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Right beginnings: Early childhood education and educators

Report for discussion at the Global Dialogue Forum on Conditions of Personnel in Early Childhood Education
(22–23 February 2012)

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The beginning is always the most important part.

Plato

Hold childhood in reverence.

Rousseau

Introduction

Background

The present report grew out of informal consultations at the ILO through the Advisory Body for the Education and Research grouping in October 2008 and November 2009. The recommendations of the Advisory Body, endorsed by the ILO Governing Body, called on the ILO to prepare an international study on early childhood education (ECE) in 2011 with a focus on the employment and working environment in early childhood education. Noting the lack of international data in this area, members of the Advisory Body recommended that the ILO study should focus on numbers employed in this sector, their diversified profile (including gender), training and qualifications, recruitment and deployment, salaries and conditions of work, including comparisons between public and private services and with other levels of education.

At its 311th Session (June 2011), the Governing Body of the ILO confirmed a decision taken in March 2011 for the ILO to convene a Global Dialogue Forum on Conditions of Personnel in Early Childhood Education in the first half of 2012, instead of 2013 as originally proposed. At the same time, the Governing Body fixed the composition and the purpose of the Forum, namely to address issues identified in this report.

Scope of the report

The report examines evidence which demonstrates that early childhood education is a cost-effective strategy to help prevent or remedy delays in individual learning capacity and disadvantages created by poverty and unfavourable socio-economic conditions. The report reiterates arguments made by many analysts that ECE provision has significant short- and long-term individual and societal benefits.

The report in particular argues that investment in ECE should be viewed as a public good with higher rates of return than interventions directed at older children. Recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of well-trained and motivated staff is critical to improving access to, and the quality of, ECE provision. The status and conditions of educators, including the nature and extent of social dialogue as a means of engaging educators in key ECE decisions and the impact such factors have on learning provision and quality, forms the core of the report.

The report examines early childhood educational provision, policies, structures and human resources up to the age at which children begin primary education. The coverage is intended to be worldwide, from high-income countries with well-developed ECE systems to the poorest countries with minimal provision, formal or informal. Inevitably, given the disparity of provision and especially data and qualitative information on the subject, coverage of more socio-economically developed countries is greater. The paucity and unevenness of data, especially on the core subject of educators, their training, status and conditions, constitutes one of the main findings of the report and the basis for its

recommendations on the need for much greater and more systematic efforts by countries and international organizations in the future.

The report consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 looks at the rationale for ECE, its evolution and global progress in ECE provision. Chapter 2 examines issues concerning public and private provision, funding and governance, and access and quality. Chapter 3 reviews trends and policy challenges in teacher education and professional development. Chapter 4 focuses on the status and conditions of early childhood educators and Chapter 5 looks at the state of social dialogue in the sector. Chapter 6 gives some concluding remarks.

Terminology and definitions

The huge diversity of early childhood care and education provision is equalled by the diversity of terms used to define it. Countries and international institutions use different terms: early childhood care and education (ECCE); early childhood education and care (ECEC); early child and early childhood development (ECD); and early childhood education (ECE). The latter is used throughout this report, with a focus on the educational aspects of these services as opposed to the broader concept of "care" and education.

Moreover, ECE in this report refers to services for the whole age range of children under 6 years, although with a focus on education rather than care, the spotlight (and most of the available information) is on the 3- to 6-year-old age group. For this reason, when discussing this age group, the report also uses the term "pre-primary" education in line with UNESCO usage.

For the purposes of this report, ECE includes all kinds of education taking place before compulsory primary education (which begins at 6 years old in most countries) provided in different settings: nurseries, crèches, child-care centres, kindergartens, preschools, infant schools and other similar settings. A distinction has to be made between the under 3- and the 3- to 6-year-old age groups – in essence between early childhood centres for the former and schools for the latter. Nearly half of the world's countries have formal ECE programmes before age 3 years. These programmes typically provide organized custodial care and, in some cases, health services and educational activities in day-care services, crèches and nurseries. They are most likely to be private. Pre-primary education programmes are primarily designed for children aged 3–6 years as an introduction to a school-type environment, to provide a bridge between home and school and are variously referred to as infant, nursery or preschool education (the most commonly used term by countries), kindergarten or early childhood education – but other terms include children centres, preparatory education and initial education.

Arising out of the World Education Forum held at Dakar in 2000, the term "other ECCE programmes" has been used to refer to non-formal development programmes designed for children from age 3 that include organized learning activities spanning, on average, two hours per day and 100 days per year. ECE therefore represents a continuum of interconnected arrangements provided by a mix of actors: governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private providers, communities and parents. The settings can encompass centre-based programmes to classes in schools.

Such a diverse sector is also reflected in the terms used to describe the workforce. Early childhood teachers, pedagogues, nursery workers, child minders, day-care staff, auxiliary nurses, volunteer helpers – are just some of the titles to describe the workforce found in early childhood programmes and institutions. Relatively little is known about the staff working with the very youngest children (under 3 years), especially in developing countries. Parents (typically mothers) and community members are an important feature of

early childhood programmes, especially in developing countries and rural areas. Many NGOs run programmes to help parents accomplish their role as first educator effectively. In the report, the terms “teacher” or “teaching staff” are mostly used to describe the teaching workforce in mostly formal ECE. In addition to the teaching staff, some countries have teaching assistants, cooks, nurses, psychologists and other specialists and support staff working in early years’ education.

In about 85 per cent of countries, participation in pre-primary education is not compulsory (UNESCO, 2007: 129). The standard age range for this sector is 3–5 year-olds. There is a trend towards countries making pre-primary education compulsory. This duration is much shorter – one or two years – in much of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Arab States, East Asia and the Pacific. The age groups that countries target for pre-primary education are also less standardized than for primary or secondary education.

Inevitably, understandings of, and approaches to, early childhood vary according to changing local traditions, cultures, family structures and the organization of primary schooling. The report implicitly acknowledges the importance of, for example, changing household and family structures, as well as valuing this diversity in an increasingly multi-cultural world.

1. Early childhood education: Rationale and evolution

Why is early childhood education (ECE) important?

1. Investing in young children is both the right and the smart thing to do. Advocates argue, with increasing evidence, that ECE should be a major priority on a country's development agenda, a major contributor to breaking poverty cycles as the Education For All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set out (Naudeau et al., 2011: xiv; UNESCO, 2011a: 29).

2. Learning begins before a child first walks into a classroom, and so can lifetime advantages and disadvantages. Although early childhood is a period of great potential for growth and development, it is also a time when children are especially vulnerable to being left behind. Such is often the case in the poorest countries and the poorest social strata of even very rich countries (box 1.1). A child born in the developing world has a four out of ten chance of living in extreme poverty, and relative poverty stubbornly persists in a number of developed countries (UNESCO 2007: 12). In both contexts, children from disadvantaged groups have the most to gain from ECE – and the most to lose from being excluded.

Box 1.1

Leave no child behind: Evidence from OECD countries

A 2010 UNICEF study of 24 countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) examined how successful governments were in limiting "bottom-end inequality" – the gap between children at a lower point than 90 per cent of children in society and those at the median. The study, which drew on data from the period 2006–08 and did not reflect any impact of the economic and financial crisis post-2008, concluded that there has been a steady rise in bottom-end inequality in most OECD countries over the last three decades. In education, the study found that in Italy, Austria, France and Belgium, children at the tenth percentile were falling further behind the median than is necessary, while the smallest gap was found in Finland, Ireland, Canada and Denmark.

Source: UNICEF, 2010.

3. Early intervention is crucial. The skills developed in early childhood form the basis for future learning and labour market success, making early childhood a critical time of human capital accumulation (Naudeau et al., 2011: xiii). Delays in cognitive and overall development well before a child enters primary school often have long-lasting consequences for children, their families and society at large, and they are more costly to remedy. Conversely, evidence from many countries shows that quality ECE can narrow the "opportunity divide" and reduce poverty, ethnic and linguistic disadvantages (UNESCO, 2010a: 49–50).

4. Despite the overwhelming case for building strong early foundations, ECE remains a peripheral concern within education systems virtually everywhere, characterized by insufficient resources and fragmented planning (UNESCO, 2011a: 37–38). Evidence strongly suggests that those who need ECE the most, receive it the least. The majority of poor children in low- and middle-income countries do not have access to high-quality ECE (Naudeau et al., 2011: xiv). Household poverty and low levels of parental education are two of the most critical barriers to early childhood programmes (UNESCO, 2010a: 42, 48–49).

5. Too few countries, especially in the developing world, have made early childhood a priority. Only a minority of countries provide early childhood programmes to at least two-thirds of the population, mostly developed or formerly centrally planned to market economy countries (UNESCO, 2007: 106). Moreover, some developed countries do not provide universal coverage. In many developing countries, especially sub-Saharan Africa, early childhood programmes are available only to a small fraction of the population, typically affluent urban families.

6. A major obstacle is the lack of consensus among policy-makers about the need for early childhood programmes compared to other key education goals such as universal primary education. The UNESCO-sponsored World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education: Building the Wealth of Nations (Moscow, September 2010) attempted to move ECE higher up on political agendas, in line with EFA goals. The Moscow Framework for Action and Cooperation, adopted by the Conference (UNESCO, 2010b), outlined a number of key challenges and policy solutions (box 1.2).

Box 1.2
Moscow Framework for Action and Cooperation: Harnessing the wealth of nations

The Moscow Framework for Action puts forward a number of suggested actions for national and international actions on ECE, inter alia:

- Put in place human and material conditions required to achieve quality early childhood care and education, including committed, valued and trained professionals, appropriate ECCE environments as well as context-sensitive curricula and materials.
- Improve and expand teacher training, accreditation and the professional development of ECE professionals.
- Mobilize diverse and innovative financing sources and mechanisms in support of ECE; enhance, when appropriate and with the necessary regulations, resources through partnerships with the private sector.

Source: UNESCO, 2010b.

The roots of early childhood theory and practice

7. While some cultural traditions emphasize family and community, the dominant vision and model in ECE derives from European and North American traditions based on individual children's rights and development (Penn, 2008: 19, 35). Recognition that the early years have a particular role in subsequent human development emerged in Europe in the seventeenth century. Much of what is thought most characteristic of modern child-centred good practice in ECE – the use of first-hand experience, the value of praise and active learning, learning through play – can be traced back to seventeenth and eighteenth century European philosophers and educators such as the Czech, Jan Amos Comenius, the Swiss philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Swiss educator, Johann Pestalozzi (Cunningham, 1995: 17, 153).

8. A practical orientation to early education came from the British industrialist and socialist, Robert Owen, who set up an infant school for the children of his cotton mill workers from the age of one and the German educator, Friedrich Fröebel, who put his ideas into practice in a school he called a "kindergarten" (see Lawrence, 1970, for a detailed look at early childhood development origins).

9. Innovation continued in the twentieth century with a focus on the very youngest children. The Italian Maria Montessori had a profound influence through her ideas and practice of emphasizing individual over class teaching, children learning rather than the teacher teaching and children's liberty to follow self-chosen activities. This change was carried forward in United Kingdom-based experimental schools, such as A.S. Neill's Summerhill School and Bertrand Russell's Beacon Hill School, and child development work by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, who was also influential in shaping ECE in countries as distant as Japan (Lawrence, 1970).

The formalization of ECE

10. Public policy towards ECE evolved in the twentieth century in relation to multiple challenges, most notably pauperization, the needs of working mothers (especially during and after the Second World War), demands for an enriching preschool education for a growing middle class, and for preparing young children for primary schooling. By the end of the century, the concept

of the public nursery or preschool as a place offering education for children from all backgrounds and run by highly qualified professionals was widely accepted in Europe and North America (UNESCO, 2007: 121–122). This development, termed by UNICEF "the child-care transition" (UNICEF, 2008), has led to the majority of very young children in high-income countries spending a large part of early childhood outside of the home in some form of care.

11. In developing countries the existence of early childhood programmes came much later – mostly after 1970 – and was driven by different rationales. As the basic needs of so many young children were not being met, many developing countries emphasized infant and child health, poverty reduction, safe and affordable environments for childminding, and the transition to primary schooling (UNESCO, 2007: 122).

12. UNESCO-sponsored surveys of pre-primary education in 1961, 1974 and 1988 outline trends and continued challenges. The first survey concluded that qualified pre-primary teachers, often suffering from low status, were in short supply in all countries. The 1974 survey found that nearly all countries had programmes for 3-year-olds, but coverage was limited and uneven in most developing countries. The 1988 survey found that half the countries reporting had kindergartens; about 40 per cent had institutions attached to primary schools; and half the ECE programmes charged fees (UNESCO, 2007: 123).

13. The World Declaration on EFA at Jomtien (1990) introduced the idea that "learning begins at birth", affirming ECE as an integral part of basic education and an educational level in its own right. The Dakar EFA Declaration further institutionalized and propagated this objective, and the 2010 Moscow Declaration sought to elevate the priority attached to ECE even more. Overall, the twentieth century witnessed a significant expansion of early childhood provision, much of this initiated and sustained by private agencies and charitable groups, but increasingly viewed as a key public responsibility. This has meant that more and more children participate in structured, purposeful learning activities both before and, more typically, after the age of 3 in what is labelled ECE.

Children have rights

14. In the twentieth century, children came to be viewed as holders of rights, including to education, as part of the broader concept of the right to childhood. A League of Nations declaration in 1924 formally recognized that "mankind owes the Child the best it has to give". In 1989, the United Nations adopted the legally binding Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world. The CRC emphasizes the right of all children to education and calls on governments to provide assistance to parents and legal guardians in their child-rearing responsibilities, and to make child-care services and facilities available, especially to working parents. The CRC has helped shape ECE policies and provision around the world, but has not weighed as heavily on many governments' public spending decisions to ensure that the rights are effectively applied.

Windows of opportunity for early childhood interventions

Timing matters

15. Neurobiology and other brain research in recent decades have determined that much of the child's brain architecture is set during the first five years of life. Certain sensitive periods exist before the age of 3 during which adequate stimulation must be received or development is impaired (UNICEF, 2001: 14–15). Even if the capacity for human brain reorganization continues throughout life and can be enhanced by remedial interventions, there is a wide

consensus that during early childhood the brain is taking shape with a speed that will never again be equalled (UNICEF, 2001: 14). The longer a society waits to intervene in the life cycle of a disadvantaged child, the more costly it is to put right (Naudeau et al., 2011: 19).

16. Early interventions are the most cost effective in that they minimize the need for special interventions, have the most significant effects on children's development and learning and have a decisive and lasting impact on how children grow to adulthood. An early start in education is particularly important for children from disadvantaged families: by the time children enter primary school, disparities in language skills linked to income and other factors are often so marked that children never catch up. Evidence from the United Kingdom shows that test scores at 22 months are a strong predictor for educational qualifications at 22 years (UNESCO, 2010a: 49). The issue of differences between home and school language is particularly important in impeding the progress of immigrant children.

17. Children who do not receive guidance in monitoring or regulating their behaviour during the early years have a greater chance of being anxious, impulsive and behaviourally disorganized when they reach school (UNICEF, 2001). This implies that early childhood programmes can not only benefit all children, but also help compensate for young children's negative experiences as a result of conflict, lack of stimulation or nutritional inputs – more than 200 million children in developing countries under the age of 5 are exposed to these multiple risks that negatively affect their development (Naudeau et al., 2011: 37).

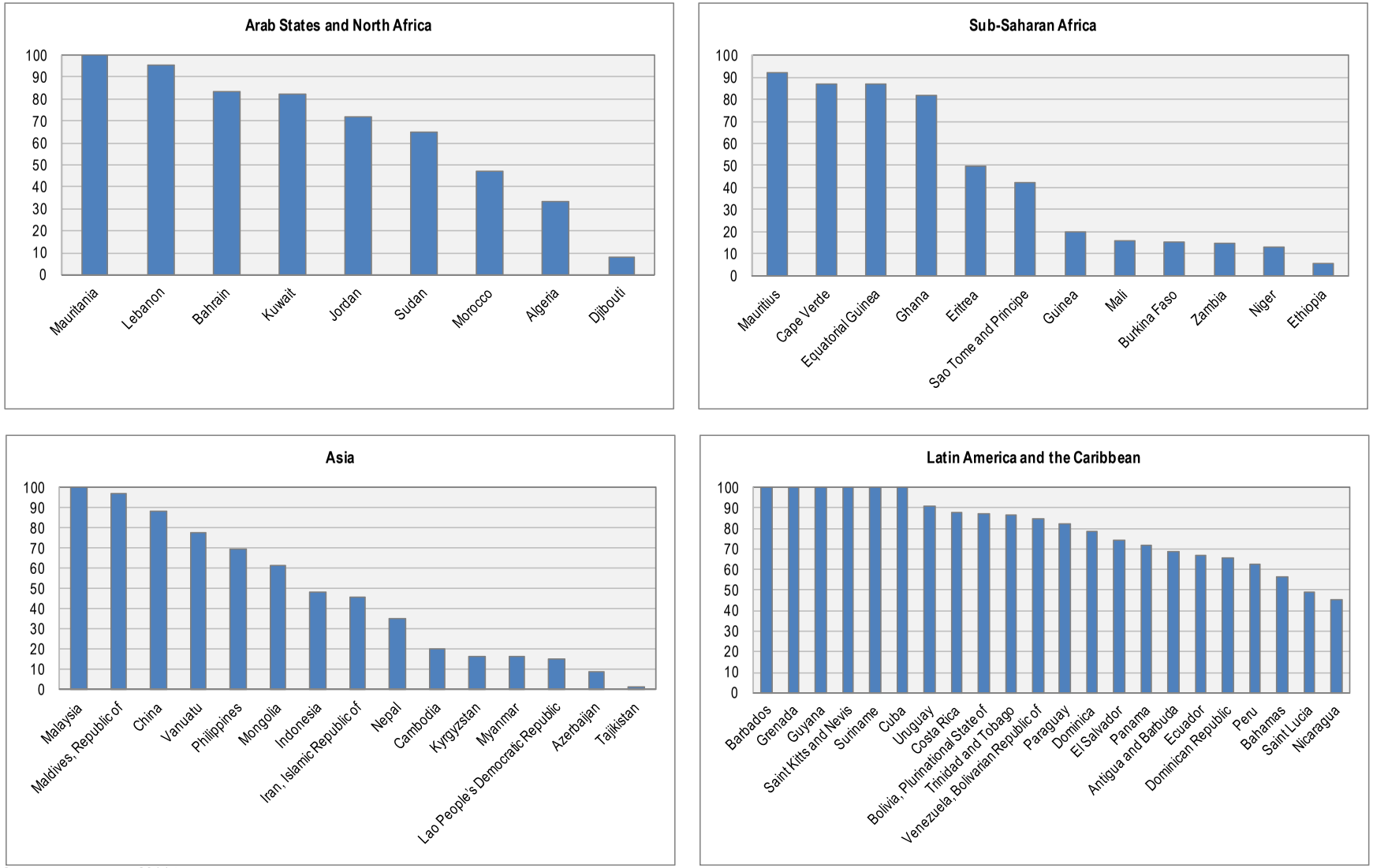
The importance of starting early

18. Most centre-based programmes focus on children aged 4 to 5; however, data from a United States early longitudinal study showed that the strongest cognitive benefits are experienced by those children who entered a centre-based programme between the ages of 2 and 3. A similar evaluation in the Philippines came to the same conclusion. These studies seem to affirm the value of providing centre-based ECE to children as young as 2, especially for the most vulnerable groups (Naudeau et al., 2011: 83–84).

School readiness and achievement benefits

19. The positive impacts of ECE on readiness for further education are well documented, leading to a growing view that it should be seen as a public good (OECD, 2006: 36–37). ECE programmes can: improve school readiness; make enrolment in the first grade more likely (figure 1.1); reduce delayed enrolment, drop-out and grade repetition; and increase completion and achievement. Evidence comes from evaluation in both developed and developing countries, for example Myanmar, Nepal, Turkey and United Kingdom. Controlling for Global Domestic Product (GDP), the higher an African country's ECE enrolment ratio, the higher its primary completion rate and the lower its primary school repetition rate. The impact of ECE is stronger for children from poor families in terms of lower drop-out and repetition rates than those from more advantaged children (UNESCO, 2007: 112). Research from the United States shows that the beneficial impact of ECE on children from poorer families is twice as high as for those with a more advantaged background (Barnett, 2004: 10). Additionally, there are positive benefits for girls' education (Naudeau et al., 2011: 40).

Figure 1.1. Percentage of new entrants to primary education with experience in early childhood care and education, selected countries, 2009



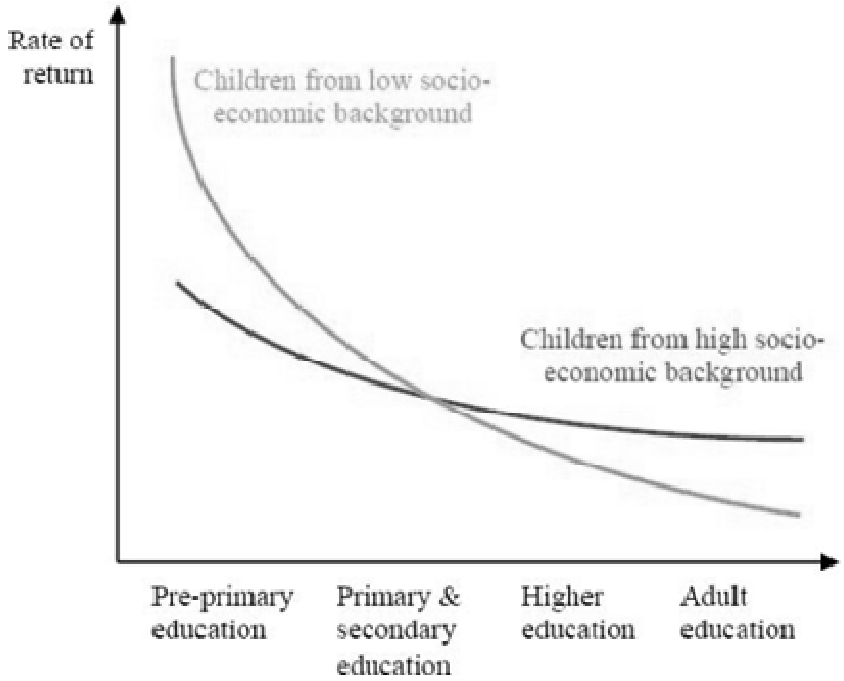
Source: UNESCO, 2011d.

20. Attending the French pre-primary education system increases class retention of low-income and immigrant children in primary school by 9 to 17 per cent, with wider benefits for literacy and numeracy (UNESCO, 2010a: 50). There is also clear evidence that participation in high-quality ECE leads to significantly better attainment in international tests on basic skills such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Progress in International Reading and Literacy Skills (PIRLS), equivalent to between one and two years of progress (OECD and the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), cited in European Commission, 2011: 1).

The economic case for investing in ECE

21. For policy-makers, faced with competing demands for public funds and concerned with cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit considerations, it is important to note that investing in ECE literally pays dividends. Research shows that high-quality ECE can *save* money later. Evidence suggests a potential return rate of 7–16 per cent annually from high-quality early childhood programmes targeting vulnerable groups (Naudeau et al., 2011: 19). Studies conducted most notably in the United States show that returns are higher than other educational interventions, and for the most disadvantaged, as set out in figure 1.2 – returns are over a longer period and the skills acquired are a foundation for further learning (UNESCO, 2007: 112). Comparable evaluations of ECE programmes in developing countries are less available, but evidence in the same direction has started accumulating since the late 1990s.

Figure 1.2. Returns to investment at different levels of education



Source: European Commission, 2011: 5.

22. The positive role played by ECE in human capital formation is a principal reason that the World Bank has increasingly promoted lending in this area – between 1990 and 2005 the Bank's lending for early childhood development amounted to US$1.6 billion (Young, 2006, quoted in UNESCO, 2007: 185).

23. Early childhood interventions have a further social rationale in helping reduce inequalities linked to poverty, gender, race/ethnicity, caste or religion. Studies in the United States showed that the benefits of ECE are higher for marginalized children. In developing countries, the ECE

benefit has been shown for girl's enrolment and completion of primary school (UNESCO, 2007: 113). ECE as an investment in disadvantaged young children is a rare public policy with a double benefit of promoting fairness and social justice whilst at the same time promoting productivity in the economy and society at large (UNESCO, 2007: 114; UNESCO, 2011b: 7).

2. Key trends, issues and policies

ECE growth patterns, trends and projections

24. Demand for ECE in national education systems is clearly rising. Worldwide, the number of children enrolled in pre-primary education (generally 3–6 years) exceeded 157 million in 2009 (compared to over 700 million enrolled in primary education). By 2009, the global gross enrolment (GER) [1] was 46 per cent. The GER ratio in almost all countries corresponds to estimates of enrolments in both official pre-primary and other ECE programmes (UNESCO, 2011d; UNESCO–UIS, 2011).

25. Despite this progress, great variations exist at regional, subregional and national levels. GERs in 2008 ranged from 80 per cent on average in North America and Western Europe to just 17 and 19 per cent respectively in sub-Saharan Africa and in the Arab States. In sub-Saharan Africa, one in seven children is enrolled in an early childhood programme, compared with one in three for all developing countries. Significant progress has been made in some regions, notably South and West Asia (from 21 to 42 per cent between 1999 and 2008) (UNESCO–UIS, 2010: 106; UNESCO, 2011a: 29).

26. With a few exceptions, for countries or territories with such data, net enrolment rates have increased almost everywhere in recent years, attesting to the increased importance attributed to ECE. Net enrolment ratios (NER) [2] for the last decade show wide disparities among countries within regions, from under 10 per cent to over 90 per cent in some cases (figure 2.1). There are also disparities in different age groups within countries. In 2007, for example, between 90–100 per cent of 5-year-olds were enrolled in some kind of ECEC in Thailand and Viet Nam, but only 22 per cent of 3-year-olds in Thailand and 63 per cent of 3- and 4-year-olds in Viet Nam participated in such programmes (UNESCO 2008: 28).

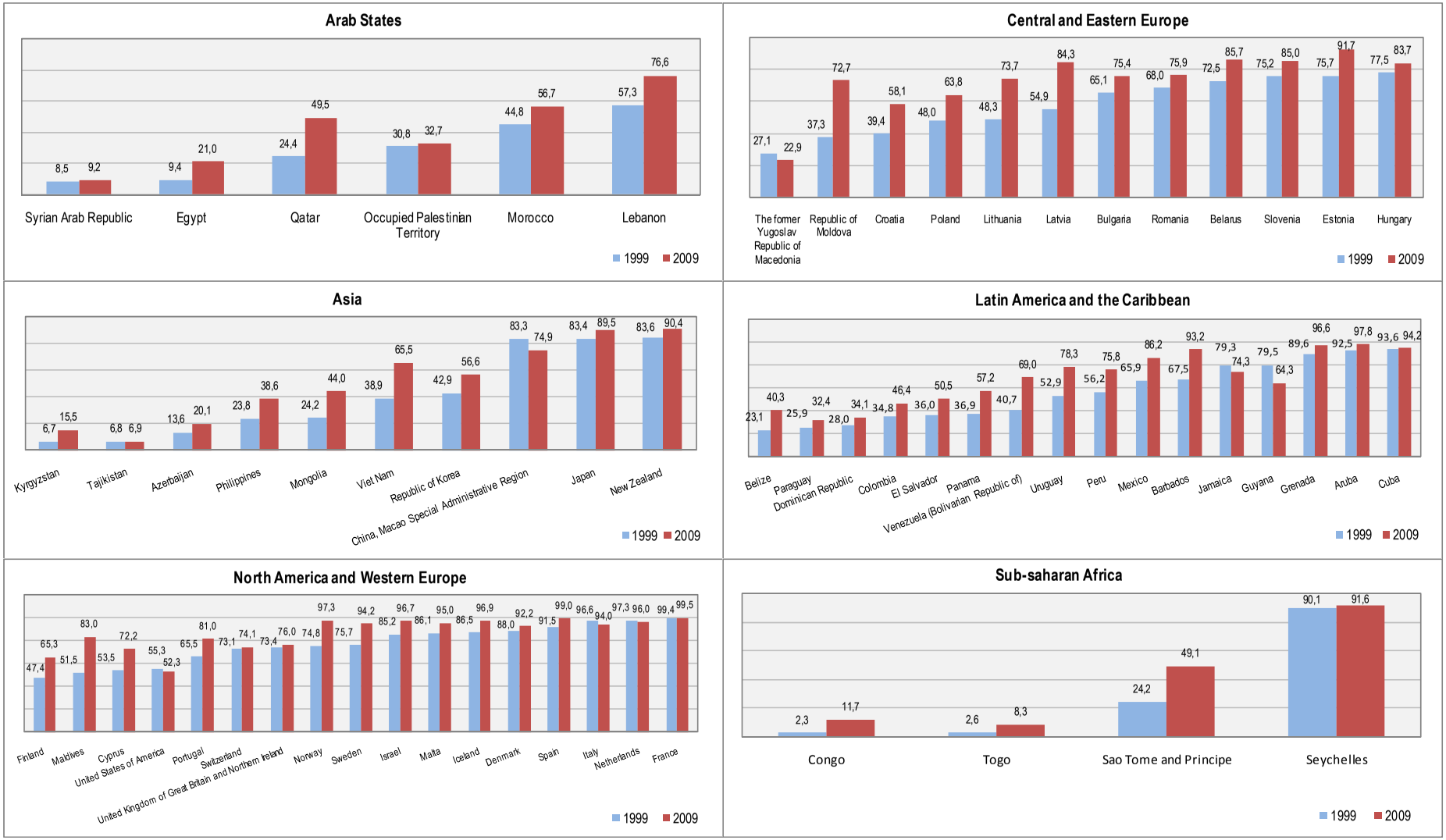
27. Generally, the ECE enrolment rate for children under 3 years is considerably lower than for children 4–6 years. In some countries, this reflects a cultural norm whereby education and care of children under 3 years is considered a family responsibility; for the most part, however, such rates reflect a lack of ECE provision, public or private. Even in this lower age bracket, however, recent evidence indicates steady, if sometimes very slow growth. The trend is towards more infants being educated and cared for outside of the home, particularly in developed countries and largely in publicly funded institutions and programmes [3] (figure 2.2). For example, in the United States, more than 50 per cent of infants under 1 year are in some form of childcare (EI, 2010: 21; UNICEF, 2008: 3).

[1] Number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of those in the theoretical age group for that level of education (UNESCO–UIS, 2010: 269).

[2] Enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group (UNESCO, 2011a).

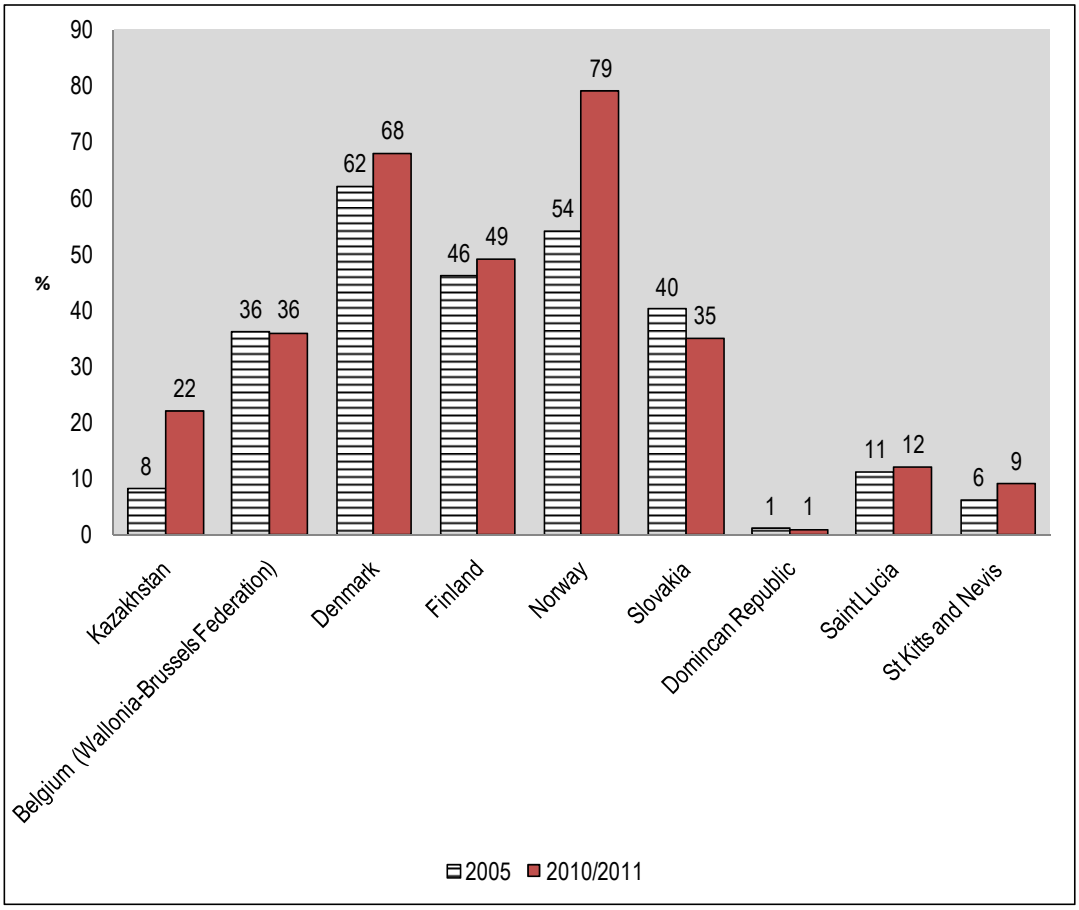
[3] For the same group of countries for which data was reported to the ILO (2011b), the percentage of 1–3 year-olds enrolled in private institutions or programmes remained the same or declined in the period 2005 to 2010–11. Similar trends prevail in the 4–6-year-old age group.

Figure 2.1. Net enrolment rate in major regions and selected countries, pre-primary education, 1999–2009



Source: ILO calculations derived from UNESCO, 2011d; UNESCO–UIS, 2011 – data accessed on 22 Nov. 2011.

Figure 2.2. Trends in the percentage of children age 1–3 years enrolled in publicly funded ECE institutions and programmes, selected countries, 2005–2010/11



Finland: 0–6 years old.

Source: ILO, 2011b.

28. National plans to increase ECE enrolments have increasingly ambitious targets. According to responses to an ILO questionnaire (2011b), Burkina Faso anticipates an increase in coverage to 8+ per cent by 2015 and to 14 per cent by 2020; Kazakhstan aims to reach 74 per cent coverage by 2015 and universal coverage by 2020, as does Bhutan; Nepal is trying to reach 87 per cent coverage by 2015; New Zealand aims to increase to 96 per cent in 2013; and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expects to achieve universal access by 2012. These goals are similar to those reported to UNESCO in the past. Given historic growth rates, such targets will be difficult to meet in many cases (UNESCO, 2007: 23), but they underline the increased commitment to expanding ECE.

Future demand projections for ECE

29. The world's population under 5 years old stood at 738 million in 2005, and is projected to rise to 776 million by 2020. Between regions, however, there are substantial differences in child population trends: declining in the developed and transition countries, as well as East Asia and the Pacific; stabilizing in Latin America and the Caribbean, and to a lesser extent in South and West Asia; and growing in sub-Saharan Africa (the number of young children is expected to grow by 35 million by 2020) and the Arab States, though at lower rates since 1990 (UNESCO, 2007: 118). Future demand and therefore growth in ECE will be determined by these demographic trends and, in particular, by the rate of infant mortality. While in 2008, 8.8

million children died before their fifth birthday (UNESCO, 2011: 30, 283–284), globally, the mortality rate for children under 5 years declined by a third between 1990 and 2009 (United Nations, 2011a: 24). Continued significant reductions in infant mortality in India and in other high-growth countries would have considerable impact on the global child population and need for ECE.

30. To these demographic trends must be added the suppressed demand by those currently excluded from ECE. The still very low pre-primary GERs in many developing regions are expected to increase because of growing demand from parents, national and international campaigns, and the resulting commitments from policy- and decision-makers, as the case of the small island state of the Republic of Maldives illustrates (box 2.1). Continued growth in ECE demand will pose increasing challenges in the future for the funding, organization and especially human resource provision necessary for both universal access and quality.

Box 2.1
Republic of Maldives: As public awareness grows, so does demand for ECE

After many years of active campaigning, the demand for ECE has increased in the Republic of Maldives. Every island, however small, has a community-run or private school. The Government makes a financial contribution towards salaries of some of the teachers and provides some training. With the introduction of local councils in every island, communities' expectations for quality pre-schools will increase and the councils are likely to demand even more assistance from the Government.

Early childhood education has become an election issue. A draft bill providing free pre-schools is currently in Parliament, and there are expectations that quality improvement and adequate financing of pre-schools will remain significant issues in future elections.

Source: MoE, Republic of Maldives, 2011.

The mix of public and private provision in ECE

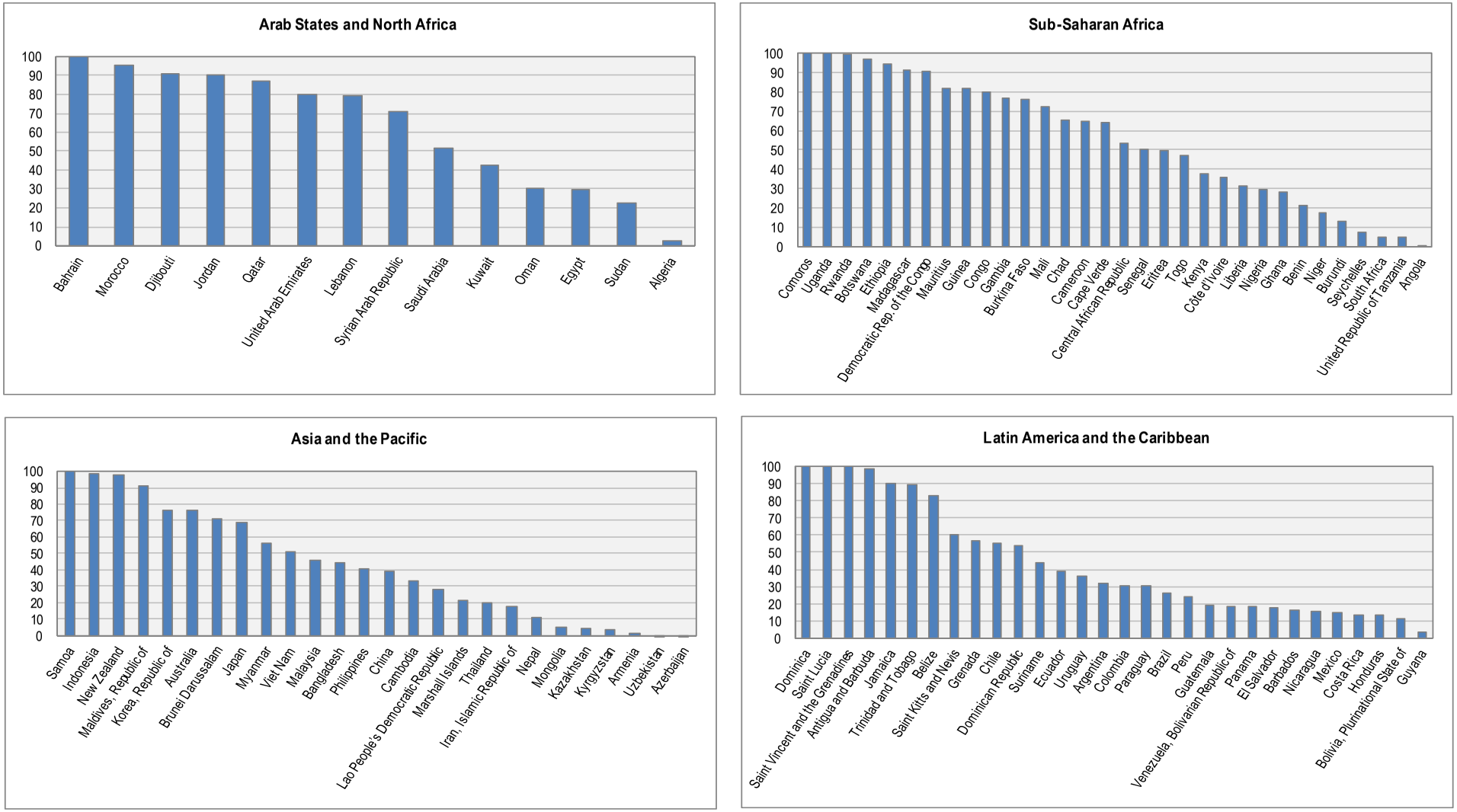
31. Globally, there is a great variety of provision and financing models for ECE, based on both public and private sources. Public provision of ECE has dominated in the developed countries (private enrolments represent 11 per cent, but are on the increase compared to 1999), while in much of the developing world the private sector has played a more prominent role (stable at 47 per cent compared to 1999) (UNESCO, 2011d; UNESCO–UIS, 2011).

32. As of 2009, private enrolments in ECE (pre-primary) represented over 30 per cent of overall enrolments. Private providers dominate the scene in countries of the Arab States (79 per cent of enrolments), the Caribbean (90 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (54 per cent), while in East Asia they enrol a slight majority (51 per cent in East Asia, including China, with a rate of 40 per cent). However, private provision in Central Asia and Central and Eastern Europe remains negligible (1–2 per cent of enrolments) and is low and declining, since 1999, in Latin America (19 per cent), North America and Europe (20 per cent).

33. Within regions, there is considerable diversity (figure 2.3). Despite advances mainly in developed countries indicated above, globally, the provision for children under 3 remains heavily privatized.

34. Despite declining importance in some regions since 1999, worldwide private enrolments are on the increase (UNESCO, 2011d; UNESCO–UIS, 2011). However, while private sector provision continues to be affirmed in many countries and regions, public services are assuming greater importance in others as governments/public authorities awake to the key role of ECE in social integration and economic development and steadily allocate more resources to the sector. At the same time, the unmet demand created by public sector fiscal and budgetary restrictions continues to be filled by private providers. Private provision is also increasing with the growth of emerging market economies.

Figure 2.3. Enrolment in private pre-primary institutions as per cent of total enrolment, selected countries, 2009



Source: UNESCO, 2011d; UNESCO–UIS, 2011.

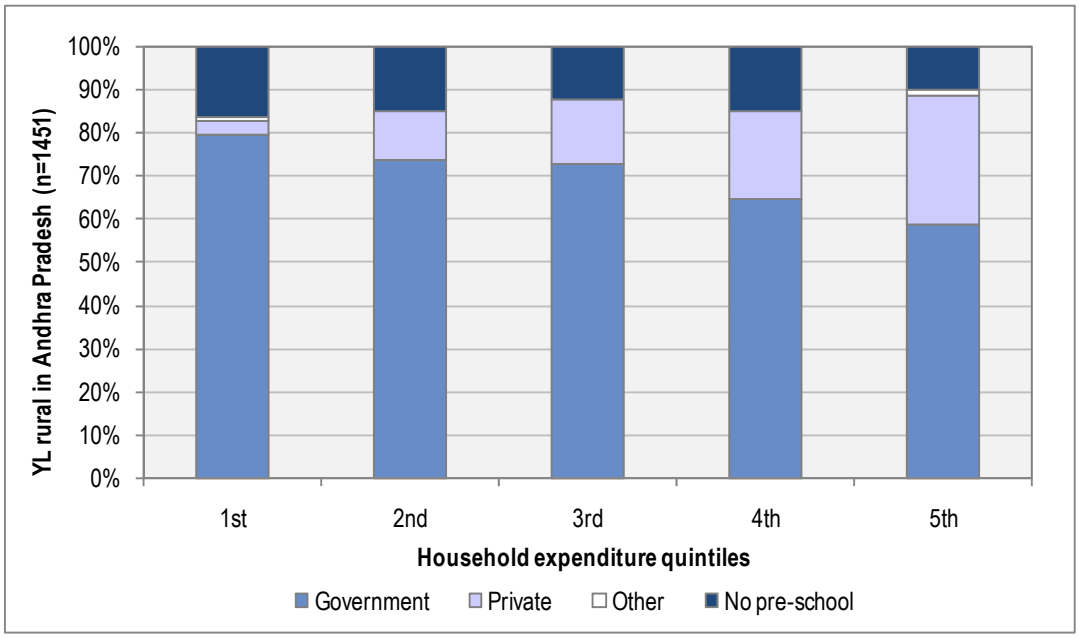
The role of the private sector in ECE

35. As enrolment figures show, the private sector plays a large role in many countries. Community-based organizations, NGOs, religious groups and for-profit entities can support government efforts to expand, improve and coordinate ECE provision. In parts of Europe, North America and Latin America, religious institutions provide ECE and often allow others to use their premises for this purpose. In many countries in transition, private providers have flourished in a situation of decreased government support, financial cut-backs and decentralization. This diversification has both encouraged innovation and increased inequalities in access (UNESCO, 2007: 176).

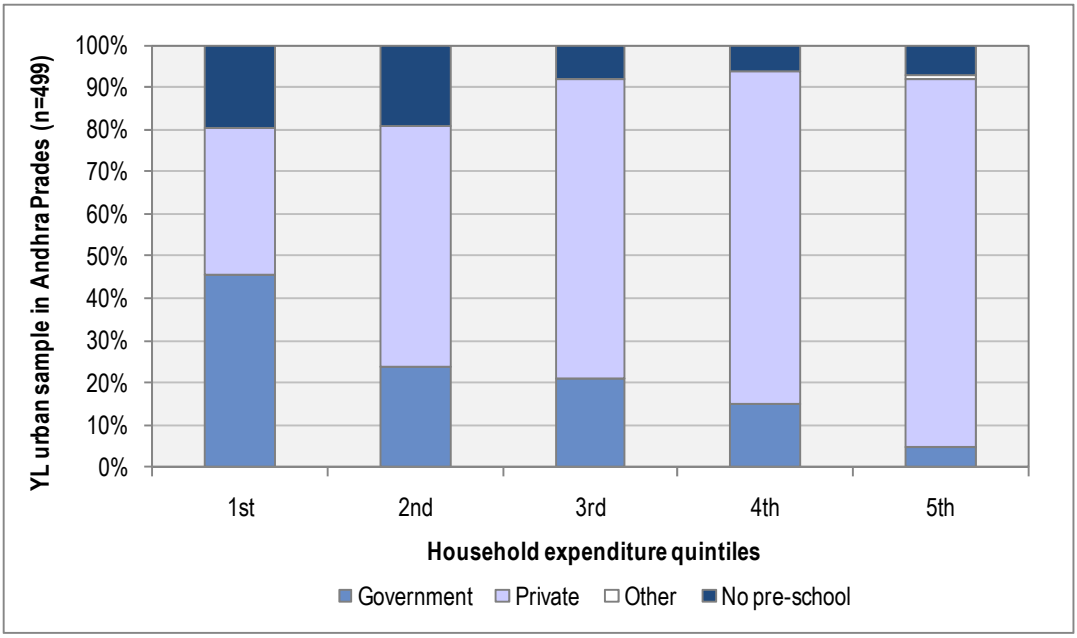
36. However, private provision fills gaps in enrolment especially in the 1–3 year-olds group in those countries supplying information to the ILO (2011b). In some countries, private enrolments in the 4–6-year-old group also increased substantially between 2005 and 2010–11 but the sampling of countries is too small to indicate a consistent trend across countries and regions.

37. The ratio of private to public sector enrolments in pre-primary education varies by poverty level and by urban–rural areas of many countries. In Andhra Pradesh, India, government provision dominates in rural communities, especially for the poorest quintile group, while in urban communities, parents have a greater choice, and the private sector plays a significant role (figure 2.4). Over 80 per cent of children in the fifth quintile go to private school, and only 5 per cent go to public schools (Vennam et. al., 2009).

Figure 2.4. India: Percentage of children in pre-schools by income level, rural and urban areas of Andhra Pradesh



Attendance by pre-school type and poverty levels – urban sample in Andhra Pradesh



Source: Vennam et. al. 2009 – samples are taken from the "Young lives" study, University of Oxford.

38. The role of for-profit entities is often hotly debated and viewed as controversial by some. As with other levels of education, proponents of for-profit ECE argue that market-based approaches encourage competition and innovation, increase efficiency and promote parental choice. The Netherlands moved in 2005 from a supply- to a demand-driven system – from subsidizing providers to subsidizing families to purchase market-provided services. There is, nonetheless, concern over reduced access for families with fewer resources, and over service gaps in rural and low-income areas which are less profitable and more challenging for providers (UNESCO, 2007: 176).

39. Countries vary with regard to the extent to which the State regulates private providers, which has important implications for quality and access. There is a risk of a two-track system developing, with children from more advantaged families attending more expensive and higher quality private programmes and less advantaged children relegated to what may be, in many cases, low-cost, lower quality public alternatives. For example, in the Congo, pre-primary school fees can range from $10 to $60, putting it beyond the reach of most families (Awopegba, 2010: 7).

40. Given the unmet demand and restrictions on public sector financing, ECE is likely to remain, for a long time to come, a domain in which public–private partnership is needed within an appropriate regulatory framework and support by the government (UNESCO, 2011b: 7–8). Examples of approaches from two high-income countries are provided in box 2.2.

Box 2.2
Public–private partnerships: New Zealand and Norway

ECE in **New Zealand** is funded and regulated by the Government, but provided by a mix of community groups and private businesses. In 2009, 98 per cent of enrolments in pre-primary education were in the private sector. Most enrolments are in full-day centres, most of which are businesses. Community services are provided by not-for-profit incorporated societies or charitable trusts, or run by organizations such as local authorities or universities. Home-based services are also rapidly expanding. Licensed home-based services run by unqualified educators are overseen by a qualified teacher, regulated and follow the national curriculum.

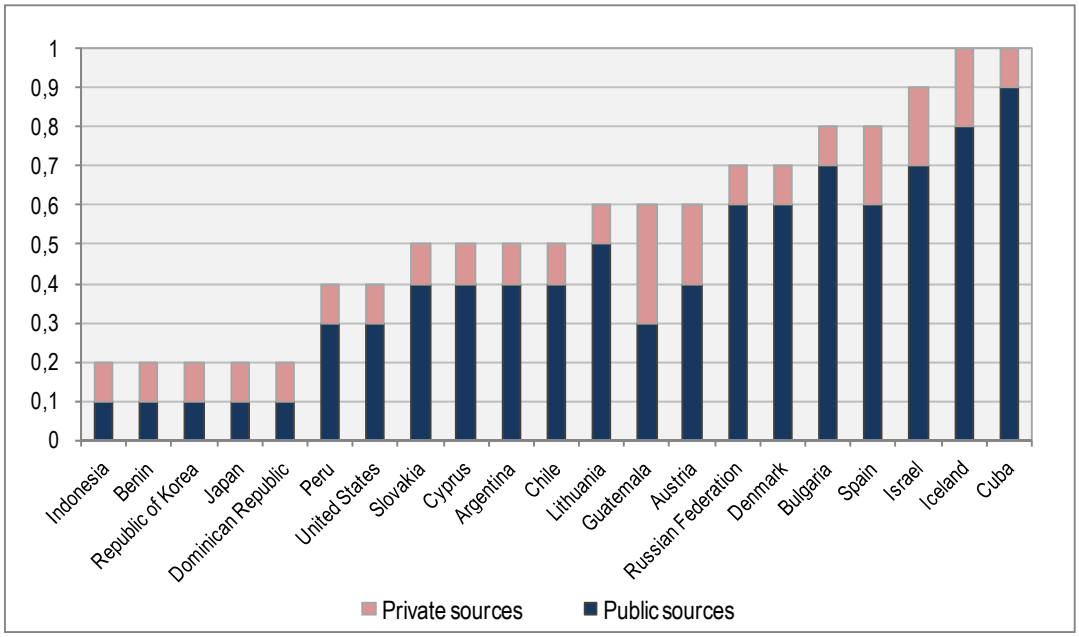
ECE in **Norway** is regulated by national laws, but is organized locally by some 435 municipalities who receive funding allocations from the central government. Earmarking for ECE ended in 2011 and ECE must now compete with other budget priorities of local authorities. Municipalities have to ensure that the national curriculum is followed. The Ministry of Education and Research holds the responsibility for ECE, schools, out-of-school care and the training of teachers.

Source: EI, 2010; UNESCO, 2011d; UNESCO–UIS, 2011.

Investment in ECE: Funding and costs

41. Available information from high- and some middle-income countries indicates that a public investment of 1 per cent of GDP is required to deliver quality ECE services (OECD, 2006: 105). [4] However, the broad mix of public and private providers makes it difficult to estimate the global cost of achieving it. In general, countries accord ECE relatively low priority in their public and private spending. Even within the OECD, the average ECE expenditure (public and private combined) for children in the 3–6 age range in 2007 was 0.5 per cent of GDP. One third of the OECD members invest more, led by Iceland at 0.9 per cent. In contrast, the Russian Federation invests 1.6 per cent of its national wealth in pre-primary institutions (OECD, 2010: 218). Figure 2.5 provides a snapshot of investments in 21 countries of different national income levels as of 2009, ranging from one fifth of a per cent in several countries to 1 per cent in Cuba.

Figure 2.5. Current expenditure on pre-primary education as per cent of GDP, public and private sources, selected countries, 2009 (or latest year)



Source: UNESCO–UIS, 2011.

42. In terms of overall ECE spending, public expenditure predominates, although in some countries (Benin, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Indonesia, Japan and Republic of Korea), private sources account for half or more of total expenditures. As a share of GNP, public expenditure on ECE is greatest in Central and Eastern Europe, at 0.5 per cent, compared with 0.4 per cent in North America and Western Europe, and 0.2 per cent in Latin America

[4] See also: UNICEF (2008: 2) and EI (2010: 25) supporting the 1 per cent of GDP as a quality indicator.

(UNESCO, 2007: 181). Explanations for divergences between public and private resourcing lie in the educational policy histories of each country, but often result from historical underfunding of ECE compared to demand, encouraging private sources to step into the breach.

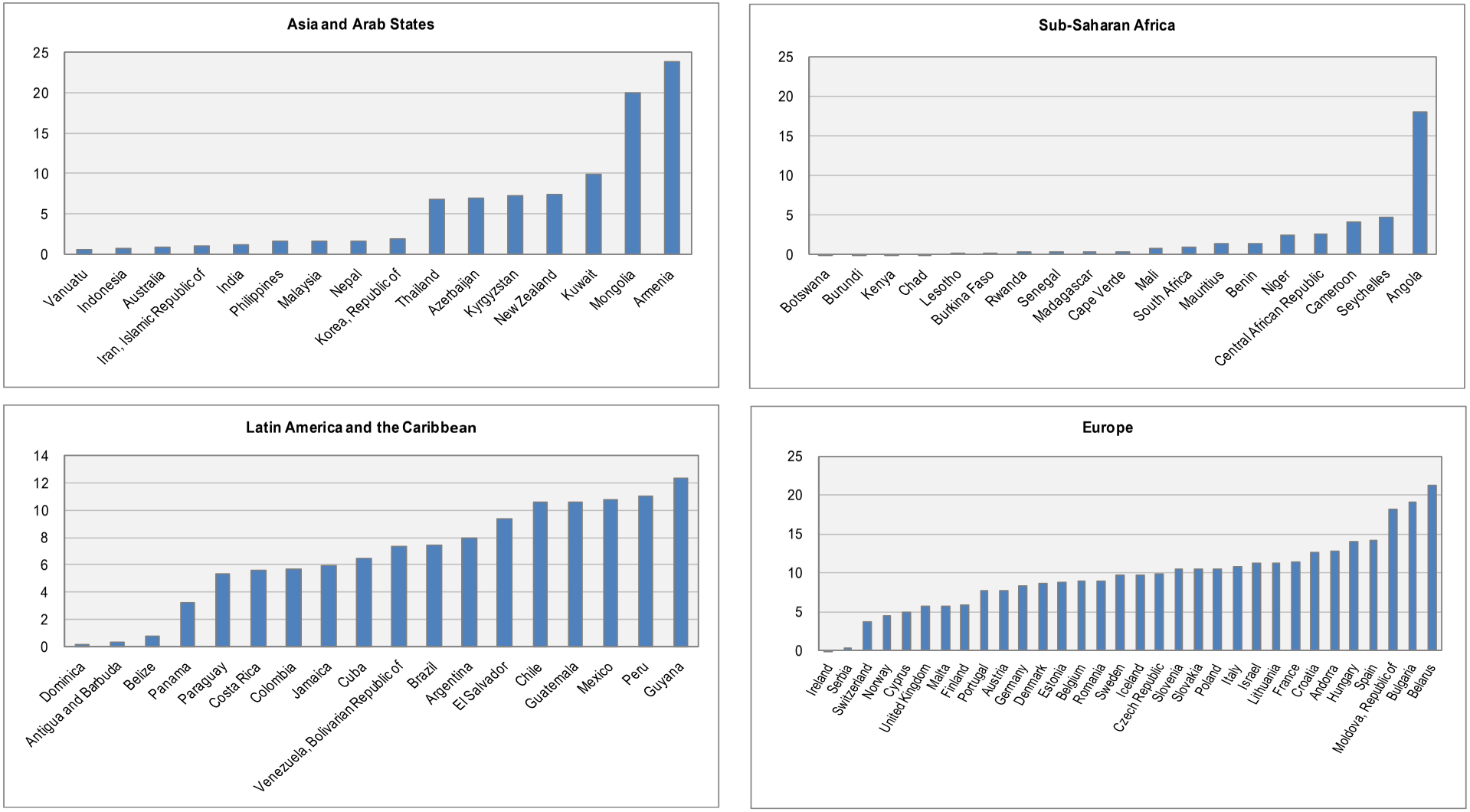
43. The major gap in funding derives from low public investments. In most countries, less than 10 per cent of total public education spending goes to pre-primary education, with many countries allocating less than 5 per cent. Most of the countries allocating more than 10 per cent are in Europe and Latin America. Some notable exceptions among relatively lower income countries (Armenia and Mongolia in Asia, Angola in Africa, Guyana in the Caribbean and Belarus, Bulgaria and the Republic of Moldova in Eastern Europe) show a much higher public investment in ECE (figure 2.6). Recent estimates situate such investments in a range of ECE, not just pre-primary education, in selected developing and developed countries, from just over 1 per cent of government expenditure on education in small Caribbean countries (Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) to nearly 10 per cent in Ghana, compared to more than 11 per cent in a country that invests substantially in ECE, New Zealand (table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Official budget spending for ECE, selected countries, 2010–11

Country	Percentage of government spending on education	Percentage of overall government budget
High income		
Austria	9	–
Belgium (Wallonia-Brussels Federation)	–	0.4
Denmark	–	6.2*
New Zealand	11.5	1.7
Norway	7.3	2.9
Slovakia	8.3	1.7
Middle/low income		
Dominican Republic	5.1	0.5
Ghana	9.8	–
Saint Lucia	1.4	0.2
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	1.2	0.2

* 7.8 per cent including parents' payments.
Source: ILO, 2011b.

Figure 2.6. Public current expenditure on pre-primary education as per cent of public current expenditure on education, selected countries, 2009



Source: UNESCO–UIS, 2011.

44. One of the biggest obstacles to adequate provision of ECE services is their cost (Penn, 2008: 35). Staffing tends to be the main cost driver at this level, as with other levels in education. Staff levels necessary to conduct quality programmes can account for 60 to 90 per cent of operational costs. The expenditure per child for pre-primary education in OECD and partner countries, all services included, ranges widely from a high of $9,394 in the United States to $1,599 in Brazil, with an OECD average of $5,447 (2007 figures, OECD, 2010: 202). Others have calculated per student costs at $58 in Mauritania, $70 in Yemen, $145 in Egypt, $318 in Tunisia and $2,739 in the United Arab Emirates. Other non-formal pre-schools, such as the Madrasa programme in East Africa (Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania (Zanzibar) and Uganda) have estimated costs of between $14 and $24 per child per month (Naudeau et al., 2011: 159–160).

45. Public expenditure on ECE is not entirely a prisoner of cost considerations. The average public expenditure **per child** in all countries with data is 85 per cent of that at primary level, and is close to 90 per cent in countries such as France, Germany and Greece. The small share of total public education spending allocated to ECE therefore reflects more the low enrolment ratios rather than low spending per child, although both are interrelated; low enrolment ratios keep overall expenditures down, which in turn discourages greater access. In North America and Western Europe, expenditure overall on **pre-primary programmes** is equivalent to about 26 per cent of that on primary education, though again in France and Germany the share is as high as 60 per cent. In Latin America, there is an average of 14 per cent, but this drops to 1 per cent in the Plurinational State of Bolivia (UNESCO, 2007: 181–182).

46. In recent years, a number of countries have stepped up their funding and provision of ECE. In the United Kingdom, public investment in pre-school education rose nearly fourfold from £1.1 billion to roughly £5 billion in the decade 1997/8–2007/8 (Hopkin et al., 2010).

47. The great policy challenge since the 2008 financial crisis, the subsequent economic downturn and public financing difficulties is whether such efforts can be sustained so as to overcome previous underfunding of ECE. The budget crisis hitting the United States and a number of European countries in 2011, notably Ireland, Greece, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom, has or will potentially impact on funding for early years education as economic stimulus programmes end and government fiscal difficulties increase (ILO, 2011c: 3). Within the last year, a number of European countries and the United States are facing substantial cutbacks in education, including ECE.

48. Answers to the latter question will in turn affect the extent of public–private funding shares, which vary considerably by country. Among OECD countries, for example, the parents' share is as high as 60 per cent of the total in the United States, but closer to 20 per cent in France and Sweden. In developing countries the variation is even greater. Cuba funds its pre-primary education almost entirely from public resources, while in the Dominican Republic and Guatemala private resources contribute to at least half of the total expenditure (UNESCO–UIS, 2011). In Indonesia, ECE is regarded as a family responsibility and public funding represents a very small percentage of the total, usually as subsidies to privately operated urban child-care centres (UNESCO, 2007: 183).

49. Financing mechanisms also vary, reflecting the public–private mix (box 2.3). Public funding is often provided by more than one tier of government, either directly or through subventions from one tier to the other. In France, the central government finances teacher salaries while local government provides the facilities. In Sweden, public funding for ECE is primarily the responsibility of the municipality and is funded through local taxes. In many countries, an alternative to direct government funding is support to parents via, for example, vouchers to be used to pay fees at any pre-school (UNESCO, 2007: 183–185).

50. The type of funding – direct to services versus subsidies to parents – may have an impact on overall quality. Evidence from OECD member countries suggests that direct public funding of

services brings more effective governance of early childhood services, advantages of scale, better national quality, more effective training for educators and a higher degree of equity in access compared with parental subsidies (OECD, 2006: 14).

Box 2.3
Funding mechanisms in New Zealand and Brazil

The Government of **New Zealand** funds services by way of a per-child per-hour subsidy (which is not means–tested) for up to 30 hours per child per week that covers about 70 per cent of the total costs. The remaining 30 per cent is covered by parental fees. Funding for ECE has grown considerably in recent years, nearly tripling between 2002 and 2009 to reach $1.1 billion.

In **Brazil**, the central government "Fund for the Development and Maintenance of Basic Education" (FUNDEB) has established a minimum per-child expenditure and allocates to each municipality an amount of money proportional to the number of children enrolled in crèches and pre-schools. FUNDEB also aims to reserve 20 per cent of state and municipal tax revenue for basic education, including ECE.

Source: EI, 2010.

External financing: Donor support to developing countries

51. Only a few donor countries or agencies have identified ECE as a specific element in their overall aid policy. A majority of bilateral donors for which data is available allocate less than 2 per cent for ECE and, as a share of total aid to education, the majority allocate less than 0.5 per cent (UNESCO, 2007: 186). An exception is the World Bank, which has substantially increased its investment in ECE since 1990 and has, in the process, heavily influenced the direction and extent of donor policies throughout the South, particularly in Africa (Penn, 2008: 25). One innovative approach in collaboration with UNICEF and UNESCO has been the Early Childhood Virtual University (ECDVU) a training and capacity-building pilot project designed to help meet the need for early childhood leadership and development in Africa and the Middle East (Penn, 2008: 36; UNESCO, 2007: 181). At present, however, the fallout from the 2008 financial crisis on domestic and external finance is likely further to erode external financing for ECE.

Governance and management

52. Governance – the allocation of responsibility within and across levels of government and between public and non-public providers – can determine whether ECE services meet a range of policy considerations: quality standards; affordability; demand; cost-effectiveness; and equity goals. Countries tend to vary on three dimensions of governance: administrative organization – the agencies responsible for ECE at national level; decentralization – the extent to which authority for ECE is vested in subnational levels of government; and the role of private actors – the extent to which policy-making and service delivery are shared with non-public actors.

53. Inter-sectoral and intergovernmental coordination pose special challenges. Although many countries offer one or two years of ECE within the education system to help prepare children for the transition to primary school, provision for children below the age of 3 years usually falls under the auspices of ministries of health, social welfare or children's and women's affairs, not education. Though this may be positive in terms of providing more comprehensive services, it can lead to conflict between ministries or departments. In the United States, nine federal agencies are involved in childhood services, with the Government itself citing frequent overlap, duplication and inefficient allocation of resources. Fragmented responsibility may lead to disparities in access and quality (box 2.4). Whereas early childhood services within education systems tend to be more universally accessible and are often free, services within the social or health sector tend to be more restrictive, are less widespread and charge fees (UNESCO 2007: 174).

Box 2.4
The United States: Decentralized ECE policy and funding

The pattern of provision of ECE is a reflection of a long-standing position regarding the limited role of government in people's lives and the related high value placed on individual responsibility and volunteerism rather than legal enactment. Currently, there is no ECE system with a national policy framework and no federal department as such responsible for children's services. Early childhood issues are considered state or local matters. Policies and resource allocations therefore vary greatly across and within states. In 2004, ten states provided no state funding for ECE. However, the Federal Government does take care of broad ECE goals and funding of services for children considered at risk, such as the "Head Start" programme in operation since 1965.

Source: OECD, 2006; EI, 2010.

54. Recognizing these challenges, a small, but growing number of countries have consolidated responsibility for ECE under one ministry to increase policy coherence. The Nordic countries pioneered this approach in the 1970s as systems expanded in response to rising maternal employment. In these countries, quality standards such as child–teacher ratios and teacher training requirements tend to be uniform throughout ECE (UNESCO, 2007: 174).

55. Since the late 1980s, the trend has been towards designating education as the lead ministry for children from birth. Once early education becomes part of the school system, it is more likely to be seen as a public good. For example, in Brazil the right to ECE is enshrined in the constitution and since 2000 has been part of the education system (EI, 2010: 30). However, as ECE is not usually compulsory, it often struggles for attention and resources within the education bureaucracy. An interministerial body (box 2.5) can help promote national coordination of policies and programmes, and provide a forum for stakeholders to achieve a common vision.

Box 2.5
Ghana: Increasing coordination at national level

Early childhood education forms an integral part of the national education system since legislation was passed in 2004. There are three levels of ECE, including "crèches" for under 2-year-olds, nursery for 2–3 year-olds and kindergarten for 3–5 year-olds. The two years of kindergarten forms part of the basic education system and is compulsory and free in public schools under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. The first two levels fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Social Welfare. In Ghana, there has been a strong commitment to invest in the development of a national ECE policy and to regulate its implementation through the establishment of a national ECE committee. Funding for ECE represents almost 10 per cent of the Government's budget for education, one of the highest percentages among developing countries.

Source: EI, 2010; ILO, 2011b.

56. Decentralization of ECE is often adopted as a strategy to increase transparency and adapt services to local needs and circumstances. It may provide options for greater access in rural and disadvantaged areas (box 2.6).

Box 2.6
Indonesia: Decentralization brings early childhood services to poor communities

Most spending on education in Indonesia is district-based – 90 per cent of the Ministry of National Education annual budget has been shifted from central government to the districts in the form of block grants to schools. These village-level grants reach children aged 0–6 and their parents/caretakers in approximately 6,000 poor communities within 50 impoverished districts throughout Indonesia. This decentralized approach is supported centrally by an early childhood directorate and a national early childhood education and development (ECED) forum of practitioners, experts and administrators.

Source: Naudeau et al. 2011: 69.

57. Decentralization, however, can lead to broader inequalities in access and quality if implementation is uneven or if central government relinquishes responsibilities for funding and

administration. This occurred in countries transiting to market economies during the 1990s. Central funds need to accompany the transfer of power to lower tiers of government, otherwise poor municipalities often cannot maintain quality standards, particularly the hiring and retention of good teachers and their professional development (see Chapters 3 and 4). Better coordination is needed not only horizontally among ministries, but also vertically between levels of government (UNESCO 2007: 176).

Access and quality

Access

58. There is a clear need for scaling-up in the ECE sector. Universal access does not necessarily mean achieving full coverage, as there are variations in demand for ECE at different ages and in different family circumstances (OECD, 2006: 74). It does imply at least making access to ECE available to all children whose parents wish such education. It is also important to have universal *and* appropriate access. As the enrolment figures demonstrate, less attention has been paid in most countries to provision for children under 3 years old, although this tends to be a key indicator of government commitment to equality for women, apart from the intrinsic and extrinsic educational benefits noted above. The Nordic countries have the highest access for children under 3 years old, based on available data, although other countries are catching up (figure 2.2). In all other reviewed OECD countries the evidence suggests that demand for services for children under 3 years far outstrips supply (OECD, 2006: 87), a picture that no doubt is replicated elsewhere. Greater access in developing countries faces a number of hurdles (box 2.7).

Box 2.7
Challenges to providing ECE for 0–3 year-olds in the Caribbean

Caribbean region countries point to funding, logistics, staff and policy obstacles hindering the development of services for children 0–3 years old:

- **Antigua and Barbuda**: insufficient spaces for children; lack of qualified practitioners; lack of ECE services that parents can afford;
- **Belize**: limited human resources; problems in programme monitoring, evaluation and management;
- **Grenada**: understaffed centres unable to implement standards and regulations; staff lack proper training and are underpaid;
- **Guyana**: dearth of qualified staff and resources;
- **Jamaica**: limited resources;
- **Saint Kitts and Nevis**: inadequate spaces; lack of funding;
- **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**: inadequate funding – no government funding to 0–3 year-olds services; preschools provided by private donors, churches and community groups;
- **Suriname**: resource constraints; lack of qualified educators; no policy for ECE.

Source: UNICEF, 2011.

59. ECE access is a complex concept embracing notions of: conditions of access (free or fee paying?); scope (sessional, half-day or full-day?); and quality (including whether services are flexible and appropriate to the age of the child). In the European region, EU policy has targeted conditions and scope of access through benchmarks (box 2.8).

Box 2.8
The European Union: Using targets to boost access

An initial attempt in 2002 in the European Union to set targets for Member countries to provide subsidized places for one third of 0–3 year-olds and over 90 per cent for all 3–6 year-olds by 2010, saw only six countries having reached the targets for *both* groups – Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Norway and Sweden. In 2009, education ministers reinforced this approach by setting a European benchmark for at least 95 per cent of children between 4 and the start of compulsory education to participate in ECE by 2020 – the current average is 92.3 per cent, with a significant group of countries lagging far behind. Though providing a benchmark for countries to work towards, inclusion remains challenging in terms of teaching all groups, notably the Roma minority and children with disabilities – some 2 per cent of the European school population remains in segregated settings.

Sources: OECD, 2006; European Commission, 2011.

60. Nevertheless, as a sign of the increasing importance placed on ECE provision, European and other high-income countries have extended access in the last decade or more, increasingly focusing on children under 6 years old (box 2.9).

Box 2.9
Extending access in high-income countries

In **Finland**, all parents have a right to child-care services for every child under primary school age (7 years old), irrespective of the parents' financial or employment status, either in municipal centres, through home-care allowances to parents until the child is 3 years old or allowances to cover private providers. All 6-year-olds have the right to pre-primary education since 2001, with the municipality obligated to arrange 700 hours of pre-primary education during a school year. More than 97 per cent of all 6-year-olds attend pre-primary education. In 2011, the Government announced that it will evaluate rendering pre-primary education compulsory, with the aim that all 6-year-olds participate in the future.

A number of states *(Länder)* in **Germany** introduced free kindergartens in 2011.

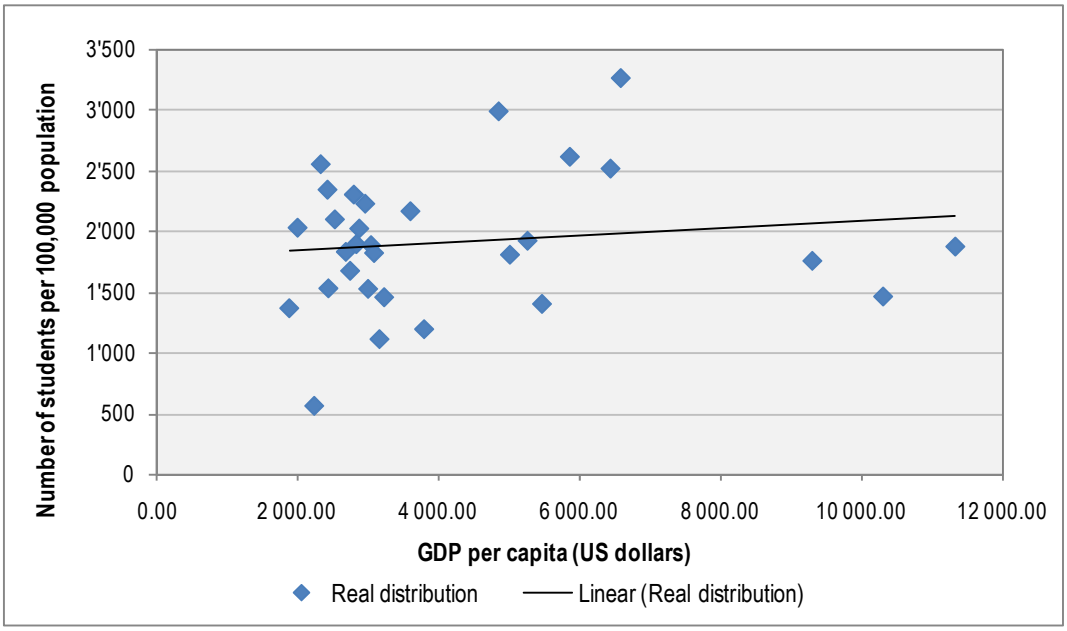
Since 2007, all 3–4 year-olds in **New Zealand** have been entitled to 20 hours a week free ECE.

The **United Kingdom** introduced a free entitlement for all 4-year-olds in 1998, extending to all 3-year-olds in 2004. This entitlement was to 15 hours per week from September 2010. In addition, the Sure Start programme was launched in 1997 to tackle child poverty, social exclusion and educational disadvantage, reaching 2.4 million families.

Sources: Finland: ILO, 2011b; Germany: *Guardian International,* 2011b; New Zealand: UNESCO, 2010a: 53; United Kingdom: Hopkin et al., 2010: 7; UNESCO, 2010a: 52.

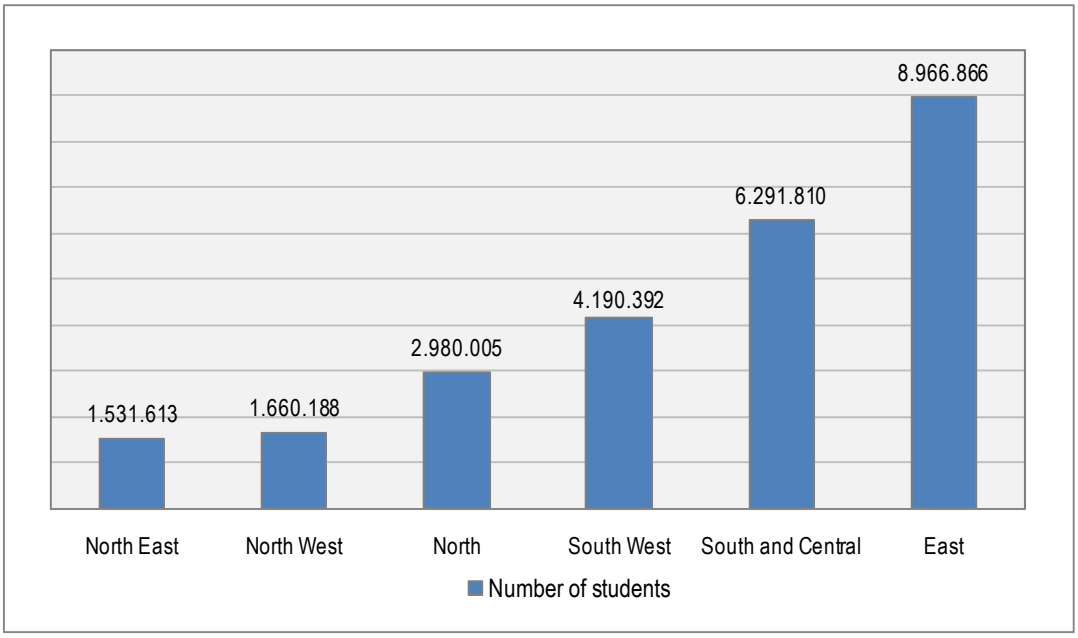
61. Expansion of ECE programmes around the world has largely benefited urban, well-to-do groups, more than those in rural and remote areas. This reduces opportunities for those most in need and who have the most to gain from them; the poor, rural families, those with disabilities, ethnic minorities, those affected by emergencies and conflict, and working children. In the process, school readiness gaps between rich and poor and between urban and rural/disadvantaged populations are increasing (UNESCO, 2011c: 6). Urban children are about twice as likely as rural children to participate in pre-school programmes, and children from the bottom 20 per cent of households are half as likely to be in pre-school as children from the top 20 per cent (UNESCO, 2011a: 38). China is illustrative of access gaps between poorer and richer provinces and regions. Provinces with higher average GDP tend to have more students in kindergarten per 100,000 people (figure 2.7), while the most economically developed regions in the country – east, south and central China – have the highest density of kindergarten enrolment rate, as well as the largest number of students (figure 2.8).

Figure 2.7. Number of kindergarten students per 100,000 people by province and GDP per capita, China, 2009



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2010.

Figure 2.8. Number of kindergarten students, major regions in China, 2009



Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2010.

62. Around the world, gender parity in ECE, as measured by the gender disparity index (GPI) [5] has generally been achieved. There was an overall increase from 0.97 to 0.99 in ECE between 1999 and 2009, with the Arab States lagging behind (UNESCO, 2011d; UNESCO–UIS, 2011). The declining economic activity in critical sectors and domestic investment in educational provision

[5] Ratio of females to males; 1 equals parity.

in the early years of the popular movements that erupted in the Arab world in 2011 ("The Arab Spring"), could impact further on this situation.

63. Many countries have enacted compulsory ECE laws to boost access, to somewhat mixed effect. Analysis suggests that it is the level of maternal education and household wealth that substantially affect participation in ECE programmes (UNESCO, 2007: 139–143). Participation rates for children of mothers with a secondary education are at least twice those for children whose mothers have no education (UNESCO, 2011a: 38). In sum, absolute poverty and social exclusion are important factors in inhibiting access to ECE programmes. Targeted policies such as conditional income transfer programmes may, nevertheless, increase access and reduce inequalities (box 2.10).

Box 2.10
The use of conditional cash transfers and tax revenues in Brazil

Access and quality of ECE varies considerably between regions in Brazil and between urban and rural areas. The government has used conditional cash transfers (CCTs) as a means of redressing social imbalances. Schemes such as *Bolsa Familia* have become internationally recognized as a means of improving access to education among the poorest sections of Brazilian society. Additionally, Brazil has instituted the *Children's Fund* amounting to 6 per cent of individual tax and 1 per cent of corporate tax to boost access to ECE among marginal groups.

Source: EI, 2010.

64. Differences in access within countries are also a feature of countries that combine high levels of decentralization with subnational autonomy as in large federal states. The United States is a striking example. Twelve states have no regular state pre-school education programme and in eight states less than 20 per cent are enrolled (UNESCO, 2010a: 51). The federal Head Start programme launched in 1965 and the Early Head Start programme established in 1994, to provide support for children under 5 years old partially compensate with comprehensive education, health, nutrition and parental involvement services for low-income vulnerable children and their families. The majority of paid staff (77 per cent) have early-childhood degrees. However, recent funding constraints have left the programme serving less than 10 per cent of the eligible target group (US–Head Start, 2011; EI, 2010). In Germany, an estimated 25 per cent of immigrant children enter the formal school system without experience of kindergarten (OECD, 2006: 32); in March 2011, Germany launched a three-year, $550 million programme aimed at teaching German in kindergartens and child-care centres to children under 3 years old of immigrant background who speak little or no German at home (*The New York Times*, 2011). Instituting special ECE programmes and measures targeted at marginal and vulnerable groups can overcome exclusion and help offset disadvantage, but are not necessarily sufficient in the absence of targeted national coordination. In New Zealand, participation initiatives have resulted in a growing number of children being enrolled in ECE, but children from low-income families, indigenous (Maori) families and migrant groups, particularly Pasifika, are reportedly still mostly excluded, in particular, because there exists no central government planning or provision of ECE services to fully reach all areas of the country, and services are often not adapted to meet the needs of those children in danger of missing out (EI, 2010: 60–62).

Quality

65. Increased investment by government in ECE has been accompanied by a growing concern about quality, even if there is little consensus on how to define the term. This concern is greatest regarding services for children under 3 years old where much of the provision is private and unregulated, with staff training and pedagogical programming especially weak (OECD, 2006). Often, governments focus on easy-to-measure indicators of structural quality: class size, child–teacher ratios, teacher education and training, physical environment and

availability of suitable materials. Other indicators of process such as positive learning relationships between children and teachers, parental involvement, and responsiveness to diversity and children with special needs, are also important (Myers, 2006: 31–34; UNESCO, 2007: 177).

66. Most studies indicate a strong correlation between staff qualifications, early childhood outcomes and classroom quality. Evidence comes from various cross-national studies, studies in North America and the longitudinal Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) project conducted in the United Kingdom that underscored the importance of teachers' knowledge of the curriculum, as well as their knowledge and understanding of child development (Naudeau et al., 2011: 86–87). Research from the United States has established that ECE programmes with well-educated, adequately paid teachers, small classes (no more than 20 children), and small staff–child ratios (less than 1:10) produce strong short- and long-term educational gains. Programmes with fewer resources invested in ECE classrooms often have failed to achieve similar results (Barnett, 2008: 19).

67. In recent years, many countries in almost all regions have developed quality control instruments (Myers, 2006: Appendix 1), sometimes aided by international organizations, for example, UNICEF (2008). To be effective, such instruments need to be universally applied to all forms of ECE provision. Yet, publicly funded services are required to follow programme quality standards, where they exist, whereas informal and other private provision is often exempt from regulation except where publicly subsidized. The lack of resources to assure sufficient inspection and monitoring for all programmes is unfortunately a common obstacle (UNESCO, 2007: 178).

68. Another important issue for quality ECE is evaluating state curricula or pedagogical frameworks for children under 6 years old, which has increased since the late 1990s, particularly among OECD countries. A recent Ofsted (inspection) report (*Guardian International*, 2011a) for England and Wales found that in 2010, 68 per cent of child-care providers in the early years' foundation stage (0–5) were good or outstanding, up from 59 per cent two years before when the stage was introduced. Nurseries performed better than childminders, but the quality of child-care provision was less good in deprived areas. In the context of monitoring and improving curriculum, different approaches can be identified – the early childhood approach and the social pedagogy approach. The former generally results in a more centralizing approach to content and methodology, while the latter remains more local, child-centred and holistic (OECD, 2006: 15).

National policies

69. Governments have not historically accorded sufficient policy and funding attention to ECE, relative to other levels, primary education in particular. Reviews of education plans reveal that they give some attention to early childhood, but most do not take a holistic approach in keeping with the Dakar Framework for Action, despite the encouragement of international agencies and early childhood networks. This policy gap is most marked for children under the age of 3 as part of an integrated system of ECE provision and regulation from birth to school entry, in no small part because the state is more reluctant to intervene, viewing the education of children under 3 as the responsibility of parents, private associations or NGOs (UNESCO, 2007: 168). There are, however, signs that this picture of some years ago is steadily evolving (box 2.11). The majority of countries now have some kind of early childhood policy in place (UNESCO, 2011c: 7).

Box 2.11
The emerging policy environment in developing countries

Chile, since 2001, has made policy commitments to improving both access and quality of early childhood provision. In 2006, a Technical Advisory Council was created to guide early childhood policies.

In 1989, **China** developed a policy to develop the profile of ECCE. Teacher education reforms adopted in 1996, and further refined in 2001, constituted a key element of this policy initiative.

In **India**, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, which came into effect in 2010, in the whole of India, allows for discretionary state provision of free pre-primary education. A National Early Childhood Council provides policy and programme oversight. These developments build on the national Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme launched in 1975, a flagship programme that now covers 23 million children. The federal Government has renewed its commitment to universalize ICDS and expand equality of opportunity to all children.

Ghana's national early childhood policy was enacted in 2004 after a decade-long policy development process. A national coordinating committee, including representation from the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), oversees the implementation of the policy.

In **Jamaica**, a strategic review of the early childhood sector led to the creation, in 2003, of an Early Childhood Commission to develop systems and policies, bringing together all the key programme and policy actors in the field.

Thailand's National Policy and Strategy for Early Childhood Development 2006–08 builds on the 1997 Constitution commitment to government support for the early years.

A national project (2006–13) was launched in **Viet Nam** following the 2002 Government commitment to greater investment in early years care and education.

Source: UNESCO, 2007; Naudeau et al., 2011; Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC), 2011.

70. Developed countries tend to have a national ECE framework that covers a wide range of policy components, whereas the picture in developing countries is less comprehensive, particularly in Africa, where ECE remains a low priority in government policy-making and provision (Penn, 2008: 10). The contrast is evident in the policy coverage for a small number of countries shown in table 2.3. Policy gaps in turn have an impact on access and quality issues, as for example in Ethiopia which lacks a national framework of policy and support, and where less than 5 per cent of the appropriate age group has access to pre-school education – which is almost exclusively limited to major towns (Awopegba, 2010: 12–16; UNESCO, 2011d; UNESCO–UIS, 2011).

Table 2.3. Policy framework for ECE, selected countries, 2011

Country	Curricula and learning goals	Education authority objectives or standards	Professional autonomy	Special education needs
OECD countries				
Austria	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Belgium (Wallonia-Brussels Federation)	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Finland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
New Zealand	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Norway	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slovakia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Non-OECD countries				
Antigua and Barbuda	Yes	Yes	–	–
Argentina	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Country	Curricula and learning goals	Education authority objectives or standards	Professional autonomy	Special education needs
Bhutan	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Burkina Faso	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Dominican Republic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ghana	Yes	–	Yes	Yes
Kazakhstan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lebanon	Yes	Yes	No	No
Montenegro	–	–	–	Yes
Nepal	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Pakistan	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Philippines	Yes	Yes	–	Yes (pre-school)
Sri Lanka	Yes	No	No	Yes
Saint Kitts and Nevis	Yes	–	–	Yes
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Yes	Yes	No	No
Suriname	Yes	Yes	No	No

Source: ILO, 2011b.

71. Even where they exist, policies often reveal a number of defects (UNESCO, 2011c: 7), of which:

- lack of systematic definition and collection of data on relevant indicators of child development and the ECE subsector;
- lack of information and data on the non-formal, community and private-sector programmes;
- lack of a comprehensive, multisectoral, and multi-partner ECE framework and strategy embedded in larger national development plans;
- no policy coordinating mechanism covering relevant partners, essential for effective service delivery;
- no systematic structure for staff training;
- no mechanism for assessing and addressing system strengths and weaknesses as, for example, through social dialogue mechanisms;
- lack of interest by ministries of education in the cognitive and psycho-social development of children under the age of 3 years; and
- a serious lack of funding, at least from the government sector – which often leads to unregulated, private-sector-dominated ECE provision.

72. Comprehensive early-childhood policies provide governments with the mandate and guidance to implement programmes for young children. The development by 2015 of comprehensive, integrated ECE policies and related strategies and programmes is an important priority for all countries of the world (UNESCO, 2011c: 7). Under the lead ministry or agency, policies need a vision, goals and objectives and leading strategies that clarify the role of ECE, access and quality goals, and that set out the funding allocations within the current budget needed to

implement the policy and propose strategies to overcome implementation obstacles. For example, in New Zealand, the ECE sector is guided by a ten-year strategic plan introduced in 2002 which places the emphasis on quality, participation and collaboration (EI, 2010: 59). Since the late 1980s, many countries, including Brazil, Ghana, Kenya, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Viet Nam, have designated the education ministry as the institutional anchor for ECE (UNESCO, 2007: 174). A policy framework, developed from consultative processes that encompass all relevant stakeholders, including teachers and their organizations, constitutes a central objective (see also Chapter 5).

73. Legislation that defines what must be done to enact the early childhood policies is also useful. At least 80 countries have such legislation and many refer to ECE as the first stage of the education system, thus recognizing its place within broader education policy. Thirty countries have at least one year of compulsory pre-primary education, most through legislation enacted since 1990. In 2002, for example, Mexico made three years of compulsory pre-school a constitutional right, with provision to be completed by 2008 (UNESCO–IBE, 2006, cited in UNESCO, 2007: 168). To this legal anchor, specialists in ECE who have noted that many policies are declarations of intent rather than reality, with little in the way of strong enforcement, detailed strategies and adequate public funding, emphasize the need for ECE policies to be constantly reviewed by stakeholders to ensure that policies are effectively put into force (Vargas-Barón, 2005: 6, 32).

Measuring and monitoring ECE progress: Data collection gaps and challenges

74. Though there appears to be a growing interest in ECE in developing countries the data to properly monitor is limited as few countries compile information on the variety of provision and regular monitoring systems do not exist for the most part (Penn, 2008: 21). Moreover, the EFA goal contains no benchmarks or qualitative targets. National reports on the nature and quality of ECE are less standardized than those on other education levels because they typically involve a diverse set of non-governmental actors and government agencies, and they cover children of different ages yet lack disaggregated data, for example, for those children aged under 3 and those aged 3–6 years (UNESCO, 2007: 124). Data collection on ECE issues also differs greatly, ranging from questionnaires (Antigua and Barbuda, Ghana and Saint Lucia) and interviews (Yemen) to databases (Philippines and Sri Lanka) and comprehensive statistical analysis (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Kazakhstan, Norway, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Slovakia) (ILO, 2011b). Data gaps are greatest for those children aged under 3 and vulnerable groups. The Philippines has developed an innovative system to address some of these issues (box 2.12).

Box 2.12
ECE data collection in the Philippines

Building on earlier efforts to standardize data collection, in 2009, an early childhood care and development system (ECCD–IS) was created with UNICEF's support. The ECCD–IS is an automated and web-based reporting system which aims to provide reliable, comprehensive and timely data/information on profiles of ECCD service providers, facilities and other relevant information from providers at the city/municipal level. It is intended to enable the relevant government departments to evaluate the status of existing ECCD centre-based and home-based services. ECCD–IS can also provide support for efforts by national, regional and local policy-makers, programme planners and managers to effectively implement the national ECCD programme and improve service delivery. The system is planned to be institutionalized in all cities and municipalities nationwide by 2011, through coordination between the Policy Development and Planning Bureau and 16 field offices.

Source: Early Childhood Care and Development Council, Department of Education, Department of Social Welfare and Development, ILO, 2011b.

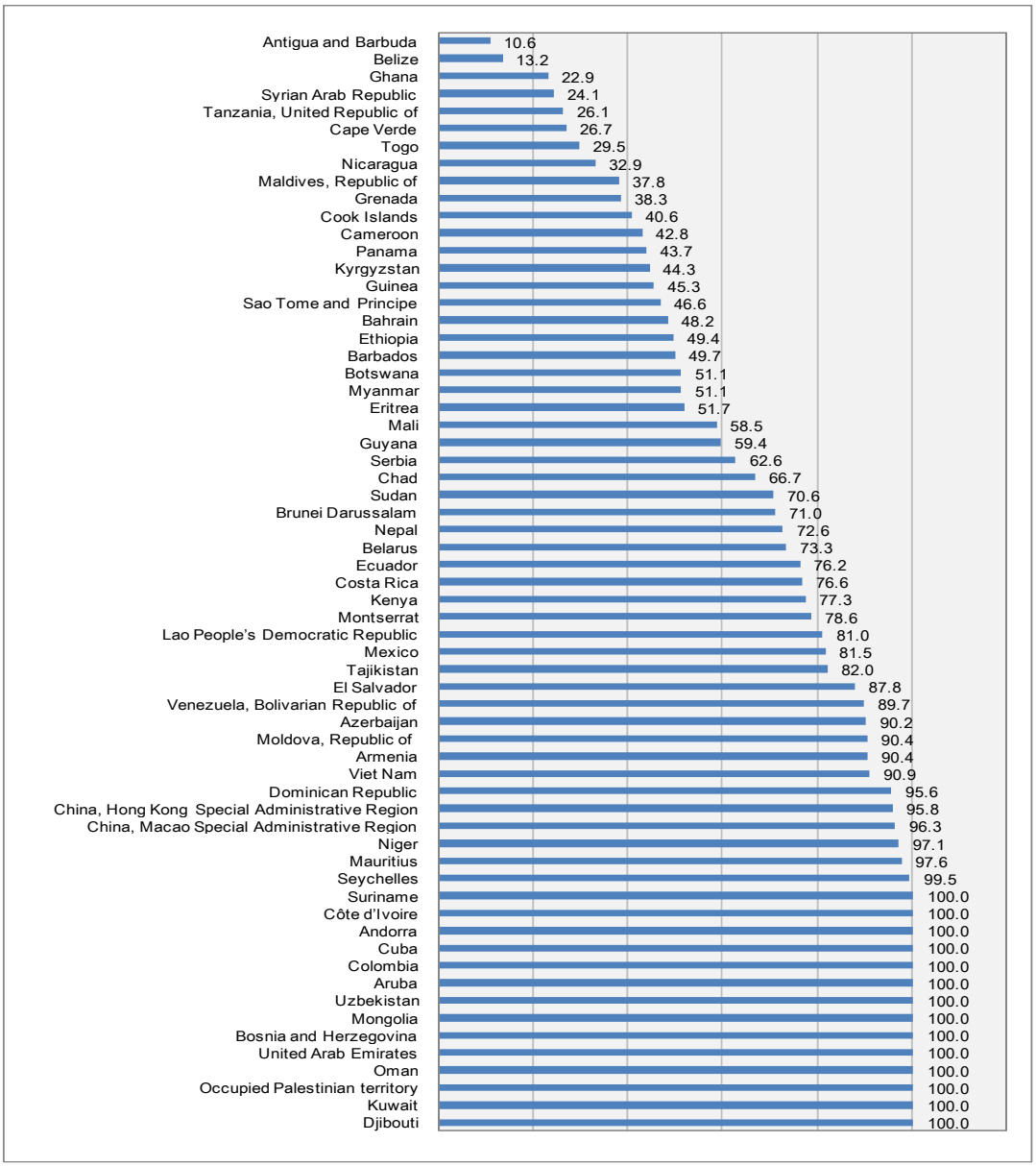
75. To help fill the data gaps, the Moscow Framework of Action (2010) called on UNESCO to complete work on "The Holistic Child Development Index" aimed at helping review progress in this sector in 2015.

3. Initial training and professional development of ECE educators

Qualifications: Quality and coverage challenges

76. If a consensus exists that quality ECE depends on high-quality staff training and professional development (OECD, 2006: 158; UNESCO, 2010b: 4), universal realization in many countries remains a distant goal, despite continued progress in the last decade. Of nearly 80 low- and middle-income countries from all major regions for which data was available in 2009 (OECD countries excluded), nearly one third estimated that 90–100 per cent of their pre-primary teachers were trained to national standards, but nearly one quarter reported that less than half of their pre-primary teachers reached national standards (figure 3.1 – UNESCO–UIS, 2011). Such estimates require some caution as the national standards in question may be more or less stringent, but they show that by the estimates of countries themselves, much needs to be done to reach desired qualification levels.

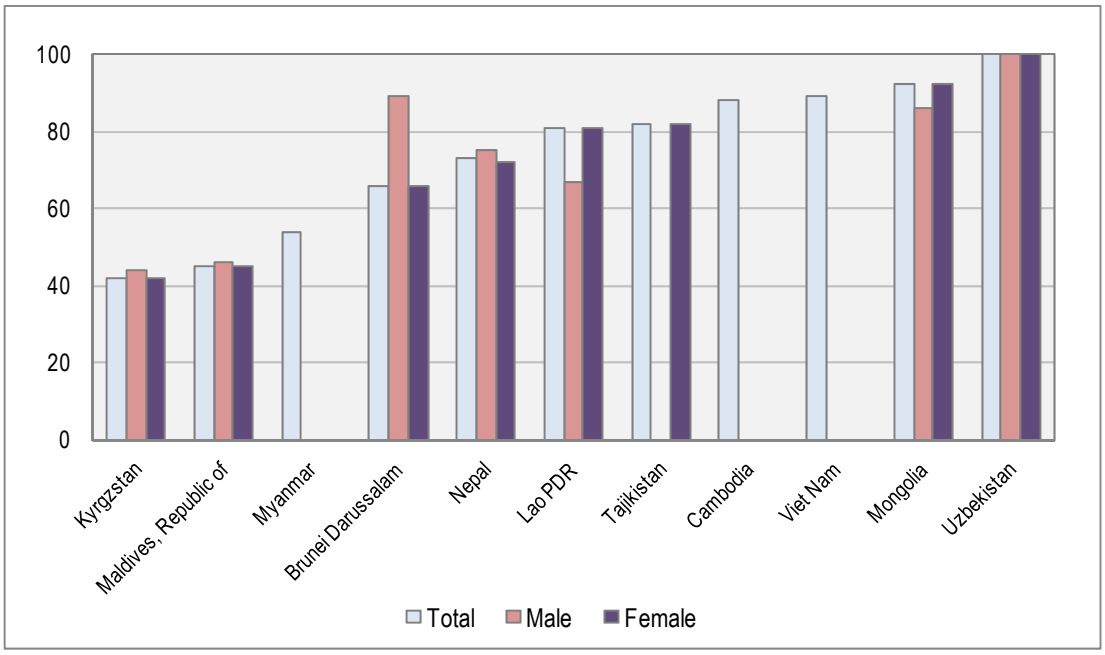
Figure 3.1. Percentage of trained teachers in pre-primary education, selected countries, 2009



Source: UNESCO–UIS, 2011 – data accessed on 23 June 2011.

77. This great diversity in reaching qualification goals applies to the distribution of countries along the low-to-high spectrum in almost all regions. Asia provides a good example with a selection of countries ranging from 40 to 100 per cent of trained ECE teachers. Bearing in mind that, with few exceptions, almost all of these teachers are female (see Chapter 4), there is no clear "gender divide" (figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2. Percentage of trained teachers in ECCE programmes, Asian countries, latest year available

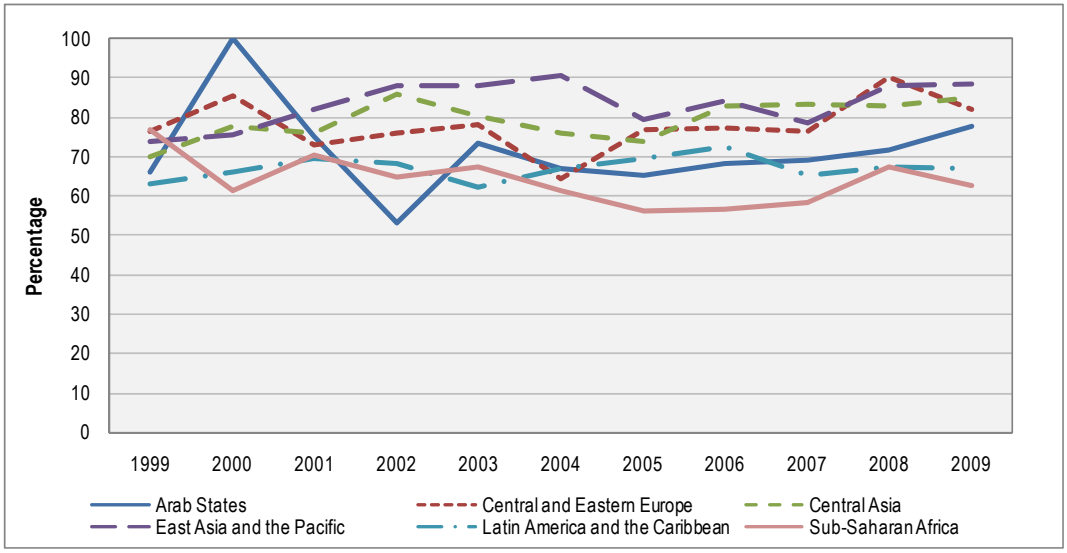


Source: ARNEC, 2011a.

78. Progress towards closing the gap in trained teachers is slow but sure in almost all regions and countries, reflecting no doubt the heightened political will and national investments to improve the quality of the ECE workforce. Asian and Pacific countries have made the most progress; Arab states have fluctuated dramatically but show a slight upward trend, while the most disquieting trend is the decline in trained teachers in sub-Saharan Africa (figure 3.3.). Significant swings up and down are evident in countries at different income levels and within the same region. At the extremes, great leaps forward in Bahrain and Viet Nam have allowed these countries to reach 50 per cent and over 90 per cent of trained teachers, while dramatic, and unexplained, declines in Antigua and Barbuda and the Syrian Arab Republic and have considerably undermined efforts to reach higher quality standards (figure 3.4).

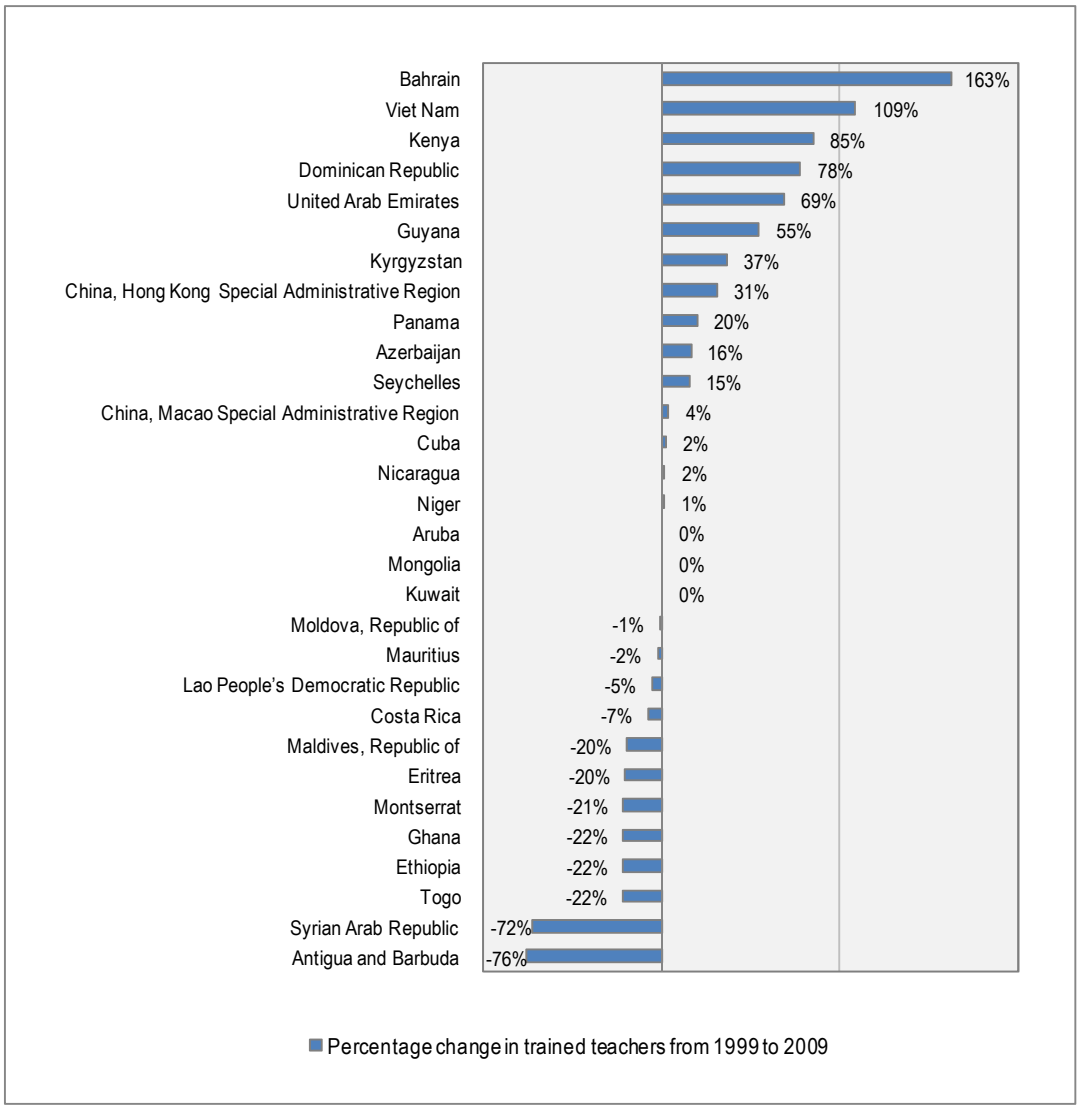
79. Why do countries show little progress in reaching higher levels of standards? A number of factors are at play, including the diversity of provision, underfunding and lack of national policies generally and, more specifically, for teaching qualifications. In some countries, the pressure of enrolment increases has led to relaxed standards and training/hiring shortcuts. In countries achieving or close to the goal of 100 per cent of teachers meeting formal requirements (figure 3.1), a greater effort to set and maintain standards is almost certainly a contributing factor. To help countries still far from the ultimate goal of a fully qualified ECE teaching force, international organizations (UNICEF, 2008; EI, 2010) recommend setting a target for the ECE sector of 80 per cent trained and 50 per cent tertiary educated.

Figure 3.3. Trends in the percentage of trained pre-primary teachers, major regions, 1999–2009



Source: UNESCO–UIS, 2011.

Figure 3.4. Trends in the percentage of trained pre-primary teachers, selected countries and territories, 1999–2009



Source: UNESCO–UIS, 2011.

ECE curriculum policy: Pedagogical frameworks and educational plans

80. In principle, initial and continual ECE educator preparation links in with the pedagogical approach, decided at national or other levels. In practice, the wide diversity in provision does not always ensure a harmonious whole, where pedagogical and curriculum reforms are not in synergy with initial teacher education, which is backed by the necessary in-service training.

81. An agreed framework for ECE approaches is useful in guiding practice across a country, and helps to ensure both consistent standards across different forms of early childhood services and learning continuity, both important tools for equity in provision. At the same time, frameworks need to be flexible to allow teachers to experiment with different approaches according to their professional judgement on individual learning needs; a rigid framework may compromise teacher autonomy, a key component of professionalism (ILO–UNESCO, 1966: Articles 61, 63).

82. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in national or state curricula. Unlike the centrally imposed curricula of traditional primary schooling, ECE curricula often take the form of short pedagogical frameworks. These frameworks, ideally based on consultation with stakeholders, including teachers, identify general quality goals and how these might be attained. They also encourage the formulation of more detailed curricula by individual ECE centres. In the last 15 years, many governments in the OECD have introduced curricula for children aged between 3–6 years, and some have developed a common curriculum or pedagogical framework for those up to 6 years old, in particular the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom (England). For example, England introduced an Early Years Foundation Stage in 2009 for children aged between 0–6 years, while a pre-primary education curricula came into effect in Finland in 2011 (OECD, 2006: ILO, 2011b).

83. Countries differ in the critical skills, knowledge and pedagogical approaches they consider best serve the development of young children. Since acquiring non-cognitive skills (such as motivation and the ability to interact with others) in the early years is essential for future learning and successful social engagement, the content of the ECE curriculum and the teacher education that helps to implement it should extend to a range of non-cognitive aspects. Integration between care and education is essential, irrespective of whether ECE organization is split between childcare from birth to 3 years and from 3 years to start of school, or is a unitary model covering the entire age range from birth to the start of compulsory schooling.

84. Two curricular traditions have emerged in OECD countries as to how "school-like" the experience should be for children, especially from ages 4 to 6 years. The early education tradition, particularly strong in France and the English-speaking countries, tends to focus heavily on cognitive development, early literacy and numeracy with a focus on "utilitarian" goals – preparation for school and by implication later on, work. Countries drawing on the social pedagogy tradition, most notably the Nordic countries, do not exclude emergent literacy and numeracy in preparation for further schooling, but seek to maintain an open and holistic curriculum until children enter school and, sometimes, well into the early classes of primary school (OECD, 2006: 140 – see box 3.1). Such less prescriptive approaches, more in keeping with the logic of child-centred learning, also tend to allow for greater teacher autonomy in the pedagogy applied, therefore conditioning teacher preparation.

Box 3.1
Nordic country curricula approaches

Denmark's kindergartens stress the free and creative development of the child in a social context. Pedagogues in Denmark resisted the formulation of a national curriculum until 2004. The belief remains strong that early childhood centres are social pedagogical institutions rather than "schools".

Norway's Curriculum Framework Plan of 1996, revised in 2006, was the first of its type in Europe to build on a holistic concept of learning with a focus on the development of social interaction skills, language and communication skills broadly defined. Curriculum and learning goals are becoming more goal orientated, with maths and language skills and standards linked to the European Qualification Framework to ensure equity and high quality and strengthen the kindergarten as a learning community.

In recent years, **Sweden** has tried to combine both traditions with a greater emphasis on learning and education while retaining the social pedagogic focus. Since 1996, ECE in Sweden has been incorporated into the education system, with a conscious attempt to build closer links between pre-school with primary schools, treating all as equal parts of the education system. However, unlike systems in the United Kingdom (England) or France, there is no formal assessment in Swedish pre-schools.

Sources: ILO, 2011b; OECD, 2006: 138–140.

85. An increasingly important aspect, as countries face more complex issues of multi-culturalism and integration, relates to inclusive curricula that respond to all learners' needs, including disabled, ethnic minority and immigrant children. New Zealand's *Te whariki* ECE curriculum is considered an inclusive, internationally renowned approach (ILO, 2011b).

86. Recent curricula trends point to far longer and more detailed learning goals and greater tasks to be undertaken by pedagogues. For example, the 36-page pre-school framework enacted in Greece in 2003 was supplemented in 2006 by a 431-page teacher's guide. In part it was to compensate for insufficient training on new curricula, but there have been mixed feelings from teachers as to whether the guidelines supported teachers or hindered their initiative and self-learning by children (Sofou and Tsafos, 2009: 413, 420). Such central direction and prescription may well be unnecessary where there is a well-qualified and stable teaching force capable of planning and evaluating children's progress (OECD, 2006: 144).

Qualifications and initial training

87. The curricula diversity and structural divide between under 3 years and 3–6 years is also reflected in educator qualification and training requirements, varying according to the type of early childhood professional and the nature of the tasks performed. Typologies of ECE professionals common in developed countries distinguish between early childhood specialists or pedagogues who work with children in multiple contexts from birth to compulsory school age, and pre-primary teachers who are mainly centre-based. In many OECD countries, educators are trained *specifically* to work with young children in the three or more years prior to entry into primary school, and are often trained at the same level and in the same institution as primary school teachers. In several countries, pre-primary teachers are trained for both sectors and may or may not have a dominant training or certification in early childhood studies (OECD, 2006: 159–162).

88. Typically, early childhood educators working closer to the primary school gate are better trained and rewarded. In early education there is a cross-national trend towards at least a three-year tertiary degree for lead professional staff (generally teachers) in developed countries. Across the OECD, staff serving children aged between 3–6 years are more likely to hold three- or four-year university, or two-year post-secondary, degrees. For example, in France, a four-year university degree plus up to two years professional training is required for teachers of children 2–6 year-olds. In contrast, staff in settings serving the youngest children are more likely to have varied backgrounds, ranging from no training to post secondary three-year professional education or a two-year post-secondary degree. In a large federal State, the United

States, there is no national standards system; most teachers are not required to hold a first-level university (bachelor's) degree; nor do teachers in private centres have to undergo any pre-service training in most states, although many states require a competency-based ECE credential (EI, 2010: 86–87; OECD, 2006: 158–160). By contrast, some OECD countries now have a significant percentage of their ECE staff educated at least to bachelor's degree level: Denmark (55 per cent); New Zealand (64 per cent); and Norway (32 per cent) (ILO, 2011b).

89. The picture is even more diverse in middle- and low-income countries. In general, pre-primary teachers have less pre-service training and almost always less than their primary school counterparts. Up to five years ago, no specific training courses for pre-primary teachers were in place in a wide variety of developing countries, for example, Bangladesh, Chad and the Syrian Arab Republic, and only a few countries explicitly require teacher training (UNESCO, 2007: 147). ECE teachers in some parts of Pakistan may have only some weeks of post-secondary training, and those in Nepal can be employed with a 10th grade graduating certificate and 90 hours basic training (ILO, 2011b).

90. The situation continues to evolve towards higher standards and more structured initial preparation: Argentina requires four years of post-secondary studies for ECE employment; Kazakhstan estimates that 55 per cent of ECE educators have a bachelor's degree or equivalent, while 38 per cent have a two-year post-secondary certificate; and Lebanon estimates the number of bachelor's degree holders at more than 30 per cent. Diplomas or certificates of one to three years obtained in a mix of training institutions, rather than more comprehensive tertiary degrees still predominate, for example in almost all countries of the Caribbean, even if bachelor's or master's degree training is possible, though usually by going abroad (ILO, 2011b). Sub-Saharan Africa illustrates the general lack of comprehensive approaches to ECE teacher education; where few countries boast early childhood educators with higher education, qualification standards are non-existent or weak, professional development is rarely systematic or universal and some countries suffer from mismatches in training and deployment. In sub-Saharan Africa training is generally short, around one year maximum (UNESCO–BREDA, 2010: 44). Some good practices to redress the situation can nevertheless be noted in Lesotho, Mauritius and South Africa (box 3.2).

Box 3.2
Initial training and professional development in sub-Saharan Africa

In **Burkina Faso**, the general requirement is a two-year post-secondary certificate but may be less for auxiliary staff ("moniteurs"). Despite an integrated training structure, the number trained fails to meet growing demand. There is considerable "leakage" from the system in the form of trained ECE teachers assigned to work in the ministries rather than in ECE centres. Training tends to assimilate ECE with that of the formal primary school, while professional development suffers from an unstructured approach.

In **Congo**, ECE teachers are trained for two years. The minimum level qualification for teaching is at least three years in general education institutions. On-the-job training and in-service seminars constitute professional development. There is a need to redeploy trained teachers from ministries to schools and centres.

Pre-school teacher education in **Ethiopia** is a shared responsibility between the government, NGOs and the private sector. The country reportedly lacks a clear pre-school teacher education policy teacher education quality standards, thereby hampering development of a desired teacher profile and professional career structure for pre-school teachers. Trainees receive ten months of training in a single government institute; most regions have no pre-school training institute. Private institutes train pre-school teachers for between three to ten months. Many of these lack qualified staff, have only part-time staff and are handicapped by inappropriate facilities and materials.

In **Ghana**, a three-year diploma is required for certification. Initial education and professional development is variously provided at university level and at a national nursery teacher training centre.

In **Lesotho**, a Certificate in Early Childhood Education was launched in 2007, along with a two-year in-service training course, marking the beginning of ECE professional development in the country. A minimum of a junior secondary education plus five years teaching experience is required for admission. A system of national trainers provide training using a cascade model from district to community level to cater to the training needs of experienced but unqualified ECE staff.

Mauritius is working on a national certificate to ensure harmonization of all teacher training courses offered by private providers with those from the National Training Institution. Efforts are geared towards ensuring training accords with international norms and standards.

South Africa has an accreditation system for early childhood development, under the South African Qualifications Authority. The National Qualifications Framework for early childhood development seeks to regularize training done by tertiary institutions and NGOs who offer training aimed at the previously disadvantaged black population. Trainees are visited at least eight to ten times a year by trained ECE teachers and assisted with lesson planning, materials development and the use of traditional games and songs to promote the language and culture of the local community.

Sources: Awopegba, 2010; ILO, 2011b; Penn, 2008.

Training of para-professionals, community and contract teachers

91. Given the challenges posed by the training, recruitment, and compensation of qualified teachers in developing countries linked to human resource and budgetary constraints, many countries have responded through the use of para-professional, community or contract teachers, mirroring similar developments in primary education (Fyfe, 2007: 1–2). Centre-based programmes have used para-professionals such as the Madrasa resource centre pre-schools in East Africa that target poor Muslim children. One assessment has suggested that such programmes can equip para-professionals with the tools that enable them to deliver ECE programmes in low-income settings of comparable quality to more formal programmes in similar situations (Mwaura and Mohamed, 2008: 404). Viet Nam has also heavily used non-formal education teachers (UNESCO, 2007: 173).

92. Bearing in mind the underdeveloped nature of ECE in much of the developing world, recourse to such training and recruitment approaches in poor communities is explicable in the absence of more structured options but, over time, risks undermining quality-based provision for poor communities based on high teacher-training standards. The combination of pre-primary teachers employed on a contract basis, receiving a low salary and with limited or no professional training has been cited as a major impediment to quality ECE in African countries (UNESCO–BREDA, 2010: 44–45). The ILO–UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966: Article 142–144) suggests policy options in situations of lower professional training approaches to meet teacher shortages: careful selection of future educators based on the established professional standards; special measures to facilitate upgrading; and the supervision of unqualified staff by professionally qualified teachers. This cocktail of professional development and guidance/supervision by professionally trained educators has been advocated as a means of absorbing contractual teachers, used extensively at primary level in many poor countries or communities, into a unified teaching force (Fyfe, 2007: 17–18). Professional guidance and supervision by professionals in an already poor human resource environment is particularly challenging, but could be envisaged as part of restructuring career options for experienced ECE educators.

Upgrading the ECE workforce

93. Upgrading and expansion of the ECE workforce responds to societal changes and demands associated with an increasing complexity of work within ECE, for example more self-evaluation and quality improvement, without necessarily replicating primary school methods (OECD, 2006: 147; UNESCO, 2007: 148–149). Since the mid-1990s at least, many countries have further developed, revised or improved initial training programmes. For example, beginning in 1997, New Zealand increased the number and diversity of pre-service teacher education providers, including three-year programmes for ECE and in 2002 set targets for qualification levels covering four-fifths of teachers by 2012 (box 3.3). Singapore did the same

in 2001. Others, such as Albania, have recently developed their first specialist programmes. Many European countries have moved towards reconciling primary and pre-primary qualifications, and many countries are strengthening in-service education as a means of improving the quality and qualifications of existing staff. In 2003, Estonia launched competence-based teacher training and in-service programmes for pre-school teachers (UNESCO, 2007: 148–149). Despite particularly acute challenges to improving educators' qualifications and competency levels, even in small states such as the Republic of Maldives, progress is being made (box 3.4).

Box 3.3
Quality initiatives in New Zealand focus on teacher qualifications

Under the 2002 strategic plan for ECE, 80 per cent of teachers are expected to be qualified by 2010, 100 per cent by 2012. Teachers are becoming qualified with three year diplomas or degrees, and post-graduate diplomas are becoming common as more graduates enter ECE teaching. Many tertiary institutions are moving towards the award of degrees and away from diplomas; several universities are moving to four-year degrees. Teacher training has reached a similar level to that for primary teachers and is moving towards qualification standards required of secondary teachers. The low rate of graduate output reportedly remains a hindrance to achieving the target of a fully qualified teaching force.

Source: EI, 2010.

Box 3.4
Republic of Maldives: Progress in teacher training in a small island developing state

More than half of all ECE staff in the Republic of Maldives are untrained, a major challenge for quality learning when the staff–pupil ratio is 1:21. Despite resource constraints, in addition to the basic qualification for educators – a three-month certificate in ECCE – and an advanced one-year certificate, both offered by the Centre for Continuing Education (CCE), a two-year diploma was launched in 2011 by the Maldives National University. Moreover, since 2005, UNICEF has helped to set up a system of teachers' centres to overcome the sense of professional isolation and has more recently been involved in curriculum development for pre-school education and the design of teacher diploma courses.

Sources: MoE, Republic of Maldives: 2011; UNESCO–UIS, 2010; UNESCO, 2011e.

Professional development

94. Despite progress made in recent years, opportunities for ECE staff to participate in professional development and in-service training vary greatly across countries and between educators of 4–6 year-olds and those working with 1–3 year-olds. As a general rule, staff in very early years' education with the lowest levels of initial training, have the least access to in-service education. Continuous training and professional development is also frequently disconnected from the curriculum and pedagogical objectives of initial teacher education (OECD, 2009: 4). The need for support to in-service education is most acute across the developing world, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa (box 3.2 above). Provision in a range of developing countries is quite diverse, as is the coverage of ECE educators (box 3.5). ECE staff in workplace-based centres may also benefit from enterprise leave and funding for professional development opportunities in official ECE networks in some countries such as Kenya, an example of public–private cooperation (Hein and Cassirer, 2010: 88).

Box 3.5
Professional development opportunities in selected developing countries

Countries in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean have adopted a great variety of approaches to ECE in-service education, ranging from very ad hoc to more systemic based on regional sharing or subnational structures to ensure access in all regions of a country. Generally, however, coverage of all educators remains far from universal.

Africa

In **Morocco**, each province has a pre-school resource centre providing continuing education and pedagogical support to teachers; information on coverage is not known.

Asia

In **Bhutan**, 50 per cent of the ECE educators participate in annual in-service training, which is provided by the Ministry of Education. An estimated 20 per cent of ECE educators in **Kazakhstan** are provided with 14 days of in-service training annually, but are, in turn, limited to such training only once in five years.

Caribbean

Antigua and Barbuda: the Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU) organizes a professional development day once a year on current trends and workshops on the last Friday of each month on topical issues in ECE, but no information is available on the frequency or numbers of participants. In **St. Kitts and Nevis**, approximately 0.01 per cent of the education budget is targeted to ongoing training of ECE teachers; as a result, an estimated 84 per cent of educators benefit from approximately 25 days of in-service training annually. Less than 30 per cent of educators in **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** benefit from three days of continuing professional development (CPD). In the Caribbean, the SERVOL Training Centre in **Trinidad and Tobago** organizes in-service training for the region.

Sources: Morocco, and Trinidad and Tobago: UNESCO, 2007: 149; all other countries: ILO, 2011b.

95. In comparison, professional development opportunities are more available in the OECD, with coverage extending to 100 per cent of ECE educators in some countries, and variously built into non-contact time or on a mandatory basis in a few (box 3.6).

Box 3.6
Professional development in OECD countries

In **Belgium**, **Italy** and **Hungary**, educators can set aside about 10 per cent of their time for non-contact work, including their own professional development. Hungarian educators have a personal obligation to take 120 hours of state-funded professional development every seven years.

Local authorities in the **Republic of Korea**, have a statutory requirement to fund a minimum level of staff development. For example, every three years kindergarten teachers must take 80 hours of in-service training to raise their level of professional qualifications.

In-service training is also a requirement and a condition for maintaining teacher registration in **New Zealand**. Professional development is provided by a range of institutions including public tertiary education and private training providers.

Nordic countries, for the most part, offer extensive coverage of the ECE workforce, albeit with fewer days and reportedly less than teachers in primary education, depending on the country. In **Denmark**, 95–100 per cent of educators receive two days of in-service training a year, while in **Norway** all ECE educators have access to five days in-service training annually. In **Finland**, local authorities are obliged to provide a certain level of continuous training in social welfare, which includes ECE staff, with a targeted annual amount of three to ten days, depending on an employee's basic education, the qualifications required for the job and the job description; there is no national plan for CPD.

In-service training in **Portugal** is 56 hours per year as a minimum, the same as for other education levels, offered to all teachers through regional teachers' centres and universities. Though not mandatory, it is necessary for career progression.

In the **Slovakia**, five days of training is provided by law, and additional days can be offered depending on the agreement with the employer.

Sources: EI, 2010: 64, 72; ILO, 2011b; OECD, 2006: 160.

96. Initiatives in Europe to strengthen cooperation in this area as part of efforts to increase ECE quality levels in response to trends in the integration of childcare and education have been built on a strategic framework of cooperation in education and training for the period 2009–11. The framework, inter alia, targets teacher support so as to increase staff competencies and professionalism. The efforts recognize that, to date, ECE staff rarely have the same opportunities for induction, in-service training and continuous professional development as are available to teachers at other levels of the education system (Urban, 2009; European Commission, 2011).

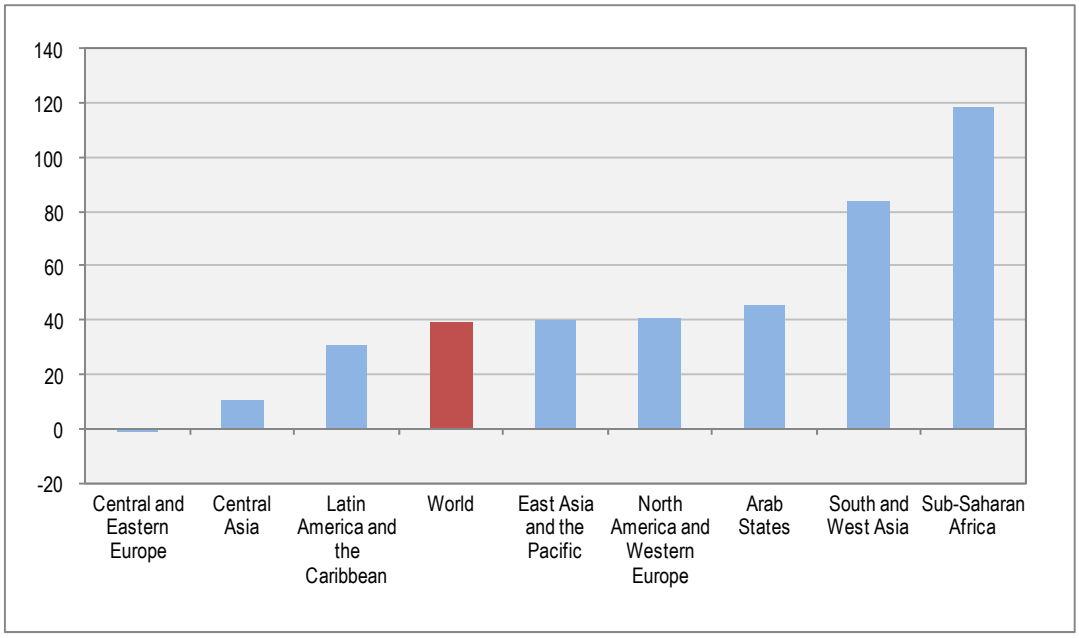
97. Despite advances in recent years, professional development through in-service training or otherwise remains the weakest link in the ECE teacher education chain, although *all* teachers need such opportunities, especially non-qualified or under-qualified ones who have weak pedagogical and skill foundations. To address this issue, an investment/funding target of 1 per cent minimum of the teacher payroll, per annum, as a benchmark to support in-service training of teachers, has been proposed by the ILO as part of reflections on reaching EFA goals, and could be a policy option for ECE educators as well (ILO, 2011d). In addition, support for small-scale teacher resource centres and networks in rural and remote areas could help reduce the professional isolation of ECE educators.

4. Employment terms and conditions in ECE

Employment figures and trends

98. In 2009, the global pre-primary teaching force [1] stood at more than 7.5 million. Over the preceding decade, employment growth was substantial in all regions except Central and Eastern Europe, with the previously under-served regions of South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa showing the largest percentage gains (figure 4.1). Compared to the trends in enrolment rates (figure 2.1, Chapter 2), teacher employment growth exceeded the acceleration in numbers of children enrolled in the Arab States, East Asia and the Pacific, South and West Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and North America and Western Europe, but did not keep pace with, even falling greatly behind, enrolment growth in Central and Eastern European and Central Asian countries taken as a whole. In much of the world, employment of ECE educators more than matched the often considerable enrolment growth, a further sign that, in terms of numbers alone, most governments have made considerable investments in training and hiring new ECE staff (UNESCO–UIS, 2011).

Figure 4.1. Percentage change in total teaching staff employed in pre-primary education by major region, public and private, full and part time, 1999–2009*



* UNESCO–UIS estimation for many regions.

Source: UNESCO, 2011d; UNESCO–UIS, 2011.

99. Why are such trends important? In absolute terms, the number of educators (and ECE centres or schools) influences access. Previous analysis has suggested a causal relationship between pre-primary pupil–teacher ratios (PTRs – see below) and therefore the number of teachers and enrolments: countries with lower PTRs tend to have higher net enrolment gains in the years

[1] The figures do not include ECE educators engaged in other than formal pre-primary education as defined nationally.

that follow (UNESCO, 2007: 135). Recent data from the world's most populous country, China, underscores the positive benefits of employing more teachers and staff to boost access to ECE (box 4.1).

Box 4.1
China: Increasing ECE staff levels benefits enrolments and learning access

Beginning in the mid-1990s, pre-primary enrolments began to decline in China, following demographic trends. Initially, teacher and other staff employment remained stable but finally dropped precipitously, beginning in 2001. Between 1999–2003 enrolments declined by 14 per cent, overall staff also decreased (-16 per cent), while numbers of full-time teaching staff fell even more sharply (-30 per cent). Nationwide, GERs stagnated during this period at 36 per cent – essentially, no progress was made in access to pre-primary education in China as a whole.

Enrolments began to pick up thereafter, increasing by 36 per cent in the period 2003–09, most probably influenced by changes in policies, investments and parental demand, but clearly also by even more rapid growth in the numbers of full-time teachers and all staff, both of which climbed by an impressive 61 per cent. During this period, GERs also made dramatic gains, reaching 47 per cent by 2009, and accelerating notably in just three years from 2006 to 2009. The data indicate that ECE employment growth has strongly correlated with greater learner access in China.

Sources: Staff and enrolments: National Bureau of Statistics of China; GERs: UNESCO–UIS, 2011. Enrolment and teaching staff numbers differ somewhat between the two sources, but show the same trends over time.

Profile of the ECE workforce, recruitment and deployment challenges

100. Countries face a number of challenges not only to recruit enough qualified teachers, but to achieve a better balance in the ECE workforce profile and its deployment to meet expanding needs and higher quality goals. Issues include qualified versus unqualified by age group, the urban–rural divide in terms of ECE provision, ethnic (and linguistic) diversity and gender and age balances.

Teacher competencies and age groups

101. A considerable divide exists between those who provide care/education for 1–3 year-olds, including auxiliary staff and volunteers, and trained educators for the 4–6 year-old age group. Within the OECD countries with "split" regimes (child care/early education), qualified teachers work in early education with children aged over 3 years, while for the under 3-year-olds, a mixture of lower trained staff are employed (OECD, 2006: 161). In countries with integrated services for children under 6, tertiary-trained "pedagogues" or early childhood educators work with children across the age range. Trained assistants, with primary responsibility for care, often work alongside these pedagogues. In developing countries, as Chapter 3 notes, the weaker qualification and training standards create an even more fractured picture, and policy challenge to upgrade the profiles of ECE educators across all age groups.

The urban–rural divide

102. A second major challenge is the urban–rural divide, not unlike that facing other education levels. Chapters 1 and 2 highlighted some of the funding and provision challenges that often leave rural populations at a disadvantage. In developing countries, much of the ECE provision is still largely urban-based (UNESCO–BREDA, 2010: 45). Despite great overall recruitment progress in recent years, shortages of ECE teachers in rural, especially remote areas, are not uncommon in countries such as Viet Nam, even as teacher income and living standards improve (UNESCO, 2007: 173). A survey of OECD countries revealed similar shortages in remote and disadvantaged areas (OECD, 2009: 3–4). As challenges facing recruitment to rural

and remote communities are progressively met quantitatively, there will be a corresponding challenge on the quality side to recruit qualified staff to less attractive areas.

Linguistic and ethnic diversity

103. Often linked to the urban–rural divide in educator recruitment and deployment are questions of a multi-ethnic, multicultural and linguistically representative workforce. The higher the qualifications required and the more institutionalized the service, the less likely it is to have a representative workforce. For example, minority ethic women are found predominately in the least qualified positions with the lowest wages (OECD 2006: 171). Working with diversity is a challenge for ECE in many countries, from richer OECD countries to poorer, multi-ethnic societies. Ethnic minority children benefit from positive role models and a mix of professionals from their own backgrounds, while the "mainstream" community also gains from cultural diversity. The same questions apply with regard to language: as in basic education, learning gains may be greater in the early years when carried out in the indigenous language, implying that the educators assigned to such areas have this capacity, either based on local recruitment or careful induction policies.

104. Recruitment policies in several OECD countries (for instance, Australia, Canada, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom) encourage the employment of ethnic minority staff. As one example, in the five years to 2007, the number of Maori-speaking educators in New Zealand tripled (UNESCO, 2010a: 53), although the ethnic composition of ECE teaching force in New Zealand is overwhelmingly European at over 70 per cent (EI, 2010: 63).

Gender balance

105. ECE staff remain overwhelmingly female in virtually every region and country, with only sub-Saharan Africa having less than 90 per cent of women in their ECE workforce (table 4.1). The percentage of male pre-primary teachers approaches or exceeds 50 per cent in only a handful of countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Guinea, Liberia, United Republic of Tanzania), and men register between 20 to 35 per cent of the workforce only in a slightly larger group of mostly developing countries: Algeria, Benin, Ethiopia, France, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Thailand and Uganda (UNESCO–UIS, 2011). Moreover, trends are almost universally towards a greater feminization of the ECE workforce.

Table 4.1. Females as a percentage of pre-primary teachers by major region, 1999–2009

Region	% Female	
	1999	2009
Arab States	77	91
Central and Eastern Europe	100	99
Central Asia	97	97
East Asia and the Pacific	94	96
Latin America and Caribbean	96	95
North America and Western Europe	92	94
South and West Asia	72	93
Sub-Saharan Africa	72	76
Developed	94	94
Developing	88	93
World	**92**	**94**

Source: UNESCO–UIS, 2011.

106. Recent estimates from a select group of countries indicate that the overwhelmingly feminized ECE workforce is reflected in both public and private providers. If anything, where data permit comparisons, private providers are even more heavily dependent on female educators (table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Percentages of female early childhood educators, public and private, selected countries, 2010 (or latest year)

Country	Percentage of female early childhood educators (public)	Percentage of female early childhood educators (private)
OECD		
Belgium (Wallonia-Brussels Federation)	97	97
Denmark	86	–
Finland	97	–
New Zealand	98	98
Norway	95	–
Slovakia	100	100
Non-OECD		
Dominican Republic	97	–
Ghana	68	93
Kazakhstan	99	100
Lebanon	100	100
Montenegro	99	100
Nepal	98	–
Pakistan	100	–
Saint Lucia	100	100
Sri Lanka	17	64
Saint Kitts and Nevis	100	100
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	100	100
Yemen	97	–

Source: ILO, 2011b.

107. The recruitment of men to this sector is universally neglected – it barely registers at the policy level. ECE remains "a gender ghetto" (Urban, 2009: 47). Partly, this derives from deeply imbedded stereotypes about the traditional caring roles of mothers and women. In many societies, the care and education of young children were assumed to be intuitive, maternal activities that required few formally acquired skills and little training, thus the overwhelming predominance of women workers in ECE programmes represents an extension of women's traditional child-care and mothering roles.

108. Why should the continued feminization of ECE be a concern? A greater gender-balance among the workforce is desirable from the standpoint of children's development and the need to challenge gender stereotypes in the workplace and society at large. Continued feminization

may also have recruitment implications in tight labour markets in situations where women teachers in ECE are drawn to other jobs as their skill levels rise, leading to qualified teacher shortages. To date, few countries have taken this challenge seriously enough to adopt policies that would redress the disequilibria; of nearly 30 countries responding to the ILO on this question in 2011, a few pointed to advocacy on the subject in recruitment campaigns, but only Montenegro and Norway indicated that gender action plans for the sector were or had recently been in place. In 1996, the European Commission Network on Child Care set a target of 20 per cent males in the sector within ten years. Norway also set a target in 1997 of 20 per cent of men as active pedagogues in early childhood services, but has had little success – only 5–8 per cent (depending on the data source) of ECE staff in Norway are men (EI, 2010: 72; ILO, 2011b). Some countries, such as Denmark and the United Kingdom, are responding by targeting recruitment of men in initial training, but the evidence does not indicate a real breakthrough. Countries have also sought to rethink working conditions and rewards in ways that would make gendering less pervasive, but in a current international climate marked by efforts to render ECE coverage universal and tight fiscal and budgetary constraints, the issue does not seem to be high enough on the policy agenda to substantially alter female dominance of the ECE workforce in the near future.

Age profiles

109. As with other aspects of ECE, the age profiles of the workforce tend to reflect the split between the under 3-year-old group, and the more structured pre-primary education. While there is very little hard data, staff in the former are predominately young (OECD, 2009: 3–4), while those in the latter may be older in high-income countries at least, comparable to that of primary school teachers. A report in the mid-part of the last decade pointed out that in OECD countries, more than 20 per cent of pre-primary teachers were aged 50 or over, except in the Republic of Korea and Japan (less than 1 and 6 per cent respectively). In low- and middle-income countries, the increasing expansion of pre-primary education translates into a higher proportion of younger teachers than at the primary level; previous surveys have shown that in Jordan and Paraguay about 80 per cent and 52 per cent, respectively, of pre-primary teachers are below the age of 30 (UNESCO, 2007: 148).

110. Age disequilibria pose different policy challenges. The heavy concentration of young workers with low qualifications, poor salaries (see below) and few career prospects in the under 3-year-old group in particular invites high staff turnover. While more experienced, an older workforce in a seniority-based career structure represents a higher salary package for providers.

Addressing workforce imbalances

111. To address, and hopefully resolve, these imbalances countries need to develop a comprehensive national recruitment and development strategy for ECE using planning tools such as an education management information system (EMIS), including gender-, ethnic- and age-disaggregated data, and targeted recruitment incentives such as training bursaries for under-represented groups, better salaries and career prospects (ILO, 2011d). In 2009, Australia developed a national workforce and leadership development component to improve recruitment and retention of a high-quality workforce as part of a national ECE development strategy (COAG, 2009: 19; OECD, 2009: 5).

Remuneration in ECE

112. Teachers working in ECE tend to earn much lower salaries compared to teachers at the primary or higher education levels, reflecting the historical undervaluing of the sector, low status of its workforce and lower qualifications of staff, despite improvements in recent years (EI, 2010: 28; OECD, 2009: 3–4). In many countries in sub-Saharan Africa salaries are under US$50 a

month (UNESCO–BREDA, 2010: 44), and educators suffer from low levels and irregular payments, especially in privately based centres with little government support (box 4.2). Attitudes towards women's employment also influence remuneration (OECD, 2006: 170). Lower qualification requirements and salaries in turn fuel higher turnover in the workforce, which is costly in terms of system quality, training and recruitment. Earlier reports have cited annual turnover of ECE educators as high as 40 per cent in Kenya and more than 30 per cent in Australia (Hein and Cassirer, 2010: 48).

Box 4.2
Kenya: Low and irregular salaries

Although most of Kenya's early childhood centres are public and usually attached to primary schools, they are mainly funded and managed by parents and local communities through parent/teacher associations (PTAs) or centre-based committees. Teachers' salaries are mostly, if not entirely, covered by parental fees, unlike primary teachers, who are paid by the Government on an official salary scale. The level of teachers' remuneration depends on the total number of children enrolled and parents' contributory capacity. In general, the monthly salaries of teachers have changed little in recent years and are below the basic minimum wage recommended by the Ministry of Labour, with large variations between rural and urban areas. Salary payment is irregular and fluctuates monthly depending on parents' contributions.

Source: Hein and Cassirer, 2010: 308–309.

113. Salaries in many high- and middle-income countries are relatively better, considered equivalent to or slightly below those of primary teachers in earlier surveys (OECD, 2006: 162; UNESCO, 2007: 149–150). Estimates provided to the ILO show salaries of public early childhood educators in Denmark, Kazakhstan and Norway to be between 85–100 per cent of primary school teachers' salaries, and at parity in the Dominican Republic and New Zealand (ILO, 2011b). In New Zealand, teacher's salaries are viewed as quite good as a result of a shortage of teachers in the sector and public policy and funding that encourages the employment of qualified teachers. The picture in the United States is less sanguine where the salaries of ECE teachers, most of whom work in the private sector, are comparatively lower than those of teachers at primary and secondary levels, a significant factor in high staff turnover that some estimates put at 36 per cent a year (EI, 2010: 64, 87; OECD, 2006: 169).

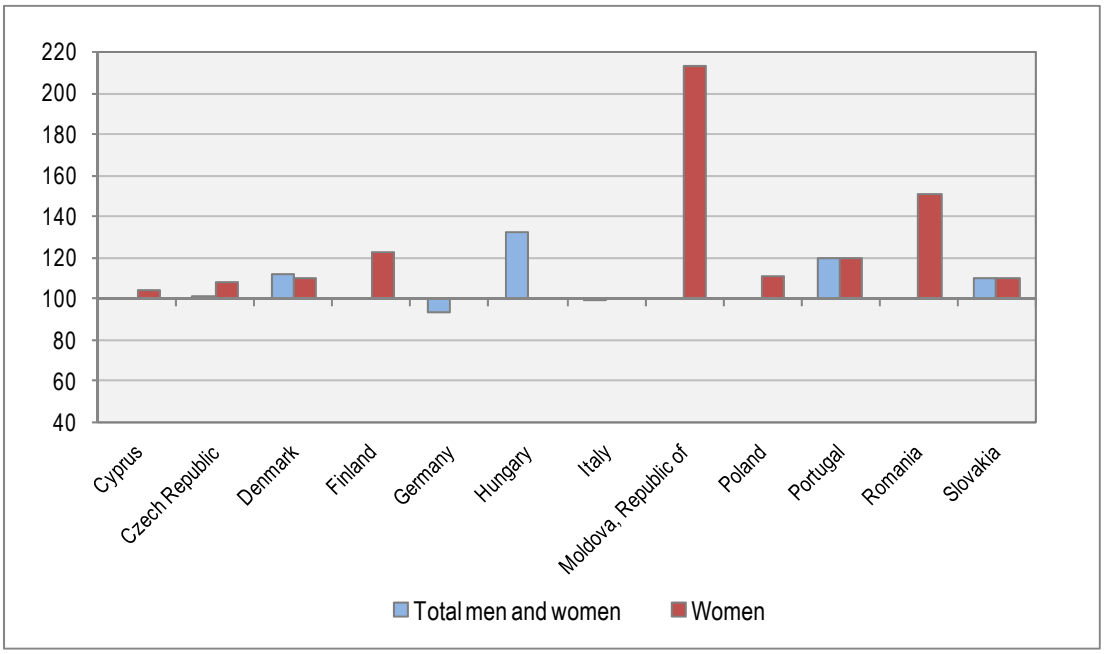
114. The scant data available to compare ECE salaries to remuneration in other occupations with equivalent qualifications, or to measure progress over an ECE teacher's career tend to show an unattractive picture. Finland, which has a relatively well-developed ECE system, provides some clues: kindergarten teachers with ten years of experience earn around €2,170 a month in comparison to an average graduate salary of €3,100 (AKAVA, 2009). Earlier estimates show that in a wide range of middle-income countries, pre-primary teachers at the start of their careers receive lower salaries than per capita GDP, a proxy for an average national wage, and average pre-primary salaries remain at or below the per capita GDP level at the end of the teacher's career in most of these countries (UNESCO, 2007: 149–150).

115. Salaries in private ECE centres, compared to public providers, differ according to country and areas within countries. In Brazil, salaries are reported to be lower in same private schools, particularly those in poorer areas and in community schools where teachers earn the national minimum salary. In wealthier urban areas, teachers' salaries in the private sector may be six to 12 times higher than the minimum salary, depending on the level of school fees and children per teacher (EI, 2010: 32–33). Recent estimates reported to the ILO for Denmark and Norway show the same or only slightly lower salaries for public as compared to private ECE staff, but private salaries on average are lower than public salaries in Saint Lucia and Saint Kitts and Nevis (ILO, 2011b).

116. Improving salaries and working conditions is therefore an important factor in increasing both the quantity and quality of ECE teachers. Trend data suggests that salaries have been improving in some countries in recent years (figure 4.2 shows real salary indexes in Europe).

Similar upward movement is apparent in other regions although information is not conclusive whether these are nominal or real salary increases (ILO, 2011e).

Figure 4.2. Index of real salary movements, kindergarten teachers, selected European countries, 2002–08 (or latest year; 2002 or 2003 = 100)



Source: Compiled from ILO, 2011e.

117. Despite such encouraging signs, the picture of a low-paid education sector remains the dominant one. One measure to address this situation is to establish salary floors by means of a national minimum wage for employment in the sector, as the United Kingdom did some years ago for categories of child-care staff (UNESCO, 2007: 180). Australia adopted a new multi-employer bargaining stream for low-paid jobs to assist employers and low-paid employees in sectors like ECE to reach agreements on improving remuneration and working conditions. Kindergarten teachers in New Zealand and Portugal have reportedly achieved pay parity with primary- and secondary-school teachers in recent years; New Zealand provides additional funding to cover the extra cost of employing qualified and registered teachers (OECD, 2009: 6–7).

The teaching and learning environment

Working hours

118. Although working conditions strongly determine the quality of provision in ECE, especially where the education and caring relationship between educators and learners is so critical, ECE staff often work in low-status teaching and learning environments marked by a decent work deficit, particularly in the earliest years (1–3 years). Hours are not infrequently longer than their primary education counterparts, even if there is no consistent pattern. Previous surveys in 14 middle-income countries (UNESCO, 2007: 149–150) showed that the number of official hours worked by pre-primary in comparison with primary school teachers bore no discernible relationship with comparable job requirements and salaries: in the Russian Federation, pre-primary teachers worked almost twice the annual hours of their primary school counterparts; in several countries there was near parity; and in a few (India and Philippines) primary school teachers worked longer hours. There is no comparable recent data, but reports to the ILO (table 4.3) reveal that daily and weekly contact hours are often long and leave little room for

the multiple tasks expected of a teaching professional: number and preparation of lessons; teacher–pupil ratios (see below); extra-curricular activities; consultations with parents; and professional development (ILO–UNESCO, 1966: Articles 90–93).

Table 4.3. Hours of work in selected countries, 2011 (or latest year)

Country	Contact hours/presence in ECE centre		Overall hours of work – all tasks, in school and out	
	Daily	Weekly	Daily	Weekly
OECD				
Belgium (Wallonia-Brussels Federation)	–	26	–	38
Denmark	–	37	–	37
Finland	–	n.a.	–	38.3
New Zealand	–	25–26	–	n.a.
Norway	–	33.5	–	37.5
Slovakia	–	28	–	40
Non-OECD				
Antigua and Barbuda	8–10	–	n.a.	–
Burkina Faso	6.3	–	8	–
Ghana	6	–	8	–
Jamaica	6	–	8–9	–
Kazakhstan	–	24	–	24
Montenegro	5	–	8	–
Nepal	4	–	n.a.	–
Pakistan	4.3	–	–	25
Philippines	3*	–	8*	–
Saint Lucia	8h (public) 10.5h (private)	–		8
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8	–	–	40
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	9	–	n.a.	–
Yemen	5	–	–	30

n.a. = not applicable.

* 5 days/week, 10 months – pre-school.

Source: ILO, 2011b.

119. Trends over time reported to the ILO (2011e), as for other education levels, do not show significant variations during the period 2002–08 (table 4.4), but do show a slight upward movement in OECD countries, where ECE teachers tended to work one half to one hour more per week, except in the Republic of Moldova (much more) and Poland and Slovakia (much less). There has been speculation that the economic downturn beginning in 2008 would worsen working time arrangements in education but the source of these earlier changes is not known. Nor is much information available about the intensity of the average ECE educator's working day, week or month, or whether educators are obliged to work overtime or in second jobs because of relatively low salaries.

Table 4.4. Average hours of work trends, selected OECD and European countries, 2002–08

Country	Per week Paid for	Per week Actually worked	2002	2004	2006	2008
Australia	✓	–	35.9	37.4	37.5	–
Canada	–	✓	36.3	33.7	–	–
Cyprus	–	✓	38	37.9	38.1	–
Czech Republic	✓	–	–	39.1	40	40.1
Finland*	–	–	165.5	165.5	167.4	–
Germany	–	✓Per week – Normal hours of work	–	–	38.5	39
Republic of Korea	–	✓	40.7	42.8	41	–
Mexico	–	✓	38	38	39	39
Republic of Moldova	✓	–	32.1	31.9	33.5	39.8
Poland	✓	–	27.5	23	21.9	–
Portugal	✓	–	36	34.6	34.4	–
Romania**	–	–	–	168	176	188
Slovakia***	–	–	142.27	130.45	131.07	–

* Per month: Normal hours of work. ** Per month: Paid for. *** Per month: Actually worked.

Source: ILO, 2011e.

120. Working time is important not only for the quality of service provided, and accessibility of parents, but equally to respect international standards on workers with family responsibilities, namely, the *Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)*, and the *Workers with Family Responsibilities Recommendation, 1981 (No. 165).* The latter specifically calls for a national policy to avoid discrimination and allow workers to be employed without prejudice to their family obligations, including addressing issues of equipment and hygiene, ECE staff numbers, qualifications and training (ILO, 2011f; Recommendation No. 165: Paragraph 26). In addition to negotiation/collective bargaining to set reasonable hours (see Chapter 5), national policies such as Chile's "Work Environment Improvement Projects" to monitor working conditions of ECE staff and implement a "Quality Care Assurance Model" could be effective means of improving the working, teaching/learning, environment (OECD, 2009: 7).

Teacher/staff–child ratios

121. A central factor in quality ECE provision is the ratio of young learners to the numbers of teachers or overall staff, the latter being particularly important in the very early years. International organizations (UNICEF, 2008, and EI, 2010) suggest a benchmark child–staff ratio in ECE of no more than 15:1. Data for 2009 put the global average pupil–teacher ratio at 21:1 (UNESCO–UIS, 2011) with, however, considerable regional and national variation as tables 4.5 and 4.6 (staff ratios) show. Such ratios assume greater importance the lower the ages taught in relation to early childhood-learning needs, and countries shown in table 4.6 set higher pupil–staff ratios the higher the age group.

Table 4.5. Pre-primary pupil–teacher ratios by region (2009 or latest year available)

	Average No. of pupils per teacher
Arab States	20
Central and Eastern Europe	10
Central Asia	11
East Asia and Pacific	21
Latin America and the Caribbean	21
Caribbean	27
North America and Western Europe	14
South and West Asia	40
Sub-Saharan Africa	26

Sources: UNESCO, 2011d; UNESCO–UIS, 2011.

Table 4.6. Child–staff ratios in ECE centres

OECD	
Denmark	3.4:1 (0–2 year-olds); 5.7:1 (3–5 year-olds)
Finland	4:1–7:1 (centre based); 4:1 (family based)
New Zealand	5:1 (under 2-year-olds); 10:1 (over 2-year-olds)
Norway	4.1:1
Slovakia	19:2
Non-OECD	
Antigua and Barbuda	4:1 (0–1 year-olds); 6:1 (1–2 year-olds); 8:1 (2–3 year-olds); 15:1 (3–5 year-olds)
Bahamas	Stipulated adult–child ratios: 5:1 (0–1 year-olds); 10:1 (1–2 year-olds); 15:1 (2–3 year-olds); 20:1 (3–5 year-olds); 5:2 (Pre-school inclusive programme)
Barbados	12:1 (2–4 year-olds) 15:1 (3–4 year-olds, Nursery education:) 3:1 (3–23 months, day-care centres and schools); 6:1 (2–6 year-olds)
Belize	Actual child–adult ratios: 20:1 (3–5 year-olds, pre-school) Stipulated adult–child ratios 15:1 (3–5 year-olds, pre-school)
Dominica	Stipulated child–adult ratios: 10:1 (1–2 year-olds); 15:1 (3-year-olds or greater)
Haiti	Average ratio 57:1, varies 31:1–79:1 (3–5 year-olds)
Jamaica	Nursery: 5:1 (0–12 months); 7:1 (12–24 months) Day care: 8:1 (24–36 months) Basic school: 10:1 (3–5 year-olds)
Kazakhstan	9:1
Lebanon	7:1
Montenegro	Two teachers per educational group; one nurse per educational group
Nepal	15:1

Pakistan	30:1–35:1 (overall ratio 42:1)
Philippines	Pre-school: 25:1 in regular mono schools,10:1 in multi-grade schools
Saint Lucia	5:1 (0–2 year-olds); 10:1 (2–3 year-olds); 15:1 (3–5 year-olds)
Sri Lanka	21:1
Saint Kitts and Nevis	5:1 (0–1.5 year-olds); 7:1 (1.5–3 year-olds); 10:1 (3–5 year-olds)
Trinidad and Tobago	4:1 (0–3 year-olds); 15:1 (3–4 year-olds)

Source: ILO, 2011b; UNESCO, 2010c.

122. In addition, there are considerable differences within countries, particularly between urban and rural areas. The pupil–teacher ratio in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia can be as low as 17:1, close to the international benchmark, but in Gambela region it can be as high as 141: 1 (Awopegba, 2010: 13).

Health and safety matters

123. Health and safety is a relatively neglected issue in ECE, even if most governments regulate ECE programmes in order to monitor the quality of the environment. In most countries, publicly funded ECE services are required to follow programme quality standards, including health and safety, but the very diverse private providers are often exempt from regulation except when publicly subsidized. It is important that governments enforce, not just develop, regulations that promote quality health and safety concerns in the interests of staff and learners. A number of international instruments have been developed in recent years to assess all dimensions of quality as set out in Chapter 2. The International Step-by-Step Association (with 29 participating countries) has four health and safety indicators (UNESCO, 2007: 179).

124. In sub-Saharan Africa the general well-being of children can be severely impacted by the behaviours and personal hygiene of their parents, teachers and caregivers, as well as lack of basic hygiene facilities. General health management for ECE workers and access to basic medical examinations and care as recommended by international standards (ILO–UNESCO, 1966: article 53) is crucial, but this may be difficult for staff in poorly resourced private centres without government support. All pre-school personnel should be regularly trained on good practices regarding disease control and management and awareness of the needs of HIV/AIDS-infected and affected children and teachers (Awopegba, 2010: 34; ILO–UNESCO, 2006).

The importance of infrastructure

125. Good quality ECE practices are dependent on infrastructural support, as can be seen in the experience of OECD countries where adequate government infrastructures have played an important role in ensuring greater access (Penn, 2008: 36). Learning environment indicators are also built into various quality assessment tools. The Association for Childhood Education International Self-Assessment Tool contains 17 indicators regarding environment and physical space, whereas the US-developed Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale contains eight indicators regarding space and furnishings (UNESCO, 2007: 179). These standards are difficult to apply in sub-Saharan Africa where ECE is often provided in unsuitable premises lacking basic learning resources such as books, toys and other relevant materials. In these circumstances, a key policy recommendation is that government licences to provide ECE must ensure the suitability of the environment, regular supervision of premises and the provision of an adequate budget for the enforcement of regulations (Awopegba, 2010: 34).

5. Social dialogue in ECE

126. In an education sector still characterized by low entry standards and relatively poor terms and conditions of employment, giving stakeholders and ECE educators a voice in major policy decisions and workplace conditions through social dialogue offers one way out of the low status–low productivity cycle that defines much of the sector. ECE is even more defined by a variety of private providers that, taken together with government and trade unions representing ECE staff, have large roles to play in the range of ECE decisions important to the sectors' continued growth and quality provision. These include appropriate levels of funding and governance, teacher-training standards and professional development, and the issues of improved status, remuneration and better teaching and learning conditions accorded to ECE staff.

What is meant by social dialogue?

127. Based on ILO concepts, social dialogue is defined as all forms of information sharing, consultation and negotiation between representatives of governments, employers and workers on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy (ILO, 2011a). It can operate at two different but interlinking levels. Social dialogue may help determine the broader policy and operational issues of a sector such as ECE by engaging the relevant stakeholders, including the social partners – employers' and workers' organizations. Social dialogue *within* ECE systems and institutions, i.e. between employers, whether national or institutional, such as boards of ECE centres or individual managers, and trade unions representing educators, may cover broader policy issues – funding, governance, organization, etc. – but especially focus on the specific workplace relations between employers, public or private, and the workforce represented by their unions.

128. These forms of dialogue apply to the major concerns of the teaching profession set out in the international standards: educational objectives and policies; preparation and further education for teachers; employment, careers and salaries; rights and responsibilities; and conditions for effective teaching and learning (ILO–UNESCO, 2003: 6). Of the many forms of social dialogue, negotiation, often in the form of collective bargaining, is the highest expression, since it represents a binding agreement between parties. Social dialogue is a key strategic objective of the international "Decent Work Agenda" (ILO, 2008), and is vital to healthy policy formulation and implementation and sound workplace relations within any sector, ECE included.

Applying social dialogue within ECE

129. Effective social dialogue, especially within the early childhood sector, depends on adherence to a set of basic principles articulated in international labour standards and recommendations on teachers. [1] These establish frameworks and mechanisms for tripartite (governments, employers and workers) consultation and/or negotiation using international standards relevant to basic

[1] In addition to the ILO–UNESCO Recommendation (1966), the relevant international labour standards are: the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87): the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144); the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151); and the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154).

economic and social policies (in this case, overall ECE policy) and on good labour relations in both public and private settings, also applicable to early childhood staff. Basic prerequisites for dialogue are a democratic culture, respect for rules and laws, and institutions or mechanisms that permit individuals to express their views individually or collectively through unions or associations on issues that affect them. In education, this implies respect for professional freedom and the active participation of individual educators or their collective trade union representatives in deciding a range of professional issues – curricula, pedagogy, student assessment and issues relating to the organization of education (ILO–UNESCO, 2007: 8).

130. Social dialogue has been termed "the glue for successful educational reform". Without the full involvement of teachers and their organization, effective change is difficult to fully realize in key areas such as policies, curriculum and staff recruitment and deployment and governance (ILO–UNESCO, 2003: 7). In its 2009 review of the state of social dialogue in education, the Joint ILO–UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART) concluded that, although there was overall progress, the regional and national picture was very mixed, with social dialogue ranging from highly developed to non-existent (ILO–UNESCO, 2010: 17–18).

The nature and extent of ECE social dialogue

131. There is scant information on the nature and extent of social dialogue in ECE, both "external" (between stakeholders on policies and structures) and "internal" (between employers and staff). The report (Chapters 2 and 3) has nevertheless highlighted some countries where social dialogue contributed to the development of education plans and quality improvements. Many curricula plans have emerged from a widespread consultative process as envisaged in international standards (ILO–UNESCO, 1966: Article 62). In the German states of Bavaria, Berlin and Hesse, the educational plans were developed, as in the Nordic countries, after extensive consultation with teachers, parents and providers, as well as administrators and curriculum experts (OECD, 2006: 142, 146–147). A national coordinating committee that advises the Government of Ghana on the implementation of the 2004 early childhood policy includes stakeholders such as the Ghana National Association of Teachers (Naudeau et al., 2011: 73). Teacher unions have been involved in the process of developing a new policy for ECE in Brazil that should lead to better organization and provision throughout the country (EI, 2010: 32).

132. Social dialogue within ECE workplaces faces obstacles related to its diversity, including the intersectoral and intergovernmental coordination challenges noted in this report, its relative non-regulation and an absence of organized partners capable of, or committed to, institutionalized consultation or negotiation. To begin with, ECE teachers remain largely non-unionized, particularly in the dominant private sector. There are exceptions (boxes 5.1 and 5.2) that show both the capacity for improving workplace conditions and continued obstacles in this sector.

Box 5.1
Trade union representation and collective bargaining in some OECD countries

In **Denmark**, around 90 per cent of pedagogical workers are members of a union, but the share is smaller among assistants. All staff in ECE are covered by a collective agreement.

In **Finland**, the Trade Union of Education (OAJ) represents approximately 95 per cent of all teachers including those in day-care centres. Additionally, around 13,000 kindergarten staff are members of the OAJ-affiliated association representing kindergarten teachers (LTOL). Both organizations are active in ECE policy development and promote collective agreements concerning pay and conditions, which under the Finnish system of labour relations also cover non-union staff. Another trade union, which represents the kindergarten teachers, is the Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors (JHL). JHL is involved in negotiations of agreements that concern workers in services provided by the State, municipalities, the church and the private sector.

Between one quarter and one third of the ECE workforce is unionized in **New Zealand** where a collective agreement covers kindergartens (box 5.2).

In **Norway**, the level of unionization is high with around 90 per cent of ECE teachers in public centres and 75 per cent of teachers in private centres. Approximately 95 per cent of ECE staff are covered by a collective agreement, although unions contend that teachers working in Norway's private ECE centres often do not have the same level of salaries and working conditions as the public sector, in part due to the reluctance by some owners to sign collective agreements.

In **Slovakia,** approximately two-thirds of pedagogic and non-pedagogic workers are union members. A central agreement covers all workers in the public administration, including pre-primary education staff, and additional local-level agreements can provide more favourable terms.

Sources: EI, 2010: 70; ILO, 2011b; OAJ, 2011, LTOL, 2011 and JHL 2011.

Box 5.2
New Zealand Kindergarten Teachers, Head Teachers and Senior Teachers Collective Agreement 2009–11

The agreement between the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI or *Te Riu Roa*) and the Ministry of Education came into force on 1 March 2009 and covers all teachers employed by a kindergarten association and who are members of NZEI. The agreement sets out the responsibilities of employers including:

- good and safe working conditions;
- equal employment opportunities;
- recognition of the aims, aspirations, cultural differences and employment requirements of Maori people and other ethnic or minority groups;
- employment requirements of women and persons with disabilities;
- opportunities for individual professional development.

The agreement sets the maximum child-contact workload at not more than 26 hours per week for full-time staff, and less for part-time employees. In addition to annual leave and public holidays, employees are entitled to minimum term breaks of 15 days, also considered as professional time. Every teacher covered by the agreement is allowed to attend at least two union meetings each year on ordinary pay.

Source: NZEI, 2011.

133. Systemic social dialogue in the fractured and largely private ECE systems of developing countries is more problematic. There are examples, as in Ghana, of trade unions organizing in the private sector where most teachers are non-unionized (EI, 2010: 49), but there is little information on how social dialogue functions, or on its impact on workforce quality improvement.

134. Despite a relatively mixed picture, social dialogue in a range of countries at least takes place within a framework that provides opportunities for the basic threads of social dialogue that help shape policy and organization of ECE services (table 5.1). The scope for negotiations or collective bargaining on terms and conditions of employment is the weakest component of these frameworks.

Table 5.1. Framework for social dialogue in selected countries, 2011

Country	Information on ECE policy and practice shared between public and private employers and ECE staff	Consultation takes place between ECE employers and staff or their representatives on ECE policies/practices	Negotiations or collective bargaining on terms and conditions of employment takes place between public and private employers and ECE trade unions or staff organizations
OECD			
Denmark	n.a.	yes	n.a.
New Zealand	yes	yes	yes
Norway	yes	yes	yes
Slovakia	yes	yes	yes
Non-OECD			
Antigua and Barbuda	yes	n.a.	n.a.
Burkina Faso	yes	yes	n.a.
Dominican Republic	yes	yes	yes
Ghana	yes	no	no
Jamaica	yes	yes	no
Kazakhstan	yes	yes	yes
Lebanon	yes	yes	yes
Montenegro	yes	yes	yes
Nepal	yes	yes	no
Pakistan	yes	yes	no
Philippines	yes	yes	n.a.
Saint Lucia	yes	yes	no
Sri Lanka	yes	yes	no
Saint Kitts and Nevis	yes	yes	n.a.
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	yes	no	no
Suriname	yes	yes	no

n.a. = not applicable.
Source: ILO, 2011b.

New opportunities and challenges

135. The locus of social dialogue on education matters remains national but could, in the future, expand to regional or international levels on some issues. In 2009, a European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) was established, composed of Ministries of Education, associations of local government and public agencies recognized as employers in education, from 15 countries. With the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) representing education sector workers, an agreement was reached to create a European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Education. The Committee, which first met in June 2010, provides a forum for the social partners to develop policy and tools at all levels of education, starting with pre-primary education (EFEE, 2010; ETUCE, 2010).

136. Looking to the future, continued economic and government budgetary difficulties in many European countries and the United States is likely to impact on social dialogue. With a few

exceptions, there is little evidence that social dialogue has played an important role in deciding on plans to reduce public budget deficits, investments in the education sector and therefore education workers' employment terms and conditions. Education sector unions have sometimes been consulted but rarely engaged in full-blown negotiations leading to agreements on the way forward (ILO, 2011c: 8–9). Worse, in the United States where a number of states face severe budget cuts, some have challenged public workers' (including teachers') bargaining rights, a development that could further affect education provision and quality.

137. Despite the incomplete and undeveloped state of social dialogue in ECE, as at other levels of the education system and across the board in the world of work, it remains a key to the sector's further development. To play an effective role in sound policy and programme development, social dialogue must be based on an inclusive, participatory process in consultation with all major stakeholders, including the private sector, educators and their unions, and will need to rely on more institutionalized frameworks for information sharing, consultation and negotiation (particularly the latter) than appears to be the case at present.

6. Concluding remarks – Looking to the future

138. The core messages of the report are that ECE is a key investment for all countries, requires greater policy, funding and organizational attention to reach maximum access for young learners and their families, and that staff competencies and conditions are central to high-quality ECE.

139. A growing body of research has shed light on the vital importance of the early years for further educational development, social inclusion, recognition of children's rights and the economic returns for the individual and society. Despite the overwhelming case for building strong educational foundations in the early years, too few countries, especially in the developing world, have yet made ECE a priority. Globally, considerable progress has been made in enrolments as pre-school programmes have expanded steadily over the past decade, but the global figure remains at 44 per cent of those eligible, revealing a significant suppressed demand for these services. Progress is uneven and many millions of children are still excluded from ECE, with equality of access remaining a difficult goal to reach: children from poorer and rural households and those with special needs have significantly less access, yet these are the children who have the most to gain from ECE. Getting these children into ECE will require increased public investments and more cohesion in public policy.

140. Increasing numbers of countries in all major regions have, in fact, developed or upgraded ECE policies, and a growing number of these reflect a multi-sectoral and comprehensive approach, with the lead in ECE policy and programme development being taken more and more by Ministries of Education. Globally, a great variety exists in financing models based on public–private sources and partnerships. Public provision of ECE has hitherto been dominant in much of the developed world, while the private sector has played a more prominent role in the developing world, particularly in Africa. Despite the need for more public investment, government fiscal and budgetary constraints will probably require continued reliance on private financing, chiefly from families, but also employers. While increased private provision may offer alternatives for children who would not otherwise have access to ECE, the prospects of worsening equality of access and exclusion for poor families, which find it difficult if not impossible to pay the necessary fees, have to be addressed. Public–private partnerships therefore need developing within an appropriate regulatory framework and supporting by government.

141. These questions of financing and governance also impact on the professional and material status of the educators who manage the teaching and learning process. The conditions of service for ECE teaching staff tend to be inferior to those of their counterparts in other education sectors. Professional development and the allocation of non-contact time are often insufficient, and remuneration is poor. At the same time, the realization is growing that the work of ECE educators is complex and that the same level of professionalism expected of other education levels is required. This can be created through strong initial education that is adapted to changing learner needs, sound induction and continual professional development framework, attractive remuneration and supportive teaching and learning environments. From this recognition, countries are increasingly striving to raise the qualifications of ECE staff and to improve their conditions of service as part of a more holistic approach to public policy for early years' education and care. Integration of the care and education components is increasing the professionalism of staff working in ECE, including higher and broader ranges of required education levels, higher salaries, and better working conditions. Much more remains to be done.

142. Redressing this situation is vital to recruit sufficient numbers of qualified educators for all children, reduce high turnover rates and ensure retention. As policy- and decision-makers work to improve recruitment, the report argues that more attention should be paid to the ECE workforce profile. Few countries have taken seriously the need to address the under-

representation of men in the sector, and to better reflect cultural diversity in the workforce in response to growing multiculturalism.

143. Although information in this area is also scarce, social dialogue, a key factor that could help address these issues, appears to be relatively undeveloped or barely exists at national and centre-based levels. This deprives stakeholders of the necessary involvement in deciding on policies and organization, and the workforce to upgrade its engagement in reform decisions and its status for higher quality ECE. Although examples exist of teacher union involvement in consultative and coordinating mechanisms on policy, oversight and quality development, social dialogue mechanisms where educators and their representatives can consult over terms and conditions and reforms regarding the curriculum are difficult to find, particularly in developing countries. Social dialogue is constrained at this level by the diversity of staff and provision, the relatively few mechanisms available and the low level of worker organization. Improving social dialogue in ECE remains a major challenge and one to which trade unions and employers have a responsibility to respond.

144. As the report shows, it is not easy to monitor progress in ECE, especially regarding the under 3-year-old group, given major data gaps. This is also the case regarding teachers' terms and conditions and social dialogue across the sector. Considerable efforts are needed to improve data collection and develop national quality assessments to guide improvements on issues such as expenditure, teachers' qualifications and professional development, remuneration and teacher– or staff–child ratios.

145. In sum, the challenges facing attempts at improving teacher quality in the ECE sector to ensure greater access and quality require a multi-pronged approach that provides appropriate levels of funding, develops holistic national policies and frameworks, including better data gathering and, most importantly, improves the status and conditions of the workforce through strengthened social dialogue.

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