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Technical guidance

on pre-primary workforce development in low- and middle-income countries

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Key terms

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The SDGs are a universal call to action by the United Nations General Assembly to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. Goal 4 ensures that all girls and boys complete free primary and secondary schooling by 2030. For more information, see www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals/goal-4-quality-education.html.

Pre-primary education subsector: Pre-primary education is aimed at children below the age of entry to primary education, and may be referred to as early childhood development (ECD), early childhood education (ECE), play school, reception or preschool programmes. This subsector corresponds to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 0. It can include two phases: (i) ECD, designed for children aged 0 to 2 years; and (ii) pre-primary education, designed for children from the age of 3 to the start of primary education. Such programmes are designed to support children's early cognitive, physical, social and emotional development and to introduce them to organized instruction outside the family context and prepare them for participation in primary education.

Pre-primary workforce: The pre-primary workforce consists of individuals who share a dedication to improving the development and learning of pre-primary children in partnership with their families. Whatever their role, the members of this workforce share distinctive pre-primary competencies as well as the competencies and qualifications necessary for their specific responsibilities.[1]

Competencies: Competencies are associated with the qualities of an individual practitioner, which can be acquired through training and professional preparation (i.e., the integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation).[2] Competencies refer to the requirements and expectations for what professionals should know and be able to do.[3] In general, there are two types: (i) competencies for professionals, and (ii) competencies for what training and professional development should impart. The first is essentially the 'professional competence profile', while the second is a 'training competence profile'.

Pre-service or initial training: We use these terms interchangeably. Pre-service training is the training that an educator undergoes before taking up a post in ECE. Adapted pathways to qualification can be offered to low-qualified workers covering competencies that should have been developed through initial training.[4]

Continuing professional development (CPD) or in-service training: We use these terms interchangeably. CPD refers to external and in-house training courses, team supervision, peer group learning sessions, mentoring, pedagogical guidance, coaching and counselling.[5]

Reflective competencies: This is the ability of pre-primary professionals to reflect on their knowledge, skills and values, and to continually build on and improve the latter in order to improve their pedagogical practice.

Reflective practice: This involves thinking about and analysing one's own practice to identify what drives children's learning and development. Reflective practice allows early childhood professionals (including teachers) to develop a critical understanding of their own practice, and to continue to develop the necessary skills, knowledge and approaches to achieve the best outcomes for children.

Peer learning: In peer learning, staff involved in providing ECE share their knowledge about teaching and learning practice with their colleagues.

Mentoring or coaching, pedagogical guidance and counselling: These forms of CPD are provided by a mentor, coach or counsellor who facilitates the practitioners' active reflection on their work. It is characterized by a focus on practice-based learning that takes place in constant dialogue with colleagues, parents and local communities.[6]

Contents

Introduction to the pre-primary workforce guidance

Context for this guidance

The overarching goal of this guidance is to contribute to the realization of universal, quality pre-primary education by supporting countries in developing comprehensive workforce strategies for pre-primary education.

This is an exciting time for the early childhood education (ECE) field. Enrolment in pre-primary and other early childhood services has increased in low- and middle-income countries.[7] Fuelled by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the specific indicator for universal quality pre-primary education under SDG 4,[8] governments are establishing policies to expand access to ECE programmes and other support for children in their early years.[9] The potential for quality ECE programmes to have a positive effect on children's development and learning, at an early age and in their future, is great.

*Quality i*n pre-primary education is the crucial ingredient in ensuring these programmes result in the desired impact for children and education systems. Achieving quality universal pre-primary education by 2030 requires a systems approach, with pre-primary education recognized and supported on a similar basis as other education subsectors.

UNICEF's *Conceptual framework for the pre-primary education subsector* seeks to support governments by establishing comprehensive ECE plans and building pre-primary systems that can deliver quality programmes at scale. In this framework, quality is not a stand-alone entity in education for young children, but the sum of five interlinked subsector components essential for effective pre-primary systems (see Figure 1).

1. Planning and resource allocation

2. Curriculum development and implementation

3. Workforce development

4. Family and community engagement

5. Quality assurance of services[10]

This guidance focuses primarily on core function 3, workforce development, and aims to support governments in developing or strengthening a comprehensive, systematic workforce strategy.

Figure 1:

Five core functions of the pre-primary subsector

COORDINATION

RESPONSIVENESS

Curriculum

Teachers

Quality pre-primary education

Planning and resource allocation

Families and communities

Quality assurance

EQUITY

EFFICIENCY

Subsector levels

LOCAL   SUBNATIONAL   NATIONAL
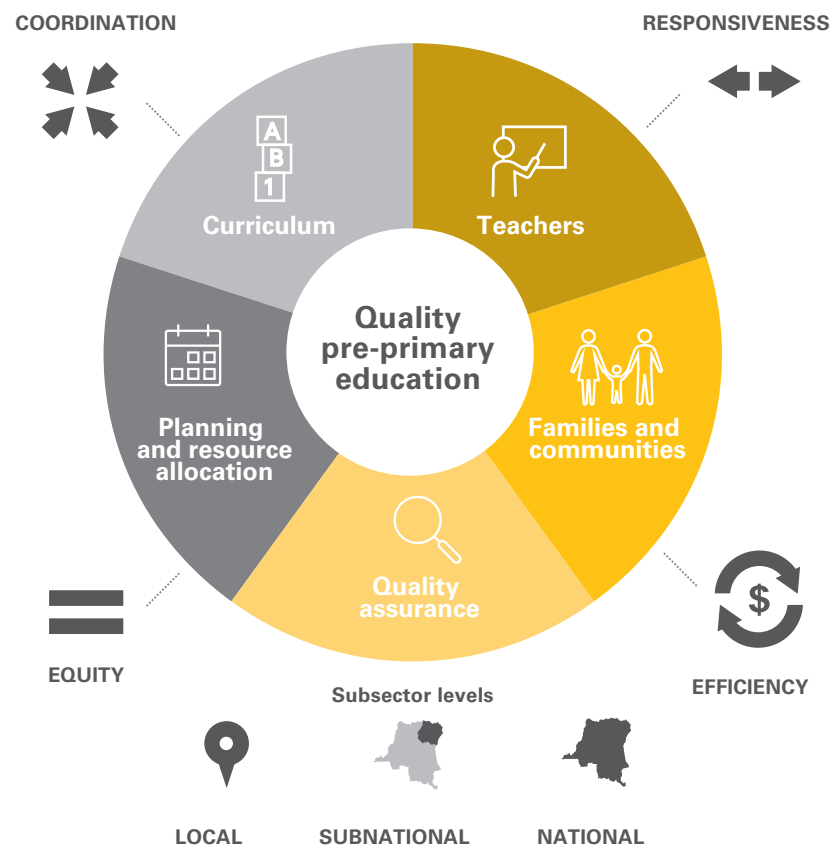
Competent pre-primary workforce at the heart of pre-primary systems

Countries are scaling up pre-primary services at a rapid rate. Yet, a key component of effectiveness – a strong workforce – is often absent. In planning and implementing pre-primary programmes, the ECE workforce – the teachers, principals, supervisors, specialists and others who deliver and manage pre-primary services – is sometimes overlooked. The result is that the increasing number of pre-primary centres, classrooms and professional development institutions may not be not staffed with personnel (both women and men) who have appropriate qualifications, training and ongoing support.

Research clearly indicates that the quality of the teaching workforce is at the core of quality pre-primary services, with the potential to make a significant difference in children's outcomes.[11] A number of governments have embarked on workforce development initiatives. Some are focused on the broader early childhood development (ECD) workforce, which includes health care practitioners, social workers and paraprofessionals,

among many others. Other initiatives are focused on the teacher workforce at large as a part of the education sector, but without a specific focus on pre-primary teachers. Still other initiatives are taking a research and evidence-generation approach to the issue of teacher development, and helping governments to assess the level of qualifications of their ECE teachers.[12] All of these are promising, but are seldom a central part of an overall strategy for pre-primary planning and implementation.

This guidance indicates that a pre-primary workforce strategy in the context of national pre-primary policy and programme initiatives is crucial. It must be comprehensive and systematic, addressing all elements of workforce development, including qualifications and competencies for pre-primary personnel and their training programmes; pre-service training and continuing professional development or in-service training, with monitoring and quality assurance emphasized across all elements. Taken together, and accompanied by systematic monitoring

and use of data, these elements have the potential to produce appropriate levels of motivation and competence in the pre-primary workforce.[13]

Each government works within a specific context that must be considered in devising realistic, effective approaches. For example, stakeholders may disagree on the level of formal education that is both important and feasible for their teachers; a country may value some competencies more highly than others for cultural reasons; or a country's teacher training institutions may lack capacity to provide pre-service preparation at an appropriate level, yet have great potential for community-based training. Trade-offs and compromises will need to be considered within and across all elements as the expansion of pre-primary services takes place. The result should be clear short-term and long-term strategies on how to develop the pre-primary workforce, taking these realities into account and considering a variety of possible combinations and trade-offs within and across key elements.

How this guidance can help

The guidance offers an organized, easy-to-use framework for low- and middle-income countries whose governments are in the process of scaling up or improving provision for the pre-primary education.[14] It aims to:

ENABLE

governments and partners to move from piecemeal efforts towards a comprehensive workforce strategy for the pre-primary subsector

PROVIDE

a tool for advocacy concerning the current status, future development and professionalization of the ECE workforce

SUPPORT

policy decision-making and programme initiatives to strengthen the pre-primary workforce

CREATE

a shared understanding of workforce development across multiple national (and global) actors often involved in supporting pre-primary teachers and other personnel across diverse pre-primary providers

This guidance aims to be useful to a wide range of stakeholders who are engaged in issues around pre-primary workforce development and training. These may include:

- national and subnational policymakers responsible for developing overall strategies for strengthening the pre-primary workforce;

- those responsible for developing education and training requirements (including qualification routes) for pre-primary personnel and overseeing their implementation;

- technical and managerial staff responsible for the design of national pre-primary teacher training systems, supervision and overall workforce development;

- UNICEF staff and technical partners responsible for advising governments on workforce development in relation to pre-primary education;

- teachers, administrators and other providers of pre-primary services, as well as families and communities seeking to improve pre-primary services for their children.

Overview of the guidance and its organization

Challenges in developing the pre-primary workforce in low-income and middle-income countries

It is not easy to put together a plan that results in a pre-primary workforce with the competencies needed to promote children's development and learning. Each context is different, but low- and middle-income countries face particular challenges that make progress difficult to achieve. These challenges are briefly noted below (see box '*Challenges in developing the pre-primary workforce in low- and middle-income countries*').

These challenges contribute to significant gaps, areas of weakness, inequitable access and uneven quality in workforce development efforts in countries. To address these problems, governments may make piecemeal efforts, such as a series of policies or a set of scattered initiatives. For example, governments may establish policies mandating higher education qualifications for pre-primary teachers without ensuring that higher education institutions (HEIs) are prepared to deliver strong teacher preparation programmes. Similarly, new, potentially effective in-service training may be developed, but it is not accessible or affordable to the village teachers who may be most in need of it.

This guidance aims to guide national stakeholders in addressing these common challenges in a systematic and strategic way.

Challenges in developing the pre-primary workforce in low- and middle-income countries

- Insufficient number of qualified educators: Goals for the pre-primary subsector cannot be met without personnel to teach, administer and supervise programmes. Globally, the supply of pre-primary teachers will need to double by 2030 to meet the SDG target of universal coverage with an ideal pupil-teacher ratio of 20 to 1. For instance, the Democratic Republic of the Congo currently has about 15,000 pre-primary teachers, but will need at least half a million more by 2030 to meet the universal pre-primary target.[15] Where governments have set a low budget for pre-primary services, this represents the most significant (but not the only) obstacle to increasing the supply of qualified personnel.

- Inappropriate expectations for pre-primary teacher qualifications: Workforce development is hindered when governments have expectations that are either too low or too high. If expectations are too low, teachers will lack the essential competencies to promote children's early learning. If they are too high (or better suited to primary-grade teaching), the supply of teachers will continue to be inadequate, and the content of training may be developmentally inappropriate.[16]

- Inequitable deployment of pre-primary personnel: Even when the supply increases, qualified teachers may fail to be assigned to areas with the greatest need. Regions with the greatest poverty or with ethnic or linguistic minority populations often lack staff for current or future programmes.

- Limited workforce development expertise: In government and in non-governmental organizations (NGOs), there has often been little opportunity to build the knowledge and skills needed to plan, implement and monitor strategies for pre-primary workforce development.

- Ineffective programmes for workforce development: Training is often too theoretical, leaving teachers with few practical skills for the classroom. Often, training is a one-off, with little or no follow-up such as on-site coaching or participation in peer learning communities. Higher education programmes are seldom connected to continuing professional development (CPD).[17]

- Lack of effective supervision, monitoring and oversight: Workforce improvement is often minimal because the implementation of training is not consistently monitored, and data are not used for continuous improvement. Because pre-primary services occur under varied auspices (e.g., public vs. private), supervision may occur in some contexts, and not at all in others.

- Significant gender inequality: Since most people working in the pre-primary workforce are women, there is a need to identify and address barriers to participation by men in pre-primary education through all stages of policy development, planning and implementation within the subsector.[18]

The three workforce development pillars

This guidance is organized around three pillars that are essential to supporting a comprehensive pre-primary workforce strategy[19]

PILLAR

1

QUALIFICATIONS

PILLAR

2

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

PILLAR

3

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This pillar is focused on setting appropriate requirements and competencies to meet short- and long-term goals for a qualified pre-primary workforce. It is strengthened by the development of rigorous yet realistic expectations for the education and training of pre-primary personnel, related to competencies and standards of practice and supported by data-based plans to recruit and retain teachers and other staff, ensuring equitable access to a qualified workforce.

This pillar is focused on high-quality, relevant, accessible teacher preparation before entering the profession. It is strengthened by the establishment of relevant, well-organized programmes to prepare personnel for pre-primary teaching, is linked to competencies and organized to integrate theory and practice. Such training needs to be tailored to the individual context, and made accessible to current and future teachers, with oversight by, and close connections with, higher education. Training needs to be aligned with CPD, and monitoring of their implementation and outcomes is essential.

This pillar is focused on ongoing workforce support through in-service teacher training and on-site professional development. It requires strong programmes of ongoing training and individualized support for pre-primary personnel, again linked to competencies and to pathways for teachers to increase their knowledge and skills, including access to higher education. If monitored well, a variety of delivery systems can ensure broad access and relevance to the workplace.

The pre-primary workforce

This guidance aims to help governments strengthen the pre-primary sector workforce, as part of their overall goal of building a strong pre-primary subsector. But what is the 'workforce'? For our purposes, the primary focus is on those who work as teachers in pre-primary classrooms. However, the workforce also includes classroom teaching assistants, principals/head teachers, heads of department and subject leaders, inspectors or supervisors, members of faculty and trainers, mentors and coaches who provide pre- and in-service CPD, and specialists providing expertise in areas such as early intervention or family engagement. To promote positive development and early learning for pre-primary children, all these individuals need to share a core of knowledge and commitment, while also having the in-depth knowledge and skills needed to carry out their professional responsibilities.[22]

The three pillars reflect international research and evidence on workforce development,[20] and professional development for early childhood educators.[21] For each pillar, this guidance describes typical issues/challenges and makes practical recommendations. A comprehensive workforce strategy will take each pillar into account and will take action to strengthen each one. Although each government will have its own short- and long-term priorities, overlooking one pillar (for example, focusing only on college degrees without plans for CPD) is likely to result in a system that cannot produce quality pre-primary personnel. Finally, across all three pillars, there is a consistent emphasis on monitoring, evaluation and data use for continuous improvement of the pre-primary workforce.

Table 1 simplifies the different stages of development, but as you reflect on your own situation, it may be helpful to consider these points:

1. **Development of the pre-primary workforce may be at different stages with respect to the different pillars.** For example, pressure for immediate training may have resulted in the rapid implementation of accessible, competence-based in-service CPD (Pillar 3, initiating stage), but formal preparation for recognized accreditation by universities has not yet been addressed (Pillar 1, latent stage).

2. **The three stages are not a rating scale or score sheet:** It is not helpful to compare your progress with that of other countries, which may face very different contexts and challenges. As you consider how to improve workforce strategies for each pillar, the stages are there to help you identify where you are now, and the next practical steps to take.

3. **Workforce development is a continuous process:** Keep your eye not only on each pillar's current stage of development, but also on where you aim to be in the future.
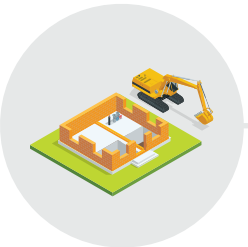
Overview

The three stages of workforce development

Pillars are not developed in a day. An effective workforce takes time to develop, and this guidance therefore views its development as a process, with three specific stages: latent, initiating and established (*see Table 1*). This guidance recognizes that although countries may share a broadly similar long-term vision for their pre-primary workforce, they are likely to be at quite different places in their progress toward their vision.

Progress within each pillar typically moves from *latent* to *initiating* to *established*, and a first step is to establish where in this process the governments of individual countries stand, by examining the **current status of the pre-primary workforce** and identifying areas for development and improvement.

Table 1: Stages of workforce development

	Strengths	Challenges	Priorities
1. Latent stage	There is a determination to develop or reform the pre-primary workforce.	There are few or no policies specific to pre-primary teachers and personnel, competence profiles are lacking, programmatic initiatives or monitoring frameworks are not in place.	Engage stakeholders to help establish foundations for the ECE workforce. Identify competence profiles, teacher supply needs, as well as the data that are needed for work to begin.
2. Initiating stage	Foundational policies are established. Some data relevant to workforce issues are being collected.	There are difficulties in the practical implementation of policies, including uneven and inconsistent application. Policies and initiatives around training and supervision of early childhood educators may be disconnected or misaligned. Data are not yet being used for quality assurance.	Identify inequalities in deployment of pre-primary teachers, assess issues with access to pre-service and in-service training and support opportunities for teachers; develop strategies to respond to unmet needs among other early childhood personnel, such as trainers, inspectors, principals or head teachers. Implement systems to use data for quality assurance mechanisms.
3. Established stage	Most policies and programmatic initiatives related to recruitment, training and support of pre-primary teachers and other personnel are in place. Data are being collected that can support continuous improvement of such policies and programmes.	Policy and programme reviews may expose areas for improvement or a need for stronger alignment between the different workforce pillars. Demographic or political change may necessitate a review or an update of existing practices; broadening of the workforce concept may be needed.	Reflect on the results of monitoring and evaluation of workforce initiatives and activities to update, refresh and ensure continuous improvement.

Step by step: Using the technical guidance

The guidance is organized by the three key pillars outlined above. It allows users to first review common issues for each pillar in order to determine the current status of the pre-primary workforce in each specific context. It then proposes concrete recommendations for addressing issues related to workforce development for each pillar. Recommendations are organized by pillar, moving in sequence from the latent stage to the established stage.

1. **Begin by thinking about one pillar at a time.** Look at the issues for each stage in the development of that pillar (*see the checklists in the following sections for a snapshot of issues across each pillar*). Which stage best describes where your country is at this time: latent, initiating or established? Do the same for the other two pillars. You may find it helpful to supplement these checklists with issues that are specific to your context.

2. **Consider whether development of your workforce strategy is uneven across the three pillars.** For example, you may decide that Pillar 1 (Qualifications) is at the latent stage, but Pillar 2 (Pre-service training) is at the initiating stage. Make notes about these patterns and discuss them with colleagues and stakeholders (suggestions for a process are in the concluding section of this guidance).

3. **Look carefully at the recommendations for each pillar.** Recommendations are not intended to match up with issues exactly. In fact, each recommendation may help you address several issues; these connections are noted in the descriptions of each recommendation. You will see that the recommendations are colour coded by the stage of development that seems most relevant for implementing each one. In your situation, which recommendations seem most relevant and useful?

4. **Review the recommendations** for the *stage towards which you are moving.* Which recommendations might be realistic to implement in your context? Which might wait until later?

5. **Use your reflections and discussion of the recommendations** to construct realistic workforce development strategies.

6. **Step back and consider a comprehensive strategy that promotes strength across, and connects, all three pillars.** For example, does the overall strategy ensure alignment between initial training and CPD? Are national competence profiles emphasized across private and public training programmes? Are data gathered and shared across the three pillars to form a comprehensive picture of progress and concerns?

Finally, consider how the workforce initiatives fit within the big picture of pre-primary subsector improvement. Consider how efforts to improve the workforce can be made a fully integrated part of the broader pre-primary subsector development (*see Figure 1*). Tie this in with the four other core functions described in UNICEF's *Conceptual Framework*: effective planning and management; curriculum development and implementation; engaged families and communities; and monitoring, regulation and quality assurance.[23]

Pillar 1: Qualifications

1 LATENT STAGE

Appropriate requirements and competencies to meet goals

Six recommendations

2 INITIATING STAGE

Implement recruitment plans and closing the skills gap

Five recommendations

3 ESTABLISHED STAGE

Make adjustments and improvements towards full implementation

Four recommendations

1

Pillar 1:
Qualifications

This section summarizes some of the key issues relevant for Pillar 1 and proposes recommendations for addressing these issues. The recommendations move in sequence from the latent stage to the established stage. It is important to look across the three stages to identify which recommendations are most useful to your context, and to be aware of the recommendations you will consider as work progresses.
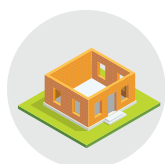
Key issues relevant for Pillar 1

Checklist of issues to consider for Pillar 1: Qualifications
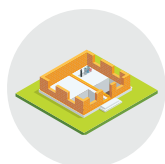
Latent stage

In creating a high-quality pre-primary workforce, a first priority is to establish expectations for staff qualifications and standards of competence, and to put into place a data-driven system for ensuring an adequate supply of qualified personnel. Many countries are just beginning to address these foundational requirements. At this stage, policies around pre-primary qualifications and competencies are still absent, and descriptions of the workforce's diverse roles and responsibilities may not be available. There is unlikely to be a well-qualified, motivated workforce, and existing personnel may receive no pay or very low pay.

☐ Official pre-primary teacher qualification requirements have not yet been developed.

☐ There is no clear definition of roles and responsibilities for various pre-primary personnel.

☐ There are no established standards of practice or competencies for pre-primary personnel.

☐ Qualified and motivated pre-primary teachers are not readily available, i.e., pre-primary teachers are in short supply.

☐ Teachers receive no pay or very low pay; pay scales may not have been determined.

☐ No strategy exists for systematically recruiting individuals to become pre-primary teachers.

☐ Leaders who will be responsible for establishing pre-primary workforce standards and qualifications lack relevant background knowledge.

Initiating stage

Availability of qualified, competent and motivated pre-primary workforce and recognition of the profession are cornerstones for development of the ECE subsector. While some countries have made initial progress in these areas, much more needs to be done. The challenges that may be faced at the initiating stage have to do with both implementation of policy directives and continued need for improving the recruitment and deployment of teachers with appropriate pre-primary qualifications.

☐ Expectations for pre-primary qualifications are not realistic for the present situation in the country, i.e., expectations might require a bachelor's degree for pre-primary teachers, while the majority of current teachers may lack a secondary school diploma.

☐ Teachers lack pre-primary-specific qualifications or specialization, i.e., they are trained in primary education.

☐ Professional qualifications and competencies that have been set at the national level are not being implemented at subnational and local levels.

☐ Subnational officials and other leaders may not yet understand the purpose and importance of new pre-primary qualifications and competencies.

☐ Initial strategies for recruitment and retention of pre-primary teachers exist but these are not backed up by clear action plans and budgets.

☐ Initial pay scales have been determined but compensation initiatives are not widely implemented.

☐ Pre-primary teacher supply continues to be inadequate to meet the national policy goals for equitable access to pre-primary education.

Checklist of issues to consider for Pillar 1: Qualifications


Established stage

Even if countries have a well-established system of qualifications and competencies and have a generally qualified workforce, at this stage they still need to aim for continued implementation of reforms to ensure that positive workforce initiatives are sustained and lead to improved learning outcomes for children. Using monitoring data as a foundation, countries at the established stage may need to address issues related to equity in deployment, development of specialized personnel, regular reviews and updates of teacher competencies and local implementation.

☐ The phasing in and timelines for implementing new qualifications may not be progressing as planned.

☐ Periodic reviews of qualifications and competencies have not been conducted to ensure continued relevance.

☐ Fully qualified personnel are lacking in specific parts of the country and in certain specializations, i.e., deployment of highly skilled pre-primary teachers is not equitable.

☐ Strategies for recruitment and retention of pre-primary teachers, including compensation initiatives, are not widely implemented.

☐ Despite improvements, pay structures for pre-primary personnel continue to be less than for other levels of education.

Recommendations for Pillar 1

Latent stage: Appropriate requirements and competencies to meet goals
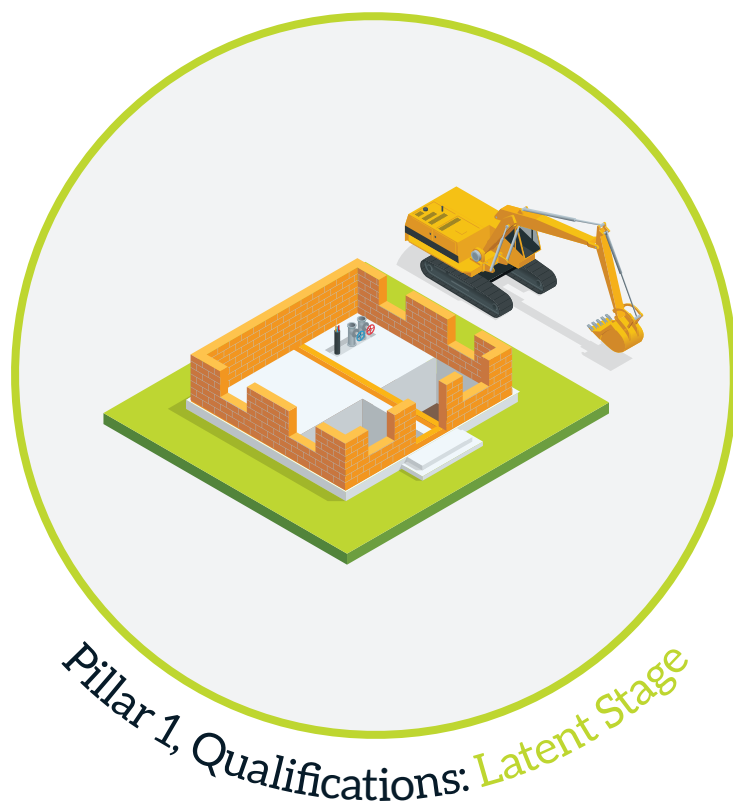
At the latent stage, governments will need to focus on basic policies and directives for addressing the challenges that affect teacher availability and recruitment, and qualification and professional competence profiles. It will also be necessary to device a set of competencies to guide pre-service training and CPD. These need to be accompanied by a coherent framework for monitoring pre-primary workforce issues. These steps will help ensure a good foundation for later implementation of an effective system of CPD for the pre-primary workforce.

There are six recommendations for the latent stage of Pillar 1.

Pillar 1, Qualifications: Latent Stage

1. Develop pre-primary teacher qualifications based on the current educational context and country realities, while keeping in mind longer-term goals.

Internationally, many low- and middle-income countries are not in a position to quickly develop and implement high-level expectations for pre-primary teacher education and training (such as a bachelor's degree in ECE). Therefore, at this stage, governments may plan the initial steps toward the long-term goal of a fully qualified professional workforce, by:

- constructing clear, accessible pathways for teachers to move from more basic qualifications to higher levels (Pillars 2 and 3);

- establishing pathways for non-qualified workers to bring them to the same level as core, qualified practitioners;[24]

- using an inclusive, collaborative approach in developing qualifications and competencies, to include government officials, representatives of pre-primary professional organizations, programme managers and others with influence in the sector;

- seeking out the input of expertise from other countries or individuals with specific and relevant experience of the pre-primary subsector;

- gaining commitment from the pre-primary subsector: Educators need to feel that their perceptions and knowledge are being respected and that there are shared goals for a qualified workforce.

The importance of pathways for non-qualified workers

It is essential to create pathways for currently non-qualified pre-primary workers, aiming to bring them to the same level of qualification as core, qualified practitioners. This requires:

- recognizing and respecting their work experience and previously acquired competences;

- connecting theory with practice by helping groups of staff reflect on their own practices;

- planning to provide on-the-job pedagogical guidance;

- providing special support to those with an ethnic minority background and with low socio-economic status.[25]

2. Develop contextually relevant competencies and standards

It is not sufficient to develop the requirements for pre-primary teachers' education and training: Explicit expectations are needed for what the workforce should know and be able to do, by:

- closely coordinating the work of different groups or task forces to align the agreed professional competencies with qualifications and job profiles, in a way that is practical and achievable;

- identifying training competencies that describe pre- and in-service training activities that will help practitioners gain the expected levels of professional competence;

- considering the context, including cultural expectations, interim and long-term goals, and an appropriate balance between practical competencies and theoretical knowledge;

- adapting the examples provided in this guidance to your context (see box 'Pre-primary workforce competencies'), and recognizing both the 'core' competencies needed by all members of the workforce (e.g., respect for children's individuality and commitment to play-based learning), and 'specific' competencies that align with the practitioners' roles and the cultural context of early learning.

Pre-primary workforce competencies

The Competence Requirements in Early Childhood Education and Care (CoRe) and the Early Workforce Initiative recommend that each country should have a common set of competencies and standards to serve as a foundation for training and professional development of the pre-primary workforce.[26]

- Namibia has developed a National Qualification Framework for all teachers in the education sector, which defines the competencies required of pre-primary teachers.[27]

- The Early Childhood Care and Education Teacher Competency Framework for Southeast Asia identifies early childhood teacher competencies across four domains: content knowledge, pedagogic practice and assessment, the learning environment, engagement and collaboration, and professional development.[28]

- In Tanzania, a low-income country, the official requirements to teach pre-primary are currently the same as those for teaching in primary, and although pre-service training in ECE is available, including certificate and diploma programmes, not enough teachers are currently undertaking this specialization. This is a good example of uneven development across the different stages.

- In regions like Latin America and the Caribbean, and Central and Eastern Europe, some countries require tertiary degrees for pre-primary teachers, although obstacles persist.[29]

3. Develop job profiles for pre-primary roles and responsibilities

Job profiles are descriptions of the expectations for those working in different positions (such as lead teacher, assistant teacher, principal or head teacher and supervisor). The specific content of job profiles will vary according to the context, although examples of job profiles from other countries can be a useful starting point. In general, job profiles should:

- reflect the agreed national competencies and standards that are in place;

- include core responsibilities and core knowledge, while also reflecting the specific context and setting;

- be developed by a body charged with all three Pillar 1 tasks (developing qualifications, competency standards and profiles), or by a separate group that coordinates its work with that of others;

- be overseen by people who can contribute both specialized and local knowledge.

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4. Gather information about current patterns of pre-primary remuneration and develop a plan for pay structure and conditions

Pay is an issue in almost all countries and contributes to difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified, motivated personnel. When gathering information and making decisions about pay, you will need to:

● survey the current status of pre-primary remuneration. Besides giving you a baseline, this can later become part of a monitoring framework;

● include questions that probe the details of remuneration packages, such as:

– considering the context, including cultural expectations, interim and long-term goals, and an appropriate balance between practical competencies and theoretical knowledge;

– Are pre-primary teachers paid, and if so, at what level and in what kinds of positions?

– How does their compensation compare with that of teachers or administrators in the primary grades?

– Are there inequities between public and private providers, or related to programme content or geographical setting?

– How do patterns in the country compare with those in countries with similar socio-economic conditions?

● use the data you have collected to develop interim and long-term plans that identify needs and potential sources of benefits, including non-monetary incentives.

5. Identify patterns of deployment and shortages in pre-primary personnel and use this to develop a recruitment plan

There may be existing data on these issues, or new information may need to be collected as one element of a comprehensive workforce monitoring plan. You will need:

● accurate knowledge about where existing pre-primary teachers are (in what parts of the country, under what jurisdiction, and in what setting, such as public vs. private programmes);

● data on the current availability of professional development providers (e.g., trainers, higher education faculty) and pre-primary administrators;

● a recruitment plan that targets areas and personnel categories that are most needed, along with realistic and measurable targets and timelines;

● coordination between the recruitment plan and newly developed qualifications (including interim qualifications), core competencies and job profile descriptions (see recommendations 1–3);

● local involvement in order to focus recruitment targets on the context in which the personnel will work.

6. Strengthen the knowledge and capacity of those responsible for developing, implementing and monitoring qualifications, standards and job profiles

Pillar 1 lays the foundation for a strong workforce. For this to happen, at the latent stage it is critical to start building technical capacity within government departments and with other stakeholders. The capacity-building process may be initiated in one or more of the following ways:

- providing various forms of technical assistance;

- convening in-country consultations on specific areas of knowledge (such as the desired content of core competencies for pre-primary personnel);

- sharing knowledge and practice in other countries in the region that are a bit further along;

- undertaking study visits.

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Initiating stage: Implement recruitment plans and closing the skills gap

Pillar 1, Qualifications: Initiating Stage

Moving to the initiating stage, and assuming that pre-primary qualifications, competencies and job profiles are in place, strengthening Pillar 1 requires an emphasis on equitable, high-quality implementation. Existing recruitment plans and plans to move toward living wages and equitable pay also need implementation at this stage. As transitions occur, it is especially critical to have credible data to guide the design of innovative approaches that will build the capacity of the current workforce at a time when there are likely to be gaps in qualifications and continuing shortages of well-qualified pre-primary personnel.

There are five recommendations for the initiating stage of Pillar 1.

7. Build the capacity of subnational officials and other stakeholders to implement and monitor implementation of qualifications, competencies and job profiles

Subnational and local implementation is key for the initiating stage of Pillar 1, by:

- providing programme managers and field officers with clearer information about their responsibilities to recruit qualified teachers at all levels;

- conducting an initial survey to identify the sources of potential candidates;

- devising recruitment strategies based on the survey and other relevant data from the local context.

8. Align the content of pre-primary professional development programmes with established competencies and job profiles

The competencies and job profiles that were developed nationally at the latent stage must now be integrated with all professional development programmes (whether public or private, and for pre-service or in-service CPD). The initiating stage involves:

- communication about the competencies and job profiles as a first step;

- involvement of professional development providers, to ensure buy-in and expert input;

- creation of an operational plan to review and revise existing professional development programmes with other interested parties;

- monitoring of the process to ensure consistent implementation (see Pillars 2 and 3 for related recommendations);

- identifying and subsequently closing any gaps in provision to ensure equitable opportunities for participants in professional development.

9. Develop strategies to bridge the gap between teachers' current qualifications and those re-quired when the workforce strategy is fully implemented

Pre-primary personnel may need to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding by augmenting their existing qualifications, either because these are at a lower level than what is now required, or because their qualifications are in a different field, such as psychology, or primary or secondary education. The following are measures to close gaps in workforce qualifications:

- conduct a training needs analysis, in particular surveying current practitioners who need to acquire qualifications at a higher level or in a different subject;

- provide bridging courses at diploma or certificate level to enable less qualified personnel to acquire some of the skills and competencies that they would otherwise have developed through a full, formal pre-service course at an HEI;

- use a competency framework to design specific courses and CPD initiatives that will close the skills gaps;

- involve technical training institutes and colleges of education in the design and implementation of courses;

- consider alternative delivery options, such as online courses or outreach provision with HEI oversight and accreditation (see Pillars 2 and 3 for related recommendations).

Effective monitoring of pre-primary workforce development initiatives

Systematic monitoring of pre-primary workforce development programmes allows for the generation of appropriate information and feedback at relevant local, regional or national levels. This information should support open exchange, review, evaluation and the development of competencies at all levels in the system. Monitoring is most effective when information collected at the 'teacher' or individual level is aligned with information collected at many different levels of the system, such as individual pre-primary centres, training institutions and policy-making bodies. The focus of such monitoring should be primarily on children's well-being and on staff engagement with children and families,[30] with emphasis on creating conditions for continuous improvement of pre-primary practices.[31]
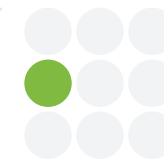
10. Use data on pay structures and working conditions to continue to address remuneration inequities

At the latent stage, you will have developed a process for mapping the pay structures and work conditions of pre-primary personnel across settings and programme providers. At the initiating stage, you can now use this data to:

● motivate national and regional governments to reduce identified inequities;

● help to ensure, in the long term, that pre-primary teachers are paid on a par with primary teachers, and that personnel in other job categories (such as pre-primary supervisors and trainers) also have equitable remuneration.

Madrasa Project in East Africa

The Madrassa Project in East Africa has used innovative strategies to attract and retain a local workforce. Their approach starts with an approximately one-year period to establish relations with the local community. After this period, when the link between the school and the community has been established, the school management committee, the teachers and the parents go together through a two-year training programme. Fostering community relationships and engaging the community in the process has proved to be critical to build interest in and support for pre-primary education services and jobs.[32]

11. Implement plans for recruitment and develop strategies for staff retention

By this stage, comprehensive plans to recruit personnel, based on data regarding deployment and supply gaps, should be in place. Their implementation requires coordination from national to subnational levels in order to target the areas of greatest need and to ensure culturally relevant approaches are used to attract potential recruits into pre-primary education. In implementing these plans, you will need to:

● develop retention strategies, which need to be regionally and culturally appropriate;

● develop career progression pathways ladders that give classroom teachers the opportunities for growth, such as becoming expert teachers or trainers;

● consider non-monetary incentives (such as public recognition ceremonies) to raise the status of the profession in local communities;

● consider whether performance-related pay ('merit pay') would be feasible and effective (see Pillars 2 and 3 for more discussion of performance monitoring);

● monitor the effectiveness of the recruitment strategies and revise the original plan as needs change over time.
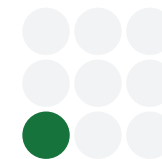
Established stage: Make adjustments and improvements towards full implementation

Pillar 1, Qualifications: Established stage:

In a continuous improvement approach, countries that have a well-established system of pre-primary qualifications, competencies and job profiles will continue to set goals to enhance their effectiveness. Even if strong policies ensure that qualified, motivated teachers are in place, these will need regular review and adjustment in response to new research or changing demographics. Additionally, equitable pay structures that are sufficient to recruit and retain effective personnel may need further attention. Improved communication and sharing of responsibilities across national, subnational and local entities may be needed.

There are four recommendations for the established stage of Pillar 1.

At the established stage, improvement steps and strategies are likely to be highly specific to the context, but some of the following recommendations may be useful to consider.
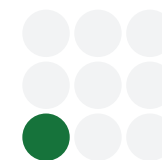
12. Advocate for, and create pathways towards, full implementation of pre-primary qualifications

At this stage, considerable progress will have been made towards establishing and fulfilling the desired qualifications for various pre-primary positions, although full implementation may not yet be achieved. To that end, you may consider various approaches to help your project to progress, including the introduction of:

- collaborative work between government and educational institutions to develop advocacy strategies and incentives (such as scholarships), so that more students will be able to take up academic programmes in ECE;

- programmes that are configured to suit local conditions, such as those that allow potential students to retain their current job while studying part-time;

- incentive programmes, such as those offering pay increases and/or recognition for achievement;

- cohort programmes, in which a group of teachers from the same area enrol in higher education – particularly helpful for mature students returning to education;

- programme monitoring for the effectiveness of various incentives and alternative pathways, with the information used to promote continuous improvement.

13. Increase access and equity by regularly reviewing competencies, job profiles and pay structures

The competencies and job profiles that were developed nationally at the latent stage must now be integrated with all professional development programmes (whether public or private, and for pre-service or in-service CPD). The initiating stage involves:

- using high-quality data to measure and track the effectiveness of long-term plans related to issues such as salary equity, teacher recruitment and retention of qualified staff, resulting in new and revised policies, directives and plans;

- prompting the creation of well-designed communication channels and coordination mechanisms across national, subnational and local governments, thus empowering localized recruitment of teachers and other pre-primary personnel;

- operationalizing teacher retention strategies at the subnational level;

- providing a precise means of monitoring provision.
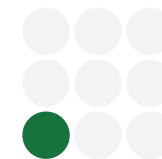
14. Examine the current fit between job profiles, available specializations and local needs

Data may reveal continuing or new gaps in the availability of pre-primary personnel. New specializations may be needed to deal with contexts such as:

- conflict situations in the country, creating an urgent need for specialists in early childhood mental health;

- new government initiatives, such as those targeting the prevention of stunted growth, requiring greater capacity for nutrition-related competencies.

Keeping the need for such adjustments under review and adjusting job profiles and specialized competencies in response will be vital for continuous improvement of the provision (see Pillars 2 and 3 for more discussion of specializations and alternative career options).

15. Promote continuous improvement by sharing successes

At the established stage for Pillar 1, countries are likely to have significant accomplishments. For example, perhaps great progress has been made in the percentage of fully qualified teachers, or equal pay policies are finally being implemented, or there has been substantial improvement in the use of monitoring data to inform changes in workforce policies, including gaining consistency between public and private provision. Now is the time to:

- celebrate and share successes with colleagues in other countries, either face to face or through distance technologies;

- create novel learning opportunities among professional networks to learn from not only from one another's successes, but also from common challenges.

Pillar 2: Pre-service training

1 LATENT STAGE

Create high-quality teacher preparation

Four recommendations

2 INITIATING STAGE

Initiating stage: Develop high-quality programmes and establish the foundations of quality assurance

Five recommendations

3 ESTABLISHED STAGE

Established stage: Strengthen further implementation and embed monitoring systems for quality improvement

Three recommendations

2

Pillar 2:
Pre-service training

This section summarizes some of the key issues relevant for Pillar 2 and proposes recommendations for addressing these issues. The recommendations move in sequence from the latent stage to the established stage. It is important to look across the three stages to identify which recommendations are most useful to your context, and to be aware of the recommendations you will consider as work progresses.

Key issues relevant for Pillar 2

Checklist of issues to consider for Pillar 2: Pre-service training
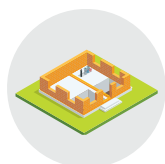
Latent stage

Programmes to prepare pre-primary teachers to enter the classroom — or to enter other positions — are essential components of workforce strategies. Such preparation predicts the quality of pre-primary services as well as children's later educational success. At the latent stage, typically, a country has few if any opportunities for teachers to receive pre-service or 'initial' preparation programmes for ECE teachers. Existing programmes may provide initial training but are not aligned with competencies and do not lead to formal qualifications. At the same time, HEIs in the country lack technical capacity to design suitable academic programmes, and the government has no policy to develop such programmes, including interim steps.
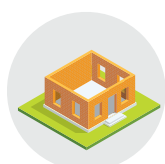
Initiating stage

At the initiating stage, pre-service or initial training programmes have been developed and are in implementation, but in many cases there are no clear pathways from these to formal certification, diplomas or degrees. Additionally, these may not yet be well-synchronized with the country's teacher competencies, and they may not adequately reflect relevant content and sound instructional methods. Many programmes that exist under private providers may remain unregulated and not consistent with government expectations for the extent and content of pre-service training. Relatively few pre-primary teachers may have access to such programmes, whether these are short pre-service courses of study or full university degrees. Higher education capacity and engagement remain in need of improvement. Overall monitoring of workforce strategy implementation is still insufficient.

- [ ] Few, if any, systematic pre-service training programmes are available specific to pre-primary education. Only brief orientation or workshops may be available.
- [ ] The government has no comprehensive plan, or policy directives, regarding the extent and content of required pre-service education.
- [ ] HEIs do not have adequate capacity and faculty to support pre-primary academic programmes; there are few or no higher education faculty specializations in early childhood. Few or no departments of ECE may exist in the country.
- [ ] Competencies to guide the content of pre-service programmes are not available, and there is not yet a plan to monitor implementation of pre-service policies and programmes.
- [ ] Career trajectories for pre-primary per-sonnel are not yet developed.

- [ ] Some systematic pre-service training pro-grammes specific to pre-primary education are in place; however, these may still not be of sufficient intensity or length to ensure adequate preparation.
- [ ] Pre-service training programmes don't systematically lead to formal credentials. Links with higher education courses are few, and training programmes run by private providers are unregulated.
- [ ] HEIs have recently developed or are be-ginning to implement programmes, but these are not linked well to national professional and training competencies and to good practice in pre-primary teacher preparation. The depth of preparation may be insufficient.
- [ ] A system for recognition and licensing of pre-service programmes has not been fully developed.
- [ ] Few policy directives are available to guide existing secondary or post-secondary /university-led pre-service pro-grammes.
- [ ] Pre-service training remains primarily theoretical.
- [ ] Connections remain weak between pre-service programmes in pre-primary and in primary education, and between pre-service and CPD programmes.

Checklist of issues to consider for Pillar 2: Pre-service training

Established stage

At the established stage, well-designed and well-implemented pre-service programmes exist, but challenges may still persist, hindering the process of reform and continuous improvement. These challenges may include low participation rate in pre-service programmes (especially those that confer degrees and certification or licensure); inconsistent compliance with national directives at the subnational level; a need for regular review of existing recognition and licensing of pre-service programmes under both public and private auspices; and the need for a broader range of pre-service content to address the needs of all pre-primary personnel. Additional data may be needed to document the impact of quality pre-service education on graduates' competence.

☐ Take-up of pre-service programmes may be low, especially for those in remote areas, with alternatives to traditional higher education remaining limited.

☐ Opportunities for progress to more advanced study and preparation for diverse and specialized pre-primary roles remain limited.

☐ Subnational compliance with government and policy directives for pre-service pro-grammes remains inconsistent; licensing systems and their effectiveness not regularly reviewed.

☐ Regular reviews of pre-service pro-gramme content and implementation are not taking place regularly.

☐ Policy directives are focused primarily on teacher centred approaches; there is a need for more focus on experimental learning and child centred activities.

☐ Professional development opportunities for pre-service training providers (including replacement faculty) need to be strengthened.

☐ Initial training may benefit from further focus on reflective competencies.
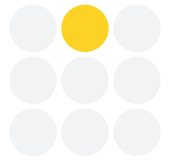
Recommendations for Pillar 2

Latent stage: Create high-quality teacher preparation

Pillar 2, Pre-service training: Latent Stage
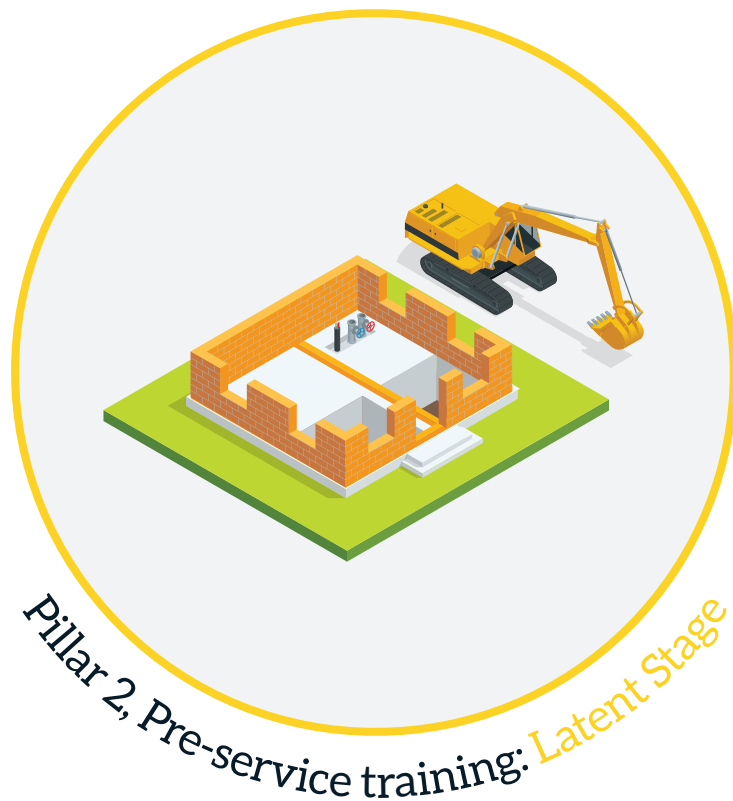
At the latent stage of Pillar 2, governments will need to focus on creating a set of basic policies, directives, capacity-building plans and monitoring frameworks to address challenges that affect pre-service teacher preparation. Interim strategies will be important in designing realistic short-term and long-term plans for implementing and connecting various pre-service training initiatives. These steps will help ensure a good foundation for later implementation of a comprehensive, effective system of preparation for the pre-primary workforce.

There are four recommendations for the latent stage of Pillar 2.

2

Pillar 2, Pre-service training:

LATENT STAGE
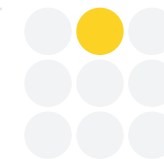
1. Develop a comprehensive plan to guide the development of pre-service training

At this early stage of the development of pre-service training, three key elements are needed for planning: (i) an overall vision for the nature and format of pre-service provision, (ii) training delivery systems, and (iii) realistic targets for step-by-step implementation in the period between early implementation and a fully developed pre-service system. Begin by drawing up plans for:

● an interim training scheme that sets out proposals for short programmes of pre-service training;

● the use of providers both within and outside the higher education system;

● expectations for how the professional competencies for pre-primary teachers will be implemented (see Pillar 1 for more details);

● alignment of plans and policies with any existing national and regional pre-service programmes, so that the core competencies for all pre-primary personnel are supported by the proposed pre-service training programmes;

● the general content and training approaches for pre-service provision, which should focus on strengthening prospective the ability of teachers to implement good practice;

● identification of the key government departments, partners and forms of delivery to help inform the work of academic institutions and their partners;

● interim policy directives for those involved in phasing in new or reformed pre-service programmes, including HEIs and other providers outside the higher education system.

Pre-service alternatives outside of higher education institutions

In many contexts, pre-service preparation occurs in higher education programmes. However, there are alternative approaches for those who have not begun to serve as pre-primary teaching staff to follow a pathway to qualification, a combination between pre-service and in-service training that is linked to practice and to the local context.[33]

2. Build long-term pre-service capacity by developing relationships with expert partners

Even at the latent stage, efforts can be underway to create the foundations of working relationships with international experts, universities and training institutes with pre-primary expertise to promote pre-service capacity-building. These networks can be formed by:

- forging links with providers, particularly HEIs, which are central to this process;

- ensuring that governments work closely with development partners, including international universities, technical institutes and expert partners to identify and develop terms of reference for partnership work, including proposals by which partners, as part of their technical assistance to government, may consider funding particular activities;

- encouraging virtual and face-to-face collaboration to allow existing and potential pre-service training providers to connect with ECE communities in ways that build capacity, for example through shared sessions, faculty exchange and joint research;

- developing CPD programmes simultaneously with pre-service training to create coherent, coordinated professional routes for the pre-primary teaching profession.

3. Develop the foundations for new pre-service training programmes

Before teachers enter the profession, comprehensive, competency-focused training programmes should lay the foundation for development of a strong ECE workforce.

- Building on existing initiatives when possible, countries can provide technical support to colleges of education, university departments and others to develop pre-primary training programmes to meet future teachers' qualification requirements and professional needs.

- Pre-service programmes may draw upon international examples, adapting to the national context.

- All new pre-service programmes should be aligned with the country's professional competencies and promote the country's desired child outcomes, responding to the national context and the characteristics of those who will undertake the course of study.

Pre-service programme in Pakistan

Because there are few trained ECE teachers in Pakistan, primary teachers teach preschool classes. In the Releasing Confidence and Creativity early childhood programme, primary school teachers are trained to work with a specific early childhood curriculum. After six months of training they receive a qualification. All the trainees are mentored by pre-primary professionals during their initial field work (four months) and in the monitoring and follow-up phases. Fol-lowing the training period, the new teachers are coached by an experienced teacher to improve their practice and share successful pedagogical practices.[34]

4. Create incentivized systems that can potentially motivate higher education faculty to increase their expertise in pre-primary content knowledge, research skills and good practice in ECE

In most countries, higher education faculty have difficulty balancing their multiple responsibilities. Many teach at more than one institution or have other jobs. Many were trained in other disciplines, may have had little or no research training, and are given no released time for scholarly activities. However, higher education networks can be a useful source of expertise. For example, Harvard University's Centre on the Developing Child has expertise and resources that can be used across contexts to develop the content of academic programmes.[35] Similarly, the Aga Khan Foundation's madrasa resource centres in Kenya, Uganda and Zanzibar are examples of teacher education and preschool curricula that are closely connected to the local contexts.[36]

Thus, collaboration within the global academic network can lead to gains, by:

- instituting mentorships, interinstitutional research traineeships and other capacity-building activities to expand faculty members' content knowledge and research skills;

- locating faculty members in other disciplines who can be incentivized by development partners to learn more about the pre-primary field;

- joint working among national and international colleagues, focusing on locally relevant research, perhaps including qualitative teacher research;

- motivating academic faculty to expand their knowledge and contribute to country-specific research evidence that can inform their own academic programmes and those of others.

Initiating stage: Develop high-quality programmes and establish the foundations of quality assurance

Pillar 2, Pre-service training: Initiating Stage

Strengthening Pillar 2 at the initiating stage requires an emphasis on the development of high-quality academic programmes that are tailored to realize the competencies that a country aims to develop in its pre-primary workforce. Additional emphasis may be given to setting up quality assurance mechanisms related to licensing and recognition of pre-service programmes. Finally, there needs to be a strong focus on content, making it more relevant to pre-primary teachers and better aligned with current research and international recommendations.

There are five recommendations for the initiating stage of Pillar 2.

5. Implement programmes for pre-service training alongside provider partners

At this stage, academic programmes begin to be implemented, perhaps first leading to a certificate or diploma and subsequently a degree in pre-primary education. The steps needed are:

- development by HEIs of suitable, government-approved programmes that are offered in collaboration with professional development providers in the private sector, who can create access for communities in need of training;

- capitalization of relationships among HEIs and their international counterparts to re-view existing or new programmes to keep their content and methodology dynamic and up to date, in line with international standards, while also taking local contexts into account;

- using links with pre-primary schools and national and subnational government service commissions to find positions for graduates as pre-primary teachers, and to allow students to visit local preschools to gain work experience in an ECE setting.

- interim policy directives for those involved in phasing in new or reformed pre-service programmes, including HEIs and other providers outside the higher education system.

6. Use a variety of evaluation approaches to ensure pre-service programmes help students achieve professional competencies

All pre-service programmes should be linked to nationally identified professional competencies, and promote the achievement of these competencies. This is achieved by providers and government working in partnership to:

- align all programmes, from local pre-employment short courses to full university degrees, so that all training reflects the nationally identified professional competencies;

- link the professional competencies to the early learning standards,[37] so that all teachers are trained to promote children's achievement of these standards;

- review the early learning standards and pre-primary professional competencies and align them with newly developed pre-service programmes;

- develop realistic strategies and tools to assess students' progress, using other sources where possible, to continuously assess pre-service students and new graduates to see whether pre-service programmes are helping them understand and practise skills related to ECE outcomes and competencies;

- conduct direct observation of student teachers, as well as follow-up surveys of graduates, and research on outcomes for children who are taught by programme graduates;

- optionally, form a core group of national and international experts to review pre-service course content for alignment with the competencies and standards.

7. Revise policies for pre-service programmes to increase access and to recognize successful completion by teachers

In the initiating stage of Pillar 2, based on the pre-service programmes being implemented across the country, governments may review their expectations and, if necessary, revise them based on the experience of the programmes, by:

● considering issues of access and phasing in, so that future teachers can find initial training programmes to at least get them on the first step toward qualified teacher status;

● developing multiple ways in which programmes can be accessed, in order to increase reach and diversity;

● recognizing teachers who have successfully completed pre-service training, for example through a licensing system that is periodically reviewed and renewed, with the input of a national accreditation body, the government department responsible for teacher training, HEIs and other professional development providers, and the ministry of education.

8. Implement a system of licensing and recognition for higher education institutions and other providers

The process of quality assurance involves registration, licensing and recognition. Typically, governments develop a process of to cover all pre-service provision, including public and private providers. This ensures that programme quality is consistent, and prospective students are made aware of the status of programmes in which they might enrol. When establishing quality assurance mechanisms, you will need to:

● be realistic about your context, and consider adaptations that recognize the realities of current provision (e.g., short training courses and non-HEI provision, where HEI provision is in short supply);

● ensure that all such programmes attend to the core professional competencies and use appropriate content and pedagogy.

● optionally, form a core group of national and international experts to review pre-service course content for alignment with the competencies and standards.

9. Focus attention on the key theoretical constructs, pedagogy and evidence-based content for pre-primary education programmes

As pre-service programmes begin to be implemented across the country, attention is needed to key elements in the course of study, by:

- basing decisions on recent, reliable research in areas such as early learning and development, pedagogical practice, assessment of young children, inclusive education, multilingualism, parent and carer engagement, as well as the country's cultures and core values;

- giving equal weight to both theoretical and practice-related content;

- providing many opportunities for students to observe and practise the essential skills they have learned in a real-life setting, followed by reflective practice with their peers;

- providing opportunities for students to visit pre-primary schools to observe, participate in and reflect on good practice in ECE;

- facilitating discussions that enable students to connect these experiences with key theoretical constructs and research;

- using data from student interviews and surveys to assess whether and how well these strategies are being implemented.

Practice-based training in Burkina Faso

While building the knowledge base of teachers is critical, it is also imperative that teachers are adequately skilled to handle real-life situations. In Burkina Faso, the national training programme in social work places a strong emphasis on practice, with internships included as part of the curriculum.[38] Of course, ideas from other countries will require adaptation in curriculum and teaching methods to suit the diversity of children and contexts.

Established stage: Strengthen further implementation and embed monitoring systems for quality improvement

Pillar 2, Pre-service training: Established stage

At the established stage of Pillar 2, in countries where the pre-service component of the pre-primary subsector has been generally well-implemented, reforms may be undertaken to build on the strong foundation and continue the momentum. Hence, actions at this stage may involve promoting the take-up of academic programmes, building incentive-based systems and outreach mechanisms to encourage participation, ensuring updated licensing and recognition systems, and establishing pre-service programmes that prepare teachers for different roles in the pre-primary subsector. Emphasis should also be given to including the full range and alignment of academic programmes, from those delivered as short courses in communities, through basic degree programmes, to advanced study at the master's and doctoral levels. At this stage, monitoring efforts should seek a range of data on implementation and effectiveness, with equity of access and quality in mind. There are three recommendations for the established stage of Pillar 2.

There are three recommendations for the established stage of Pillar 2.

10. Further reduce barriers to participation in pre-service academic programmes

Social mobilization and advocacy programmes are critical in raising community awareness of the need for quality teachers in ECE, and of the academic pathways to achieving it. In advocating wider participation, consider:

- how your advocacy will help prospective students to see pre-primary teaching as a professional career path, leading to a variety of positions and levels of responsibility;

- whether development partners and implementing organizations can support advocacy strategies by involving local government, women's groups, local NGOs, existing teachers and social workers, with the aim of educating and informing communities about the pre-primary subsector and the importance of the role of ECE teachers in shaping the lives of young children;

- whether you need additional modes for delivering pre-service training programmes (e.g., distance learning) that have been found to reduce barriers to participation;

- how you will collect sufficient reliable data to identify gaps in participation, and how collaboration with local leaders will generate solutions.

11. Support potential candidates for pre-service training within the higher education system

Incentive-based structures can help develop public demand for pre-service programmes. Options include scholarships, progressive course design staggered over time to allow gradual completion, accreditation of prior and informal learning, and participation in CPD. Consider how students can be encouraged to progress up the career ladder. Among the options to consider are:

- scholarships, especially in areas where participation is low or the need is high;

- a clear, step-by-step pathway in academic programmes, with flexible options throughout that allow participants to acquire a basic certificate, and going all the way to a doctoral degree;

- technology-aided models of recruitment and delivery, which can be piloted before being rolled out regionally or nationally;

- allowing students to step on and off programmes as their life circumstances permit. Motivation is maintained if certificates mark each step in the career pathway, with many options along the way, including returning to education to renew and top up qualifications after a career break;

- accrediting prior educational and teaching experiences, by accounting for them when candidates apply.

Incentivizing pre-primary teachers in Croatia

Croatia requires higher education qualifications for working with children from 6 months to 7 years of age (a three-year bachelor's degree). Graduates can continue to follow a postgraduate two-year study for a master's degree in Early and Pre-primary Education. Specialized study is provided for pedagogues, psychologists, special needs teachers, nurses and assistants. More than half of the early childhood workforce has this bachelor's level teacher training.[39]

12. Develop a monitoring and review system to further improve programme structure, delivery and classroom practice

Most countries follow a cascade model of teacher training, with consistent content and competencies, yet with multiple modes of delivery. This approach makes quality assurance a key factor in continuous improvement. Even with evidence-based competencies and course designs in place, poor implementation may change the goals and outcomes of pre-service training. In starting to embed systems for monitoring and review, consider:

- looking closely at training sessions to familiarize yourself with the rationale for the methods used, and the style of presentation and interaction, and indicators of student satisfaction;

- developing supportive mechanisms for on-site monitoring, with well-trained monitoring staff, as part of an integrated national workforce development strategy;

- implementing a review mechanism for the licensing system to ensure that quality is continuously monitored;

- periodically evaluating the provision, using quality parameters and standards, and the input of regulatory authorities such as boards of education, teacher regulatory bodies and national accreditation committees;

- commissioning independent evaluation studies to determine the performance and functioning of the pre-service programme licensing and recognition systems.

Pillar 3: Continuing professional development

1 LATENT STAGE

Latent stage: Establish basic policies and directives for CPD

Three recommendations

2 INITIATING STAGE

Initiating stage: Implement CPD policies

Five recommendations

3 ESTABLISHED STAGE

Established stage: Review and refine CPD policies

Six recommendations

3

Pillar 3: Continuing professional development

This section summarizes some of the key issues relevant for Pillar 3 and proposes recommendations for addressing these issues. The recommendations move in sequence from the latent stage to the established stage. It is important to look across the three stages to identify which recommendations are most useful to your context, and to be aware of the recommendations you will consider as work progresses.

Checklist of issues to consider for Pillar 3: Continuing professional development
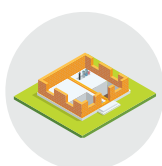
Latent stage

Opportunities for CPD are essential for a strong pre-primary workforce. In many low- and middle-income countries, teachers have limited access to higher education, and so much of their professional support takes place in community settings. This kind of continuing support may be absent entirely, or low in quality, at the early stages of workforce development. If the country is at this early point, a number of specific challenges need attention.

- ☐ There is no policy or expectation for CPD, or the policy is very limited in scope. Government requirements do not yet specify that pre-primary teachers and other personnel must engage in CPD. In some countries, there is a CPD requirement but not specific to pre-primary or only covering limited content.
- ☐ CPD is absent or only minimally available in most parts of the pre-primary system.
- ☐ There is little or no institutional capacity to develop and implement CPD programmes. Such capacity is needed both by colleges of education and by other training institutions in government agencies or NGOs.
- ☐ Teachers receive no pay or very low pay.
- ☐ No strategy exists for recruiting pre-primary teachers
- ☐ Leaders who will be responsible for establishing standards and qualifications lack relevant background knowledge.

Initiating stage

Countries in which the basic foundation for CPD may be in place – policies, expected outcomes, a basic strategy for implementation and monitoring, a plan for institutional capacity-building – are in a good position to further develop this pillar of the pre-primary workforce. A number of challenges continue to be evident, often with respect to uneven or inequitable implementation and a lack of connection to pre-service programmes. Careful attention is also needed to the content of in-service training to ensure that pre-primary personnel have opportunities to practise essential skills on an ongoing basis.

- ☐ Opportunities for CPD are not yet widely available to pre-primary personnel. Although there may be policies and expectations specific to CPD, equitable access remains limited by geographic location, availability of trainers, and insufficient access for diverse pre-primary and primary staff. Monitoring data are not being used to identify gaps in access.
- ☐ At the national and subnational levels, institutional capacity to support CPD for a range of pre-primary personnel is not fully developed. Some capacity among higher education and other training organizations exists but is not yet meeting the needs of personnel working in varied roles and contexts; training institutions are not using CPD to connect pre-primary and other parts of the education sector to ensure effective transitions.
- ☐ The content and methods used in CPD do not consistently reflect good practice for high-quality, effective training. There is insufficient emphasis on mastering specific practices through the use of active learning and reflection. On-the-job CPD remains unavailable or is limited to inspection visits.
- ☐ Regulation and monitoring of CPD programmes, with the goal of continuous improvement, are not implemented. Where monitoring takes place, it does not aim for quality improvement.
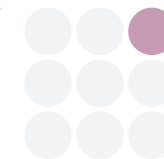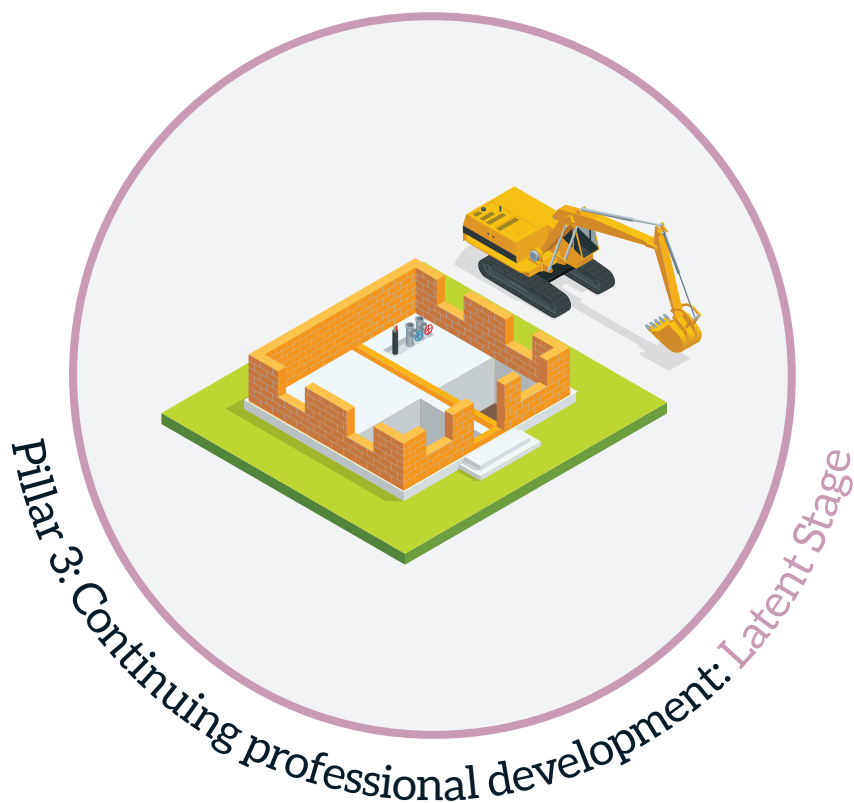
Established stage

Governments that have a well-established system for CPD provision may still have areas for improvement. Even strong policies and sound professional development offerings are likely to need updating and further evaluation in response to new research or changing demographics. Specialized training may also be added to the country's basic system, guided by data on teachers' performance and training needs. Attention needs to be paid to linking CPD and pre-service programmes in an integrated workforce development strategy. Communication across national, subnational, and local entities engaged in CPD may need greater attention. A focus on these and other issues is likely to enhance even a fully functioning CPD system.

☐ Policies and directives for CPD and its links with other professional development have not been reviewed and updated to ensure currency and responsiveness. If CPD is now well-established, its framework may have been developed some years ago, thus requiring careful review in light of new knowledge, results from ongoing monitoring of CPD and changing conditions in the country.

☐ The available in-service training is not sufficiently linked to practice, and there is not enough focus on coaching in practice.

☐ Subnational capacity to implement practice-based, reflective CPD in a range of contexts and content areas remains limited. Subnational issues may include lack of specialized training in areas such as special needs, multilingualism and pre-primary to primary linkages and transitions.

☐ Access to quality pre-primary CPD is not yet reaching all relevant personnel. Non-teaching personnel (such as programme directors, trainers, and supervisors) and those in the primary subsector have their own CPD needs that are not yet being addressed.

☐ CPD programmes exist across the country, but they are not consistently evaluated or recognized for quality in their content, methods and training of personnel, including their documented effects on teacher performance. The methods and effectiveness of such recognition have not been regularly reviewed and updated.

☐ The coaches that are supporting the teachers do not use methods that have been proven to be successful in improving pedagogical practice.

Recommendations for Pillar 3

Latent stage: Establish basic policies and directives for CPD

Pillar 3. Continuing professional development: Latent Stage

At the latent stage of introducing CPD, the focus is likely to be on examining the current status of CPD, establishing basic policies and directives and building institutional capacity. These actions will help ensure a good foundation for later implementation of an effective system of CPD for the pre-primary workforce.

There are five recommendations for the latent stage of Pillar 3.
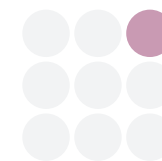
A few notes on CPD

- A recent Eurofound study found that a system of CPD can increase the quality of ECE and influence children's outcomes when the programmes are intensive and are implemented for at least two years.[40]

- There is evidence that that comprehensive, long-term CPD can yield beneficial effects equal to those of initial (pre-service) professional preparation. Countries that currently have no initial training requirements or opportunities can focus on intense, continuous professional development, ideally with more individualized, intense forms of coaching during child-free hours. To be beneficial, such coaching should be provided by specialized pedagogical coaches who use methods that stimulate teachers to critically reflect on their pedagogical practices.[41]

- Depending on the prior education and training level of teachers, the length and intensity of in-service training can vary:

  Option 1: If teachers in the country have received extensive, high quality pre-service preparation, then CPD may be relatively brief, perhaps a few days per year.

  Option 2: If teachers in the country have little or no pre-service preparation or have received their formal education in a different specialization, or were prepared many years ago, then they require more sustained, comprehensive CPD, with emphasis on practice-based learning.

1. Develop policies, directives and a monitoring framework to guide CPD provision

At this stage of CPD development, creating interim policies is a good start, for example by:

- setting down the requirements for a specific, realistic number of hours of annual CPD, linked to the qualifications referred to in Pillar 1;

- targeting a specific group, such as pre-primary teachers, with other personnel added later;

- linking policies to the national standards for pre-primary competencies and to training competencies concerning the nature of CPD provision;

- considering the interaction between pre-service training (Pillar 2) and CPD, so that even at the early stages, CPD is an integral part of an overall workforce development system;

- referring to the general expectations for content and training methods, with an emphasis on teachers strengthening their ability to implement effective practice for pre-primary children's learning;

- beginning work on monitoring and quality improvement for CPD.
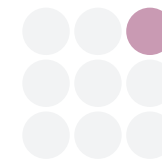
2. Assess the current status of CPD provision

The development of CPD as part of the workforce development strategy should be based on basic knowledge of the current CPD landscape. The results of this kind of analysis will show the size and location of gaps in CPD provision and the areas of greatest need. It will also identify some key stakeholders to engage in the strategy development process.

- Using available data, focus group discussions and stakeholder interviews, start asking questions such as:

  - Who is currently providing current CPD?

  - Where does this take place?

  - Which categories of pre-primary personnel, if any, are receiving CPD (e.g., classroom teachers in government schools, teachers in NGO-supported classrooms)?

  - Are there any CPD programmes currently supporting the development of trainers or administrators?

  - Do public and/or private organizations have plans to develop CPD?

  - Is there evidence of good practice in CPD by individual providers?

- Probe the patterns of availability of existing CPD, for example by asking:

  - Are data available to show whether the distribution of CPD is equal across countries and regions, or whether particular parts of the region are better served than others?

  - Is any financial support available for teachers to fund their CPD?

  - Are teachers generally eager for more training?

  - What topic and delivery preferences do teachers have for CPD?

  - Where are the country's most vulnerable children, and what kind of CPD support, if any, do their teachers currently receive?

3. Develop a strategy to make basic CPD available to all pre-primary personnel

Equitable provision of CPD opportunities is essential to a strong workforce. Although at this stage it may not be feasible to implement a comprehensive programme of CPD, an important step is to devise a strategy for future implementation, using the findings of the landscape analysis in recommendation 2, by:

- developing a strategy collaboratively, with stakeholders including current and potential providers of CPD (even if that training is currently limited in scope), HEIs, relevant national and subnational government entities, and consumers of CPD – teachers, managers, trainers and other pre-primary staff;

- including interim steps, informed by the most pressing needs and priority groups;

- identifying existing programmes that can be scaled up;

- drawing up a clear plan for phasing in provision, with target dates and resources to keep CPD development on track.
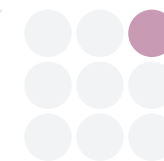
4. Begin to develop a coherent framework for CPD content, aligned with the pre-primary teacher competencies and pre-service training programmes

At the latent stage, this is likely to be a beginning effort, but an important one. This planning process will ensure a consistent foundation for CPD when it is later implemented or scaled up in the country, so that staff in diverse settings have not only equitable access to training, but also access to similar content, albeit modified to meet local conditions. Using the policies and directives established in Pillar 1, the goal is to build consensus around the core content and sequence of CPD, by:

- emphasizing practical skills in CPD programmes, rather than simply the transmission of information and theory;

- using the professional competencies developed for Pillar 1 to guide identification of the most important pre-primary teaching skills and attitudes;

- planning a coherent sequence of training modules that are designed to build those competencies using active learning methods;

- bringing education and training institutions into the planning process to ensure complementarity and alignment with pre-service training;

- reflecting the country's current context and realities in CPD development plans: Most LMICs will need to adopt CPD policies and programmes gradually in order to help current pre-primary teachers gain college and/or university accreditation.

Consider, as an interim measure, using high-quality, community-based training, while planning for a later transfer of credit to the higher education system (see Pillar 1 for additional discussion of this strategy).


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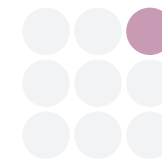
5. Strengthen capacity to provide quality CPD and monitoring mechanisms

As described in recommendation 1, information about the current landscape will be very useful in accomplishing this task. The first task is to establish which institutions – and in some cases, individuals – are either currently offering CPD to pre-primary teachers or might be able to do so in the future. This can be achieved by:

- asking questions through surveys, focus group discussions and interviews such as:

  - Is there a sufficient knowledge about effective methods of CPD, including coaching as well as group training?

  - What expertise exists in institutions about the desirable content for such training?

  - What adaptations of content are needed for those with varying job profiles and work contexts?

  - What are the optimum methods for assessing participants' engagement in, and later application of, CPD?

- measuring the capacity of current or potential CPD trainers:

  - Is there a pool of trainers with expertise in content and knowledge of effective training practices?

  - If not, how might trainers gain such knowledge and expertise?

- expanding some institutions' current mission to include pre-primary teachers as well as primary and secondary teachers;

- developing plans to train or retrain CPD providers;

- estimating the resources needed to build and sustain CPD capacity;

- partnering regional and national organizations to benefit from their valuable experience and expertise, and sharing this knowledge with providers who are responsible for CPD design and implementation.

Initiating stage: Implement CPD policies

Pillar 3. Continuing professional development: Initiating stage
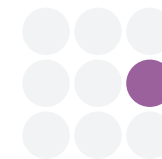
Strengthening Pillar 3 at the initiating stage requires a focus on equitable, high-quality, well-monitored implementation of CPD policies. This should ensure broad access to CPD opportunities and improve the quality of CPD provision. Especially critical is a focus on the alignment of CPD with national policies and pre-primary competencies, and the use of training methods that emphasize guided practice in critical professional skills. Again, strong connections with pre-service training providers and relevant HEIs are key to a strong, coordinated system.

There are five recommendations for the initiating stage of Pillar 3.
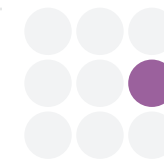
6. Engage stakeholders in ensuring that existing policies and directives are well understood and appropriately implemented

Nationally developed CPD policies may not, at the initiating stage, be well understood, implemented or monitored at the subnational level. This requires action to:

- implement systems for good communication and close monitoring to ensure adherence to the CPD frameworks established at the latent stage of Pillar 3;

- run national or regional workshops in partnership with HEIs and other CPD providers to create a dialogue about policy implementation, while simultaneously building stakeholder capacity;

- assess the progress of implementation:
    - Are there sufficient resources?
    - What is the capacity of current trainers and providers?
    - Is there provision for training or re-training of trainers that is consistent with new in-service expectations?
    - Are there step-by-step guides for trainers?

7. Increase the supply of CPD programmes in areas where coverage has been insufficient

At the initiating stage, it is likely that CPD opportunities are increasing, but gaps no doubt remain and will be revealed as data become available. Identifying and targeting these gaps is critical for progress. Increasing the supply requires multiple strategies.

Depending on the country context, strategies to increase the supply and reach of CPD may include:

- expanding the number of quality programmes by supporting and recognizing CPD delivered by the private sector, either with formal accreditation or incentives for alignment with the national teacher competencies;

- diversifying the location of CPD programmes to further target areas most in need of support for pre-primary teachers;

- piloting alternative methods of providing CPD, such as distance learning and through social media, which may reach teachers in remote areas;

- planning individual, on-site professional development, for example through short training sessions provided by the pre-primary principal/head teacher or coaching within a teacher's classroom.
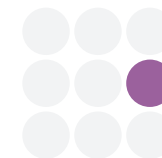
South Africa's Power Learning Around You (P.L.A.Y.) programme

P.L.A.Y. is an online in-service training programme for early childhood teachers in South Africa. P.L.A.Y. has two versions, one for teachers of children from birth to two years of age, and the other for two to five years, with 20 modules that can be completed at the teacher's own pace in a period between two and six weeks. The programme is accredited by the South African Council of Educators, not as a qualification but as credits for CPD. Not only teachers but also principals and managers are encouraged to complete the course. It aims to reach 150,000 practitioners and educators.[42]

8. Review the content and methods of current CPD programmes, monitor performance and improve their effectiveness

The focus of CPD programmes should be on developmentally appropriate teaching and learning that are consistent with the professional competencies previously identified. Existing CPD programmes should be examined for their alignment with identified competencies for pre-primary personnel, by:

- increasing the emphasis on practice, so that pre-primary teachers learn how to implement developmentally appropriate, engaging activities in their classrooms;

- including an element of reflective practice, so that teachers reflect on their work and consider what is working well, and what needs to improve;

- modelling train-the-trainer sessions and resources on active learning and demonstrating the practice and methodologies that teachers and other personnel (such as those responsible for allocating and delivering CPD) need to acquire;

- ensuring that teachers' resources give specific guidance on recommended schedules, teaching and learning activities and interacting with children;

- building ample time into CPD sessions for demonstrations, video examples with discussion, role play and other activities that let teachers practise what they will use in their classrooms, not just hear lectures about it;

- taking teachers' feedback on CPD into account for future design and implementation.
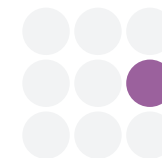
9. Assess the feasibility of, and develop a plan for, on-site coaching for pre-primary teachers

Increasing evidence supports the value of on-the-job reflection as a way to improve practice.[43] However, most LMICs have not yet implemented any kind of coaching except in small pilot programmes. If CPD is at the initiating stage, this may be a good time to explore various approaches to expanding on-site coaching, for example by:

- identifying existing coaching initiatives and discussing the feasibility and costs of broader implementation;

- encouraging participants to share their own small-scale coaching experiences and discussing the feasibility of broader implementation through questions such as:

  - Who might be the coaches?

  - Who would train future coaches and with what approach?

  - What resources would be needed and from what sources?

  - How would the effectiveness of coaching be assessed?

- depending on the goals and context, considering various delivery options, such as group coaching, peer coaching and distance coaching with video or other media;

- implementing coaching initiatives gradually, using the lessons learned from small initiatives to inform later scale-up.

The Wanda coaching model in Central and Eastern Europe

The Wanda model of group reflection developed by VBJK and Artevelde University College in Belgium has been implemented in four Central and Eastern European countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Croatia and Slovenia).[44] It appears that the use of this model increased the ability of educators to critically reflect on their practice and improve their pedagogical skills.
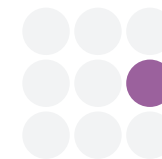
10. Use multiple strategies to build capacity to implement quality CPD

Some capacity-building strategies have been touched on in previous recommendations, such as improved training of trainers and additional practice-focused resources for teachers. At the institutional level, additional approaches are likely to be effective, such as:

- strengthening training institutions responsible for CPD – these could be government or private training providers that currently provide CPD for primary and secondary teachers, and who can be given resources and technical assistance to expand their CPD provision to ECE;

- increase the capacity of colleges of further education to oversee, support and participate in the evaluation of CPD, both for their own graduates and for community-based pre-primary teachers who have not yet participated in higher education;

- using quality CPD to feed into higher education programmes and strengthening the links and alignment between pre-primary and primary education;

- using collaboration between CPD providers and HEIs to discuss and design equivalency agreements, either limited to one institution or more generally, for example, by agreeing to equivalency between a certain number of CPD hours on a specific topic (such as family engagement) and a comparable course at a local college of further education.

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Established stage: Review and refine CPD policies

Pillar 3: Continuing professional development: Established stage

In a continuous improvement approach, countries that have a well-established system for CPD provision continue to set goals to enhance their systems. New research, changing demographics and new monitoring data lead to changes in CPD policies. Specialized training needs to be added to basic CPD programmes. Communication across national, subnational and local entities engaged in CPD needs further development. The following recommendations aim to make a country's CPD system a more effective component of workforce development.

There are six recommendations for the established stage of Pillar 3.

11. Review and monitor CPD policies and directives to ensure that they are current, responsive and consistent with international expectations

If the country is at the established stage, it is likely that its CPD policies were developed some time ago. Although the policies may seem to be working well, regular review and updating are important, and can be achieved by:

● investigating current research on CPD, within the country or internationally, to prompt revisions to methods and delivery systems;

● considering new policies to accommodate demographic change in the pre-primary workforce, for example in retirement and recruitment patterns;

● examining current CPD provision to ensure that it reflects both local responsiveness and general consistency with international good practice, and ensuring that where inconsistencies are found, policy directives and implementation meetings drive better coordination and consistency.

12. Further develop systems to recognize and approve high-quality CPD programmes and training institutions

Even if licensing and inspection systems were developed at the initiating stage, these should now be reviewed and, if necessary, strengthened. Whether CPD provision is delivered by public or private providers, their ability to support nationally defined professional competencies should be acknowledged, for example by:

● developing and introducing a tiered recognition system (such as a star rating) for grades of excellence, using a consortium of HEIs, NGOs and other interested parties;

● building in incentives for improvement, along with financial support for CPD programmes that have undertaken improvement initiatives.

13. Expand access to relevant CPD for all pre-primary personnel

At earlier stages, it is likely that the main focus of CPD will have been on classroom teachers. Now it is time to add training modules or short in-service programmes tailored for those in other roles, such as teaching assistants, trainers, coaches and mentors, administrators, technical operatives, supervisors and early childhood specialists, by:

- embedding a common core of knowledge, skills and understanding for all pre-primary personnel that sets out the fundamental principles of ECE: child development and early learning, family support, developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment, safeguarding and professional responsibilities;

- implementing alternative delivery modes to reach staff who cannot access in-service provision – for example through distance learning, massive open online courses, twilight sessions and mentoring partnerships with senior staff;

- paying particular attention to the needs of primary school teachers and administrators, ensuring that CPD emphasizes key pedagogical practices (such as small-group work, ex-tended projects and use of concrete materials) that should continue from pre-primary into the primary grades;

- strengthening connections between pre-primary and primary education by enabling teachers from both phases to take part in CPD together, sharing their experiences and reflecting together.

Training for other pre-primary personnel

In many lower-middle-income countries such as Ghana, Namibia and the Philippines, the teacher is supported by an assistant or volunteer.[45] Adapted shorter in-service training of these assistants or auxiliary staff must be set up that lead to qualification.[46]

14. Expand available CPD content to include special populations and contexts

In the earlier stages, core content for CPD was developed and implemented. It is likely that additional modules with more specialized content focus will now help strengthen the overall CPD offer. To begin this expansion into more specialized provision, it will be necessary to:

- conduct a needs assessment to show what content teachers and other personnel would find most helpful to deepen and supplement core training – examples include pre-primary science and mathematics, teaching bilingual or multilingual children. inclusive education for children with disabilities, approaches to family engagement, cultural responsiveness and supporting the development of children in post-conflict situations;

- align the specialized provision with pre-service training content so that specialized as well as core professional competencies are supported across all professional development roles and settings.

15. Strengthen the use of reflective practice within CPD, including peer learning and support

The CPD that is already being implemented is, if well-designed, already emphasizing teachers' mastery of developmentally appropriate practice, with opportunities for observation and trialling new ideas. At the established stage, greater emphasis may be placed on teacher reflection. Reflective approaches to CPD help personnel go beyond implementing what is given to them. Rather, teachers are helped to think critically about the fit with their own values, the children they teach and their own experiences. Reflective practice sees teachers taking a more active part in improving their practice when they reflect on and identify strategies for improvement. Reflective practice may be implemented by:

- adding to and modifying existing CPD programmes, especially those for personnel who have had substantial prior training;

- commissioning new content for training-the-trainer programmes to include demonstrations, master classes, observations, video interactions and guided practice, so that trainers themselves become more reflective;

- increasing access to CPD with the use of distance learning technologies and mentoring by senior teachers;

- helping to establish peer support networks for teachers in the same school or village to share good practice, and facilitating the creation of professional associations for senior managers and head teachers.

Supporting reflective practice and ownership in CPD in Chile

- In a two-year CPD programme for pre-primary teachers in Chile, a coach video records the teacher interacting with the children, so the teacher can later review the recording to reflect on his or her pedagogical practices before receiving feedback from the coach. There is evidence that the use of video interaction in coaching can be very effective in improving teachers' practice.[47]

- There is evidence that when teachers self-evaluate and create their own individual improvement plans, they are encouraged to assume individual responsibility for their professional growth and to share accountability for the entire organization's development. For example, in the Philippines, an individual plan for professional development is drawn up following a formal training and development needs assessment to guide each professional's CPD. Each teacher or other professional regularly and individually prepares, implements, monitors and updates their own IPPD individual plan for professional development.[48]

- Peer learning groups with a focus on exchanging interesting practices among different preschool institutions are greatly appreciated by practitioners; such groups can be powerful tools in changing teachers' methods and interactions.[49]

16. Ensure and evaluate opportunities for pre-primary teachers to have regular coaching and on-site support

At the initiating stage, plans were probably developed for how to create coaching opportunities, and perhaps some small-scale programmes were implemented and evaluated. For example, given the evidence of the effectiveness of coaching, the established stage is a good time to scale up these opportunities, by:

- training school principals, directors or lead teachers to serve as coaches and mentors;

- conducting group coaching with teachers from the same school, and virtual coaching through technology, or other strategies that fit the context;

- including coaching models, as well as other innovative approaches to pre-service and CPD training, in the regular pre-primary workforce monitoring plan, so that data on coaching implementation, and its effects on professional competencies may be used to guide improvement strategies and further scale up plans.

Site visits in South Africa

In rural South Africa, The Thusanang Trust has introduced an innovative mentoring approach to provide support to teachers, who receive advice and feedback about their classroom practice through site visits and the provision of materials.[50] Within pre-primary centres, there are 'peer and a mentor' programmes, in which peer groups of teachers are formed, and leaders within these groups are trained as mentors who organize meetings for teachers to share experiences, ideas and challenges. As a result, practitioners feel connected and supported, and the momentum of improvement is sustained.[51]

Moving forward with a comprehensive workforce strategy

If you have been working through this technical guidance, you will know that a strong pre-primary workforce is essential to the quality and sustainability of early learning services. The resources in this guidance have been designed to help you identify the specific issues in your country and the recommendations that may be most relevant as workforce development progresses from one stage to the next.

Now you will need to think about how to move forward. What decisions need to be made? What is the time frame? What options are there for a methodology that will connect with your government's education sector planning (ESP) processes?[52] Alignment with ESPs should now be brought to the fore, as this will help to secure committed funding, human resources and technical support.

This last section will help you with the next steps to take in your workforce development strategy, and in particular the decisions you will need to make. This is followed by a plan for running practitioner and/or stakeholder workshops.

Key decisions to guide workforce strategy development

Decisions about when and how to promote systematic action on workforce issues

Timing is important. Windows of opportunity may be opened through new government directives, through newly released data on critical needs for teachers, or by the potential for significant new funding. The country may be engaged in exercises such as appraisals of current policies on teacher training, ECE, or inspection, licensing and evaluation mechanisms. If your government is about to undertake or has recently undertaken the ESP process, this is an exceptional opportunity to propel the pre-primary workforce to the forefront of action planning.

Specific to the pre-primary subsector, perhaps your government has recently completed a comprehensive pre-primary analysis and planning workshop using UNICEF's Conceptual Framework and the accompanying analysis and planning tool. If so, this analysis will have considered the five core functions of the framework, including core function 3, which relates to the pre-primary workforce. Such an analysis will have provided insights into workforce needs as a distinct area and how those needs connect with, and are influenced by, the other core functions.

Decisions about whether to concentrate on immediate or long-term goals

The recommendations in this guidance show you how to address both immediate and long-term goals at the same time. You will need to keep in mind simultaneously your comprehensive vision and strategy for an effective pre-primary workforce, while taking the small interim steps toward realizing that vision.

For example, your government may have a target for all teachers to possess a college degree in pre-primary education. However, this is likely to take years to implement even in a few regions of the country. As suggested in the recommendations for Pillar 2, the interim steps might include the development of short preparatory courses that are taken by all new teachers. These would be designed with the oversight of HEIs, and be consistent with the national competency profiles, but delivered locally, including through distance learning.

Decisions about which pillar to emphasize

When deciding which of the three pillars should command the most attention, think about the context. A preliminary review of the current issues for each pillar (see Figure 2, section 2) and identification of the country's current stage of development for each one will help to identify the areas of greatest need.

It is difficult to imagine a workforce development initiative that ignores a lack of pre-primary teacher competencies, job profiles and expectations for levels of training (Pillar 2). Without these, much of the work for Pillars 1 and 3 will be difficult to

A comprehensive workforce development strategy builds on all 3 pillars
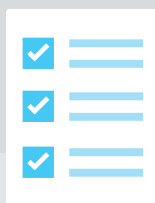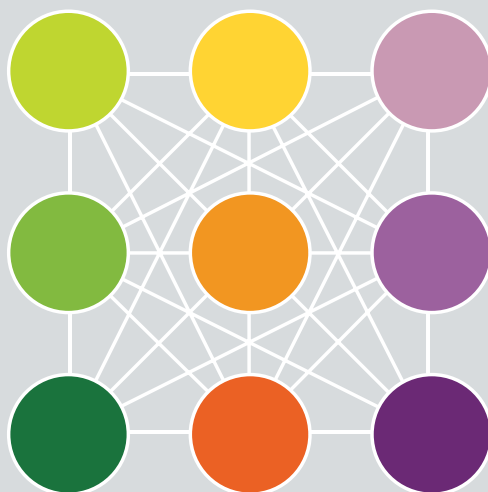
implement. That said, establishing government-approved qualifications and competence profiles takes time, so also think about the preparatory work taking place in other pillars, such as strategies to build the capacity of CPD providers so that they will be ready and motivated to implement programmes at the proper time. Similarly, data-gathering recommendations are made within every pillar because this activity will also prepare for implementation and provide material for advocacy around pre-primary workforce issues.

Decisions about how to move forward in the face of funding constraints

Many countries may need to consider cost-effectiveness as part of their overall reform and development of the pre-primary subsector, particularly when deciding which combination of pre-service and in-service training is needed in order to meet demand.[53] Again, this guidance describes varied strategies that take costs into account. For example, depending on level and content,

distance-learning training modules are often more cost-effective than extended face-to-face training at HEIs. Interim use of locally delivered, short pre-service courses cannot fully substitute high-quality degree programmes, but for many countries these may be a cost-effective option.

Governments often fail to prioritize workforce development in their budgets, especially for the pre-primary workforce. Advocacy around the value, added by a well-qualified pre-primary workforce, may help change such priorities, using both international research and local data. Again, tapping into the ESP process may create opportunities for concerted funding and clear strategies for pre-primary workforce development. This would mean that countries ensure workforce is included in the ESP.

Of course, additional funds allow additional workforce improvement initiatives to be added. Development partners are sources of support and strategic thinking on such issues.

Initiating the workforce development planning process

Running a collaborative workshop

Every country is different, so the following suggestions may not fit the context. However, in most situations a well-planned, collaborative workshop may help reach consensus on the major priorities and actions needed to make progress on pre-primary workforce challenges. Following such a workshop, follow-up steps with clear accountability will keep decisions in mind and generate both visibility and commitment.

Pre-workshop planning

- Be clear about goals.

- Identify key participants, including public and private providers as well as government officials, NGO representatives and others with a stake in a strong pre-primary workforce.

- Decide on optimal timing for such a workshop, taking into account ESP processes, government budget cycles and other country-specific factors.

- Identify a venue and schedule for the workshop that will encourage broad participation and allow participants to focus on the issues.

- Identify background materials for participants, including summaries of the current status of the workforce and key initiatives that are ongoing or planned.

The workshop

- Create an interactive agenda with skilled facilitation.

- Aim toward consensus on priority issues to tackle a selection of recommendations.

- Map decisions and plans onto a realistic timeframe of immediate and long-term plans.

- Identify follow-up steps with participant commitment: Who will be responsible for guiding follow-up, and what additional partners may be needed?

Post-workshop follow-up actions

- Confirm who will be responsible for which aspects of implementing the recommendations.

- Decide which subgroups are needed, for example to move forward on each Pillar or particular recommendations.

- Set up systems for communication and coordination between subgroups.

- Decide who will be responsible for making connections with other countries in the region that are addressing similar issues.

- If capacity-building is an issue, decide who will coordinate resources, including facilitating technical workshops.

- Set up communication channels and peer networks to help workshop participants and other stakeholders stay informed and engaged, and to share progress and challenges.

- Connect the workforce development priorities with work on other aspects of the pre-primary subsector.

The big picture:
The workforce as part of a comprehensive, effective pre-primary system

The introduction to this guidance emphasized that workforce development is one of a connected set of areas, each of which –separately and together – is essential to a strong pre-primary subsector.

The big picture:

The workforce as part of a comprehensive, effective pre-primary system

The *Conceptual Framework* also describes the broader context within which the pre-primary subsector operates, referred to as the enabling environment (see Figure 4). Four aspects of the enabling environment can, when working well, serve as levers to promote optimal pre-primary functioning or, in contrast, can hinder the subsector's development. These four areas are:

1. policies and legislation

2. ministerial leadership and capacity;

3. financing

4. public demand

Figure 2:

Conceptual framework for the pre-primary subsector

The big picture:
The workforce as part of a comprehensive,
effective pre-primary system

As you continue your engagement in workforce development, keeping this bigger picture in mind will help ensure that critical related issues are given needed attention. In particular, the following need to be kept in mind:

- The core functions are interconnected and mutually influence one another, such that activities in one are inextricably linked to activities in the others. For example, engaging in workforce development has an impact on the implementation of curriculum, or family and community involvement in activities. Ultimately, the workforce development strategy will form an integral part of the broader subsector plan that addresses all components of high-quality pre-primary education.

- These dynamic interactions between the core functions mean that there might be entry points in each of the core functions (other than core function 3) that can be leveraged to engage in workforce development issues. For example, the revision of a curriculum or the implementation of a family engagement strategy presents the opportunity to

focus on the skills and pedagogical approaches of pre-primary teachers. In such cases, the starting point for strengthening workforce development is found in another area of the subsector, but naturally leads to refinement of workforce-related aspects.

- Finally, the broader context of the subsector should be considered, as workforce development activities will likely depend on having a supportive enabling environment. For example, policy directives may be necessary to ensure that responsibilities and accountability for various workforce development issues (such as teacher training, monitoring, etc.) are clearly delineated and respected. Financing is also often required to enable implementation of workforce development tasks.

Maintaining a systems perspective and keeping the bigger picture in mind are therefore critical. The result will be a system and a set of comprehensive and coherent strategies that together will promote ECE of the country's young children, and their overall development, while also supporting their families and communities.

Annex: Checklist of issues across the 3 pillars
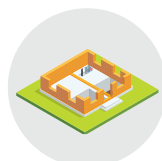
1 Pillar 1, Qualifications:
Appropriate requirements and competencies to meet interim and longer-term goals for a qualified pre-primary workforce.

2 Pillar 2, Pre-service teacher education:
High quality, relevant, accessible teacher preparation before entering the profession.

3 Pillar 3, Continuing professional development:
Ongoing workforce support through in-service teacher training and on-site professional development

Latent stage

Pillar 1
- ☐ Official qualification requirements have not yet been developed.
- ☐ There is no clear definition of roles and responsibilities for various pre-primary personnel.
- ☐ There are not yet established standards of practice, or competencies, for pre-primary personnel.
- ☐ Qualified and motivated pre-primary teachers are not available.
- ☐ Teachers receive no pay or very low pay.
- ☐ No strategy exists for recruiting pre-primary teachers
- ☐ Leaders who will be responsible for establishing standards and qualifications lack relevant background knowledge.

Pillar 2
- ☐ Few if any systematic programmes of pre-service/initial training are available under any auspices.
- ☐ Government has no comprehensive plan, including overall vision and policy directives, regarding the extent and content of required pre-service education.
- ☐ Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) do not have adequate capacity and faculty to support pre-primary academic programmes.

Pillar 3
- ☐ There is no policy or expectation for continuous professional development (CPD), or if there is a policy, it is very narrow in scope.
- ☐ CPD is absent or only minimally available in most parts of the pre-primary system.
- ☐ At present, there is little or no institutional capacity to develop and implement CPD programmes.

Initiating stage

Pillar 1
- ☐ Expectations for pre-primary qualifications may not be realistic within the present situation in the country.
- ☐ Teachers may lack pre-primary-specific qualifications.
- ☐ Professional qualifications and competencies that have been set at the national level are not being implemented at sub-national and local levels.
- ☐ Strategies for recruitment and retention of pre-primary teachers, including compensation initiatives, are not yet widely implemented.
- ☐ Sub-national officials and other leaders may not yet understand the purpose and importance of new pre-primary qualifications and competencies.

Pillar 2
- ☐ Some systematic programmes of pre-service training are available; however, links with higher education academic courses are few, and programmes under private auspices are unregulated.
- ☐ IHEs have recently developed and are beginning to implement programmes, but these are not well linked to national professional and training competencies and to best practices in pre-primary teacher preparation. Depth of preparation may be insufficient.
- ☐ A system for recognition and licensure of pre-service programmes has not been fully developed.
- ☐ Few policy directives are available to guide existing university-led pre-service programmes.
- ☐ Pre-service training remains primarily theoretical.

Pillar 3
- ☐ Opportunities for CPD are not yet widely available to pre-primary personnel.
- ☐ At national and sub-national levels, institutional capacity to support CPD for a range of pre-primary personnel is not fully developed.
- ☐ The content and methods used in CPD do not consistently reflect best practices for high quality, effective training.
- ☐ Regulation and monitoring of CPD programmes, with the goal of continuous improvement, is not implemented.
- ☐ CPD is not part of a comprehensive system to upgrade pre-primary workforce qualifications.

Established stage

Pillar 1
- ☐ Phase-in of, and timelines for, new pre-primary qualifications may not be progressing as planned.
- ☐ Periodic reviews of qualifications and competencies have not been conducted to ensure continued relevance.
- ☐ Fully qualified personnel are lacking in specific parts of the country and in certain specializations.
- ☐ Pay structures for pre-primary personnel continue to be less than for others despite improvements.

Pillar 2
- ☐ Participation and uptake of pre-service programmes remains low, especially for those in remote areas, with alternatives to traditional higher education limited.
- ☐ Opportunities to progress toward more advanced study of pre-primary education and to prepare for diverse and specialized pre-primary roles remain limited.
- ☐ Sub-national compliance with government policy directives for pre-service programmes remains inconsistent.
- ☐ Monitoring, revision and updating are not fully implemented across auspices, including regular reviews of pre-service programme recognition and licensing systems, programme implementation, and effectiveness.
- ☐ Professional development opportunities for pre-service training providers (including replacement faculty) do not ensure updating on research and skills related to pre-primary content and pedagogy.
- ☐ Connections remain weak between pre-service programmes in pre-primary and primary education, and between pre-service and continuing professional development programmes.

Pillar 3
- ☐ Policies and directives for CPD and its linkages to other professional development have not been reviewed and updated to ensure currency and responsiveness.
- ☐ In some areas, sub-national capacity to implement practice-based, reflective CPD in a range of contexts and content areas remains limited.
- ☐ Access to quality pre-primary CPD is not yet reaching all relevant personnel.
- ☐ Formal mechanisms to recognize high quality CPD (quality content, training, and trainers) exist but may not be fully established, widely implemented, or regularly reviewed.

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