Towards Competent Early Childhood Education Systems: A Conceptual Framework for a Pre-Primary Education Sub-Sector

2018 Asia-Pacific Regional Early Childhood Development Conference
Kathmandu, Nepal

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Early Learning and Early Childhood Development

- Nutrition
- Security And Safety
- Health
- Responsive Care Giving
- Parental support
- Organized programmes
On current trends, by 2030, only 43% of children in low income countries will have access to early education……
Challenges, Bottlenecks, Opportunities

- Complex and diverse nature of provision
- Presents challenges for governments in terms of scale up, as well as quality assurance and regulation
- It also presents opportunities for partnership and quality assurance
Addressing these challenges and leveraging on opportunities.....

A systems approach....

Conceptual Framework for Pre-Primary Sub-Sector

Grounded in developmentally appropriate practice
Key Elements of the Pre-Primary Sub-Sector Conceptual Framework

① A supportive or **enabling environment** that can help leverage political, public, and financial resources for the pre-primary sub-sector

② Five **action areas** that are essential to the development and maintenance of high quality pre-primary education
Government expenditure by education level as a percentage of total government expenditure on education

Government expenditure by education level as a percentage of total government expenditure on education [%] (most recent data)
Action Areas

Curriculum
To ensure that children in diverse early learning settings experience a curriculum and have access to materials that stimulate their development and respond to their individual and cultural characteristics.

Teachers
To ensure that pre-primary teachers and other personnel have essential competencies, training and support required to promote children’s positive development and early learning, and that personnel have opportunities for growth.

Planning and Resource Allocation
To ensure equitable and efficient provision of pre-primary services, the deployment and management of available financial, human, and physical resources.

Families & Communities
To ensure that families are active participants in children's learning and development; collaborate with communities to strengthen pre-primary programs, family practices, and children's learning and development.

Quality Assurance
To have a coherent system to monitor all aspects of the pre-primary sub-sector, particularly in terms of service quality and regulation compliance.
Action Area 1: Effective Pre-Primary Planning and Management of Resources

**Purpose:** Ensure equitable and efficient provision of pre-primary services, including the deployment and management of available financial, human, and physical resources

**Goals**

- Develop comprehensive service provision plan (what access, for whom first etc.)
- Monitor and adjust to ensure equity and efficiency
- Strengthen governance structures and coordination that enable equitable provision
Applying the framework: Diagnostic and Planning Tool
A snapshot of the Diagnostic Tool – Measures and Guiding Questions

**Measure 1:** There is a national pre-primary service provision plan based on data and evidence.

- Is there a national pre-primary service provision or action plan in place?
  - a. Is the plan endorsed by key sector stakeholders and partners?
- Is the plan informed by evidence and data:
  - a. Analysis of service availability and gaps across the country, including
    - Percentage of children who have publicly funded or subsidised access to pre-primary education
    - Percentage of children who attend pre-primary regularly
  - b. Analysis of service demand, including
    - Percentage of families who want to send their children to preschool
    - Analysis of access from equity perspectives, such as poverty, urban/rural, vulnerable populations and other relevant factors
    - Percentage of children from poorest households attending an early education program
  - c. Analyses of the families' needs in terms of the kind of access that is needed - half day, full day, proximity to home etc.
- Does the plan leverage the different types of provision in your country to maximize resources for and coverage of pre-primary services - for example how is private provision or provision by civil society leveraged?

**Civil society leveraged:**

**Measure 2:** The plan prioritizes availability of services for the most vulnerable groups (i.e. employs a progressive universalist approach).

- Is there an agreed definition of “disadvantaged” or “vulnerable” families and children?
- Does the plan include reductions of fees or free provision for children from disadvantaged and/or marginalized families; the size of the public subsidy is sufficient?
- What percentage of families that are entitled to publicly funded subsidized pre-primary education can find a place for their child/children?
- Does the plan account for potential differences between regions or districts by directing more resources where they are needed most?
- Does the plan account for additional needs for marginalized or disadvantaged groups - such as special educational support, and/or language support or other?
Action Area 2: Curriculum Development and Implementation

**Purpose:** Ensure that children in diverse early learning settings experience a curriculum and have access to materials that stimulate their development and respond to their individual and cultural characteristics.
Action Area 3: Competent Pre-Primary Teachers and Other Personnel

**Purpose:** Ensure that pre-primary teachers and other personnel have essential competencies, training, support and opportunities for growth

**Goals**

- Establish appropriate staff qualifications and profiles
- Attract and Retain a Qualified Pre-Primary Workforce
- Promote continuous improvement through monitoring workforce development programs
- Implement pre and in-service training opportunities

**Other Personnel:**
- Assistant teachers
- Pre-primary directors/principals
- Supervisors
- Trainers; coaches
- Specialists
Action Area 4: Family and Community Engagement

**Purpose:** Ensure that families are active participants in children’s learning and development; collaborate with communities to strengthen pre-primary programs, family practices, and children’s learning and development.

**Goals**

- Establish a comprehensive engagement strategy with clear goals
- Evaluate and continually improve engagement practices across the sub-sector
- Effectively implement initiatives in the context of the pre-primary programme
Action Area 5: Monitoring, Regulation, and Quality Assurance

**Purpose:** Ensure that there is an overall coherent framework for monitoring quality of pre-primary education, and more specifically of service quality and regulation compliance.

**Goals**

- **Establish comprehensive quality standards and goals across the pre-primary system**
- **Use data for continuous improvement, decision making and sustainability**
- **Build functional quality assurance and regulatory mechanisms**
Connecting Across Action Areas

The Problem: Different Action Areas often sit in different parts of the government and therefore may lack coherence.

In reality, all Action Areas are closely connected and influence one another.

→ Coherence and coordination of all Action Areas is crucial.
Sub-Sector or System Levels

- A strong pre-primary sub-sector is only as strong as its district- or local-level structures, capacity etc.
- To ensure effectiveness, there must be coordination and vertical alignment from national to local levels.

![Diagram showing levels of governance: National Level, Sub-national level, Local Level.]

Image: A group of people, presumably in a community setting, with a focus on providing educational materials.
Sub-Sector-Building Principles

**Equity**
System built to allow equitable access to services

**Efficiency**
System built to maximize benefits from financial and human resources, relying on evidence to make good decisions about resource allocation.

**Responsiveness**
System built to keep learning and responding to changing conditions and contexts, reflecting diverse needs while building consensus on the value of early learning.

**Coordination**
System built to promote collaboration within the subsector, between sub-sectors and between sectors.
Optimum Child Development Outcomes in Pre-Primary requires Multi-Sectoral Collaboration among a variety of actors.

- Health and Nutrition
- Civil Society
- Local authorities
- Protection, Safety and Security
- Private Sector
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- Media
- Social Protection
- Gender
- Finance
Analysis and systematic thinking can support pre-primary education in all phases of the Education Sector Processes.

1. Analysis (in preparation for sector planning)
2. Plan Development (incl. budgeting and costing)
3. Implementation
4. Review and Prep for Course Corrections
Typologies of country contexts as they relate to progress towards pre-primary education

1. Limited/Weak focus on pre-primary within the Education system

- **Likely characteristics**: Weak enabling environment, non-existent sub-sector: No policy in place; low levels of financing; low enrollment rates; lack of convergence across providers and low commitment (yet) of MoE or relevant ministry

2. Initial focus on pre-primary, but not prioritized sufficiently to make needed progress

- **Likely characteristics**: Relatively favorable enabling environment (though funding may still be limited); initial progress on enrollment achieved but still relatively low, gaps across the sub-sector – isolated efforts, lack of coherence and focus on implementation; not enough capacity across MoE branches to implement a coherent and quality pre-primary program at scale;

3. Established focus on pre-primary within MoE (or relevant ministries), but gaps in quality and equity remain;

- **Likely characteristics**: Favorable enabling environment and established sub-sector: Clear focus on pre-primary as a priority of the education system; an implementation plan in place; many aspects of the sub-sector either developed or in development (i.e. curriculum in place, appropriate teacher qualifications in place and training mechanisms, quality assurance mechanisms in place, etc.); work on coherence, equity, inclusion, system capacity to implement and quality assurance needed etc.
In conclusion ...
Thank you!