



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Korea
Funds-in-Trust



Sustainable
Development
Goals

Strengthening Costing and Financing of SDG 4.2 in the Asia-Pacific Region

Project Brief

Background

In the last two decades, there has been growing international recognition on the importance of early childhood care and education (ECCE). The inclusion of ECCE in the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development 2015-2030 is evidence of this increased global attention.

The Incheon Declaration on Education 2030 endorsed the universal provision of (at least one-year of) free and compulsory pre-primary education. However, there has been a notable disparity in access rates of preprimary education between disadvantaged and higher economic groups. The UNESCO Regional Baseline on SDG4¹ (2018) reported that 15 out of 38 countries in the region, most of which are middle or low-income countries, enrol less than 50% of children in their ECCE programmes. Additionally, due to the lack of qualified and trained teachers, developmentally appropriate curriculum, and availability of play and learning materials, the quality of learning tends to be poor.

To effectively address inequity in access and poor quality of pre-primary education and ultimately contribute to the fulfilment of the SDG commitments, governments need to adequately plan and resource the ECCE sector overall, but particularly the pre-primary education sub-sector. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report², the annual total cost of achieving universal pre-primary, primary and secondary education in low

and lower middle-income countries is projected to increase from US\$149 billion in 2012 to US\$340 billion in 2030. Spending per student will also need to increase substantially. The global Education 2030 Framework for Action emphasizes that significant increase in resources is needed to achieve SDG4 to bring all children (especially those from marginalized groups) to school.

Five years since the adoption of 2030 agenda, the lack of adequate financing remains one of the biggest obstacles to accelerating SDG4. In addition, there is little effort made to systematically review and analyze the resources required and the financial gap to achieve these goals especially on target 4.2 at regional and national levels. This involves developing and integrating an evidence-informed costing and financing plan for pre-primary education as part of the sector-wide education planning.

The Kathmandu Statement of Action, endorsed by a ministerial-level Policy Forum on ECCE in 2018, identified increasing investment in ECCE as a priority area in the Asia-Pacific region. However, the inadequate understanding on costing of relevant interventions along with poor financing approaches come out as a major impediment for proper integration of pre-primary education (PPE) into Education Sector Plans (ESP), resulting in a lack of policy intention and resources to sustain and expand preschool programmes in many countries.

¹[UNESCO, 2018. Paving the Road to Education: A Target-by-Target Analysis of SDG4 for Asia and the Pacific](#)

²[UNESCO, 2015. EFA Global Monitoring Report Policy Paper 18: Pricing the Right to Education](#)

Moreover, the lack of quality finance/expenditure data specifically on pre-primary education hinders the costing and estimation of financial gaps in education.

In this regard, developing and integrating an evidence-informed costing and financing plan for pre-primary education as part of the sector-wide education planning will greatly help the governments in planning for education and using their resources more efficiently.

Project Objectives

This project aims to strengthen national capacities for systematic review and analysis of costing and financing of SDG4.2 to ensure that national education sector plans become truly sector-wide that includes pre-school education. It will also help in contributing to the following key milestones and discussions in the region:

- Asia Pacific SDG4 Progress Review (2015-2020)
- 4th Asia Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education (2020)
- Asia Pacific Regional Education Ministerial Conference II (2020)
- Regional ECD Conference (2020)

Expected Results

By providing the in-country technical support and capacity development activities on Costing and Financing SDG Target 4.2, this Project expect that Member States in the Asia-Pacific region will have increased government investment in ECCE and expanded partnerships with all relevant stakeholders for equitable access to quality ECCE.

Project Duration

January 2020 to December 2020 (1 year)

Project Coordination

This Project will be implemented by the UNESCO Asia and the Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok (UNESCO Bangkok) under the auspices of the Regional Thematic Working Group (RTWG) Education 2030+, co-chaired by UNESCO Bangkok and UNICEF. A Regional Expert Team will be established to develop relevant and regionally appropriate methodology and to provide technical support on the technical implementation of the Project. To maximize resources, partnerships with the RTWG-Education 2030+ members including research institutes and think-tank in the region will be sought.

Main Activities and Timeframe

The project has one main activity: Technical Support and Capacity Development Activities on Costing and Financing SDG Target 4.2.

Activities	Timeframe
1. Establishment of National Taskforce Team	February-March 2020
2. Review and Translations of Regional Costing Model	April-June 2020
3. National Workshops	July-September 2020
4. Finalization of National Costing Models	October-November 2020
5. Final Report	December 2020

Contact

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