2017 Status Report on Early Childhood Care and Education in Pacific Island Countries
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Acronyms

CCT  conditional cash transfer
DRR  disaster risk reduction
ECCE  early childhood care and education
ECE  early childhood education
ECD  early childhood development
EFA  Education for All
EMIS  Education Management Information System
FEdMM  Forum Education Ministers Meeting
FSM  Federated States of Micronesia
GER  gross enrolment ratio
KAP  knowledge, attitudes and practices
MOE  Ministry of Education
MESC  Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture
MQSS  minimum quality service standards
NCECE  National Council for Early Childhood Education in Samoa
NER  net enrolment ratio
NGO  non-governmental organization
PECCS  Palau’s Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems
PICs  Pacific Island Countries
PRC4ECCE  Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Care and Education
RMI  Republic of Marshall Islands
SABER-ECD  Systems Approach for Better Education Results-Early Childhood Development
SDG  Sustainable Development Goal
UNESCO  United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF  United Nations Children’s Fund
Foreword

This report on early childhood care and education (ECCE) in the Pacific highlights the significant progress achieved by Pacific Island Countries and the pressing gaps that need to be filled to secure the optimal development of the region's youngest children.

As Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Care and Education (PRC4ECCE), UNICEF has been actively monitoring the implementation of ECCE programmes in the region, particularly the implementation of the Pacific Guidelines for the Development of National Quality Frameworks for ECCE: Programming for Ages Three to Five (2014), which were formally endorsed by all Pacific Education Ministers during their Forum meeting in Cook Islands in April 2014. In 2015, UNICEF completed a baseline survey based on the guidelines. This report provides an update and lays out the improvements, setbacks and critical areas for action relating to the provision of ECCE services across the Pacific region. It was put together by UNICEF Early Childhood Development Specialist Consultant Joy Millan-Maler and UNICEF Pacific Chief of Education Niki Abrishamian, working closely with PRC4ECCE members to collect the most up-to-date data on ECCE.

As highlighted by this report, data collection continues to be a challenge in the region, particularly with the ECCE subsector. While it was possible to report on key aspects of ECCE in the region, many gaps remain. Complete and disaggregated data, particularly with pre-primary enrolment rates for girls/boys and for urban/rural areas, is needed to fully monitor performance, evaluate programmes and services, and support evidence-based decision-making. This is even more pertinent as early childhood development secures a more prominent footing in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the universal development charter for the 21st century.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals outlines essential goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all. To fulfil these, strengthening early childhood development is a key foundational step. Scientific and empirical research provides resounding evidence of the impact of investing in the early years in securing long-term outcomes such as academic achievement, lifetime health, adult earnings and productivity.

The inclusion of early childhood development in the SDGs obliges Pacific Island Countries to ensure that their youngest citizens get the best start in life. While there has been considerable progress in the region, more substantial investment and galvanized efforts are necessary to accelerate the progress and achieve the 2030 SDG deadline. Toward this, UNICEF has and will continue to support countries in the Pacific, working together to reach every child and help build solid foundations for individual, national, and region-wide prosperity.

Sheldon Yett
UNICEF Representative, Pacific Island Countries
Executive Summary

This report updates the status of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Pacific Island Countries (PICs) framed by the five-component system specified in the ‘Pacific Guidelines for the Development of National Quality Frameworks for ECCE Programming for Ages Three to Five’. This status report follows a 2015 status report. The report cites positive developments and setbacks across various aspects of ECCE: policies and legislation, human resources, curriculum, child assessment, teaching and learning environment, performance monitoring and assessment, and family and community partnerships. The report also provides a broad snapshot of progress related to ECCE in the region, citing commonalities among countries and identifying gaps and areas of improvement.

Data for this report was collected following the distribution of a questionnaire that was completed by representatives of the Pacific Regional Council in Early Childhood Care and Education (PRC4ECCE) in mid-2016 regarding ECCE in their country. Twelve of 13 PICs completed and returned the questionnaires – Cook Islands, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Data was subjected to in-country and cross-country analysis. Related reports by UNICEF and the World Bank were also consulted. Similar to the previous status report, the status of ECCE in each PIC was rated using an informal and qualitative traffic light approach.

General findings reveal that there are wide discrepancies in the quality of the ECCE subsector across PICs. Countries like Fiji, Cook Islands, Niue and Nauru are more advanced, with relatively strong government support for ECCE, while weaknesses in funding, quality and implementation of aspects of ECCE such as legislation and policies, workforce, performance monitoring systems and partnerships exist in the other PICs. ECCE coverage levels have improved compared to the 2015 status report although coverage levels remain below 50 per cent in many PICs. Majority of countries have some form of legislation and policies in place on ECCE; however, the mandate and implementation remain weak. Furthermore, funding for ECCE is often low and ad hoc. Most PICs set aside less than 5 per cent of their total education expenditure for ECCE, which is well below the international benchmark of 10 per cent. A robust multi-sectoral network for service delivery is yet to be seen in any of the PICs and most face serious difficulties recruiting and maintaining a high-calibre ECCE workforce. While ECCE data is now collected in Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) and improvements in performance monitoring were noted since the 2015 status report, flaws persist in the scope and comprehensiveness of ECC data that is collected. Governments are also not able to adequately support communities in the provision of quality ECCE services due to a lack of government funds, resources, and/or oversight.

Based on these findings and a review of global best practices in ECCE, five main recommendations are proposed to accelerate the pace of progress on ECCE in PICs. Governments need to devote considerably more time, energy and resources in ECCE subsector system-building initiatives to see a major return on their investments, particularly with school retention and the learning achievement of children. Some of these initiatives include strengthening ECCE-related legislation and policies, increasing investments, institutionalizing pre-primary education, supporting new and existing service delivery structures, improving monitoring and data collection, fostering better coordination across sectors, and professionalizing the ECCE workforce.
Introduction

“Early childhood development can help drive the transformation we hope to achieve over the next 15 years,” then Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon declared as he launched the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in early 2016.\(^1\) The SDGs ensure that the optimal development of young children is explicit in the global development agenda, with SDG target 4.2 demanding from nations that “by 2030, all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.”

Compared to the previous Education for All (EFA) goals, the SDGs go a step further by reframing early childhood care and education (ECCE) not just as a means but also as an end and defining ECCE holistically as encompassing the cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical domains. Children must be developmentally on track across all domains to be ready for primary education and must be thriving rather than merely surviving.\(^2\)

There is mounting consensus, spurred by growing research and empirical evidence, that ECCE is critical for individuals and societies to achieve their full growth potential. Advances in neuroscience have illuminated the benefits of positive early experiences and the debilitating effects of adverse circumstances on the young brain and human physiology.\(^3\) Studies in The Lancet medical journal have demonstrated that high-quality programmes in the early years have a cumulative impact on children’s long-term outcomes, including academic achievement, health, and adult productivity.\(^4\) Moreover, landmark analyses led by James Heckman, Nobel laureate on the economics of human development, have established the benefits of early childhood interventions, demonstrating a return as high as $17 for every $1 invested, with benefits accruing to society in the form of higher incomes, better health, and lower crime rates.\(^5\) To put more plainly, the benefits of investing in the early years are critical and abundant while the costs of inaction are severe.\(^2\)

SDG Target 4.2:

By 2030, all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

What is ECCE?*

Early childhood care and education or ECCE is defined as the range of out-of-home care and educational settings that children experience between birth and school entry. This definition acknowledges that primary education begins at different ages in different countries. It is a specific sector of services within the larger universe of early childhood development (ECD) policies and programmes, which encompass health, nutrition, child protection, social protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene policies. At the same time, ECCE programmes and policies can either integrate services from other sectors, or coordinate with them at the community, subnational and/or national levels.

*Definition adapted from the May 2014 background paper ‘The Evidence Base on Early Childhood Care and Education in Global Contexts’ by Yoshikawa, H. and Kabay, S. prepared for the UNESCO 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report

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Despite global advances in ECCE, significant challenges remain in the provision of quality services to young children and their families in the Pacific region. Across the region, an alarming 70 per cent of 3–5 year-olds do not have access to pre-primary or preschool education, with low attendance likely influenced by poor-quality provision and a lack of awareness among parents of the value of early learning. At a systems level, there are severe weaknesses in policy, capacity and implementation of ECCE programmes and services. Countries in the Pacific region rarely consider pre-primary education as an established component of basic or compulsory education. Governments in the region invest very little in ECCE or on an ad hoc basis and only after priorities in primary or secondary education are fulfilled.

Recent global attention on ECCE coupled with challenges in the Pacific region prompted the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat to call for the creation of a regional council to consolidate and coordinate ECCE activities. The Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Care and Education was established following the acceptance of a paper entitled “ECCE in the Pacific” at the 2010 Forum Education Ministers Meeting (FEdMM) in Papua New Guinea. UNICEF was appointed secretariat. The Council’s terms of reference and strategic plan were completed by 2012, guided by recommendations from the Pacific Islands Forum and high-level representatives from education ministries across the region.

### About PRC4ECCE

The Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Care and Education was established as part of the Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) to consolidate and coordinate educational development activities related to ECCE across Pacific Island countries. The PRC4ECCE was approved following acceptance of a paper entitled ‘Early Childhood Care and Education in the Pacific: A Progress Review’ at a 2010 meeting of the Pacific Islands Forum Ministers of Education in Papua New Guinea. Key ECCE stakeholders representing all PICs sit on the PRC4ECCE’s various governing bodies – the Executive Board, Council and Advisory Group. UNICEF was appointed Secretariat of PRC4ECCE at its inception and continues to serve in that capacity. In 2012, a strategic plan and the Council’s terms of reference were completed, guided by recommendations from the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and high-level representatives from education ministries across the region.

Since early childhood development in the PICS typically falls under the purview of MOEs, the PRC4ECCE’s primary purpose is to advocate to strengthen ECCE subsectors within Ministries of Education (MOE). ECCE and ECD are typically used interchangeably in the region. ECD is the more commonly recognized term to reference the holistic, multi-sectoral development of young children under the age of 8 years; however, the PRC4ECCE made the practical and strategic decision to maintain the term ECCE to reinforce its engagement with MOEs as an entry point for country-level advocacy and leverage existing ECCE infrastructure.

PRC4ECCE’s vision is for all “children across the Pacific (to) reach their full potential through region-wide investments in high-quality and sustainable ECCE programmes and initiatives.” The PRC4ECCE works to achieve this vision by providing direction for national and regional initiatives that deliver high-quality, inclusive and equitable ECCE programmes, primarily by enabling and promoting effective coordination, sharing, dissemination, and use of relevant research, resources, and documented best practices. PRC4ECCE seeks, in particular, to promote approaches to ECCE that are uniquely ‘Pacific’ and cater specifically to the existing capabilities and needs of PICs.

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Background of the Status Report

The ‘Pacific Guidelines for the Development of National Quality Frameworks for ECCE Programming for Ages Three to Five’ (henceforth referred to as the ‘Pacific Guidelines’)\(^8\) provide a comprehensive overview of the key components that make up a high-quality ECCE system. The guidelines were the result of a two-year discussion across the Pacific region about the definition of quality early childhood programming, both in policy and practice, that was facilitated by the PRC4ECCE.

The ‘Pacific Guidelines’ were formally and unanimously endorsed at the FEdMM in April 2014 in Cook Islands, signalling the acceptance of ECCE as a regional priority and its value in preparing the youngest citizens to be successful learners.

The secretariat of PRC4ECCE, a role held by UNICEF Pacific since PRC4ECCE’s inception, was tasked with monitoring the implementation, adaptation and impact of the ‘Pacific Guidelines’ across the PICs. In 2015, UNICEF worked with PRC4ECCE country representatives to collect and analyse data using a questionnaire and extensive country follow-up. This resulted in the release of a baseline status report on ECCE that was presented at a Pacific Heads of Education Systems meeting in October 2015 and published in a Springer peer-reviewed journal in 2016.

This report uses the 2015 status report and five-component system specified in the ‘Pacific Guidelines’ as references in providing an update of the status of ECCE across the Pacific region. This report describes positive developments as well as challenges related to improving ECCE in the PICs such as policies and legislation; human resources; curriculum; child assessment; teaching and learning environment; performance monitoring and assessment; and, family and community partnerships. The report also provides a snapshot of the status of ECCE in the region, identifying commonalities among countries as well as gaps and areas of improvement.

It is hoped that this report will be used not only by MOEs to guide plans to strengthen the quality of ECCE programming in their respective countries but also by various other stakeholders as a useful reference to improve the provision of ECCE services for young children and their families in the Pacific.

Methodology

Data collection

Data collection for this report was based on a situational mapping exercise conducted by UNICEF in 2015. A survey that posed questions relating to the status of ECCE was developed and circulated to PRC4ECCE country representatives in mid-2016. (The questionnaire is presented in Appendix 1). The representatives were primarily comprised of ECCE officers or coordinators at MOEs of the respective countries.

Survey questions corresponded to the following five components that comprise a quality ECCE framework (see Figure 1) and are outlined in the ‘Pacific Guidelines’:

1. Policy, Legislation and Governance – strategies and regulations that support ECCE.
2. Human Resources – the personnel who work with young children, their qualifications, training requirements, and compensation.
3. Curriculum, Child Assessment and Environment – how children are taught, what they learn, and learning environments for young children.
4. Performance Monitoring and Assessment – how quality is defined and monitored, the frequency of monitoring, and how monitoring and assessment results feed back into planning and implementation.
5. Family and Community Partnerships – the relationship between government, which provides oversight and family and communities, who own and implement ECCE centres.

Additionally, data on a variety of indicators such as gross and net enrolment ratios, number of early childhood education (ECE) centres, infant mortality and stunting rates, and rates of birth registration were also requested in the survey. (A full list of indicators is presented in Appendix 1). Some of these indicators required survey respondents from MOEs to collect statistics from counterparts in ministries of health and social protection.

By April 2017, questionnaires had been returned from 12 of 13 PICs – Cook Islands, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Although the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) did not complete the survey by the deadline, data was collected from available sources for this report. An extensive follow-up with survey respondents was carried out to clarify and confirm the data collected.

Data analysis

Collected data was subjected to in-country and cross-country analysis. Within countries, a summary description of the status of ECE was completed across the five components. (Country-level summaries are presented in Appendix 2).

General descriptions across countries were generated to depict the overall status of ECE in the region. In reporting the findings, related reports were reviewed, including the World Bank’s Systems Approach for Better Education Results – Early Childhood Development (SABER–ECD) that were completed for Tonga, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. A joint SABER-ECD and UNICEF National Situational Assessment were consulted for Kiribati and Solomon Islands. Other UNICEF reports, such as an unpublished 2017 National Situational Assessments and in-country research studies also were reviewed.

Following analysis of the data, each country was categorized as latent, emerging or established per the informal qualitative traffic light system used in the previous status report. The categories are not intended to compare countries but to provide a quick and accessible snapshot of how various aspects of the ECCE subsectors are progressing in each country. The ratings and associated colours are defined as follows:

- **Latent** (red) – components or subcomponents have not been developed; funds are not allocated for implementation.

- **Emerging** (yellow) – components or subcomponents have been established but funding, quality and/or implementation is weak; some subcomponents have been established, others are incomplete or not yet implemented.

- **Established** (green) – components or subcomponents have been developed; funding is allocated for implementation; implementation is monitored.

One limitation to the status report is that survey data for each country was derived primarily from a single source – the PRC4ECCE country representatives. It has been assumed that survey respondents had collected and verified the data from their own government ministries. As much as possible, survey responses were substantiated with other data sources available online and/or UNICEF reports.
Survey results are presented below for each of the five components that comprise a quality ECCE framework as outlined in the ‘Pacific Guidelines’ followed by a region-wide snapshot of ECCE coverage and key regional findings.

Component 1: Policy, Legislation and Governance

Legislation and Policies

The ‘Pacific Guidelines’ assert that clear policies and legislation, along with strong financial support, are essential to the provision of quality ECCE services. Governments must ensure an adequate legal and regulatory framework is in place relating to such matters as the ECCE workforce, the management of ECCE centres, national ECCE curriculum and quality standards. Legislation must also be supportive of equity, ensuring access to quality services for even the most disadvantaged families and communities.

The incorporation of ECCE in legislation like national Education Acts implies the foundational role of early years’ learning and development to school performance and lifelong learning. Research has demonstrated that ECCE impacts children’s enrolment, retention, and achievement in primary school and beyond. ECCE also is essential for children to achieve school readiness as studies show that children who attend preschool perform better scholastically than those who did not.9

Since the release of the 2015 status report, Fiji and Solomon Islands have included pre-primary education in their respective Education Acts, bringing the total to 11 of PICs with education legislation encompassing the early years – Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, RMI, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. ECCE is not included in the Education Acts of Kiribati and Tuvalu. However, Kiribati has developed a bill on ECCE that has now passed in Parliament after being committed by the Committee State and set down for second reading in August 2017.

Although most PICs have included ECCE in their Education Acts, the degree to which ECCE is addressed in the legislation is limited. A review of the various Education Acts found that regulations for primary and secondary schools are clearly detailed while regulations for ECCE have significantly less scope. For example, while Vanuatu’s Education Act mandates French and English as the language of instruction for primary and secondary schools, it is silent on the language that ought to be used for pre-primary education even though research overwhelmingly recommends it should be the mother tongue.10 The language requirement for ECCE is contained in another document, the new Vanuatu Language Policy 2016, which states that mother tongue will be used from ECCE to Class 3.

The compulsory nature of ECCE varies across the PICs. (See Table 1). Five countries – Nauru, Niue, the Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, and Tonga – have made preschool or kindergarten part of compulsory education. The revised Education Act of Samoa states that all children must attend ECE when they reach the age of four which means that every child must have one year of ECE before attending primary school. Cook Islands’ 2012 Education Act defines and creates access to ECCE and while ECCE is not compulsory, it is government funded from the age of three years. FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu have similar provision for voluntary ECCE or pre-primary education. Fiji’s education system includes one-year free kindergarten that is not compulsory. Vanuatu provides for the right to access free education starting from ECCE but the Government has yet to formulate a compulsory education policy. Solomon Islands is developing a road map to roll-out a one-year pre-primary education which will be part of the country’s basic education system.

The age range that corresponds to ECCE cited in legislation differs across countries. Fiji and Solomon Islands refer to early childhood education or “ECE,” which is defined as the variety of programmes providing care and education to children from zero to

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10 Ball, J., ‘Enhancing Learning of Children from Diverse Language Backgrounds: Mother-tongue based bilingual or multilingual education in the early years’, Analytical review commissioned by the UNESCO Education Sector, Paris, 2011
eight years of age and is consistent with international definitions of ECD. Niue used to differentiate between “ECD,” which the country defines as taking place from birth to three years and eight months and “ECE,” which occurs from three years nine months to five years, although recently, the two terminologies were subsumed under “ECCE”. The Cook Islands describes “ECE” as education for children under the age of five. FSM refers to “preschool,” which is defined as the period from infancy to age five or six, preceding attendance at elementary school.

The provision of free pre-primary education for at least one year is mandated in only four countries—the Cook Islands, Fiji, RMI, and Nauru. Fiji provides a grant of FJ$50 per term for each 5-year old child in the country that is disbursered to schools and ECE centres that apply for it and prohibits schools who receive this grant from charging additional fees. In Kiribati and Solomon Islands, local communities are encouraged to take ownership of the establishment and management of preschools and ECCE centres in their areas. Parents are asked to shoulder all or part of their children’s school fees, including tuition, uniform, meals, teacher salary contributions, and transport costs. Solomon Islands currently pays the salary of ECCE teachers but is reviewing this practice because of the government’s financial constraints.

The adoption of Education Acts has prompted many PICs to develop early childhood education policies that set out ECCE goals and approaches. Policies are as important to advancing ECCE since they outline a course of action or blueprint to achieve certain objectives, which may or may not involve specific legislation. However, it should be noted that policies do not mandate action the way laws do.

ECCE policies are in place in most of the PICs. Palau was in the process of drafting ECCE policies at the time of the release of this status report. RMI does not have a stand-alone ECCE policy document but has statutory instruments like the Primary School System Education Act and the Ministry of Education Rules and Regulations. ECCE is not included in Kiribati’s Education Act, but a policy on ECCE is in place and there are plans to review this policy following the passing of the ECCE Act in 2017.

In general, ECCE policies that exist in the Pacific region encompass a broad educational scope as well as objectives and principles underpinning the provision of education for young learners. The policies include guidelines for registering and managing ECCE centres management, employing teachers, implementing programmes and/or curriculum, enrolment, and monitoring and evaluation that correspond to the components outlined in the ‘Pacific Guidelines’. Following the introduction of policies, other regulatory guidelines often ensue such as a national curriculum, learning and development standards, and quality service standards for ECCE provision. Table 2 lists the ECCE-related acts, policies and standards that are in place in the PICs.

Since ECCE policies are often road maps to achieving goals related to ECCE, it is reasonable to suppose they evolve as practices, legislation and standards change. Hence, an important consideration is whether mechanisms are in place to review and, if necessary, revise ECCE policies to ensure they continue to be relevant and useful.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Period of Basic or Compulsory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>1st grade–13th grade (not compulsory at the end of the year in which child turns 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>1st grade –13th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>Kindergarten 5–8th grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>1st grade–junior secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>Preschool (4 years)–end of high school (18 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>ECCE–Year 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>1st grade–end of high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMI</td>
<td>Kindergarten–12th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>4 years (ECE)–year 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>1st grade–9th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>ECE (4 years)–18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>1st grade–10th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>ECCE–Year 10 (entitlement, not compulsory)</td>
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</table>

Table 1: Period corresponding to basic or compulsory education for each PIC.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Education Act Includes ECCE</th>
<th>National ECCE Policy</th>
<th>National ECCE</th>
<th>Early Learning &amp; Development Standards</th>
<th>Quality Service Standards for ECCE Centres</th>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMI</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: ECCE-related legislation and policies in PICs.

*Minimum infrastructure and equipment standards contained in 2013 ECCE policy

**ECCE is not in Education Act but a separate ECCE bill has just passed into law; Minimum standards are incorporated in the ECCE Act and is expected to be revised and improved over time

***Follows Head Start programme standards

Ideally, such reviews should be carried out every two to five years. However, some PICs where ECCE policies exist have not done reviews. This is likely because there is a lack of firm legislation and commitment to ECCE and a tendency to treat ECCE on an ad hoc basis rather than as a full-fledged subsector. Only six PICs were in the process of reviewing their respective ECCE policies – Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu – at the time this status report was completed. Vanuatu just finished reviewing theirs in 2010. Table 3 shows which PICs have reviews scheduled and the estimated timeframes for the reviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Period of Basic or Compulsory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>1st grade–13th grade (not compulsory at the end of the year in which child turns 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>1st grade–13th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>Kindergarten 5–8th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>1st grade–junior secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>Preschool (4 years)–end of high school (18 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>ECCE–Year 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>1st grade–end of high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMI</td>
<td>Kindergarten–12th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>4 years (ECCE)–year 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>1st grade–9th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>ECE (4 years)–18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>1st grade–10th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>ECCE–Year 10 (entitlement, not compulsory)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Schedule of reviews of ECCE policy by PICs
Governance and Coordination

Despite promising recent advances in the legislative environment for ECCE in the Pacific region, many governments struggle to implement and enforce laws and policies related to ECCE. In most countries, there is no capacity to enforce the laws and regulations. For instance, while policies exist in most PICs on how to properly register ECCE centres, many ECCE centres in the Pacific operate in the absence of appropriate registration papers. The World Bank’s SABER-ECD report indicated that as of 2014 in Tuvalu, only eight of 18 centres had met construction standards despite an ECCE policy requiring ECCE centres to comply with basic building requirements and rules for annual inspections.\(^{12}\) In Solomon Islands, only 35 per cent of teachers in 2011 were trained despite the existence of a policy requiring teachers to have a minimum of one year of training.\(^{13}\)

The coordination essential to the successful implementation of policies – from national governments to local units and community partners – is a challenge in the Pacific region. In many PICs, non-state actors – private or not-for-profit providers of ECCE, community leaders, and development partners – are involved in the delivery of ECCE services to communities but very few mechanisms exist for these stakeholders to collaborate and integrate service delivery.

The World Bank’s SABER and National Situational Analysis-ECD 2013 report found that all preschools in Solomon Islands and Kiribati are managed by the community or church in the absence of formal agreements with their respective MOEs\(^{14}\) resulting in ill-defined roles and a lack of accountability in the support for and provision of ECCE. The capacity to ensure national mandates are implemented locally is also weak despite the existence of ECCE policies. Technical oversight at a decentralized level is stronger in Solomon Islands, where ECCE officers are based in provincial education offices and thus better able to directly support the implementation of the country’s ECCE policy.\(^{15}\) Kiribati is set to improve government support of ECCE following the recent enactment of an ECCE bill in 2017.

In Samoa, where there are no public pre-primary education facilities, the ECE subsector is largely the responsibility of the National Council for Early Childhood Education in Samoa (NCECES). NCECES is an autonomous non-governmental organization (NGO) that includes representatives from ECCE centres and the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC). The MESC has managerial responsibility for ECE, including setting national quality and curriculum guidelines. The MESC collaborates with the NCECES in monitoring and enforcing the ECE age requirement; providing pre- and in-service professional development for teaching staff; distributing ECE training certificates to interested candidates; and monitoring the effective implementation of curriculum guidelines, quality standards, and resource kits.\(^{16}\) However, due to an absence of data or reporting on this arrangement, it is unclear how well it is working.\(^{17}\)

In addition to vertical coordination among national and local structures, the successful implementation of ECCE policies requires effective horizontal coordination across various sectors that address ECCE or ECD more broadly. Empirical evidence confirms that inter-sectoral cooperation results in better outcomes for children and families\(^{18}\)

However, the delivery of ECCE services in the Pacific region tends to be fragmented – scattered across education, health, finance, child protection


\(^{15}\) Fiji National University, University of South Pacific, & UNICEF, ‘Early Childhood Care and Education in the Pacific: A progress review’, paper presented to the Forum Education Ministers’ Meeting in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, October, 2010.


and social welfare agencies – in the absence of clear mandates and coordinating mechanisms. MOEs in most PICs have ECCE coordinators or ECCE focal persons who are responsible for overseeing educational matters in the country’s kindergartens, preschools and ECCE centres. However, these tend to be ECCE departmental positions in the primary education management structure that are staffed by personnel with limited expertise and a weak capacity to provide leadership and supervision in ECCE.

Some PICs have strengthened coordination through the establishment of an institutional or organizational anchor. In some PICs, and particularly those where ECCE services are delivered primarily by private providers, a national body composed of government representatives and service providers coordinates the provision of ECCE. Task forces are in place in Samoa and Solomon Islands to coordinate ECCE activities nationally but they focus primarily on the education part of ECCE.

Palau’s Early Childhood Comprehensive System (PECCS) provides a national and multi-sectoral framework that integrates ECCE, support for families, access to medical services and interventions. The PECCS is a grant within the Family Health Unit of the Department of Health and Human Services that brings together primary care providers, teachers, families, and caregivers to develop systems of care for children by addressing their physical, emotional, and social health in a broad-based and coordinated way.

**Financing**

Investment in ECCE by governments is critical to ensuring that adequate resources are available to transform laws and policies into programmes and services. In Tonga and Samoa, for example, despite ECCE being made compulsory, less than 50 per cent of children are enrolled mostly due to inadequate government funding for the subsector.

ECCE policies ought to be accompanied by implementation plans that are costed to guide government budgeting processes. This includes, for example, a target budget allocation for ECCE as a proportion of total education funding or total public expenditure as well as details related to sources of funding, minimum salary requirements for teachers, grant amounts for students or ECCE centres, and scholarship schemes. Naturally, it is also important that these budget guidelines be enforced and that funds for ECCE are appropriately disbursed as part of MOE’s annual education budgets.

The survey that was circulated for this status report found that only Fiji, Nauru and Vanuatu had estimated the financial costs of implementing their ECCE policies. FSM, Kiribati, Tonga, and Tuvalu have not estimated costs for their ECCE policies, while Cook Islands, Palau, RMI and Samoa did not respond to the survey question. Niue receives 1 per cent allocation from the education budget for the operation of ECCE. As of 2014, Kiribati did not include a specific allocation for ECCE in its ministerial budget; however, a cost and financing study had been completed to inform its ECCE policies now that the ECCE Act has been approved in Parliament. Solomon Islands had completed a costing and financing study of its ECCE policy, but it had not been put in place as of the release of this report.

Table 4 shows that, while data is limited, many countries set aside less than 5 per cent of total education expenditure for ECCE, which is well below the international benchmark of 10 per cent expenditure on pre-primary education as percentage of total government expenditure on education. The only exception is Cook Islands, which provides 12 per cent of its MOE budget to ECE.

Funding for ECCE in most PICs is usually a combination of government, communities, public and donor, with public and donor funds typically allocated for national-level activities like the development of policies, training and resources. Most of early childhood education in Palau is delivered via Head Start programmes and financed by federal grants from the United States, although there are three kindergartens operating under faith-based organisations.

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20 International Labour Organization, ‘ILO Policy Guidelines on the promotion of decent work for early childhood
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>ECCE as Percentage of Education Budget/Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>12% of total budget into operating to schools (2016 Education Statistics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>2.9% (2017 response by survey respondent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>8.5% (2014 World Bank FSM Public Expenditure Analysis)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>No allocated public expenditure for ECE (2014 SABER-ECD Report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>1.0% (2017 response by survey respondent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMI</td>
<td>5% (2017 data from PRC4ECCE representative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>1.5% (2017 response by survey respondent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>4.8% (2016 MEHRD Performance Assessment Report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>0.02% (2015 response by survey respondent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>1.9% (2013 data from EFA report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>0.09% (2015 Annual Statistics Digest)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Budget allocation for ECCE as percentage of total education expenditure *Data calculated as average of per cent allocations in four states

The lack of investment in ECCE in the Pacific region is a lost opportunity considering the robust body of empirical evidence linking early investments in child development to later academic achievement. A recent study completed in the Pacific show that attendance at an ECCE programme positively correlated with higher achievement results in literacy and numeracy. Furthermore, high-quality ECCE programmes lead to long-lasting intergenerational benefits and greater yields in returns compared to equivalent investments made later in a child’s life. Furthermore, investing in the early years contributes to the success of other social programmes thereby allowing governments to address multiple priorities with a single investment.

In the Pacific, communities and parents of young children bear much of the financial burden for ECCE. Local communities usually cover the costs of construction of facilities, salaries of staff and other school fees. Only a few PICs offer free pre-primary education, which means parents who wish to send their children to pre-primary schools are required to pay for tuition, uniforms, meals, transportation and contribute to teacher salaries. However, some PICs have begun distributing grants to support ECCE centres. To reduce disparities in access to education, the Fiji Government provides grants to preschools and ECCE centres that apply and are registered with the MOE, thereby supporting almost universal access. In Solomon Islands, duly registered ECCE centres qualify for student and school administration grants. Additional grants may be provided to ECCE centres that are located remotely and/or attached to primary schools. In Tuvalu, the government offers grants to offset the salaries of preschool teachers and contribute to the construction of preschools. The Government also provides resources, advice on curriculum and training for preschool teachers.

Calculating the broader public expenditure for early childhood is problematic due to a lack of intersectoral data on early childhood expenditure and limitations in budgetary reporting. Even if other line ministries have budgets available on programmes for young children, it is only usually MOEs that clearly demarcate funds for early childhood. Thus,

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22 Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP), ‘Analysis of the PILNA Data to Identify any Correlation Between Attendance in ECCE Programmes and Performance in Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes in Grade 4 Students’, Unpublished report commissioned by UNICEF, June 2017
ECCE and Academic Performance in the Pacific

In 2017, UNICEF commissioned a study on the relationship of attendance in an ECCE programme and academic performance in Year 4, using results from the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA). Results indicate that ECCE attendance positively correlates with higher achievement in literacy and numeracy. Students are more likely to have achieved a higher level of proficiency for both literacy and numeracy when they also attended an ECCE programme when they were younger. In literacy, the mean score is higher for those students who attended an ECCE programme by 15 points, and four per cent greater in the percentage of students achieving the minimum expected proficiency level. Numeracy had a significantly higher mean score by those students who attended an ECCE programme, with a 28-point difference, compared to those who did not attend an ECCE programme. Those who attended an ECCE programme were 16 per cent more likely to have achieved the minimum expected numeracy proficiency level as compared to those who did not attend an ECCE programme. This study is the first of its kind done in the Pacific and strengthens the argument for greater investment in ECCE.

* Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (EQAP), ‘Analysis of the PILNA Data to Identify any Correlation Between Attendance in ECCE Programmes and Performance in Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes in Grade 4 Students’, Unpublished report commissioned by UNICEF, June 2017.

Recruiting and maintaining a well-trained and professional ECCE workforce is an ongoing challenge. For example, only 48 per cent of teachers were certified and 62 per cent were qualified to teach in Solomon Islands in 2014. In Tonga, only 87 out of the 214 total number of teachers nationwide were qualified, as of 2015. The survey circulated for this status report found that staff capacity at the national level is limited, with many PICs employing only one or two ECCE technical staff within their respective MOEs. A lack of qualified personnel and opportunities for current staff to upgrade their professional skills makes it difficult for PICs to fill posts at subnational and provincial levels with qualified ECCE professionals.

In most PICs, ECCE falls under the jurisdiction of provincial education authorities who are responsible for managing primary education but often do not possess the training and expertise required to oversee ECCE. These authorities tend to be ill-equipped to evaluate ECCE quality indicators, verify teacher qualifications and efficacy, and

29 Based on survey respondent for this report.
deliver training on early education to teachers. The World Bank reports, for example, that in Solomon Islands, while ECCE officers are based in provincial education offices and therein able to directly support the enforcement of national ECCE policies, many are not technically competent to do so.  

Every PIC has minimum requirements for ECCE teachers. Table 5 summarizes minimum requirements for ECCE professionals by PIC. In countries like Cook Islands and Fiji, these standards include the requirement to be registered before they are permitted to teach. Cook Islands has recently introduced an ECCE-specific teacher training and qualifications framework that guides the professionalization of teachers.

While the presence of minimum credentials for ECCE teachers is a positive step, it should be noted that for countries like Tuvalu, this merely requires completion of a short training course on ECCE. Considering the specialized knowledge and skills required to address the unique developmental requirements of young children, it is reasonable to assume that completion of a short course is inadequate preparation for teachers to be effective at the job. Vanuatu used to require just a field-based training in ECCE but has now upgraded its requirement to a Certificate III from a recognized university.

Moreover, in countries like FSM, Nauru, and Niue, generic teaching credentials apparently are deemed ample preparation for one to teach during the early years. In fact, the suite of pedagogies appropriate for ECCE is qualitatively and considerably different from those used in primary school settings where teaching is more formal and subject-specific. Put another way, it is unfitting to assume that their training automatically makes primary school teachers capable and qualified to lead early childhood or pre-primary classrooms.

The delivery of the specialized training that ECCE teachers require is difficult particularly to those located in remote or rural areas in the Pacific region. To illustrate, as of 2015, only half of Vanuatu’s ECCE teachers were certified or qualified.  

Challenges exist even in PICs where the ECCE subsector is more advanced. Too few opportunities for regular professional development are available to the cadre of ECCE teachers to keep them up-to-date on knowledge and best practices in ECCE teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Minimum requirements for ECCE teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>Certificate in ECCE; must be actively working towards their degree; must have current teacher’s registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Certificate in teaching from a recognized institution; must be registered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>Must meet minimum requirements for teaching, including passing a national teacher minimum competency test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>Approved certificate from accredited institution or recognised church and local community teacher training, or at least 3 years of teaching experience; certificate on first aid training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>Diploma or degree in primary teaching and/or degree in early childhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>Certificate in teaching and Certificate in Teacher Aiding from recognised institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>Head Start programme requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMI</td>
<td>Associate level post-secondary degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>Certificate in ECCE Teacher Training; Certificate III from Australia Pacific Technical College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>Technical, vocational or specialist training from recognized institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>Foundational certificate in ECE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>Must have reached Year 13 and possess certificate from University of South Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>Completed field-based training in ECCE and Certificate III from University of South Pacific or Australia Pacific Technical College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Minimum requirements for ECCE teachers

Many teachers in Cook Islands, for example, are reportedly older and nearing retirement, highlighting the need to train a new and younger cohort of teachers, although Cook Islands reports that this is now being addressed and that improvements are being made.

Given the dearth of qualified ECCE teachers and personnel in PICs, especially in rural or remote areas, community members, often out of necessity, take the initiative to operate and teach at ECCE centres. However, they do so in the absence of training on ECCE teaching or centre management. MOEs provide insufficient training opportunities for school and ECCE centre committee members, which raises concerns as to the effective management of ECCE centres. Minimum service standards in Solomon Islands and a draft version of minimum service standards in Vanuatu require just one trained teacher for every ECCE centre. The onus appears to be on teachers who possess training on ECCE to undertake quality supervision and training of colleagues, especially at larger ECCE centres.

Aside from lack of training, too few incentives exist to attract highly-qualified and competent teachers to the ECCE subsector in the Pacific region. Across the PICs, remuneration levels for ECCE personnel are severely inadequate. The World Bank reports, for example, that the average ECCE teacher in Kiribati earns less than one-third of the poverty threshold. Only a few PICs have established minimum wage levels for teachers or included teachers in national minimum wage structures.

Moreover, discrepancies in wages between ECCE and primary school teachers demotivate ECCE personnel. In Tuvalu, for example, ECCE teachers receive 50 per cent less in pay than primary school teachers. This discrepancy leads many ECCE teachers to aspire to and eventually move on to become primary level teachers as soon as they can manage to upgrade their qualifications.

Progress has been made in some PICs in the remuneration of teachers. In Fiji, for example, the Government now pays for the full salaries of ECCE teachers; it only used to cover 80 per cent of teacher salaries while ECCE management was responsible for the balance. In addition, the Government adjusted its salary structure to pay teachers based on their qualifications. As of 2013, ECCE teachers in Cook Islands have received salaries that are equal to those of primary and secondary school teachers. In RMI, which has adopted the United States’ Head Start programme, ECCE teachers are employed as civil servants, thereby elevating their status in the country.

Component 3: Curriculum, Child Assessment and Environment

National Curriculum

The ‘Pacific Guidelines’ state that a child- and community-friendly curriculum that is developed in consultation with ECCE stakeholders and regularly reviewed is essential to the provision of quality ECCE. ECCE curriculum must address the holistic development of children, adopt a play-based methodology, engage children in active learning, and use a variety of resources and materials that are age-appropriate.

National ECCE curricula are in place in all PICs, which is a significant achievement considering only seven countries had national curricula for young learners when the last status report was released. Solomon Islands has a curriculum framework and as of the release of this report was in the process of developing a pre-primary curriculum for five-year-olds that is expected to be implemented in three pilot provinces in 2018. Tuvalu is also in the process of developing its National ECCE curriculum.

In general, national curricula for ECCE in the PICs adhere to recommendations in the ‘Pacific Guidelines’ by espousing a play-based approach to teaching and learning and the active engagement of children. Vanuatu’s curriculum is noteworthy in that it was designed specifically for children to transition well into Primary One. Curriculum in Palau and RMI was modelled on the Head Start programme, which focuses on school readiness and stresses parent and family involvement. Niue and Cook Islands adapted New Zealand’s Te Whariki ECCE curriculum to their

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34 Fiji National University, University of South Pacific, & UNICEF, ‘Early Childhood Care and Education in the Pacific: A progress review’, paper presented to the Forum Education Ministers’ Meeting in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, October, 2010.
own context. Fiji sets out comprehensive guidelines in its national curriculum for kindergarten that specify children outcomes, teaching and caring practices, and strategies for monitoring and assessment.

While it is encouraging that national curricula for the early years is in place, not all PICs have ensured that it has been translated into commonly used national languages and widely distributed for use by ECCE practitioners. For example, Kiribati’s ECE curriculum excels in adopting a thematic approach and encouraging the importance of play, but it has not been disseminated to all ECCE teachers and it is not available in the mother tongue of teachers. Personnel at most ECE centres in Samoa have not seen the national curriculum guidelines despite its existence. A new teacher-friendly curriculum is now being developed. In Vanuatu, the curriculum is currently only available in English and needs to be translated into French and Bislama to ensure it is an effective reference for teachers across the country.

**Child Assessment**

The survey circulated for this status report found that national early learning and development standards had been established in seven PICs – Cook Islands, FSM, Kiribati, Niue, Palau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – compared with only three when the last status report was released. Solomon Islands and Fiji are in the process of developing their learning and development standards.

Learning standards for ECCE specify expected outcomes for specific ages and/or class levels. Essentially, these standards are developmental expectations for a designated age range across all domains, including physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and language. The standards must be aligned with national curricula and show a natural relation between what children should be achieving and the activities that help children reach those milestones.

Early learning and development standards are important because they provide the basis upon which children’s development is assessed and monitored. Data on child development outcomes cannot be captured in Kiribati, for example, because outcomes have not been established. Clear outcomes allow the ECCE subsector to develop systems capable of tracking the development of individual children and provides critical information for parents, teachers, policymakers, and other stakeholders.

Most PICs have identified an approach to child assessment in their respective ECCE policies and/or national curriculum. Assessment methods use a combination of portfolios, checklists, learning stories, observations, and development or progress reports. Various assessment tools have also been developed to determine children’s readiness for school. A school readiness assessment tool is administered at the end of the prep year in Naru to assess whether children are ready for primary education. An Early School Readiness Assessment Tool in Vanuatu is distributed to parents to assess their children’s developmental level prior to enrolling in kindergarten. The country also makes available to teachers a resource material on child assessments.

**Environment**

Many PICs have established explicit quality service standards for ECCE centres or programmes – Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Solomon Islands, Samoa and Tuvalu. Kiribati has incorporated a set of minimum quality service standards (MQSS) into their new ECCE Act. It plans to finalize its MQSS, which is currently in draft form, following the enactment of legislation on ECCE. Fiji’s service standards for ECCE are in progress. Vanuatu was developing MQSS and plans to put this in place by the end of 2017.

Standards help ensure that the ECCE services meet accepted norms or standards for quality. Quality tends to be divided into structural dimensions like infrastructure, teacher qualifications, and teacher-child ratios, and process dimensions, including teacher-child interactions and opportunities for play and exploration. Research demonstrates the importance and benefits of high-quality ECCE provision and the potential harm of poor-quality ECCE programmes. In fact, it has been argued that in some instances, it may be better for young children to stay at home than attend poor-quality ECCE programmes.

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In PICs that lack explicit MQSS, guidelines for ECCE centres are often embodied in the registration criteria for ECCE centres, which tend to be limited in scope and typically include structural requirements like building facilities and equipment, enrolment numbers, teacher-child ratios and staff qualifications. Often, they focus on what can be easily counted rather than processes that usually have greater impact on student outcomes such as developmentally-appropriate pedagogies and teacher-student interaction.40

Ideally, quality standards are incorporated into continuous monitoring processes to ensure that quality is upheld even after initial registration requirements are met. However, provisions for regular monitoring are often absent in PICs and monitoring capacities are weak. Moreover, compliance mechanisms are vague. If or when ECCE centres fail to meet the standards, it is unclear if centres should be closed, fined, or supported to carry out school improvement plans. This contributes to poor accountability and does little to encourage quality improvements.

The existence of national regulations, curriculum, and standards improve ECCE service provision in PICs only if teachers and ECCE school committees are trained on their use and refer to them consistently. However, due to the inconsistent delivery of professional development in many PICs, training on the application of these regulations and guidelines is likely to be uneven, especially in rural or remote areas.

**Component 4: Performance Monitoring and Assessment**

The ‘Pacific Guidelines’ state that performance monitoring and assessment is a component of quality assurance as it helps identify what is working well and where improvement is needed. An effective ECCE monitoring system should ensure that all structures and processes are functioning as they should on an ongoing basis, including the existence of tools to carry out monitoring and the designation of who is responsible for monitoring and how often it should take place. When linked with action plans, monitoring and assessment procedures hold those responsible accountable for their actions.

The most crucial systems-wide monitoring and assessment tool for MOEs is their respective Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), which are repositories for various data and information on education indicators. Ideally, the EMIS should collect and process data and be used to carry out analyses that may be disseminated to key stakeholders to optimize planning, management and budgeting processes. The EMIS should also be used to evaluate the efficiencies of the educational system, identify improvements, and influence evidence-based decision making on educational policies and strategies. ECCE is gradually and slowly being incorporated into the EMIS systems of most PICs, which are relatively well established for primary and secondary levels.

The survey found that most PICs capture information on ECCE in their respective EMIS platforms. Palau and RMI did not provide answers to this survey question. In general, data is collected on students such as age, gender, demographics, attendance, teachers, including personal particulars and qualifications, and schools such as location, resources. Some countries such as FSM collect more comprehensive sets of data related to children’s physical health and dental care, special needs, and parent activities. But the data in the EMIS of other countries like Kiribati and Nauru is sparse and includes only whether children attended ECCE or preschool prior to Year 1. Kiribati intends to improve its data collection following the passage of its ECCE bill in 2017. The EMIS in countries like Solomon Islands, where few ECCE centres are registered, fail to provide an overall snapshot of ECCE in the country since data is only collected for registered ECCE centres.

More effort is required in PICs to ensure that all ECCE centres are duly accounted for in the database. Fiji’s Ministry of Education made a concerted effort to do so during its response to Tropical Cyclone Winston,

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which resulted in the inclusion in the EMIS of all ECCE centres in the country. Improvements also are required in the collection and analysis of data related to ECCE indicators at the systems-level, collated from education and health management information systems, Demographic Health Surveys, and Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys. Ideally, countries should have access to a comprehensive range of data for a variety of early childhood indicators from sectors other than education such as health and child protection. For instance, statistics should be accessible for immunization, nutrition and other health-related issues as well as birth registration and other matters related to child protection.

Robust tools and procedures for regular monitoring also are required at the local level, including self-assessment tools for ECCE centres. Various monitoring processes for ECCE centres are in place in PICs, including in FSM, where national level officials follow up twice a year on the efforts of programme coordinators to monitor and evaluate programme quality in the country’s ECCE centres. Toolkits are used by ECCE coordinators that include special identification used to track individual child development. In Nauru, education officers monitor ECCE programmes in all the country’s preschools at the beginning and end of a school term.

Monitoring tools should be contextually appropriate and relevant. Indicators should be studied for their relevance to the local context and developed in close consultation with key ECCE stakeholders. Tools that are simple, practical and readily administered are more likely to be used and enduring. On this point, Vanuatu’s development of the national MQSS is a useful example. Given the country’s nascent ECCE sector, it was agreed that quality standards should reflect only the most basic aspects of ECCE services rather than aspirational or lofty standards that are unrealistic for many ECCE centres to achieve. The minimum quality standards were developed through a consultative workshop that was supported by UNICEF and involved representatives from across sectors, including teachers, NGOs, disability organizations, health and justice ministries, as well as key staff from the Ministry of Education and Training. The monitoring tool that was developed was easy to use and featured simple yes or no responses for behavioural and observable indicators.

Table 6 shows the extent to which communities contribute to ECCE service provision in different PICs. In many, communities provide for ECCE centre infrastructure and occasionally even allocate the land on which ECCE centres are built.

Table 6: Community contributions to ECCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Community Contributions to ECCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>Centre infrastructure, classroom resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Centre infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>Centre infrastructure, classroom resources, others (meals, transport)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>Did not respond to survey question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>Centre infrastructure, classroom resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>Primarily government-funded although communities can give donations and do fundraising for resources, equipment and infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>Did not respond to survey question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMI</td>
<td>Not applicable/ECCE is government sponsored/supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>Teacher salaries, centre infrastructure/ housing, others (meals, transport), land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>Classroom resources, classroom infrastructure, others (meals, transport)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>Teacher salaries, centre infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>Centre infrastructure, classroom resources, others (meals, transport)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>Teacher salaries, centre infrastructure, classroom resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Component 5: Family and Community Partnerships

Community Partnerships

Various community stakeholders play critical roles in the provision of ECCE services in PICs. The ‘Pacific Guidelines’ advise that it is essential to forge strategic partnerships with these stakeholders. These include community leaders, Island Councils, faith-based organizations, NGOs, private entities, and individuals. In Tonga, for example, 100 per cent of ECCE centres are privately owned and community-based facilities. All the preschools in Kiribati are managed by churches, island councils, communities or private entities.

Sometimes the buildings are owned by the community, other times the ECCE programme is operated in communal or public buildings like community halls or churches. In Tuvalu, ECCE centres are operated by Island Councils or local management committees with government grants that cover facility upgrades and resources. In Samoa and Tonga, communities take full or part payment for teacher salaries. In Vanuatu, community-owned ECCE centres cover their teachers’ salaries while ECCE centres attached to primary schools have government-funded teacher salaries. Many communities also cover miscellaneous expenses like meals and transportation for the children.

The responsibility for the day-to-day implementation and management of ECCE programmes falls on community members since many ECCE centres in the Pacific region are community-based. This includes parents, guardians, caregivers and community members who sometimes form a formal school or centre management committee. Preschools in Vanuatu are required to have preschool management committees that usually are comprised of parents, chiefs, pastors, and other community members. Management tasks include administering budgets, raising funds, applying for grants, maintaining records, and managing human resources such as teachers, teacher aides, and volunteers. Sources of funding for ECCE centres include contributions from individual community members, donations from NGOs and grants from national or local governments.

To effectively fulfil leadership and management roles, communities require technical support, tools and training from governments. However, the government support that is provided in PICs tends to be haphazard due to financial constraints, shortages in resources and/or a lack of formal oversight. For example, anecdotal evidence suggests that while Vanuatu requires the establishment of preschool management committees, few are operational. Additionally, MOEs are usually unaware of the existence of community-owned ECCE centres that are not registered with the government. Only recently has the Vanuatu government stepped up its efforts to support community management of ECCE centres, with a new preschool committee training package and registration process for ECCE centres.

Community partnerships for stand-alone ECCE centres are slightly different than those attached to or located in primary schools. These sorts of ECCE facilities exist in Fiji and Vanuatu and management tends to fall under the leadership structure of the primary school and thereby subject to more robust government oversight. Community participation in ECCE provision is also likely to be more of an ad hoc basis in these schools, although it is still recommended that community participation remains strong so that children’s learning is integrated with their contexts and realities. Community participation can include volunteering in school activities, providing community services to children while at school (for example, health visits by community health workers), and fundraising or donation of materials.

Family Partnerships

Parental involvement in early childhood learning is integral to the optimal development of young children. In fact, research shows that the quality of parenting has a greater influence on later school success than early childhood programs. Parenting accounts for almost four times the variability in children’s academic outcomes when compared with the independent effect of early childhood programmes. Quality parenting involves factors such as the home learning environment, parents’ warmth and responsiveness, and parental control and discipline. Given the link between parenting and early childhood development, partnerships with parents and especially those that nurture parenting skills and foster rich home learning environments are a key aspect of the provision of quality ECCE.

The survey circulated for this status report did not include the scale or nature of parental participation in ECCE because respondents were ministry officials who do not have access to data on the engagement of parents at ECCE centres. Parental involvement in ECCE is rarely captured in EMIS.

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However, UNICEF has completed knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) studies that have explored aspects of parenting and caregiving in the Pacific region. KAP studies recently have been completed in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu and a KAP study was under way in Kiribati as of the release of this status report. KAP studies investigate a multitude of aspects of parenting such as early learning in the home environment, breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices, and issues related to child protection such as exposure to violent discipline. This information is then used to design and implement ECCE interventions that consider the local context, including parenting education and support programmes. KAP study findings have informed the design of ECD programmes for parents in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati.

KAP studies in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu reveal low rates of parental participation in the learning of young children at homes. This is a concern given the growing body of research that found parent involvement in a child’s development to be positively associated with academic achievement and social-emotional competence in children. Only 62 per cent of households in Solomon Islands engaged in activities that promoted early learning and school readiness, a KAP study found. A similar level of parental involvement was found in Vanuatu, with only about 64 per cent of households. Reading children's picture books is uncommon in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu since families lack access to the books. UNICEF is supporting parent support programmes in both countries, including the provision of picture books in homes, to address this gap.

The KAP studies also reveal disappointing rates of paternal participation in early learning and school readiness activities for young children. Fathers did not engage in a single early learning activity with their children in 53 per cent of households in Solomon Islands and 29 per cent of households in Vanuatu. The study highlights an area for intervention since increased involvement of fathers has been associated with more positive child outcomes. In particular, father-child play has been shown to have a long-term positive effect on children’s cognitive and social development, problem-solving skills, reciprocity and turn-taking, and encouragement to explore a broadening environment.

School or teacher-led parental awareness programmes are often a component of quality ECCE programmes. Sometimes more formal structures like parent-teacher associations are established to improve collaboration between ECCE centres and parents. ECCE centres are principal entry points to reach out to parents, particularly as children start school, to raise awareness on issues like health and nutrition at home and positive disciplining strategies, and to provide referrals as needed to other social services. However, ECCE teachers across the PICs are rarely trained on parent involvement or parenting education and have limited parenting resources to share with families. A noteworthy example is Fiji’s parental engagement framework, launched in early 2017 and distributed to schools and parents which contains guidelines on how to strengthen parent-community-school partnerships.

Parental demand for ECCE services has often been cited as a reason for poor levels of participation in organized early learning in the Pacific region. A KAP study found that only 26 per cent of mothers in Vanuatu and 12 per cent in Solomon Islands believe that their child learned a lot in kindergarten. It is unclear whether negative perceptions about the value of early schooling is due to low quality of ECCE services or a lack of parental awareness about the value of ECCE methodologies like play-based and active learning. Nonetheless, as ECCE systems in the Pacific region advance, effort will be required to raise awareness about the benefits of ECCE and increase parental demand for quality learning opportunities in the early years.

Overall Ratings

Table 7 provides a snapshot of the various components that make up the ECCE subsector in the PICs, using the ‘Pacific Guidelines’ as a framework and applying a qualitative traffic light approach as described earlier in the methodology section.
Each component is rated as latent – undeveloped components, no funding; emerging – some aspects of component are present but funding, quality, implementation is weak; or established – all aspects of component have been developed and are adequately funded, implemented and monitored. RMI did not respond to the survey and is not included in these overall ratings.

Since the last status report, two countries – Fiji and Niue – joined Cook Islands and Nauru in successfully establishing all components of their respective ECCE subsectors. In general, these four countries have an adequate legislative environment with the requisite resources – human personnel, tools, materials, and data – to provide quality ECCE services in the country.

All the components are in place for the ECCE subsector to thrive in these four PICs although that does not imply there is no room for improvement in these countries. ECCE services are well-supported for Niue’s small population of young children, but the country’s monitoring systems could be improved and education indicators made more transparent. Fiji has achieved considerable progress in advancing ECCE following renewed commitment from government and ECCE stakeholders but there is a palpable push to fill other critical gaps, including attaining free and compulsory pre-primary education, increasing government budget allocations, and improving the collection of ECCE data in the EMIS.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is Kiribati with four of five ECCE components rated as latent. However, promising advances are steering the course of the country’s ECCE subsector in the right direction, the most important of which is the recent adoption in Parliament of an ECCE bill, which is what prompted the emerging rating for the policy, legislation, and governance component. Now that legislation is in place, a stronger mandate will drive Kiribati to expedite the development of other aspects of its ECCE subsector, including putting in place the appropriate funding and governance mechanisms that characterise an established rating. UNICEF is supporting several studies, including on KAP and the costs of funding of ECCE, which provide much-needed insights on the development of appropriate programmes and services for the country.

As Table 7 also shows, aspects of ECCE in the other PICs are rated as emerging because weaknesses remain related to funding, quality, or implementation of these components. FSM, for example, has an Education Act and policy on ECCE but these have not been costed and budgetary funds have not been allocated for implementation. Early learning benchmarks are in place but the country has yet to develop national curriculum. Communities take ownership of significant aspects of ECCE provision but mechanisms to coordinate with Government are unclear. The Ministry of Education and Training in Vanuatu is stepping up its ECCE provisions, including the development of service standards and monitoring mechanisms for ECCE centres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Policy, Legislation and Governance</th>
<th>Human Resources</th>
<th>Curriculum, Child Assessment, Environment</th>
<th>Performance Monitoring and Assessment</th>
<th>Family and Community Partnerships</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
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<td>Emerging</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
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<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Established</td>
<td>Emerging</td>
<td>Established</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Ratings per component and country
nationwide. However, it remains to be seen how these national initiatives translate to local level implementation and whether they are sustained over time.

Some components of ECCE in Palau are relatively well-established while others lag. The Ministry of Education in Palau is not responsible for ECCE; rather, it is managed under a semi-autonomous agency responsible for the Head Start programme, which operates 11 centres mainly from grants from the United States. Given that Head Start is a relatively well-established programme in the United States, ECCE curriculum, child assessment and environment, and family and community partnerships in Palau rate as established. However, more effort is required to strengthen policy, funding, monitoring and to train personnel to meet Head Start high standards for teachers. Data on Palau’s education indicators is also incomplete.

The ECCE subsector is emerging in the remaining countries – Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu – and considerable work still needs to be done to advance ECCE in these PICs. The most pressing work is strengthening legislative and governance frameworks that, in most cases, will serve as the impetus to advancing other developments in ECCE. More robust political and financial commitment to ECCE also is needed. Without these two key elements, these PICs will find it hard to significantly advance their respective ECCE subsectors.

**ECCE Coverage**

Coverage levels of ECCE generally have improved across the PICs, although the levels remain below 50 per cent in most PICs. Table 8 presents the latest enrolment data that can be found in the PICs and is based on an analysis of survey responses and other sources like MOE statistics, UNESCO Education for All reports, and an online database of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. Survey respondents were asked for data on education indicators but complete answers were not provided for every PIC.

As Table 8 shows, nearly universal enrolment, has been in achieved in Cook Islands (97 per cent) and Tuvalu (88 per cent). In Fiji, 98 per cent of new entrants in primary school were reported to have had an ECE experience in 2015.49 At the other end of the spectrum are countries like Kiribati and Samoa, where the enrolment rate is just 30 per cent. Tonga, has an even more dismal 21 per cent gross enrolment ratio (GER). Data was not provided by Palau, however a 2014–2015 overview of the Head Start programme indicates 400 children were enrolled.50

Table 8 illustrates discrepancies between the GER and net enrolment ratios (NER). GER is the number of students enrolled in each level of education, regardless of age, expressed as percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education. NER, on the other hand, is the total number of students in the official age group for a given level of education enrolled in that level, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group.51 Discrepancies between GER and NER are due to differences between the percentages of all children at any age compared with children at school at the appropriate age.

![Enrolment Rates in Pre-primary](image)

Table 8: Enrolment rates in pre-primary education

* Percentage of base school-age population in school (based on projected population as opposed to the actual NER figure).

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51 Definitions adapted from UNESCO Institute for Statistics.
Discrepancies for GER and NER are small in countries like Cook Islands, meaning that most of the children enrolled in ECE did so at the appropriate age while GER is much higher than NER in Vanuatu. The Vanuatu Ministry of Education and Training reported that 34 per cent of children in ECCE centres were overage, with ages ranging from 6 to 10 years.52 Vanuatu has recently launched a campaign called “6-year old in Class One” to address this. In RMI, the discrepancy between GER and NER is 25 per cent, also implying that a sizeable proportion of children enrolled in ECE fall outside, and are most likely above, the 5-year age group. Since ECE in RMI is compulsory and free, it has been hypothesized that many parents, especially those on outer islands, are unaware that compulsory education is meant to begin at the age of 5.53

Key Regional Findings

A summary of key regional findings is provided below that is based on the results of the survey circulated for this status report and other referenced sources:

• The Pacific region is characterized by wide discrepancies in the quality of ECCE subsectors. Countries like Fiji, Cook Islands, Niue and Nauru are more advanced, with relatively strong government support for ECCE. On the other hand, only about a quarter of young children attend ECCE centres in countries like Kiribati and Tonga, where severe gaps persist in the public provision of ECCE services for young children and families.

• Coverage levels for ECCE have improved across PICs, but remain below 50 per cent in many PICs. Majority of PICs has some form of legislation and policies on ECCE; however, most have neither a strategic plan for implementation nor funds for allocation.

• Legislative scope tends to be limited and lacking the mandate required to provide comprehensive services and universal coverage for ECCE. The provision of free pre-primary education, for at least one year, is mandated in only four PICs.

• Many Pacific Island governments struggle to enforce and implement laws and policies and coordinate programmes and services across national, subnational and community levels.

• Many ECCE services in the region focus strictly on early childhood education while little is known about comprehensive service coverage for children across sectors, particularly those younger than 3. A robust multi-sectoral network for service delivery has yet to be in place in any of the PICs.

• Funding levels for ECCE in the Pacific region are low and irregular. In general, PICs set aside less than 5 per cent of total education expenditure for ECCE, which is well below the international benchmark of 10 per cent. In most PICs, communities and parents of young children bear much of the financial burden for ECCE.

• PICs face serious difficulties in recruiting and maintaining a high-caliber ECCE workforce. Incentives are poor, with ECCE teachers receiving low wages and teacher aides often expected to volunteer their services or to accept in-kind compensation. While minimum requirements for ECCE teachers exist, they are not well-regulated and few training opportunities are available to nurture teacher competencies.

• All PICs have a national curriculum or national curriculum framework for ECCE. Other important national guidelines like early learning and development standards and quality service standards have yet to be developed by all countries.

• ECCE data is often collected for EMIS platforms in the PICs but flaws exist in the scope and comprehensiveness. Data is often incomplete because it does not include unregistered ECCE centres. Furthermore, few systems collect ECCE data across sectors.

• Many ECCE centres in the Pacific region are community-based and daily management responsibilities fall to community members, parents, caregivers, families, and church leaders. Governments are not able to adequately support communities in ensuring quality


provision of ECCE due to funding constraints and a lack of resources and/or oversight.

- The rate of parental involvement in children’s learning is low across the Pacific region. ECCE centres and teachers are rarely trained on how to foster parent involvement or conduct parenting education and have limited parenting resources to share with families.

Recommendations

To ensure comprehensive and regular provision of quality ECCE services, Pacific Island governments ought to invest considerable time, energy and resources in ECCE system-building initiatives. Governments must buttress the legal status of ECCE, strengthen ECCE policies and policy support, improve coordination across sectors, and ensure programmes and services are monitored for quality.

On a positive note, the development of ECCE is building momentum in the Pacific region. The establishment of the PRC4ECCE – a regional council focused on ECCE advocacy, policy dialogue and knowledge-sharing – signals acknowledgment of the value of Pacific-led approaches to ECCE. The Council, supported by UNICEF and the World Bank, will hold a first-ever multi-sectoral and high-level regional conference on advancing ECCE in the region in September 2017. Regional efforts such as these, coupled with targeted national initiatives, bode well for advancing ECCE across the region.

Considering the status of ECCE outlined above and global best practices for ECCE, five recommendations are proposed to accelerate the pace of progress on ECCE in PICs.

Recommendation 1: Prioritize strengthening the legislative and regulatory frameworks for ECCE, including appropriate costing of policies and increased budget allocations.

For PICs with less advanced legislative and regulatory frameworks and limited budgets, the first step must be to work with policymakers to raise broad awareness about the value of ECCE and provide support in developing and improving ECCE-related laws and policies. In successful cases, this has been facilitated by identifying a political champion who advocates publicly for ECCE and spearheads reforms. While ECCE is included in the Education Acts and policies of some PICs, these need to be reviewed to ensure they include a strong mandate and clear and specific guidelines on such matters as financial budgets, regulatory procedures for quality standards of ECCE centres, and teacher qualifications.

Adequate resources and sustainable funding sources must be available for enforcement and implementation of ECCE programmes and services. The global consensus is a public investment of 1 per cent of gross domestic product on ECCE as the minimum required to ensure quality provision. The sensible course of action for PICs to reach global targets would be progressive increases over successive years considering that current spending levels are very low. Moreover, it is recommended that budget allocations for ECCE be coordinated across sectors and be based on explicit criteria, outcomes and/or needs. Policies that are costed with earmarked budgetary allocations are more likely to be executed.

Given limited budgets, governments can start off with undertaking a cost and financing study to determine how they can realistically commit to ECCE. In Tuvalu, the cost and financing study helped its MOE make informed decisions about the payment of ECCE teachers’ salaries. Kiribati has recently completed its cost and financing study to provide insight on government options to finance the ECCE subsector. In preparation of its education sector planning, Vanuatu will be conducting an ECCE cost and financing study in late 2017 to allow for evidence-based planning for the ECCE subsector.

Governments should explore innovative mechanisms for expanding public provision of ECCE to address urgent needs related to access to and financing of ECCE. For example, to reduce infrastructure costs, ECCE classrooms could be attached to existing primary schools. When full-year pre-primary programmes are not feasible, short-term bridging programmes could be considered to help children transition to primary school.

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instance, in late 2017 or early 2018, an innovative UNICEF programme will be piloted in Kiribati where teachers provide an accelerated readiness programme for young children prior to primary school using existing school classrooms.

Governments can also explore alternative sources of funding that best match their current fiscal capacities. These include funding from private foundations and corporate social responsibility initiatives. Development partners who are active in the Pacific region can be tapped more strategically to channel aid and resources into system-building and long-term initiatives. Conditional cash transfers (CCT) can be used to incentivize pre-primary enrolment and access to other ECCE services. Public-private partnerships such as social impact bonds and partnerships between governments and employers to provide childcare centres for employees are worth considering. Government-community partnerships can also be considered and institutionalized.

Research repeatedly shows that the benefits of quality ECCE interventions are more pronounced among highly disadvantaged children; however, the most vulnerable groups tend to find it the most difficult to use ECCE services. Put another way, the very children who are most likely to benefit from ECCE services are the least likely to access them. Interventions in education, health, nutrition, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene interventions are a powerful and efficient way to mitigate the myriad of risks associated with growing up in disadvantaged settings. Therefore, governments ought to strategically focus funding to ensure equitable access to quality ECCC services.

Investments in ECCE must target the poorest and most disadvantaged of families and communities, including children with disabilities, through subsidies, needs-based grants and/or CCTs.

While resource constraints no doubt will persist, policymakers need to appreciate the cost efficiencies of investing in the early years and recognize that these investments are smarter in the long run because they contribute to overall economic and social prosperity. ECCE investments in education alone have been shown to yield returns that exceed their costs. As illustrated in Graph 1, studies show that the return on early interventions are up to 7 to 10 per cent higher compared with equivalent investments later – at primary school, secondary school and beyond. Furthermore, ECCE investments contribute to better outcomes for primary or secondary school investments.

**Recommendation 2:** Institutionalize universal pre-primary education, at least for one year, and incorporate this within national education systems.

Under SDG Goal 4 on quality education, SDG Target 4.2 aims to ensure that "by 2030, all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education." Participation rates of children in at least one year of a quality pre-primary education programme prior to the official primary school entry age is one of the indicators of SDG Target 4.2. The provision in the Pacific region of compulsory pre-primary education is an essential step to achieving this SDG. Institutionalizing at least one year of pre-primary education and incorporating it

![Graph 1: Rates of return across different age groups](image-url)
into national education systems should be the focus for PICs. Countries that have integrated ECCE funding into public expenditure ought to consider free access to ECCE, at least for one year. In Niue, since mandating that education be free and compulsory from the age of 3 years and 9 months and that schools take the initiative to encourage students to stay in school,\(^\text{59}\) enrolment of children in pre-primary education has increased by 99 per cent. The examples of Cook Islands, Fiji, Solomon Islands, FSM and Kiribati, which are at varying stages of institutionalizing pre-primary education, can be used as case studies to encourage more in-depth South-South dialogue.

**Recommendation 3:** Improve quality provision of ECCE services by supporting the growth of new and existing delivery systems, building comprehensive monitoring and assessment systems, and incorporating disaster risk reduction approaches to programmes.

In addition to expanding access, considerable effort is required to improve the quality of existing ECCE centres and strengthen service delivery structures particularly given the high prevalence of community-based ECCE services in the Pacific region. This can be achieved through the provision of technical and monetary support to community-based management groups, strengthening government oversight and forging government-community partnership agreements to promote accountability and ensure that quality standards are met.

Linking the eligibility for government grants to requirements for registration and quality standards gives operators of ECCE centres a financial incentive to duly register their facilities with government authorities and undertake quality improvements. Registration criteria and quality standards must be realistic and appropriate for the context since reports have shown that complex registration processes can pose a barrier for communities seeking access to grant funds.\(^\text{61}\) Quality standards must reflect current realities and registration and improvement procedures must be clear and manageable enough for low-resourced centres to accomplish.

Robust performance monitoring and assessment systems must be in place to facilitate quality improvements. More comprehensive sets of data related to ECCE must be collected by EMISs to ensure PICs have adequate information to properly monitor the ECCE subsector. Exhaustive mapping is required by PICs to ensure all ECCE centres have been accounted for and monitored. Training on the appropriate collection and submission of data should be provided to centre administrators and teachers. Various innovations exist that could help PICs improve monitoring, including for example AkvoFlow, a data collection and monitoring tool that uses mobile technology.

Learning and development standards must be established that clearly articulate holistic child development outcomes for ECCE. Outcomes must have corresponding indicators that can be assessed and integrated into data systems that are capable not only of collecting inputs but also monitoring outputs to determine whether children are developmentally on track. Accurate and reliable measurements of children’s development, in turn, should inform the formation of sound policy and programmes, identify where additional investments are needed, guide curricula, instruction and teacher training, and perhaps most critically, identify children who are at risk of developmental delays.\(^\text{62}\)

Measuring outcomes can be more challenging for younger children compared with older children, but various instruments are available that PICs may adapt for their use, including the East Asia Pacific Child Development Scales and UNICEF’s Multiple Index Cluster Survey.

The embedding of disaster risk reduction (DRR), preparedness and response in public programmes for young children is urgently required since the PICs are among the most vulnerable in the world to natural disasters like cyclones, earthquakes, and rising ocean levels. School attendance is often


disrupted when disasters strike and schools are physically exposed to these disasters and climate risks.

Safe school environments should form a key component of national service standards. ECCE centres must be required to have evacuation policies and plans, emergency standard operating procedures, and regular emergency drills. DRR approaches must constitute part of teacher training and teachers must know how to incorporate environmental sustainability, conservation, and DRR concepts into lessons for young children.

Government capacity must also be strengthened to establish resilient education systems that can better cope with disasters. Contingency plans during emergencies must be closely linked to sector priorities so that emergencies, disaster risk, response and recovery phases are integral parts of national sector plans. Contingency funds, both from government and donor partners, must be adequate to ensure that critical services like pre-primary education will be disrupted only minimally during emergencies and disasters. Furthermore, databases for ECCE centres must be resilient enough to allow for uninterrupted monitoring and resource allocation even during emergencies.

**Recommendation 4:** Improve coordination across sectors, including multi-sectoral policy planning, monitoring, financing, and service delivery.

Since young children’s care, development, and learning are intertwined, support from a variety of sectors and services is essential to achieving positive outcomes. Development in early childhood is a multidimensional and sequential process, with progress in one domain acting as catalyst for development in other domains. For these reasons, experts underscore the importance of ‘nurturing care’ in the early years – encompassing health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, security and safety, and early learning – as a vital ingredient in high-quality ECCE services. Whenever possible, it is best to formalize coordination between sectors through written inter-agency agreements to ensure clear guidelines on planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of services for all parties. Contracts or memorandums of understanding can also help delineate responsibilities and set out accountability measures related to vertical coordination across national, regional and local or community levels. Ideally, a separate institution ought to be mandated to coordinate ECCE services horizontally across sectors and vertically across central and local levels. These are sometimes referred to as boundary spanning entities – institutions with an explicit mandate to coordinate efforts among the myriad of relevant institutions and actors. They are also referred to as the “ECD motor” when they function with a clear organizational structure, terms of reference, and annual core budget. This “ECD motor” can also be a department within the lead ECCE ministry, a public sector “executive agency”, or an agency under the President’s office.

**Recommendation 5:** Devote resources to the professionalization of the ECCE workforce, including adequate incentives and capacity-building programmes that recruit and maintain skilled professionals.

As with any industry or sector, the extent to which the ECCE subsector can deliver high-quality ECCE services relies heavily on the expertise and skills of its human resources – teachers, caregivers, school leaders, teacher trainers, supervisors, administrators and policymakers. It is imperative for PICs to explore various mechanisms to address serious shortages in qualified staff and the dearth of opportunities for training and professional development.

Capacity-building initiatives such as pre- and post-service training, ongoing professional development courses, and the creation of communities of practice among ECCE practitioners are ways in which the knowledge and skills of Ecce practitioners can be boosted. UNESCO is currently developing an ECCE Teachers Competency Framework for

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South-East Asia and the Pacific Small Island States that will be a useful and context-relevant resource on the mandatory competencies for teaching early learners. Capacity-building of ECE coordinator in MOEs is also crucial since the coordinator is often the lone champion for ECCE in ministry structures and can be instrumental in moving agendas forward.

In addition, prompt and deliberate action is needed to reform current incentives and compensation structures for ECCE teachers, teacher aides, and volunteers, especially those working in community-managed centres. Policies must set out minimum salary guidelines and governments must be able to provide subsidies for communities unable to meet those salary levels. Whenever possible, teacher salaries should be commensurate to those for primary or secondary school levels as this signals that ECCE teachers are an equally important part of the education workforce.

Governments should provide requisite oversight of and support to communities since it is likely that PICs will continue to rely on communities for ECCE service provision. It has been reported that community-based programmes have higher participation rates and tend to be more responsive to local issues. While this is positive, it does not absolve governments of their duty to provide ECCE services. Clear and mutually-reinforcing partnership structures between government and communities are needed. Ongoing training should also be provided so that community-based ECCE managers continue to advance their skills in the supervision of ECCE programmes, including the transparent management of fiscal resources.

Conclusion

As embodied by the new global development agenda, children have a right to survive and thrive, develop to their full potential, and live in a sustainable world. The benefits of fulfilling these rights for children are supported by scientific and empirical evidence. When children are provided the resources and opportunities to build strong foundations early in life, especially those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged, they can vastly improve their life chances and become more productive and responsible citizens, with benefits redounding to their future children and society in general.

Progress that has been observed in advancing ECCE in PICs must be accelerated for the region to meet development targets and to set the Pacific region firmly on a path of inclusive and sustainable social and economic prosperity. The pace of advancing ECCE needs to pick up on several fronts, including establishing an enabling legislative and governance environment, increasing investments, fostering multi-sectoral coordination, expanding technical support to the ECCE workforce, and improving monitoring to facilitate evidence-based decision-making.

With around 450,000 children across the region, all of whom are presently moulding their brain structures, building their competencies, and banking the experiences that set them up for life, there is no other time to act but now.

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Upon unanimous endorsement of the Pacific Guidelines for the Development of National Quality Frameworks for ECCE by all Education Ministers at the Forum for Education Ministers Meeting (FEdMM), April 2014 in Cook Islands, PRC4ECCE and UNICEF Pacific have been tasked to provide ongoing monitoring of ECCE in the region. In 2015, PRC4ECCE conducted a baseline survey and presented "Implementation of the Pacific Regional ECCE Guidelines: Status Report" to the Pacific Heads of Education Systems meeting, October 2015, in Vanuatu.

The purpose of this survey is to obtain updated information from each country in order to report to the upcoming FEdMM meeting any changes in ECCE systems and implementation in the region since the Guidelines were endorsed. Your responses will provide valuable information for this ongoing regional initiative!

Person Completing Survey: Please list below all those who contributed to this survey. Add rows if needed. This will enable any follow ups for questions and clarifications if needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/ Organization</th>
<th>Email/ Phone contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Part A: Survey

1. Does the Ministry of Education have a dedicated early childhood education staff?
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Yes
     - Tell us about them: How many? What are their titles and genders?

2. Does the Education Act include ECCE?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
     - At what age does ECCE start?
     - Other (in progress, etc)

3. Is there an ECE Policy?
   - [ ] Yes – endorsed 2013 or before
     - Is it currently under review?
   - [ ] Yes
   - [ ] No
o When is it scheduled for review?
☐ Yes – endorsed after 2014
☐ No policy
☐ Currently being drafted

4. If there is an ECE Policy:
   a. Is policy costed?
      ☐ Yes
      ☐ No
   b. Is there a budget allocated for its implementation?
      ☐ Yes
      ☐ No
   c. Is there an implementation strategy?
      ☐ Yes
      ☐ No

5. Is ECCE included in your national education sector plan or national education action plan?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

6. Does a multisectoral or intersectoral national policy on ECCE exist within the country? Please list the sectors explicitly mentioned in the policy.

7. What does the ECE Policy include? Check all that apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Included in ECCE Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher qualifications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Teacher assistance/ classroom aide qualifica-
| tions                                    |                         |
| Teacher training                           |                         |
| Child protection                           |                         |
| ECCE Curriculum                            |                         |
| Language                                   |                         |
| Monitoring system                          |                         |
| Budget                                     |                         |
| EMIS                                       |                         |
| Education In Emergencies                   |                         |

8. Does the policy include a mechanism for ECCE centres to track the following at student enrolment:
   ☐ Immunizations
      o Yes – if a child does not have up to date immunizations, what happens?
      o No
   ☐ Birth Registration
      o Yes – if a child is not registered, what happens?
9. What information on ECCE is collected by your EMIS system?

10. What is the government contribution on ECCE as a % of total public expenditure on education?
   - % Recurrent costs
   - % Capital costs
   - How much, if any, % is from donor aid?
   - What do government contributions include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher salaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECCE centre infrastructure (building, WASH, maintenance)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monitoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. When looking at the different roles and responsibilities for ECCE implementation, which are the role of government, and which are the role of communities? Please check in the appropriate box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training</td>
<td>Teacher training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher salaries</td>
<td>Teacher salaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre infrastructure</td>
<td>Centre infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom resources</td>
<td>Classroom resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other: (Meals, transport)</td>
<td>Other: (Meals, transport)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td>Other:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Is there a national network for ECCE engaged in capacity building of the work force supporting ECCE, advocacy for ECCE, and/or ECCE knowledge management and research? Please name the network(s) here, and provide the name and contact person who leads it.

13. Does an inter-ministry committee, working group, or other coordinating body exist to plan, manage, and/or provide oversight of holistic ECCE programming?
   - Yes
   - No
14. Is there national legislation or regulations on the International Code of Marketing Breast Milk Substitutes with a designated body for continuous monitoring of its implementation?

- Yes
- No

Additional information:

15. Are there national early learning and development standards?

- Yes
- No

Additional information:

16. Is there a national early learning curriculum?

- Yes
- No

Additional information:

17. Are there any entry requirements to become a pre-primary teacher?

- Yes
- No

If YES, what are they:

18. Are there certification requirements for early childhood educators?

- Yes
- No

If YES, what are they:

19. Are children with disabilities addressed and included in early childhood services?

- Yes
- No

If YES, how:

20. Are ECCE programs expected to monitor child development?

- Yes
21. The following questions are related to Education in Emergencies, within the ECCE context:

- Is there a national education in emergencies policy?
  - NO
  - Yes
  - If Yes, does it include ECCE?

- NO

- Yes

- Does the ECCE Policy include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>If yes, how is this monitored?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disaster Preparedness Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Evacuation Route</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Practice Drills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Aid Kit</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• If yes, is it secured from children and others?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Emergency Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Has your country faced an emergency in the past 5 years?
  - NO
  - Yes
  - If Yes, was ECCE included in the post disaster needs assessment?

- NO

- Yes, but only those "attached" to primary schools
  - Public only
  - Public and private

- Yes, both "attached" and community based programs, public and private
  - If Yes, did government respond to the needs assessments of ECCE centres, and if so, how?
☐ NO
☐ Yes, gave ECD in Emergency kits
☐ Yes, gave ECD kits plus tents
☐ Yes, gave ECD kits plus grants
☐ Yes, other response:
☐ Does a national emergency preparedness and response plan or strategy exist with explicit provisions for (a) pregnant and nursing women and (b) children < 8 years exist? (Please consult with health colleagues as well)

22. What would you identify as the current gaps in ECCE systems-building and implementation in your country? (Examples can include: legislation; strengthened policy; monitoring; teacher training; curriculum....)

23. What activities are planned for ECCE during 2016?

Part B: This information was consolidated during last year’s baseline data collection. The purpose of this section is to provide updated information, and engage with partners in other ministries to support ongoing holistic early childhood discussions.

Please complete with the most recent data available for your country, as well as the citation. The requested data includes health/nutrition, early childhood education, and child protection/welfare, in order to reflect the holistic development of the child. If your country does not collect that data, please leave blank. Please collaborate with your peers in other ministries.

Health/Nutrition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Data Citation and Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant Mortality (deaths per 1,000 live births) estimates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under-5 Mortality (deaths per 1,000 live births) estimates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate and Severe Stunting (under-5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal Mortality Ratio (deaths per 100,000 births)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of 1-year-old children immunized against DPT (corresponding vaccines: DPT3β)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of births attended by skilled attendants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of children below 5 years of age with suspected pneumonia receiving antibiotics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of pregnant women receiving antenatal care (at least once)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants exclusively breastfed until 6 months of age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infants with low birth weight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence of anaemia in pregnant women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of children less than 5 years of age sleeping under Insecticide-Treated Net (ITN)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Early Childhood Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data/Response</th>
<th>Data Citation and Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gross Pre-primary Enrolment Rate (GER): Please include disaggregation by sex and age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NER in ECE: Please include disaggregation by sex and age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># children in ECE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># ECE centres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(If your country has MQSS): % ECCE centres meeting national MQSS by 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Existence of ECCE curriculum Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>National ECCE policies and planning Frameworks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EMIS system inclusive of relevant ECCE data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#/% teachers meeting qualifications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: teacher ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>% new primary entrants with ECCE experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ECCE % access to potable water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ECCE pupil: toilet ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Child Protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data/Response</th>
<th>Data Citation and Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How many children under age 5 as of Dec 2014 with birth registration, from country register</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental leave policies***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS there a law on the prevention of domestic violence?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Snapshot of ECCE per country

**ECCE SNAPSHOT: COOK ISLANDS**

- **528** children educated in 23 ECCE centres and schools nation-wide (2018)
- **12%** of ECCE teachers’ remuneration is budgeted for (2018)
- **32** teachers in 1:17 pupil-teacher ratio in Kindergartens (2017)

**ECCE SNAPSHOT: FIJI**

- **17,633** children educated across the country (2017)
- **1:15** pupil-teacher ratio in Kindergartens (2017)
- **1,223** teachers in 1:29 pupil-teacher ratio in Schools (2018)
- **2.9%** of government’s budget is budgeted for ECCE (2017)

**LAWS AND POLICIES**

- Education Act that includes ECCE
- National ECCE Policy
- National ECCE Curriculum
- Early Learning & Development Standards
- Quality Service Standards (follows Head Start Programme standards)

**PRE-PRIMARY ENROLMENT**

- **99%** in 2015
- **97%** in 2016

**Note:** Data above refers to pre-primary education (ECCE) in 2017.

**PRE-PRIMARY ENROLMENT**

- **85%** in 2017

**Note:** Data above refers to pre-primary education (ECCE) in 2017.
**ECCE SNAPSHOT: MICRONESIA**

- **Unknown**: Number of ECCE teachers trained or certificated in FSM.
- **8.5%**: Enrollment in ECCE programs as a percentage of total education budget (2017) (FSM). For the Ministry of Education and Community Development (MECD), FSM.

**LAWS AND POLICIES**

- **Education Act that includes ECCE**
- **National ECCE Policy**
- **National ECCE Curriculum**
- **Early Learning & Dev’t Standards**
- **Quality Service Standards**

**PRE-PRIMARY ENROLMENT**

- 48.5% (Palau)

**ECCE SNAPSHOT: KIRIBATI**

- **5,128**: Children aged 0-5 in ECCE programs nationwide (2017). For the “teacher to pupil” ratio in ECCE programs in Kiribati (1:14) and Tuvalu (2018) (1:14).
- **360**: Number of ECCE teachers trained or certificated in Kiribati.
- **None**: Number of ECCE teachers trained or certificated in Tuvalu.

**LAWS AND POLICIES**

- **Education Act that includes ECCE (Separate ECCE Act just passed by Parliament)**
- **National ECCE Policy**
- **National ECCE Curriculum**
- **Early Learning & Dev’t Standards**
- **Quality Service Standards (contained in ECCE Act)**

**PRE-PRIMARY ENROLMENT**

- 33.7% (Kiribati)
ECCE SNAPSHOTS:

**PALAU**

- **515** 5-6 year olds enrolled in ECE (2017-2018)
- **73%** 80% of kindergarten children attend pre-school
- **UNKNOWN** Number of preschool teachers
- **UNKNOWN** Number of preschool surcharges

**LAWS AND POLICIES**

- Education Act that includes ECCE
- National ECCE Policy
- National ECCE Curriculum
- Early Learning & Dev’t Standards
- Quality Service Standards (Head Start standards)

**PRE-PRIMARY ENROLMENT**

- **UNKNOWN**

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**MARSHALL ISLANDS**

- **1,295** 5-6 year olds enrolled in ECE (2017-2018)
- **88%** 5-6 year olds enrolled in kindergarten
- **5%** 2-4 year olds enrolled in kindergarten
- **UNKNOWN** Number of preschool teachers
- **UNKNOWN** Number of preschool surcharges

**LAWS AND POLICIES**

- Education Act that includes ECCE
- National ECCE Policy
- National ECCE Curriculum
- Early Learning & Dev’t Standards
- Quality Service Standards

**PRE-PRIMARY ENROLMENT**

- **84%**
- **50.6%**
**ECCE SNAPSHOT:**

**TONGA**

- **2254** students in ECCE centers registered with MoECCE
- **1:11** ratio of teachers to children in ECC (2018)
- **87/214** enrollment of children (2013)
- **0.02%** of total education budget (2015)

**LAWS AND POLICIES**

- Education Act that includes ECCE
- National ECCE Policy
- National ECCE Curriculum
- Early Learning & Dev't Standards
- Quality Service Standards

**PRE-PRIMARY ENROLMENT**

- **42.6%**

Source: National Education and Training Authority of Tonga

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**ECCE SNAPSHOT:**

**TUVALU**

- **705** children enrolled in ECCE centers in the country (2019)
- **1:13** ratio of teachers to children in ECC (2019)
- **59%** of total education budget (2015)
- **1.9%** public expenditure on education (2015-16)

**LAWS AND POLICIES**

- Education Act that includes ECCE
- National ECCE Policy
- National ECCE Curriculum (in progress)
- Early Learning & Dev't Standards
- Quality Service Standards

**PRE-PRIMARY ENROLMENT**

- **88.1%**
- **69.5%**

Source: National Education and Training Authority of Tuvalu

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ECCE SNAPSHOT: VANUATU

- **14,301** children enrolled in ECCE centres in the country
- **1:16** teacher to student ratio in ECCE programmes
- **50.9%** percent of teachers who are certified
- **0.09%** public expenditure on ECCE, as percent of total national budget

**LAWS AND POLICIES**
- Education Act that includes ECCE
- National ECCE Policy
- National ECCE Curriculum
- Early Learning & Dev't Standards
- Quality Service Standards (in progress)

**PRE-PRIMARY ENROLMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>30</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>70</th>
<th>80</th>
<th>90</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DPP</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NII</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: ECCE Vanuatu Annual and ECCE Annual Financial Report