE policy. It is recommended among other things that institutions for training Early Childhood Education teachers are built by government, and government should create proper awareness for stakeholders and design a new curriculum for the ECE programmes.

This paper is accessible at: http://ir.ucc.edu.gh/dspace/handle/123456789/776

Mwaura, P., Sylva, K., & Malmberg, L.E. (2008). Evaluating the Madrasa preschool programme in East Africa: a quasi-experimental study, *International Journal of Early Years Education,* **Vol. 16 (3) pp. 237-255.**

Abstract:
This study investigated the effect of preschool experience (two types of preschool: Madrasa and non-Madrasa) on the cognitive development of children in East Africa. In the three countries studied (Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania/Zanzibar) preschool education is burgeoning and government standards are being set. This quasi experimental evaluation used four subscales (block building, verbal comprehension, early number concept, picture similarities) adapted from the British Ability Scale II (BAS II; discussed by Elliot, Smith and McCulloch in 1996), and three (verbal meaning, exclusion, closure) from the African Child Intelligence Test (ACIT; discussed by Drenth and colleagues in 1980). The development of 423 children was studied at pre-test (entry to preschool) and at post-test 18 months later. Hierarchical regression showed that children with both types of preschool experience performed better than the home (comparison) group; however, children attending Madrasa Resource Centre preschools achieved significantly higher scores overall.

This paper is accessible at:
http://web.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/ehost/detail?sid=237da54b-d99d-4730-8206-8f1412ee137e%40sessionmgr13&vid=1&hid=14&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBlPWlwLGNvb2tpZSx1cmwsdWlkJnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#db=aph&AN=34506206

Super, C., Harkness, S., Barry, O., & Zeitlin, M. (2011). Think Locally, Act Globally: Contributions of African Research to Child Development, *Child Development Perspectives***, Vol. 5 (2) pp. 119-125.**

Abstract:

Research on African children has made key contributions to the emergence of a more globalized developmental science, advancing theory and providing illuminating examples in the domains of motor development, cognitive growth, attachment, and socially responsible intelligence. Because the environments for children's development are culturally structured, local knowledge is necessary to understand development and to devise social programs to promote healthy outcomes, as illustrated here by a case study in Senegal. This argues for advancing the research activities of local scholars. At the same time, action at the global level is necessary to weave such local knowledge into a global science of human development.

This paper is accessible at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/doi/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2011.00166.x/abstract

Dillard, C. (2009). I Am Because We Are: Increasing Educational Opportunity for Early Childhood Education in Ghana, West Africa, *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts***, Vol. 2 (2), pp. 243-257.**

Abstract:

Explorations of secondary education globally are influenced deeply by the larger developmental, cultural, social, historical, and political contexts within which these formal learning environments are created. However, such explorations too often ignore two issues. The first is the way that access to formal and informal preschool and primary education provides the sheer possibility of access and entrance to upper levels, including secondary education. Second is the way that transformative power that involvements in education and (re)membering between African Americans and Africans on the continent can be manifestations of Freire's (1970) notion of praxis, the purposeful coming together of thought and action to address educational access and opportunity. I explore both, as a teacher, researcher, and human being, through the work of building and administering a preschool and currently building an elementary school in Ghana, West Africa.

This paper is accessible at:
http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/action/doAdvancedSearch?q0=I+Am+Because+We+Are%3A+Increasing+Educational+Opportunity+for+Early+Childhood+Education+in+Ghana%2C+West+Africa&f0=ti&c1=AND&q1=&f1=au&acc=on&wc=on&fc=off&Search=Search&sd=2009&ed=2009&la=&pt=race+ethnicity+multidisciplinary+global+contexts

Soudee, A. (2009). Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge and Practice into ECCE: A Comparison of Programs in The Gambia, Senegal and Mali, *Current Issues in Comparative Education***, Vol. 11 pp. 15-23.**

Abstract:
Early Childhood Development (ECD) has emerged as a theme in international and African dialogue on education in recent years. UNESCO's Division of Basic Education Early Childhood promotes an integrated approach to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) policy development and review. The study examines how this is implemented in three West African countries, with similar cultural groups in their diverse populations: The Gambia, Mali and Senegal. In The Gambia there is thus far a proposal on how indigenous knowledge should be included in early childhood programs. The clos d'enfants [children's groups], in Mali demonstrates similar ideas through an international partnership with a local initiative program, developed in Bamako using mothers, local materials and toys made by the participants. Senegal's program combining local traditions and European pedagogical philosophies, the case des tout-petits [children's huts], came from the President. Analysis of these three cases suggests that these programs and proposals may be a springboard for UNESCO and partners to further develop ECCE with indigenous knowledge and practice in Africa.

This paper is accessible at: http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ847156.pdf

Pence, A. (2011). Early Childhood Care and Development Research in Africa: Historical, Conceptual, and Structural Challenges, *Child Development Perspectives***, Vol. 5(20) pp. 112-118.**

Abstract:
This article challenges the specter of the universal child and examines historical, conceptual, and structural factors that have resulted in a virtual absence of African-led contributions to research on early childhood care and development. It considers the dark side of good work, questions who defines ''normative and desirable'' and how it is measured, and considers ways forward in promoting African research capacity, leadership, identification of key issues, and scholarly engagement with ideas regarding African children's future and how best to ensure healthy, hopeful, and capable future generations.

This paper is accessible at: http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/doi/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2011.00165.x/abstract;jsessionid=128A0EBFDB32147245EAA74BD982E662.d01t01

Nsamenang, A. B. (2009). A Critical Peek at Early Childhood Care and Education in Africa, *Child Health and Education***, Vol. 1(1) pp. 44-55.**

Abstract:

In this article, the state of early childhood care and education (ECCE) within Africa is critiqued in light of assumptions and issues discussed in the 2007 Global Monitoring Report of Education for All: Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education. Further, several factors that potentially mediate the efficacy of ECCE strategies in Africa are highlighted including: Africa's resource base, capacity building and Africentric literacy. The article concludes that for ECCE to benefit African children and their families, Western conceptions of the construct must not simply be adjusted for use in Africa. Rather, the very people that ECCE is meant to benefit—Africans themselves—must initiate a form of ECCE that is unique to Africa and African needs but that should be consistent with the complexity of the blend of ECCE realities within Africa today.

This paper is accessible at:
http://www.childhealthandeducation.ca/articles/documents/Nsamenang11.pdf