

# Vision for ISSA's Future

## Summary of Strategy Framework for 2010–2012

In 2008–2009 ISSA engaged in a highly participatory strategic planning process, involving its Members. The goal was not to develop ‘the ultimate plan’, rather to develop a concept of ISSA’s focus and direction, to provide a unifying theme, stimulus and motivation for all its activities. The process included external mapping, internal mapping of members’ unique features, similarities and needs, identifying the critical issues which the association is trying to address, choosing from possible scenarios and setting a number of strategic goals. The following documents resulted from this process: **Strategy Framework for 2010–2012, Program and Advocacy Framework, Funding Plan and Members’ Charter** (to be finalized in 2010). Within the framework established by these strategy documents, work plans will be developed for each year.

### Background

Ten years after it was established in 1999, ISSA, continues building upon the substantial investment and success of OSI’s Step by Step Program and upon the vibrant network and movement resulting from the program, with the aim to improve the lives of children and their chances for success in life. Over the years, ISSA has grown to become the pre-eminent early childhood development network in Central Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

### ISSA’s Organizational Vision

In this phase of its development, the association will expand to be a broader professional and advocacy network, and become a widely recognized leader on issues related to care and education for children from birth through primary school. ISSA’s mission of ensuring equity and access to quality care and education for every child will be realized through:

- continuing to be at the forefront of innovations in early childhood care and education,
- broadening its membership, engaging and supporting more civil society actors and national coalitions, in order to have strong impact at the national/regional level in pursuing the mission,
- engaging in influential advocacy campaigns affecting policy and practice at the national and regional level,
- being an advocate and resource both for formal center-based early education, and for broader early childhood development concerns.

During 2010–2012 ISSA will reinforce the foundations needed to realize this new vision, by building upon successes and strengths developed during previous years.

**ISSA’s Societal Vision:** *With support from family and community, every child reaches his or her full potential and develops the skills necessary for being a successful and active member of a democratic knowledge society.*

**ISSA’s Mission:** *ISSA’s mission is to support professional communities and develop a strong civil society that influences and assists decision makers to:*

- *provide high quality care and educational services for all children from birth through primary school (birth through 10 years old), with a focus on the poorest and most disadvantaged,*
- *ensure greater inclusion of family and community participation in children’s development and learning,*
- *ensure social inclusion and respect for diversity.*

**ISSA’s overarching goal** *is to promote inclusive, quality care and education experiences that create the conditions for all children to become active members of democratic knowledge societies. ISSA does this through: raising awareness of the importance of quality care and education; developing resources; disseminating information; advocating; strengthening alliances and building capacity to create conditions where all children thrive.*

## Operational Mechanisms

In order to pursue its mission and achieve the strategic goals outlined in this plan, ISSA will use four operational mechanisms. Each of these tools will be used in an integrated approach and in a coordinated manner:

- Community-Building: promoting and sustaining values; linking membership into a stronger community
- Professional Capacity Building/Strengthening Professionalism in Education
- Advocacy and Public Information/Education
- Convening and Network Representation: partnership building; cooperation with other relevant networks

## Strategic Goals

### 1. Promote access and equity of care and education for young children in the region

ISSA's strategic goal is to contribute to the development of full potential and to assuring equal access to quality care and education for all children, as an imperative of child's rights, with special emphasis on children from disadvantaged socioeconomic groups, from isolated rural areas and from other vulnerable groups, such as ethnic/language minorities and children with disabilities.

### 2. Promote high quality and professionalism in providing care and education for young children

ISSA's strategic goal is to contribute significantly to promoting and implementing quality care and education for all children, with special emphasis on development and education in the early years, and for children of preschool and primary school age.

### 3. Promote civil society participation, community-based ECD and parental education

ISSA's strategic goal is to help ensure greater support for and inclusion of family, as well as community participation in children's development and learning.

### 4. Enhance the capacity of the ISSA network to deliver its strategy

ISSA's strategic goal is to develop the skills of its membership, ensure good governance practices and management systems to achieve its program/advocacy goals and to build the association's sustainability in the medium to long term.

## Combined Approach

- activities focused on *programming*: best practices/innovations, professional development, knowledge management
- activities aimed at *advocating*, building upon the strength in program development and implementation
- *activities aimed at directly benefiting all members* in the network (new and old): professional development and networking opportunities, online exchanges, disseminating information, network representation etc.
- *activities anchored at the country level*, in partnership with member NGOs, other stakeholders and international partners/donors. ISSA will ensure that not only the host country, but the whole network benefits, by sharing resources, recommendations, lessons and approaches resulting from such initiatives.

## Empowering the Members

ISSA builds upon the strong expertise of its member organizations in Central/Eastern Europe and Central Asia in implementing systemic and sustainable changes in education in countries in transition. As a membership association ISSA, focuses on building capacity within the network in order to pursue its mission and the strategic goals. As in previous years, ISSA will continue to provide its members with: professional development and capacity building; information sharing and networking opportunities; technical support; international advocacy; resources and publications.

## Expanding the Membership

Building upon the network resulting from the Step by Step Program, ISSA will *gradually* open its membership geographically and organizationally to like-minded civil society actors, recruiting new **full** and **affiliated** members, with the aim to expand ISSA's reach and impact. This process will be *member-driven*.