

# Case Study

## Kyrgyzstan Sets Foundations for Learning through ECE Subsector Strategies

### CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

This case study illustrates how Kyrgyzstan developed ECE subsector strategies based on identified challenges and policy objectives to inform the ECE sections of the Education Sector Strategy (2020-2040) and associated Action Plan (2021-2023). It highlights the ECE Technical Working Group's work in this regard, starting with a diagnostic workshop using the Pre-primary Subsector Analysis Tool to identify priority challenges that then lead to the development of proposed strategies and activities for the ESS and EAP.

The case study provides a snapshot of the process that supported the ECE Technical Working Group's collaborative efforts to translate policy objectives into prioritized strategies. For a more detailed summary of Kyrgyzstan's experience to integrate ECE into the ESS and Action Plan, please read this [blog](#).

This case study was developed by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan.

## INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) of the Kyrgyz Republic has been leading on the formulation of the Education Sector Strategy (2020-2040) and Education Action Plan (2021-2023), with inputs from the different technical working groups (including the ECE Technical Working Group) and with technical assistance from development partners such as the World Bank, GPE, UNICEF and others.

## A SUBSECTOR DIAGNOSTIC WORKSHOP TO ASSESS, DEVELOP AND PRIORITIZE SUBSECTOR STRATEGIES

Within the context of the development of the Education Sector Strategy (ESS) and Education Action Plan (EAP), a consultative preschool education (PSE) subsector diagnostic workshop was organized in Bishkek on March 18-19, 2019 by the MoES and UNICEF to support relevant government and nongovernmental organizations and stakeholders in assessing and identifying how to strengthen the PSE subsector for all 3- to 5-year-olds in the country. The Pre-primary Subsector Analysis Tool was used to reflect on the key strengths and challenges of the PSE subsector.

### **The objectives of the workshop were to:**

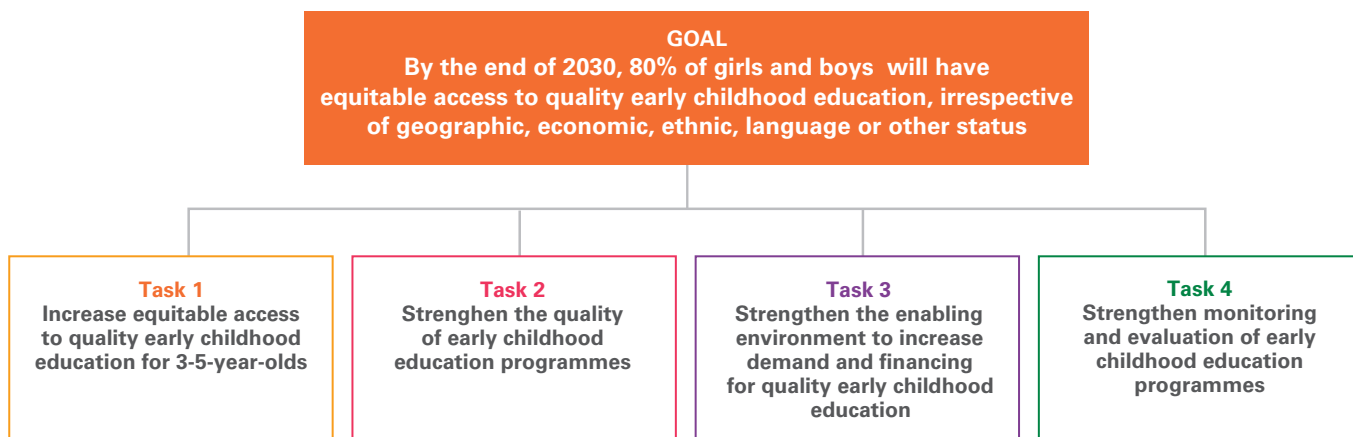
- Align the vision for ECE across key stakeholders and to conduct a brief subsector diagnostic assessment to initiate indepth planning for ECE in the context of the development of the ESS and Action Plan;
- Develop an initial roadmap for integrating ECE into the ESS and EAP, outlining key concrete strategies, activities, responsibilities and timelines;
- Develop a capacity development plan to strengthen capacities across the subsector.

The workshop was attended by a diverse group of forty-six (46) experts working in various PSE subsector roles across levels of the system. Participants included: MoES stakeholders, and stakeholders across other Ministries including the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, deputy governor of the Batken region, specialists of the World Bank, Aga Khan Foundation, representatives of the Kyrgyzstan Academy of Education, pedagogical universities and colleges, the Republican Institute for inservice teacher training, district / city education departments, heads of preschool educational organizations, libraries, and representatives of nongovernmental organizations. This diversity of participants helped ensure that multiple perspectives were considered in the discussions and dialogue.

The process started with an analysis of the strengths and challenges of Kyrgyzstan's PSE subsector, utilizing the Pre-primary Subsector Analysis Tool. The analysis centered around the five core functions (planning and budgeting; curriculum development and implementation; workforce development; family and community engagement; and quality assurance), and the enabling environment (ministerial leadership; policies and legislation; financing; public demand) of the pre-primary subsector.

Through facilitated discussions and group work, workshop participants reflected on key challenges around the themes of access, equity and quality. Needs identified included: creating favorable conditions for ensuring access to quality preschool education, without compromising gender parity; expansion of access for children with disabilities and marginalized groups; introduction of a variety of PSE programmes to respond to the different needs of children and families; establishing teacher standards and strengthening of teacher training programmes; revision and improvement of curriculum.

These reflections helped the participants to jointly agree on the overall vision and goal for the subsector and the policy objectives (or “Tasks”) for the PSE subsector to be addressed in the ESS and Action Plan:



The participants then completed the difficult task of prioritizing key challenges under each “Task,” and generating potential strategies or solutions to the challenges.



## WORKSHOP RESULTS:

### GOING FROM IDENTIFIED ECE SUBSECTOR ISSUES TO ECE INPUTS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR STRATEGY AND CONCRETE SUBSECTOR ACTIONS

The below table highlights the prioritized subsector challenges that emerged from the the diagnostic workshop. The table highlights how these challenges were then reflected and addressed as subsector inputs in the Education Sector Strategy. Current actions being taken as of March 2020 are featured in the table to illustrate how challenges identified are already being addressed within the subsector.

TABLE: Diagnostic Workshop Issues Reflected in Education Sector Strategy and Current ECE Subsector Actions

Issues Identified in the Diagnostic Workshop	Diagnostic Workshop Issues Reflected in the Education Sector Strategy	Current Actions Resulting From the Diagnostic Workshop Leading to Education Sector Strategy Implementation
<b>Core Function 1: Planning and budgeting</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient funding and weak practice of forecasting, monitoring, analyzing, and planning in the preschool education sector, taking into account the birth rate of children and their needs (including gender, inclusive education, children with disabilities, etc.):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• allocation of funds based on the needs of children in the preschool education sector</li> <li>• increase of kindergartens (construction or opening of alternative programs for early and early childhood education)</li> <li>• predictive training, retraining and advanced training of teachers for preschool institutions</li> <li>• creation of a safe and highquality environment (major repairs, purchase of equipment, gaming, educational, training materials, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out forecasting, monitoring, analysis and development planning in the preschool education sector, with a view to making operational decisions at the national and institutional level</li> <li>• Increase provision of ECE programmes to 80%</li> <li>• Equalization of wages and the introduction of a stimulating grant by a teacher of preschool educational organizations, as well as preprimary schoolteachers.</li> <li>• Digitization of the preschool education sector:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT training - use skills</li> <li>• Electronic environment creation</li> <li>• Learning and building digital control</li> <li>• Attracting the business community to expand access to early childhood education</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of the available premises for creating various platforms for working with children;</li> <li>• Creation of Child Development Centers for 0-5 year-olds;</li> <li>• Establishing shift term kindergartens involving children 3- to 5-years old in rural areas, including from the poorest quintile;</li> <li>• Development of regulatory and legal documents in order to expand the different forms of preschool education;</li> <li>• Introduction of amendments to the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On preschool education” in article 7 (types of preschool education organizations);</li> <li>• Development of a regulation on alternative forms of preschool education</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ineffective use of the budget and weak managerial capacity have limited the extent to which the system could expand access and improve the quality of its services, including preschool education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing awareness among the population through the media on the implementation of the State social contracting in the field of preschool education.</li> <li>• The introduction of various mechanisms of public-private partnership in the sector of preschool education.</li> <li>• Expanding the reach of children with special educational needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the video, posters and memos</li> <li>• Development of a regulatory framework for public-private partnerships in the preschool education sector.</li> </ul>

Issues Identified in the Diagnostic Workshop	Diagnostic Workshop Issues Reflected in the Education Sector Strategy	Current Actions Resulting From the Diagnostic Workshop Leading to Education Sector Strategy Implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When forecasting and planning the budget, there is no interagency communication and coordination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of mechanisms for effective financial management at the national and regional levels, taking into account forecasting and planning for the long and medium term in the preschool education sector.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To analyze the existing system of budget financing of the preschool education sector</li> <li>Development of Guidelines for the effective financing of early childhood education based on the existing legal and budgetary base of local authorities.</li> <li>Amendments to the legislation on financing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The responsibilities between the managers of ECE funds/budgets (Ministry of Education and Science, local authorities and parents) are not clear.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating a system of regulatory and budgetary (per capita) financing of preschool education with the possibility of its implementation in preschool education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of mechanisms for the effective implementation of the system of regulatory and budgetary (per capita) financing for ECE</li> <li>Increasing the capacity of employees of preschool organizations and representatives of other financial institutions responsible for financing the preschool sector.</li> </ul>

### Core Function 2: Curriculum development and implementation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdated curriculum standards: Curriculum of early childhood development and early childhood education and training are not sensitive to diversity, taking into account gender, social cohesion and inclusion. etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvement of early childhood development and preschool education programme/curricula</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis and inclusion of aspects of social cohesion, peacebuilding and diversity into the existing state learning standards and curriculum.</li> <li>Scale up of the program "social cohesion and peacebuilding" in preschool education</li> <li>Development of digital educational programs and materials for teaching preschool children via television channels.</li> <li>Printing and distribution of the new state standards on preschool education and childcare.</li> <li>Training of teachers of preschool education on the use of new standards.</li> <li>Alignment of the preschool education program/ curriculum with the new state standards on preschool education and childcare.</li> <li>Development of a strategy for disseminating an approach to social cohesion and peace in the preschool.</li> <li>Implementation of programs for the development of multilingual education in ECE.</li> <li>Development of a curriculum for child development centers.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No tools/mechanisms and curricula for early identification and intervention for children with disabilities (CwD) or development delays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthening inclusiveness in the system of preschool education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of existing ECD/ECE programs to identify gaps in inclusion of children with disabilities,</li> <li>Development of additional programs for early identification and intervention for CwD</li> </ul>

Issues Identified in the Diagnostic Workshop	Diagnostic Workshop Issues Reflected in the Education Sector Strategy	Current Actions Resulting From the Diagnostic Workshop Leading to Education Sector Strategy Implementation
<b>Core Function 3: Workforce development</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of teachers with appropriate education;</li> <li>There are no qualified methodological services in the field for the provision of methodological assistance to ECE teachers;</li> <li>Lack of in-service training programs for preschool teachers;</li> <li>Inadequate in-service and pre-service trainings for teachers on children with special education needs in preschool education programs;</li> <li>Lack of trainings for teachers who are working at alternative ECD/ECE facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of distance learning technologies while increasing the potential of teachers; adjusting the in-service and pre-service curricula</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrating gender, inclusiveness, multilingual education aspects into in-service ECD/ECE teacher trainings curriculums;</li> <li>Improving the capacity of library workers in an adapted program of preschool education;</li> <li>Development of mentoring tools to help preschool teachers.</li> <li>Development of training modules to build capacity of the librarians on early childhood development;</li> <li>Training of ECD/ECE administrative staff on the use of the EMIS program</li> </ul>
<b>Core Function 4: Family and community engagement</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weak parental involvement;</li> <li>There are no materials for parents on issues of early development, education and childcare for 0-3 year-olds;</li> <li>No resources for promotion and support family on child development issues;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a need to develop a program for parents, raise their awareness of the importance of early development and their involvement in the development of children, and especially fathers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop a materials to strengthen the potential of parents, including fathers, on the importance early ears and development of children;</li> <li>Creation of television information programs on the importance of the development of children of early and preschool age, including early detection and intervention in order to attract children with special needs into preschool education programs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low parental awareness on the importance of ECD/ECE.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revision of the existing diary for parents on the development of the child from birth to 7 years and making changes.</li> </ul>
<b>Core Function 5: Quality assurance</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no monitoring and evaluation in the preschool education subsector: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no indicators / tools for quality monitoring of the preschool education subsector;</li> <li>there is no collection and analysis of information on issues of parent-child relationships;</li> <li>analysis of the quality of relationships between educational organizations and families is not practiced</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Availability of a system for monitoring and evaluating the preschool education subsector in terms of qualitative and quantitative indicators.</li> <li>It is necessary on a regular basis to collect data adapted for different forms of preschool education facilities in the framework of EMIS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of a monitoring framework and indicators for preschool education to monitor the quality and quantity of coverage of children with various forms of preschool education and training.</li> <li>Developing ECD/ECE monitoring indicators and incorporating them into existing EMIS in the education sector.</li> </ul>