Regional Perspective
“State of ECCE in Asia and the Pacific: Challenges and Prospects”

Gwang-Jo Kim, Director
UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
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I. Introduction
I.1 Asia and the Pacific at a glance

- 46 UNESCO Member States
- Enormous cultural and linguistic diversity
- More than 4 billion people (2/3 of the world population)
- 950 million (1 out of every 4 persons) under poverty line ($PPP1.25/day)
- 20.1 million out-of-school primary school-age children in 2010
- 506 million adult illiterates – more than 400 million in South and West Asia
- 67.2 million young people (ages 15-24) remain illiterate (63% are young women)
I. 2 Demographic Change

Source: UN-DESA Population Division (2011)
I.2 Demographic change

Falling fertility rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>East and North-East Asia</th>
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<th>Pacific</th>
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Source: WHO data derived by ESCAP (ESCAP Data Centre)
I.3 Female labour participation

Distribution of female and male working-age populations by main economic activity, Asia, 2009

Source: ILO, Trends econometric models, October 2010.
I.3 Female labour participation

Percentage of female population aged 15 and older that is economically active (2011)

Source: World Bank data bank
I.3 Female labour participation

Relationship between female labour participation and fertility rate

Developed industrialised countries (females aged 24-54 years)

Source: Lim, L. L. based on ILO labour force participation rate data and UN Population Division’s estimated fertility rate
I.3 Female labour participation: Relationship between female labour participation and fertility rate

Asia-Pacific (females aged 24-54 years) - unclear pattern

Source: Lim, L. L. based on ILO labour force participation rate data and UN Population Division’s estimated fertility rate
I.3 Female labour participation

Duration of maternity leave

Percentage of countries by legislated length of maternity leave, by region, 2009

- Less than 30% of the Asia-Pacific countries live up to the international standard of 14 weeks.
- Among all regions, Asia-Pacific has the highest distribution of countries providing maternity leave for less than 12 weeks.

Source: United Nations Statistics Division
I.4 ECCE on global and national development agenda

Compelling scientific evidence of brain development

- Brain circuitry is formed rapidly during early childhood
- How the neurons connect depends on interaction with the external world
- Prenatal and early childhood period sets trajectories for lifelong health, learning and behaviour
- Child development is strongly affected by the quality of environment (esp. humans)
- Integrated ECCE yields greatest benefits for child development
1.4 ECCE on global and national development agenda

Economic evidence of ECCE as one of the most productive forms of educational investment

Investment in early childhood development for disadvantaged children provides 7 to 10 percent each year to society through increased personal achievement and productivity.

Source: Carneiro and Heckman 2003
Education for All Goal 1

Access expansion
Quality improvement
Equity provision

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
II. State of Young Children in Asia and the Pacific
II.1 Survival and well-being

More Children Surviving

Under-five mortality rate [Deaths per 1,000 live births]

Source: WHO data derived by ESCAP (ESCAP Data Centre)
II.1 Survival and well-being

Prevalent Chronic Malnutrition

Percentage of children under five suffering from stunting (2007-2011)

- Sub-Saharan Africa: 40%
- Middle East and North Africa: 20%
- South Asia: 39%
- East Asia and the Pacific: 12%
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 12%
- CEE/CIS: 12%
- World: 26%

II.1 Survival and well-being
Existing disparities

Underweight prevalence in children under 5 (%) – 2007-2011

South Asia

<table>
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East Asia and Pacific

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<th>Rural</th>
<th>richest 20%</th>
<th>poorest 20%</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
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II.2 Participation in pre-primary education

Percentage of new entrants to primary education with ECCE experience, by sex, 2011

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics
II.2 Participation in pre-primary education

Shift in percentage of new entrants to primary education with pre-primary experience

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics
II.2 Participation in pre-primary education

Gross enrolment ration in pre-primary education (ca. 2011)

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics
II.2 Quality of pre-primary education

Pupil-teacher ratio at pre-primary level (2011)

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics
II.2 Quality of pre-primary education

Trained preprimary teachers as a percentage of total preprimary teachers (ca 2011)

- Kyrgyzstan: 46.2
- Maldives: 49.5
- Myanmar: 58.5
- Cook Islands: 69.7
- Brunei Darussalam: 73.0
- Nepal: 83.7
- Tajikistan: 86.8
- Mongolia: 93.0
- Lao PDR: 97.4
- Cambodia: 97.5
- Viet. Nam: 98.5
- Uzbekistan: 100.0

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics
II.3 Financing
Public investment in education

Total public expenditure on education as a percentage of total government expenditure (2010)

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012
II.3 Financing
Public investment in pre-primary education

Educational expenditure in pre-primary as a percentage of total educational expenditure, 2011

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics
III.4 Service delivery

Enrolment in pre-primary education: Public vs Private

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics
II.4 Service Delivery

In most countries governments cannot provide universal access to ECCE

- Heavy reliance on private/non-state actors (families, communities, NGOs and international donor agencies)
- Prioritization of preschool age, disadvantaged groups

Private Sector

- Negligible in Central Asia
- 99% of provision in Indonesia, Samoa and Fiji
- For-profit provision growing in Southeast and South Asia – need for regulation for quality standards
III. Opportunities and Challenges
III.1 Public awareness

- The importance of early childhood and its holistic nature is highlighted on many national policy documents.
- This has in turn led to increased inter-sectoral coordination efforts.
- More concern about the quality of programmes and children’s development and learning outcomes.
- Increased political awareness but further need for awareness raising among parents and communities (country reports from Afghanistan, Bhutan and Vanuatu).
III.2 Policy Coordination

- Coordination of multiple ministries, agencies and NGOs continues to be a major challenge ⇒ risk of fragmentation, overlaps and diffusion of responsibility

- Options for leadership:
  - Lead line ministry (e.g. MOET in Viet Nam),
  - Independent lead ministry for children (e.g. India’s MWCD)
  - Inter-ministerial coordination body (e.g. Philippines)

- Decentralization of ECCE provision aiming at greater transparency and ownership ⇒ risk of inequitable distribution of resources and expertise
Promising cases

• Free quality education and curricular integration for all five year olds – Ministries of Education and of Health and Welfare (e.g. Republic of Korea)
• Recent efforts to develop holistic ECCE policy (e.g. Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR)
• Successful inter-ministerial coordination (e.g. Bangladesh and Philippines)
• Financing: inclusion of ECCE in the EFA-FTI and GPE (e.g. Mongolia, Lao PDR, Tajikistan); Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme in Hong Kong SAR
• Establishment of teacher qualification standards (e.g. China, Singapore)
• Promotion of mother tongue-based multi-lingual ECCE programmes (e.g. Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Myanmar and Viet Nam)
• National curricular guidelines with traditional values for flexible use by teachers (e.g. New Zealand, China)
IV. Conclusions
Priority for action

• Evidence-based policy advocacy and public awareness
• Government commitment to ECCE: as part of national socio-economic development agenda, ensure resource allocation and quality service provision and monitoring
• Coordination among sectors at central and decentralised levels (i.e. vertical and horizontal coordination)
• Public-private partnerships and involvement of civil society and communities to reduce marginalization and inequity
• International cooperation (south-south, north-south, north-north) in capacity development, policy formulation and research