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BUILD TO LAST

A framework in support of universal quality pre-primary education

Participation in quality early childhood education (ECE) sets in motion a positive learning cycle and is a proven strategy to address the global learning crisis at its roots. Quality ECE helps to close early learning gaps, strengthens the efficiency of education systems, and provides for a solid foundation for human capital development and economic growth.

As governments and their partners seek to scale up quality pre-primary education, it is critical for these efforts to be guided by a strong, comprehensive and systemic vision.

The *Build to Last* framework was developed to support governments' efforts to scale up quality and sustainable ECE.

Drawing on research and international experience, the framework:

- **identifies the essential, interrelated features of an effective pre-primary subsector that helps ensure children's optimal learning and development in ECE programmes;**

- **promotes a systems approach to planning and improving access to quality ECE; and**

- **supports national and global efforts to advance the achievement of universal access to equitable, high-quality pre-primary education.**
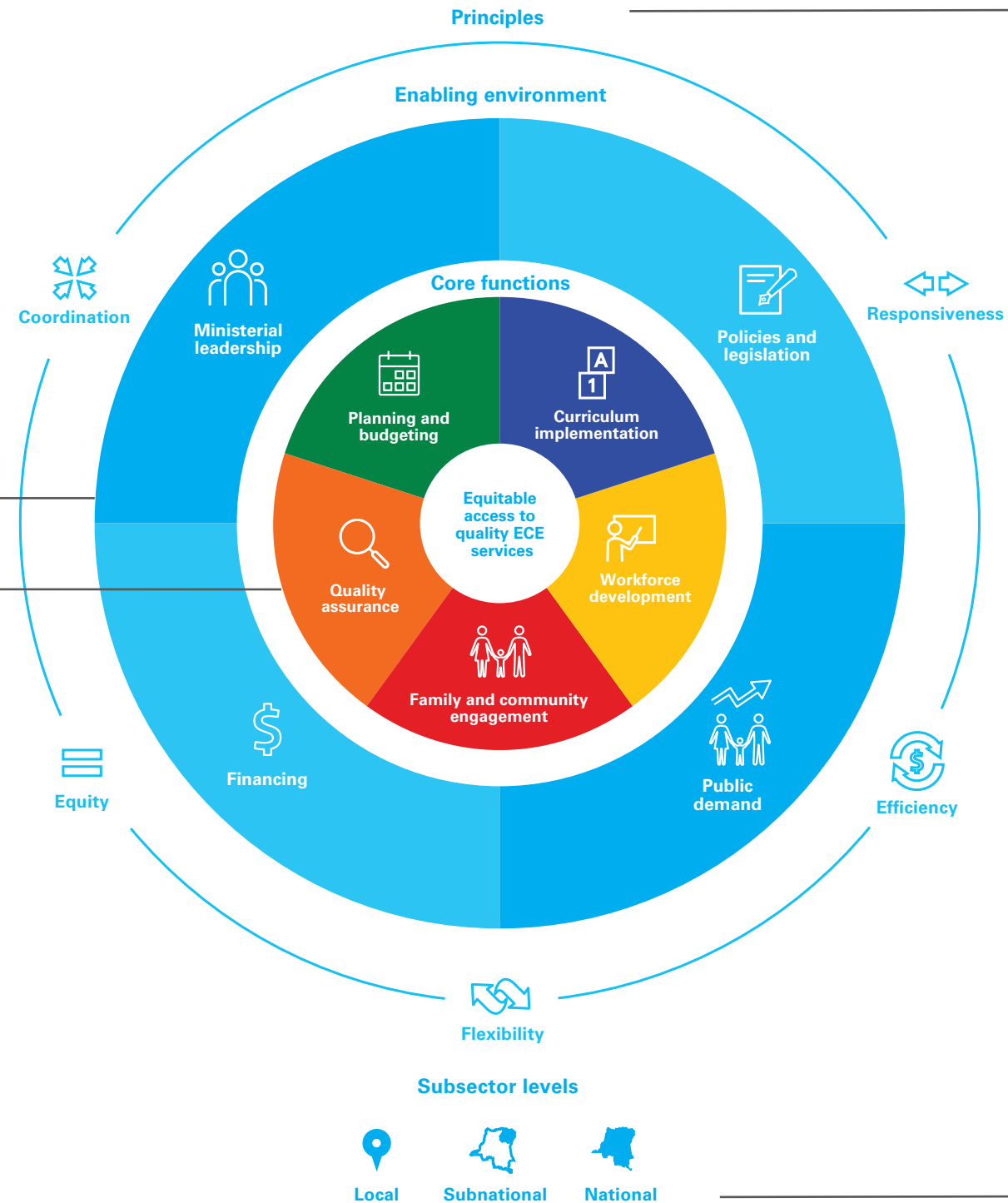
The building blocks of an effective pre-primary subsector

Enabling environment

An effective and equitable pre-primary subsector requires a strong and supportive environment. Within the enabling environment, the framework focuses on four catalysts that are vital for advancing the subsector's development – ministerial leadership, policies and legislation, financing and public demand.

Core functions of the pre-primary subsector

An effective subsector develops and nurtures five core functions: (1) planning and budgeting, (2) curriculum development and implementation, (3) workforce development, (4) family and community engagement and (5) quality assurance. Systems-strengthening requires the establishment of robust implementation and governance mechanisms for each of the core functions. The sustainability of interventions and potential reforms requires commitment and cooperation at all levels of government, among all types of service providers, and with international and national development partners.

Principles

When a country is building or strengthening its pre-primary education subsector, applying a set of basic principles will increase the likelihood that this work will endure over time, despite shifting conditions or crises. The framework recommends the use of five overarching principles:

- **Equity.** Decisions about pre-primary services ensure fair access for all children.
- **Efficiency.** Thoughtful, evidence-based decisions consider how to create the greatest benefits within the available resources.
- **Responsiveness.** The design of pre-primary systems and services takes the likely changes in national and local contexts, cultures and needs into account.
- **Coordination.** The process reflects dynamic, ongoing interactions between sectors beyond education, as well as the pre-primary subsector and other education subsectors.
- **Flexibility.** While anchored in the authority of a central government ministry, the pre-primary subsector recognizes the full range of programme approaches and engages with multiple providers, including public, private, not-for-profit and for-profit service delivery.

Subsector levels

Although discussions of systems-building often concentrate on the national level, a strong pre-primary subsector is only as strong as its district- or local-level implementation. This framework considers the dynamic relationships between different levels of government as they influence each other. It is important to consider, for example, not only how policies at the national or subnational levels affect what happens at the local level, but the reverse as well.

The *Build to Last* framework offers a blueprint for systematic government engagement from which a coherent plan for pre-primary education can emerge, and can support systems-strengthening in pre-primary subsectors at different stages of development.

Tips for using this framework:

- This framework is designed to be given meaning by each country and each group of users. Its flexibility allows for adaptation and prioritization for each country's context and the specific ways its pre-primary system functions.

- The framework is not intended to dictate the content or structures of a country's pre-primary subsector, how services should be delivered, or which improvements are priorities. Because countries, contexts and cultures differ so greatly, the steps it outlines for establishing or enhancing pre-primary services are a starting point.

- The framework maintains a systems-strengthening perspective and a long-term view for delivering quality services.

Creating a comprehensive set of priorities for the pre-primary subsector, and taking action to strengthen the associated functions, is central to building equitable education systems that will place millions of children today on the path to fulfilling their potential. We invite you to use this framework to support your systems strengthening efforts.

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