



# Right from the start

Build inclusive societies through inclusive early childhood education

GLOBAL EDUCATION MONITORING REPORT

2021

## Inclusion and education:

ALL MEANS ALL

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## All means all

### Countries have committed to providing inclusive pre-primary education

- SDG 4 Education target 4.2: ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality ECD, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- The Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development
- Coming soon: The Global Partnership Strategy for Early Childhood



# Equitable access to pre-primary education is a precondition for inclusion

The pre-primary gross enrolment ratio remained at **61.5%** in 2019

**Four in ten children** are **not in education** during the period countries expect them to be in school

**One in four** children are **not in education** the year before the official entry to primary school

**Just three in ten** countries have at least one year of **pre-primary education as compulsory**



# The most vulnerable are at the greatest risk of being left behind

Those who would benefit the most access it the least

Participation rates and **vast disparities** exist between the **richest** and **poorest children**

**Over half of Roma children in Europe** are **missing out** on pre-primary school

**FIGURE 2:**

**Roma children in Europe are less likely to participate in early childhood education than their peers**

Early childhood education participation rate, Roma children and general population, selected European countries and territories, 2014–2020



Note: Reference to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).  
Source: FRA (2016) for EU countries; UNICEF MICS survey findings reports for South-eastern Europe.

# Early childhood education has long-term individual and social benefits for inclusion

ECCE creates the foundations for expanded opportunities and offers a chance to escape poverty

Diversity in schools strengthens social cohesion

- In **Chile**, learners who had attended early childhood education before going to kindergarten scored higher in reading, mathematics and social sciences than others



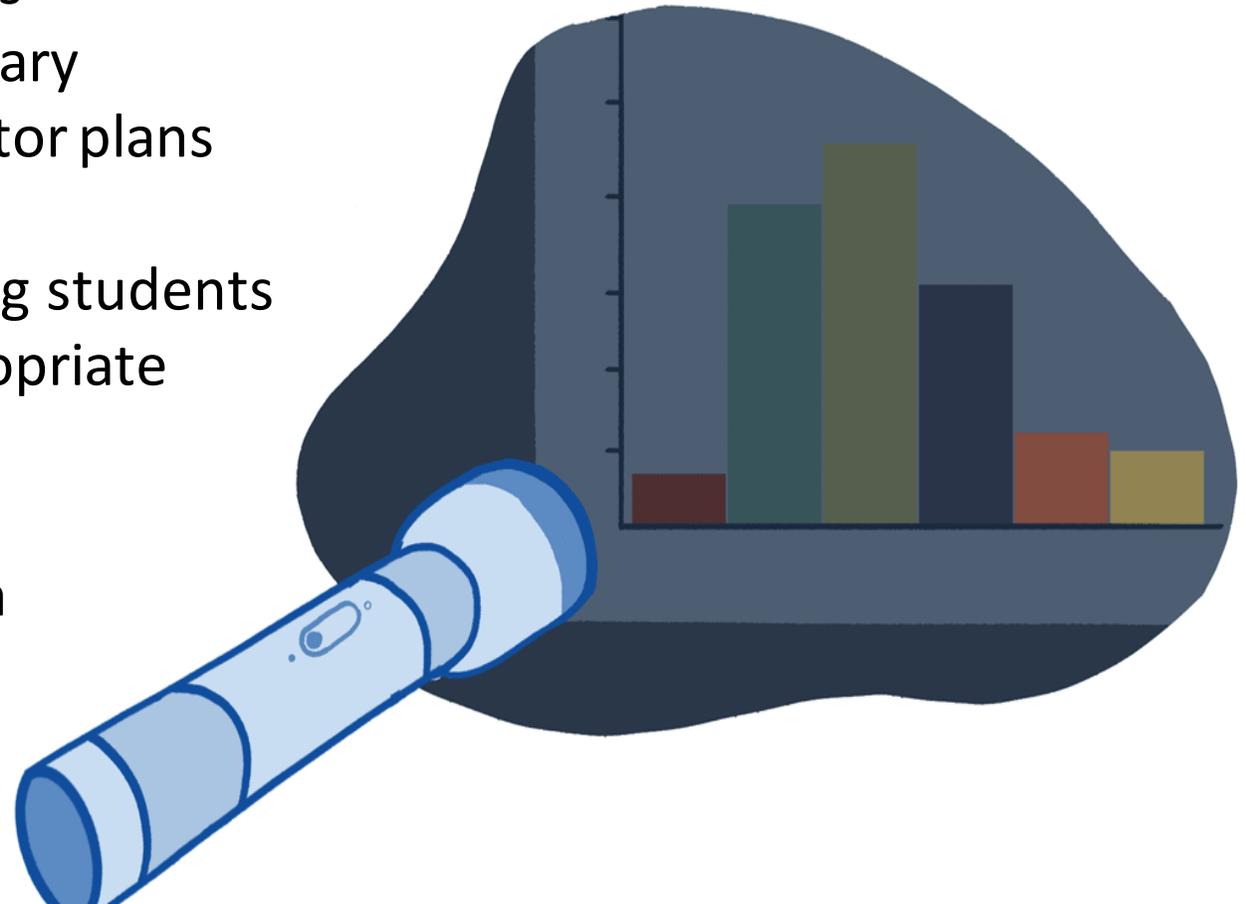
One study in the **USA** found that attending pre-primary education increased secondary school completion by as much as 11 percentage points

## Early identification of needs is a necessary investment

Among **51** low- and middle-income countries **none** reported whether children in pre-primary education had disabilities or not in their sector plans

Pre-primary education is critical in identifying students with special needs and assigning them appropriate interventions

In **Bulgaria**, the ministry plans to introduce a functional assessment toolkit in at least 400 Schools and kindergartens



# Legislation and policies support equitable access to early childhood education

Governments are making specific legal and policy provisions for vulnerable groups

- **Cambodia** provides instruction to ethnic minority groups in preschool and in the first three years of primary school **in five languages** other than Khmer
- In **Cuba**, children with disabilities are **included in mainstream ECD programmes**
- In **Croatia**, kindergartens have to **include children with disabilities** under the Pre-School Education Act of 1997

## Curricula need to respond to all children's needs

Two factors are essential for quality inclusive early childhood education curricula:

- 1. Flexibility** – eg. flexible schools for nomadic people in Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation and Uzbekistan
- 2. Play** – eg. Kidogo in Kenya targets children under age 6 living in slums

Represent all groups without stereotypes

- In **New Zealand**, Te Whāriki, the early childhood curriculum, adopts bicultural framing to encourage the inclusion of Indigenous learners



**One in 3 education** systems in Europe do not provide standardized curricula for children under three

## Ensure cooperation across government

Promote **horizontal collaboration** across ministries:  
Data collection is the least likely area of collaboration

- e.g. In **Chile** Crece Contigo (Chile Grows with You) provides coordinated services across all relevant sectors covering prenatal to age 4

Promote **vertical collaboration** between government levels: ensure schools and local governments have **capacity**

- e.g. In the **Netherlands**, the MOE developed agreements with 37 municipalities to support disadvantaged children's transition from preschool to primary



## Train early childhood educators in inclusion

In most low-income countries teachers are not equipped for inclusive practice in pre-primary schools

In **Malawi** - a survey of 127 caregivers found that only one in three had completed secondary school or had any education qualification

In **Tuscany**, about 60% of teachers reported lack of familiarity with the conditions of immigrant, refugee, and Roma students



ADEME

Out of **13** countries in Asia and the Pacific, only **Viet Nam** covered **inclusion in training policies** at the pre-primary and primary level

## Recommendations on inclusion

- Equitable access is a precondition for inclusion
- Inclusion in early childhood education is but a subset of social inclusion
- Early identification of needs is a necessary investment
- Curricula need to respond to all children's needs
- Educators' competences, knowledge and attitudes need to respond to all children's needs



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