

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION IN E-9 COUNTRIES: STATUS AND OUTLOOK

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by the

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PREFACE

The Jomtien Declaration for Education for All stated that *Learning begins at birth*. The Dakar Framework for Action included the expansion and improvement of early childhood care and education as the first of the six global goals. Countries are launching various efforts to meet their global commitment to the development of care and education services for young children.

The nine populous countries – Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan – decided in the 4th E-9 Ministerial Meeting held in 2002 in Beijing, China to devote the fifth meeting to discussing their achievements and challenges for early childhood care and education. This report was prepared as a background document for the fifth meeting held in Cairo, Egypt, December 19-21, 2003.

The report offers an overall review of the contexts in which the E-9 countries' early childhood care and education policies are being developed and implemented. The reviewed issues include the provision of services, funding, training, curriculum and monitoring. It pays special attention to the issue of cross-sectoral coordination in early childhood care and education. Looking ahead, it summarises key policy objectives of the countries' early childhood plans and the priority tasks that need to be performed to facilitate the EFA process.

The paper was prepared using information drawn from the nine National Case Study Reports on Early Childhood Care and Education prepared by the UNESCO Offices of the E-9 countries and other international references. The draft version of this report was circulated to the representatives of the E-9 countries who came to the Meeting in Cairo, for their comments, based on which this final version was prepared.

Preparation of the report was a collaborative work. First, I would like to thank the UNESCO Field Offices in the nine countries – Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan –, for their kind assistance with the National Case Study Reports, which formed the basis of this report. Specially, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to Mohamed Abdulrazzak and Ghada Gholam in the UNESCO Office in Cairo and Regional Bureau for Science, for their kind assistance with the distribution of the draft report. I am also grateful for Qian Tang and Maria Yannarakis in the Executive Office of the Education Sector at UNESCO-Headquarters, Paris, who coordinated and financed the publication of this report. My special thanks are reserved for Soo-Hyang Choi, Chief of the Section for Early Childhood and Inclusive Education, who prepared the text of this report. Finally, preparation of this report would not have been possible without cooperation of the governments of the E-9 countries. I hope this report is found useful in improving the care and education of young children in these nine countries.



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Glossary

ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EFA	Education for All
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services (India)
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development (India)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
U-5 MR	Under-Five Mortality Rate
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WEI	World Education Indicator (project)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EFA and ECCE

The 1990 Jomtien Declaration stated that learning begins at birth, and embraced early childhood care and education (ECCE) as being within the purview of basic education. The Declaration, however, contributed little to the expansion of ECCE in countries. Ten years later, the world community renewed its commitment to ECCE in the Dakar Framework for Action, whose first goal is to expand access, improve quality and ensure equity in ECCE.

E-9 Countries' Commitment to ECCE

All nine countries have shown a clear awareness of the need to embrace ECCE within government policy and legislative frameworks. This encouraging development is attributed, in part, to global initiatives on children, among which the Convention on the Rights of the Child and EFA have wielded the greatest influence. The individual countries have also launched key initiatives drawing on national determination and political support. Nevertheless these frameworks have yet to produce concrete actions.

The Need and Demand for ECCE

As population growth and fertility rates decrease, fewer children will be requiring ECCE service in the E-9 countries in the future. This will allow the governments in due course to devote attention to improving quality. Demand for ECCE services in urban centres is likely to increase in all the E-9 countries, but in those where women work mainly in the informal sector, mothers will continue to have difficulty translating their needs into demands requiring government attention. The overall health and nutrition status of the child is improving in the E-9 countries, but they remain far from fulfilling their commitment to the "learning begins at birth" vision in terms of promoting early learning opportunities. In some countries, a low literacy rate among women poses a particular challenge in mobilising them as key caretakers of young children.

Authorities Responsible

Policy-makers in the E-9 countries have not yet taken clear decisions regarding sectoral leadership for ECCE, leaving different ministries responsible with no age-wise coordination or integration. The involvement of the education sector tends to start from three or four years, not at birth. Across different levels of administration, a decentralisation policy is firmly in place in all nine countries, with the provision of services mainly the responsibility of local authorities.

Types of Services and Participation

Pre-primary education for children over three, being formal and structured, is the crux of a country's system as it builds for ECCE. But expansion is slow, and provision is prone to inequity. Integrated health-related services are widespread and prove especially useful in countries where survival health and nutrition issues are still paramount. Social ECCE services for working mothers are not very well developed in the E-9 countries; and because of their fee-paying scheme, they are often taken up by middle-class mothers or working mothers with privileged access to public childcare services. The average gross enrolment ratio of pre-primary education in the E-9 countries is 32%.

Funding

Government investment in ECCE is small and insufficient. Where there are investments, inefficiencies point to the need for critical examination to uncover possible policy and system faults. The education

sector's investment in ECCE is particularly limited. Contributions from non-public sources are encouraged, but concrete measures to implement this policy are absent.

Training

Formal qualification requirements exist mainly for educators working in education services. Most of the E-9 countries require pre-primary educators to obtain a tertiary degree. In some of the countries, pre-primary education has a higher teacher-student ratio than primary education, raising the question of quality in pre-primary education. Training opportunities for non-formal and informal educators are scanty and not systematised. The use of trained formal educators for the training of non-formal and informal educators is being piloted to overcome this challenge.

Curriculum

Brazil, China, Egypt, Indonesia and Pakistan have national curricula for pre-primary education. Bangladesh and Mexico are developing one. In the case of Mexico, it will be a comprehensive curriculum for 0-6-year-olds. The curricula and pedagogical guidelines are meant to emphasise the child's holistic development. But in reality, the emphasis in pre-primary education is on the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. Insufficient attention is paid to the pedagogical framework of non-formal services and services for children under three.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation systems for ECCE services are not well developed in the E-9 countries. Government officials and professionals frequently disagree over what to monitor and evaluate. But the absence of a system is only part of the problem; the greater challenge is to implement existing norms and standards and use the results of evaluations to devise corrective measures. The lack of administrative and data-collecting systems to map various services in the non-public sector hinders the development and implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems. In Brazil and Mexico, efforts are under way to develop relevant indicators and statistical data.

The Issue of Cross-Sectoral Coordination

Little effort has been made to tackle the problem of sectoral fragmentation and duplication in ECCE. Even the establishment of coordination mechanisms has been fragmented, with different sectors creating and supporting different mechanisms. EFA coordination bodies have been ineffective. Extended responsibility of the education sector for 0-6-year-olds in Brazil and Mexico is the closest example of integration. With the exception of China, few countries have tried to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of different sectors for ECCE. Determination is lacking to address the problem of fragmentation and to take decisions on identifying the lead section for ECCE.

Early Childhood Coordination Mechanisms

Bangladesh and Pakistan do not yet have nationally agreed coordination mechanisms; Brazil and Egypt have been able to set up such mechanisms, but have been unable to muster much coordination at the policy level. In China, a major mechanism exists in the social sector; a similar attempt to place leadership in the social sector is being made in Bangladesh. In India, Indonesia and Nigeria, mechanisms are established separately by individual stakeholders, creating another problem of coordinating coordination mechanisms.

EFA National Plans for ECCE

All E-9 countries have developed EFA national plans for ECCE. Concerning access, the focus is on expanding early childhood education services for children over three. As for quality, the approach is to improve the pedagogical aspects of services (e.g., curriculum, training, qualifications); relatively little

attention is spared for improving sectoral coordination. Equity is an important policy issue in all E-9 countries, but it receives little more than lip service. Inequitable access and provision are likely to continue posing challenges in most E-9 countries.

Priority Tasks

The governments need to build administration systems to support and guide non-public services. Second, they should make more concerted efforts to address the problem of sectoral fragmentation in ECCE. A crucial first step is to take a national decision on the lead sector for ECCE. Finally, resources are needed for the implementation of EFA plans for ECCE once they are developed. While resources should be mobilised from all stakeholders, government investment in ECCE should be increased. At the same time, ECCE should be supported as part of the country's synergistic efforts to achieve other EFA goals, given ECCE's rippling effects on other EFA goals. It should also be included in the country's poverty reduction strategy, given investment in ECCE is an effective way of removing the roots of poverty at the start.

I. CONTEXTS

I.1. EFA and ECCE

In March 1990, the international education community, gathered in Jomtien, Thailand, announced the World Declaration on Education for All (known as the Jomtien Declaration), recognising that all human beings have a right to equal opportunities to meet their basic learning needs. The Jomtien Declaration, which focused on the concept of basic education, noted in Article 5 that “learning begins at birth,” and placed early childhood within the purview of basic education. It further stated that provision of these early childhood services could be made through arrangements involving families, communities or institutional programmes. The statement affirms that early childhood, the foundation of all human learning, is an area of education that requires national policy attention. Early childhood was no longer to be considered the private domain of the family.

The Jomtien Declaration provided conceptual and policy inspirations, but has not spurred much progress in the expansion of early childhood services in countries. According to a study conducted in 2000 for the 10th anniversary of the Jomtien Declaration,¹ the vision of learning from birth is far from becoming a reality. In most of the countries, early childhood care and education is still understood as pre-primary education for children over three. In the successive political and economic transformations sweeping over the former socialist countries, early childhood services have proven vulnerable to national crises and austerity measures.

The world education community that reassembled in Dakar for the 10th anniversary of Jomtien Declaration reaffirmed its commitment to ECCE and agreed that the first of the six global goals would be devoted to ECCE: *Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children*. The goal was stated without setting a numerical target or a fixed time frame, but the governments were specifically urged to expand access, improve quality and ensure equity in ECCE services. The statement also emphasises that ECCE services should be comprehensive and integrated, addressing the child's growth, development and learning needs in a holistic manner. Compared with Article 5 of the Jomtien Declaration, the goal set in Dakar is more specific and directive in terms of policy objectives.

International support for ECCE is based on research findings that the development of the brain occurs primarily in the early years of life, when the foundation is laid for a person's learning path. It is now well-established that devoting resources to ECCE is a highly profitable investment option, bringing multiple benefits to society and the community as well as the child and his or her family. Children who participated in quality ECCE programmes are more likely to start primary education and perform better in school and less likely to drop out or repeat.² They are more likely to obtain a higher level of education and get a better-paying job, and less likely to be involved in crime. According to studies, children from disadvantaged circumstances benefit more from ECCE than those from favourable family backgrounds. Mothers of children in ECCE also benefit because they are more likely to seek employment and hold down their jobs. According to one study, every dollar spent on ECCE generates four dollars in benefits.³

1. Myers, R. (2000). Thematic study: Early childhood care and development. Prepared for Education for All 2000 Assessment. UNESCO.

2. What's the difference? An ECD impact study from Nepal (2003). Save the Children, UNICEF.

3. Masse, L.N., & Barnett, S. (2003). A benefit-cost analysis of the Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention. www.nieer.org

Summary: *The Jomtien Declaration stated that learning begins at birth, and placed ECCE within the purview of basic education. The Declaration, however, did not contribute much to the expansion of ECCE in countries. The world community renewed its commitment to ECCE in the Dakar Framework for Action, whose first goal was devoted to ECCE. The Dakar Framework is concerned with expanding access to integrated ECCE services, improving their quality and ensuring equity. It is now an established fact that investment in ECCE pays off, educationally, socially and economically.*

1.2. Commitment to ECCE

Commitment can be measured in various ways, depending on how the concept is defined. Some critics may argue, rightly, that a commitment is necessarily accompanied by financial support or the provision of resources. However, where ECCE was not previously part of a government's public policy agenda, the mere preparation of a policy statement or a legal framework may be taken as an initial sign of commitment. This section provides an inventory of such "preliminary" commitments made by E-9 countries as ECCE has begun to enter the government's policy discourse.

All E-9 countries have constitutional provisions with implications for the care, education and protection of children. However, they are too vague to require concrete actions. The latent concern for children was galvanised by the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child. On ratifying the Convention, the E-9 countries began refurbishing their legislation concerning children. India, for instance, after signing the Convention in December 1992, formulated its National Plan of Action: A Commitment to the Child, which prompted a series of national policies concerning children's nutrition, health, education, women and population over the following decade. Nigeria, too, upon signing the Convention, appointed committees tasked with harmonising national laws and policies related to children and women.

While the Convention helped build legal frameworks for issues concerning children and families, the EFA movement provided impetus for renewed commitment to the education of young children. A case in point is Pakistan, where Katchi Classes that once prepared children for formal schooling were discontinued in the 1980s. With EFA, the country began to pay renewed attention to the education of young children, and the National Education Policy of 1998-2000 called for the reintroduction of Katchi Classes into the formal education system.⁴ Likewise, as a follow-up to the Jomtien Declaration, Bangladesh came to recognise 3-5-year-olds as the target group of its early childhood programmes.

Mexico has taken even more concrete steps to realise the Jomtien vision of ECCE. As part of efforts to extend public education to all, the Ministry of Public Education undertook a series of reforms to expand and improve pre-school education. Recently Article 3 of the Constitution was amended to extend the mandatory status of basic education – pre-school, primary and secondary education – to every citizen. Starting from the 2008-09 school year, pre-school education will become compulsory in Mexico for 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds. Amid a growing awareness of the importance of a comprehensive approach to ECCE, the area is viewed increasingly from an educational rather than a welfare perspective in Mexico.

Some nationally initiated efforts were made to consolidate a commitment to ECCE, notably in Brazil whose 1988 Constitution, for the first time in the nation's history, made a specific reference to children's rights, as distinct from family rights. Accordingly, early childhood education was recognised as

4. The policy has yet to be implemented, however, mainly due to a lack of resources.

the right of every child, and its provision as a choice of every family and a duty of the state. As a follow-up, the National Educational General Act (LDB/1996) integrated daycare services for children aged 0-3 with pre-school education for 4-6-year-olds to establish early childhood education as the first stage of basic education.

Another example of a national effort is in China, where a 1987 State Council Circular made an important decision on the division of responsibilities for early childhood education among different ministries. Given that overlap among different government sectors is one of the most serious problems facing ECCE, the effort to delineate sectoral responsibilities is a clear sign of its commitment to removing an obstacle to the development of ECCE. Indonesia also has furthered ECCE development through its own national initiatives. The 1999-2004 Basic Guidelines of State Policy and the 7th National Five Year Development Plan 1998/99-2003/4 (Repelita VII) support the development of an integrated policy framework for early childhood development. Improved coordination of health, nutrition and education services for young children was identified as part of the country's poverty reduction strategy.

In Egypt, the momentum came from the political arena. Government support for ECCE in Egypt was not evident until late 1980s. President Hosni Mubarak declared the First Decade for the Protection and Welfare of the Child in 1989, establishing the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. Since then, the Council has played a major role as the country's hub of ECCE actions and decisions. The Second Decade for the Protection and Welfare of Child 2000-2010 spells out in more precise terms the health, social and educational sectors' responsibilities regarding young children. The 1993 National Conference for the Development of Primary Education also made a significant contribution to ECCE, recommending that two years of pre-school education be part of compulsory basic education. Though not be fully implemented, this recommendation has been one of the main engines behind the country's expansion of pre-school education for the last decade.

Summary: *All nine countries have exhibited a clear awareness of the need to embrace ECCE within the government's policy and legislative frameworks. This encouraging development is attributed in part to global initiatives on children, notably the Convention on the Rights of the Child and EFA. Milestone initiatives have also been launched thanks to national determination and political support. The translation of these frameworks into concrete actions, however, has been elusive.*

1.3. Need and Demand for ECCE⁵

The need and demand for ECCE services in the E-9 countries is assumed to be enormous, although no precise assessment has been done and would be difficult in any case, partly because of a lack of relevant data. This section examines some of the indicators that show potential demand for ECCE services in the nine countries, and should be taken into consideration in policy development.

The population ages 0-14 in the E-9 countries, as a % of world total (2001), is 54.5%, which means more than half of the world's concerned population is concentrated in the E-9 countries (Figure 1).

5. Demand and need for ECCE are not the same. A need, felt by would-be beneficiaries (e.g., children, mothers), does not necessarily translate into a demand unless the agent responsible for the supply (e.g., government, enterprises) is led to perceive the need as a demand and feel liable for meeting the need.

FIGURE I: Population Ages 0-14 in E-9 Countries, as a % of World Total⁶

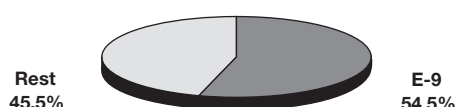


Table I summarises key demographic changes of the last three decades or so in the E-9 countries. Notably, the fertility rate has dropped consistently, from 5.8 (1970-75) to 3.2 (2000-5). The percentage of the population under 15 in E-9 countries is expected to shrink from 35% (2001) to 30% (2015). Accordingly, population growth is projected to continue slowing, to 1.5%. This rate, however, is still higher than the world middle- and high-income countries' averages (0.8% and 0.5% respectively) and the world average (1.1%); it is only lower than the overall average for low-income countries worldwide (1.7%).

Table I: Demographic Changes in E-9 Countries

	Annual population growth rate (%)		Urban population (as % of total)		Population under age 15 (as % of total)		Total fertility rate (per woman)	
	1975-2001	2001-2015	2001	2015	2001	2015	1970-1975	2000-2005
Bangladesh	2.4	1.8	25.5	34.4	38.8	31.9	6.2	3.5
Brazil	1.8	1.1	81.7	87.7	28.8	24.1	4.7	2.2
China	1.3	0.6	36.7	49.5	24.3	19.4	4.9	1.8
Egypt	2.2	1.9	42.7	45.8	35.7	31.7	5.7	3.3
India	2.0	1.3	27.9	32.2	33.7	27.7	5.4	3.0
Indonesia	1.8	1.1	42.0	55.0	30.4	25.3	5.2	2.4
Mexico	2.0	1.2	74.6	77.9	33.3	26.4	6.5	2.5
Nigeria	2.9	2.3	44.8	55.5	44.8	40.6	6.9	5.4
Pakistan	2.8	2.4	33.4	39.5	41.8	38.1	6.3	5.1
E-9	2.1	1.5	45.0	53.0	35.0	30.0	5.8	3.2
Low income	2.2	1.7	31.5	38.1	36.9	32.5	5.7	3.7
Middle income	1.5	0.8	51.6	60.7	27.1	22.5	4.6	2.1
High income	0.7	0.5	79.4	82.6	18.5	16.6	2.2	1.7
World	1.6	1.1	47.7	53.7	29.8	26.1	4.5	2.7

Source: Human Development Report (2003), UNDP

It is thus estimated that fewer children in the E-9 countries will require ECCE services in the future. This forecast presents an opportunity, but one that should be viewed with caution. With fewer children to cater for, if government investment remains constant, more can be spent on improving quality. But if ECCE services continue to expand at a constant rate, eventually there will be a surplus

6. World Development Indicators (2003), World Bank.

of ECCE places. This should be taken into account during planning for access, though current participation in ECCE is so low that it will be a long time before enough places are created to cater for all ECCE age cohorts.

A rise in urban population is closely associated with a rise in double income households with less access to childcare support from family members. Thus, the rapid growth of cities in the E-9 countries points to a potential increase in demand for ECCE services. The urban population of the E-9 countries is projected to rise from 45% of the total in 2001 to 53% in 2015. In Brazil and Mexico, the proportions will rise to 87.7% and 77.9%, respectively. These two countries' governments will face a particularly acute challenge to meet the demand for ECCE services among working urban parents. On the other hand, in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, because of relatively smaller urban populations, perceived demand for ECCE services will be less than in the other E-9 countries.

Demand for ECCE services is also very closely related to the female labour force in the formal sector. A country with a higher percentage of women working in the formal sector is more likely to perceive the demand for ECCE services among working mothers than a country where most female workers are employed in agriculture or in the informal sector. Female labour in the informal sector is less likely to be recognised as work, or represented in collective actions and negotiations for workers' welfare such as support for childcare.

In this regard, working mothers in Bangladesh face a particular challenge. First of all, the country has a relatively high female economic activity rate of 66.4% (Table 2), but the majority, 78%, of these working women are in agriculture. They will certainly have more difficulty getting the government to perceive their need for ECCE services, if other factors are controlled, than their counterparts in Brazil, Nigeria and Mexico, where most female workers are in the service sector.

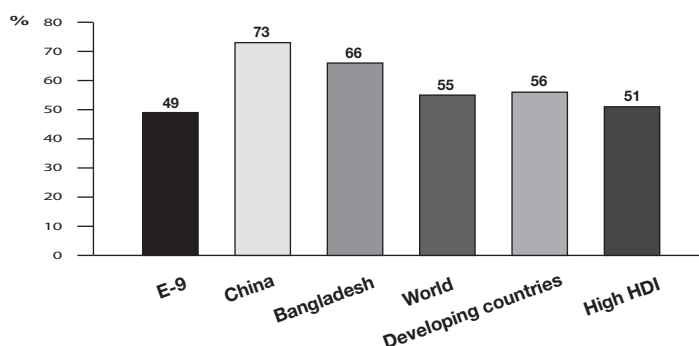
Table 2: Female Labour Force Participation in E-9 Countries

	Female economic activity rate (age 15 and above; %, 2001)	Employment by economic activity (% 1995-2001)			Contributing family workers (as % of total, 1995-2000)
		Agriculture	Industry	Services	
Bangladesh	66.4	78	8	11	81
Brazil	43.8	19	10	71	–
China	72.6	–	–	–	–
Egypt	35.4	35	9	56	43
India	42.2	–	–	–	–
Indonesia	55.6	42	16	42	–
Nigeria	47.7	2	11	87	–
Mexico	39.8	7	22	71	49
Pakistan	35.8	66	11	23	33
E-9	49.0				
Low income	51.9	–	–	–	–
Middle income	59.1	–	–	–	–
High income	51.9	–	–	–	–
World	55.2	–	–	–	–

Source: Human Development Report (2003), UNDP

At the global level (Figure 2), the female economic activity rate of E-9 countries is lower than that of the world, developing countries of high Human Development Index countries, though Bangladesh and China show a rate higher than any of these reference groups.

Figure 2: Female Economic Activity Rate in E-9 Countries, 2001⁷



The need to encourage the female workforce and supply new workers in support of a country's expanding economy are among the many rationales that have been used by governments to justify investments in ECCE. Today's view has, quite rightly, become more child-centred, with ECCE increasingly seen as first and foremost benefiting the child, placing priority on the child's overall development and well-being. Seen from this perspective, a pressing need remains for all E-9 countries to invest more in ECCE to improve children's health and nutritional status (see Table 3).

Table 3: The Health Status of Children in E-9 Countries

	Under-5 mortality rate (per thousand)		Progress ⁸ towards MDG 4: reducing under-5 and infant mortality rates by two-thirds	% of under-5s with stunting (1995-2001)	GDP per capita (PPP US\$, 2001)
	1960	2001			
Bangladesh	248	77	On track	45	1,610
Brazil	177	36	On track	11	7,360
China	225	39	Far behind	17	4,020
Egypt	282	41	On track	19	3,520
India	242	93	Lagging	46	2,840
Indonesia	216	45	On track	–	2,940
Mexico	134	29	On track	18	8,430
Nigeria	207	183	Far behind	46	850
Pakistan	227	109	Far behind	–	1,890
E-9 average	218	72		29	3,717
Least developed countries	278	157	No. of countries in: Achieved or on Track: 85 Lagging, far behind, or slipping back: 81	43	Low income: 2,230 Middle income: 5,519 High income: 26,989
Developing countries	223	89		32	
Industrialised countries	37	7			
World	197	82		32	7,376

Source: *The State of the World's Children (2003)*, UNICEF; *Human Development Report (2003)*, UNDP

7. Human Development Report (2003), UNDP.

8. Progress towards the goal for 2015 based on linear interpolation of trends in the 1990s.

The E-9 countries have made remarkable progress in reducing the Under-5 mortality rate (U-5 MR) over the last couple of decades. The average rate dropped from 218 in 1960 to 72 in 2001, lower than the world average of 82. But for Nigeria, whose U-5 MR of 183 in 2001 remained higher than the average for least developed countries (157), there is no room for complacency. Both Nigeria and Pakistan are considered “far behind” in progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goal of reducing U-5 MR by two-thirds. India’s U-5 MR of 93 is higher than the E-9 average of 72 and the developing countries’ average of 89. Meanwhile, the U-5 MRs of Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, Indonesia and Mexico⁹ have decreased to below the average of 89 for developing countries, although in countries like Brazil, regional disparities are such that the national average can easily mask the grimmer reality of some impoverished areas in the country.¹⁰

The picture is mixed concerning the prevalence of stunting in children under five, a strong indicator of poverty. In Bangladesh, India and Nigeria, the percentages (45, 46, and 46, respectively) are much higher than the world average of 32%. The E-9 average of 29%, which excludes Indonesia and Pakistan, for which data are not available, is lower than that of all developing countries or the world overall (both 32%), but if Brazil and Mexico are not counted, the E-9 average increases from 29% to 35%. The implication is that low-income E-9 countries still need to make greater efforts to improve children’s health and nutrition.

As for children’s access to early learning opportunities, measured in terms of gross enrolment in pre-primary education, the situation in E-9 countries varies rather widely (Table 4). In Mexico, 76% of children over three attend pre-primary education, but in Pakistan and Egypt, the proportion is below 20%.¹¹ Brazil’s rate (63%) is higher than average for low- and middle-income countries in general (20% and 47%, respectively).

Table 4: Educational Profile of E-9 Countries

	<i>Gross enrolment ratio of pre-primary education (% of relevant age group, 2000)</i>	<i>Net primary enrolment ratio (% , 2000)</i>	<i>Primary completion rate (% of children who complete primary school, 1995-2001)</i>
Bangladesh	25	89	70
Brazil	63	97	71
China	40	93	108
Egypt	12	93	99
India	20	–	76
Indonesia	19	92	91
Mexico	76	103	100
Nigeria	18 ¹²	–	67
Pakistan	17 ¹³	66	59
E-9	32	90	82
Low income	20		69
Middle income	47	99	102
High income	79	98	–

Source: *The State of the World’s Children (2003), UNICEF; Human Development Report (2003), UNDP*

9. In 1991, the National Vaccination Council was created by a Presidential Decree. This Council helped bring together all health care institutions in the country and promote synergy between health and other sectors.

10. For example, the northeast region of Brazil has a rate of 52.4 deaths per 1000 newborns, while in the South and Southeast of Brazil in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, the rate is only 15.1 (Source: Anuário Estatístico de Saúde do Brasil, 2001).

11. The rate in Egypt increased to 14% in 2002.

12. Data from MICS, 1999.

13. Data from the Financing of Education in Pakistan Report. (2003). UNESCO-Islamabad. According to another government document, Pakistan’s pre-primary education enrolment rate is 25%.

Regardless of the current participation rate in pre-primary education, some of the E-9 countries may have a better chance of boosting their attention to pre-primary education than others, if all other factors are controlled, depending on overall progress towards universal primary education. Where primary education is fraught with problems and its universal provision and access remains an elusive goal, it is unlikely that the government will be able to spare major policy and investment attention to early childhood.

From this point of view, Egypt deserves special mention. Among the E-9 countries, it has the lowest enrolment ratios in pre-primary education, but its net primary education enrolment ratio has reached 93% and the primary education completion rate is nearing 100%. Since universal primary education is not deemed to be a major challenge in Egypt, it should be better placed to concentrate on pre-primary education and other ECCE services than countries such as Bangladesh, India, Nigeria and Pakistan, which still have pronounced problems with primary education.

While it may be unrealistic to expect a major investment in pre-primary education in countries still lagging in primary education, these countries ironically have all the more reason to invest in pre-primary education. Since, as a plethora of studies¹⁴ have shown, participation in pre-primary education boosts children's performance in primary education, countries like Bangladesh, Brazil, India and Nigeria may need to consider investing in pre-primary education to enhance primary education. Especially in Brazil, where inequitable access and provision of early childhood services among different population groups is a serious social problem, investment in early childhood could help promote social cohesion by guaranteeing an equal start for all children.

Another variable that affects ECCE and that must be taken into consideration in policy planning is the status of women's education and literacy. Women with low literacy are less likely to be employed in the formal labour market, making the collective demand for ECCE services difficult to identify and express. Mothers with low literacy require more education and training to become effective child caretakers. Furthermore, uneducated mothers tend to have more children, and to give birth to children with more developmental problems, increasing the burden on the government education and health budget.

From this point of view, the 61% female literacy rate of the E-9 countries (Table 5) leaves no room for complacency. In Bangladesh and Pakistan, where female literacy rates are particularly low (around 30%), the ECCE policy option of mobilising mothers as main caretakers must be examined critically, since educating the mothers to be literate and knowledgeable about childrearing in these countries will require far more extensive efforts and resources than in other countries. Pakistan, whose HDI minus GDI rank is -3, faces a particular challenge to improve its overall gender development index.

The percentages of pregnant women in Bangladesh and Pakistan whose births are attended by skilled health personnel are 12% and 20%, respectively, lower than any of the other countries in the E-9 group and the average of world low-income countries (40%). This is a matter of concern, as it implies high health risks both for the mothers and their newborn babies. Bangladesh, India and Indonesia, which show high ratios of maternal mortality (600, 440, and 470, respectively, far higher than the other E-9 countries' average of 374), face the urgent task of reinforcing mother's health care, which has knock-on effects on the health and well-being of children.

14. Chinapah, V. (1997). Handbook on Monitoring Learning Achievement. UNESCO; What's the Difference? An ECD Impact Study from Nepal (2000). Save the Children, UNICEF.

Table 5: Women in Development in E-9 Countries

	Female literacy rate (% age 15 and above, 2001)	Births attended by skilled health personnel (% '95-2001)	Maternal mortality ratio reported (per 100,000 live births, 1985-99)	Gender-related development index (GDI) ¹⁵ /HDI rank minus GDI rank
Bangladesh	30.8	12	600	121 / 1
Brazil	87.2	88	260	58 / 0
China	78.7	89	60	83 / 1
Egypt	44.8	61	170	99 / -1
India	46.4	43	440	103 / 0
Indonesia	82.6	56	470	91 / 1
Mexico	89.5	86	65	52 / -1
Nigeria	57.7	42	1100	124 / 1
Pakistan	28.8	20	200	120 / -3
E-9	61.0	55	374	95
Low income	53.9	40	–	–
Middle income	81.8	84	–	
High income		–	–	

Source: Human Development Report (2003), UNDP

Summary: Due to slowed population growth and fertility rates, fewer children will require ECCE services in the E-9 countries in the future. This will allow governments in due course to spare attention for quality improvement. Demand for ECCE services for urban populations is likely to increase in all E-9 countries; but in countries where female workers are mostly concentrated in the informal sector, as in Bangladesh and Pakistan, mothers will continue to have difficulty translating their need for ECCE into a demand requiring government's attention. Although children's overall health status is improving in the E-9 countries, low-income E-9 countries have no room for complacency. In terms of providing young children with early learning opportunities, the E-9 countries are far from meeting their commitment to the "learning begins at birth" vision. In some countries, such as Bangladesh and Pakistan, low literacy rates among women pose a particular challenge in mobilising them as key caretakers of young children.

15. The ranking is led by Australia, with Niger last at 146.

2. SYSTEMS

2.1. Provision and Participation

2.1.1. Authorities responsible

ECCE is a multi-sectoral discipline that requires the involvement of many sectors in the government, notably those concerned with education, health and social assistance. There are three ways in which countries coordinate these sectors. First, a single sector or ministry can be made responsible for the entire early childhood age group. This integrated model is a growing trend in developed countries.

Table 6: Ministerial Auspices for ECCE in E-9 Countries by Child Age¹⁶

	Child age								
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Bangladesh	Ministry of Education						Primary education		
	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs								
	Ministry of Social Welfare								
	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare								
Brazil	Ministries of Education, Health and Social Assistance						Primary education ¹⁷		
China	Ministry of Education						Primary education		
	Ministries of Civil Affairs and Health								
	Ministry of Health								
Egypt					Ministry of education		Primary education		
	Ministries of Health and Social Affairs								
India	Dept. of Women and Child Development, MHRD ¹⁸						Primary education		
					Dept of Elementary Education, MHRD				
	Ministries of Health and Family Welfare, Labour, and Social Justice and Empowerment, Urban Development								
Indonesia	Ministry of Education						Primary education ¹⁹		
					Ministry of Religious Affairs				
	Ministries of Health, Social Welfare, and Women's Empowerment National Family Planning Board								
Mexico	Ministry of Public Education						Primary education		
	Institute of Social Security for Government Employees, National System for Comprehensive Family Development								
	Mexican Social Security Institute								
Nigeria					Ministry of Education				Primary education
Pakistan					Ministry of Education		Primary education		
	Ministries of Health, Women's Development and Social Welfare								

If single leadership for ECCE is difficult to establish, different ministries can be designated for different age groups (e.g., 0-2 years to the social sector and 3-5 years to the education ministry). This split model can avoid duplication among different ministries, but it harbours the risk of segmenting child development by age. When there is no systemic effort to streamline government responsibility for ECCE, a parallel model is most likely to set in, and different ministries will overlap with one another in terms of the age groups concerned.

In case of the E-9 countries, as shown in Table 6, the parallel model prevails: Education, health and social sectors, among others, are involved in ECCE, without a clear age-based division or integration of responsibilities. The exception is Egypt, which has a split model in which 0-3-year-olds are with the social sector and 4-6-year-olds with the education ministry.

In all nine countries, involvement of the social and health sectors starts from birth, but that of the education sector, except in Brazil and Mexico, comes later, at three or four years. Education authorities in the countries are aware that this does not correspond to the Jomtien vision of "learning begins at birth" and are making efforts to address the situation. Egypt's national plan for early childhood, for instance, notes that child development does not start at age four, but at birth, and states the need for pre-school education from an earlier age. In Nigeria, too, a proposal is being drafted to place the entire 0-5 age range within the purview of ECCE.

From this point of view, the systems in Brazil and Mexico are closer to the Jomtien vision; they both have integrated care services for young children and education services for older children into the education ministry, although the other sectors are still involved, in parallel. In both cases, however, the pedagogy and training in care and education services are still divided. Concerning age of entry into primary school, 6 years seems to be the norm (i.e., in Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, India and Mexico), while in China, it is 7 and in Pakistan 5. In Pakistan, a debate is under way over whether to raise the age to 6.

Across different levels of administration, the local authorities are the ones mainly responsible for the provision and management of ECCE services. In Brazil, the Constitution stipulates technical and financial collaboration among the three levels of the government structure – Union, State and Municipality – for education. But for ECCE, the Union is responsible only for the overall policy and legislative framework; the elaboration of this framework into action plans and systems is the responsibility of the State and/or Municipalities, while provision of services is strictly the responsibility of the Municipal Councils of Education. China, India and Pakistan have similar systems: Local authorities have the freedom to set their own policy directions and develop service and training systems within the overall frameworks laid out by the central governments.

Given the sizes of the E-9 countries, in terms of both land and population, decentralisation is not only inevitable but also desirable. In the case of China, the policy has allowed local authorities a degree of flexibility to respond to local conditions in the development of non-formal or informal services for impoverished populations with no access to formal services. But the policy has the inherent risk of inconsistency in the standard of services across regions. The development of quality standards is thus emerging as a policy issue in most E-9 countries.

16. The table covers the education, social and health sectors only, and indicates only the child age by which each sector's involvement begins.

17. From 1996, the law has allowed 6-year-olds to enrol in primary schools. According to the 2001 School Census, 17% of 6-year-olds are in primary schools.

18. Ministry of Human Resource Development.

19. 6.5 or 7 years.

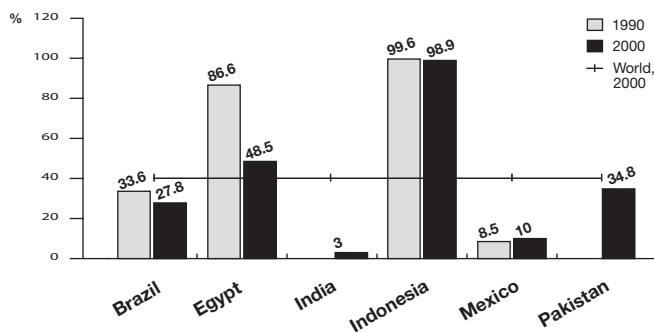
Summary: The E-9 countries have not yet taken a clear decision concerning sectoral leadership for ECCE, allowing a variety of ministries to be involved without age-based coordination or integration. In most E-9 countries, except Brazil and Mexico, the education sector's involvement tends to start for children aged 3 or 4, not from birth. Across different levels of administration, a decentralisation policy is firmly in place in all countries: Provision of services is mainly the responsibility of local authorities.

2.1.2. Types of ECCE services and participation

All E-9 countries have pre-primary education, variably called kindergarten, pre-school or early childhood education, focusing on the child's early learning and preparation for formal schooling. In most countries, efforts are being made to link the area with formal schooling. For example, in Brazil, Egypt and some Indian states (e.g., Assam), pre-primary education is integrated as part of the formal education system. The Indian and Pakistani governments are trying to integrate pre-primary education into primary education, or reinforce the linkage. In Bangladesh, the government recommends that at least two years of pre-school education be provided through either public or private schools. In China, the aim is to universalise three years of pre-school education by 2015.

Meanwhile, as demonstrated in Figure 3 below, in Egypt and Indonesia, the private enrolments of pre-primary education are still larger than public ones. But, it is notable that the private enrolment in Egypt has reduced drastically over the last decade. In case of Indonesia, it is important to point out that the government subsidises private services, so some, if not all, of these private services are actually government-subsidised services catering for poor children.

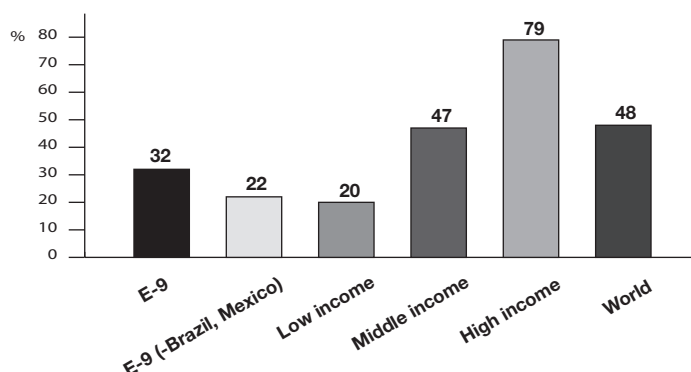
FIGURE 3: Private Enrolment of Pre-Primary Education in E-9 Countries, as a % of Total, 1990/2000²⁰



Pre-primary education is normally provided at a school or at an independent centre. Because of its affinity with education system, pre-primary education is likely to be the centre of the country's system building for ECCE. But setting up a formal structure is expensive, and expanding access is difficult. As seen in Figure 4 below, E-9 pre-primary education enrolment average of 32% is lower than that of middle, high-income countries and of world. Without Brazil and Mexico, the E-9 average comes down to 22%, closer to the average of low-income countries.

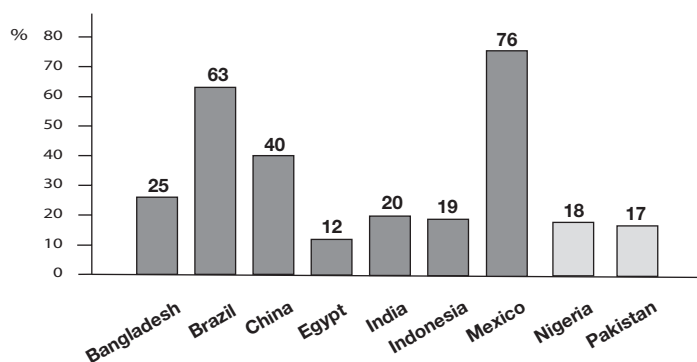
20. EFA Global Monitoring Report (2003-4), UNESCO.

FIGURE 4: Global Comparison of Gross Enrolment Rate of Pre-primary Education, 2000²¹



The figure 5 below shows the gross enrolment rates of pre-primary education in each of the E-9 countries.

Figure 5: Gross Enrolment Rate of Pre-primary Education in E-9 Countries, 2000²²



Mexico shows the highest rate of 76%, followed by Brazil (63%). Egypt shows the lowest, but this is a result of more than 100% increase from 1990. In most countries, intra-national disparity across different populations and regions is a matter of concern. In the case of Brazil, the national enrolment rate of 6-year-olds in pre-school education is 61%, while in the impoverished North region the rate is only 39%. Likewise in Mexico, the national average enrolment of the 3-year-olds in pre-school education (2002-3) is 20.6%, but 13 out of 32 States show rates below 10%, though the regional gaps are narrower with older children.

In general, there does not seem a great gender gap in access to ECCE. In Mexico, the enrolment rate of girls in pre-school education is 49.5%, while boys are enrolled at 50.5%. In Egypt, the rate for girls is

21. World Development Indicators (2003), World Bank.

22. World Development Indicators (2003), World Bank. Data for Nigeria come from MICS, 1999; and for Pakistan, from Financing of Education in Pakistan, 1999-2000.

a little lower (45%) than that for boys (54%). But in Pakistan, more girls are enrolled in Katchi Class than boys (39 and 34%, respectively). A similar phenomenon is observed in Nigeria, where girls' participation in day-care centres (30% among the 25-36-month-olds) is much higher than boys' (17%).

Besides pre-primary education, a variety of integrated health-related ECCE services are available. Unlike pre-primary education focused on children only, health-related ECCE services tend to target both children and their families, especially mothers, addressing their health and nutritional needs in an integrated manner. These services are delivered through public health centres, but as these centres work closely with other civil society organisations and networks, delivery points are also found in the non-public sector. Increasingly, these health-related early childhood services incorporate an "educational" component to enhance the child's psychosocial development.

In Indonesia, the Integrated Care Post (Posyandu), the Mother's Programme on Childrearing for Children under Five (BKB), and the Maternal Care Centre (Pushemas) make up about 47% of ECCE services provided in the country. Likewise, India's Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the country's flagship ECCE service, offers not only nutritional and health care for children and their mothers, but also pre-school education for older children. In the rural areas, 88% of pre-school education is delivered through the ICDS scheme. The country's Reproductive Child Health Programme is another example of an integrated service caring for the health needs of both mothers and their children. The National Nutrition Programme provided by the Ministry of Health in Bangladesh through local NGOs and Municipalities is another example of an integrated programme. Mexico's Opportunities Programme to help low-income families improve the child's nutrition, health and education is also one of the well-known integrated ECCE programmes.

The ECCE services provided by the social sector are geared towards working mothers' childcare needs. These services, whose principal function is child minding, are variably called day-care centres, nurseries or crèches. Some countries encourage enterprises to provide childcare services for their female workers. India, for example, is paying special attention to the children of mothers working in hardship environments – plantations, mines and construction sites. But such support for working mothers is not widespread in most of the E-9 countries. In Indonesia, the most typical service of this kind is Child Care Centres, but it counts less than 11% of the country's early childhood services. In Egypt, these childcare services are used by middle-class mothers who can afford the fees or by government officials with privileged access to government-supported childcare services. Also in China and Pakistan, nurseries are developed mostly in urban areas, catering for mothers who can afford the fees.

The countries' social sectors also offer various social assistance services to children in difficult situations. China is making a special effort in this direction. Through various policy measures, it is trying to upgrade the quality norms and standards of early childhood services for orphans and children with special needs so that these services can, in addition to their conventional custodial function, cater for these children's holistic developmental needs. In Brazil, the sector's efforts are more integrated with that of the education sector: Besides offering its own services (setting up shelters and supporting children with disabilities and their families), the Ministry of Social Assistance subsidises poor children attending pre-schools or day-care centres.²³ In the other countries (e.g., Bangladesh), the social sector

23. Following the 1996 General Education Act, the administrative responsibility for pre-schools and day-care centres has been increasingly transferred to the education sector, particularly at the municipal level.

builds shelters, orphanages and other social institutions. In Egypt, NGOs affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs offer day-care services for children from 3 months to 5 years across the country. This service reaches about 15% of the age cohort.

Besides these more or less mainstream services of the education, health and social sectors, various non-formal/informal services are provided by NGOs or communities. In Nigeria, for instance, Market Early Childhood Centres take care of rural children accompanying their parents to the market. In rural China, similar Seasonal Classes are set up during the farming period to cater for parents' childcare needs. In Pakistan, religious education at home by parents is an important socialisation process through which young children acquire various social and cultural values. Especially for girls, this informal socialisation is the main process through which they initially develop and learn. The Mosque-based Maktab in Bangladesh is a similar programme offering religious teaching to young children.

In Mexico, early childhood education services for 0-3-year-olds are mainstreamed in the sense that they are recognised within the education sector's ECCE service structure, but their delivery is mainly non-formal. An additional service that specifically targets indigenous populations is recognised as one of the two principal pre-school education services. About 64% of indigenous 4-5-year-olds are catered for through this service, which pays special attention to their intercultural and bilingual needs.

Summary: *The E-9 countries provide pre-primary education for children over three. Being formal and structured, this educational service is the crux of each country's system building for ECCE, but coverage is limited. Health-related integrated services are widespread and prove useful in countries where survival health and nutrition issues are still pronounced. Social ECCE services for working mothers are not very well developed in the E-9 countries; and because they are fee-paying, they are often taken up by middle-class mothers or those working in the government with privileged access to public childcare services. Religious services, though informal and limited in coverage, play an important role in Pakistan and Bangladesh for children's early socialisation.*

2.2. Funding²⁴

Without relevant data, arriving at a reasonable understanding of the sources and amounts of ECCE funding is extremely difficult, and the E-9 countries are no exception. The general assumption is that non-public contributions from families, individuals, communities, NGOs and enterprises would exceed government support. This may be true for non-formal and informal services for children under three. But the picture for pre-primary education is unclear; judging from the data available from the five countries presented in Table 7, below. While in India, 95.3% of expenditure on pre-primary education comes from public funds, exceeding the WEI and OECD means of 66.9% and 81.7% respectively, in Indonesia public expenditure accounts for only 5.3%. China's pre-primary education funding is more balanced: 54.6% is public and 45.4% private.

24. For reasons of data availability, discussion in this section is limited to pre-primary education.

Table 7: Expenditure on Pre-Primary Education in Selected E-9 Countries²⁵

	GDP per capita ²⁶ (1999)	Enrolment rates of 3-4-year-olds ²⁷ (2000)	Relative proportion (%) ²⁸		As % of GDP (1999) ²⁹		Per student (1999) ³⁰	
			Public source ³¹	Private source	Pre-primary education ³²	Primary/lower secondary education	Pre-primary education ³³	Primary education
Selected E-9								
Brazil	7,037	24.6	–	–	.4	3	1,222 ³⁴	956
China	3,617	(40) ³⁵	54.6	45.4	.1	1.7	105	372
India	2,248	(20) ³⁶	95.3	4.7	–	–	65	303
Egypt	3,420	6.4	–	–	–	–	–	–
Indonesia	2,857	N ³⁷	5.3	94.7	–	–	53	81
Selected WEI								
Jamaica	3,561	N	49.4	50.6	.7	5.8	386	764
Jordan	3,955	13.7	–	–	n	3.5	–	775
Philippines	3,805	16.0	–	–	n	4.1	46	474
Zimbabwe	2,876	–	–	–	n	3.9	–	537
WEI mean ³⁸	5,553	22.2	66.9	33.1	.2	2.9	612	797
OECD mean	21,317	63.8	81.7	18.3	.4	2.3	3,847	4,148

Source: *Financing education: Investment and returns, Analysis of the World Education Indicators (2002)*. Paris: OECD and UNESCO

As a percentage of per capita GDP, Brazil's investment in pre-primary education (.4%)³⁹ equals that of OECD countries, but its enrolment rate (24.6%) is much lower than the OECD mean (63.8%). The WEI countries' investment in pre-primary education relative to per capita GDP (.2%) is half of Brazil's, but their enrolment outcome (22.2%) is similar to Brazil's (24.4%). Meanwhile, in terms of per-student expenditure, Brazil is one of the few countries where per-student expenditure for pre-primary education exceeds that for primary education. Though crude, these observations suggest that the country's investment in pre-primary education is inefficient, and point to the need for a critical examination of its pre-primary education policy and system.

25. The five countries – Brazil, Egypt, China, India and Indonesia – presented in the table participated in the World WEI project.

26. In equivalent \$US converted using PPPs.

27. Full-time and part-time students in public and private institutions as a percentage of the population in that age group.

28. Distribution of public and private sources of funds after transfers from public sources.

29. Expenditure from public and private sources.

30. Annual expenditure, from public and private sources, per full-time equivalent student, in equivalent US\$ converted using PPPs.

31. Including international sources.

32. Public institutions only.

33. Public institutions only.

34. In public institutions only, 1998.

35. Gross enrolment rate for relevant age cohort (2000), data taken from the World Development Indicators (2003), which may not be compatible with other data in the column focused on 3-4-year-olds.

36. Gross enrolment rate for relevant age cohort (2000), data taken from the World Development Indicators (2003), which may not be compatible with other data in the column focused on 3-4-year-olds.

37. Negligible.

38. Mean of the countries participating in the World Education Indicators project: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Malaysia, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Russian Federation, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay and Zimbabwe.

39. Direct public expenditure only, 1998.

Further comparing developed and developing countries, the two regions represented by the OECD and the countries that took part in the WEI project show similar levels of investment in primary/lower secondary education, measured as a percentage of GDP: the WEI mean is 2.9%, compared with 2.3% for the OECD. But investment in pre-primary education shows a significant difference: the WEI mean (.2%) is half that of the OECD (.4%). Similarly, in terms of per-student expenditure, the gap between pre-primary and primary education is much wider in WEI countries (\$386:764) than in OECD countries (\$3,847:4,148).⁴⁰ Given that per-student expenditure affects the quality of the service, there is reason for great concern in developing countries over the quality of pre-primary education.

Meanwhile, in some developing countries, per-student expenditure on pre-primary education seems negatively correlated with enrolment rates. For example, Indonesia spends more per student on pre-primary education (\$53)⁴¹ than the Philippines (\$46)⁴², but Indonesia shows a negligibly small enrolment rate, while the Philippines' rate registers at the level of 16%. Likewise, Brazil's per-student expenditure on pre-primary education (\$1,222) is almost twice the WEI mean (\$612), yet the country's enrolment (24.6%) is not much different from the WEI mean (22.2%). Though a thorough analysis is needed before a conclusion can be drawn, these observations partly reflect the inequitable access to quality services enjoyed by a small group of privileged children in these countries.

The greatest difficulty the countries face with regard to early childhood funding is mobilisation of resources. This is a challenge faced by all countries, but it is particularly daunting in developing countries where understanding of the need and importance of ECCE among government officials is relatively poor and where ECCE has not been part of public policy. Mobilising funds is an immediate challenge for countries such as Mexico, whose government has announced that participation in pre-school education will become mandatory. Government funding for ECCE is, in general, extremely small; the area is mainly supported and provided by the private sector. In the case of Nigeria, expenditure on ECCE comes mainly from international agencies, at a level of 75% during 1992-95.

Within the government, the education sector has a particular challenge, partly because of the sector's preoccupation with the goal of universalising primary education. For instance, in Brazil, 25% of the State and Municipal revenues are to be spent on education, and Municipalities are to spend 60% of this education budget on primary education, and the rest on early childhood education for 0-6-year-olds. But in reality, most of the Municipalities' education budgets go to primary education, beyond 60%, leaving very little for early childhood services. Meanwhile, as pre-primary education's dependence on municipal funding is much larger (87%) than primary education's (49%), this *laissez-faire* situation at the municipal level leaves very little chance for early childhood to obtain any public funding.⁴³

As a strategy for mobilising funds for early childhood, governments encourage contributions from non-public sectors. The Egyptian and Pakistani governments are encouraging private schools to create pre-primary services within their primary schools. In China, the emphasis is on cost sharing: The government will support model kindergartens, children in disadvantaged situations and teacher training, while parents and communities are required to share the costs of services. The Nigerian government encourages private contributions but has few specific strategies for tapping these potential sources. The lack of implementation reduces the strategy to a paper policy, serving more as a pretext for not spending government money than as a policy.

40. Brazil is an exception, with per-student expenditure in pre-primary education exceeding that in primary education.

41. There is a possibility that the expenditure is actually higher by 15%.

42. Public institutions only.

43. To rectify this "unfair" situation for early childhood education, the Congress is preparing a bill to set up an independent national budget for early childhood education.

Summary: Government investment in ECCE is small and insufficient. Where there are investments, inefficiencies are observed, requiring a critical examination of possible policy and system faults. The education sector's investment in ECCE is particularly small and limited. Contributions from non-public sources are encouraged, but concrete measures and strategies to implement this policy are absent.

2.3. Training

Alongside the governments' tepid involvement and investment in ECCE, training systems for early childhood educators are not well developed in the E-9 countries. Qualification requirements exist

Table 8: Required Qualifications for Formal Early Childhood Educators in E-9 Countries

	Type of services	Qualifications required	% of qualified educators
Bangladesh	Public early childhood education for 5-6-year-olds	Secondary and upper secondary education degree + pre- and in-service training in primary education	
Brazil	Early childhood education for 0-6-year-olds	4-year college degree	20.8% ⁴⁴ with a college degree and 69.2% with a secondary education degree
China			11.8% of kindergarten teachers have 2-3 years of higher education; 45% are graduates of secondary teacher training institutions; 16.2% are graduates of vocational high schools specialised in kindergarten education; and the rest have general secondary education degrees
Egypt	Kindergarten for 4-6-year-olds Nurseries for 3-month to 5-year-olds	4-year college degree in related fields (e.g., pre-school education, social work, psychology, general education, etc.) Secondary education degree or equivalent; and short-term training	
India	Pre-school education for 4-6-year-olds	One academic year in tertiary education with 150 teaching days	
Indonesia	Public and Islamic kindergarten	Diploma Two Educational Programme for kindergarten teachers	
Mexico	Pre-school education for 4-5-year-olds	4-year bachelor's degree	
Nigeria		<i>National plan to develop regulations for teacher qualifications</i>	
Pakistan	Katchi, pre-primary education for 4-6-year-olds	Upper secondary education degree + 1 year training certificate ⁴⁵	

44. School Census 2001.

45. This is a federal requirement; the provinces have different levels. For instance, in Sindh, for regular educators, a bachelor's degree is required; and for assistants, an upper secondary degree.

only for educators working in formal services. Even there, the number of educators with required qualifications is small (e.g., 20% in Brazil, 12% in China). Some countries (e.g., Nigeria) have not yet specified the level of required qualifications; but for most others, the problem has more to do with implementing existing standards. Meanwhile, in Mexico, efforts are directed at increasing the quality of teacher training by adding more child development courses and a kindergarten practicum to training requirements.

For educators in formal pre-primary education, most countries require tertiary education, with the exception of Bangladesh where secondary education is sufficient.⁴⁶ In Pakistan, the federal requirement is upper secondary, but in Sindh Province, a university degree is needed. Information is scanty on the qualifications required for educators of other services than education, but they are normally lower. For example, in Egypt, teachers in public kindergartens run by the Ministry of Education are required to have a university degree; but those working in day-care centres run by NGOs and supervised by the Ministry of Social Affairs are required to have a secondary education degree, with some short-term pre-service or on-the-job training.

Table 9: Ratio of Student to Teaching Staff and Gender Distribution in Pre-Primary and Primary Education in E-9 Countries

	GDP per capita ⁴⁷ (1999)	Ratio ⁴⁸		Gender distribution ⁵⁰	
		Pre-primary ⁴⁹	Primary	Pre-primary ⁵¹	Primary
Selected E-9					
Brazil	7,037	18.5	26.6	98.1	92.6
China	3,617	26.7	20.2	–	–
India	2,248	–	43.0	93.8	31.2
Egypt	3,420	(22.0) ⁵²	23.0	– ⁵³	–
Indonesia	2,857	33.0	27.1	98.1	53.7
Selected WEI					
Jamaica	3,561	22.1	30.4	98.0	89.8
Jordan	3,955	19.4	–	99.8	–
Philippines	3,805	32.9	34.7	–	87.4
Zimbabwe	2,876	–	37.0	–	48.3
WEI ⁵⁴ mean	5,553	23.6	26.6	97.7	69.9
OECD mean	21,317	15.5	17.9	95.3	77.6

Source: *Financing education: Investment and returns, Analysis of the World Education Indicators (2002)*. Paris: OECD and UNESCO

46. But because of a high unemployment rate among teachers, many bachelor's or master's degree holders teach in primary schools, where pre-school classes are set up.

47. In equivalent \$US converted using PPPs.

48. Calculations based on full-time equivalents.

49. Only public services are included.

50. Percentage of women among teaching staff in public and private institutions, based on head counts.

51. Only public services are included.

52. Data from the Ministry of Education, Egypt, 2000-01.

53. According to a government source, 100% of pre-primary teachers are women and 77% of primary school teachers are women.

54. Mean of the countries participating in the World Education Indicators project: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Jordan, Malaysia, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Russian Federation, Thailand, Tunisia, Uruguay, and Zimbabwe.

Regarding the teacher-student ratio in pre-primary education, among the three E-9 countries for which relevant data are available (Table 9), Brazil's ratio of 18.5 is closest to the OECD mean (15.5). China's 26.7 is slightly higher than the WEI mean of 23.6. Indonesia's ratio of 33 is most similar to that of the Philippines (32.9), but these two countries' ratios are higher than the WEI mean. Unlike Brazil, in China and Indonesia the ratio for pre-primary education is higher than that for primary education. Given that education with younger children requires a much lower teacher-student ratio, the observation implies a quality problem in pre-primary education.

In terms of gender distribution, the three E-9 countries are not too different from WEI or OECD countries: their early childhood educators are mostly female. In primary education, the female ratio is generally lower compared with pre-primary education, particularly in India (31.2), Indonesia (53.7) and Zimbabwe (48.3). Interestingly, the ratio of female teachers in primary education in developed countries remains higher than in WEI countries, a reflection of the OECD's generally more feminine education workforce.

The E-9 countries' most serious problem with early childhood educators is in the training for non-formal and informal services. Educators in these services face multi-faceted challenges. Since the services are not formal or regular, they cannot attract motivated educators, let alone trained ones. Operating mainly with contributions (often in-kind) from parents and communities, the services cannot afford to offer training to their workforce, though in the case of Bangladesh, the NGO network has a good in-service training programme for non-formal and informal workers. Very often, however, non-formal and informal educators do not feel the need for training; they tend to believe that the experience of raising their own children is enough to take care of other children. In Mexico, nevertheless, efforts have been made to give non-formal educators short-term in-service training and to ensure that all educators working in the indigenous pre-schools receive proper training.

All these factors combine to create a situation in which non-formal and informal educators, especially those in care services for younger children, are under-trained, under-paid and under-motivated; unsurprisingly, their job satisfaction is low. In Indonesia, discouraged and disinterested workers in such jobs eventually leave them out of boredom, leading to a high turnover rate. One approach to tackle this problem is to use trained formal educators to train non-formal and informal educators. In Indonesia, for instance, an effort is being made to introduce the concept of Team Teaching, which brings together educators of different sectoral orientations under the leadership of a trained educator to learn to collaborate as a team. In India, workers trained for the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) project are despatched to train other ICDS workers with lower responsibility.

Summary: *Formal qualification requirements exist mainly for educators working in education services. Most of the E-9 countries require pre-primary educators to obtain a tertiary degree. In some countries, the teacher-student ratio in pre-primary education is higher than that in primary education, raising the question of quality in pre-primary education. Training opportunities for non-formal and informal educators are scanty and not systematised. The use of trained formal educators for the training of non-formal and informal educators is being introduced to address the problem.*

2.4. Curriculum

Pre-primary education normally follows a fixed curriculum, but this is not a widespread practice in the E-9 countries, among which only Brazil, China, Egypt, Pakistan and Indonesia have a national curriculum for pre-primary education. India and Nigeria do yet have one. India's National Curriculum Framework

for education includes a section on early childhood, which is used by government-run public services, and which can, if necessary, be elaborated into a separate curriculum for early childhood. In Bangladesh, an effort to develop a curriculum did not materialise because of financial constraints. But with the national EFA plan aiming to reinforce pre-primary education, the government sponsored a study that has set out a framework pre-primary curriculum, which will accelerate the process.

Table 10: Status of ECCE Curriculum in E-9 Countries

	<i>Presence of a national curriculum</i>	<i>Services concerned</i>	<i>Pedagogical emphasis</i>
Bangladesh	(Guidelines for the development of a curriculum have been prepared.)	Education for 3-5-year-olds	Physical and social development, play, stimulation activities, problem-solving skills, foundation skills/understanding for reading, writing and counting
Brazil	National Curriculum Guidelines National Curricular Reference for Early Childhood Education, an elaboration of the national guidelines	Mandatory observance by all day-care centres and pre-schools. Not mandatory	Motor-sensory development, language, socialisation, nature, society and mathematics
China	National guidelines on kindergarten education	All – i.e., formal, non-formal, public, non-public – services for 3-6-year-olds	Health, language development, socialisation, science, arts and plays
Egypt	National curriculum Informal guidelines	Mandatory observance by public kindergartens Services for 1-3-year-olds, provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs	Play, language, math-cognitive development and religious and social values Socialisation, language, awareness of the environment, art, play
India	No independent national early childhood curriculum; existing is a section on pre-school education included in the "National Curriculum Framework" Training curriculum for workers of ICDS programmes	Government-run services All childcare services for 0-6-year-olds	Physical growth, socialisation, cognitive development, language development and play Early stimulation, psychosocial development, home-based care
Indonesia ⁵⁵	National curriculum A curriculum developed in 1982 A curriculum	Public and Islamic kindergartens ⁵⁶ Mother's Programme on Child-rearing with Children under Five (BKB) Playgroup and Child Care Centre	Value, physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language development, creative skills, hygiene Developmentally appropriate childrearing practices, to stimulate the child's holistic development
Mexico	(A reform is under way to develop a comprehensive curriculum)	(Early education for 0-3-year-olds and pre-school education for 4-6-year-olds)	(Proposed areas: social-emotional, cognitive, language development, pre-literacy, etc.)
Nigeria	No national ECCE curriculum; existing are project-based pedagogical guidelines		
Pakistan	National curriculum of early childhood education	Early childhood education services for 3-5-year-olds	

55. A curriculum for Playgroup and Child Care Centre is being prepared by the ECE Consortium.

56. The Islamic Kindergartens adopt the national curriculum to emphasise Islamic teaching.

The existing curricula emphasise, in common, the child's holistic development – cognitive, emotional, social and physical – while the guidelines for care services emphasise stimulation. But in reality, as far as services for older children are concerned, most countries are putting particular emphasis on the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. In Pakistan, for instance, a pre-primary class is run like a primary school class, with alphabet and number charts. Given that the purpose of pre-primary education is to expand the child's learning potential through play- and experience-based pedagogy, and this early period is the only time when this potential development can be stimulated, this downward extension of primary education is a matter of great concern.

Concerning implementation of the existing curricula, another gap is observed in private services. In Egypt⁵⁷ and Bangladesh, private kindergartens are also expected to follow the national curriculum. But in reality, they often run extra-curricular classes, such as English lessons, at the demand of the parents. As these services are fee-based and depend on the parents' contributions, they have no choice but to meet their clients' demands, even at the risk of disregarding or distorting the recommended pedagogy. In Bangladesh, private and other services using English as the medium of instruction often teach using foreign primers, but being beyond the reach of public supervision, these aberrant pedagogical practices are left unchecked. In Indonesia, private kindergartens also try to implement the curriculum, but they are hampered by a lack of relevant materials.

As with teacher training, curriculum development neglects care services for children under three, who are less likely to have and follow a fixed pedagogical framework. An exception is Mexico, which is following a two-pronged effort to reform the ECCE curriculum, combining an attempt at horizontal integration of the curriculum for both younger and older children and vertical integration to link ECCE with school education. Once the two types of integration are achieved, there will be a seamless pedagogical framework for children from birth to the early grades of primary education. Nevertheless, given that for younger children the quality of their interaction with the agents of their socialisation is of far greater importance than the existence of a curriculum, so whatever guidelines exist must be accompanied by adequate training of the educators, who include parents.

Summary: *Brazil, China, Egypt, Indonesia and Pakistan have national curricula for pre-primary education, while Bangladesh and Mexico are developing theirs. Mexico is developing a comprehensive curriculum for services for 0-6-year-olds. All the curricula and pedagogical guidelines emphasise the child's holistic development. However, principle is one thing and practice is another: In pre-primary education, the actual practice focuses mainly on basic learning skills. Non-formal services and services for children under three pay inadequate attention to the pedagogical framework.*

2.5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Defining the quality of an ECCE service is an exercise that raises more questions than it answers. The views and interests of planners, providers, practitioners and parents are diverse, yet they must all be taken into consideration. A single, straightforward answer to the question is elusive, which complicates the task of monitoring and evaluating early childhood services.

57. In case of Egypt, the private kindergartens are also supervised by the Ministry of Education and they are to observe the national curriculum. But there are some "additional" activities to the regular programme, which are not always pedagogically correct.

In the E-9 countries, where non-public agents are the main providers of ECCE services, public authorities and their counterparts in civil society are often sharply divided over what to monitor and evaluate. Public authorities tend to be concerned with observing rules and fulfilling objectives, while practitioners and providers are more interested in the outcome for the individual child.

For example, in Bangladesh, the government – i.e., the Ministries of Education, Health, Women and Children's Affairs, and Social Welfare – monitors the achievement of objectives, delivery of services and utilisation of resources, especially from public sources,⁵⁸ while the non-public providers' main concern is whether the needs of the beneficiaries – both children and their families – have been met. In Indonesia, too, the government's monitoring concerns are characteristically systemic, to do with coverage/access rates, personnel and facility requirements, and so on. But an exception is found in Mexico, where the education sector defines quality as necessarily consisting of adequate stimulation for the child's holistic development and his/her well-being in terms of both health and social security.

The gulf in interests is to some extent inevitable given the different roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, and even helps prevent duplication, but it should not negate the need for public authorities to pay more attention to child outcomes, and the impact of ECCE services on the development of the child.

In some of the countries, the problem is not so much what to monitor, but what to monitor with. India,⁵⁹ for instance, has no national monitoring norms and standards to begin with, making it difficult to carry out a systematic assessment of the conditions of the various services. Elsewhere, existing standards and norms are unlikely to be observed because of the costs of implementation. Or, even where the policy and resources exist to improve the quality of services, the services that most require quality improvement (e.g., non-formal and informal services) are often difficult to map and identify, as they are delivered outside the public administration system.

Moreover, where a system exists, monitoring is split across sectors. For example, in Indonesia, the education and health sectors both monitor public formal early childhood services, one for the pedagogical aspects, and the other for the health aspects. The division of work is appropriate, but the reporting system should be consolidated to help ensure the child's holistic development. Such consolidation of monitoring is infrequent in Indonesia, casting doubt on the utility of separate monitoring.

In regard to the utilisation of monitoring results, China offers an interesting experience. There, the local education authorities carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of both formal and non-formal kindergartens, grading them accordingly. The best qualify as National Model Kindergartens. This honour is also an incentive because it guarantees greater support from the local government. From the government's point of view, it is an effective way of improving quality. The central government is working on a more comprehensive set of standards to discern National Model Kindergartens.

58. For example, the Directorate of Non-Formal Education through which donors' funds are distributed among NGOs working in basic education and pre-primary education monitors and evaluates implementation and the quality of the programmes; but its monitoring is limited to quantitative indicators related to implementation.

59. The exception is with ICDS, which has a computerised MIS that is used by all service delivery points in the country. Information is collected systematically and compiled into progress reports, which in turn assist decision-making in management and programming.

Brazil's monitoring and evaluation efforts have been geared towards improving the early childhood data and information system. Before the national survey was launched, day-care services for 0-3-year-olds were encouraged to register so that the government could map their existence and collect data on them.⁶⁰ The data were incomplete, as not all day-care centres were registered; nevertheless the partial baseline data gave the Ministry of Education an overview that enabled the inclusion of day-care centres in the policy discourse on early childhood. The Ministry acknowledges that the availability of relevant data, made possible by the registration system, was pivotal to embracing day-care centres within the framework of the country's early childhood education policy.

Mexico's monitoring effort is also concentrated on developing early childhood indicators. In order to monitor implementation of the National Development Plan 2001-06, the government will define early childhood well-being indicators concerned with physical, intellectual, social and emotional development along with nutritional and health status. Similarly, studies are under way, as part of the reform of the pre-school education curriculum, to develop indicators with which to evaluate the quality of pre-school centres. These indicators, once developed, are expected to help not only government officials but also providers and practitioners to monitor and evaluate their services.

Summary: *The monitoring and evaluation system for ECCE services is not well developed in the E-9 countries. Government officials and professionals disagree over what to monitor and evaluate. But the lack of systems is only part of the problem; a bigger challenge is to implement existing norms and standards and use the evaluation results for corrective measures. The lack of administrative and data systems to map services hinders the development and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system. In the case of Brazil and Mexico, efforts are devoted to developing relevant indicators and statistical data.*

60. UNESCO Policy Briefs on Early Childhood (2002), No. 2, Planning for Access: Develop a Data System First.

3. CROSS-SECTORAL COORDINATION

3.1. The Issue of Coordination⁶¹

ECCE concerns many government sectors, notably the education, social affairs and health sectors. Coordination among these sectors in policy development and implementation is essential for ensuring the child's holistic development and the efficient use of government resources. It is one of the key factors determining the quality of early childhood programmes.

Cross-sectoral coordination, however, is difficult to achieve. Among the E-9 countries, none has opted yet for the integration solution – that of placing the administrative auspices for early childhood in a single ministry, which would remove the problem of coordination at the structural level.⁶² They have chosen instead to set up coordination mechanisms, but few of these have proven effective or functional. The result is rampant fragmentation and duplication of early childhood initiatives across different sectors.

The E-9 countries, except China, do not have clear policies regarding the respective roles and responsibilities of different government sectors for ECCE. Nor do officials show sufficient awareness of the need to tackle the problem of fragmented and duplicated government involvement in ECCE. Consequently, few attempts have been made to set up a national early childhood coordination mechanism, although this is one of many ways to promote inter-sectoral coordination in ECCE, including developing integrated indicators. Bangladesh and Pakistan have no nationally set up and recognised mechanisms; in Nigeria, efforts to coordinate different sectors have been driven mainly by the donor community.

While a nationally agreed coordination mechanism is a rarity, some mechanisms have been set up by individual sectors, notably the education and social sectors, which rarely agree to work within a single mechanism. Within the education sector, the formal and non-formal education sub-sectors, too, have a tendency to use their own independent mechanisms. The proliferation of such mechanisms, rather than solving problems, creates a new problem – that of coordinating the coordination mechanisms.

The most serious problem is that most countries' EFA mechanisms do not seem to muster inter-sectoral coordination in ECCE. One reason could be EFA's preoccupation with pre-primary education, which is less concerned with the social or health sectors. On the other hand, the latter sectors' preoccupation with other components of ECCE than pre-primary education, such as child's health, nutrition and childcare for working mothers, may distance them from the EFA camp focused on educational issues. Whatever the reason, the inefficiency of the EFA mechanism for the promotion of ECCE is certainly a matter of concern, as it will hamper efforts to achieve Dakar Goal I.

61. Coordination among different government sectors is one such issue that concerns early childhood. Others include coordination between public and private sectors, and coordination between different levels of administrative authorities. In this paper, the focus is on the first type of coordination issue.

62. Although Brazil and Mexico have extended the responsibility of the education ministry to cover services for children aged 0 to 6, the other ministries still have de facto responsibility for their own services concerning this age group.

The reasons for the inefficiency of early childhood coordination mechanisms are many, but the following deserve special mention.⁶³

Early childhood coordination mechanisms are effective when their function is to coordinate a particular early childhood programme that may be handled by different sectors. They are also proven effective when the concerned sectors try to coordinate programmes targeting the same population. Certainly, mechanisms are useful in carrying out a specific task for a certain period of time or in exchanging information and developing and distributing materials and documents together across sectors.

While they are effective in coordinating programmes and conducting specific time-bound inter-sectoral tasks, coordination mechanisms are, in general, not very effective in developing and implementing a coherent overall policy and administrative framework across sectors. In fact, few mechanisms are set up with this mandate, even though it is among the tasks that most need to be accomplished.

One of the main reasons for the mechanisms' underperformance is their lack of administrative authority to develop and implement a policy. This, in turn, has to do with the fact that these mechanisms are often set up as ad hoc bodies, outside of a line ministry's legitimate structure. As such, these mechanisms are not mandated, in the first place, to develop and implement a policy. At best, they can make recommendations to ministries, but these are rarely taken into consideration, especially when it comes to decisions with financial implications.

To counteract the lack of authority, the mechanisms are often associated with a high political office (e.g., president, prime minister, first lady). While political patronage offers greater visibility and helps the mechanisms to command cooperation among different sectors, it does not bestow administrative authority to develop and implement policy. Besides, when there is a political change, such mechanisms are likely to undergo change or even be dismantled and replaced by a new mechanism favoured by the new government.

One way to ensure a coordination mechanism's decision-making power is to place it under a line ministry. But designating a lead sector is a challenging prospect in most developing countries. Furthermore, singling out a sector as lead sector for ECCE can carry the risk of inadvertently diminishing the roles of the other sectors. Or the designated sector can remain restrictive in its perspective, not embracing the concerns of all the sectors involved.

Despite all these challenges, designating a lead sector is necessary for a coordination mechanism to be functional, especially at the level of policy and administration. Unlike other functions expected of a coordination mechanism, developing and implementing a coherent early childhood policy and administration system require administrative, decision-making authority; and this is not possible unless the mechanisms are placed within a government structure where such functions are part of its own mandate. Thus, the prerequisite to this first step is a national decision on the lead sector for ECCE.

63. For details, see UNESCO Policy Briefs on Early Childhood (2003), No. 9, Cross-Sectoral Coordination in Early Childhood: Some lessons to learn.

Summary: Few efforts have been made to tackle the problem of sectoral fragmentation and duplication in early childhood. The setting up of coordination mechanisms has itself been fragmented, with different sectors creating and supporting different mechanisms. EFA coordination bodies have been ineffective. Other than China, few countries have tried to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of different sectors for early childhood. What is lacking is a determination to tackle the problem of fragmented administration systems and to identify the lead sector for early childhood.

3.2. Early Childhood Coordination Mechanisms

Bangladesh

Ministerial auspices for early childhood follow a typical parallel model in Bangladesh. The health sector targets children up to age three and their mothers, but these children are also the target group of day-care centres and children's homes run by the social sector. Pre-primary education is mainly the responsibility of the education sector, but the social sector's early childhood services (i.e., Microteaching Programme for Street Children) also offer pre-primary education. Likewise, the education sector's service for disadvantaged children (i.e., The Hard to Reach Programme) is delivered without coordination with the concerned social sector. Each sector develops its own training curriculum and pedagogical materials.⁶⁴

There is no national mechanism set up specifically to coordinate the different sectors for early childhood. It is not fully understood that child development is a continuous process and must be approached holistically. No major initiatives have yet been taken to promote sectoral coordination. Recently, however, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has made an effort to mobilise actors across different sectors in the government as well as actors in the field to implement the Shishu Academy,⁶⁵ which runs integrated pre-primary education for 4-5-year-old children. UNICEF, for its part, has set up an ECE Network within its office to exchange information among early childhood actors, NGOs and the concerned government ministries.

UNICEF has also attempted to designate the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs as the focal point for overall early childhood services for children aged 0-8. As part of this effort, an integrated early childhood development service for 4-5-year-olds has been set up within the Shishu Academy, and some advocacy materials have been produced. Despite the desirability of this integrated approach, the question remains as to how the social sector's leadership for early childhood will be coordinated and harmonised with the education sector, especially over services for children over three.

64. Recently, the social sector has started using the curriculum developed by the education sector.

65. An institution that promotes children's rights, with branches in all 64 districts of the country.

Table 11: Early Childhood Coordination Mechanisms in Bangladesh

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Functions</i>
Coordination for the Shishu Academy	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	Government, NGOs, community leaders and parents	To coordinate early childhood activities of the Shishu Academy and other partner institutions To raise awareness on early childhood at the district level
CD Network	UNICEF	Government, NGO, INGO representatives; no representation of professionals	To develop pedagogical guidelines Monitoring implementation
Directorate of Non-formal Education, Kindergarten Association		NGOs, kindergarten schools and other private schools	Providing subventions

Brazil

Sectoral tension is most pronounced between the education and social assistance sectors. Under the 1996 National Education Guidelines, the education sector became the lead sector responsible for all early childhood education services, namely pre-schools and day-care centres. But the federal funding authority for these services still lies with the social assistance sector. This allocation of administrative and funding authority to different sectors indicates a continuing lack of clarity over whether early childhood is a domain of social assistance or of education.

Brazil's most important coordination mechanism was the Early Childhood Committee, set up under the Solidarity Community Programme.⁶⁶ The committee of government officials from the education, social and health sectors and other key actors sought to coordinate the implementation of federal policies concerning young children. It helped set up Local Committees for Early Childhood in 394 municipalities,⁶⁷ helping to involve local authorities in an integrated approach. But despite its mandate to coordinate federal policies for early childhood, the mechanism received little attention from the federal government, and was unable to muster the power or authority to obtain decisions at the federal level. With the inauguration of the new government in 2003, the committee was dismantled.

Meanwhile, under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, the National Early Childhood Education Committee was set up to lead discussions on national policies on early childhood education. This, however, does not assume coordination functions across different sectors of the government.

66. A federal programme established in the previous government. It proposed new ways of fighting poverty and social exclusion by creating mechanisms of integration and coordination of public social programmes in the poorest areas of the country, while mobilising civil participation.

67. There are 5,561 municipalities in Brazil.

Table 12: Early Childhood Coordination Mechanisms in Brazil

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Functions</i>
Early Childhood Committee (dismantled in 2003)	Civil Office of the Presidency of the Republic, as part of the Solidarity Community Programme	Solidarity Community Programme, government officials of the health, social and education, and culture sectors, NGOs, IGOs	To articulate, coordinate and supervise implementation of federal policies for early childhood
National Early Childhood Education Committee	Ministry of Education	Representatives of the Ministries of Education, Health, Social Development and Justice	To conduct, in a participatory manner, the national early childhood education policy

China

Thanks to the 1987 Circular Concerning the Division of Responsibilities Related to the Management of Early Childhood Education Initiatives, issued by the State Council, China has cleared up confusions about departmental responsibilities, at least, for early childhood education. The Circular states that the Department of Education is responsible for the development and implementation of policy and regulations concerning kindergartens. Any policies with a bearing on early childhood education must come from the Department of Education.

But other departments also have specific responsibilities for early childhood education, in accordance with their respective mandates. For instance, health issues in kindergartens are the responsibility of the Department of Health; the inclusion of early childhood education in national social and economic plans is the concern of the Department of Planning; and welfare matters affecting kindergarten teachers and other kindergarten personnel are handled by the Department of Labour and Personnel. This clarification of sectoral roles and responsibilities certainly facilitates a multi-sectoral approach to early childhood education, with no need to set up a coordination mechanism.

Meanwhile, the State Council in 1990 set up a Committee for Women's and Children's Work to coordinate all matters related to women and children, particularly laws and regulations concerning their protection. Its membership is drawn from 24 government departments including the Ministries of Finance, Foreign Trade and International Cooperation. The local branches of the committee group representatives from the major agencies and actors in ECCE services from different sectors to promote their coordination at the local level.

Table 13: Early Childhood Coordination Mechanism in China

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Functions</i>
Committee for Women's and Children's Work	State Council	24 government departments; five NGOs	To coordinate initiatives of government departments and NGOs concerning women and children

Egypt

Egypt's wish to coordinate ECCE is well illustrated by the establishment of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood in 1989. Formed by a presidential decree, it is an independent body that does not belong to a government structure but is headed by the prime minister. Its membership includes the ministers of education, health and social affairs and other concerned ministries and national bodies. Its main function is to prepare plans for children and mothers as part of the National Development Plan. Training and research activities and the dissemination of exemplary practices are also part of the Council's mandate.

The Council's achievements are many and notable, though much still remains to be done. For instance, it set up a Consultative Committee that helped to draft the 1996 Law 12 on Child Protection. This Committee's long-term project to train personnel of services catering for 2-4-year-olds, which was implemented over a period of 10 years in the 1990s, has greatly contributed to improving the quality of day-care services in the country.

While it has undertaken useful initiatives to promote the well-being of children and mothers, the extent of its contribution to the coordination of different sectors involved in early childhood remains unclear, with much fragmentation and duplication still in evidence.

Table 14: Early Childhood Coordination Mechanism in Egypt

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Functions</i>
National Council for Childhood and Motherhood	Independent, but headed by the prime minister	Ministers of Social Affairs, Health, Culture, Education, Employment and Training, Planning, Information and Youth, professionals	To prepare policy plans related to children and mothers as part of the National Development Plan, and to implement good practices for replication

India

The country's major sectoral coordination is centred on the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). In fact, practically all coordination efforts have concentrated on removing services that might overlap with ICDS. Implemented by the Department of Women and Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the ICDS coordination scheme is relatively well connected with other departments. For instance, the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, which also belongs to the Ministry of Human Resource Development, set up early childhood education centres within the framework of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). To choose sites for these centres, it coordinated with the Department of Women and Child Development to be sure to avoid places that already had ICDS centres. When the programme drew to an end, the Department of Women and Child Development took over the centres, ensuring their continuity.

But some duplication has occurred between the two departments over ICDS's early childhood education component, which is under the education department. For instance, the early childhood education component of the ICDS is coordinated within the ICDS scheme, while that of the

education department is coordinated by the latter's own coordination mechanism, the National Standing Committee for Early Childhood Education. Thus India's early childhood education is coordinated by two different mechanisms set up by two different departments in the same ministry.

Table 15: Early Childhood Coordination Mechanism in India

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Functions</i>
National Standing Committee for Early Childhood Education	Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resources	Members of the Departments of Health, Women and Child Development, National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, National Council for Educational Research and Training, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, and representatives of civil society	To address the coordination issue in early childhood education on a permanent basis

Indonesia

The key sectors involved in ECCE – education, social welfare and health – collaborate and complement each other to some extent. For example, health authorities are involved in the services provided by the education or social sector, looking after children's health and nutritional matters. The social sector's whole-day services conveniently complement the education sector's half-day services, catering for the child's educational needs as well as parents' childcare needs.

But some duplication occurs between the education and social sectors. For example, both sectors offer training courses for workers at childcare centres, but they present different orientations, confusing the trainees who are to work in the same service structure. Moreover, the education sector has a curriculum for early childhood, while the social sector is developing other pedagogical guidelines for the services it is in charge of, instead of elaborating the existing pedagogical framework of the education sector.

No officially recognised mechanisms exist at the national level for coordinating early childhood activities across sectors. But two existing mechanisms serve as vehicles that different actors in the government and civil society can use to experiment with partnership – the Early Childhood Education Forum and the Early Childhood Education Consortium.

The Forum consists of high-level government officials from all concerned inter-ministerial and multi-sectoral coordinating bodies. Its main function is to develop and coordinate early childhood policies. The Forum and the Consortium, described below, are both housed in the Ministry of Education,⁶⁸ whose staff provide secretariat services for both.

68. In the ECCD Directorate of the Directorate-General of Out-of-School Education and Youth.

The Consortium, established in 2001, is concerned mainly with improving the quality of non-formal early childhood services, and its membership is drawn mainly from the government, academia and civil society. While it can boast notable achievements, especially in the area of advocacy and the development of pedagogical materials, its function as a coordinating mechanism has been undermined by its limited focus on non-formal services, leaving formal kindergarten services to the separate authority of the Directorate of Basic Education. Also, by being involved in policy development for non-formal services, it overlaps partly with the Forum, whose main function is policy development.

Table 16: Early Childhood Coordination Mechanisms in Indonesia

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Functions</i>
Early Childhood Education Consortium	Directorate-General of Out-of- School Education and Youth, Ministry of Education	Mid-level technical government officials from concerned ministries and coordinating bodies, early childhood experts, NGO representatives	To develop, evaluate coordinate and advocate non-formal early childhood programmes for 0-8-year-olds
Early Childhood Education Forum	Directorate-General of Out-of-School Education and Youth, Ministry of Education	High-level government officials from concerned ministries and bodies	Improving curriculum and management; conducting capacity-building exercises To develop and coordinate early childhood policies

Mexico⁶⁹

A notable coordination mechanism in Mexico is the National Commission for Monitoring and Evaluating the National Programme of Action to Benefit Children (the Commission). Set up in 1990 after Mexico signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Commission is tasked with monitoring the country’s commitment to the World Summit for Children. Led from the health sector, the Commission drew high-level membership from almost all key ministries in the government including bodies responsible for food, water and security. The Commission’s biggest achievement was the development of a National Plan and State Plans for improving children’s well-being. But, underscoring disadvantage of politically supported mechanisms, the Commission was dismantled with the change of government in Mexico in 2000, giving way to another presidential mechanism, the National Council for Children and Adolescents.

Another notable mechanism is the Informal Working Group to Define Indicators of Well-Being for Children under Six Years of Age, which was set up on the advice of the international development agencies operating in the country. The members, drawn from the education, health and family development sectors, were low-ranking officials. Although the success of this mechanism remains to be proven, it shows that focusing on specific tasks is workable in an informal mechanism.

Another notable and successful mechanism is the National Coordination and Technical Committee of the Programme Opportunities in Mexico. Located within the Secretary of Social Development, the

69. Myers, R. (2003). Early Childhood Policy and Program Coordination: A Mexican Case Study. UNESCO Working Paper:

Committee was set up in 1997 to coordinate different sectors and deliver an integrated social assistance programme, concerned with education, social assistance and health and nutrition, to extremely poor families. Its membership is composed of representatives of the social, education, health and treasury ministries. Having jointly set the rules of operation and approved initiatives, the Committee helped deliver the multi-sectoral programme successfully to the target populations.

At the moment, the greatest integration question pending in Mexico is the merging of Early Education for 0-3-year-olds with Pre-School Education for 4-6-year-olds. The development of an integrated curriculum could be a milestone achievement that will eventually provide a firm pedagogical framework with which different sectors could work harmoniously, without necessarily the help of a coordination mechanism.

Table 17: Early Childhood Coordination Mechanisms in Mexico

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Functions</i>
National Commission for Monitoring and Evaluating the National Programme of Action to Benefit Children, which became the National Council for Children and Adolescents in 2000	Ministry of Health	All key ministries in the government	To collect data related to well-being of the child and monitor the country's commitment to the World Summit for Children
National Coordination and Technical Committee of the Programme Opportunities in Mexico	Secretary of Social Development	Representatives of social, education, health and treasury ministries	To deliver an integrated social assistance programme to poor populations

Nigeria

Nigeria's most important ECCE coordination mechanism is the National Early Years Development Consultative Committee. Established with the assistance of UNICEF and the Bernard van Leer Foundation, the mechanism aims to coordinate early childhood policies and programmes provided by different actors and partners in the country. The Committee recently formed a taskforce to coordinate ECCE services governed and/or provided by different government sectors. The taskforce is made up of government officials from the education, social welfare and health sectors, among others. The Committee is housed in the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, the operational arm of the Ministry of Education.

The Committee eventually sidelined the existing Early Childhood Care NGO Network, which had not been very effective. The two bodies were quite similar, and the Committee appeared simply to be a new attempt using the same modus operandi but with different initiators. Meanwhile, the parallel existence of the Committee, concentrating on health-focused early childhood services, and the EFA Group, centred on pre-primary education, runs the risk of further bifurcating health and educational services. The two mechanisms can be complementary, but unless they find ways to work together, the education and health components risk becoming compartmentalised.

Table 18: Early Childhood Coordination Mechanism in Nigeria

Name	Location	Membership	Functions
National Early Years Development Consultative Committee	Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council, of the Federal Ministry of Education	Ministries and government bodies concerned with education, social welfare, health, representatives of civil society, and international agencies	To coordinate early childhood policies and programmes of different actors in the Government and in civil society

Pakistan

At the national level, Pakistan has no taskforce or committee devoted to the coordination of early childhood services. In the education sector, the National EFA Forum set up in the Ministry of Education is supposed to coordinate different government sectors as well as EFA components, including ECCE, in civil society; but due to financial problems, its members cannot meet regularly. Nor is it coordinated with the National Commission on Child Welfare and Development, an operational arm of the Ministry of Women's Development for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The coordination of the Ministries of Health, Education and Women's Development in general is very weak.

Sectoral coordination is also spotty at the provincial level. The different sectors' provincial departments do have management committees that coordinate their respective activities across sectors, but they are not very effective or functional, partly because of a lack of resources. Importantly, the provincial early childhood coordination mechanisms do not necessarily draw their membership from different sectors; they tend to consist mainly of personnel of their own department, undermining its functioning as a cross-sectoral coordination body. Policy development is one of the frequently mentioned functions of these mechanisms, but policies are rarely coordinated through them.

Table 19: Early Childhood Coordination Mechanisms in Pakistan

Name	Location	Membership	Functions
National EFA Forum	Ministry of Education Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education	Provincial education departments, NGOs, international agencies	To plan, coordinate EFA components including early childhood care and education
National Commission for Child Welfare and Development		Officials of Ministry of Women, Divisions of Education, of Interior, and of Planning and Development. National Council of Social Welfare and NGOs	To develop and implement early childhood policies and programmes of the Ministry of Women

Summary: *The effort to set up coordination mechanisms itself is fragmented, each sector creating and supporting its own mechanism; and the mechanisms themselves are not very useful for policy development and implementation. In Bangladesh and Pakistan, there is no nationally agreed coordination mechanism yet; Brazil and Egypt have been able to set up such mechanisms, though they have not been able to muster much coordination at the policy level. In China, a major mechanism is located in the social sector; a similar attempt to place leadership in the social sector is being made in Bangladesh. In India, Indonesia and Nigeria, mechanisms are set up separately by different stakeholders, creating, rather than solving, more coordination problems.*

4. ACTIONS NEEDED

4.1. EFA National Plans on ECCE⁷⁰

In accordance with their commitment to the Dakar Goal 1 on ECCE, the E-9 countries have developed national EFA plans on ECCE. These plans are concerned specifically with expanding access, improving quality and ensuring equity. They are also keen to promote advocacy on ECCE across all stakeholders including parents. The translation of these plans into action remains a daunting challenge, but countries are trying their best to implement them. This section describes some of the key aspects of these plans.

Access

Most countries' access plans on ECCE are focused on services for 3-5-year-olds. The importance of day-care centres for children under three is mentioned, but plans on these services are not as detailed as those for older children, though countries like Brazil and Indonesia have equally specific plans for care services. This bias is explained by the fact that the EFA plans are developed mainly by the education sector, of which concerned age group for ECCE is 3-5-years. Table 20 summarises the E-9 countries' ECCE access plans.

Table 20: E-9 Countries' EFA Plans to Expand Access to ECCE Services

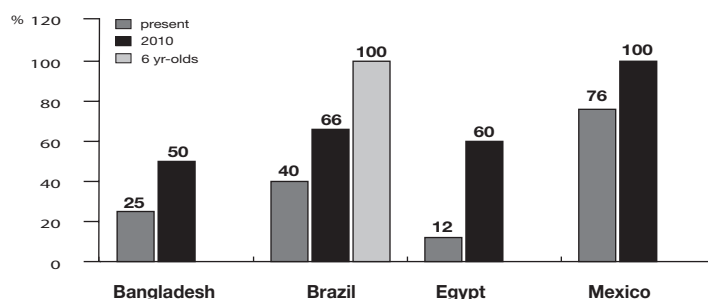
Bangladesh	Increase enrolment of 3-5-year-olds by 30% (2005), 50% (2010) and 80% (2015)
Brazil	Increase enrolment at day-care centres (for 0-3-year-olds) to at least one-third of the age cohort by 2011
	Increase public pre-school enrolment by at least 5% per year until 2010
	Universalise pre-school education for 6-year-olds as a basic education requirement
	Increase enrolment of 4-6-year-olds from the current 40% to 66% by 2010
China	Universalise three-year pre-school education in urban areas
	Increase enrolment in one-year pre-school education in rural areas to 80% by 2015
	Increase enrolment in three-year pre-school education overall to 55% by 2015
Egypt	Expand pre-school classes for 4-6-year-olds to 60% by the end of 2010
	Open, across the country, One Room Classes for Girls, for girls who could not start school at the required age of 6 and who would not be admitted to Grade 1 because they have passed the official age for Grade 1
India	Universal access to ECCE for 3-6-year-olds, through ICDS
Indonesia	Increase the participation rate in early childhood care services from 41% in 2000 to 80% by 2015
	Increase the participation rate in early childhood education services from 27% in 2002 to 75% by 2015
Mexico	Enrol all 4-6-year-olds in pre-schools by 2008-09
Nigeria	Follow recommendation to embrace 0-5-year-olds within the purview of ECCE
Pakistan	Increase enrolment in Katchi Classes, pre-primary education to 50% by 2015

70. This section is based mainly on input provided in the National Case Study Reports and the countries' EFA national plans on ECCE.

Except Nigeria, whose EFA plan is centred on some general principles for promoting ECCE, all E-9 countries have numeric targets for expanding access to ECCE services, showing their commitment to the area, though the feasibility of the plans is another question. As mentioned, the plans focus on expanding formal education services for 3-5-year-olds, which are in most cases located or annexed to public schools. Involving civil society is mentioned as a strategy, but specific support plans to expand access through non-public services are absent.

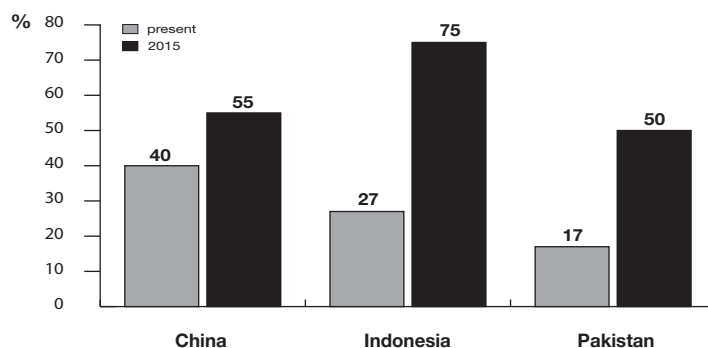
As shown below in Figure 6, Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt and Mexico set goals to be reached by 2010.

FIGURE 6: Increase of Gross Enrolment Rate of Pre-primary Education in E-9 Countries by 2010



Brazil and Mexico⁷¹ mention universalising early childhood education services as a long- or short-term goal. Bangladesh, Brazil and Egypt wish to increase enrolment rates in early childhood education to 50%, 66% and 60%, respectively by 2010. China, Indonesia and Pakistan set goals to be achieved by 2015 (Figure 7, below).

FIGURE 7: Increase of Gross Enrolment Rate of Pre-primary Education in E-9 Countries by 2015



71. Though not presented in the figure, China and India also plan on universalisation as a long-term goal.

Pakistan wants to reach the halfway mark by 2015, when Indonesia wants to have reached 75%. Egypt shows particular attention to the linkage with primary education, including support for Grade 1 within the planning of ECCE. China has a region-specific access plan in view of the large gaps in resources and enrolment status between rural and urban areas.

Quality

The E-9 countries have similar plans concerning quality, each including the following core elements among their improvement measures:

- Developing and improving the pedagogical framework
- Improving and providing teaching and learning materials
- Improving the qualifications level of teaching/management personnel, and providing training opportunities
- Setting and improving standards for infrastructure, supervision, provision of services
- Improving the learning environment.

Given that an integrated approach is an essential feature of a quality ECCE service, efforts by Brazil, India and Mexico to see to the child's health, nutrition and safety needs as well as education needs in an integrated, holistic manner deserves special mention. Indonesia's efforts to involve communities and other stakeholders on the ground can also be considered a measure to promote an integrated approach.

But none of the countries has plans to tackle the issue of sectoral coordination in a more outright manner, through changes at the systemic level. Nevertheless, some countries address the issue at the level of data collection. For example, in Brazil, Egypt and Mexico, concern with quality is exhibited in efforts to improve and develop comprehensive ECCE data and information systems, which will provide the governments with a concrete tool for monitoring and evaluating ECCE services across different services and sectors. Bangladesh is also proposing a plan to develop an integrated database for 3-5-year-olds.

Equity

In regard to equity, all nine countries mention that children in disadvantaged situations (e.g., orphans, children with special needs, indigenous, ethnic and/or rural populations, etc.) are primary target groups. This is particularly the case with Brazil, China and Mexico, where regional inequities in the provision of and access to quality ECCE are acute. In China, the access plan has been developed separately for each region, taking into adequate consideration the current status, particular needs and contexts.

In other countries, the plight of children in disadvantaged situations and regions are mentioned or even highlighted, but strategies for ensuring their access to quality ECCE services are not conspicuous. In most cases, at best, mobilisation of non-formal approaches and community participation are encouraged while being mentioned in passing. This falls far short of a strategy for helping disadvantaged populations, unless complemented and supported by government investment. Given that access plans focus on formal services, which are unlikely to be reached by those who are not targeted, and that few measures are devised to assist disadvantaged children, the inequitable access to and provision of quality ECCE services is likely to remain the most daunting challenge facing all E-9 countries.

Other objectives

Some of the other notable features of the countries' plans are as follows. Bangladesh emphasises the need to raise awareness among all stakeholders of the importance of ECCE and their respective shares in the overall responsibility. In Brazil, a great deal of effort is concentrated on system building (e.g., setting national standards for infrastructure, pedagogy and training, etc.) for both day care and early childhood education institutions. Meanwhile, China continues its systemic approach to delineating the respective responsibilities of various stakeholders for the provision and funding of ECCE. In Egypt, nationwide programmes and events (e.g., the Reading for All Programme) are being planned to promote the development of young children's literacy.

Indonesia's concern with disadvantaged children is seen in the drafting of anti-discrimination legislation. India's EFA plan is centred on expanding the well-established ICDS scheme, which is consolidating its status as the country's flagship ECCE service. It also plans on developing distance training programmes. Mexico's EFA plan on early childhood is best represented by various measures to integrate early education for younger children and pre-school education for older children. Nigeria's plan can be best summarised by efforts to reach consensus on some of the basic principles of ECCE (e.g., the age groups concerned, holistic development, etc.). Finally, in Pakistan, improving coordination among different levels of administration is a major challenge as well as policy objective.

Summary: *All E-9 countries have developed national EFA plans for ECCE. Concerning access, the focus is on expanding early childhood education services for children over three. Access plans for services for younger children have not been elaborated. As for quality, the approach focuses on improving the pedagogical aspects of services (e.g., curriculum, training, qualifications). Some efforts are aimed at improving sectoral coordination through integrated data collection and curriculum development, but no major change is being proposed at the system level to decide on the lead sector for ECCE. Equity is an important policy issue in all E-9 countries, but measures to address the issue do not go beyond paying lip service. Inequitable access and provision is likely to be a continuing challenge in most E-9 countries.*

4.2. Priority Tasks

Since the E-9 countries have all prepared national EFA plans on ECCE, the overriding priority is to implement them. A review of these plans points to a few priority tasks across all E-9 countries that will facilitate their respective implementation processes. Some of these tasks are in areas that have received relatively little attention in the countries, but that are essential to tackling the issues that have been identified and that the countries intend to address. This section describes some of these tasks.

First, the E-9 countries have not paid much attention to the building of administration system for various ECCE services. Preoccupied with low enrolment and lack of services, policy attention has mostly been directed to provision activities – that is, creation of new services. This is of course necessary, but accompanying the problem of provision is the need to develop and put in place the administration system that supports the various services created by various actors, especially those from the non-public sector:

For example, the E-9 countries have promoted and encouraged non-public actors (e.g., individuals, communities, NGOs, enterprises, etc.) to participate in the creation and delivery of ECCE services,

but few have paid attention to the building of the basic administration system (e.g., registration, licensing, monitoring etc.) needed to map, identify and support them.⁷² As a result, non-public services exist and even mushroom, but not in partnership with the government. Likewise, governments are aware of the services on the ground, but do not necessarily embrace them in their policy planning and support for ECCE. This non-systematised partnership between public and non-public sectors in the delivery and provision of ECCE services has a direct impact on the implementation of the government's access, quality and equity policies.

For example, government alone cannot meet the enormous ECCE needs of a country; it needs partners who can share the burden and help extend the reach of services to those who have not been reached by the formal system. But without a basic administration system to identify and create these valuable partners, say, through minimum incentives, the governments cannot expect them to multiply. Even with a plethora of partners, if the government does not have a system for monitoring and providing pedagogical support to the services provided by the non-public sector, it will soon face the problem of quality. If the non-public services are fee-paying, affordable only by a few rich families, the non-public services can widen rather than narrow the equity gap in access. Thus a non-systematised partnership can cause more harm than good.

Second, one of the biggest challenges the E-9 countries have in implementing ECCE policy is coordinating different government sectors, notably the education, social and health sectors. Without the coordination, cooperation and mutual understanding of these key sectors, it is extremely difficult to address the child's care, development and learning needs in an integrated, holistic manner; and a holistic approach is synonymous with a quality ECCE service. In other words, no government concerned with quality can afford to ignore the issue of sectoral coordination.

Countries have tried to resolve this problem mainly by setting up coordination mechanisms. While the mechanisms do serve some purposes, they are not usually very useful in developing and implementing an integrated policy. Country experiences show that this task is best achieved if ECCE is integrated into a single ministry or if a lead sector is designated for ECCE, which will work with other sectors in a leadership-based partnership. Such efforts have not been attempted in the E-9 countries⁷³ and are not featured in the E-9 countries' EFA plans.

Change at the system level is difficult, but it will become even more difficult if separate ECCE systems become firmly established in each of the individual sectors. The education sector's preoccupation with pre-primary education is a good example. Since this sector has traditionally had pre-primary education firmly within its purview, it tends to be more resistant to the holistic view of ECCE, which necessitates attention to the care component. In the course of time, a similar resistance can grow in other sectors unless they are encouraged early on to broaden their perspective and learn to work with across sectors.

In this sense it is, ironically, "fortunate" that most E-9 governments have only just begun to be involved in ECCE, and few systems are established that may need to be deconstructed and changed. Thus, it is high time for the E-9 countries to streamline sectoral responsibilities for ECCE. This process must start with the full awareness of why cross-sectional streamlining at the system level is important and necessary, especially in relation to the provision of quality ECCE services; and this awareness must

72. Except Brazil, which has endeavoured to register day-care services so that they can be surveyed for the national census.

73. Except China, which has assigned responsibilities of the different sectors for early childhood education.

be brought to the attention of the country's highest authorities, who should help take a decision on the matter, which may include designation of a lead sector. Without such a national decision, investment in ECCE will continue to be inefficient, both in terms of policy and funding.

Finally, it is also important to recognise that the need and demand for ECCE cannot be met through the community mobilisation strategy alone. This can be a useful financial strategy, but only in conjunction with baseline contributions from the government. Likewise, decentralisation will not solve the problem of insufficient funding or commitment from the central government in support of ECCE. Delivery and management of services, as well as policy matters related to provision, can be best handled by local authorities, but expecting them to spare funding for ECCE, when their understanding of the importance of ECCE is likely to be even lower than that of central government officials, merely offers the central government a pretext for not supporting ECCE, and may be a sign of naivety.

From this point of view, Brazil's current effort to set up a mandatory early childhood education fund at the national level is the ultimate sign of the country's seriousness towards ECCE and its conviction regarding the investment value of ECCE. Countries can and must devise funding schemes that are most suitable and appropriate to them. But the idea of mandatory funding, or some form of obligatory investment in ECCE, seems inevitable. Otherwise, the starting point of lifelong learning is not likely to be on the government's priority investment list. Countries that have achieved universal primary education, for example, do not turn to ECCE as their logical next goal. They tend to move on to secondary education, adult education or higher education, despite a plethora of studies proving that investment in ECCE reaps great social, educational and economic returns.

While the governments can strive to secure an independent funding for ECCE, there are still other strategies to mobilise funds ECCE. First, ECCE has rippling effects on other EFA goals, notably, universal primary education, literacy and gender equity. If ECCE is provided and supported as part of the country's synergistic efforts to promote these other EFA goals, its access can be expanded to some extent without an additional, independent funding. Linking ECCE with primary education and with adult literacy programmes is also a pedagogically sound approach for the former as well as for the latter. Secondly, ECCE is an effective way of removing causes of poverty at the start. Its provision should be included and supported as part of the country's poverty reduction strategy. These "tapping into" strategies are, perhaps, one of the most feasible ways of locating resources for ECCE, which is still not top on the government investment agenda.

Summary: *The first need is to build basic administration systems to support and guide non-public services. Second, the E-9 governments should make more precise efforts to address the problem of sectoral fragmentation in ECCE. A national decision designating the lead sector for ECCE is an especially desirable step. Finally, resources are needed to implement the EFA plans that have been developed for ECCE. While resources should be mobilised from all stakeholders, government investment in ECCE should be increased. Tapping into the government's efforts for other EFA goals and poverty reduction strategy is a realistic way of locating resources for ECCE, while a continuing effort is made to secure independent funding for it.*

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In 1993, the heads of state and government of nine high-population countries — Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan — launched the E-9 Initiative aimed at achieving concrete progress in basic education. The initiative calls for the education ministers of these nine countries to meet every two years to review their progress. The topic chosen for the fifth E-9 Ministerial Review Meeting, held in Cairo, Egypt, in December 2003, was early childhood care and education (ECCE). This report presents progress achieved in ECCE in the nine countries.

Bangladesh

Brazil

China

Egypt

India

Indonesia

Mexico

Nigeria

Pakistan

Section for Early Childhood and Inclusive Education
Division of Basic Education, Education Sector - Paris

