



ARNEC
Asia-Pacific Regional Network
for Early Childhood

#ARNECwebinars

ARNEC holds webinars to connect the ECD community in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond on early childhood development

Accelerating ECD Outcomes through Strengthened Governance Mechanisms

25 May 2022, 4:00-5:30 Singapore time

ARNEC, ISSA lead webinar on strengthening the early childhood workforce in the Asia-Pacific region

Recognising the role of the early childhood workforce in improving the quality of early childhood development (ECD) services and outcomes for young children, ARNEC and the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) facilitated a webinar on 25 May 2022.

The webinar had a theme on strengthening the early childhood workforce in the Asia-Pacific region highlighting the need for proper recognition and support for professionalisation, competency development, and investment.

ISSA and the Results for Development (R4D) implement the



Early Childhood Workforce Initiative (ECWI), which has expanded to include partnerships with ARNEC and other regional ECD networks to advocate sustained attention to addressing workforce issues at the country, regional, and global levels and to support cross-country learning and capacity-building.

The speakers were Dr. Cliff Meyers, ARNEC; Zorica Trikic and Vidya Putcha, ISSA-R4D; and Chavi Vohra, Mobile Creches India. Professor Margaret Sims moderated the webinar. The documentation report and presentation materials are available in <https://arnek.net/resource?id=311>.

...whilst experts share insights, experience on developing early childhood workforce

Dr. Cliff Meyers, ARNEC Board of Directors member, presented the status of the early childhood workforce in the Asia-Pacific region clarifying who are part of the 'early childhood workforce' depending on country-specific context in the region.

They are referred to as teachers, caregivers, practitioners, and frontline workers and

usually operate in health, care, nutrition, education, and protection sectors.

Apart from citing research-based findings on the role of the workforce in raising child development outcomes, Cliff stressed the challenges they face in the region, among them are the inadequate standards, limited competency-based learning and professionalisation, and the lack of enabling



WHO is Early Childhood Workforce?

- Early childhood workforce consists of, professionals, volunteers and paraprofessionals, working directly with children to support their healthy growth, development and learning and to those responsible for leading and managing ECCE services.
- They may variously be referred to as 'professionals', 'teachers', 'caregivers', 'educators' 'frontline workers' or 'practitioners', depending on country-specific context and usage.
- Whether employed by government or non-state actors, early childhood workforce operates within and across a variety of sectors, including health, care, nutrition, education (Ref: ECWI)



IMPACT OF PANDEMIC ON EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE IN THE REGION

The regional survey conducted by UNESCO reported:

- **Few ECE personnel had received training on crisis management (1.2%) and distance teaching and learning (20%)** prior to the COVID-19 outbreak in the region
- **The closure of ECCE provisions affected the working condition of the staff.** Around 6.7 percent of respondents were approached by their employer to consider leaving or terminating their contracts.
- **Many ECE teachers experienced pandemic-induced stress.** However, the survey revealed that only 35.2 percent of respondents reported to receive psycho-social support such as stress management advices.

environment necessary to support better work conditions, sustained investment, and appropriate legal-regulatory arrangements.

Cliff also presented the conditions of the workforce during COVID-19, particularly the closure of ECCE services and, as a result, ECE workers experienced pandemic-induced stress with little support for managing this crisis, keeping their well-being, and shifting to distance teaching and learning when the pandemic eased up.

In disadvantaged communities in India at the height of COVID-19, Chavi Vohra, Integrator-Childcare Service and Capacity-Building at Mobile Creches India, emphasised adjusting and prioritising capacity-building for staff and partners providing care and protection services.

Chavi reinforced the critical link and roles of frontline workers and partners to provide ECD services for young children and families in urban slum settlements when lockdowns disrupted services.

Meanwhile, Senior Program Officer Vidya Putcha of R4D introduced ISSA's ECWI program, whose goal is for the early childhood workforce to be prepared, supported, and empowered so that it provides young children and families with quality services. Vidya also highlighted the four elements essential to support the workforce encompassing (1) competencies and standards; (2) training and professional development; (3) working conditions; and (4) continuous quality improvement.



Zorica Trikić, ISSA

Zorica Trikić, Senior Program Manager at ISSA, explained the Home Visiting Workforce Needs Assessment Tool and how this could be used to identify workforce strengths and gaps to leverage priority attention by governments in the region.



Vidya Putcha, R4D

Discussions followed focusing on male engagement and the value of strategic political messaging to get policy support for the early childhood workforce.

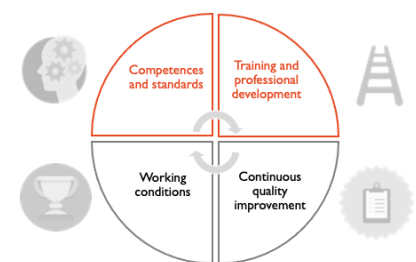
The presentation materials of Cliff, Zorica, and Vidya, and the full webinar recording are available in the ARNEC website.

Strengthening and Supporting the Early Childhood Workforce

Zorica Trikić & Vidya Putcha
May 25, 2022

EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE INITIATIVE
earlychildhoodworkforce.org

Four elements to support and strengthen the early childhood workforce





Margaret Sims

Honorary Professor, Macquarie University, Australia and Member, ARNEC Steering Committee

From the Webinar Moderator

It has been 20 years since neurobiological research provided the evidence for the importance of investing in early childhood development. Twenty years after, there seems to be little progress getting political support from policymakers and decision makers. It is time we get the right political messages out and involve politicians to get the enabling support we need for the early childhood workforce and early childhood development.

Moving forward

Webinar insights and action points

- 1 Visibility of the early childhood workforce matters in recognising the vital roles they play in laying the foundation for early childhood development
- 2 Political support for the provision of enabling environment for the early childhood workforce (e.g. legal arrangements for working conditions, financing, etc.) important
- 3 Investing in building competencies and capacities of the early childhood workforce essential for the quality of early childhood services and outcomes
- 4 Building the info base on the early childhood workforce at the country level necessary for cross-country learning and regional-global advocacy

earlychildhoodworkforce.org

Website

Knowledge Hub



Sign-up to the ECWI Newsletter!

Please feel free to get in touch:

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Early childhood workforce resources are available in the ISSA website

<https://www.issa.nl/workforce>



<https://ar nec.net>



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