

# Status Report

## Early Childhood Education Systems in 15 Pacific Island Countries and Territories

March 2024



# Foreword

In the Pacific region, early childhood education (ECE) is recognized as foundational to advance national development. Governments across the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) have committed to investing in their youngest citizens to ensure that they have the best start in life and are equipped to build strong skills for the future. Regional collective efforts and national initiatives have been directed towards preparing children in the Pacific to be happy and successful learners, and enabling them to contribute towards more equitable, inclusive and sustainable societies as they grow up.

These efforts in the Pacific region are a conduit towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which sets goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. Strengthening ECE systems is one crucial step towards attaining these goals. Investing in the early years can benefit children, their families and society as a whole, as it improves children's learning and development outcomes and has the potential to yield high future economic individual and societal returns.

This report is focused on mapping the status of ECE systems in the 15 PICTs and tracking the progress achieved across five key components: planning and budgeting for ECE, human resources, curriculum, performance monitoring and assessment, and family and community partnerships. Such progress tracking is essential for scaling up equitable and quality provision of ECE. We encourage leaders, practitioners and policymakers across the PICTs to make use of the report's findings to inform and advocate for ECE reforms. Countries should also consider the priorities and policy recommendations together with ECE focal points in their ministries of education, for development of education sector plans to strengthen and progress their ECE systems.

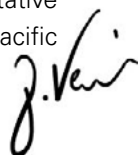
We must capitalize on the promise of investing in the early years to transform the lives of all children, their families and communities in the Pacific. Strong ECE systems that place children's learning and development at the core of their work and target the system in a holistic and interconnected manner are more likely to succeed in this endeavour. It is up to us to ensure all children in the Pacific are able to thrive and reach their full potential, and this mission needs to start from their first years of life.

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# Acronyms

<b>ECD</b>	Early childhood development
<b>ECE</b>	Early childhood education
<b>EMIS</b>	Education Management Information System
<b>FEdMM</b>	Forum Education Ministers Meeting
<b>FSM</b>	Federated States of Micronesia
<b>MEHRD</b>	Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development
<b>MESC</b>	Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture
<b>MET</b>	Ministry of Education and Training
<b>MEYS</b>	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
<b>MoE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>MoEST</b>	Ministry of Education, Sports and Training
<b>MoET</b>	Ministry of Education and Training
<b>NER</b>	Net enrolment rate
<b>PICTs</b>	Pacific Island Countries and Territories
<b>PNG</b>	Papua New Guinea
<b>PRC4ECCE</b>	Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Care and Education
<b>PRC4ECD</b>	Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Development
<b>PTA</b>	Parent and Teacher Association
<b>RMI</b>	Republic of the Marshall Islands
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>WASH</b>	Water, sanitation and hygiene





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# Executive summary

Investment in high-quality early childhood education (ECE) programmes for children aged 3 to 6 years has shown long-term benefits in cognitive and socioemotional outcomes (Richter et al., 2016; UNICEF, 2017a). Based on this evidence, ECE has become a priority in multiple countries, including in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). The PICTs mapped the status of their ECE systems in 2015 and 2017 across five core functions, which are key components characterizing high-quality ECE systems, developed following the Pacific Guidelines (UNICEF and PRC4ECCE, 2014) and UNICEF's 'Build to Last' framework (UNICEF, 2020). These core functions include planning and budgeting, human resources, curriculum, performance monitoring and assessment, and family and community partnerships. The goal of this research was to map the status of ECE in 2022 to identify strengths, gaps and areas for improved ECE service delivery.

Leveraging insights from a desk review and primary data collection with ECE focal points in ministries of education (MoEs),<sup>1</sup> this report summarizes the status of the ECE systems in 2022 across the 15 PICTs: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

The research adopts a system lens to explore recent developments in ECE using four categories to track progress. The PICTs were classified as advanced (level 4), established (level 3), initiating (level 2) or weak (level 1) for each core function based on the data collected. Overall, participation in ECE has increased in the Pacific region; however, most countries continue to encounter challenges to scale up quality service delivery. More specifically, greater progress has been achieved across the PICTs in the human resources and curriculum areas since 2017. Gaps remain in the areas of planning and budgeting, performance monitoring and assessment, and family and community partnerships. In most countries, the lack of financial resources to address the different areas of ECE programme implementation, including monitoring quality at the service delivery level and collecting data on child learning outcomes, are barriers for effective scale-up. There is also a lack of national-level strategies in most PICTs to promote parental and community engagement in pre-primary education.

The main findings and recommendations for each of the five core functions are summarized below.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'ministry of education (MoE)' is used as a general term. When referring to an individual country, the specific name of its education institution is mentioned.



## Findings

## Recommendations



### Planning and budgeting

- As of 2022, only five countries mandated ECE as both free and compulsory, essential criteria for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.2, which calls for the provision of at least one year of high-quality ECE for all children by 2030. The 10 remaining PICTs would also need to achieve this by 2030 to ensure all children in the Pacific have access to early learning programmes that can prepare them for school with the necessary foundational skills.
- In 2022, 14 PICTs had education legislation covering ECE, compared with 11 in 2017. Nine of these PICTs also include the financial costs of implementing their ECE policies, rising from only three countries in 2017.
- Access has increased in some countries that have included ECE in their National Education Acts since the release of the 2017 status report. From the 13 PICTs that mandate the provision of free ECE for at least one year, nine achieved net enrolment rates (NERs) over 88 per cent. The inclusion of ECE in education legislation has allowed countries to ensure government budget is allocated for teachers' remuneration, as ECE is now considered part of the school system.
- While most PICTs have increased the proportion of government funds allocated to ECE, the budget is often limited to teacher salaries. Ten countries also depend on external donor grants or international aid to ensure sufficient funding for the continuation of all activities across other core functions, in addition to human resources.

1. **Analyse the current gaps in investment in ECE across the PICTs to identify priorities and increase public funding** for the provision of at least one year of high-quality ECE for all children in the Pacific.
2. **Improve effective and comprehensive ECE planning and governance** across all five core functions and at all levels.







## Human resources

- Almost all countries (14 PICTs) set post-secondary non-tertiary education as the minimum qualification level to teach in ECE, with ECE-specific pre-service training requirements. Only one country considers upper-secondary school completion as sufficient. All PICTs were providing in-service training to ECE teachers.
  - Many PICTs encounter difficulties retaining the ECE workforce due to an inability to provide competitive remuneration compared with teachers of higher education levels. Most PICTs provide incentives to ECE teachers; however, base salaries are lower than in primary and/or secondary education in more than half of the countries (nine PICTs).
1. **Develop and implement a holistic continuous professional development strategy for ECE teachers** to progressively strengthen their capacity to provide high-quality teaching and learning for young children.
  2. **Develop and implement a clear recruitment, remuneration and career progression pathway** that contributes to the retention of qualified teachers in ECE.



## Curriculum

- Nearly all countries have developed early learning standards for children across different developmental domains (14 PICTs), and minimum quality standards for ECE facilities (12 PICTs).
  - Less progress was observed in the provision of support to ECE teachers for curriculum implementation. Practical training approaches offering opportunities for ECE teachers to observe and practise the implementation of aspects of the curriculum are used in fewer than half of the countries (six PICTs), limiting the consistency of the implementation process across classrooms.
1. **Review and update the content of ECE curricula** to ensure critical learning goals for young children and pedagogical approaches to achieve them are clearly defined.
  2. **Strengthen in-service teacher training for ECE curriculum implementation**, with an emphasis on developing teaching strategies to enhance children’s foundational skills.





## Performance monitoring and assessment

- Most countries (14 PICTs) include ECE in their Education Management and Information Systems (EMIS). The comprehensiveness of the ECE indicators varied widely across countries, with only five PICTs collecting data on child learning assessments.
- Available data are mainly used by the PICTs to identify the needs of specific regions, preschools and/or children. Detailed disaggregation of the data and timely use and analysis remained a challenge for most countries.
- Most PICTs faced challenges in monitoring quality at the service delivery level due to a reduced number of ECE dedicated staff in MoEs and to the lack of financial resources to visit preschools, particularly in remote areas.

1. **Define systems and tools to monitor and improve quality in ECE** at the service delivery level.



## Family and community partnerships

- Initiatives for supporting families and communities were in place through partnerships with international organizations. However, MoEs in most PICTs faced challenges in promoting and scaling up family and community engagement in a sustainable and inclusive approach. Most countries are implementing isolated activities for caregivers, with no prioritization for disadvantaged groups, namely caregivers of children with disabilities, families from ethnic and/or linguistic minorities or those living in natural hazard-prone areas.

1. **Develop and implement clear parental engagement strategies** to support families of young children to foster early learning at home and in schools.



The findings of this mapping can support MoEs to track improvements and recurring challenges in their respective ECE systems and identify what should be prioritized to progress towards more advanced levels in the core functions of ECE. Understanding how ECE systems have progressed across the five core functions can also contribute to identifying gaps and areas of improvement that can be further explored through more in-depth and targeted monitoring efforts at the service delivery level. This is essential to create the enabling environment that would allow more countries to achieve SDG 4.2, and provide equitable access to high-quality ECE services for all children in the Pacific.



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# Introduction

## Context and background

Early childhood education (ECE) refers to organized programmes that are intentionally designed to include educational content for young children before the start of grade 1 (UNICEF, 2020). This is an integral component of multisectoral early childhood development (ECD), which incorporates all the essential policies and programmes required to support healthy development of children from birth to age 6 years, including health, nutrition, protection, ECE opportunities and responsive caregiving. Participation in high-quality ECE establishes strong foundations for learning and success in school and beyond, especially for the most vulnerable groups of children (Richter et al., 2016; UNICEF, 2017a). Delivering high-quality ECE at scale requires the recognition of ECE as a comprehensive component that is integral to the education system, rather than as an 'add-on service'.

In the Pacific context, there are vast differences in approaches to ECE, the size of the ECE sector and the needs of each country or territory. Following on from a 2017 ECD Forum, in 2018, Pacific Island Forum leaders called for a whole-government, whole-community approach to ECD, recognizing the need for health, nutrition, social welfare, education and finance agencies to work together with families to achieve optimal outcomes for their youngest citizens. This led to the establishment of the Pacific Regional Council for ECD (PRC4ECD), expanding from the original Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Care and Education (PRC4ECCE), which was focused more specifically on education. In 2014, the PRC4ECCE endorsed the Pacific Guidelines for the Development of National Quality Frameworks for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programming for Ages Three to Five (henceforth referred to as the Pacific Guidelines) to define the foundations of ECE programming (UNICEF and PRC4ECCE, 2014), with focus on a whole-systems approach targeting five core functions<sup>2</sup> of ECE systems:

- Policy, legislation and governance
- Human resources
- Curriculum, child assessment and environment
- Performance monitoring and assessment
- Family and community partnerships.

<sup>2</sup> The Pacific Guidelines define core functions as key elements that characterize high-quality national ECE systems and are required to ensure effective and equitable service delivery (UNICEF and PRC4ECD, 2019).



The Secretariat of PRC4ECCE, a role held by UNICEF Pacific, was tasked to provide technical, operational and financial support for ECE activities in the PICTs, following the Pacific Guidelines. UNICEF provided technical guidance to PRC4ECCE to map the status of ECE systems across the region, culminating in the 2015 and 2017 status reports on ECE in the PICTs. The current PRC4ECD terms of reference outline structures for multisectoral coordination, and call on each sector to provide dedicated attention to young children. As such, the 15 PICTs have identified respective ECE focal points to support and guide regional ECE initiatives. This 2022 ECE status report, which builds on the 2017 version, is the first regional ECE activity engaging the 15 ECE focal points with technical support from UNICEF.

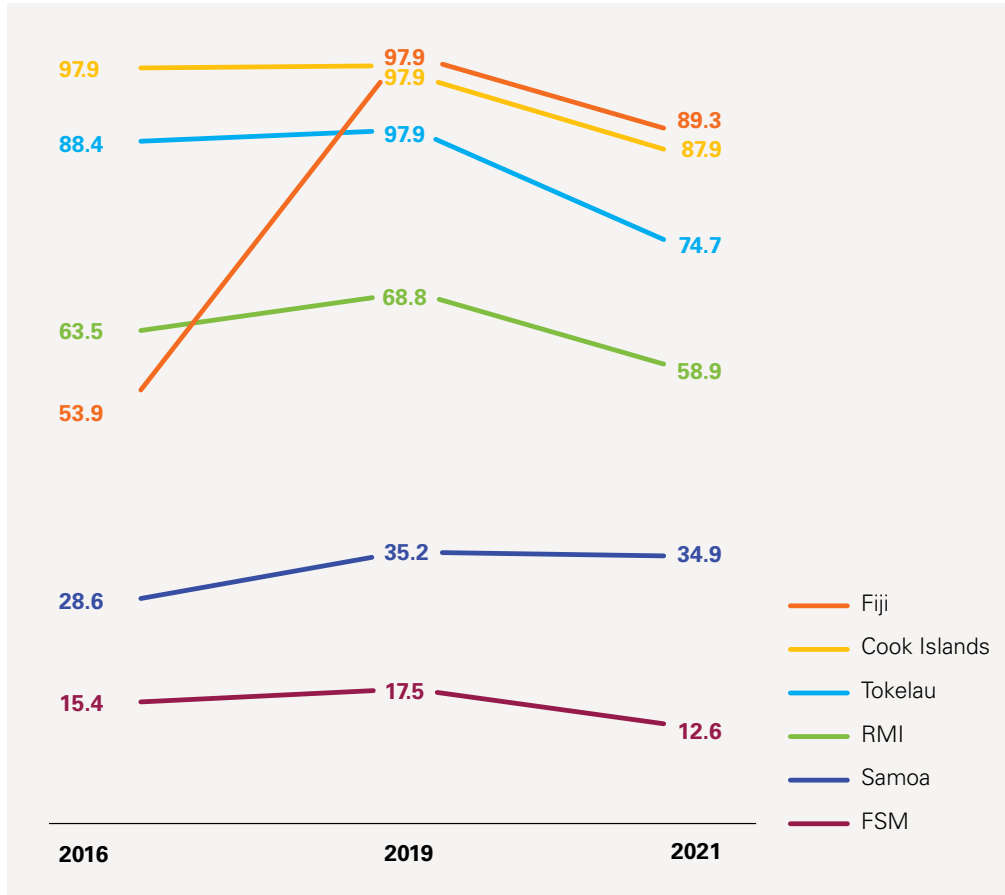
## Access to and quality of ECE in the PICTs

Access to ECE varied widely across the PICTs in 2021. This ranged from very low net enrolment rates (NERs) for the year before official primary school entry in Samoa and Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) (at 34.9 and 12.6 per cent, respectively), to very high NERs in Niue, Fiji and Tuvalu in 2021 (90.9, 89.3 and 89.0 per cent, respectively). And while generally there were improvements in access to ECE between 2015 and 2019, NERs dropped in several countries and territories following the COVID-19 pandemic (see *Figure 1*). Between 2019 and 2021, NERs dropped in six PICTs: Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Tokelau and Tuvalu, while two countries – Nauru and Niue – showed an increase in NERs. In two countries – Vanuatu and Samoa – net enrolment remained stable. Three PICTs only had data for 2020, with NERs of 97.7 per cent in Kiribati, 89.3 per cent in Palau and 94.6 per cent in Tonga. Given the drop in NERs in many of the countries with comparable data, it is essential that the previous momentum and prioritization of ECE continues following pandemic learning recovery efforts ([UNICEF, 2021a](#)).



**Figure 1.**

Adjusted net enrolment rates (NERs) (%) one year before official primary entry age in the PICTs for 2016, 2019 and 2021.



**Source:** UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

**Note:** NER data for countries with multiple years available were included in Figure 1 for comparison.

The 2017 status report revealed that some countries had relatively strong government support for the provision of ECE services (Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue and Nauru); however, limitations in public funds allocated, support provided to the ECE workforce for curriculum implementation, and the scope and comprehensiveness of ECE quality assurance systems in most of the countries led to wide discrepancies in the quality of service provision across the region (UNICEF, 2017b). Many PICTs are therefore seeking to improve the quality of ECE following a systemic vision, through the integration of ECE into their education sector plans and Education Management and Information Systems (EMIS).



## The 2022 ECE status report

This 2022 status report builds on the 2015 and 2017 reports, adopting a more systematic approach to capture the status and progress achieved in ECE in the PICTs. As in the 2015 and 2017 versions, a system-wide lens was used to explore the status of ECE systems across the five core functions defined in the Pacific Guidelines. These were disaggregated into sub-functions for more detailed analysis (see *Table 1*). For each sub-function, rubrics with specific criteria were developed to categorize countries' progress more systematically and identify gaps and areas of improvement to support their current efforts to scale up access to quality ECE services.

The 2022 version of the status report also provides evidence to support the Pacific Regional Education Framework's (PacREF) mission of improving the quality of ECE in the Pacific by identifying key regional priorities (PacREF, 2018). Policy recommendations are included to guide regional and national efforts to expand quality ECE through a systemic vision. This is of special significance after the COVID-19 pandemic because the PICTs will require recent evidence on the status of their ECE systems to boost education recovery and address the net enrolment drop in almost half of the countries (six PICTs). This report draws insights from a survey and follow-up key informant interviews conducted with the ECE focal points from MoEs in participating countries. ECE focal points participated in the design of the scoring rubric, data collection and co-creation of policy recommendations, and were integral to the development of this research and report.





Photo credit: Arisa Oba





# Methodology

## Research questions

The 2022 status report on ECE systems in the PICTs aimed to explore the following research questions:

1. What is the status and progress achieved across the five core functions of ECE systems in the PICTs since 2017?
2. What are the commonalities among countries, strengths and areas for improvement for equitable and high-quality ECE provision in the Pacific region?
3. What have been the key practices undertaken by MoEs in the PICTs to improve ECE policy and programming since 2017?

## Sample

This status report included the 15 PICTs:

1. Cook Islands
2. Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)
3. Fiji
4. Kiribati
5. Nauru
6. Niue
7. Palau
8. Papua New Guinea (PNG)
9. Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)
10. Samoa
11. Solomon Islands
12. Tokelau
13. Tonga
14. Tuvalu
15. Vanuatu

ECE focal points from each MoE within the PICTs were surveyed and interviewed as part of the research.



## Methodological framework

The methodological framework for the 2022 ECE status report in the PICTs was developed by UNICEF with guidance from regional ECE focal points from 15 PICTs and based on a technical review of key global and Pacific ECE documents and frameworks. These included previous ECE status reports from the Pacific (UNICEF, 2015; [UNICEF, 2017b](#)); the Pacific Guidelines ([UNICEF and PRC4ECCE, 2014](#)); the ECE Teacher Competency Framework for Pacific Small Island Developing States ([UNESCO and PRC4ECCE, 2018](#)); UNICEF’s ‘Build to Last’ framework ([UNICEF, 2020](#)); UNICEF’s Technical Guidance on Pre-primary Education Workforce Development in Low- and Middle-income Countries ([UNICEF, 2019a](#)); and the World Bank Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) ([World Bank, 2013](#)).

The Pacific Guidelines and UNICEF’s ‘Build to Last’ were used as complementary frameworks to define the five core functions of ECE, namely: (1) planning and budgeting; (2) human resources; (3) curriculum; (4) performance monitoring and assessment; and (5) family and community partnerships. These core functions were disaggregated into sub-functions, which are more specific components that contribute to the establishment of effective, high-quality and equitable ECE systems, detailed in Table 1.



**Table 1.** Summary of the core functions and sub-functions developed to map the status of ECE systems in the PICTs<sup>3</sup>

Functions and sub-functions	Description
<b>1. PLANNING AND BUDGETING:</b> Careful planning, budgeting and management of available physical, human and financial resources to ensure equitable and high-quality ECE service provision	
<b>1.1 Legislation and policy</b>	Strong regulatory framework for ECE at the national and/or subnational level that is periodically reviewed and strengthened.
<b>1.2 Governance and implementation</b>	Clear governance structures, strategies and mechanisms for effective implementation of ECE policies at the national, subnational and/or local levels.
<b>1.3 Funding and costing</b>	Costed ECE policies to ensure adequate budget allocation for equitable and high-quality service provision.
<b>2. HUMAN RESOURCES:</b> ECE workforce with the essential competencies, training and support required to promote children’s positive development and early learning	
<b>2.1 Workforce recruitment</b>	Workforce recruitment targets and use of strategies to attract skilled and diverse ECE candidates.
<b>2.2 Pre-service training</b>	Effective and ECE-specific pre-service programmes for the workforce before entering the teaching profession.
<b>2.3 In-service training</b>	Effective in-service training opportunities for the ECE workforce to update and upgrade their skills for quality service delivery.
<b>2.4 Workforce retention</b>	Mechanisms to promote ECE workforce retention, including monetary and non-monetary incentives.

<sup>3</sup> Definitions for functions and sub-functions were developed following the ‘Build to Last’ framework (UNICEF, 2020) and the Pacific Guidelines (UNICEF and PRC4ECCE, 2014).



**3. CURRICULUM:** Children in ECE settings have access to learning experiences, environments and materials that stimulate their development and respond to their individual and cultural characteristics. Their learning progress is assessed to drive quality improvement.

**3.1 National ECE curriculum**

Official ECE curriculum defined in consultation with a range of stakeholders, stating learning goals for children and pedagogical approaches.

**3.2 Curriculum implementation**

Clear implementation plan for the national ECE curriculum, including dissemination activities, workforce training initiatives and mechanisms to monitor curriculum delivery.

**3.3 Child assessment**

Clear national early learning standards and an evaluation approach to assess children’s skills and progress.

**3.4 Environment and materials**

Minimum quality standards for ECE facilities and use of effective teaching and learning materials to accompany the national ECE curriculum.

**4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT:** Coherent monitoring system used to assess and constantly improve the quality of ECE service delivery

**4.1 Quality assurance system**

Quality assurance system to monitor ECE service delivery with comprehensive indicators, and robust and contextually appropriate monitoring tools.

**4.2 Use of data**

Use of monitoring and administrative data to facilitate quality improvements at the national, subnational and/or local levels in ECE policy and programming.

**5. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS:** ECE programmes engage families and communities to strengthen service delivery, and children’s learning and development.

**5.1 Family partnerships**

Strategies to encourage family engagement in ECE and foster nurturing home-learning environments.

**5.2 Community partnerships**

Formal mechanisms to promote community participation in ECE, for management decision-making and education activities.



## Rubric development

A rubric approach was developed based on a review of key frameworks to track progress in education systems, including the World Bank Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) (World Bank, 2013) and UNICEF’s Goal Area 2 (Every Child Learns) Strategic Monitoring Questions (SMQs) from the 2018–2021 Strategic Plan (UNICEF, 2017c). Rubrics were reviewed, validated and further refined through two consultation meetings with ECE focal points in MoEs from the 15 participating countries to account for contextual nuances and relevance.

A rubric for each sub-function was developed (see Appendix 1) with a four-level rating scale to classify countries as advanced (level 4), established (level 3), initiating (level 2) or weak (level 1) (see example in Figure 2). The 2017 status report used a three-level scale (3: established, 2: emerging, 1: latent) (UNICEF, 2017b); therefore, it was not possible to fully compare the status of ECE across years. However, where possible, comparable data and changes that have occurred since 2017 are included in various sections of this report.



**Figure 2.**  
Rubric levels and definitions for the pre-service training sub-function

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p><b>Minimum qualification and training requirements</b> for ECE candidates entering the teaching profession are <b>explicitly defined</b> in the National ECE and/or Human Resources Policy. <b>Pre-service training programmes include ECE-specific topics:</b> (i) National ECE Curriculum implementation, (ii) play-based pedagogy and (iii) holistic development of the child, among other general topics. Quality of pre-service training programmes for ECE professionals is monitored and/or regulated by a <b>government authority</b>.</p>	<p><b>Minimum qualification and training requirements</b> for ECE candidates entering the teaching profession are <b>explicitly defined</b> in the National ECE and/or Human Resources Policy. <b>Pre-service training programmes include ECE-specific topics:</b> (i) National ECE Curriculum implementation, (ii) play-based pedagogy and (iii) holistic development of the child, among other general topics.</p>	<p><b>Minimum qualification and training requirements</b> for ECE candidates entering the teaching profession are <b>explicitly defined</b> in the National ECE and/or Human Resources Policy. <b>Pre-service training programmes are mostly general</b> and do not include ECE-specific topics: (i) National ECE Curriculum implementation, (ii) play-based pedagogy and (iii) holistic development of the child.</p>	<p><b>Minimum qualification and training requirements</b> for ECE candidates entering the teaching profession are <b>not defined</b>.</p>



## Data collection

Data were collected in two stages; the first included an online survey of ECE focal points in each MoE. The online survey was partially based on the tool used for the 2017 status report to facilitate progress tracking. The survey also included new indicators to collect more in-depth information. The second stage of data collection included virtual follow-up semi-structured interviews with ECE focal points from the 15 PICTs to explore promising developments in policy and programming in ECE implemented by MoEs. Interviews were conducted by UNICEF between September and October 2022.

## Data analysis

Data collected from the online survey for each country were first analysed to categorize the PICTs according to the four levels of the rubric for each sub-function. Average ratings were then calculated for each core function (see *Appendix 2*).<sup>4</sup> Data from the online survey were then subject to cross-country analysis to propose policy recommendations to scale up equitable and high-quality ECE in the Pacific region. Additionally, data from the interviews were used to complement findings from the survey and provide more detailed information on developments and promising practices in the core functions. Policy documents were used to triangulate data from the surveys and interviews. These policy documents were identified through an initial desk review and/or submitted by in-country representatives, and included, but were not limited to, Education Acts, national ECE policies and ECE curricula.

To ensure reliability of the rubric scoring process, 10 per cent of the indicators were randomly selected to be rated by two researchers from UNICEF, covering all countries and sub-functions at least once. The researchers agreed on 76 per cent of the indicators (19 out of 25 indicators). For those with disagreement, the difference was only one level apart (for example, weak or initiating, initiating or established). After a discussion and second revision of available data, agreement was reached for all ratings.

## Limitations

Although this status report builds on the 2015 and 2017 versions, the methodological approaches used are not entirely comparable. As such, countries' progress during the last five years was reported only where comparable data were available. Additionally, this report captures evidence on the status of ECE systems in participating countries using insights from a survey and semi-structured interviews with ECE focal points in MoEs. However, it does not include the use of EMIS or learning assessment data to track countries' progress in the access to, and quality of, ECE service delivery. The lack of disaggregated data for ECE in most PICTs presented a limitation for this kind of analysis.

<sup>4</sup> Country profiles with ratings for all sub-functions are presented in Appendix 3.



# Findings



## 1. Planning and budgeting

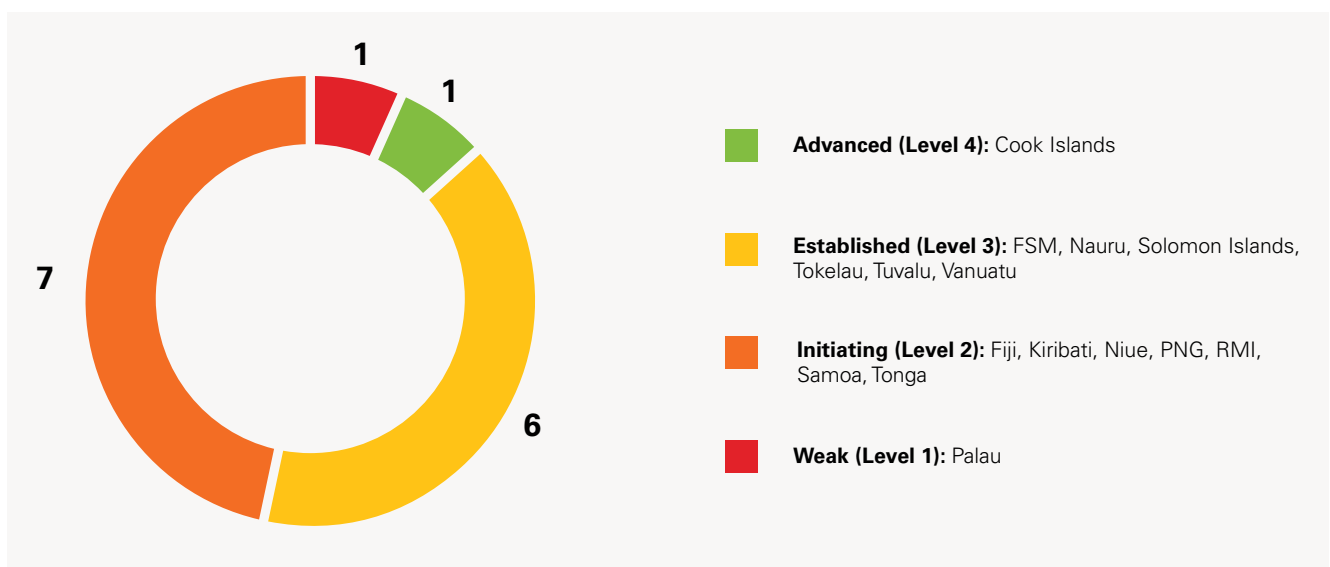
**During the last five years, there has been progress in planning and budgeting for ECE across the Pacific region, with more than half of the countries (eight PICTs) achieving an advanced or established level on average,** adopting policies to mandate the provision of at least one year of free ECE supported by implementation plans and strong governance mechanisms (see Figure 3). In 2022, 14 PICTs had education legislation covering ECE, compared with 11 in 2017. Nine of these PICTs also include the financial costs of implementing ECE policies, rising from only three countries in 2017.

From the 13 PICTs mandating the provision of free ECE for at least one year, nine achieved NERs as high as 88 per cent between 2019 and 2021.<sup>5</sup> However, limited financial resources of MoEs in the region continues to be a challenge for scaling up high-quality ECE services. While many PICTs have increased the proportion of government funds allocated to ECE following the development or update of their education policies, their budgets are often restricted to teachers’ remuneration. More than half of the countries (10 PICTs) also depend on additional funding from external donors to ensure the continuation of ECE programme implementation activities, mainly for curriculum development and review processes and workforce training.

Planning and budgeting is an essential component of ECE, as thorough planning, budgeting and management of available human and financial resources is crucial to ensure equitable and high-quality ECE service provision (UNICEF, 2020).

**Figure 3.**

Number of countries achieving each rating of the planning and budgeting core function



<sup>5</sup> See the latest available data on NERs from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics at <<http://data.uis.unesco.org/>>, accessed 14 March 2023.





Countries' progress in the planning and budgeting core function is discussed in more detail below, across three sub-functions: legislation and policy, governance and implementation, and funding and costing.

## 1.1 Legislation and policy

A strong regulatory framework at the national and/or subnational level is necessary to set the prioritization of ECE in national plans and budgets, and provide a clear direction for high-quality programme design and implementation ([UNICEF, 2020](#)). The Pacific Guidelines highlight that this regulatory framework should include policies and legislations mandating different aspects of ECE provision, namely financial and human resources, curriculum, language of instruction, teaching and learning materials, and quality assurance mechanisms ([UNICEF and PRC4ECCE, 2014](#)).

Across the PICTs, the form and level of specificity of ECE legislation and policies varied widely. This ranged from the ratification of broader Education Acts stating the compulsory and/or free nature of ECE, to the existence of general ECE policies accompanied by a series of more targeted guidelines on specific topics such as workforce qualifications or minimum quality standards ([UNICEF, 2020](#)). Since the release of the 2017 status report, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu have included ECE in their respective Education Acts, bringing the total to 14 countries – all except for PNG, which plans to include this in the next iteration of its legislation. Interview respondents from Solomon Islands and Tuvalu mentioned that the inclusion of ECE in their education legislation led to improvements in the human resources core function. In Solomon Islands, they noted that the government started allocating a budget for ECE teachers' salaries as ECE became part of the unified payment structure for all civil servant teachers. In Tuvalu, ECE teachers' salaries increased to the same level as primary because the government committed to providing more financial resources for workforce remuneration. In Kiribati, interview respondents mentioned that legal recognition of ECE also had a positive impact on the performance monitoring and assessment core function. Quality standards for ECE were developed after a national ECE policy was endorsed and data were collected to monitor compliance with the standards across all preschools in the country. All countries also included ECE in their education sector plans (*see Table 2*).

Wide disparities exist across the PICTs in terms of the ECE student population size and the ECE workforce size. Countries such as PNG and Solomon Islands have the highest student populations (385,983 and 55,155 students, respectively) and ECE workforce sizes (8,607 and 1,900 teachers, respectively). In contrast, Niue and Tokelau have the lowest ECE student populations (23 and 77 students, respectively) and ECE workforce sizes (1 and 12 ECE teachers, respectively) (*see Table 3*). Most countries (11 PICTs) have established 3 years as the official age of entry to ECE in their respective national education acts, but enrolment in ECE was not compulsory across all.<sup>6</sup> Six countries – PNG, Nauru, Tokelau, RMI, Samoa and Tonga – stated it as compulsory, so parents are

<sup>6</sup> Compulsory education refers to the number of years or age span during which children are legally obliged to attend school ([UNESCO IIEP, 2023](#)).



legally obliged to enrol their children in ECE. In contrast, nine countries did not mandate this (Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, FSM, Kiribati, Palau, Cook Islands, Niue and Tuvalu). PNG had the longest duration of compulsory ECE (for three-, four- and five-year-olds), while RMI, Samoa and Tokelau had the shortest (for five-year-olds only) (see Table 3).

**Table 2.**  
ECE legislation and policies currently in place in the PICTs

Country or Territory	National Education Act including ECE	National ECE Policy*	National ECE Curriculum*	Learning Standards for ECE	Education Sector Plan including ECE	Minimum Quality Standards for ECE
Cook Islands		'Apii Potiki' – Early Childhood Education Policy (2022)	Cook Islands Early Childhood Education Curriculum (2011)			
Fiji		Policy in Early Childhood Education (2013)	'Na Noda Mataniciva' – Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines for the Fiji Islands (2009)			
FSM		Early Childhood Education National Policy (currently being reviewed)	National Pre-Primary Curriculum Framework (2022)			
Kiribati		Act to provide for and regulate Early Childhood Care and Education services in Kiribati (2017)	Early Childhood Education Curriculum (2022)	Developmental Assessment Checklists for three- to five-year-olds (2022)		Kiribati ECE Quality Standards (2019)



Country or Territory	National Education Act including ECE	National ECE Policy*	National ECE Curriculum*	Learning Standards for ECE	Education Sector Plan including ECE	Minimum Quality Standards for ECE
Nauru		Being drafted	Nauru Early Years Guidelines (2015)			
Niue						
Palau			Early Childhood Curriculum (2019)			
PNG	ECE will be included in the next iteration	Early Childhood Education Policy (2020)	Early Childhood Curriculum Framework (2022)			
the RMI		Being drafted	Early Childhood Education Curriculum (2022)			
Samoa		Early Childhood Education Policy in Samoa (2017)	Curriculum Statement for Early Childhood Education (2017)			
Solomon Islands		National Early Childhood Education Policy Statement	Pre-Primary Year (PPY) Curriculum (2018)			
Tokelau			'He Tifa Ola' – Takiala mo na Akoga Kamata a Tokelau (2019)			



Country or Territory	National Education Act including ECE	National ECE Policy*	National ECE Curriculum*	Learning Standards for ECE	Education Sector Plan including ECE	Minimum Quality Standards for ECE
Tonga		Tongan Early Childhood Education Policy Framework (2013)	Learning Through Play – 'The Heilala Way' (2022)	Key Indicators for Development Success (2022)		
Tuvalu		Tuvalu Early Childhood Care and Education Policy (2007)	Tuvalu National Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum Framework (2013)			
Vanuatu		Early Childhood Education and Care Policy (2018)	Vanuatu National Curriculum for Kindergarten (2012)	Vanuatu Early Learning and Development Standards (2010)		

**Notes:**

Green = available; yellow = in development; red = not available.

Table 2 includes the latest endorsed policies and curricula.

Names are included for documents that are publicly available or were shared digitally by ECE focal points in MoEs.

Since the 2017 status report, no changes have been reported in terms of the compulsory nature of ECE; nevertheless, progress has been achieved in mandating its free provision. In addition to Cook Islands, Fiji, RMI and Nauru, which had already mandated this for at least one year before entry to primary school, nine new countries have included free provision in their national education acts: Solomon Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu, FSM, Niue, Palau, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu (*see Table 3*). Despite this increase in free provision, only five countries mandate ECE as both free and compulsory (Nauru, RMI, Samoa, Tokelau and Tonga), an essential measure to achieve SDG 4.2, which calls for the provision of at least one year of high-quality ECE for all children by 2030 so that they are ready for primary education ([United Nations, 2022](#)). From this group of countries, only Nauru and Tonga offer free access to ECE for all years mandated as compulsory (four- and five-year-old classrooms), whereas RMI, Samoa and Tokelau have focused only on the year prior to primary school entry (five-year-old classrooms). In Tonga and Nauru, which mandate ECE as free and compulsory, NERs were as high as 94.6 and 96.0 per cent, respectively, in 2020.



From 13 countries providing free ECE services for at least one year before official primary entry age, nine achieved NERs over 88 per cent.<sup>7</sup> In Fiji, free provision in government-run preschools had a positive effect on access to ECE with substantial increases in enrolment rates. Following the government's mandate in 2017 of attaching at least 80 per cent of five-year-old classrooms to primary schools to provide free access to one year of ECE, NERs one year before the official primary entry age increased from 81.1 per cent in 2017 to 92.0 per cent in 2021 ([Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2021](#)), which is positive, especially when considering the potential effects of COVID-19 on enrolment and financing. Similarly, in Tonga, the first government-run ECE classroom was established in 2019, providing free ECE services, and since then 45 public centres have opened. In 2020, a year after this free provision mandate, NERs one year before the official primary entry age were as high as 94.6 per cent, although no data from previous years were available for comparison.

**Table 3.**

Key characteristics of ECE provision in the PICTs

Country	Official age of entry to ECE (2020)*	Official age of entry to primary school (2021)*	Duration of compulsory ECE (in years) <sup>†</sup>	Duration of free ECE (in years) <sup>†</sup>	NERs (%) (latest year)*	Size of ECE student population (latest year)*
Cook Islands	3	5	Not compulsory	2	87.9 (2021)	437 (2021)
Fiji	3	6	Not compulsory	1	89.3 (2021)	16,777 (2021)
FSM	3	6	Not compulsory	3	12.6 (2021)	421 (2021)
Kiribati	3	6	Not compulsory	Not free	97.7 (2020)	7,795 (2020)
Nauru	3	6	2	2	96.0 (2020)	263 (2020)
Niue	4	5	Not compulsory	1	90.9 (2021)	23 (2021)
Palau	3	6	Not compulsory	1	89.3 (2020)	526 (2020)
PNG	3	6	3	Not free	71.4 (2018)	385,983 (2018)
the RMI	5	6	1	1	58.8 (2021)	946 (2021)

7 Countries mandating the provision of free ECE for at least one year that have achieved high NERs between 2019 and 2021 are Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. See the latest available data on NERs from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics at <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>, accessed 14 March 2023.



Country	Official age of entry to ECE (2020)*	Official age of entry to primary school (2021)*	Duration of compulsory ECE (in years)†	Duration of free ECE (in years)†	NERs (%) (latest year)*	Size of ECE student population (latest year)*
Samoa	3	5	1	1	34.9 (2021)	4,360 (2021)
Solomon Islands	3	6	Not compulsory	1	65.6 (2019)	55,155 (2019)
Tokelau	4	6	1	3	74.7 (2021)	77 (2021)
Tonga	3	6	2	2	94.6 (2020)	2,402 (2020)
Tuvalu	4	6	Not compulsory	3	89.0 (2021)	709 (2021)
Vanuatu		6	Not compulsory	2	98.0 (2020)	16,571 (2021)

\* Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics (official age of entry to ECE for RMI corresponds to 2021).

† Source: Status report on ECE systems in the PICTs online survey (2022).

The inclusion of ECE in Education Acts has led to development of policies to set an ECE-specific vision, goals and approaches in many countries. According to survey responses, 11 PICTs implemented national ECE policies, which were in place prior to the release of the 2017 status report; however, only seven had a nationwide policy implementation plan or strategy in place. From these countries, five indicated that their national ECE policy is being implemented to some extent (FSM, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu), whereas two noted that it has been implemented to a great extent (Cook Islands and Tokelau).<sup>8</sup> All seven PICTs that reported having a national ECE policy and a policy implementation plan also mentioned that ECE was included in their education sector plans. Five out of these seven countries achieved a minimum established level on average in all five core functions (Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu – see Appendix 2). This points to the importance of having specific plans that guide policy implementation to ensure comprehensive ECE systems in which all core functions progress alongside each other. It also reflects the need to integrate ECE in education sector plan cycles, rather than developing stand-alone policies that are separate from the overall vision and goals of the education sector.

In 2022, nine countries were undergoing a review process of their national ECE policy: Kiribati, Vanuatu, Tokelau, Tonga, Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands. Fiji, Tonga and Tuvalu adopted a comprehensive review process with the support of UNICEF, conducting consultation meetings at the national level with a wide range of stakeholders. This included ECE teachers from different types of preschools (faith-based, community-based, stand-alone preschools which are located in a separate facility from

<sup>8</sup> The survey asked countries to indicate to what extent their national ECE policy was implemented, using a four-level rating scale: not implemented at all, implemented to a little extent, to some extent or to a great extent.



primary schools, and attached-to-primary preschools), parent representatives from school management committees, external ECE experts and ECE advisors from the MoE. During the consultation meetings, stakeholders discussed priorities and adjustments required in the policy document across the five core functions of ECE systems. Four countries did not have national ECE policies (RMI, Palau, Nauru and Niue); however, RMI and Nauru are currently undergoing the drafting process of their first policy documents. In Samoa, the scheduled review of the national ECE policy was affected by COVID-19. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) delayed this process to prioritize addressing more urgent needs caused by the pandemic, including delivery of hygiene kits to schools and development of distance learning modalities ([MESC, 2020](#)).

## 1.2 Governance and implementation

Clear governance structures and mechanisms are essential for effective implementation of ECE policies and programmes. System-level institutional capacity needs to be ensured to support long-term planning, implementation and continuous improvements across different core functions, namely curriculum development and implementation, teacher training, monitoring and evaluation, and quality assurance. This includes ensuring the availability of dedicated staff with adequate management and technical expertise across different aspects of ECE systems, organized within a governance structure that responds to contextual needs and characteristics. It is also important to establish strong coordination mechanisms between central and local education authorities, teachers and different ECE providers, based on a shared understanding of ECE policy implementation plans and aims ([UNICEF, 2020](#)).

Across the PICTs, two main governance structures are in place for ECE. Nine countries have an autonomous ECE department, unit or office within the MoE responsible for ECE policy and programme implementation (Cook Islands, FSM, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, Nauru, Kiribati, Vanuatu and PNG). Four countries have staff performing ECE-related functions within the primary education department, unit or office (Fiji, RMI, Niue and Tonga). The governance structure established is not strongly related to the student population size or the number of ECE teachers in the country (*see Table 3 and Figure 8*). For instance, Fiji and PNG have relatively higher student populations and ECE workforce sizes, but Fiji has ECE dedicated staff within the primary level, and PNG has an autonomous ECE unit. Niue and Tokelau have much lower student populations and ECE workforce sizes; however, Niue has ECE dedicated staff within the primary level, and Tokelau has an autonomous ECE unit. These disparities in governance structures may influence countries' capacity to provide access to high-quality ECE programmes.

Survey responses indicated that dedicated ECE staff, in autonomous ECE units or within the primary level, are mainly responsible for setting and/or reviewing policies, coordinating ECE service delivery, establishing preschool quality standards and monitoring access to and quality of ECE programmes. However, there was a lack of technical expertise for ECE in some PICTs, regardless of the governance structure in place. Interview respondents from Niue and Tonga, two countries with ECE dedicated staff within the primary education unit, mentioned they require more staff, ideally with an



ECE-specific background to cope with increasing enrolment rates and adequately monitor all ECE teachers, especially in recently opened centres. Niue, in particular, faces an acute challenge, with only one person responsible for supervising ECE service delivery across four ECE facilities, who is also a teacher and must divide time between teaching and administrative roles. The lack of technical expertise is also a challenge in countries with an autonomous ECE department, unit or office within the MoE. For instance, in Vanuatu, interview respondents explained that ECE has not received the same level of attention from education leaders as primary and secondary education; therefore, more qualified human resources are allocated for these other levels.

According to the 2017 status report, only two countries – Solomon Islands and Samoa – had an ECE taskforce to facilitate coordination between different divisions in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD), the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) and other sectors for holistic ECE policy and programming. Over the last five years, eight new countries have established an inter-ministry committee, working group or taskforce focused on the early years (Cook Islands, PNG, Fiji, Niue, RMI, Tuvalu, Tonga and Kiribati). In Fiji, Tonga, Tuvalu and RMI, these coordination bodies are focused on early childhood development (ECD) more broadly, rather than specifically on ECE, and involve the participation of ministries of health, education and finance. In Solomon Islands, there is a working group composed of representatives from the policy, curriculum and human resources units in the MoE, who meet quarterly to discuss all matters pertaining to implementation of the national ECE policy. Similarly, in PNG, the early childhood taskforce includes the directors of all key divisions in the MoE, namely General Education Services, Curriculum, Inspections, Teacher Education and Infrastructure Coordination, and has been at the forefront to ensure all divisions are working in an aligned manner.

While progress has been made over the last five years in the PICTs to establish organizational structures that promote a higher degree of coordination for the effective implementation of ECE policies and programmes, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted their regular operations. For example, in Solomon Islands, the ECE working group shifted from holding monthly to quarterly meetings as representatives from the different units in the MEHRD prioritized emergency response programming to continue delivering education services during school closures. In Tonga, the Tongan National ECD Council was formed in 2019 but has only been able to meet twice because priorities of ministries shifted due to the pandemic.



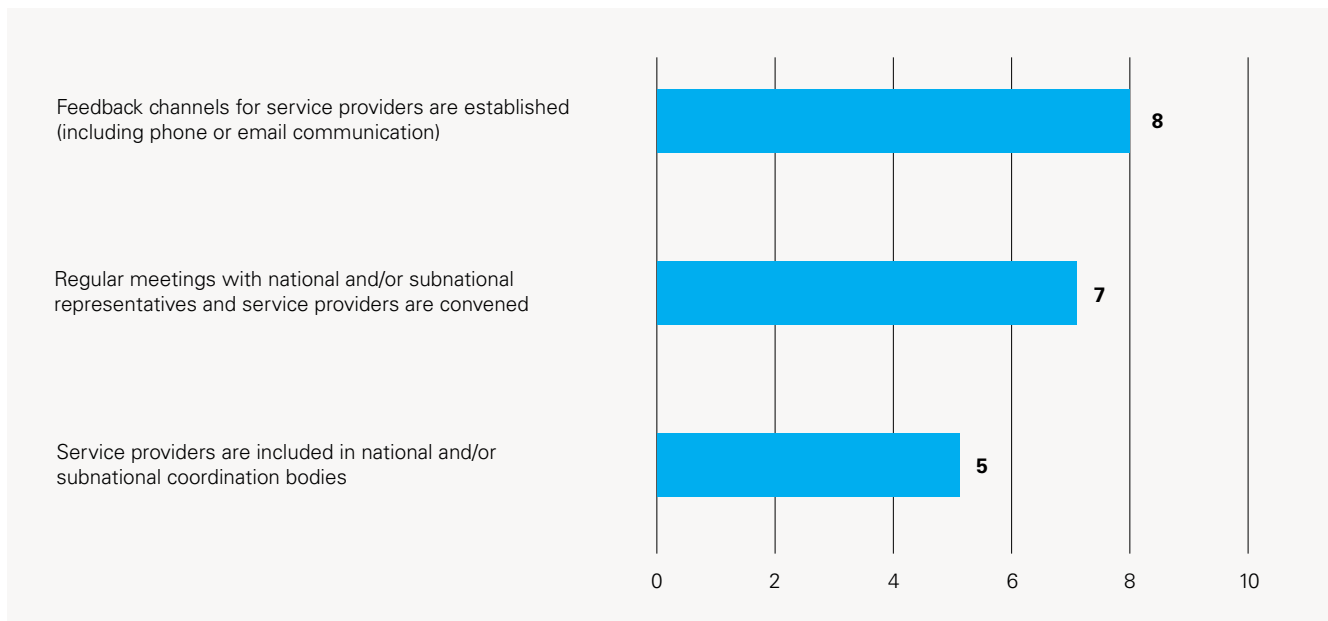


In addition to coordination bodies at the central level, some PICTs implement coordination mechanisms between national and/or subnational education authorities and ECE service providers. Nine countries have formally endorsed these mechanisms through their education legislation and/or policies (Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, RMI, Nauru and Vanuatu), whereas three countries implement them without formal recognition in official documents (Tonga, Kiribati and PNG). Feedback channels for ECE service providers including telephone and/or email communication are the coordination mechanism used most often, followed by the convening of regular meetings between national and/or subnational authorities and ECE service providers (see Figure 4).

Many PICTs face acute implementation difficulties due to the complex geographical characteristics of the region. All countries, except for Niue and Nauru, have main and outer islands to which ECE services should be delivered. The limited connectivity in outer islands and the elevated transportation costs to reach remote preschools represent challenges to monitoring of implementation of ECE services in these locations. In countries such as FSM, Vanuatu and PNG, the use of decentralized governance structures has allowed MoEs to ensure the government’s presence throughout the country and provide continued support to all preschools (see Box 1).

**Figure 4.**

The number of countries with formally or informally established coordination mechanisms between national and/or subnational education authorities and ECE service providers



**Source:** Status report on ECE systems in the PICTs survey (2022). N = 10 countries that provided information on the coordination mechanisms used.



### 1.3 Funding and costing

Policy goals and objectives for ECE should be translated into comprehensively costed budget projections to secure adequate financial resources for equitable and high-quality service delivery. These projections should cover all components of programme implementation, including teacher salaries, workforce professional development, curriculum, quality assurance mechanisms, and family and community engagement initiatives. Well-costed policies can ensure budget allocations are based on actual needs and costs, and can serve as advocacy tools for further investment by external donors (UNICEF, 2020).

Eight PICTs had costed national ECE policies. In the last five years, six new countries have estimated the financial costs of policy implementation (Tonga, Tokelau, Cook Islands, FSM, Samoa and Solomon Islands), in addition to Fiji and Vanuatu, which already had costed policies in 2017. However, adequate budget allocation for ECE continues to be a challenge for many PICTs. Although all countries rely on government funding for ECE, interview respondents noted that allocated budget is typically insufficient or covers only one component – usually teacher salaries. For instance, respondents from Kiribati reported that the only budget provided by the government is designated for ECE teacher salaries; therefore, the country often depends on international organizations as main funders for in-service teacher training or curriculum development and implementation activities.

As of 2022, eight countries had a specific budget allocation for ECE (Kiribati, Vanuatu, Tokelau, Cook Islands, Samoa, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands and Nauru), while this was included within the primary-level budget in five countries (PNG, Fiji, FSM, Tonga and Niue). Although progress has been achieved to secure government financial resources for teacher salaries, having a budget allocated within the primary level can create tension when setting priorities across the education sector. Respondents from Fiji mentioned that ECE financial resources were included within the official primary education budget prior to COVID-19; however, due to the government’s prioritization of primary education after the pandemic, the requested budget for ECE was not approved in 2022. Salaries for the ECE workforce have been guaranteed, but in-service teacher training programmes and monitoring visits to preschools have been postponed to 2023.



**Box 1.**

**Decentralized governance structures for ECE in FSM, Vanuatu and PNG**

FSM has established an autonomous national ECE unit within the Formal and Non-formal Education Division in the National Department of Education. This unit is responsible for providing technical assistance for service delivery and setting national curriculum standards for ECE. At the subnational level, over 600 islands are grouped into 4 country states – Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae – and each one is assigned to an ECE coordinator responsible for programme management in the respective area.

Vanuatu makes use of the provincial geographical structure to support ECE governance. It has adopted a structure composed of a central ECE office within the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) and six provincial education offices for each of the country’s provinces: Malampa, Penama, Sanma, Shefa, Tafea and Torba. Within each province, an ECE provincial coordinator is responsible for programme implementation across all preschools in the area, including the delivery of teacher in-service training and monitoring of teacher pedagogical performance.

In PNG, dedicated ECE staff were appointed at the national level within two divisions in the National Department of Education: General Education Services (GES) and Teacher Educatio. At the subnational level, 23 provincial education coordinators are deployed across the country, who work jointly with ECE inspectors in each province for better programme implementation and monitoring of preschools.



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Across the PICTs, there are limited publicly available data on the proportion of total government expenditure on ECE; therefore, it is not possible to compare countries' progress relative to the 10 per cent benchmark advocated for ECE spending out of the total education budget (UNICEF, the Education Commission and LEGO Foundation, 2022). In their annual education statistics reports, some MoEs in the PICTs only report general indicators, including the government's overall expenditure on education as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but this was not disaggregated by education level (FSM National Department of Education, 2021; Cook Islands Ministry of Education, 2020). Latest public expenditure data from 2020 for the PICTs on education showed that overall, four countries did not meet the two benchmarks set in the Education 2030 Framework for Action<sup>9</sup> to allocate at least 4 per cent of GDP and 15 per cent of public expenditure to education (PNG, Vanuatu, Cook Islands and Nauru) (UNESCO, 2023). Eight PICTs, in contrast, were successful in achieving both benchmarks, five of which are classified as upper-middle-income or high-income countries (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5.**

Progress relative to public expenditure on education benchmarks in the PICTs, 2020

	Below 4% of GDP	Above 4% of GDP
Above 15% of public expenditure on education		Kiribati Fiji FSM Palau the RMI Samoa Solomon Islands Tonga
Below 15% of public expenditure on education	PNG Vanuatu Cook Islands	Nauru
No data	Niue, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu	

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

<sup>9</sup> The Education 2030 Framework for Action was adopted in 2015 with the aim of mobilizing countries and partners around the SDGs on education. It proposes ways to implement, coordinate, finance and monitor education systems to ensure equitable, high-quality and inclusive learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2015).



Although compulsory ECE is mandated in only six PICTs, three countries – Nauru, RMI and Samoa – have met at least one of the two public education expenditure benchmarks. However, with a higher number of PICTs providing at least one year of free ECE before entry to primary school, interview respondents indicated that more public funds have been allocated to ECE to cover student tuition fees and teacher salaries, which were otherwise covered by families and communities. For example, in Fiji, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, the government allocated budget for ECE teacher salaries for the first time in 2018, as a result of the Pasifika Call to Action for ECD. In Fiji, half of ECE teacher salaries were paid by school management committees with funds they raised, but salaries are now fully guaranteed by the Ministry of Finance.

The allocation of government funds for workforce remuneration is important progress achieved across the PICTs; however, this takes a large proportion of the public expenditure directed to ECE, leaving other areas of programme implementation uncovered. For instance, in 2019, 92.4 per cent of the total expenditure in public pre-primary education institutions in RMI was directed to teachers' remuneration, while in Tokelau, the entire public budget for pre-primary education in 2020 was devoted to cover current costs, which include teachers' salaries.<sup>10</sup>

Budget allocation for teachers' remuneration is not enough to ensure high-quality ECE service delivery; therefore, most PICTs must identify additional resources to cover other core components of ECE implementation. According to survey responses, the government is one of the main funders for ECE in all 15 PICTs; however, 10 countries also indicated the need to apply for external donor grants or rely on international aid. For example, FSM and RMI rely on the funding provided by the Compact of Free Association with the United States, which offers economic assistance to these countries across a wide range of activities, including education. Similarly, in Kiribati, UNICEF is the main funder for teacher training and curriculum implementation activities.

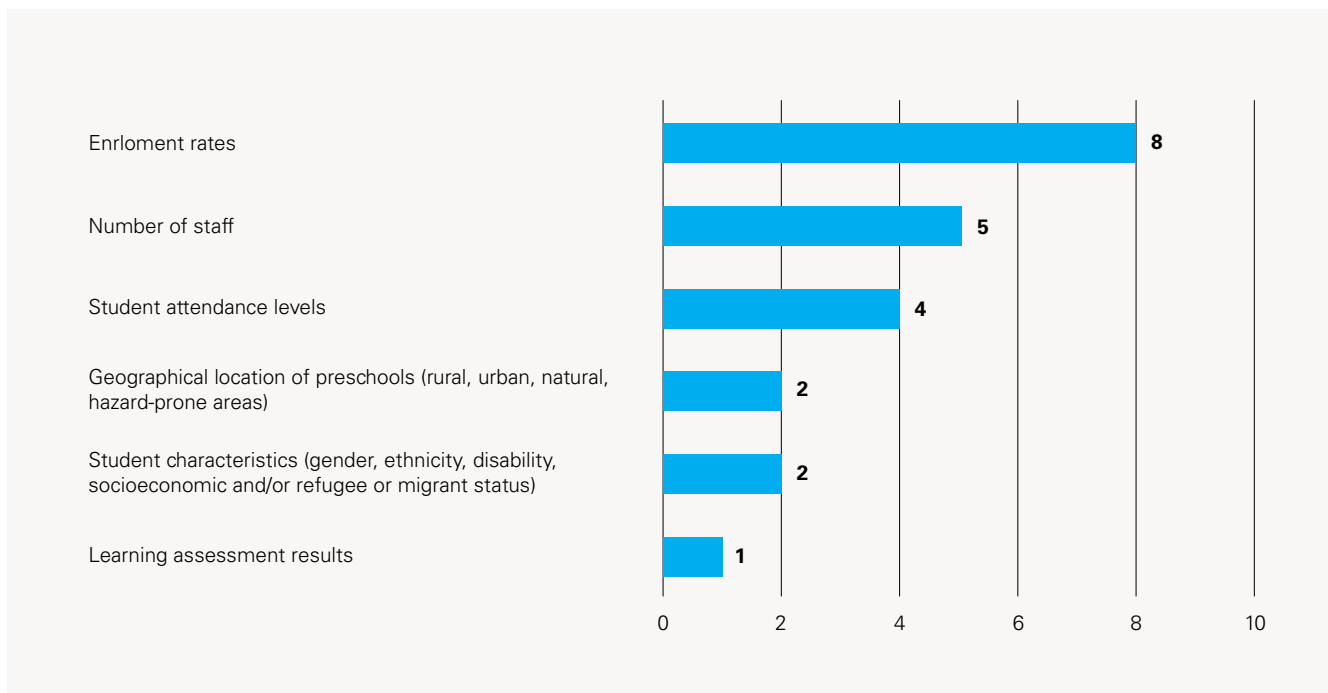
10 See the latest available data on education expenditure from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics at <<http://data.uis.unesco.org/>>, accessed 16 May 2023.



In addition to costed national ECE policies, it is crucial that budget allocation supports equity and gives priority to the most vulnerable children and communities (UNICEF and PRC4ECCE, 2014). Although the provision of ECE should be guided by a vision that progressively aims towards universal access, the priority should be to direct public resources to disadvantaged children first, and ensure they are benefiting from ECE services (UNICEF, 2020). In the survey, nine countries indicated that specific criteria were applied when determining funding allocation to preschools (Tonga, Vanuatu, PNG, Cook Islands, Samoa, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, RMI and Nauru). These criteria were mostly based on demand-driven factors rather than supporting equitable coverage of the most disadvantaged groups. For instance, student enrolment rates were the most common criterion used to allocate budget to preschools (eight countries) according to survey responses, followed by the number of staff members in the centre (five countries) and student attendance rates (four countries) (see Figure 6). Cook Islands, Tuvalu and Nauru, which use all three demand-driven factors for budget allocation, reported some of the highest NERs in the Pacific region between 2020 and 2021, exceeding 88 per cent. Information from Cook Islands and Nauru additionally mentioned that students' characteristics were considered, including gender, when distributing financial resources; however, it had not been possible to achieve gender parity in access to ECE, with greater NERs among girls than boys in both countries.

**Figure 6.**

Criteria for funding allocation to preschools and the number of countries that use these when determining budgets



**Source:** Status report on ECE systems in the PICTs survey (2022). N = nine countries indicating the use of specific criteria for funding allocation in ECE.

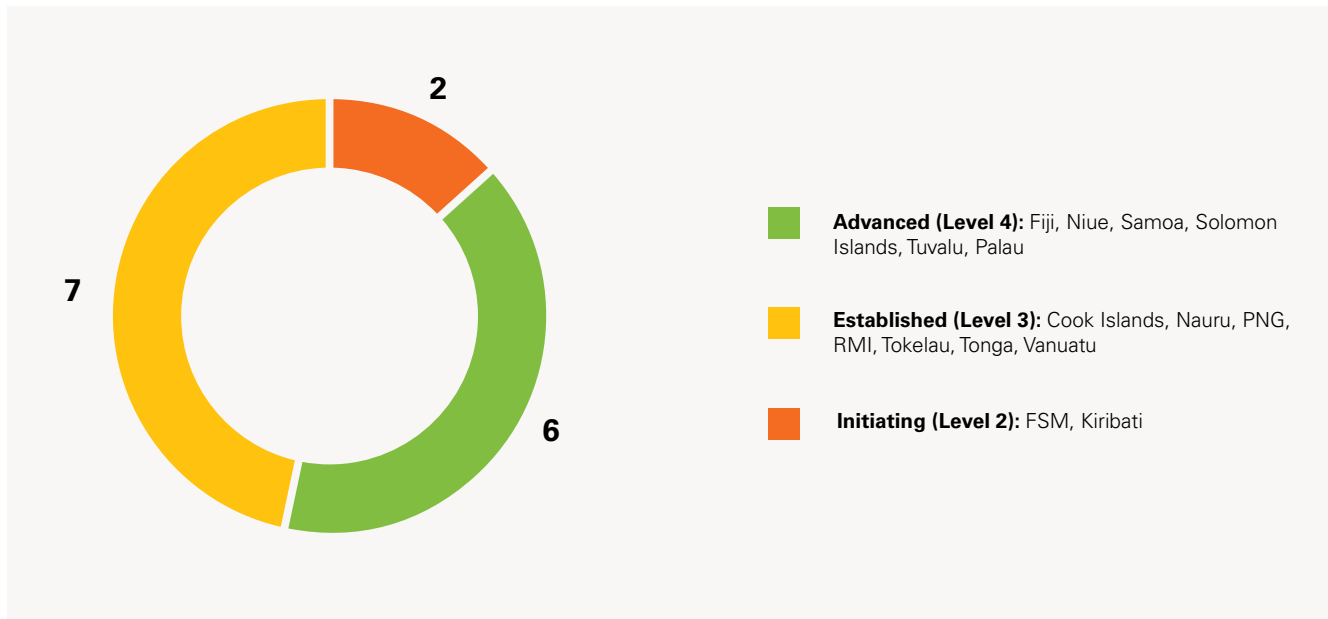


## 2. Human resources

Since the release of the 2017 status report, the greatest level of progress in the Pacific region has been achieved in the human resources core function, with most countries (13 PICTs) achieving an advanced or established level on average, as detailed in Figure 7. Almost all countries (14 PICTs) have established minimum qualifications to include pre-service training and are providing in-service training for ECE teachers. While significant progress has been achieved in upgrading the qualifications of ECE teachers, more than half of the countries (nine PICTs) still find it difficult to retain a qualified workforce because of the inability to provide competitive remuneration for ECE in contrast with other education levels.

Countries' progress in the human resources core function is discussed in more detail below, across four sub-functions: workforce recruitment, pre-service training, in-service training and workforce retention.

**Figure 7.** Number of countries achieving each rating of the human resources core function



## 2.1 Workforce recruitment

Governments should set appropriate recruitment targets at the national and/or subnational levels, and implement recruitment strategies to attract qualified teachers to ensure the hiring of a skilled and qualified workforce necessary for equitable and high-quality ECE service delivery ([UNICEF and PRC4ECCE, 2014](#)).

All PICTs except for FSM and Vanuatu defined recruitment targets for the ECE workforce, specifically for teachers and teaching assistants, and implemented recruitment strategies to attract skilled and diverse candidates. Most countries (10) prioritized these strategies for the recruitment of teachers with ECE-specific pre-service training to increase the number of preschools complying with minimum quality standards. Implementation of recruitment strategies to attract a qualified workforce has become necessary due to a higher demand for ECE in the region overall, despite the negative effect of COVID-19 on NERs in some countries, and due to the increased number of PICTs offering at least one year of free provision before primary school. For example, the Ministry of Education and Training (MET) in Tonga recognizes workforce recruitment as one of its major challenges after the rapid expansion of government-run preschools in 2019.



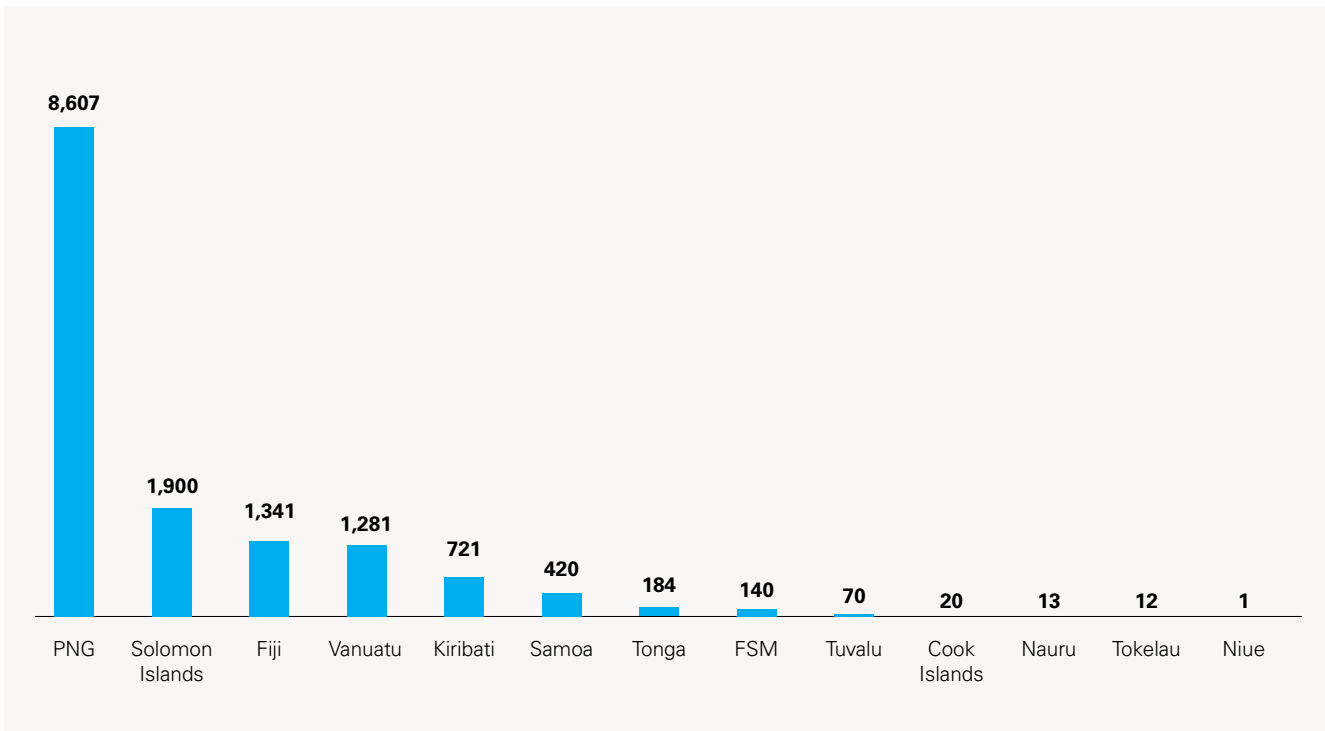
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Countries need to have a well-prepared workforce, as this is key to delivering high-quality ECE services. Different staff members interacting with young children, including teachers, principals, quality assurance personnel and teacher training providers, should have the necessary competencies and receive ongoing support to create stimulating learning environments ([UNICEF, 2020](#)).





**Figure 8.**  
Number of ECE teachers across the PICTs



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics.

The number of ECE teachers varies widely across the PICTs. PNG, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu have the highest ECE workforce sizes, while Nauru, Tokelau and Niue have the lowest (see Figure 8). In most PICTs, recruitment of ECE teachers is conducted by the Human Resources unit in the MoE. ECE focal points participating in the survey and interviews reported that the lower remuneration provided to ECE teachers in most countries is an issue preventing qualified candidates from entering and staying in ECE.

## 2.2 Pre-service training

Before entering the profession, teachers should receive high-quality and ECE-specific preparation that builds their qualifications, including both theoretical and practical competencies (UNICEF, 2020). Countries can establish different pathways for becoming an ECE teacher. These pathways vary by teacher qualification level, the duration of teacher training programmes and the total duration of years in academic study (UNESCO, 2020). All PICTs, except for Tokelau, established post-secondary non-tertiary education as the minimum qualification level required to teach in ECE. In Tokelau, upper-secondary school completion is considered sufficient due to the limited range of post-secondary training options available (Tokelau Department of Education, 2020).



To achieve the minimum qualification level, teachers must participate in ECE-specific training programmes. Most countries (10 PICTs) require an ECE Certificate, while two countries require an ECE Diploma, and two others an Associate of Arts degree in ECE. Although all minimum teacher training requirements in the PICTs are equivalent to the fourth level within the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)<sup>11</sup> (UNESCO, 2011), the duration and depth of these different qualifications vary widely across countries, which suggests a lack of harmonization in pre-service ECE teacher training programmes in the region (see Figure 9). Such lack of harmonization can also be observed within countries, with different providers offering pre-service training programmes of varying durations to achieve the same qualification.

Countries also differ in the total number of years of academic study required (combining primary and secondary education and teacher training) to become an ECE teacher, ranging from 12 years in Kiribati, Nauru and Tokelau to 14 years in Fiji, PNG, Vanuatu, FSM, RMI, Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tuvalu (see Figure 9).



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11 ISCED level 4 corresponds to post-secondary non-tertiary education. Programmes at this level aim to enhance the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies lower than the level of complexity of tertiary education, and are typically designed to prepare individuals for entering the labour market or progressing to tertiary education (UNESCO, 2011).



**Figure 9.** Mapping education and minimum training requirements for ECE teachers across PICTs<sup>12</sup>

Country	Title	Years of education															
		Primary education (ISCED 1)						Secondary education (ISCED 2–3)						Teacher training (ISCED 4)			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
<b>Cook Islands</b>	Diploma in Early Childhood Education	Primary education (ISCED 1)						Secondary education (ISCED 2–3)						Teacher training (ISCED 4)			
<b>FSM</b>	Associate of Arts, Associate of Science or Associate of Applied Science	Primary education (ISCED 1)						Secondary education (ISCED 2–3)						Teacher training (ISCED 4)			
<b>Fiji</b>	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Primary education (ISCED 1)						Secondary education (ISCED 2–3)						Teacher training (ISCED 4)			
<b>Kiribati</b>	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Primary education (ISCED 1)						Junior secondary education (ISCED 2–3)			Senior secondary education (ISCED 3)		Teacher training (ISCED 4)				
<b>Nauru</b>	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Primary education (ISCED 1)						Secondary education (ISCED 2–3)				Teacher training (ISCED 4)					
<b>Niue</b>	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Primary education (ISCED 1)						Intermediate/lower secondary education (ISCED 2)				NCEA Level 1 (ISCED 3)	NCEA Level 2 (ISCED 3)	Teacher training (ISCED 4)			
<b>Palau</b>	Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education	Elementary school (ISCED 1)						Elementary school (ISCED 2)		High school (ISCED 3)						Teacher training (ISCED 4)	
<b>PNG</b>	Diploma in Early Childhood Education	Primary education (ISCED 1)						Secondary education (ISCED 2–3)						Teacher training (ISCED 4)			
<b>the RMI</b>	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Primary education (ISCED 1)						Secondary education (ISCED 2–3)						Teacher training (ISCED 4)			
<b>Samoa</b>	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Standard education (ISCED 1)						Junior secondary education (ISCED 2)			Secondary education (ISCED 3)				Teacher training (ISCED 4)		
<b>Solomon Islands</b>	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Standard education (ISCED 1)						Junior secondary education (ISCED 2)			Upper secondary education (ISCED 3)		Teacher training (ISCED 4)				
<b>Tokelau</b>	No minimum teacher training requirement	Primary education (ISCED 1)						Secondary education (ISCED 2–3)									
<b>Tonga</b>	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Primary education (ISCED 1)						Secondary education (ISCED 2–3)						Teacher training (ISCED 4)			

12 Figure 9 follows ISCED (UNESCO, 2011). ISCED level 1 corresponds to primary education, ISCED level 2 to lower secondary education, ISCED level 3 to upper secondary education, and ISCED level 4 to post-graduate non-tertiary education.



Country	Qualification	Primary education (ISCED 1)								Secondary education (ISCED 2–3)				Teacher training (ISCED 4)	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Tuvalu	Certificate in Early Childhood Education	Primary education (ISCED 1)								Secondary education (ISCED 2–3)				Teacher training (ISCED 4)	
Vanuatu	Certificate III	Basic education (ISCED 1)								Lower secondary education (ISCED 2)		Upper secondary education (ISCED 3)		Teacher training (ISCED 4)	

**Source:** Status report on ECE systems in PICTs survey (2022) and UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2022).

Since the release of the 2017 status report, some countries have implemented strategies to facilitate qualification upgrades for ECE teachers. For example, 100 per cent of teachers in Niue and Tuvalu had the minimum pre-service requirements in 2021. In Fiji and Cook Islands, this was equivalent to 95 and 90 per cent of teachers in 2021, respectively.<sup>13</sup> In Vanuatu, the government provided access to ECE-specific programmes through the School of Education in Vanuatu's National University. Similarly, the opening of a new regional campus from the University of South Pacific in RMI has allowed more teachers to improve their qualifications without travelling abroad. However, there has been a challenge with coordinating suitable study schedules for teachers in outer islands or remote areas who need to travel long distances to receive training. Countries with a significant expansion of ECE have also implemented pre-service training initiatives to meet the rising demand for qualified teachers. PNG has launched a Teacher Conversion Programme to increase the number of teachers with ECE-specific training for kindergarten classrooms, which has recently been included in the national education system (see *Box 2*).

## Box 2.

### Teacher Conversion Programme to upgrade qualifications of ECE teachers in PNG

In 2020, the Government of PNG endorsed its first ECE policy including Kindergarten level one (4 years old) and Kindergarten level two (5 years old) in the national education system, in addition to Preparatory classroom (6 years old).

With this expansion, the demand for qualified ECE teachers increased. The Department of Education launched a Teacher Conversion Programme to upgrade the qualifications of ECE teachers who were previously in Preparatory classrooms. Preparatory classrooms were the only group already included in the national education system; however, most teachers did not have ECE-specific pre-service qualifications. As part of the programme, teachers receive training in ECE pedagogy following a holistic approach for children's development aligned with the new ECE curriculum. After being piloted in four provinces, the Teacher Conversion Programme has been rolled out nationally to train 130 preschool teacher-mentors, who will subsequently deliver the content to ECE teachers.

<sup>13</sup> See the latest available data from the UNESCO Institute of Statistics at <http://data.uis.unesco.org>, accessed 14 March 2023.



## 2.3 In-service training

Continuous professional development opportunities for the ECE workforce are key to update their skills and pedagogical competencies. Through training workshops, on-site classroom coaching and reflective practice, ECE teachers can receive the necessary support to ensure high-quality service delivery ([UNICEF, 2020](#)).

All PICTs currently provide in-service training for ECE teachers, and in Tokelau, Niue, Samoa, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, RMI, Nauru and Palau, programmes also include teacher aides. In-service training is mainly provided by MoEs in all PICTs. In eight countries training programmes are directly implemented by government ECE officers, quality assurance personnel and/or pedagogical coaches assigned to preschools (Tonga, Tokelau, PNG, Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Niue and RMI). The frequency and duration of mandatory in-service training vary widely across countries, from 20 hours per year in Fiji and FSM, to quarterly workshops at the end of every term in Niue, or an annual workshop prior to the start of the academic year in Tuvalu, Solomon Islands and RMI. However, COVID-19 caused disruptions to the normal frequency of in-service teacher training provided by some PICTs. For instance, in Fiji, no training was provided to ECE teachers during COVID-19 school closures due to budget restrictions.

Different in-service training modalities were used across the PICTs. The most frequent modality, implemented by all countries, was one-off workshops to reinforce pedagogical concepts underpinning the ECE curriculum, mainly play-based pedagogy and holistic development of the child. Twelve countries also mentioned having programmes with follow-up observations in the classroom, including Tonga, Tokelau, RMI, PNG, Cook Islands, FSM, Niue, Samoa, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, Nauru and Palau. In RMI, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have been established, comprising networks of ECE teachers from neighbouring preschools. These PLCs are managed by a coach who conducts classroom observations of teachers and provides feedback and support.

However, the remoteness of outer islands in PICTs, with high costs of and/or lack of transportation, often affects the support that can be provided. Tonga has attempted to address this challenge by collaborating with government officers from the primary level, which has contributed to the provision of ongoing professional development and on-site coaching of ECE teachers in outer islands. This was done using a recently developed observation tool to monitor teacher competencies aligned with the ECE curriculum (*see Box 3*).



**Box 3.****On-site classroom coaching programme for ECE teachers in Tonga**

In 2021, the Tongan Ministry of Education developed the Teacher Core Competency observation tool, which explores four key teacher competencies in the following areas: (1) set-up of the classroom environment, (2) effective use of time, (3) stimulating pedagogical practices and (4) positive student–teacher interactions. Six ECE officers are responsible for visiting preschools twice a term throughout the academic year to monitor teacher performance using this tool. During each visit, the ECE officers conduct classroom observations, provide feedback to ECE teachers and collaboratively develop an action plan to improve their core competencies. Progress is measured and discussed during follow-up visits.

This on-site coaching programme is also implemented in outer islands. Due to the lack of ECE officers assigned to these areas, primary officers oversee follow-up classroom observations so that remote preschools can receive equal support to preschools on the main island.

Only Cook Islands and Niue provide in-service training programmes that promote spaces for teachers to reflect jointly on their own practice. Both countries implement a Teacher Appraisal Programme that brings together ECE teachers to share best practices and collectively develop strategies to address the pedagogical challenges they face in their own classrooms. At the end of the academic year, all teachers are required to undertake an analysis of their students' progress to identify learning objectives for the following year. They then convene to present their analysis to other colleagues and discuss potential strategies for achieving their priority objectives.

**2.4 Workforce retention**

Monitoring the working conditions of ECE teachers, including progress in salaries and other non-monetary incentives, is crucial to ensure their retention (UNICEF, 2020). It is also important to establish clear career progression pathways to motivate qualified teachers to enter and remain in ECE (UNICEF and PRC4ECCE, 2014). All PICTs, except for Tonga, Kiribati and Fiji, provide ECE teachers with incentives, primarily in the form of salary increases based on their academic qualifications. However, base salaries are considerably lower than those of other education levels in more than half of the PICTs (nine), making ECE less attractive to potential candidates entering the teaching profession. In Fiji, ECE teachers were included in the civil service to receive salaries from the government. Most ECE teachers have an ECE certificate, whereas primary and secondary school teachers have diplomas or degrees. Yet remuneration depends on the number of hours taught in each education level, which are fewer in ECE than in primary and secondary; therefore, ECE teachers receive lower salaries even in cases where they



have the same qualifications as teachers from other levels. In Samoa, the government only covers 50 per cent of ECE teachers’ salaries, as opposed to full coverage for primary teachers, so there tends to be a reliance on school grants or funds raised by families and communities to cover the remaining portion of ECE teachers’ salaries.

The greater priority given to primary and secondary levels in contrast to ECE is another challenge to the retention of qualified teachers. For instance, interview respondents in Cook Islands noted that recruited ECE teachers who meet the minimum qualification level tend to be moved to primary if there are teacher shortages. As such, ECE students are more likely to be taught by a non-qualified workforce. Similarly, in Niue, teachers with a secondary-school qualification were hired for ECE because candidates with higher qualification levels were prioritized for upper grades.

Although workforce retention is a sub-function where less progress was achieved in the PICTs overall, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu have made important achievements to guarantee better working conditions for the ECE workforce since the release of the 2017 status report (see Table 4).

**Table 4.**

Progress achieved in ECE teachers’ remuneration in Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

Solomon Islands	Tuvalu	Vanuatu
A unified structure for teacher remuneration was introduced across all education levels, including ECE. Salaries now depend on teachers’ qualifications regardless of the level of instruction.	The government committed to providing economic support for the full coverage of ECE teachers’ salaries. ECE base remuneration was increased to the same level as primary. Teachers are also receiving salary increases according to qualification upgrades.	Since 2018, the government has allocated funds for ECE teachers’ salaries. All ECE teachers serving in government-run centres, including community-based centres and attached-to-primary centres, are now entitled to the minimum wage.

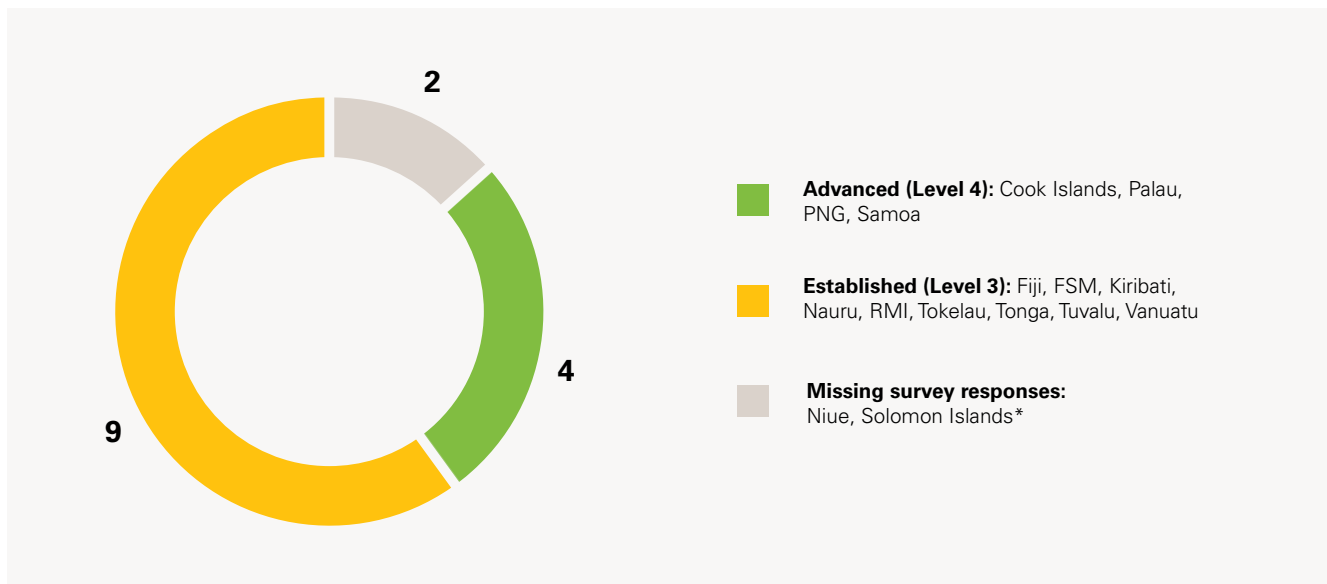


### A 1 3. Curriculum

Since the release of the 2017 status report, substantial progress has been attained in the curriculum core function across the Pacific region, with most countries achieving an advanced or established level on average (see Figure 10). Almost all countries in the region (14 PICTs) have an ECE curriculum including early learning standards across different development domains. However, after a new or revised curriculum has been rolled out, the provision of substantial training to support ECE teachers to implement that curriculum remains a challenge for most countries. Training approaches offering opportunities for ECE teachers to observe and practise implementing aspects of the curriculum are used in fewer than half of the countries (six PICTs), limiting the consistency of the implementation process in the classroom.

Countries should develop strong ECE curricula outlining pedagogical approaches to use in the classroom, learning standards and mechanisms to assess children’s learning outcomes, as this is essential to guide educators in their role of supporting young children to reach their full potential (UNICEF and PRC4ECCE, 2014).

**Figure 10.** Number of countries achieving each rating of the curriculum core function



**Note:** Average ratings for Niue and Solomon Islands are not calculated due to missing information in the survey.

Countries’ progress in the curriculum core function is discussed in more detail below, across the four following sub-functions: national ECE curriculum, curriculum implementation, child assessment, and environment and materials.





### 3.1 National ECE curriculum

An official ECE curriculum is critical to set the vision for all ECE programmes nationally ([UNICEF, 2020](#)). National ECE curricula were in place in all PICTs prior to the release of the 2017 status report. However, during the last five years, nine countries have finalized frameworks that were in development, updated previous versions following ECE expansion or adapted existing frameworks from other countries (RMI, Solomon Islands, Niue, Kiribati, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Tokelau and Tuvalu). For instance, PNG developed an ECE curriculum for four- and five-year-old kindergarten classrooms, which has recently been included in the national education system, Palau developed a curriculum to facilitate the transition between kindergarten classrooms which are open in all public schools and grade 1, and RMI adapted the Head Start<sup>14</sup> curriculum for its own context.

Overall, countries have prioritized establishing ECE curricula only for the year prior to primary school entry, regardless of whether this is compulsory or not according to the education legislation. Countries such as Vanuatu and Cook Islands, which mandate two years of free ECE provision, do not include differentiated guidelines for each year in their ECE curricula. For instance, the Vanuatu National Curriculum for Early Childhood only specifies learning goals for five-year-old classrooms (kindergarten), even though free access to four-year-old classrooms is also guaranteed. Cook Islands Early Childhood Education Curriculum states common learning goals for all preschool-aged children. Although the curriculum provides examples of specific activities that can be done with toddlers (three-year-olds) and young children (four-year-olds), no differentiation is made in terms of the expected achievements for each age.

ECE curricula need to be reviewed periodically to determine whether adaptations are needed to the content, delivery approaches, materials or teacher training ([UNICEF, 2020](#)). Four countries began a review of their ECE curricula in 2022 (Fiji, FSM, Nauru and Tonga), while five others have reviews scheduled for the period between 2023 and 2025 (Tokelau, Cook Islands, Niue, Tuvalu and Palau). Due to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the PICTs, some ECE curriculum reviews have centred on ensuring that frameworks are adapted to the local context. For example, Tonga's curriculum update is focused on including a stronger focus on Tongan citizenship values in the classroom. Similarly, Tokelau prioritized the revision of cultural and spiritual aspects, and language of instruction.

The MoE leads the development and review processes of ECE curricula in all countries and promotes participation of ECE teachers during the design and piloting stages. It is essential to engage a wide range of stakeholders for development of an ECE curriculum to achieve consensus and agree on the desired learning goals for young children ([UNICEF and PRC4ECCE, 2014](#)). External ECE specialists and/or advisors are generally involved to provide technical support across all PICTs except Palau. Kiribati was successful in engaging different education stakeholders for a curriculum review in 2018, setting up a working group composed of two external experts with an ECE background, ECE

<sup>14</sup> Head Start is a programme implemented by the US Department of Health and Human Services for children aged birth to 5 years. It provides support through early learning and development, health and family well-being services ([Office of Head Start, 2022](#)).



teachers and representatives from different units within the MoE, namely monitoring and evaluation, teacher training and curriculum development divisions.

While it is encouraging that ECE curricula are in place in all PICTs, only four countries have translated these to local languages to ensure wider use by ECE practitioners (Tonga, Tokelau, Cook Islands and Palau). Although this status report does not assess ECE curricula, the survey and document review provided relevant information on their content. All PICTs explicitly mandated a specific pedagogical methodology and language of instruction for ECE classrooms, except for RMI and Tonga, which do not specify the language of instruction. Additionally, most PICTs explicitly advocate for inclusive education in national ECE policies; however, only eight highlighted the need to adapt activities and/or resources for children with disabilities (Vanuatu, Tokelau, PNG, Cook Islands, FSM, Niue, Samoa and Tuvalu).

### 3.2 Curriculum implementation

A clear roll-out plan for the national ECE curriculum, including dissemination activities, workforce training initiatives and mechanisms to monitor curriculum delivery, is necessary to achieve effective implementation ([UNICEF, 2020](#)). Most PICTs (13) include ECE curriculum implementation as a core component of in-service teacher training programmes for the ECE teaching workforce. Only Fiji and Tuvalu reported not providing this support due to financial constraints, but information from these countries mentioned plans to deliver in-service training in 2023, which includes training for ECE curriculum implementation.

Training approaches varied according to the number of ECE teachers. In countries with a smaller ECE teaching workforce, teachers are often trained directly by ECE officers from the MoE. For instance, ECE teachers in Nauru – a total of 13 ECE teachers (*see Figure 8*) – participate in a one-week training workshop prior to the start of the academic year to review the main principles of the curriculum and support elaboration of new classroom resources. Throughout the academic year, they also participate in training workshops before the start of each term. Similarly, all ECE teachers in Tonga were invited to a training workshop conducted by the ECE unit on play-based pedagogy for implementation of the new curriculum. This approach, however, limits the participation of teachers from outer islands, who may not be able to attend workshops due to a lack of transportation means or expensive travel costs to the main island. In countries with a larger ECE workforce, such as Vanuatu and Solomon Islands (*see Figure 8*), the use of a training of trainers approach was more effective to ensure all teachers were reached, including those in the outer islands (*see Box 4*).



**Box 4.**

**Training of trainers for curriculum implementation in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands**

In Vanuatu, ‘key teachers’ were selected by ECE provincial coordinators across the six provinces in the country to participate in a one-week training workshop for curriculum implementation in Port Vila. Key teachers represent specific schools and were responsible for replicating the training with all ECE teachers in those schools when they travelled back to their provinces. The training programme included simulation activities to model pedagogical practices in the classroom.

In Solomon Islands, teachers teaching classrooms with five-year-old children from all provinces in the country were selected by subnational education authorities to participate in a training workshop on implementation of the new Preparation for Primary Year curriculum, in Honiara. Officers from the curriculum and teacher training departments in the MEHRD conducted the training. Selected teachers are expected to replicate the workshop with their colleagues in their respective schools.

Although most countries have strengthened their ECE curricula, there has been less progress in providing substantial and practical support to ECE teachers for curriculum implementation. All PICTs include ECE curriculum implementation as a component of in-service teacher training programmes, primarily using theoretical activities, namely presentations or seminars during training workshops, to reinforce constructs and/or principles underpinning the curriculum. Interview respondents noted that practical activities to simulate how to implement pedagogical approaches in the classroom occur less often. Also, only six countries implemented programmes for ECE teachers to reflect on their own instructional practice (Vanuatu, Tokelau, Cook Islands, Niue, PNG and Samoa). Cook Islands is a promising example of this self-reflective approach using peer-to-peer support. Based on classroom observations, the MoE selects a preschool that effectively implements the curriculum. Then, an exchange is organized for ECE teachers to visit classrooms in the selected preschool, to observe and discuss their colleagues’ pedagogical and classroom management practices. Teachers then return to their own centres to share key learning with other staff members.

Interview respondents also mentioned that implementation of national ECE curricula was affected by COVID-19, as teachers were not sufficiently prepared to deliver remote learning. In Tonga, teachers experienced acute difficulties using multi-modalities for teaching with school closures; therefore, the Ministry of Education and Training (MET) focused on developing and streaming pre-recorded short radio sessions for young children. In Nauru, the provision of ECE was disrupted to a higher extent in comparison with other education levels. The provision of education services in primary and secondary schools was prioritized during lockdowns; therefore, ECE teachers were asked to support the delivery of learning packages in these levels through home visits. Children enrolled in ECE received very limited support during school closures, and ECE was the last level to return to school.



### 3.3 Child assessment

ECE curricula should include a system to monitor children's outcomes and measure whether desired pedagogical approaches are positively impacting children's learning and development (UNICEF and PRC4ECCE, 2014). This can be done through larger-scale school-readiness evaluations at the national level as well as smaller-scale formative assessments in the classroom using a variety of tools, namely portfolios, checklists, observation rubrics or interviews (UNICEF, 2020). Nearly all countries (14 PICTs) had developed early learning standards; seven of these countries developed the standards over the past five years (Fiji, PNG, Nauru, RMI, Samoa, Tokelau and Tonga), while the remaining seven had had these in place since 2017 (Cook Islands, FSM, Kiribati, Niue, Palau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu). All these countries include early learning standards for physical, cognitive, socioemotional and language domains to measure children's holistic development.

Nauru is the only country that conducts a national large-scale assessment to measure ECE children's skills at the end of the school year. The results of this assessment are used to facilitate children's transition to primary school and tailor teacher in-service training programmes to children's needs (see Box 5). In Palau, a similar assessment will be conducted for the first time at the end of the 2023 school year for all children aged 6 completing kindergarten. The assessment tool has been developed based on the national ECE curriculum and is focused on literacy and numeracy skills. All PICTs include formative assessment guidelines in their ECE curricula for teachers to monitor children's learning in the classroom. Portfolios with samples of children's work are the most common assessment tool used in all countries, followed by observations of children while they work and/or play, which are used in 10 countries.

#### Box 5.

#### Assessment at the end of ECE in Nauru

Since 2015, all six-year-old Nauruan children have been assessed before entry to primary school to measure foundational skills across five dimensions of the ECE curriculum: physical development, literacy, numeracy, socioemotional skills and creativity. The School-Readiness Assessment tool is used for this purpose.<sup>15</sup> Data are registered in the EMIS. Results are shared with grade 1 teachers during a one-week orientation workshop prior to the start of the school year. The information is also used to implement remedial learning programmes for children starting grade 1 who have fallen behind in development of foundational skills required for primary education. The content of in-service teacher training programmes is also updated drawing on data from the School-Readiness Assessment to support the ECE workforce in addressing children's learning and development gaps.

<sup>15</sup> Information on the School-Readiness Assessment tool was gathered through the interviews, and no public evidence/documentation is currently available for this tool.



### 3.4 Environment and materials

Minimum quality standards are essential to ensure ECE services meet the accepted norms for structural and process dimensions of quality (UNICEF, 2020). Structural quality refers to aspects such as teacher qualifications, group size and student-to-teacher ratios within preschools, while process quality encapsulates children's day-to-day experiences at the preschool, such as teacher-child interactions or language exposure (Slot et al., 2015). In the Pacific region, minimum quality standards should be applicable to all ECE settings, including faith-based, community-based, playgroups, government stand-alone and attached-to-primary preschools. Since the release of the 2017 status report, four countries have developed minimum quality standards for ECE (PNG, Vanuatu, Kiribati and RMI), bringing the total to 12 countries (see Table 1). FSM and Palau follow the minimum quality standards of the Head Start programme. Across all the PICTs, Niue and Vanuatu have harmonized the ECE minimum quality standards with those of the entire education system in their respective countries.

Although definitions of quality vary between countries according to the context and specific approaches of their ECE systems, establishing quality standards such as child-teacher ratios, classroom materials, space distribution, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and safety conditions is crucial to ensure children's access to stimulating and safe learning environments (Slot, 2018). Most PICTs with minimum quality standards have included all these indicators in their frameworks. According to survey responses, child-teacher ratios, standards for classroom equipment and materials, safety conditions and WASH standards for ECE facilities are established in all countries, except for RMI, which did not specify this information in the survey. All PICTs also include standards for classroom set-up and management except for Cook Islands.

Since the release of the 2017 status report, Tonga and Kiribati have made considerable progress in monitoring of compliance with established minimum quality standards. Following Action 6 of the Pasifika Call to Action for ECD, which calls for development, implementation and monitoring of quality norms and standards (UNICEF and PRC4ECD, 2019), these countries have integrated quality indicators into the licensing process to recognize preschools as government-run. In Tonga, quality criteria are checked when preschools apply for a licence, although the quality standards framework has not yet been fully endorsed by the government as an official monitoring tool. In Kiribati, minimum quality service standards were finalized and approved after the release of the 2017 status report and are being monitored in all preschools in the country, according to interview responses (see Box 6).



**Box 6.**

**Monitoring compliance with minimum quality standards in preschools in Kiribati**

In 2018, the MoE of Kiribati approved minimum quality standards for ECE to ensure all preschools provided high-quality services. These are divided into two main categories:

- 1. Infrastructure:** includes standards for play and learning materials, classroom arrangement, and health and hygiene facilities.
- 2. Teaching competencies:** includes child–teacher ratios, standards for curriculum implementation, interactions in the classroom, learning opportunities and assessment.

In 2019, a working group was set up to monitor compliance across all preschools in the country, including those in the outer islands. Preschools were given an ‘approved’ licence if they complied with 23 or more of the 27 quality standards, a ‘provisional’ licence if they followed between 16 and 22 standards and a ‘denied’ licence, if they complied with 15 or fewer. Forty preschools received an ‘approved’ licence and 20 a ‘provisional’ licence. No preschools were denied a licence. Follow-up monitoring inspections for preschools with a ‘provisional’ licence started in October 2022 using a digital data collection process for the first time. Island-based education inspectors are also part of this monitoring system, conducting more regular monitoring of the standards throughout the school year.



Photo credit: Arisa Oba

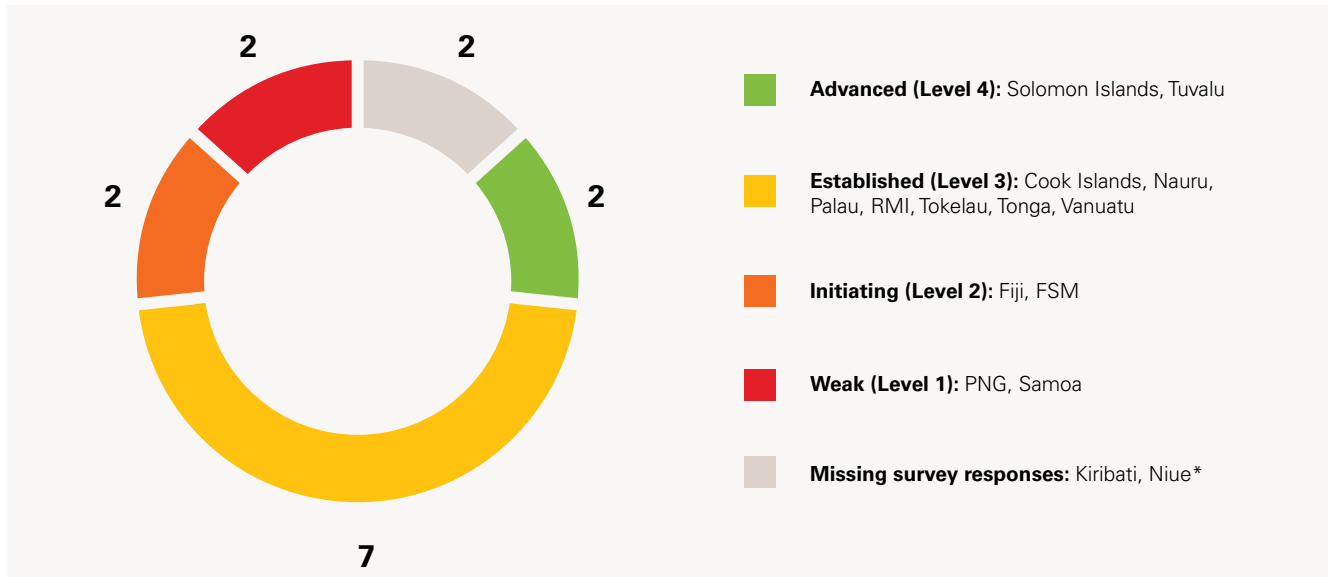


## 4. Performance monitoring and assessment

During the last five years, progress has been achieved in the performance monitoring and assessment core function across the Pacific region, with half of the countries (eight PICTs) achieving an established level (see Figure 11). While most countries (14 PICTs) have included ECE in their EMIS and have started collecting a wider range of ECE indicators, the level of disaggregation of the data is still limited, and there is a lack of learning assessment data for ECE. Most countries also continue to face challenges in monitoring quality at the service delivery level, despite the existence of tools for this purpose, as a result of low numbers of ECE dedicated staff within MoEs and limited financial resources.

Countries' progress in the performance monitoring and assessment core function is discussed in more detail below across two sub-functions: quality assurance system and use of data.

**Figure 11.** Number of countries achieving each rating for the performance monitoring and assessment core function



**Note:** Average ratings for Kiribati and Niue are not calculated due to missing information in the survey.



## 4.1 Quality assurance system

Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) are repositories for a variety of data on education indicators, and are considered the most important system-wide tool for the MoE to monitor and assess the progress and challenges of ECE policy and programme implementation (UNICEF and PRC4ECE, 2017). Collection and analysis of EMIS data can inform MoEs on policymaking and future investments to enhance the provision and quality of ECE services (UNICEF, 2020).

Respondents from nearly all PICTs (14) indicated that ECE data are collected at the national level and include in their respective EMIS databases, except for PNG. A variety of ECE indicators are collected in EMIS, but the comprehensiveness varies across the PICTs. All PICTs included ECE in EMIS to record student enrolment, while school location, student attendance, teacher qualifications, teacher attendance, child assessment and infrastructure of ECE facilities are not universally included. According to the 2017 status report, Nauru only collected information on whether children attended ECE prior to grade 1, but has now added additional indicators on ECE student enrolment, child assessment, teacher qualifications and the location and infrastructure of ECE facilities (UNICEF and PRC4ECE, 2017). Three countries – Kiribati, PNG and Tuvalu – have also implemented strategies to improve the EMIS data collection process by introducing digital tools or providing technical assistance (see Box 7). Data on non-education indicators are also collected in some countries; most PICTs (10) record information on birth registration, while only a few register data on children's health (5), immunization (4) and nutrition conditions (3).

Countries should establish robust and comprehensive quality assurance systems, as this is essential to ensure that the ECE system is performing well and delivering high-quality services (UNICEF, 2020).

Effective ECE quality assurance systems should provide a clear definition of quality and corresponding quality standards to be monitored, and establish monitoring tools and mechanisms.

### Box 7.

#### Strategies to improve the EMIS data collection process in Kiribati, PNG and Tuvalu

- 1. Enhancing the use of digital tools for data collection:** In October 2022, the MoE in Kiribati started a new round to monitor compliance with the quality standards in all preschools, with data collected and recorded digitally for the first time. In PNG, education inspectors have been trained to use Kobo Toolbox to collect and record information in real time. This measure has been trialled in some provinces and will be rolled out at a national level in 2023.
- 2. Providing technical support throughout data collection:** In Tuvalu, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) has hired a research and data officer to provide guidance to IT officers located in each of the nine atolls of the country, to collect data from preschools and record them in the EMIS.





Despite wide coverage in terms of indicators, disaggregation across key demographic and socioeconomic dimensions for most PICTs was limited. It is widely acknowledged and advocated that ECE data should be disaggregated, where relevant to the context, by age, gender, geographic location, children's migration status and disability status, or other characteristics, so that service delivery can better attend to the needs of disadvantaged children and address inequalities at a younger age (UNICEF, 2017d). Survey responses showed that gender, location (urban/rural) and children's ethnic and/or linguistic background were the three most widely adopted dimensions. For the geographic location, Cook Islands noted that its EMIS also captures whether ECE facilities are in the main or outer island. Information on child gender is recorded in 12 PICTs, but not Kiribati, Nauru or PNG. In five countries children's disability status is also registered (Tokelau, Niue, Tuvalu, Palau and Solomon Islands). Collecting data on children's disability status allows MoEs to locate preschools serving these children, to adapt pedagogy to their specific needs or identify necessary professional development opportunities for teachers working with children with disabilities.

In addition to the EMIS data, large-scale household surveys can be used to complement the analysis of ECE systems. For example, five countries – Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu – have introduced the ECD component of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), and three countries – FSM, Nauru and Vanuatu – will participate in the next round. This ECD component includes indicators on children's early learning outcomes in literacy, numeracy, social-emotional development and learning environment such as access to play, learning materials and child supervision (UNICEF, 2017e). Using these data to complement existing EMIS data can support in addressing the holistic needs of the child, by identifying gaps and areas for improvement in ECE service delivery, while allowing for international comparisons.

All PICTs have adopted at least one monitoring tool and/or mechanism to conduct quality assurance on ECE and assess teacher performance, with variations in the way these tools are used. Checklists and observation rubrics on school premises or in classrooms are the most common tools according to survey responses, used by 13 and 11 PICTs, respectively. In seven PICTs, self-assessments are utilized by the ECE centres to conduct performance evaluations. Tokelau, FSM, Niue, Samoa, Tuvalu and Solomon Islands have adopted all three of these different monitoring tools to ensure the quality of ECE teaching. However, in countries such as Fiji, Kiribati and Vanuatu, only one type of monitoring tool is used. Despite the existence of different tools to monitor quality at the service delivery level, interview respondents from most countries noted monitoring as a challenge due to lack of sufficient ECE dedicated staff in MoEs. Financial limitations also affect the possibility of conducting regular monitoring visits to preschools, especially in remote areas or outer islands, as transportation to reach these locations is often very costly.

During the process of developing performance monitoring tools, the MoE is typically the main decision maker in 12 PICTs. Data were not available on this at the point of data collection for FSM, Kiribati and RMI. A multi-stakeholder approach has been adopted by the 12 PICTs through various forms of collaboration. In countries such as Cook Islands, Fiji, PNG and Tokelau, ECE teachers and headteachers are also involved in this process. Cook Islands, Niue and Tuvalu also reported consulting with non-governmental ECE providers.



## 4.2 Use of data

Availability of data is not enough to improve outcomes; the data need to be utilized to inform policymaking and address challenges in ECE systems (UNICEF, 2020). However, many respondents mentioned challenges to ensuring the information is ready for use in a timely manner. Most PICTs are at an established or initiating level in this sub-function, as ECE data in EMIS are processed and ready to be utilized at or after the start of the new school year. Solomon Islands is leading in the timely utilization of the EMIS data among the PICTs, with the data available for use three months prior to the start of the new school year. Three PICTs – Nauru, Palau and Tuvalu – have the data available at the start of the new academic year, while seven countries only have them available after the academic year has already started. Interview respondents also mentioned that the availability of EMIS data was affected by COVID-19. For example, in Solomon Islands, forms were distributed to be completed by school directors in 2020; however, this process was much slower, as they prioritized the delivery of distance learning services over data reporting during school closures. The flow of information from schools to the MEHRD was delayed; therefore, the process of recording data in their EMIS also took longer.

EMIS data are used in various ways (see Table 5). Most PICTs (11) indicated that they use the data to identify the needs of specific regions, ECE centres and/or children. For example, EMIS data are used to improve teacher workforce allocation based on the number of children and teaching staff. Data are also utilized to elaborate national or subnational reports in 10 countries, and help to improve funding allocation for ECE by using an evidence-based approach in 9 countries. Solomon Islands uses EMIS data to coordinate resource allocation such as training programmes or materials for teachers and investment in book provision for children in some regions.

**Table 5.**  
Use of EMIS data for ECE service delivery across the PICTs

Country	Improve funding allocation for ECE	Reporting at a national and/or subnational level	Identify needs of specific regions, preschools and/or children
Cook Islands	Green	Red	Green
Fiji	Green	Green	Green
FSM	Green	Green	Green
Nauru	Green	Green	Green
Niue	Green	Green	Green
Palau	Red	Green	Green
the RMI	Red	Green	Green



Country	Improve funding allocation for ECE	Reporting at a national and/or subnational level	Identify needs of specific regions, preschools and/or children
Solomon Islands	Green	Red	Green
Tokelau	Green	Green	Green
Tonga	Red	Green	Green
Tuvalu	Green	Green	Green
Vanuatu	Green	Green	Red

Source: Status report on ECE systems in PICTs survey and follow-up interviews (2022).

Notes: Green= available; red= not available.

N = 12 countries that provided information on EMIS data use in the survey.



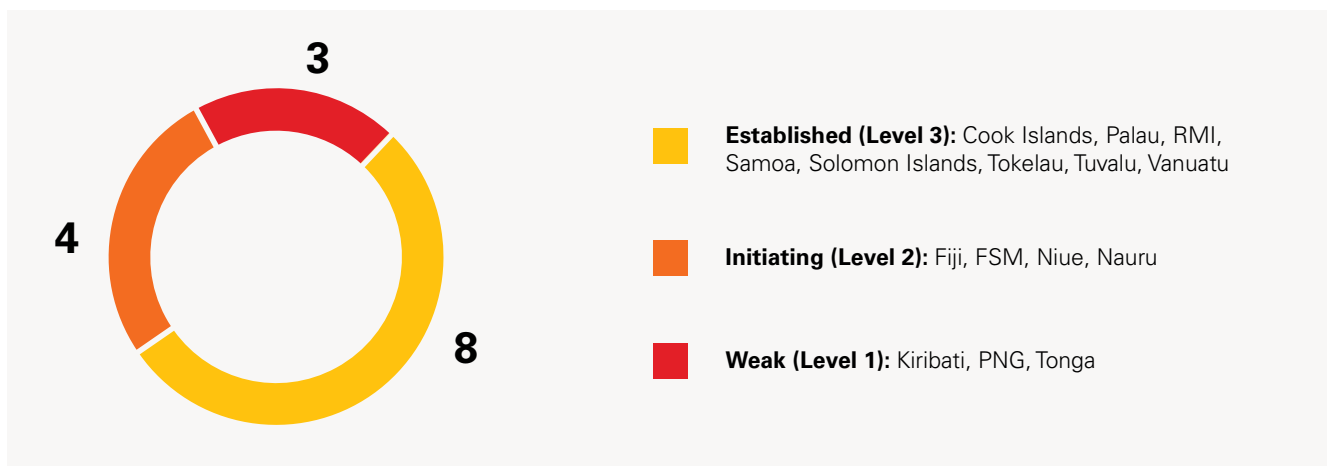
## 5. Family and community partnerships

Family and community engagement is usually the least developed core function in ECE worldwide (UNICEF, 2020). This is also the case for the Pacific region, with almost half of the countries (seven PICTs) at a weak or initiating level, as detailed in Figure 12. Although connectedness and togetherness among families and communities is highly acknowledged and appreciated in the Pacific region (UNICEF, 2019b), there is an absence of formal strategies across countries to promote this at a national level. Most PICTs are facing challenges to scale up parenting programmes in a sustainable and inclusive approach, mainly implementing isolated initiatives with no prioritization for disadvantaged groups.

Countries should include families and communities as strategic partners in decision-making, as this is key to establish stronger connections between home and school environments and enhance children’s learning (UNICEF, 2020).

Figure 12.

Number of countries achieving each rating on the family and community partnerships core function.



Countries' progress in the family and community partnerships core function is discussed in more detail below across two sub-functions: family partnerships and community partnerships.

This round of the status report collected data for the family and community partnerships core function from ECE focal points in the PICTs for the first time. In the previous status reports, these data were leveraged from Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices studies<sup>16</sup> for Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, which were the only countries with such data available when the 2017 ECE Pacific status report was released.

## 5.1 Family partnerships

Active participation of parents and/or caregivers is particularly essential for children at the pre-primary level because they are exposed to new learning environments, namely preschools or kindergartens, for the first time. Learning also continues nearly equally, if not more, at home (UNICEF, 2020). The Pacific Guidelines define ECE as a joint responsibility between the education system and the family, and parents are acknowledged as the child's first teachers (UNICEF and PRC4ECE, 2017). Family engagement is an overarching principle across the Pacific region, listed explicitly as a priority in national ECE policies in most countries (14 PICTs). Existing strategies to support families with young children implemented by MoEs across the PICTs can be grouped into two categories, according to the information provided by interview respondents: promotion of parental engagement from the early years and implementation of parenting programmes.

### Promotion of parental engagement from the early years

Since the release of the 2017 status report, MoEs across the PICTs have promoted parental engagement with Pacific families. Different modalities have been used to bring parents' attention to ECE and increase their engagement from the earliest stages of their child's development. For example, in Tuvalu, the MEYS organizes visits to communities to conduct workshops for families on the importance of the early years and the benefits of attending playgroups<sup>17</sup> and preschools. In Tokelau, families are also invited to visit preschools for different activities with their children, such as sports days, cooking days and play sessions. These activities are organized by the Department of Education as part of its advocacy efforts to raise awareness on the importance of the early years and promote positive child-parent interactions. Most of these initiatives, however, have been implemented as isolated activities rather than as part of a formal national strategy for family and community engagement. Interview respondents across the PICTs noted that limited staff capacity and financial resources to oversee and cover different areas of ECE service delivery are the main barriers for the implementation of sustained parental engagement strategies. The establishment of partnerships with international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) has therefore been essential to allow MoEs to provide greater support to parents and communities (see Table 6).

16 Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices studies were conducted by UNICEF in 2014 in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The aim of these studies was to investigate various aspects of parenting, namely early learning in the home environment, breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices, and issues of child protection (UNICEF, 2017b).

17 Playgroups are a specific modality of ECE programming implemented in Tuvalu and Niue, in which children can enrol from the earliest months. Caregivers attend with the children to do activities together, facilitated by a centre manager.



**Table 6.**

Parental engagement programmes implemented by MoEs in partnership with INGOs in the Pacific region

Programme	PICTs	INGOs	Description	Key reported results
Pacific Early Age Readiness and Learning (PEARL) programme ( <a href="#">World Bank, 2019a</a> )	Tonga Tuvalu	World Bank; Global Partnership for Education (GPE)	This programme was implemented from 2014 to 2019, focusing on early literacy in the Pacific region. It aimed to increase school readiness through the establishment of playgroups for children aged 0–5 years and their caregivers, run by communities in Tonga and preschool teachers in Tuvalu. In these settings, <b>parents participated in guided play-based learning activities once or twice a week, with a stimulating environment provided for their children</b> , and an opportunity for them to continue engaging with their children daily.	<p><b>Tonga</b> One year after the programme, children’s reading test scores improved by 0.21 to 0.47 standard deviations (<a href="#">Macdonald et al., 2017</a>).</p> <p><b>Tuvalu</b> In Year 1, children who participated in the programme for two school terms could identify and read correctly 8 of the 10 most frequently printed words of their language (<a href="#">World Bank, 2019b</a>).</p>
Tuvalu Learning Project ( <a href="#">World Bank, 2020a</a> )	Tuvalu	World Bank; UNICEF	This programme is currently implemented in 18 preschools and at primary level nationwide. For ECE, it aims to improve school readiness of children aged 3–5 by 2025 through two strategies: (1) provide <b>training to teachers</b> on implementing the ECE curriculum and a play-based methodology <b>to facilitate playgroups with children and their caregivers</b> ; and (2) implement <b>outreach campaigns for families through radio and community meetings to raise awareness on the importance of attending ECE.</b>	<p>At midline (2022), the percentage of parents engaging in home stimulation activities with their children in the previous three days increased from 58 to 74 per cent.</p> <p>The percentage of children aged 3–5 in preschools who are able to achieve the minimum school readiness score increased by 5 percentage points (<a href="#">World Bank, 2022a</a>).</p>



Programme	PICTs	INGOs	Description	Key reported results
Early Childhood Development (ECD) Project ( <a href="#">World Bank, 2020b</a> )	RMI	World Bank; UNICEF	This project was launched in 2019 with the aim of increasing enrolment rates in ECE by 2024 and providing children with the best start in their first 1,000 days. It <b>supports public information campaigns on the importance of ECE</b> to increase access to early learning, and <b>offers counselling to parents to increase their engagement in children’s development</b> at home.	The programme has trained 231 ECE staff members on parental engagement, including teaching aides, parent educators and officers from the Ministry of Education, Sports and Training (MoEST). The number of children aged 3–4 attending preschool increased from 238 in 2018 to 326 in 2022 ( <a href="#">World Bank, 2022b</a> ).

Given the complex geographical characteristics of the PICTs, with many islands or atolls, some PICTs have also opted to deliver messages to promote parental engagement through media channels, such as TV and radio. This has allowed MoEs to expand the reach of support provided to families with messages on why and how to promote children’s early learning at home (see *Box 8*).

**Box 8.**

**Using multimedia channels to reach caregivers in Cook Islands and Solomon Islands**

In Cook Islands, a radio programme has been developed and aired to raise caregivers’ awareness on the benefits of attending ECE. The programme also provides practical support on early learning preparation at home. Content is prepared by the MoE and is read at the radio station. To increase ECE enrolment rates, the MoE of Cook Islands implements this radio programme twice a year – at the beginning and end of the school year. A TV advertisement on the importance of ECE is also aired to complement the radio broadcast twice a year.

In Solomon Islands, a radio programme consisting of 72 lessons was offered to caregivers during preschool closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lesson content included radio talks for parents on the importance of early learning, and strategies to supervise and enhance their children’s learning at home.



### Implementation of parenting programmes

Parenting programmes offer practical information and training to parents to equip them with the necessary skills to provide nurturing care and support their children's learning and development at home (UNICEF and PRC4ECE, 2017). According to survey responses, most countries (10 PICTs) currently implement parenting programmes for caregivers of children attending ECE, while five countries do not (Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, PNG and Tonga). Interview respondents across the PICTs, however, noted that implementing parenting programmes has been a challenge for MoEs due to difficulties in coordination of programme sessions and activities with parents' daily routines. For example, in Fiji, it was mentioned that participating in workshops and meetings in preschools was an extra burden for working parents, particularly for male caregivers, who found it difficult to attend because of a lack of flexibility in their working hours. It is therefore necessary for ECE teachers to accommodate parents' schedules. In Niue, for instance, most activities with families and communities are conducted on Fridays, as this is a non-working day for most sectors in the country, and parents are more likely to be available to attend sessions for longer periods.

Although the family and community partnerships core function is one of the least developed across the PICTs, interview respondents from Palau and RMI noted key factors that facilitated the implementation of parenting programmes in their contexts. First, establishment of partnerships with local non-profit organizations has been essential to capitalize on their strong connections with communities and expand the reach of support provided to families. For example, in Palau, the Belau Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, which serves as an umbrella organization coordinating the work of NGOs and community-based initiatives in the country, has acted as an implementing partner to provide support to parents through connections with Parent and Teacher Associations (PTAs) in schools (see Box 9).

#### Box 9.

### Implementation of a parenting programme with the support of a local non-profit organization in Palau

The Belau Association of Non-Governmental Organizations works closely with school PTAs on implementation of parenting programmes. The associations contributed to establishment of a Family–School–Community network which includes members of the organization and members of all PTAs. This network is responsible for organizing conferences and workshops for parents, teachers and community leaders throughout the year to provide information on antenatal healthy child development, as well as practical strategies to foster early learning at home and school.

In RMI, the contextualization of the content used in parenting programmes has also been highlighted as a crucial factor when engaging with Pacific families. The MoE has implemented a promising initiative where parents are not only recipients of support but are also able to actively participate in the design process of parenting programmes and



resources to ensure that local culture is promoted. Parents contributed to the content development of early learning resources by providing insights on what local knowledge, values and materials could be included to share with young children. Interview respondents noted that positive feedback was received after the parenting programme sessions, as parents felt familiar with the messages conveyed and the materials used.

Overall, there is a low level of attention given to children and families from the most vulnerable groups when implementing parenting programmes in the Pacific region. From 10 countries that indicated such programmes are currently in place in their survey responses, only four prioritized support for families of disadvantaged groups (Niue, Palau, RMI and Solomon Islands), including children with disabilities, ethnic and/or linguistic minorities, low-income families and families residing in rural or natural hazard-prone areas. For instance, interview respondents from Palau noted that support is prioritized for families who have children with disabilities, and in RMI, support is targeted to young and first-time mothers and vulnerable families for whom incidents such as domestic violence, substance abuse or other known adversity exist.

## 5.2 Community partnerships

Getting communities involved is imperative to ensure that ECE programmes are tailored to the needs of children in local contexts and reflect community values through curriculum and pedagogy (UNICEF, 2020). The Pacific Guidelines highlight the importance of community-led structures such as centre-based management committees and PTAs to increase the engagement of families and promote a sense of ownership among community members over ECE programmes (UNICEF and PRC4ECE, 2017). Although local communities in the Pacific region are expected to play an essential role within ECE systems, the community partnerships sub-function is among the least developed across countries.

From survey responses, 11 PICTs have preschool-based management committees in place engaging community representatives, teachers and parents in decision-making (Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Nauru, Palau, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu). Among these countries, seven have such committees in place for all ECE centres nationally, while four have only established them in some ECE centres. In 10 PICTs, committees primarily support ECE programmes by providing community-owned buildings as spaces for ECE centres to operate or help with facility maintenance. Committees are not engaged in education-related decisions in ECE, such as supporting curriculum planning or coordinating educational activities for the children, but are engaged in more logistical activities, namely preschool infrastructure construction or maintenance. According to survey responses, centre-based management committees in four countries also support raising funds to cover the salaries of ECE teachers partially or fully (Samoa, Tuvalu, Tonga and Vanuatu). In Fiji, PNG and Solomon Islands, they additionally support provision of housing for teachers in remote areas, if necessary. Additionally, PTAs were highlighted by interview respondents as another effective community-led structure to facilitate collaboration between preschools and communities. In RMI and Tokelau, PTAs have played a crucial role to strengthen education service delivery and support ECE teachers to convene more families for preschool activities (see Box 10).





**Box 10.**

**PTAs supporting ECE in Tokelau and RMI**

In Tokelau, ECE-specific PTAs have been established, in addition to whole-school PTAs, to contribute to dissemination of activities for parents with young children, such as sports days and cooking days. Activities are organized by ECE teachers, and parents from PTAs are responsible for communicating when these have been scheduled during their community meetings.

In RMI, parents from PTAs also act as bridges between preschools and families to spread the word when open days, classroom visits or other parental engagement activities are scheduled. They additionally support teachers with logistics in preschools when these events occur. One representative from each PTA across the country is also elected to participate in the ‘school improvement team’, which holds an annual meeting called by the MoE to identify aspects to improve teaching and learning in schools over the next academic year.

Most PICTs experience challenges to promotion and scaling up of family and community partnerships in ECE, as there are no directed formal strategies to guide this process. Distribution of communities and cultural differences within these communities also make it difficult to develop and implement practices to strengthen engagement in a unified way. Contexts vary from one to another, both across and within PICTs, which should be taken into consideration throughout the process of design, implementation and evaluation of community-based ECE programmes (UNICEF, 2019b). Financial limitations were another barrier noted by interview respondents because a large proportion of government budgets is directed to teacher salaries, and limited resources remain for other areas of ECE programme implementation.



# Policy recommendations

This section provides policy recommendations to improve ECE systems in the Pacific context, organized by the five core functions. The proposed recommendations were co-developed with ECE focal points from the PICTs based on the regional findings, which were also supported by the global evidence base. While each PICT is different, these policy recommendations aim to provide specific action points to be prioritized for gradual progress towards more advanced and comprehensive ECE systems across the Pacific.



## CORE FUNCTION 1: PLANNING AND BUDGETING

- **Analyse the current gaps in investment in ECE across the PICTs to identify priorities and increase public funding for the provision of at least one year of high-quality ECE for all children in the Pacific.**

Interview respondents from most countries highlighted the lack of funds for high-quality ECE programme implementation, specifically insufficient budget for in-service teacher training and quality assurance at the service delivery level. Governments should prioritize conducting a detailed analysis of their current financing sources and mechanisms for the provision of at least one year of high-quality ECE, comprising the percentage of public education expenditure for ECE, differences in the allocation of funding across preschool types (playgroups, stand-alone and attached-to-primary preschools) and geographical areas (main and outer islands), and the breakdown of spending per ECE core function ([UNESCO IIEP UNICEF and GPE, 2014](#)). Such financial analysis would provide evidence of the current deficit across PICTs to inform advocacy around increased budget allocation to ECE to enable the provision of a one-year high-quality programme prior to primary school ([UNICEF and PRC4ECD, 2014](#)). This investment analysis could also demonstrate any uneven budget distribution across core functions, which is a barrier to high-quality ECE programme implementation in most PICTs, as funds are predominantly directed to workforce remuneration, leaving other core functions unattended ([Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2017](#); [UNICEF, 2020](#)). Once PICTs achieve universal coverage of one year of ECE, they may prioritize expansion to multi-year programmes (e.g., for ages 3–5) as relevant and feasible in each context.

- **Improve effective and comprehensive ECE planning and governance across all five core functions and at all levels.**

While PICTs have advanced different elements of their ECE systems, they should now prioritize consolidating their efforts through a whole-system approach for ECE planning. Wherever possible, this should ideally be done as an integral part of broader education sector planning. As most PICTs have updated their ECE curricula and/or developed minimum quality standards since the release of the 2017 status report, governments should prioritize strengthening communication and coordination



mechanisms between national and subnational education authorities and ECE service providers to ensure that their priorities are aligned and follow the recently developed pedagogical and quality assurance frameworks ([Rebello Britto et al., 2013](#); [World Bank, 2013](#)). Holding regular meetings with representatives from different units within the MoEs, establishing communication channels with provincial education coordinators in the different atolls or outer islands and with different preschool providers are examples of governance strategies that can be leveraged to enable high-quality programme implementation from the central to the service delivery level.



## CORE FUNCTION 2: HUMAN RESOURCES

- **Develop and implement a holistic continuous professional development strategy for ECE teachers to progressively strengthen their capacity to provide high-quality teaching and learning for young children.**

All PICTs have established pre-service minimum qualifications to teach in ECE and are providing some sort of in-service teacher training. However, MoEs across the PICTs should now focus on developing more holistic continuous professional development strategies for the ECE workforce with a long-term vision. This plan should define the specific knowledge and competencies required by teachers to deliver the national ECE curriculum effectively, and provide a road map for the upcoming three to five years on how to progressively upgrade their qualifications and skills ([Mitter and Putcha, 2018](#)).

It should also outline the training modalities to be used, as well as teacher mentoring and supervision mechanisms to monitor continuous improvement of ECE teachers' pedagogical practices ([UNICEF 2019a](#); [UNICEF 2020](#)). The workforce continuous professional development strategy should be developed at the central level and include the participation of other education stakeholders, namely local universities and teacher training providers, which can support provision of scholarships and revision of teacher training programmes to ensure alignment with national goals.

- **Develop and implement a clear recruitment, remuneration and career progression pathway that contributes to retention of qualified teachers in ECE.**

Although many PICTs have managed to include ECE teachers' salaries in governments' budgets since the release of the 2017 status report, there are substantial remuneration differences between ECE and other education levels that negatively affect recruitment and retention of a qualified workforce. Progressive improvements in salaries which are linked to a clear professional development plan have the potential to increase teachers' likelihood to enter and stay in the profession, particularly to teach in challenging contexts such as remote atolls or outer islands, and also perceive the benefit of upgrading their qualifications and skills ([Adamson and Darling-Hammond, 2012](#); [Podolsky et al., 2019](#)). MoEs across the PICTs should therefore focus on establishing clear career progression pathways for ECE teachers that include remuneration improvements as they upgrade their professional qualifications.





### CORE FUNCTION 3: CURRICULUM

- **Review and update the content of ECE curricula to ensure the inclusion of critical learning goals for young children and necessary pedagogical approaches to achieve them.**

This research did not review the content of ECE curricula in the PICTs given the ongoing Pacific Regional ECE Curriculum Review. In light of this review, the PICTs are encouraged to consider the findings of that review to strengthen curricula as and when relevant. Upcoming curriculum updates should ensure that foundational learning skills relevant to each country are defined, including literacy, numeracy and socioemotional competencies. MoEs should also promote the use of play-based methodologies, inclusive education approaches and formative assessment through their ECE curricula, to adapt teaching practices in the classroom to the learning needs of young children. Evidence has shown that the introduction of child-centred pedagogy providing play and free exploration opportunities to children is more likely to have positive effects on learning and development outcomes, particularly for disadvantaged students ([Vindrola et al., 2023](#)).

- **Strengthen in-service teacher training for ECE curriculum implementation with an emphasis on developing teaching strategies to enhance children's foundational skills.**

While many PICTs offer some form of training workshops for ECE teachers, the provision of continuous practical support on how to deliver the curriculum through day-to-day pedagogical activities and strategies in the classroom should be prioritized to pave the way towards more advanced ECE systems that are able to ensure effective and consistent curriculum implementation ([Popova et al., 2022](#); [Veikune et al., 2020](#)). Given the prioritization of school readiness in regional education policies and plans, namely the Pasifika Call to Action for ECD and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) 2018–2030, governments across the PICTs should focus on strengthening ECE teachers' pedagogical skills to develop children's foundational learning skills, as defined by each country ([UNICEF and PRC4ECCE, 2014](#); UNICEF and PRC4ECD, 2019).





#### CORE FUNCTION 4: PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

- **Define systems and tools to monitor and improve quality in ECE at the service delivery level.**

Most PICTs noted that the use of tools to assess quality and teacher performance in ECE at the service delivery level is not widely and consistently established. Different ECE modalities and providers use a wide range of tools, mechanisms and standards, which causes confusion amid the ECE workforce. MoEs across the PICTs should therefore prioritize setting up a systematic quality assurance process to monitor context-specific structural and process quality indicators, and systems to ensure this process guides quality improvements. The definition of standard quality assessment and/or assurance tools and mechanisms will contribute to improve the coherence and tracking over time of the data available from ECE settings, as all preschools will collect and record similar indicators in the EMIS ([UNICEF, 2020](#)).



#### CORE FUNCTION 5: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- **Develop and implement clear parental engagement strategies to support families of young children to foster early learning at home and in schools.**

Advanced ECE systems consider parents to be key partners to improve children's learning and development outcomes ([Jeong et al., 2021](#)). As almost half of the countries (seven PICTs) are at a weak or initiating level in the family and community partnerships core function, MoEs across the Pacific region should start developing clear parental engagement national strategies to equip parents and caregivers with skills to provide nurturing care and positive parent-child interactions, and create enabling environments for children's early learning at home ([UNICEF, 2021b](#)). Parental engagement strategies should define the desired knowledge, behaviours and practices to be adopted by parents to promote children's learning and development. These strategies should also equip ECE centres and teachers with skills to partner effectively with parents. To support families, ECE teachers require specific training on how to approach parents from different contexts and backgrounds, and guide them to execute their caregiving role ([WHO, 2022](#)). Partnerships with community and faith-based organizations should be explored as part of these national strategies.



# Concluding remarks

This report has provided mapping of the status of ECE systems across the 15 PICTs, leveraging data from a desk review, in addition to surveys and interviews with ECE focal points in MoEs. Progress has been achieved in many countries across the five core functions of ECE, most notably in the human resources and curriculum functions. While such progress has been attained, challenges remain in the planning and budgeting, performance monitoring and assessment, and family and community partnerships core functions. The main gaps across countries include the lack of universal access to high-quality ECE for the year prior to primary school entry, budgetary challenges to sustain the implementation of ECE activities across diverse areas and the lack of mechanisms to monitor quality at the service delivery level and collect data on child learning outcomes.

As done through this status report, it is essential that MoEs across the PICTs continue tracking their own progress in implementing ECE programmes to support identifying gaps and areas that need additional prioritization. Such progress tracking should feed into ECE reform efforts. To do so, governments should include ECE in their education sector planning cycles and conduct country-level assessments of ECE programme implementation. Local policymakers and education stakeholders can make use of the rubrics developed for this report (*see Appendix 1*) to create a road map of how to advance from one level to the next on specific sub-functions where their countries did not score favourably (*see Appendices 2 and 3*). This evidence-based approach to assessing the status of their ECE systems is key to ensure that all children in the Pacific region can access high-quality ECE services that allow them to develop foundational skills for their school readiness.



# Appendices

## Appendix 1. Rubrics for core functions and sub-functions

### CORE FUNCTION 1: PLANNING AND BUDGETING

#### SUB-FUNCTION 1.1: LEGISLATION AND POLICY

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p>The National Education Act includes ECE. A National ECE Policy has been <b>officially adopted and explicitly mandates the provision of compulsory AND free early childhood education</b> before entry to primary school for at least one year. Free provision is inclusive of all vulnerable and/or minority groups (e.g., children with disabilities, girls/boys, children from low-income families, ethnic/linguistic minorities, children from rural or natural hazard-prone areas). It includes <b>specific service delivery guidelines for one or more of these groups</b> and a plan to <b>periodically review</b> the policy for improvement.</p>	<p>The National Education Act includes ECE. A National ECE Policy has been officially adopted and <b>explicitly mandates the provision of free early childhood education</b> before entry to primary school for at least one year, although it may or may not be compulsory. Free provision is <b>inclusive of all vulnerable and/or minority groups</b> (e.g., children with disabilities, girls/boys, children from low-income families, ethnic/linguistic minorities, children from rural or natural hazard-prone areas). It includes <b>specific service delivery guidelines for one or more of these groups</b>. A plan to <b>periodically review</b> the policy for improvement may or may not be included.</p>	<p>The National Education Act includes ECE, or it will include it in the next iteration. A National ECE Policy has been <b>officially adopted</b> or is in a <b>draft form</b>. It may or may not <b>explicitly mandate the provision of free early childhood education</b> before entry to primary school for at least one year, it may or may not be compulsory and includes <b>specific service delivery guidelines for one or more vulnerable and/or minority groups</b> (e.g., children with disabilities, girls/boys, children from low-income families, ethnic/linguistic minorities, children from rural or natural hazard-prone areas).</p>	<p>The National Education Act does not include ECE. A National ECE Policy <b>does not exist</b>.</p>



**SUB-FUNCTION 1.2: GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p>An ECE <b>Policy implementation plan or strategy</b> is in place nationwide and is implemented to a great extent. An ECE <b>department, unit or bureau</b> within the MoE has been established to support the provision and coordination of ECE, with <b>dedicated staff appointed</b> and <b>clear functions and responsibilities</b>. In smaller islands, there are dedicated staff appointed for ECE. Effective <b>coordination mechanisms</b> are <b>formally established</b> between national and/or subnational education authorities and ECE service providers for holistic policy and programming.</p>	<p>An ECE <b>Policy implementation plan or strategy</b> is in place nationwide and is implemented to some extent. An <b>ECE department, unit or bureau</b> within the MoE has been established to support the provision and coordination of ECE, with <b>dedicated staff appointed and clear functions and responsibilities</b>. In smaller islands, there are dedicated staff appointed for ECE. Effective <b>coordination mechanisms</b> between national and/or subnational education authorities and ECE service providers for holistic policy and programming are <b>not formally set up</b>.</p>	<p>An ECE <b>Policy implementation plan or strategy</b> may or may not be in place nationwide. If in place, it is implemented to a little extent. <b>Staff from primary level or another department, unit or bureau</b> perform ECE functions, or dedicated ECE staff may be appointed. <b>Coordination mechanisms</b> between national and/or subnational education authorities and ECE service providers for holistic policy and programming <b>are not formally set up or do not exist</b>.</p>	<p>An ECE <b>Policy implementation plan or strategy does not exist</b>. There are <b>no dedicated ECE staff</b> appointed within the MoE. <b>Coordination mechanisms</b> between national and/or subnational education authorities and ECE service providers for holistic policy and programming <b>do not exist</b>.</p>





**SUB-FUNCTION 1.3: FUNDING AND COSTING**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p>The <b>National ECE Policy is costed</b>, and a <b>target budget is allocated</b> for its implementation. Funding allocation follows <b>criteria for equitable coverage</b> to support the most disadvantaged groups of children (e.g., children with disabilities, girls, children from low-income families, ethnic/linguistic minorities, children from rural or natural hazard-prone areas, children with lower assessment results). <b>Public expenditure on ECE is monitored</b>, and <b>collected data are used</b> to inform future planning and budgeting.</p>	<p>The <b>National ECE Policy is costed</b>, and a <b>target budget is allocated</b> for its implementation. Funding allocation follows <b>criteria for equitable coverage</b> to support the most disadvantaged groups of children (e.g., children with disabilities, girls, children from low-income families, ethnic/linguistic minorities, children from rural or natural hazard-prone areas). <b>Public expenditure on ECE is monitored</b>, but collected <b>data are not used</b> to inform future planning and budgeting.</p>	<p>The <b>National ECE Policy is costed</b>, and a <b>target budget is allocated</b> for its implementation. For smaller islands, budget could be included in primary education budgets. Funding allocation <b>does not follow criteria for equitable coverage</b> (e.g., children with disabilities, girls, children from low-income families, ethnic/linguistic minorities, children from rural or natural hazard-prone areas). <b>Public expenditure on ECE is not monitored.</b></p>	<p>The <b>National ECE Policy is not costed</b>. There is <b>no target budget allocated</b> for its implementation.</p>



**CORE FUNCTION 2: HUMAN RESOURCES**

**SUB-FUNCTION 2.1: WORKFORCE RECRUITMENT**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p><b>Targets</b> for the recruitment of the ECE workforce <b>are defined</b> at a national and/or subnational level. A variety of recruitment <b>strategies is implemented</b> to meet these targets focused on <b>attracting skilled and diverse candidates</b> (e.g., teachers with training in ECE, male teachers, bilingual teachers) for quality service provision and <b>and/or for different locations</b> (e.g., outer islands, rural areas).</p>	<p><b>Targets</b> for the recruitment of the ECE workforce <b>are defined</b> at a national and/or subnational level. A single recruitment <b>strategy is implemented</b> to meet these targets focused on <b>attracting skilled and diverse candidates</b> (e.g., teachers with training in ECE, male teachers, bilingual teachers) for quality service provision <b>and/or for different locations</b> (e.g., outer islands, rural areas).</p>	<p><b>Targets</b> for the recruitment of the ECE workforce <b>are defined</b> at a national and/or subnational level. Recruitment <b>strategies are not implemented.</b></p>	<p><b>No targets</b> for the recruitment of the ECE workforce <b>are defined</b> at a national or subnational level.</p>



**SUB-FUNCTION 2.2: PRE-SERVICE TRAINING**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p><b>Minimum qualification and training requirements</b> for ECE candidates entering the teaching profession are <b>explicitly defined</b> in the National ECE and/or Human Resources Policy. <b>Pre-service training programmes include ECE-specific topics:</b> (i) National ECE Curriculum implementation, (ii) play-based pedagogy and (iii) holistic development of the child, among other general topics. Quality of pre-service training programmes for ECE professionals is monitored and/or regulated by a <b>government authority</b>.</p>	<p><b>Minimum qualification and training requirements</b> for ECE candidates entering the teaching profession are <b>explicitly defined</b> in the National ECE and/or Human Resources Policy. <b>Pre-service training programmes include ECE-specific topics:</b> (i) National ECE Curriculum implementation, (ii) play-based pedagogy and (iii) holistic development of the child, among other general topics.</p>	<p><b>Minimum qualification and training requirements</b> for ECE candidates entering the teaching profession are <b>explicitly defined</b> in the National ECE and/or Human Resources Policy. <b>Pre-service training programmes are mostly general</b> and do not include ECE-specific topics: (i) National ECE Curriculum implementation, (ii) play-based pedagogy and (iii) holistic development of the child.</p>	<p><b>Minimum qualification and training requirements</b> for ECE candidates entering the teaching profession are <b>not defined</b>.</p>



**SUB-FUNCTION 2.3: IN-SERVICE TRAINING**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p><b>In-service training is implemented for both ECE teaching</b> (teachers and teaching assistants) <b>and non-teaching staff</b> (e.g., principals, ECE quality assurance personnel, pedagogical advisors). It includes <b>practical activities to teach pedagogical constructs</b> (e.g., simulations in the classroom, role-playing) in addition to theoretical sessions. <b>Activities to reflect on own instructional practice and/or mentorship programmes</b> are implemented. Training is <b>assigned on the basis of perceived needs</b> (e.g., underperforming teachers, teachers from low-performing classrooms, teachers with fewer qualifications, specialization needs).</p>	<p><b>In-service training is implemented mostly for ECE teaching staff</b> (teachers and teaching assistants). It includes <b>practical activities to teach pedagogical constructs</b> (e.g., simulations in the classroom, role-playing) in addition to theoretical sessions. Training is <b>not assigned on the basis of perceived needs</b> (e.g., underperforming teachers, teachers from low-performing classrooms, teachers with fewer qualifications, specialization needs).</p>	<p><b>In-service training is implemented mostly for ECE teaching staff</b> (teachers and teaching assistants). It involves <b>primarily theoretical sessions</b> to teach pedagogical constructs. Training is <b>not assigned on the basis of perceived needs</b> (e.g., underperforming teachers, teachers from low-performing classrooms, teachers with fewer qualifications, specialization needs).</p>	<p><b>In-service training is not implemented</b>, neither for ECE teaching nor for non-teaching staff.</p>



**SUB-FUNCTION 2.4: WORKFORCE RETENTION**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p><b>Teacher salaries in ECE are competitive</b> with other education levels (primary and secondary). <b>Incentive schemes are implemented</b> for ECE staff, including <b>monetary</b> (salary increases, hardship, transport and/or housing allowances) and <b>non-monetary benefits</b> (professional development opportunities).</p>	<p><b>Teacher salaries in ECE are competitive</b> with other education levels (primary and secondary). <b>Incentive schemes are implemented</b> for ECE staff, <b>primarily</b> including <b>monetary benefits</b> (salary increases, hardship, transport and/or housing allowances).</p>	<p><b>Teacher salaries in ECE are considerably lower</b> than other education levels (primary and secondary). <b>Incentive schemes</b> for ECE staff <b>exist but may or may not be implemented</b>. If they are implemented, <b>only monetary benefits</b> are provided (salary increases, hardship, transport and/or housing allowances).</p>	<p><b>Teacher salaries in ECE are considerably lower</b> than other education levels (primary and secondary). <b>Incentive schemes</b> for ECE staff <b>do not exist</b>.</p>



**CORE FUNCTION 3: CURRICULUM**

**SUB-FUNCTION 3.1: NATIONAL ECE CURRICULUM**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p>All preschool programmes have an officially adopted <b>National ECE Curriculum that is aligned with the year 1 curriculum. The curriculum has been developed in consultation with a range of education stakeholders.</b> It includes <b>ALL</b> of the following aspects, among others: (i) age-appropriate learning standards for children, (ii) pedagogical methodology for ECE, (iii) language of instruction for ECE, (iv) strategies to adapt activities and/or resources for children with disabilities. The curriculum <b>explicitly promotes the inclusion of diversity</b> (e.g., children with disabilities, from low-income families, ethnic/linguistic minorities, religion, gender and/or refugee/migrant status). There is a plan to <b>periodically review the curriculum content</b> for improvement.</p>	<p>All preschool programmes have an officially adopted <b>National ECE Curriculum developed in consultation with a range of education stakeholders.</b> It includes <b>ALL</b> of the following aspects, among others: (i) age-appropriate learning standards for children, (ii) pedagogical methodology for ECE, (iii) language of instruction for ECE, (iv) activities and/or resources for children with disabilities. The curriculum <b>explicitly promotes the inclusion of diversity</b> (e.g., children with disabilities, from low-income families, ethnic/linguistic minorities, religion, gender and/or refugee/migrant status).</p>	<p>Some preschool programmes have a <b>National ECE Curriculum</b> that has been <b>officially adopted.</b> It includes <b>SOME</b> of the following aspects, among others: (i) age-appropriate learning standards for children, (ii) pedagogical methodology for ECE, (iii) language of instruction for ECE, (iv) activities and/or resources for children with disabilities. The curriculum <b>does not explicitly promote the inclusion of diversity</b> (e.g., children with disabilities, from low-income families, ethnic/linguistic minorities, religion, gender and/or refugee/migrant status).</p>	<p>All preschool programme <b>National ECE Curricula</b> are <b>in a draft form</b> or have <b>not been officially adopted.</b></p>



**SUB-FUNCTION 3.2: CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p>The official <b>National ECE Curriculum is translated</b> into local language(s) in the country for wider use by ECE practitioners, if applicable. <b>Training</b> on ECE Curriculum implementation is included in in-service training programmes <b>for teaching AND non-teaching staff</b>. It includes <b>practical sessions</b> with opportunities to apply methods and/or pedagogical approaches in the classroom or reflect on own instructional practice, <b>in addition to theoretical sessions</b>. The implementation of the National ECE Curriculum is monitored through feedback collection, classroom observations or other methods. There is a mechanism in place to coordinate feedback provided to teachers on curriculum implementation, if applicable.</p>	<p>The official <b>National ECE Curriculum is translated</b> into local language(s) in the country for wider use by ECE practitioners, if applicable. <b>Training</b> on ECE Curriculum implementation is included in in-service training programmes <b>only for teaching staff</b>. It includes <b>practical sessions</b> with opportunities to apply methods and/or pedagogical approaches in the classroom or reflect on own instructional practice, <b>in addition to theoretical sessions</b>.</p>	<p>The official <b>National ECE Curriculum is not translated</b> into local language(s) for wider use by ECE practitioners. <b>Training</b> on ECE Curriculum implementation is included in in-service training programmes <b>only for teaching staff</b>. It involves <b>primarily theoretical sessions</b> to teach pedagogical constructs and/or components underpinning the curriculum.</p>	<p><b>No training</b> for <b>National ECE Curriculum</b> implementation is provided.</p>



**SUB-FUNCTION 3.3: CHILD ASSESSMENT**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p><b>Clear learning standards</b> for children of different ages and/or class levels are defined, including <b>ALL</b> of the following <b>developmental domains</b>: (i) physical, (ii) cognitive, (iii) socioemotional and (iv) language skills. <b>Formative assessment guidelines</b> to monitor children’s learning are included. The country has a <b>standardized national large-scale assessment at the end of ECE</b>, and <b>collected data</b> from children <b>are used</b> to inform and improve ECE service delivery.</p>	<p><b>Clear learning standards</b> for children of different ages and/or class levels are defined, including <b>ALL</b> of the following <b>developmental domains</b>: (i) physical, (ii) cognitive, (iii) socioemotional and (iv) language skills. <b>Formative assessment guidelines</b> to monitor children’s learning are included. The country does not have a standardized national large-scale assessment at the end of ECE.</p>	<p><b>Clear learning standards</b> for children of different ages and/or class levels are defined, including <b>SOME</b> of the following <b>developmental domains</b>: (i) physical, (ii) cognitive, (iii) socioemotional and (iv) language skills. <b>Formative assessment guidelines</b> to monitor children’s learning may be included.</p>	<p><b>No learning standards</b> are defined.</p>





**SUB-FUNCTION 3.4: ENVIRONMENT AND MATERIALS**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p><b>Minimum quality standards for ECE facilities are explicitly defined</b> in the National ECE Policy, including <b>ALL</b> of the following aspects: (i) teacher–child ratios, (ii) classroom space distribution, (iii) WASH regulations, (iv) necessary safety conditions. The National ECE Curriculum is accompanied by a range of specific <b>teaching and learning materials</b>.</p>	<p><b>Minimum quality standards for ECE facilities are explicitly defined</b> in the National ECE Policy, including <b>SOME</b> of the following aspects: (i) teacher–child ratios, (ii) classroom space distribution, (iii) WASH regulations, (iv) necessary safety conditions. The National ECE Curriculum is accompanied by a range of specific <b>teaching and learning materials</b>.</p>	<p><b>Minimum quality standards for ECE facilities are explicitly defined</b> in the National ECE Policy, including <b>SOME</b> of the following aspects: (i) teacher–child ratios, (ii) classroom space distribution, (iii) WASH regulations, (iv) necessary safety conditions. The National ECE Curriculum is not accompanied by a range of specific teaching and learning materials.</p>	<p><b>Minimum quality standards for ECE facilities do not exist.</b></p>



**CORE FUNCTION 4: PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT**

**SUB-FUNCTION 4.1: QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p><b>ECE data are collected in the EMIS from ALL preschools</b> at a national level. A <b>variety of indicators</b> regarding students, teachers, preschool infrastructure and/or materials are measured. Collected data can be <b>disaggregated by gender, location</b> (urban/rural) and <b>student characteristics</b> (children’s disability status, parental education levels and/or employment status, ethnic/linguistic background). The EMIS is integrated and collects <b>data on non-education system indicators</b> (e.g., nutrition, health, birth registration). <b>Tools</b> are used <b>for regular monitoring</b> and have been <b>designed in consultation with a range of ECE stakeholders</b>.</p>	<p><b>ECE data are collected in the EMIS from ALL preschools</b> at a national level. A <b>variety of indicators</b> regarding students, teachers, preschool infrastructure and/or materials are measured. Collected data can be <b>disaggregated by gender and location</b> (rural/urban). The EMIS <b>does not collect data on non-education system indicators</b> (e.g., nutrition, health, birth registration). <b>Tools</b> are used <b>for regular monitoring</b> and have been <b>designed in consultation with a range of ECE stakeholders</b>.</p>	<p><b>ECE data are collected in the EMIS from SOME preschools</b> at a national level. <b>Limited indicators</b> are measured (e.g., only student and/or teacher attendance, student enrolment). Collected data can be <b>disaggregated by gender and location</b> (rural/urban). The EMIS <b>does not collect data on non-education system indicators</b> (e.g., nutrition, health, birth registration). If tools are used for regular monitoring, these have <b>not been designed in consultation with a range of ECE stakeholders</b>.</p>	<p><b>ECE data are not collected in the EMIS.</b></p>



**SUB-FUNCTION 4.2: USE OF DATA**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p>EMIS <b>data are ready</b> to use <b>three months</b> prior to the start of the new school year. <b>Data collected are used</b> for education <b>reporting</b> at a national and/or subnational level, to <b>improve funding allocation</b> in ECE and to <b>identify needs</b> of specific regions, preschools and/or children.</p>	<p>EMIS <b>data are ready</b> to use <b>at</b> the start of the new school year. <b>Data collected are used</b> for education <b>reporting</b> at a national and/or subnational level and to <b>improve funding allocation</b> in ECE.</p>	<p>EMIS <b>data are ready</b> to use <b>after</b> the start of the new school year. <b>Data collected are used</b> for education <b>reporting</b> at a national and/or subnational level.</p>	<p><b>ECE data are not available for use</b>, as these are not collected in the EMIS.</p>



## CORE FUNCTION 5: FAMILY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

### SUB-FUNCTION 5.1: FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p><b>Family engagement</b> in ECE is <b>explicitly recognized as a priority in the National ECE Policy</b>. Parenting support programmes are implemented for ECE caregivers to provide <b>orientation</b> to parents on the importance of ECE, nurturing home-learning environments and to <b>connect them with other social services</b> for children beyond the education system. These programmes are <b>inclusive of caregivers of children from all disadvantaged/vulnerable groups</b> (e.g., children with disabilities, children from low-income families, children in rural areas, children from ethnic/linguistic minorities, children from natural hazard-prone areas).</p>	<p><b>Family engagement</b> in ECE is <b>explicitly recognized as a priority in the National ECE Policy</b>. Parenting support programmes are implemented for ECE caregivers to provide <b>orientation</b> to parents on the importance of ECE and nurturing home-learning environments. These programmes <b>may or may not be inclusive of caregivers of children from disadvantaged/vulnerable groups</b> (e.g., children with disabilities, children from low-income families, children in rural areas, children from ethnic/linguistic minorities, children from natural hazard-prone areas).</p>	<p><b>Family engagement</b> in ECE is <b>not explicitly recognized as a priority in the National ECE Policy</b>. Parenting support programmes are implemented for caregivers to provide <b>orientation</b> to parents on nurturing home-learning environments (may or may not be specific for ECE caregivers). These programmes are <b>not inclusive of caregivers of children from disadvantaged/vulnerable groups</b> (e.g., children with disabilities, children from low-income families, children in rural areas, children from ethnic/linguistic minorities, children from natural hazard-prone areas).</p>	<p><b>Family engagement</b> in ECE is <b>not explicitly recognized as a priority in the National ECE Policy</b>. Parenting support programmes for ECE caregivers are <b>not implemented</b> (programmes for caregivers of children from other education levels may or may not be implemented).</p>



**SUB-FUNCTION 5.2: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

4 ADVANCED	3 ESTABLISHED	2 INITIATING	1 WEAK
<p><b>Preschool-based management committees</b> or similar structures <b>are in place in all preschools</b> and <b>include parents and teachers as members</b>. They <b>participate in management decision-making</b> at the school level (e.g., budget administration, fundraising, infrastructure maintenance) <b>and engage in education activities</b> (e.g., curriculum planning decisions, organize activities for children to promote local cultural traditions/values).</p>	<p><b>Preschool-based management committees</b> or similar structures <b>are in place in all preschools</b> and <b>include parents and teachers as members</b>. They <b>participate in management decision-making</b> at the school level (e.g., budget administration, fundraising, infrastructure maintenance) <b>but do not engage in education activities</b> (e.g., curriculum planning decisions, organize activities for children to promote local cultural traditions/values).</p>	<p><b>Preschool-based management committees</b> or similar structures <b>are in place in some preschools</b> and <b>only include administrative and/or teaching staff</b> from schools as members. They <b>participate in management decision-making</b> at the school level (e.g., budget administration, fundraising, infrastructure maintenance) <b>but do not engage in education activities</b> (e.g., curriculum planning decisions, organize activities for children to promote local cultural traditions/values).</p>	<p><b>Preschool-based management committees</b> or similar structures <b>are not in place in preschools</b>.</p>



## Appendix 2. Average rubric ratings for the PICTs across the five core functions of ECE systems

### CORE FUNCTION

Country	1 Planning and budgeting	2 Human resources	3 Curriculum	4 Performance monitoring and evaluation	5 Family and community partnerships
Cook Islands	4	3	4	3	3
FSM	3	2	3	2	2
Fiji	2	4	3	2	2
Kiribati*	2	2	3	-	1
Nauru	3	3	3	3	2
Niue*	2	4	-	-	2
Palau	1	4	4	3	3
PNG	2	3	4	1	1
RMI	2	3	3	3	3
Samoa	2	4	4	1	3
Solomon Islands*	3	4	-	4	3
Tokelau	3	3	3	3	3
Tonga	2	3	3	3	1
Tuvalu	3	4	3	4	3
Vanuatu	3	3	3	3	3

**Note:** Average ratings for the curriculum core function in Niue and Solomon Islands, and the performance monitoring and assessment core function in Kiribati, were not calculated due to missing survey data.



## Appendix 3. Country profiles

Ratings for core functions in 2017 were calculated using a three-level approach (3: established, 2: emerging, 1: latent) (UNICEF, 2017b). Ratings in 2022 were calculated using a four-level approach (4: advanced, 3: established, 2: initiating, 1: weak), described with more detail in the methodology section of this report. Although it is not possible to compare both approaches, the following country profiles provide a snapshot of the status of ECE systems in PICTs across the different core functions and sub-functions.

### COOK ISLANDS

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	3	4
2 Human resources	3	3
3 Curriculum	3	4
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	3	3
5 Family and community partnerships	3	3

### FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA (FSM)

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	2	3
2 Human resources	3	2
3 Curriculum	2	3
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	3	2
5 Family and community partnerships	2	2

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022
1.1 Legislation and policy	3
1 1.2 Governance and implementation	4
1.3 Funding and costing	4
2.1 Workforce recruitment	2
2 2.2 Pre-service training	3
2.3 In-service training	4
2.4 Workforce retention	3
3.1 National ECE curriculum	4
3 3.2 Curriculum implementation	4
3.3 Child assessment	3
3.4 Environment and materials	3
4.1 Quality assurance system	3
4 4.2 Use of data	3
5.1 Family partnerships	3
5 5.2 Community partnerships	3

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022
1.1 Legislation and policy	3
1 1.2 Governance and implementation	3
1.3 Funding and costing	2
2.1 Workforce recruitment	1
2 2.2 Pre-service training	2
2.3 In-service training	2
2.4 Workforce retention	2
3.1 National ECE curriculum	4
3 3.2 Curriculum implementation	2
3.3 Child assessment	3
3.4 Environment and materials	3
4.1 Quality assurance system	2
4 4.2 Use of data	2
5.1 Family partnerships	2
5 5.2 Community partnerships	2



**FIJI**

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	3	2
2 Human resources	3	4
3 Curriculum	3	3
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	3	2
5 Family and community partnerships	3	2

**KIRIBATI<sup>18</sup>**

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	2	2
2 Human resources	1	2
3 Curriculum	1	3
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	1	-
5 Family and community partnerships	1	1

**2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS**

Functions and sub-functions	2022	
1	1.1 Legislation and policy	3
	1.2 Governance and implementation	2
	1.3 Funding and costing	1
2	2.1 Workforce recruitment	4
	2.2 Pre-service training	4
	2.3 In-service training	3
	2.4 Workforce retention	3
3	3.1 National ECE curriculum	4
	3.2 Curriculum implementation	1
	3.3 Child assessment	3
	3.4 Environment and materials	4
4	4.1 Quality assurance system	2
	4.2 Use of data	2
5	5.1 Family partnerships	1
	5.2 Community partnerships	3

**2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS**

Functions and sub-functions	2022	
1	1.1 Legislation and policy	2
	1.2 Governance and implementation	2
	1.3 Funding and costing	1
2	2.1 Workforce recruitment	3
	2.2 Pre-service training	2
	2.3 In-service training	2
	2.4 Workforce retention	2
3	3.1 National ECE curriculum	3
	3.2 Curriculum implementation	2
	3.3 Child assessment	3
	3.4 Environment and materials	4
4	4.1 Quality assurance system	3
	4.2 Use of data	-
5	5.1 Family partnerships	1
	5.2 Community partnerships	1

18 In Kiribati, the average rating for the performance monitoring and assessment core function and the rating for the use of data sub-function were not calculated due to missing survey data.





### NAURU

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	3	3
2 Human resources	3	3
3 Curriculum	3	3
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	3	3
5 Family and community partnerships	3	2

### NIUE<sup>19</sup>

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	3	2
2 Human resources	3	4
3 Curriculum	3	-
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	3	-
5 Family and community partnerships	3	2

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022	
1	1.1 Legislation and policy	2
	1.2 Governance and implementation	4
	1.3 Funding and costing	2
2	2.1 Workforce recruitment	4
	2.2 Pre-service training	4
	2.3 In-service training	2
	2.4 Workforce retention	2
3	3.1 National ECE curriculum	4
	3.2 Curriculum implementation	3
	3.3 Child assessment	4
	3.4 Environment and materials	1
4	4.1 Quality assurance system	2
	4.2 Use of data	3
5	5.1 Family partnerships	1
	5.2 Community partnerships	3

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022	
1	1.1 Legislation and policy	1
	1.2 Governance and implementation	2
	1.3 Funding and costing	2
2	2.1 Workforce recruitment	4
	2.2 Pre-service training	4
	2.3 In-service training	4
	2.4 Workforce retention	2
3	3.1 National ECE curriculum	4
	3.2 Curriculum implementation	4
	3.3 Child assessment	-
	3.4 Environment and materials	1
4	4.1 Quality assurance system	-
	4.2 Use of data	-
5	5.1 Family partnerships	2
	5.2 Community partnerships	1

19 In Niue, the average ratings for the curriculum and performance monitoring and assessment core functions, and the ratings for the child assessment, quality assurance system and use of data sub-functions were not calculated due to missing survey data.



### PALAU

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	2	1
2 Human resources	2	4
3 Curriculum	3	4
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	2	3
5 Family and community partnerships	3	3

### PAPUA NEW GUINEA (PNG)<sup>20</sup>

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	-	2
2 Human resources	-	3
3 Curriculum	-	4
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	-	1
5 Family and community partnerships	-	1

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022	
1	1.1 Legislation and policy	1
	1.2 Governance and implementation	2
	1.3 Funding and costing	1
2	2.1 Workforce recruitment	4
	2.2 Pre-service training	4
	2.3 In-service training	3
	2.4 Workforce retention	3
3	3.1 National ECE curriculum	4
	3.2 Curriculum implementation	4
	3.3 Child assessment	3
	3.4 Environment and materials	4
4	4.1 Quality assurance system	3
	4.2 Use of data	3
5	5.1 Family partnerships	3
	5.2 Community partnerships	3

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022	
1	1.1 Legislation and policy	2
	1.2 Governance and implementation	2
	1.3 Funding and costing	2
2	2.1 Workforce recruitment	4
	2.2 Pre-service training	4
	2.3 In-service training	3
	2.4 Workforce retention	2
3	3.1 National ECE curriculum	3
	3.2 Curriculum implementation	4
	3.3 Child assessment	3
	3.4 Environment and materials	4
4	4.1 Quality assurance system	1
	4.2 Use of data	1
5	5.1 Family partnerships	1
	5.2 Community partnerships	1

<sup>20</sup> Papua New Guinea did not participate in the 2017 status report.



### REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS (RMI)

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	2	2
2 Human resources	2	3
3 Curriculum	2	3
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	2	3
5 Family and community partnerships	2	3

### SAMOA

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	2	2
2 Human resources	2	4
3 Curriculum	2	4
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	2	1
5 Family and community partnerships	2	3

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022	
1	1.1 Legislation and policy	2
	1.2 Governance and implementation	2
	1.3 Funding and costing	2
2	2.1 Workforce recruitment	1
	2.2 Pre-service training	3
	2.3 In-service training	3
	2.4 Workforce retention	3
3	3.1 National ECE curriculum	3
	3.2 Curriculum implementation	4
	3.3 Child assessment	3
	3.4 Environment and materials	3
4	4.1 Quality assurance system	3
	4.2 Use of data	2
5	5.1 Family partnerships	4
	5.2 Community partnerships	2

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022	
1	1.1 Legislation and policy	2
	1.2 Governance and implementation	3
	1.3 Funding and costing	2
2	2.1 Workforce recruitment	4
	2.2 Pre-service training	4
	2.3 In-service training	4
	2.4 Workforce retention	2
3	3.1 National ECE curriculum	4
	3.2 Curriculum implementation	4
	3.3 Child assessment	3
	3.4 Environment and materials	4
4	4.1 Quality assurance system	1
	4.2 Use of data	1
5	5.1 Family partnerships	3
	5.2 Community partnerships	2



### SOLOMON ISLANDS<sup>21</sup>

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	2	3
2 Human resources	2	4
3 Curriculum	2	-
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	2	4
5 Family and community partnerships	2	3

### TOKELAU<sup>22</sup>

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	-	3
2 Human resources	-	3
3 Curriculum	-	3
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	-	3
5 Family and community partnerships	-	3

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022	
1	1.1 Legislation and policy	3
	1.2 Governance and implementation	3
	1.3 Funding and costing	2
2	2.1 Workforce recruitment	4
	2.2 Pre-service training	4
	2.3 In-service training	4
	2.4 Workforce retention	3
3	3.1 National ECE curriculum	3
	3.2 Curriculum implementation	3
	3.3 Child assessment	-
	3.4 Environment and materials	4
4	4.1 Quality assurance system	4
	4.2 Use of data	3
5	5.1 Family partnerships	3
	5.2 Community partnerships	3

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022	
1	1.1 Legislation and policy	4
	1.2 Governance and implementation	3
	1.3 Funding and costing	2
2	2.1 Workforce recruitment	3
	2.2 Pre-service training	1
	2.3 In-service training	4
	2.4 Workforce retention	2
3	3.1 National ECE curriculum	4
	3.2 Curriculum implementation	4
	3.3 Child assessment	3
	3.4 Environment and materials	1
4	4.1 Quality assurance system	4
	4.2 Use of data	2
5	5.1 Family partnerships	2
	5.2 Community partnerships	3

21 In Solomon Islands, the average rating for the curriculum core function and the rating for the child assessment sub-function were not calculated due to missing survey data.

22 Tokelau did not participate in the 2017 status report.



### TONGA

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	2	2
2 Human resources	2	3
3 Curriculum	2	3
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	2	3
5 Family and community partnerships	2	1

### TUVALU

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	2	3
2 Human resources	2	4
3 Curriculum	2	3
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	2	4
5 Family and community partnerships	2	3

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022	
1	1.1 Legislation and policy	3
	1.2 Governance and implementation	2
	1.3 Funding and costing	2
2	2.1 Workforce recruitment	2
	2.2 Pre-service training	3
	2.3 In-service training	3
	2.4 Workforce retention	2
3	3.1 National ECE curriculum	4
	3.2 Curriculum implementation	4
	3.3 Child assessment	3
	3.4 Environment and materials	2
4	4.1 Quality assurance system	
	4.2 Use of data	3
5	5.1 Family partnerships	1
	5.2 Community partnerships	1

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022	
1	1.1 Legislation and policy	3
	1.2 Governance and implementation	3
	1.3 Funding and costing	2
2	2.1 Workforce recruitment	4
	2.2 Pre-service training	4
	2.3 In-service training	4
	2.4 Workforce retention	3
3	3.1 National ECE curriculum	4
	3.2 Curriculum implementation	1
	3.3 Child assessment	3
	3.4 Environment and materials	4
4	4.1 Quality assurance system	4
	4.2 Use of data	3
5	5.1 Family partnerships	3
	5.2 Community partnerships	3



### VANUATU

2017 and 2022 average ratings across core functions

Core function	2017	2022
1 Planning and budgeting	2	3
2 Human resources	2	3
3 Curriculum	3	3
4 Performance monitoring and assessment	2	3
5 Family and community partnerships	3	3

### 2022 RATINGS ACROSS SUB-FUNCTIONS

Functions and sub-functions	2022
1.1 Legislation and policy	3
1 1.2 Governance and implementation	4
1.3 Funding and costing	3
2.1 Workforce recruitment	1
2 2.2 Pre-service training	4
2.3 In-service training	3
2.4 Workforce retention	2
3.1 National ECE curriculum	3
3 3.2 Curriculum implementation	3
3.3 Child assessment	3
3.4 Environment and materials	4
4 4.1 Quality assurance system	4
4.2 Use of data	2
5 5.1 Family partnerships	4
5.2 Community partnerships	2



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