

# I am Ready!

## Accelerated intensive pre-primary education programme

### Why “I am Ready?”

Delivering **quality early childhood education (ECE)** is one of the most critical and cost-effective investments a country can make. Investment in early childhood education not only prepares young children to succeed in school and in life, but also improves the efficiency and effectiveness of education systems and is a foundational investment in the promotion of gender equality and inclusion. Yet despite global commitments to universalise access to pre-primary education by 2030, progress has been slow and uneven: half of the world’s children still do not have access to any form of pre-primary education and ECE remains grossly underfunded with only 1.4% of Education development assistance going towards ECE in 2022.<sup>1</sup>

Scaling up ECE to meet **Sustainable Development Goal 4.2** requires governments to work with new and existing delivery models while advancing national strategies to ensure quality, inclusion, and equity. **I am Ready!** is one such model and offers an opportunity for governments to address issues of access and equity in ECE.

The Daily Routine		
00-08:15	Arrival time (15 min) ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	
08-09:05	Movement time (20 min) ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	
09-09:55	Circle time (20 min) ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	
09-10:00	Cognitive Training Program (CTP) (20 min) ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	
10-10:30	Outdoor time (including free play) (20 min) ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	
10-10:50	Handwashing and snack time (20 min) ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	
10-10:50	Planning time (20 min) ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	
10-11:30	Center play time (20 min) ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	
11-11:30	Review time (20 min) ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	
12-12:40	Reading time (20 min) ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	
12-12:50	Handwashing time (20 min) ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	
13-13:15	Lunch and break time (20 min) ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	
13-13:15	Departure time ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ ᐅᓂᓂᓂ	

<sup>1</sup> <https://theirworld.org/news/new-report-reveals-record-aid-spending-on-pre-primary-education/>

## What is I am Ready?

**I am Ready!** is an **accelerated, intensive pre-primary education** model that aims to build the school readiness of disadvantaged children without access to ECE to better prepare them for school entry and successful learning. It is delivered in 8-12 weeks prior to primary school entry.

The concept was originally developed by the **Mother Child Education Foundation (ACEV)**, based in Turkey, to serve disadvantaged Turkish and Syrian refugee children who have no access to any form of ECE. It was then contextualised and pilot-tested by **Plan**

**International** in Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Tanzania.

**I am Ready!** is a **holistic, play-based model that aims to develop the physical, linguistic, cognitive, and socio-emotional skills of children**. It teaches healthy habits and fosters well-being by focusing on physical activity, play-based learning, good nutrition and appreciation for the outdoors and environment. It follows a **daily routine** that stimulates conceptual development, and acquisition of pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills. It also teaches children ways to recognise their emotions, communicate them in appropriate ways, as well as interact and establish positive relationships with peers and adults. It focuses on foundational learning with socio-emotional skills at the centre. The main Building Blocks of the model:

### Support the government to adapt and implement I am Ready!

- Contextualise the model to align with national policies:** consultation meetings led by government to review and align the model with national context, policies, standards, curriculum, and tools.
- Capacity building:** Training a critical mass of programme champions and trainers from within government at national and sub-national level who will, in turn, train and mentor teachers to implement the model.
- Enhance reach:** Supporting the **education systems** and communities to reach disadvantaged children, especially in remote, rural areas and from minority groups.

### Support the **holistic development** of young children to increase their readiness to enter and succeed in school.

- Play-based active learning through a daily routine:** A key feature of **I am Ready!** is a daily routine of play-based, indoor, and outdoor learning activities divided into blocks of time. Each block of time incorporates activities that aim to achieve specific development goals. It makes use of teachers' guidebooks, children's workbooks and teaching aids aligned with national curriculum standards.
- Good hygiene education and healthy eating:** The program teaches children good hygiene by integrating handwashing and toothbrushing practices into the daily routine. It also promotes good nutrition by providing children with healthy snacks or meals and teaching them about the importance of healthy food.

### Engage parents to support their children's learning and development through parent education.

The model teaches parents simple ways of supporting their children's learning and wellbeing, and how to create a home environment that is free from gender bias and any other form of discrimination.

### Promote community engagement and ownership for sustainability.

Community members are mobilised to provide and/or help create safe and conducive learning environments and to monitor enrolment and attendance of children in the programme.

**I am Ready! curriculum** is contextualised to align with national ECE policies and standards. The programme typically runs between 4-6 hours a day, 4-6 days a week, depending on country context. The programme duration ranges from 8-12 weeks. In Lao PDR and Turkey, it is implemented as a 10-week programme to align with the school holidays. In Cambodia, it runs for 8 weeks for the same reason. In Tanzania, the programme is 12 weeks as it is only delivered 4 days a week.

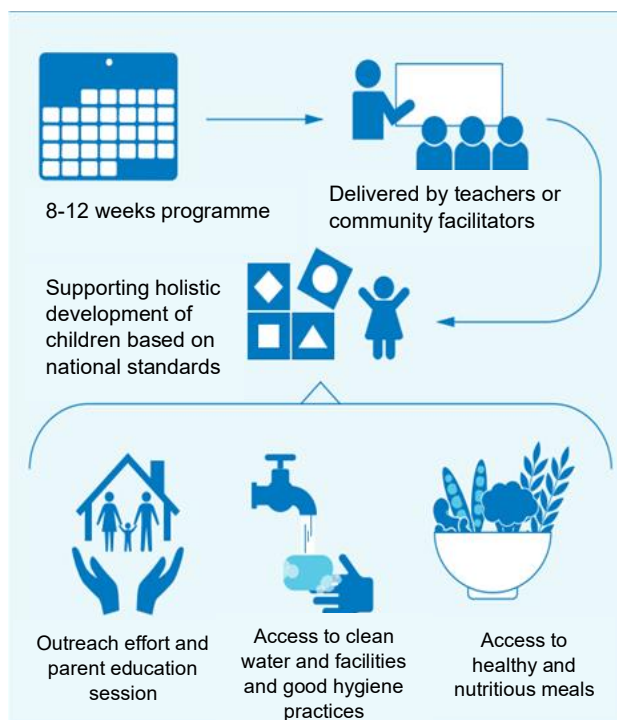
**I am Ready!** is **low cost** and builds on resources present in schools and communities, for example by utilising existing primary school teachers or community volunteers. Classes are held in primary school classrooms or any safe community space, with access to clean water and toilets.

The **value** add of this model is that since it requires low investment in teachers and classrooms, access to education can significantly increase for the most disadvantaged children, at a fraction of the cost of a regular ECE programme.

**I am Ready!** model recognises the importance of evidence-based advocacy to government at national and sub-national level for replication, scale up and sustainability.

## Gender Equality and Inclusion

Gender and inclusion is integrated into the model through strengthening the school readiness of marginalised girls and boys and addressing the barriers faced at school and household levels. In addition, teacher training builds teachers' understanding of gender norms, roles, and stereotypes and how these affect the experiences of girls and boys in all their diversity, especially their right to education. Teachers are trained to promote GE&I in the classroom via practical strategies, day-to-day **child-centred and gender transformative practices**, and tailoring instruction and assessment to children's varying needs.



The model materials use gender-equal language, represent girls and boys equally, including those with disabilities, in illustrations, and do not reinforce stereotypes and discriminatory practices.

## Evidence and Experience

The model was first implemented in Lao PDR in 2014-2018 and then expanded in Lao PDR (additional provinces), Cambodia and Tanzania in 2021-2024 with support from the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge, Innovation and Exchange ([GPE-KIX](#)), a joint endeavour between the International Development Research Center and GPE to scale promising education innovations.

Results from evaluations conducted in Turkey and Lao PDR indicate that **I am Ready!** improves school readiness, on-time enrolment, and retention in Grade 1 as well as the resilience of children exposed to early life adversities.

An impact study was conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) using a randomised controlled trial (RCT) in Lao PDR. The study compared **I am Ready!** participants, those enrolled in government



nine-month ECE and those who received no ECE. The study highlighted that **I am Ready!** participants increased on-time Grade 1 enrolment, school readiness and completion of Grade 1. The findings related to on-time enrolment were particularly noteworthy, as **I am Ready!** participants had a 37% higher rate of transition than those with no access to ECE, and an 18% higher transition rate compared to those in government ECE.

With regards to school readiness, **I am Ready!** participants had greater gains in numeracy and literacy when compared to children who received government pre-primary and those who did not receive ECE.

In Lao PDR, the strong outcomes influenced the government's decision to include the

model as an alternative innovative strategy for reaching children in disadvantaged districts in the 2021-2025 Education and Sports Sector Development Plan.

A similar impact study was conducted by AIR in Tanzania which compared the model participants to those who did not have access to any ECE. Findings indicate that the intervention increased children's enrolment in ECE by 25 percent making access close to universal (94%) and reaching gender parity in enrolment. **I am Ready!** also increased parents' participation in parenting sessions by 47%. Additionally, it improved school readiness (emergent numeracy, socio-economic learning, and motor skills).

## About Plan International

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls. We believe in the power and potential of every child but know this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it is girls who are most affected.

Working together with children, young people, supporters and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges girls and vulnerable children face. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood and we enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge.

For over 85 years, we have rallied other determined optimists to transform the lives of all children in more than 80 countries.

We won't stop until we are all equal.

### Plan International

Global Hub  
Dukes Court, Duke Street, Woking, Surrey  
GU21 5BH, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 1483 755155  
Fax: +44 (0) 1483 756505  
E-mail: [info@plan-international.org](mailto:info@plan-international.org)



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