



“My background is in ECD... [but] it was not as powerful as when I participated in the SECD course.”

PATH Child and Health Development Officer

Moving Forward

AKU IHD will continue to promote shared learning experiences and offer SECD courses for diverse audiences. Next steps involve:

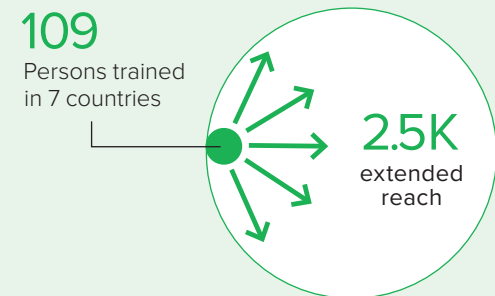
- Develop and tailor curricula and related materials for different audiences
- Expand advocacy and professional development sessions to reach more sectors and participant levels
- Build regional capacity for delivering SECD courses in the long term
- Leverage the growing network of former participants and partner organizations for policy and program advocacy.

The Science of Early Child Development: A Partnership for Better Practice with Children Affected by HIV and AIDS

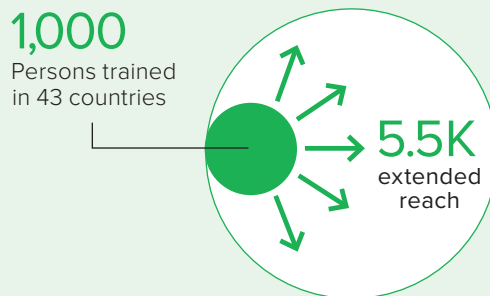


Reach of the seminars and courses to date:

SECD in Sub-Saharan Africa



Total participants trained worldwide



PARTNERS

Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is a group of private development agencies founded by His Highness the Aga Khan, which works in 30 countries to improve the quality of life for many of the world’s most vulnerable communities. AKDN makes long-term commitments and creates partnerships with governments, civil society actors and the private sector for breaking the cycle of poverty. AKDN has highlighted Early Childhood Development (ECD) as a priority area since 1982. www.akdn.org

Red River College is the largest institute of applied learning and applied research in Manitoba, Canada. www.rrc.ca

The Aga Khan University’s Institute for Human Development is an integral part of the AKDN’s higher education investments in both Karachi, Pakistan and East Africa. The East African campus of AKU, is the largest investment in tertiary education, in the region’s history. www.aku.edu/ihd

Conrad N. Hilton Foundation was created in 1944 by the man who started Hilton Hotels and left his fortune to improve the lives of the world’s disadvantaged and vulnerable people. The Foundation focuses its support in six priority areas, including the urgent issue of helping children affected by HIV and AIDS. www.hiltonfoundation.org

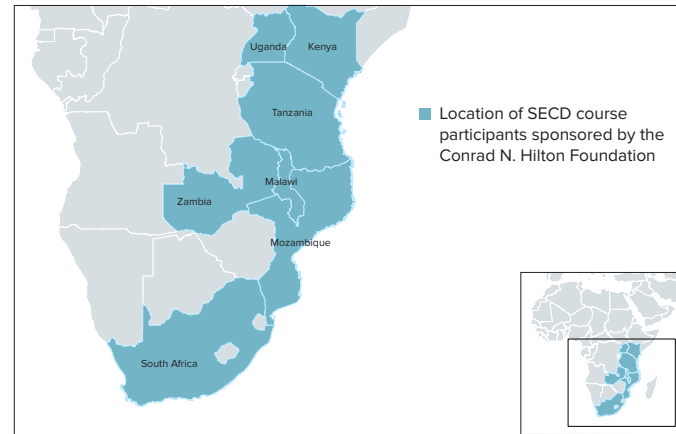
“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way in which it treats its children.

Nelson Mandela

Challenge

Overwhelming evidence indicates that children who lack supportive environments that promote their ability to thrive during their first years are much more likely to face poor health, nutritional, educational and economic challenges. For children and their families in Sub-Saharan Africa affected by HIV and AIDS, the challenges are especially acute.

Children in regions with high prevalence of HIV/AIDS are particularly vulnerable to poor developmental outcomes. Existing health systems, community childcare centers and home visitation programs can provide parents and caregivers with guidance they need. Community-based organizations can extend geographical coverage, have deep local knowledge, and often reach parents cost-effectively. People need relevant and accessible professional development opportunities to keep up-to-date with knowledge related to early childhood development (ECD) research findings and promising program interventions.



What is the Science of Early Childhood Development?

The Science of Early Child Development (SECD) is an initiative to make accessible current research on the profound impact of early brain and human development on lifelong health and well-being. SECD emphasizes the vital importance of nurturing care and everyday experiences for young children.

Beginning as an online living textbook, SECD has evolved, into a set of on- and off-line resources for diverse audiences.

SECD is comprised of 5 modules:

1. Brain Development
2. The Ecology of Childhood
3. Coping and Competence
4. Communicating and Learning
5. Developmental Health

SECD educational resources depict real-life situations through case studies, pictures and videos. They bring the voices of researchers directly to practitioners, trainers, program developers and policymakers with examples of innovative programs from around the world and use games and other tools to engage learners.



With an understanding about early brain development, adults can make a big difference in children's growth, learning and development.

From the SECD Resource Kit Facilitator's Guide

SECD was developed at Red River College (RRC) in Canada, in partnership with the Atkinson Center at the University of Toronto. The international version, developed with the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) since 2009, has been continuously expanded and enriched to be relevant across the diverse cultural, social and economic settings. For more information visit www.scienceofecd.com.

Capacity Building for Improved Early Human Development in Sub-Saharan Africa

In 2014, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) began a three-year collaboration with two primary objectives:

1. Improve understanding of SECD among Hilton Foundation partners to yield better early childhood programs benefitting children affected by HIV and AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa.
2. Strengthen institutional capacity in the region's higher education institutions for the future. The Aga Khan University's Institute for Human Development (AKU IHD) in East Africa is the central focus.

So far, the program has:

- Collaborated with Red River College to conduct courses using the SECD educational resources to address the particular needs of individuals working with and for children affected by HIV and AIDS
- Delivered two online courses and four in-person seminars to 109 Hilton Foundation partners including international and local organizations, UNICEF, and government across 7 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Strengthened the pool of AKU IHD-affiliated tutors and instructors to effectively deliver SECD courses
- Began translation of the SECD Seminar Series into Kiswahili and Portuguese
- Created avenues for strengthening research capacity in ECD through fellowships and support for Ph.D. research

Lessons and Insights

- Bringing together diverse participants in a shared learning experience with appropriate technology is powerful and can create a ripple effect.
- Participants want the latest findings regardless of origin, and want to see images and examples relevant to them.
- Using final assignments linked to a participant's work context enables deeper reflection and an increased likelihood that participants will continue to use and apply their new learning.
- Personal commitment is a key factor in participants' success in the course and their application of the material. Participant selection should consider the readiness of the individual for the learning program.
- Tutors and instructors who understand and nurture individual participants and facilitate joint learning are critical in moving knowledge to practice.

"The end of course assignment really made us use the knowledge we had gained throughout the course to...come up with something more practical that we would use once we've finished the course that I also found very, very fulfilling."

Project Officer, Catholic Relief Services



The Global Challenge

By 2030,

2B

children will reach school age worldwide.

Only

20%

of children worldwide are enrolled in early learning programs.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Global Goals aim:

100%

of girls and boys have access to quality early learning so they're ready for school.

Africa faces a

34%

increase in 5-year-old children.