



# Early Childhood Network ~ Ghana

Uniting for the Child because Every Child Matters



# At a Glance

The Early Childhood Network – Ghana (ECNG) was founded in October 2020 by Ebenezer Lartey and Sam Kwesi Acquah with the purpose of serving as a central hub for all Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) stakeholders, practitioners, and organizations in Ghana, and fostering a cohesive and unified approach towards ECD initiatives.

## The ECD Landscape in Ghana

According to the Ghana Early Childhood Development Profile published under the [Africa ECD Country Profiles from the Countdown to 2030](#), Ghana's 4.25 million children under 5 face persistent risks shaping their early development. Stunting affects 16 percent of young children, and the under 5 mortality rate stands at 37 per 1,000, challenges that are compounded by low birthweight, child poverty, high exposure to violent discipline, and limited supervision.

Most children, aged 0–3, are cared for by parents and family members, making access to health and nutrition services critical for caregivers. Despite these risks, 68 percent of children are developmentally on track and [UNESCO's 2024 Education Country Brief](#) reports that 71 percent of them are participating in early childhood education (ECE). However, enrollment varies by age, with 66 percent of 3-year-olds and 77 percent of 4-year-olds enrolled.

Ghana's early childhood strategy emphasizes the first 1,000 days, early learning and protection, caring for caregivers, and family support. Despite this framework, health and poverty challenges remain severe. One in five children suffers stunted growth during the first 1,000 days, undermining brain development and future learning. [UNICEF data](#) show 3.65 million children live in poverty and 1.2 million in extreme poverty, with children being 40 percent more likely than adults to be poor. The under-five mortality rate stands at 60 deaths per 1,000 live births, meaning one in 17 children does not reach their fifth birthday.

Education outcomes reflect these early disadvantages. Many students in grades 4–6 fail to meet proficiency benchmarks in English and Mathematics.

### ECNG VISION:

Envisioning a nation that embraces comprehensive and inclusive early childhood care and development for lifelong learning.

### ECNG MISSION:

To be the leading advocate for Early Childhood Care and Development in Ghana, providing policy direction and programmatic support to all stakeholders.



# Programs and Achievements

Since its inception, ECNG has committed itself to delivering ECCD-related services, interventions, and programs across Ghana by shaping policy, building grassroots capacity, and amplifying the voices of children, families, and caregivers. Through dynamic partnerships, ECNG delivers programs such as caregiver support workshops, community-led mapping of ECD services in underserved areas, and technical learning events. Its flagship initiatives include national webinars on play-based learning, climate resilience, and inclusion, as well as youth and parent-led advocacy. ECNG also advances workforce development by partnering with global leaders to pilot coaching tools such as My Teaching Partner, which strengthens teacher-child engagement and professional growth.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- Representing civil society on the National Steering Committee on Early Childhood Education.
- Convening national dialogues on topics such as climate resilience, ECE within the informal economy, and play-based learning.
- Collaborating with AfECN and other partners to submit a shadow report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, providing an independent assessment of Ghana's progress and highlighting key gaps with recommendations to strengthen accountability and safeguard children's rights.

In 2025, ECNG launched its Virtual Neuroscience Webinar Series to bridge brain science and policy, highlighting the importance of responsive caregiving, early stimulation, and evidence-based interventions. Its 2024 Annual General Assembly convened more than 60 stakeholders to align national strategies with the African Union's vision of "Educate an African Fit for the 21st Century," focusing on nurturing care, equity, and systemic reforms in early education.

## Spotlight Story



### STAKEHOLDER BACKGROUND

WIEGO is a global network advancing the rights and livelihoods of informal workers in 40+ countries by partnering with grassroots organizations, academics, and policymakers to generate inclusive policies and solutions. In Ghana, WIEGO has long engaged with informal worker groups in urban areas such as Accra and Kumasi.

### THE CHALLENGE

Informal urban spaces lacked mapping of ECD centers, and many childcare providers operated without formal training or regulation. As a result, children aged 0–5 in markets, transport terminals, and low-income settlements were often exposed to unsafe, overcrowded, and unstimulating environments, hindering their development and school readiness. This left many women informal workers without reliable childcare, constraining their ability to work productively and sustain their livelihoods.

### ECNG'S ROLE

Through partnership with WIEGO, ECNG brought its expertise in pedagogy, neuroscience-based frameworks, and government ties. Over a period of six months, they provided technical support in designing, planning, and assessing one childcare service in Makola, weekly childcare provider training, ECD mapping in Accra, and policy engagement.

### THE RESULTS

Between October 2023 and April 2024, ECNG through partnership with WIEGO had produced a baseline report; piloted a model ECD center that serves 200 children in Makola Market in the Central Business District of Accra; trained 15 women childcare providers; and held dialogues with municipal authorities, market associations, and the Department of Social Welfare to explore regulation and support. The partnership spotlighted informal caregivers as vital to supporting working mothers.

### THE COMMUNITY IMPACT

The outcomes of this collaboration extended beyond the immediate stakeholders. Mothers reported higher productivity and reduced stress; children showed improved development; caregivers gained skills and recognition; and the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (the political and administrative authority) began considering inclusive ECCE planning in urban development policies.

# Looking Ahead

Over the next three to five years, ECNG is committed to strengthening its leadership in Ghana's early childhood landscape by advancing quality, equity, and innovation.

## NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC GOALS

**Workforce Quality and Continuous Professional Development:** ECNG will partner with Teachstone (USA) and AfECN to introduce the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) in Ghana.

**Equity in ECD Access:** Building on successful mapping and advocacy efforts with GES, WIEGO, and community partners, ECNG will expand its reach into informal settlements, market-based childcare centers, and vulnerable communities to ensure equitable access to quality early childhood services.

**Climate-ECD Integration:** Through ongoing collaboration with UNICEF and local stakeholders, ECNG is embedding climate resilience, environmental awareness, and nature-based play into early learning settings, preparing children for environmental challenges while fostering ecological consciousness.

**Knowledge Leadership and Advocacy:** ECNG will contribute to regional publications such as *The Book on ECD in Africa*; lead participatory research on informal childcare models; and facilitate South-South learning across Anglophone West Africa.

## FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Development partners including AfECN, Children Believe, UNICEF Ghana, and WIEGO provide core support. This is complemented by technical and financial backing from global ECD alliances and donations from foundations, corporate sponsors, and individual contributors.

## CALL TO ACTION

- **Donate** to support teacher coaching and caregiver training in under-resourced communities.
- **Partner** in co-developing policy tools, research outputs, and regional knowledge products.
- **Advocate** by amplifying ECNG's proven approaches in national and international forums to strengthen early childhood development support across Ghana.

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At ECNG, we believe that the well-being and development of young children depend on the strength of the relationships that surround them. Government, families, teachers, caregivers, and service providers all have a role to play in building nurturing environments where children can thrive. Our collaboration with Teachstone and AfECN reflects our vision to promote responsive caregiving and professional growth through evidence-based tools and coaching. Together, we are supporting a national movement that places young children and their caregivers at the center of policy, practice, and progress.

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Ebenezer Lartey, Director

## Contact Info

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