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THE STATE OF
ECD & IQE

PROGRAMMES AND INFLUENCING IN APAC

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) AND INCLUSIVE QUALITY EDUCATION (IQE)

Learning Review (2020-2024)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FOREWORD

When we embarked on this learning review, some of the questions we were excited to find answers to were: what are the key investment areas in ECD and IQE? What are the areas of focus? What are the trends? What are the thematic strengths and expertise in APAC? What are promising interventions? What can we actually learn given the limitations of time and resources for this learning review?

This review generated so much data and information that we can only begin to turn into knowledge and wisdom some of it, up to this point. We hope that this report will be a seminal document for Plan International staff that are genuinely interested and invested to design and create better and more impactful education projects and programmes. Because while the upward trend in Plan International APAC COs in terms of reach and funding can be satisfying, we have to keep up with the gaps and challenges of the times.

The report is long but worth reading from start to finish because it is very interesting. The depth and breadth of the Country Offices' work is impressive. Here are a few of the interesting initiatives:

- Parenting Under Pressure program in Myanmar
- Early learning and pre-primary education for children in Laos, which is APAC's contribution to the suite of global programme models
- Plan International is a pioneer in gender-transformative and child-centred WASH approaches.
- Plan Bangladesh successfully improved coordination, communication and capacities among ECD Working Group (ECDWG) members towards ensuring access to quality integrated ECCD services of Rohingya and affected host communities.
- Education technology (ed-tech) initiatives: Learning Kiosks of Plan Pilipinas and Plan Nepal, ICT Lab by Plan Nepal, Remote Intelligent Teaching and Research Guidance Center by Plan China, LEHAR- Digital Learning Initiative by Plan India, and Digital Learning Centre on AEP for out of school children still by Plan India.
- STEM approach in education is priority for a good number of COs to promote creativity and 21st Century Skills. Girls in STEM Education Project by Plan China aims to provide STEM learning opportunities for rural children, especially girls. This education model has been adopted by local education bureaus is now promoted at more schools. The project also provides hands-on learning experience of robotic programming for girls, promoting growth mindset among girls and highlighting female role models.
- Plan Nepal is the first organization among development agencies in Nepal to embrace STEAM education approach in its education programme. With its STEAM AHEAD project, Plan is working with the Government of Nepal (GoN), academia and stakeholders to promote this, which highlights the cultivation of essential skills such as creative and critical thinking, problem-solving, and design thinking as integral part of teaching-learning processes.
- Plan India's projects, which range from pre-primary (e.g., Neev Project) to secondary school (e.g., Balika Shivir), provide a whole cycle of education for girls.
- Pacific country programmes are implementing youth led climate adaptation projects. In Papua New Guinea, there is the Disaster READY 2 PLAN Consortium. The Consortium will assist communities and schools to guarantee that women, teenage girls and boys, and individuals with disabilities have an active part in climate resilient disaster preparedness. In Solomon Islands, the Girls' Tekem Akson lo Climate Change (GTACC) project encourages young women and girls to demonstrate leadership and have an impact on local, provincial, and national climate change decision-making. In Fiji, Adolescent Girls in Climate Resilient Disaster Preparedness (AGCRDP) supported youth groups to create climate resilience action plan.

Finally, the APAC regional leadership identified three regional priorities: 1) Ending Child, Early, Forced Marriage, 2) Girls Leadership in Climate Change Actions and 2) Youth and Civic Space. These are not entirely new issues to APAC COs but the prioritization calls for purposive programming and influencing around these three themes. An attempt has been made in this report to identify the education initiatives that support the regional thematic priorities.

Read on!

ABBREVIATIONS

ALS	Alternative Learning System
AOGD	Areas of Global Distinctiveness
BCC	Behavior Change Communication
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
CBLF	Community Based Leaning Facilities
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CEFM	Child Early and Forced Marriage
CCCD	Child Centered Community Development
CCDNs	Community Child Development Networks
CLC	Community Learning Centers
CSSF	Comprehensive School Safety Framework
CSSF	Child-Sensitive Social Protection Framework
CWD	Children with Disabilities
DePED	Department of Education
DLC	Digital Learning Centre
DORP	Drop Out Reduction Program
FDMN	Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals
FLN	Functional Literacy and Numeracy
GEMS	Gender Equity Movement in Schools
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GEI	Gender Equality and Inclusion
GRSCSI	Gender Responsive School and Community Safety Initiatives
HMGs	Home Mother Groups
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IRWSCK	Improving Reading and Writing Skill Of Children In Kalikot
MAM	Moderate Acute Malnutrition
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MRWinS	Minimum Requirements for WASH in Schools
MHM	Menstrual Hygiene Management
MUAC	Mid Upper Arm Circumference
MYRP	Multi-year Resilience Program
NRC	Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre

OSG	Out of School Girls
OS	Out of School
OOSC	Out-of-School Children
OOSC/Y	Out of School Children and Youth
PIE	Promoting Inclusive Education
PFA	Psychosocial First Aid
PSHEA	Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
SAP	Systems, Applications and Product
SARDO	Students at Risk of Dropping Out
SC	Students Cabinet
SEL	Socio-emotional Learning
SEM	Socio-Ecological Model
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SISTER	Safe & Inclusive School Towards Enhanced Resilience
SMCs	School Management Committees
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
STF	School Task Force
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Development Authority
TOT	Training of Trainers
TLC	Temporary Learning Centre
TVL	Technical Vocational Livelihood
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UHND	Urban Health & Nutrition Days
VAWC	Violence against Women and Children
WSUG	Water and Sanitation User Groups
YPE	Youth Peer Educators
ZOD	Zero Open Defecation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Plan International's Global Ambition and Strategy for 2027 focuses on girls-to ensure they know their rights and are able to make informed choices about their lives; to ensure they are protected in times of humanitarian crises; to ensure their voices are represented in program design and planning; and to ensure that evidence and data are used to improve, scale, and sustain programmatic impacts.

Given this background, the Asia Pacific Regional office commissioned this review to determine how country programmes are contributing to the global strategy. The APAC region also wants to promote multi-country collaboration and identify promising practices that have been developed within each country office in the region that can be scaled, replicated, and promoted as a global programme model. Findings from this review will assist the APAC regional team in supporting country offices to further their goals and objectives, as well as serve as a useful reference for the wider organization.

There are two key sections in this report. First is the **result of the mapping** and second is the **observations, analysis and recommendations.** For the first section, PMERL, SAP and Mapping data analysis is included to provide an overview of ECD and IQE status in APAC. We are aware that different kinds of data are being uploaded into the PMERL system from the country offices. This content was added in order to explore how the PMERL dashboard and other reports can be used and analyzed by the country and regional offices. In the first section as well, the projects that have been implemented by Asia Pacific Country Offices (COs) under the ECD and IQE programmes are summarized or given an overview. This is based on a thorough list of project briefs and mapping, based on certain criteria, that has been created of all the projects that the country offices carried out between 2020 and 2024. The members of the APAC Education Network provided the information for this mapping. An attempt was also made to classify the projects and interventions under the Core Components of ECD and IQE Areas of Global Distinctiveness (AOGD). The PMERL team collaborated with APAC Education team for writing this section. Another point to be noted here is that although this report mostly consists of the IQE Learning Review, some components of ECD programmes have been included because IQE also includes early learning and pre-primary education.

The review process section done solely by the external consultant included conversations with APAC and global staff and a desk review of two main mapping documents of programmes within the Inclusive Quality Education (IQE) and Early Childhood Development (ECD) components. Details of these focus group and one on one discussions, as well as a list of all resources reviewed can be found in the Annex section.

Highlights of PMERL and SAP data analysis and mapping:

- Since the PMERL system went live in 2019 up to 1st quarter of 2024, the total number of projects that adopted ECD and/or IQE interventions was 165. Nepal, India and Bangladesh have the most projects with ECD/IQE interventions at 28, 28 and 26 respectively.

- The focus of the projects in APAC are primary education, responsive care, early stimulation and learning and secondary education. In FY23 though, alternative education and learning opportunities was identified as a prioritized thematic area by a majority of the COs.

- Beneficiary reach was generated using the Plan Annual Report, with an impressive 83% increase in reach from FY23 to FY24
    - Total reach of both ECD and IQE in FY23 – 1,083,161
    - Total reach of both ECD and IQE in FY24 – 1,982,676

- The bigger growth in terms of reach is in ECD, with 115% increase. For IQE, it is still a big increase at 61%
    - Total reach for ECD in FY 23 – 442,330; in FY24 – 950,968
    - Total reach for IQE in FY 23 – 640,831; in FY24 – 1,031,708

- The total reach of India is at 1,311,632. Myanmar at 525,670. Nepal at 424,071. Vietnam, Cambodia, Bangladesh and Philippines reach between 100,000 to 200,000. Indonesia, China, Laos, Timor Leste at 30,000-60,000 while Thailand and Fiji at less than 3,000.

- Total fund in ECD in FY2022 was 13.7 m Euro, which reduced to 12.6 m Euro in FY2023.

- Funding for IQE in FY2022 and FY 2023 are almost the same, at 16.2 m Euro and 16.6 m Euro, respectively. The comparison of sponsorship and grants allocation shows that the sponsorship fund adopted more ECD projects, close to the grant funded ECD projects. However, IQE is largely funded by grant, 72% in 2022 and 77% in 2023.

- Financial information highlights a stable or slightly growing financial commitment to both IQE and ECD programmes in the APAC region, particularly through grant funding. Despite some variations in sponsorship funding, the overall financial health of these programmes seems robust, with a clear emphasis on continuing the impact through both sponsorship and grant sources.

- In FY24, APAC had a total of 243 staff in IQE (with India's share at 67%) and 111 staff in ECD (India's share at 26%) projects. Plan India directly implements all projects. *(NB: This does not include Yayasan Plan Indonesia and Plan Timor Leste staffing.)*

- Still in FY24, there were 153 partner organizations, with Plan Vietnam's share at 67%. Plan Laos exclusively works with government partners to carry out projects.

- From the mapping, the COs that work closely with education and education related ministries or departments are Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Although it is acknowledged that other country offices collaborate with education ministries, not all COs provided information about this that could be captured during the project mapping.

- There are no ECD or IQE projects in the three country programs in the Pacific, although in Fiji, the programme office collaborates closely with the Ministry of Education as part of the Girls Resilience Initiative.

- The ECD projects mapped in terms of funding source consist of 37 projects. Top source of funding for ECD is sponsorship, funding 32% of total number of projects. Bilateral and multilateral donors contribute to 27% of projects. International corporate & private sector fund 24%. This significant private sector engagement likely aligns with corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives, indicating that these projects resonate well with corporate donors' strategic goals. UN agencies contribute 11% of the projects, to areas requiring targeted interventions. National Offices, at 6%, play a more limited though essential role in providing localized support.

- The IQE portfolio, with a total of 79 projects mapped, exhibits a different funding dynamic. International corporate and private sector funding is the biggest source, funding 42% of the total number of projects. This heavy private sector involvement suggests a strong alignment between basic education and corporate interests, likely due to the long-term societal impact of these initiatives.

- The distribution of funding across these categories points to a well-rounded but strategically complex financial landscape. For Plan International, maintaining this diversity while managing the risks associated with reliance on specific donor types will be key to sustaining and expanding the impact of both the IQE and ECD programmes in the long term.

- The distribution of project durations across the IQE and ECD programmes spanning 1 to 3 years, dominate the landscape, accounting for 55% of the total. reflects a strategic focus on achieving sustainable and impactful outcomes. Long-term projects (3-5 years), which make up 25% of the total, indicate a commitment to comprehensive initiatives that require sustained effort, particularly in areas like resilience building and multi-year educational reforms. Short-term projects (less than one year), while only 20% of the total, play a critical role in addressing immediate needs, testing new approaches, and laying the groundwork for longer-term investments.

- The pattern of project duration aligns closely with both the type of donor and the thematic focus of the projects. Bilateral and Multilateral Donors, who typically support large-scale, long-term initiatives, are more likely to fund medium to long-term projects, especially in areas like crisis response, education reform, and gender equality. International Corporate & Private Funding often supports both medium-term projects, which align with corporate social responsibility goals, and short-term projects, particularly those related to STEM and technology education where quick, impactful results are desired. UN Agencies, with their focus on targeted, high-impact areas, tend to fund a mix of medium and long-term projects, ensuring sustained engagement in critical sectors. Sponsorship Funds are spread across all durations, reflecting their flexibility in addressing both immediate community needs and supporting longer-term developmental goals.

Highlights from analysis of IQE projects and programmes

The report contains an extensive write-up of ECD and IQE projects and programmes in APAC (2020-2024); on how the country offices projects have approached the main interventions, actions, and innovations under the fundamental and complementary core components. An analysis of the projects that the country offices have implemented from 2020 to 2024 reveals the following investment priority areas under the IQE Program: The list is exhaustive and highly useful in evidencing the work that Plan has done in IQE in APAC.

Uniqueness The IQE programme integrates Plan's unique gender transformative approach to address structural injustices and oppression which are at the basis of gender inequality and climate crisis. Hence, Plan does not only provide technical skills but address deep rooted patriarchal issues and stereotypes along the way though IQE.

Variety of issues One thing is clear - IQE is one of the thematic areas where corporations see Plan APAC as a credible partner. However, the nature of IQE partnerships is changing. From safe schools, improving lifelong learning, promoting digital literacy, facilitating education in emergency, training girls in STEM, to protecting children from violence and preventing CEFM, Plan's IQE portfolio offers a diverse range of programmes and covers multi-disciplinary issues.

Humanitarian Programme Scaling up humanitarian remains a top regional priority and we know climate events and mass migration is on the rise so Ed-tech based partnerships are going to be key as well and within IQE, Education in Emergencies is going to be most fundable.

Climate change education Looking at the donor list, it seems that there is good scope of integrating climate change education where it has not been done yet. This has been mutually recognized as one of the top priorities by NOs, COs and the APAC hub. The new climate change education capacity statement is also key. The document summarizes nearly two decades of pioneering practices from Plan's programming and influencing work in APAC and globally. Gender has come back into focus and climate of course is topping the agenda.

Youth and Skills Based Development Most donors are interested in working with young people of which APAC has one of the highest populations. They are consumers of what companies produce as well as their future workforce. Companies in banking, financial services, IT and consulting are particularly interested in skills development starting at an early level and translating into better 21st century skills in IQE. Youth Leadership Academy or Girls Leadership Academy formats have also caught donor interest highlighting the need to start engaging with youth at a younger age.

Ending Child Marriage and Girls Leadership The three influencing priorities that APAC Regional Hub identified - Climate Change, CEFMU and Youth Leadership - are inextricably related to the donors' interests.

Overall, the review showed that the goals and objectives within the country offices align with the Theory of Change (ToC) for both the IQE and ECD components. Of particular strength is the priority on girls and gender responsive education. All of the countries profiled in the mapping documents emphasize these areas and are working to uplift girls in all of their programming. The review also showed the strong voice of local youth and community members in programme design. The strongest programmes also included youth as implementers-as advocates, mentors, and team leaders. Integrated programming, particularly within sponsorship funded areas, also stood out, with these programmes using a holistic approach to meet the educational and other needs of community members.

Areas where there is room for improvement include creating more robust measures of quality in education programming. The gender marker, a new tool designed to measure where projects sit on a gender continuum, is new and in conversations with staff, has yet to be widely used. Furthermore, indicators within the AOGD packages use narrow descriptors of quality, focusing more on engagement rather than impact. Conversations with APAC regional staff underscored this point, with one country office asking for *"learning outcome assessment tools"*. Staff also discussed the need for timely communication materials, to help with advocacy with government and other partners. Relatedly, the third dimension of change within the ToC for IQE and ECD, which focuses on working with government and other partners on mainstreaming approaches into government curricula and policies, was considered to be the area that needed improvement in both the IQE and ECD programmes and could be strengthened, with the exception of a few projects that had some good models of working with the government.

Some observations were obtained during project mapping, and the following are some areas could be considered.

Early Learning Programmes

could receive significant attention as a programming and influencing priority including in emergency. Child care facilities, preschools, and the ECCE ecosystem are critical because they provide children with high-quality early learning experiences that help them develop core abilities and succeed in formal school.

ECD in Climate Change

Climate change's impact on early childhood development has emerged as a pressing issue in the Asia Pacific area, with advocacy efforts underway. Young children, with their specific physiological, psychological, and social requirements, are especially vulnerablde to and after climate change.

MNCHN Programme

The analysis of country context in the CSP review shows that the demand for MNCHN programs in the Asia Pacific area is still high and thus the programme must be continued.

Reading Enhancement

Reading skill refers to children's basic literacy skills, and when children gain these skills in the early grades, they are more likely to stay in school and continue learning. In general, reading skills with fluency and comprehension could be seen as a priority for supporting children in every primary and secondary education program.

Preparing children with 21st Century skills

The children need to be trained in the skills that are anticipated to be needed in the future and promoting technology education with Science and Math is critical for meeting the demands of the twenty-first century and fulfilling the practical need for quality education. Only a few country offices focus on STEM and ICT in education. This could be one of the primary emphasis areas for influencing and developing new projects.

Inclusive (Children with Disabilities) Education Project

The analysis of country context in the CSP review shows that the demand for MNCHN programs in the Asia Pacific area is still high and thus the programme must be continued.

Out of School Children Enrollment in the Formal School System

The majority of projects that were observed examined the proportion or number of children who attended non-formal sessions, but one top priority might be getting children ready to transfer to a formal education system and complete secondary school education. Conversely, many of the CO's target students may be unable to complete their education in the formal system. In such instance, the children might be ensured an Accelerated Education Program's with the foundational Functional Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) skills.

Girls Education to End CEFMU

Ending child marriage is a regional priority. Ending child marriage and education are inextricably linked. More programmes are needed to promote girls and young women to have access to inclusive, high-quality, safe, and relevant education that will allow them to make informed decisions about preventing child marriages.

Integration of SOYEE and IQE

SOYEE projects prepare girls for the future by equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and attitude necessary to secure job and entrepreneurial opportunities. At the project design and implementation level, better coordination of the IQE and SOYEE programmes will guarantee that girls receive fundamental literacy and numeracy skills while also preparing them to participate in employment or income-generating efforts.

Comprehensive Sexuality in Education (CSE) within IQE programmes

More collaborative approaches between the IQE and SRHR could be strengthened to influence policymakers and school authorities to ensure the successful implementation of CSE in schools.

Climate Change Education and Adaptation (Plan International Capacity Statement on Climate Change Education)

All country office prioritize climate change education in their Country Strategy Document. Plan International Capacity Statement on Climate Change Education could be a good resource to socialize and apply.

School Environment and Safe School Project

Increase more collaboration with School Safety Initiative and Student Learning to support and promote involvement of students in improving learning and capacity development of teachers to facilitate an environment in which all children, adolescents and youth can achieve and enjoy their learning. At the CO project implementation level would be beneficial to determine how Safer Learning Facilities and interventions promote learning and long-term educational outcomes.

EiE Programmes

Plan International Bangladesh and Myanmar demonstrated excellent, innovative, and effective education programmes in emergencies that require more sharing/documentation of evidence for learning and have potential for funding opportunities.

Key Recommendations (By Consultant)

1. Develop **Influencing core training package and capacity development on Gender Transformative programming and influencing.** Plan International prioritizes gender transformative education in all country programs. This approach is highly effective and includes a framework, guidance notes, e-course, and pedagogy modules. Much of this content already exists. A recommendation is to refresh the packaging and socialize with country teams. A core package socialization will strengthen and expand Plan International's ability to communicate the story of their gender transformative work more cohesively, using multi-country and long-term data to demonstrate how this element enhances educational quality.

2. Include training on foundational literacy and numeracy for teachers and school staff within the core package on gender transformative education.

3. Develop a strategy on enhanced collaboration and integration of the humanitarian and development programs.

4. Develop a how-to guide on advocacy to help country teams make long-term systems Develop a how-to guide on advocacy to help country teams make long-term systems level change.

5. Sustain and promote important work in gender and climate change by developing a climate and gender focused funding strategy, targeting donors that prioritize these areas.

6. Generate and share evidence of successful approaches by conducting more external and internal evaluation.

The recommendations are organized into three buckets: Programs and Practice; Strategy and Approach; and Research and Impact.

Detailed recommendations are included in other sections of this report

Programs and Practice

- Develop **Influencing core training package and capacity development on Gender Transformative programming and influencing** that would allow Plan International to have one cohesive approach, be more strategic with its advocacy on the importance of gender transformative education at multiple levels, especially with government, and have the evidence to back it up.

- To develop a **core package targeting youth and young adults**, including elements of technical vocational training, gender transformative education, comprehensive sexuality education, and DRR that would enable more country offices to holistically serve this population and prepare them for adulthood and beyond.

- To develop a strategy on enhanced collaboration and integration of the humanitarian and development programs

Strategy and Approach

- It is s recommended to **develop a how-to guide on advocacy** to help country teams make long-term systems level change - or supported governments to adopt its policies, practices, or approaches, that can include explanations of different types of advocacy, a timeline that aligns the project cycle.

- It is essential to have **well created and timely communication materials** that tell the impact of programs in user friendly formats to share with government and donors for advocacy and fundraising purposes*.

- Sustain and promote important work in gender and climate change by **developing a climate and gender focused funding strategy**, targeting donors that prioritize these areas.

Research and Impact

- From the information available in the mapping documents, however, Sponsorship programming seems to lack a distinct program cycle or methodology that guides the pacing of activities within an impact area. It is recommended that Plan International invest in creating a **Sponsorship Programming Framework**, similar to the framework developed for Gender Responsive Education and other programs. *Save the Children's Common Approach to Sponsorship Programming* module is a good example of a framework that supports country teams in implementing Sponsorship programming.

- It is necessary to show how gender related work makes improvements in quality and what specific elements make this happen. The Global Hub Education and MERL team has developed rigorous results indicators to monitor quality in programs, and **it is recommended that MERL and project teams work closely to better understand these tools and to highlight gender transformative education programs that have met quality measures as defined by the MERL team.** It is recommended that countries be more deliberate in describing what element of quality their projects are trying to achieve and to use **results from the Results Indicator framework to describe how quality improved or changed in their projects.**

- The APAC region has many examples of successful programming spanning a variety of thematic areas. It is recommended that the APAC regional management team work with the MERL team to **conduct multi-country research** that would further validate innovative approaches and provide essential data to make informed decisions related to scale and sustainability, and to support business development.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Plan International commissioned this learning review to document the overall education programmes and projects in the Asia Pacific (APAC) region based on a mapping of projects within the Inclusive Quality Education (IQE) and Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme areas across 13 country offices. The overarching purpose of this review is to strengthen multi-country collaboration by identifying promising interventions and alignment of goals and objectives to Plan International's Global Strategy. The review will also provide recommendations on how to strengthen the regional focus and prioritize projects based on Plan International's Global Strategy, development and humanitarian needs, and trends within the donor landscape. The review will be used to guide engagement with country offices to develop strategic plans in education, conduct more cross-country collaborations, and recognize and promote projects that have the potential to scale and be replicated across the organization.

1.2 Overview of Core Components

Plan International is dedicated to ensuring that children and young people, particularly girls, are able to **learn, lead, decide** and **thrive.** With programming spanning **Inclusive Quality Education** and **Skills and Decent Work**, to **Early Childhood Development, Youth Engagement, Sexual and Reproductive Health** and **Protection from Violence**, Plan International works with local and international partners, community-based organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure girls, especially those living in fragile contexts or fighting injustice, have the support they need to improve their lives. Recognizing the impact that humanitarian and climate-related crises have on communities and particularly girls, Plan has emphasized its work in these areas and has adopted a **humanitarian-development-peace** nexus approach that responds to both near term challenges to girls' rights and systemic issues of gender inequality in crises and fragile contexts.

Plan International identified six priority thematic areas, also called **Areas of Global Distinctiveness** (AoGD), which drive programme and influencing work. The GTPP unit in the region aims to strengthen gender transformative program quality and influencing through support and joint efforts with country offices. It provides services to develop programme & influencing models, connect and strengthen organizational capacity, embed gender transformative programming and influencing and support locally led, globally connected policy and advocacy work. This review will focus on the programmes and projects within two of the AoGDs - **Inclusive Quality Education** and **Early Childhood Development.** IQE sees education as a human right and works to help children, particularly girls, access and complete education, from the pre-primary level to secondary. Programming within this area extends from birth to young adulthood, as in some cases young people need additional support to reach their goals. Recognizing that not all children are able to access formal education, IQE programming also **includes informal and non-formal** education.

Inputs within IQE are organized under the foundational component of teaching and learning and four complementary components: out-of-school children and youth; school governance; school environment; and curriculum and learning material. Programming within the IQE thematic area is developed with a **gender transformative** lens which seeks to work with community members, including boys and men, civil society organizations, government entities, and the donor community to change norms, attitudes and behaviors and influence policies in support of girls and women. IQE programmes are implemented in both development and humanitarian settings and much of Plan International's recent work includes elements of climate resilience and preparedness.

ECD is implemented in both **humanitarian** and **development** settings and targets children under eight years of age from the most vulnerable and excluded backgrounds. Plan International's ECD programming spans three key investment areas:

••

Support for nurturing care and positive relationships within the family, promoting multi-sectorial community services and support for young children's development, and strengthening household resilience for ECD, including during conflict and emergencies.

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Building on existing positive practices, evidence-based parenting education and awareness sessions support caregivers to strengthen their capacity and increase their confidence in caring adequately for their children. As with IQE programmes, ECD programmes use a gender transformative approach, with the idea that parents and caregivers should **value equally** and care equally for all their children, regardless of their sex, abilities or place in the birth order. ECD programmes are **integrated** with other components that impact child health and well-being outcomes. A focus on health, hygiene, and sanitation for example, is a cornerstone of many ECD interventions in the region. Plan International works to ensure that early childhood development is not interrupted during crises and emergency situations and as such, links families and community members to ECD provision even when schools are closed or inoperable.

1.3 Structure of the report

This report is divided into five parts - **methodology, overview of mapping, key observations, recommendations, and annexes.** An external consultant (worked for 9 working days) was assigned to conduct the learning review. The mapping of projects and PMERL data analysis part were done by the APAC GTPP and PMERL team. The methodology section explains how the review was done by the consultant, which resources were used by the consultant, and how they were used to make observations and generate additional data about programmes. The overview of mapping section states a summary of the projects and how they were categorized in alignment with the AOGD core components. The key observations section includes information on trends and gaps within country programmes,

how programmes align with regional and global strategies, promising interventions, and areas for further collaboration. The recommendations section provides detailed suggestions on priority areas which are poised for scalability in other regions/countries or can be put forward as programme models, options for a coherent strategic focus for APAC aligned with Plan's global strategy, and sources of funding that tie in with the regional focus/global strategy and trends in the donor landscape.

The Annexes include a list of documents reviewed, questions and responses from one-on-one and focus groups discussions, country and project specific tables, and data generated on trends and gaps within country programmes.

1.4 Purpose of review

The Learning review will support sharing and learning exchange about education projects across the region. **The key purposes of the Learning Review are:**

1	**2**
To identify and present the country programme priorities and key strengths	To recommend promising interventions and projects of country offices for further multi-country collaboration and research and have the potentials of developing as global programme models;

3	**4**
To better represent how the APAC CO education programmes including early childhood education work aligns with Plan International´s global position, approaches and standards as of AOGD	To recommend strategic approach for APAC regional focus through better prioritization of the projects as of global need and donor priorities.

1.5 Methodology

This review mainly drew from two sources:

(1) A mapping of the IQE and ECD projects carried out in 2020-2024, conducted by the APAC region

(2) Focus group and one-on-one discussions with staff from country, regional, global and national offices.

Other supporting documents provided by the APAC team as well as documents sourced by the consultant served as supplementary content to add context and detail to the mapping documents and conversations with staff.

Furthermore, to review the expenditure trend, donor priority, and result level indicator, these types of analyses were performed using the PMERL system, the Systems, Applications and Product (SAP) system, and mapping documents. The PMERL team worked with APAC Education Adviser to determine how the PMERL dashboard and other reports may be used and reviewed by country and regional offices to assess programme performance and progress. The APAC Finance team provided budget and expenditure related information. A onsultation was made with the Regional Corporate Partnerships Lead for donor priority analysis.

To have an in-depth analysis of the overall education programmes and projects, APAC conducted a mapping of the Country Office (CO) education programmes and projects that were active from 2020 to 2024 and are continuing beyond 2024 as planned. The information was collected from country offices and by reviewing annual reports (narrative section) of FY22 and FY23.

The mapping was completed in mid-February of 2024. The mapping document links can be found in the Annexes.

The mapping documents included the following information per country project:

- ✓ Brief summary of the country's overall strategy and approach
- ✓ Key words highlighting core projects
- ✓ Target beneficiaries
- ✓ Project name, ID/Code, duration, donor
- ✓ Brief project description
- ✓ Key interventions/innovations

1.6 Analysis and Observations

The observations in this review were developed mainly through analyzing the mapping documents. The analysis was done in the following way:

✔ **Key word comparison:** The mapping documents, organized by country, included objectives, target age of beneficiaries, gender transformative features, achievements and expected milestones, and a brief description of the project. Each country entry was preceded by a list of keywords highlighting the types of projects and beneficiaries the projects prioritized. Using the key words within the mapping document, the consultant made the following analysis:

> ❯ *Key investment areas for ECD and IQE.* Three methods were used to determine alignment of key words with key investment areas within the ToC:
> *1) if the key word used was an exact match of any of the words in the key investment area;*
> *2) if they key word was a synonym of words in the key investment area;*
> *3) if the key word described an approach affiliated with the key investment area. A table of key words and related words can be found in Annex 5.1.*

> ❯ *Areas of focus within countries.* The key words used by country programs were analyzed to determine whether a specific focus emerged. A table of the full list of key words used by countries in the ECD and IQE mapping documents can be found in Annex. 5.2.

> ❯ *Trends across countries.* Trends were analyzed by noting the frequency of key words and alignment with key investment areas. The same (or similar) key words used by five or more countries were included in the trends list. A table of trends and key words can be found in Annex 5.3.

✔ **Alignment with the Theory of Change:** To determine whether projects were aligned with Plan International's AoGDs, projects were compared against the Dimensions of Change within the ToC for IQE and ECE (Figure 1).

Figure 1: **Dimensions of Change, IQE, and ECD**
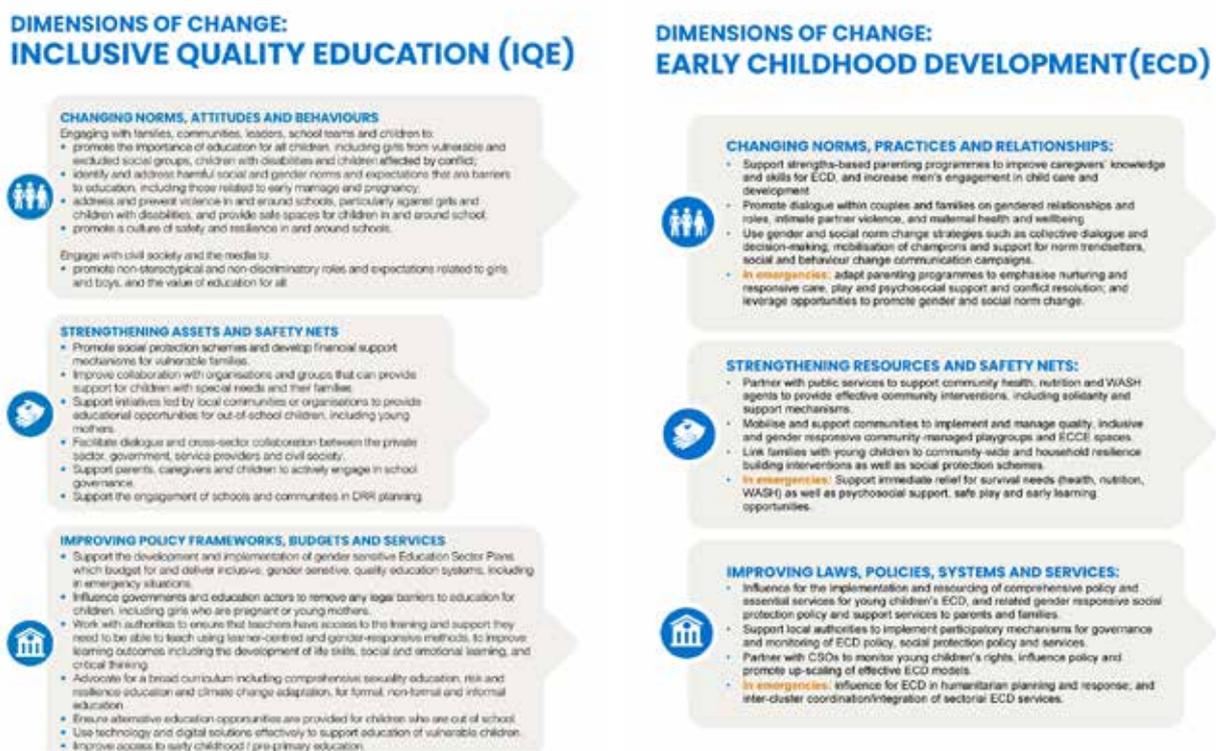
The ToC was chosen as this document is the foundation for each AoGD. The ToC presents the global goals, key stakeholders, specific dimensions of change and key investment areas. It is a high level, yet detailed account of the outcomes and impacts country teams aspire to in their project design. Furthermore, the dimensions of change offer specific guidance on how to foster change for ECD and IQE programming:

> " Support strengths-based parenting programmes to improve caregivers' knowledge and skills for ECD"

> " Support the development and implementation of gender sensitive Education Sector Plans which budget for and deliver inclusive, gender sensitive, quality education systems, including in emergency situations"

This specific guidance was a useful metric to use to when reading project descriptions and examining achievements and milestones within the mapping document.

✔ **Strategic approach.** The strategic approach of each country was difficult to determine using only the brief country introduction included in the mapping documents. To augment this, country office staff were asked to describe their vision/goal for education programming in their countries during focus group discussions. Additional insight into IQE and ECD programs was provided by regional, and national staff during one-on-one discussions. This combination of inputs, as well as individual programme descriptions, was used to gauge each country's strategic approach and how it aligned with the ToC. A table documenting each country's introduction alongside their key words can be found in Annex 5.4.

✔ **Thematic strength and expertise within the region.** Using the conversations with staff as well as project descriptions within the mapping documents, the consultant identified core areas that stood out in the APAC region. Examples of interventions that could be promoted as Global Programme Models that aligned with these core areas are described in this section.

✔ **Promising interventions.** Examples of innovative interventions developed by countries in the APAC region as described in the mapping documents were selected as promising interventions that could be shared with other countries, replicated, and studied further. Four criteria were used to select these examples: the project should have community buy-in, government endorsement, the ability to scale, and evidence of impact.

1.7 Limitations

It is important to note that the mapping document was useful to get a high-level understanding of projects within the region, however full breadth and scope of programming in a desk review on project evaluation reports and key achievements and milestones were not captured for all programmes. As such, this review forms its observations within these limits and recommendations focus on regional application rather than on individual countries and programs.

MAPPING OF ECD AND IQE PROJECT AND PROGRAM (2020-2024)

The ECD and IQE Project Brief documents served as the primary source of material and data for this Learning Review. These two Project Brief documents, created between 2023 and 2024, were filled out by individual country office colleagues to serve as a compendium and summary of initiatives implemented in their respective countries throughout this time frame. Some of the initiatives listed here began before 2020, while others continued after 2024.

Based on the data and project brief collected from the country office via a specific data table, a Mapping was conducted to see the alignment of core components and thematic focus of each country office under the ECD and IQE Programs and Influencing, and some excellent best practices emerged as a result.

The consultant conducted additional reviews and analyses of the programs described in Chapters 4 and 5.

Download the document by clicking on the link

Overview and Mapping of the ECD Program of APAC (2020-2024)

Overview and Mapping
Early Childhood Development
Programme and Projects (2020-2024), APAC

Download the document by clicking on the link

Overview and Mapping of the IQE Program of APAC (2020-2024)
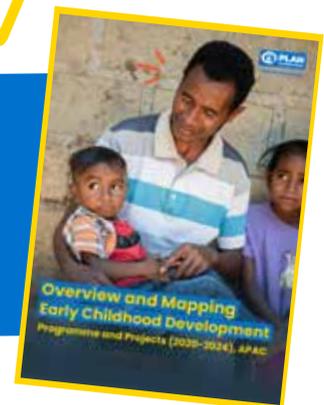
Overview and Mapping
Inclusive Quality Education
Programme and Projects (2020-2024), APAC
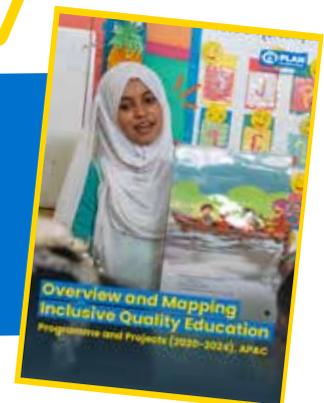
ANALYSIS OF DATA (ECD AND IQE PROJECT AND PROGRAMMES (2020-2024)

Data from the PMERL, SAP, and Mapping documents were used by the APAC team to identify and categorize projects based on key variables, and measuring ECD and IQE core component results by project.

2.1 IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION

Project Thematic Classification (from PMERL data analysis)

This includes assessing various sub-themes within each main theme to identify projects implemented in APAC country offices between 2020 to February 2024, that contribute to ECD and IQE AOGDs. Since the rollout of the PMERL System in **2019 until February 2024**, a total of **165 projects** have been designed by COs in APAC that adopted Early Childhood Development (ECD) and/or Inclusive Quality Education (IQE) interventions.

Chart 1 provides the number of these projects using outputs related to ECD and IQE. Output Codes in Plan are used to manage projects and programmes by linking them to thematic and sub-thematic components, as well as associating them with AOGD and financial dimensions. These codes are primarily utilized within the financial management system that is SAP and are mapped into the PMERL system.

During this period, according to PMERL data the majority of projects (between 26 to 28) were set up by Plan Nepal, Plan India, and Plan Bangladesh. Conversely, the fewest projects were set up by Plan Indonesia, Plan Philippines, and Plan Thailand, with 3, 4, and 5 projects respectively.

🔗 *List of Sub thematic areas*

Chart 1: Projects using IQE and ECD Output Codes

Grand Total	**165**

This data from PMERL was further analyzed to understand the sub-thematic scope of the projects.

Chart 2 illustrates that Primary Education, Responsive Care and Early Stimulation and Learning, and Secondary Education are the sub-thematic areas where most projects in APAC are focused.

In contrast, Early Childhood Development (ECD) in humanitarian responses is only addressed in 12 projects.

🔗 *IQE-ECD project-by-output-20Feb*

Chart 2: **Projects per Sub-thematic Area**

- ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
- FORMAL EARLY EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AGED 3-7 YEARS
- HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE: ECD
- HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE: EDUCATION
- HYGIENE
- INFANT AND CHILD HEALTH AND NUTRITION
- MATERNAL AND NEW-BORN HEALTH
- PRIMARY EDUCATION
- RESPONSIVE CARE AND EARLY STIMULATION AND LEARNING
- SANITATION MANAGEMENT AND PRACTICE
- SECONDARY EDUCATION

Chart 3 shows which Country Office took on projects in which thematic areas during FY23. Predominantly, Alternative Education and Learning Opportunities have been identified as a prioritized thematic area by the majority of the COs

Chart 3: **Sub-thematic Areas by CO under IQE**
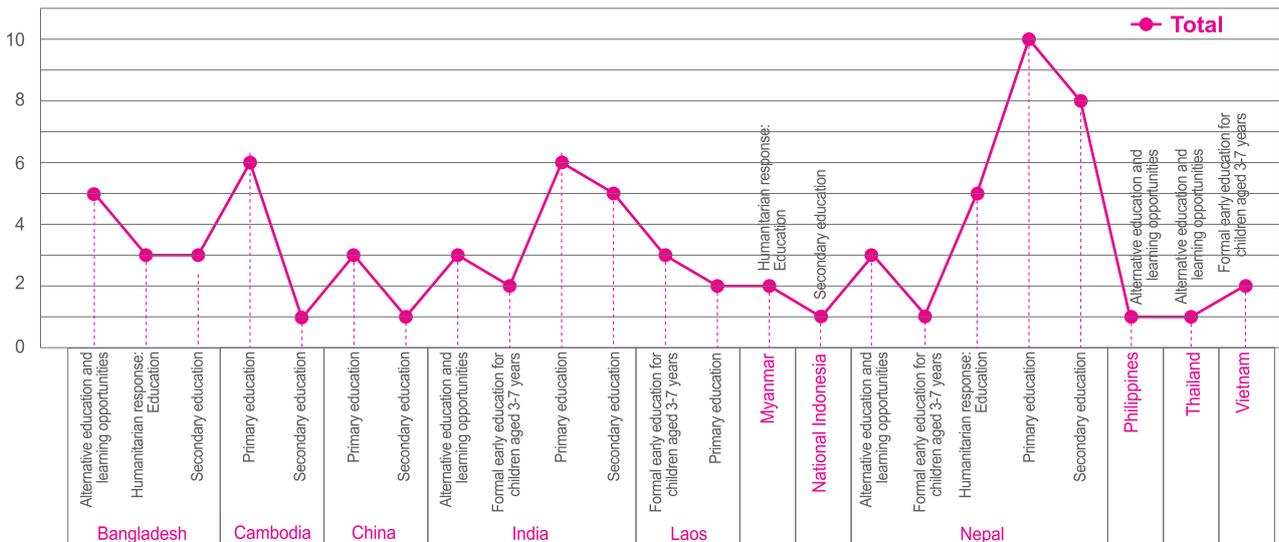
While this analysis does not provide information on the extent to which these areas are being implemented - such as by reach, resource utilization, or results - we have the ability to undertake separate analyses for financial utilization of these projects through SAP, beneficiary reach using the Plan Annual Report, and project contributions to the Plan Areas of Global Distinction (AOGD) through PMERL AOGD reports and data from Mapping (ECD and IQE) documents.

Analysis of reach (Annual reports)

Total Reach of Girls (Under and Over 18 age) (Analysis from Annual Report)

An analysis of total reach for those over and under the age of 18 girls reveals that the overall work on girls in 2024 is impressive.

Plan International, a youth-centered organization that works with girls over the age of 18, is much higher in 2024 than in 2023.

In terms of IQE programmes, in both years, reaching under 18 is covered, while Chart-4 shows that 32,948 more girls reached in 2024.

🔗 *Total Reach Data*

Chart 4: Total Reach Girls (under and over 18 age), FY 23 and FY24
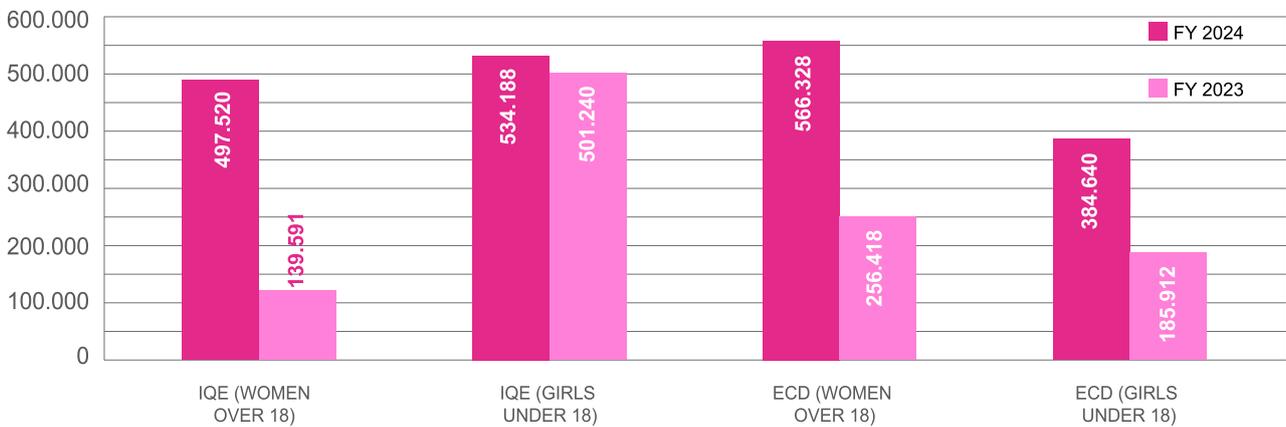
Analysis of Total Reach by Country Office: Girls (Under and over 18 age)

Chart 5: Total Reach by Country (Girls under and over 18) by COs

Chart 5 entitled *'Total Reach by Country (Girls under and over 18)'* provides an analysis of program reach across the region, focusing on both girls and women under and over 18 years old.

The chart illustrates the total reach of girls by country, segmented into four categories.

- The chart shows that India made highest reach across all categories, particularly in IQE for Women Over 18, where over 323,000 women were reached. - This highlights a strong focus on women in programme implementation.

- Bangladesh (CO) stands out for its focus on younger girls, with over 84,000 girls under 18 reached in the IQE category.   This targeted approach suggests a strategic emphasis on improving educational access and quality for younger demographics, which could have long-term benefits for the region.

- Balanced Reach: Myanmar, Vietnam, Nepal, Cambodia exhibit a balanced reach across all four categories, indicating well-rounded programme development that effectively addresses the needs of diverse groups.

- Smaller Reach: Fiji, Timor Leste, Thailand show relatively lower reach across all categories, with Fiji reaching 815 individuals in the IQE for Girls Under 18 - category. The smaller reach data suggests a need for enhanced resource allocation or programme focus in countries with lower reach to ensure a more equitable impact across the region.

- Countries like India, Myanmar, and Nepal have the highest reach, which could correlate with larger populations or greater programme focus.

- Recommendations could be made to focus on increasing reach in low-impact regions. The focus on larger countries and the balanced outreach between girls under 18 and women over 18 demonstrate the programme's broad scope and continued commitment to educational development across the region.

Analysis of programe Spending (FY20 to FY24) (SAP Data)

ECD and IQE Programme Spending by Funding Category

The total fund in **ECD in 2022 was 13.7 m Euro** , which reduced to **12.6 m Euro in 2023 (Chart 6).**

The funding in IQE in FY2022 and FY 2023 are almost the same, at **16.2 m Euro** and **16.6m Euro**, respectively **(Chart 7).**

However, IQE is largely funded by grant, **72% in 2022 and 77% in 2023.**

We see that the percentage of sponsorship fund is **23% in FY23** in IQE and **43% in ECD**, out of the total amount of spending.

Source- SAP

AOGD BVA Data

Chart 6: ECD Programme Spending Summary

FY22 ECD
- Sponsorship 6.458.179 — 47%
- Grant 7.214.972 — 53%
- Total 13.700.151

FY23 ECD
- Sponsorship 5.302.126 — 43%
- Grant 6.962.247 — 57%
- Total 12.264.373

Legend: Sponsorship | Grant | Total
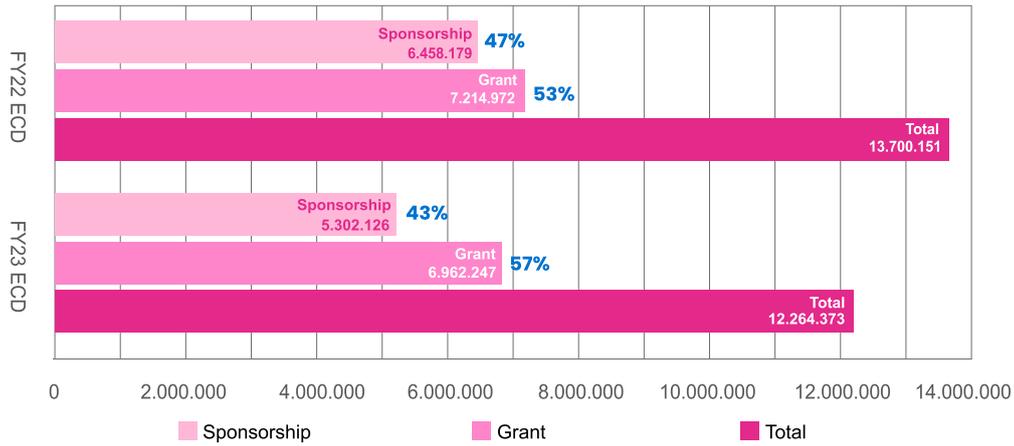
Chart 7: ECD Programme Spending Summary

FY22 ECD
- Sponsorship 4.497.334 — 28%
- Grant 11.719.004 — 72%
- Total 16.216.338

FY23 ECD
- Sponsorship 3.847.219 — 23%
- Grant 12.777.327 — 77%
- Total 16.624.546

Legend: Sponsorship | Grant | Total
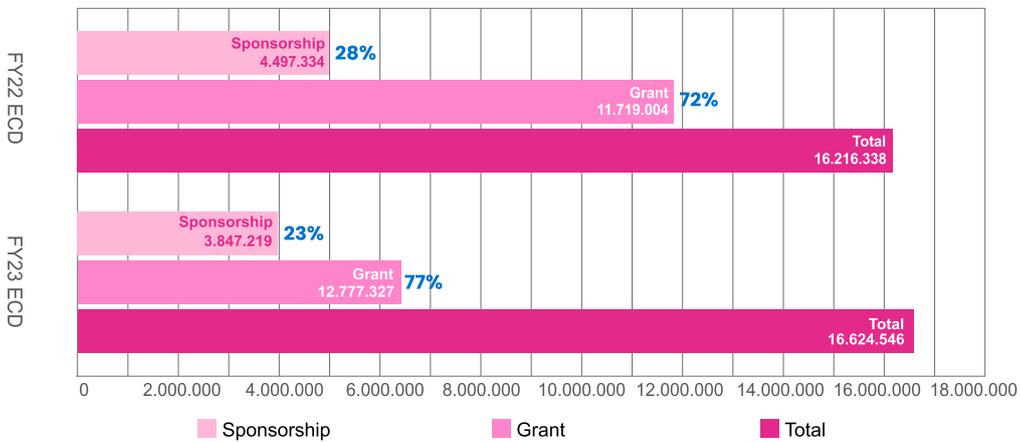
Chart 8: Spending Summary FY22 and FY23

Sponsorship
- € 4,497,334.17 — 28%
- € 3,847,218.82 — 23%
- € 6,458,178.66 — 47%
- € 5,302, 125.99 — 43%

Grant
- € 11,719,003.61 — 72%
- € 12,777,327.28 — 77%
- € 7,241,972.35 — 53%
- € 6,962,247.05 — 57%

Total
- € 16,216,337.79
- € 16,624,546.10
- € 13,700,151.01
- € 12,264,373.04

Legend: FY 22 IQE | FY23 IQE | FY22 ECD | FY23 ECD
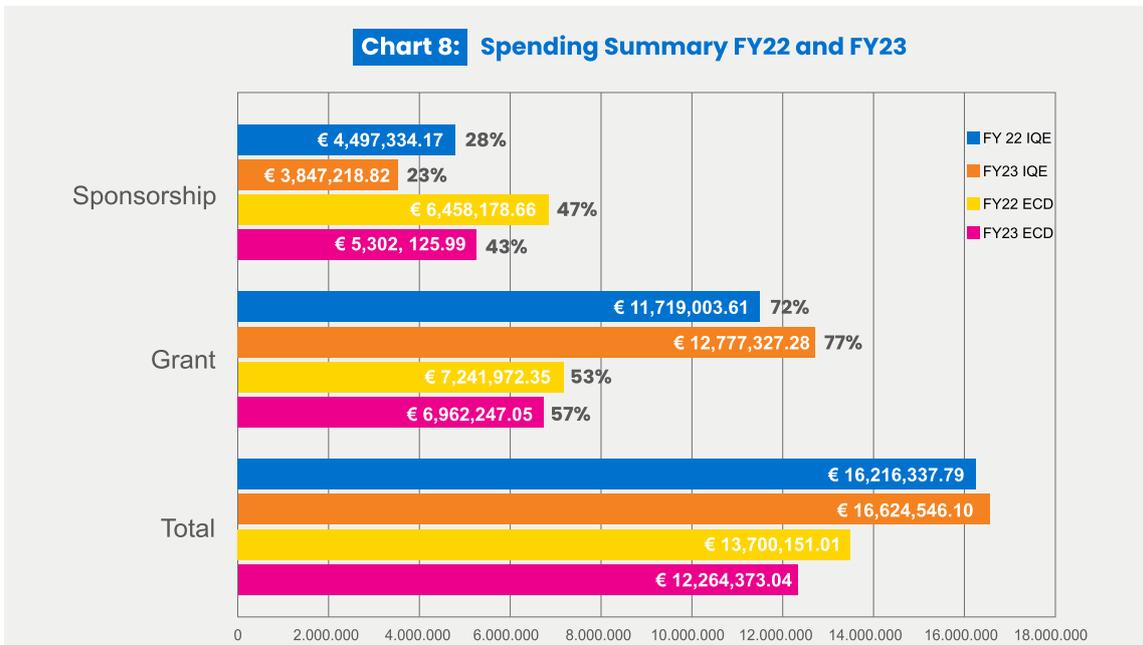
- **Chart 8** provides an overview of the financial expenditures for ECD and IQE programme spending by sponsorship and grants over two fiscal years, FY22 and FY23.

- IQE programme consistently received more grant funding compared to ECD, particularly in FY23 where it reached 77% of total spending. The overall spending for IQE also increased from FY22 to FY23.

- While ECD received a significant portion of sponsorship funding in both years, its total spending decreased in FY23 compared to FY22. Despite the reduction, it still maintained a strong focus on both sponsorship and grant channels.

- Overall, sponsorship amount in the IQE programme has dropped to 23% in FY23 from 28% in FY22. In the instance of ECD programme, the allocation of Sponsorship funding is higher, though overall funding has fallen by 4% from FY23 to FY22. Grant money for the IQE programme has grown. The ECD programme funding has fallen by 3% between FY22 and FY23.

- Grants formed the larger share of funding compared to sponsorship for both programmes, highlighting the importance of securing grant funding for programme success.

- The chart highlights a stable or slightly growing financial commitment to both IQE and ECD programmes in the APAC region, particularly through grant funding. Despite some variations in sponsorship, the overall financial health of these programmes seems robust, with a clear emphasis on continuing the impact through both sponsorship and grant sources.

Analysis of the ECD and IQE Spending List By CO (SAP data)

The SAP spending data by the projects in ECD and IQE in last two years [FY 22 and FY 23] across countries in APAC offers indirect insights into the programmatic priorities of countries in both areas. However, this spending data might not fully reflect the prevailing gaps or needs in each specific country. Further analysis is required to understand the rationale behind these spending choices. It is possible that the observed allocations are influenced by donor interests in specific themes, the presence of other actors who are better positioned to address certain themes, thereby avoiding duplication of efforts or some other strategic choices made by the country offices.

The spending data for Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Inclusive Quality Education (IQE) reveals diverse priorities across various countries and offices. Key insights include:

Chart 9: Country Spending Summary FY22 and FY23 – IQE Program, APAC
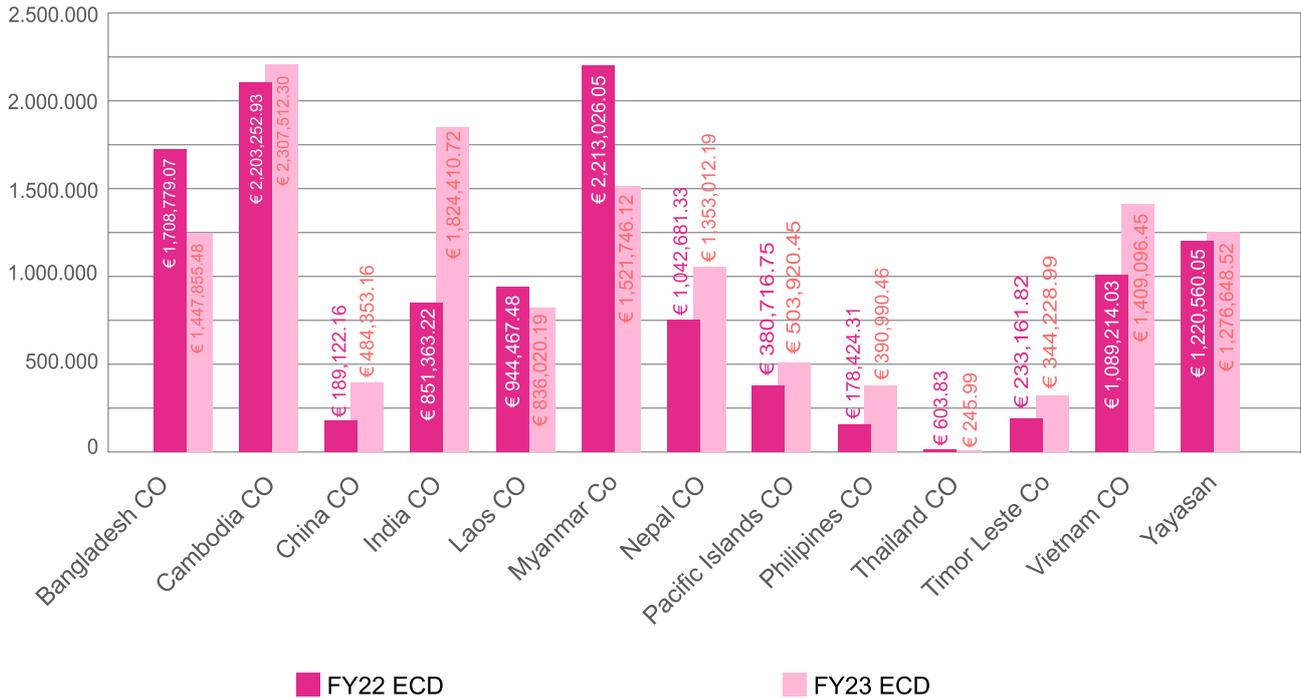
- **Timor Leste and Pacific:** All funding is allocated to ECD, indicating a sole focus on early childhood initiatives.

- **Yayasan (Indonesia):** Focuses predominantly on early childhood programs.

- **Pacific Office:** Allocate no funding for Education Project.

- **Vietnam and Indonesia:** Maintain a balanced approach with a stronger emphasis on ECD (70% and 67% respectively), while also supporting IQE.

- **Laos:** Shows a near-equal distribution between ECD (45%) and IQE (55%), reflecting a slight preference for improving educational quality.

- **Nepal, Cambodia, India and Bangladesh:** Allocate more to IQE compared to ECD prioritizing educational quality improvements. India's allocated higher funding in IQE from 2022 to 2023.

- **India and Cambodia:** Found to have the highest share of funding in IQE. However, in FY23, the allocation of India, in ECD has decreased.

- **Myanmar:** In the instance of the ECD Programme, the most substantial increase was observed with their initiatives in emergency response.

- **Philippines:** Prioritizes IQE with 66% of spending, while ECD receives 34%.

- **China:** Focuses significantly on IQE, compared to ECD. Investment in ECD has decreased significantly by 2024.

- **Thailand:** Allocates small funding in Education. Reduced funding in 2023. Funding on IQE is mainly on the Safe Schools project.

In summary, the spending portfolio reveals that Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia, and India have implemented and prioritized IQE programme, despite the fact that funding was reduced in Bangladesh and Nepal in FY 24 compared to FY 23. While China, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and the Philippines have worked on the IQE Programme, the review shows that these COs provided effective interventions, despite investing less than the aforementioned country offices.

ECD programmes are prioritized at each country office, with Nepal, Bangladesh, India, and Cambodia demonstrating similar focus as with their IQE programmes.

Some investment in the Pacific is shown here, although funding may be directed into DRM because no ECD programmes were located in the Pacific COs during the mapping or review. The Pacific office education programme could be integrated into the new CSP.

There is less spending for Thailand and the mapping shows that they are focusing on school safety, WASH and some other interventions, which may indicate that the spending is made under DRM or elsewhere.

Country wise Employees in ECD and IQE- 2024

(Collected data from the COs)

Total staff in ECD and IQE Program (CO wise list) – FY 24

APAC had a total of **243 employees** in IQE (of which India has 164); **111 employees in ECD** (of which India has 29) projects, with **153 partner organizations** (of which, Vietnam works with 102 partners)

Chart 11: Total Number of Staff working in ECD and IQE

Category	Value
OTHERS	
# PARTNER ORGANIZATION	153
# STAFF COMMON (IQE AND ECD)	86
# STAFF IN ECD	110
# STAFF IN IQE	243
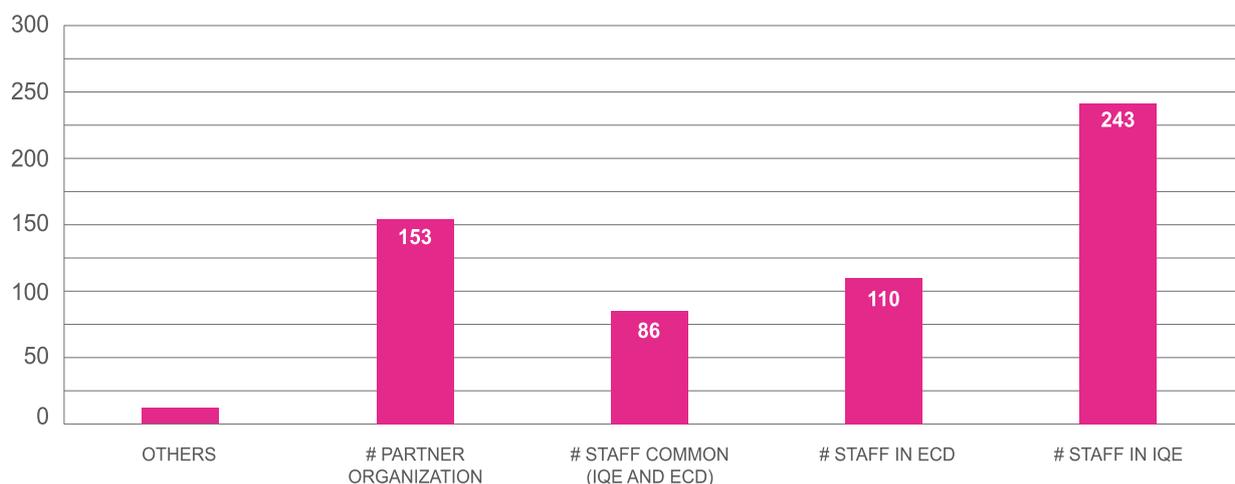
The collect data from the COs also reveals the following information

- Plan International Laos exclusively works with government partners to carry out its programmes. There were two partners at the province level and three partners at the ministry level during the project mapping phase.

- There are no partners involved in the implementation of education projects in India, since they implement programmes directly.

- Plan International Thailand also carried out projects directly, although they collaborated closely with the seven partners - Office of Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education, and 5 Education Service Area Office. PI Thailand does not have a direct education initiative; its four employees are working under the LEAD program.

- In addition to its partnerships with NGOs, Plan International Cambodia collaborates with the Ministry of Education and Youth Services (MoEYS), the Departments of Primary Education, School health, Vocational Orientation, Secondary education, and Provincial Education in the province of Ratanakiri (including three partners).

- Although it is acknowledged that other country offices collaborate with education ministries, not all COs' provided information about this that could be captured during the project mapping.

- There are no ECD or IQE projects in any of the three countries in Plan Pacific Office (PNG-Bougainville, Solomon Island, and Fiji). No project focused solely on education partners. In Fiji, they collaborate closely with the Ministry of Education as part of the Girls Resilience Initiative.

- This list does not include employees of Plan International Indonesia or Timor-Leste. There are ECD initiatives in Timor-Leste, but none in IQE.

> **The following are some of the reviews compiled from the ECD and IQE Mapping List. Find the complete list of project durations as well as the names of the donor organizations that provided the foundation for some of the reviews.**
>
> 🔗 *ECD project names with duration and donors (2020-2024)*
>
> 🔗 *IQE project names with duration and donors (2020-2024)*
>
> 🔗 *Donor Category*

The distribution of project durations across the IQE and ECD programs reflects a strategic focus on achieving sustainable and impactful outcomes. Medium-term projects, spanning 1 to 3 years, dominate the landscape, accounting for 55% of the total. This emphasis suggests that donors and programme managers prioritize initiatives that can deliver measurable results within a reasonable timeframe, allowing for adjustments and scaling based on observed impacts. Long-term projects, which make up 25% of the total, indicate a commitment to comprehensive initiatives that require sustained effort, particularly in areas

like resilience building and multi-year educational reforms. Short-term projects, while only 20% of the total, play a critical role in addressing immediate needs, testing new approaches, and laying the groundwork for longer-term investments.

The pattern of project duration aligns closely with both the type of donor and the thematic focus of the projects. Bilateral and Multilateral Donors, who typically support large-scale,

Chart 12: Project Duration Distribution across the IQE and ECD programs (2020–2024)

- Long-Term (≥ 3 years): 25%
- Medium-Term (1-3 years): 55%
- Short-Term (≤ 1 year): 20%

long-term initiatives, are more likely to fund medium to long-term projects, especially in areas like crisis response, education reform, and gender equality. International Corporate & Private Funding often supports both medium-term projects, which align with corporate social responsibility goals, and short-term projects, particularly those related to STEM and technology education where quick, impactful results are desired. UN Agencies, with their focus on targeted, high-impact areas, tend to fund a mix of medium and long-term projects, ensuring sustained engagement in critical sectors. Sponsorship Funds are spread across all durations, reflecting their flexibility in addressing both immediate community needs and supporting longer-term developmental goals.

Analysis as of Donor Category (Source- Project mapping list)

Chart 13: ECD Project Count by Donor (2020–2024)

- GPE-KIX-CNO: 1
- National Office (JNO Appeal Fund): 1
- International, Corporate & Private Funding: 9
- Bi-lateral and Multi-lateral Donors: 10
- UN: 4
- Sponsorship: 12
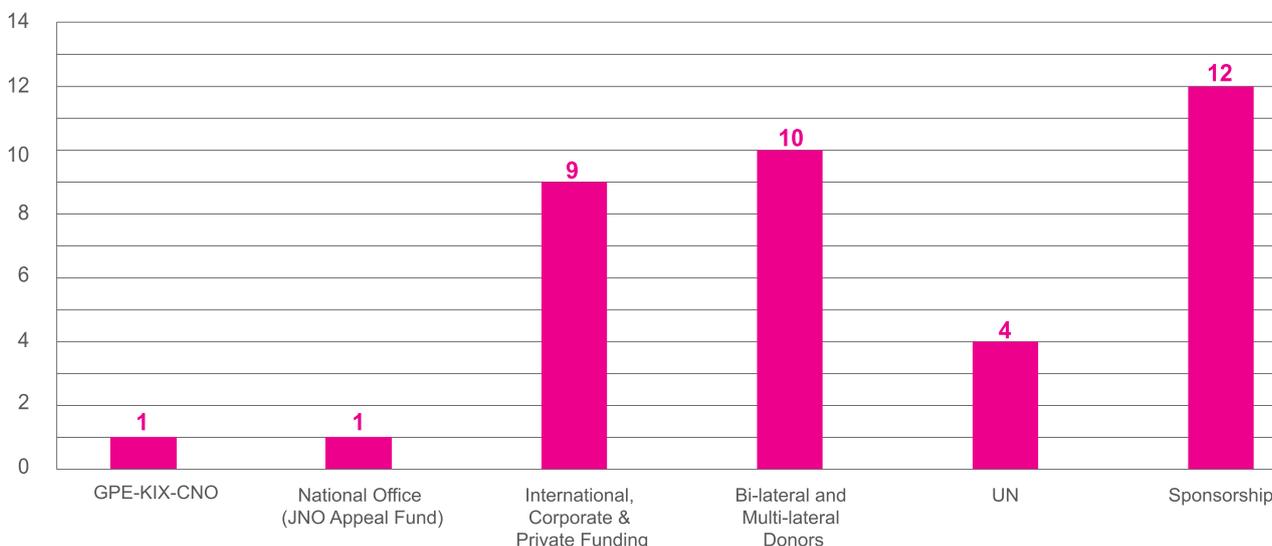
Chart 14: ECD Project Count by Donor (2020-2024)

Chart showing ECD Project Count by Donor (2020-2024):
- Sponsorship: 11
- National Office (JNO Appeal Fund): 10
- Corporate & Private Funding: 24
- International Organizations and Foundations: 9
- UN: 6
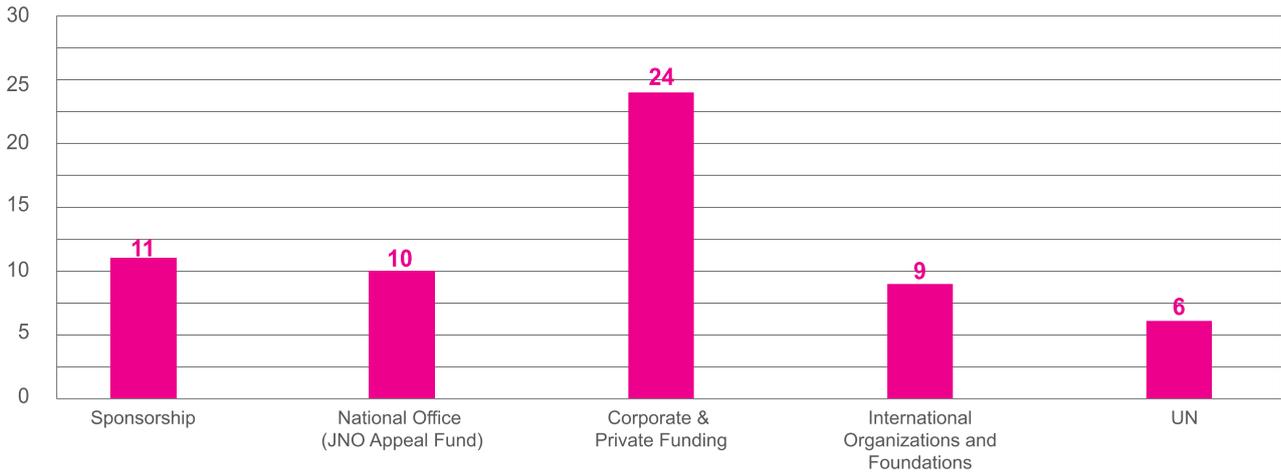
ECD Programme Donor Analysis

The list of donors found during project mapping is categorized as shown in Chart 13 and Chart 14, and then analyzed to determine how many projects are supported by which category of donors.

The IQE and ECD programmes receive support from a range of institutional donors, government donors, multi-laterals and bi-laterals, UN agencies, corporate foundations and individual sponsors across the APAC country offices. The charts show that the international corporate and individual funding has a significant contribution to the APAC CO projects.

The ECD programmes consist of 37 projects, with Sponsorship Funds leading the support, contributing to 12 projects, or 32% of the total. This strong reliance on internal funding underscores Plan International's commitment to leveraging its network for consistent support, ensuring the sustainability of educational initiatives. Bilateral and Multilateral Donors back 10 projects, representing 27% of the total, reflecting substantial governmental and institutional confidence in the programme. This category's support is crucial for long-term, large-scale initiatives, which require stable and often multi-year funding.

International Corporate & Private Sector Funding supports 9 projects, making up 24% of the ECD portfolio. This significant private sector engagement likely aligns with corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives, indicating that these projects resonate well with corporate donors' strategic goals. UN Agencies, involved in 4 projects (11%), contribute in areas requiring targeted interventions, while National Offices, funding 2 projects (6%), play a more limited but essential role in providing localized support.

IQE Programme Donor Analysis

The IQE program, with a total of 79 projects, exhibits a different funding dynamic. International Corporate & Private Sector Funding is the dominant category, supporting

33 projects, or 42% of the total. This heavy private sector involvement suggests a strong alignment between basic education and corporate interests, likely due to the long-term societal impact of these initiatives. However, the program's reliance on such funding highlights a potential vulnerability to shifts in corporate priorities.

Bilateral and Multilateral Donors support 19 projects, accounting for 24% of the ECD portfolio. This substantial involvement indicates that the program aligns well with broader developmental goals, attracting significant institutional support. Sponsorship Funds fund 11 projects (14%), showing that while internal funding remains critical, it is complemented by external sources. UN Agencies, with support for 6 projects (8%), focus on high-impact areas, aligning with their global mandates. National Office, the JNO Appeal Fund and other National Offices funded a total of 10 projects (13%), reflecting the importance of localized engagement and tailored interventions to meet specific regional needs.

KEY INSIGHTS

✔ **International Corporate & Private Funding** plays a pivotal role, especially in the IQE program, contributing to 42% of the projects.

✔ **Sponsorship Funds** are a cornerstone of Plan International's funding strategy, particularly strong in the IQE program, where it supports the largest number of projects.

✔ **Bilateral and Multilateral Donors** remain crucial, especially for large-scale, multi-year initiatives in both programs.

✔ **UN Agencies** focus their contributions on specific, high-impact areas, aligning with their global mandates.

✔ **National Offices** provide essential localized support, particularly in the IQE program, where they are involved in over 12% of the projects.

Key Takeaways

❯ The analysis of donor contributions highlights that Sponsorship Funds are particularly crucial for the ECD programme, while International Corporate & Private Funding plays a dominant role in the IQE programme. The involvement of Bilateral and Multilateral Donors is significant across both programmes, providing essential support for large-scale and multi-year initiatives. The relatively lower engagement from UN Agencies in some areas suggests opportunities for deeper collaboration and expansion to further diversify funding sources and reduce dependency on any single category. There are not many initiatives supported by the World Bank, the United Nations, or big international organizations like the United States Agency for International Development.

❯ The distribution of funding across these categories points to a well-rounded but strategically complex financial landscape. For Plan International, maintaining this

diversity while managing the risks associated with reliance on specific donor types will be key to sustaining and expanding the impact of both the IQE and ECD programmes in the long term.

Donor Trends and Insights

❯ The analysis of donor contributions reveals several strategic insights. The strong involvement of International Corporate & Private Funding, particularly in the IQE programme, indicates growing private sector interest in quality education. This sector's preference for medium-term and short-term projects reflects their focus on initiatives with clear, measurable impacts. Sponsorship Funds play a pivotal role, particularly in the ECD programme, underscoring Plan International's reliance on its internal funding networks for sustained support. Bilateral and Multilateral Donors, heavily involved in long-term projects, contribute to the program's alignment with broader developmental agendas, while UN Agencies focus on targeted, high-impact areas, particularly in crisis response.

Donor Priorities in IQE Thematic Focus (Source Mapping List)

An analysis of the projects that the country offices have implemented from 2020 to 2024 reveals the following investment priority areas under the IQE Program: The list is exhaustive and highly useful in evidencing the work that Plan has done in IQE in APAC.

❯ **Uniqueness:** The IQE programme integrates Plan's unique gender transformative approach to address structural injustices and oppression which are at the basis of gender inequality and climate crisis. Hence, Plan does not only provide technical skills but address deep rooted patriarchal issues and stereotypes along the way though IQE.

❯ **Variety of issues:** One thing is clear - IQE is one of the thematic areas where corporations see Plan APAC as a credible partner. However, the nature of IQE partnerships is changing.

From safe schools, improving lifelong learning, facilitating education in emergency, training girls in STEM, to protecting children from violence and preventing CEFM, Plan's IQE portfolio offers a diverse range of programmes and covers multi-disciplinary issues.

❯ **STEM in Education:** STEM focus has changed from STEM learning to STEM careers as it has been observed that even after training is done in mass numbers, we still do not see girls staying in the STEM careers for long. This is an area many of the pipeline projects are focusing on.

❯ **Use of Digital:** From promoting digital literacy in India to menstrual hygiene app and robotics in China, Plan utilises technology to amplify the reach, quality and impact of its programmes. Trying and testing Ed-tech models researched and new ones learned is important to offer multi-million, multi-country solutions to donors looking to support such initiatives.

> ❯ **Humanitarian Programme:** Scaling up humanitarian remains a top regional priority and we know climate events and mass migration is on the rise so tech-based partnerships are going to be key as well and within IQE, Education in Emergencies is going to be most fundable.

> ❯ **Climate change education:** Looking at the donor list, it seems that there is good scope of integrating climate change education where it has not been done yet. This has been mutually recognised as one of the top priorities by NOs, COs and the APAC hub. The new climate change education capacity statement is also key. The document summarizes nearly two decades of pioneering practices from Plan's programming and influencing work in APAC and globally. Gender has come back into focus and climate of course is topping the agenda.

> ❯ **Youth and Skills Based Development:** Most donors are interested in working with young people of which APAC has one of the highest populations. These are both consumers of what companies produce as well as their future workforce. Companies in banking, financial services, IT and consulting are particularly interested in skills development starting at an early level and translating into better 21st century skills in IQE. Youth Leadership Academy or Girls Leadership Academy formats have also caught donor interest highlighting the need to start engaging with youth at a younger age.

> ❯ **Ending Child Marriage, Girls Leadership:** The three influencing priorities that APAC Regional Hub identified - Climate Change, CEFMU and Youth Leadership - are inextricably related to the donors' interests.

Likelihood of Funding by Donors by Type of Programme

Distribution of Funding Themes (chart 15 and chart 16)

Chart 15: Comparison of Project Themes Between ECD and IQE Programs (2020-2024)
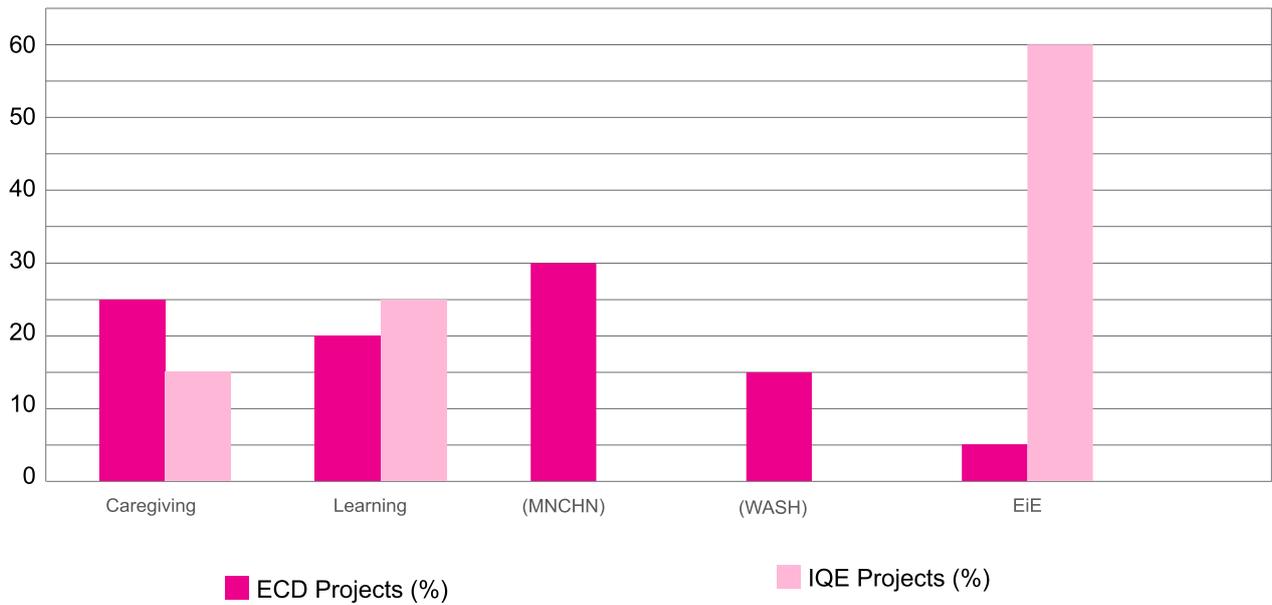
Thematic distributions:

Health and Nutrition Integration, a significant focus within the ECD programme, is prevalent in regions where early childhood development and community health are critical, reflecting the urgent need for integrated approaches in these areas.

Gender Equality is a cross-cutting theme in both IQE and ECD projects, particularly emphasized in regions facing persistent gender disparities.

Crisis and Refugee Focused projects are predominantly implemented in conflict-affected areas like Bangladesh and Myanmar, where addressing the needs of displaced populations is paramount. Conversely, themes like Safe and Resilient Schools and STEM and Technology Education are more prominent in IQE projects in regions with stable infrastructures, indicating a focus on future-proofing education and preparing youth for technological advancements. This thematic and geographic distribution demonstrates a deliberate effort to tailor initiatives to local contexts while addressing broader developmental goals.

1. Themes and Likelihood of Funding

Themes	Specific Themes Included	Likelihood of Funding	Reasoning
Inclusive and Equitable Education	Reading Promotion (Literacy), Inclusion and Disability in Teaching and Learning Practices	High	Strong alignment with gender equality and inclusion goals; often supported by both private donors and bilateral/ multilateral agencies.

Digital and Technological Education	ICT, STEM Approach in Education	High	Significant interest from International Corporate & Private Funding; aligns with corporate CSR objectives and long-term education strategies.
Child Protection and Social Issues	Early Marriage, Out of School Children	Medium	High priority for Sponsorship Funds and some Bilateral Donors, but less so for Corporate Funding; focus on vulnerable populations.
Safe and Resilient Learning Environments	Safe School, Education in Emergency	High	Strong support from UN Agencies and Bilateral Donors; focus on crisis response and resilience in education.
Environmental Education and Adaptation	Climate Change	Medium-High	Gaining traction with Bilateral Donors and private sectors interested in sustainability; potential for increased future funding.

2. Insights on Likelihood of Funding

> **Inclusive and Equitable Education** is likely to attract significant funding due to its alignment with global priorities on equity, gender, and inclusion. This theme covers literacy and inclusive practices, which are central to many educational frameworks and attract diverse donor categories, including Sponsorship Funds, Bilateral Donors, and UN Agencies.

> **Digital and Technological Education** themes like ICT and STEM approaches are highly likely to receive funding. These are well-supported by International Corporate & Private Funding due to their alignment with CSR strategies and the increasing focus on digital skills and technological literacy in global education systems.

> **Child Protection and Social Issues** such as Early Marriage and Out of School Children have a moderate likelihood of funding. These themes are critical in addressing social issues and are often prioritized by Sponsorship Funds and specific Bilateral Donors. However, they may not be as attractive to corporate donors compared to themes directly aligned with technology or economic development.

> **Safe and Resilient Learning Environments** are highly likely to attract funding, particularly from UN Agencies and Bilateral Donors who prioritize emergency response and creating safe educational spaces in crisis-affected areas. The focus on safety and resilience aligns well with global humanitarian efforts and educational stability goals.

> **Environmental Education and Adaptation** related to Climate Change has a medium to high likelihood of funding. This area is increasingly becoming a priority for Bilateral Donors and private sectors interested in sustainability and climate resilience, making it a growth area for future funding.

Analysis (Distribution of Donor Priority)		
Agency	**Likely to Fund**	**Rational**
UNICEF	Integrated ECD Services	UNICEF consistently funds projects that integrate ECD with health and nutrition, especially in crisis settings (e.g., Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh). Also, their support for education in emergency contexts is evident in multiple projects.
	Education in Emergencies (EiE)	
DFAT (Australian Government)	Gender-Transformative ECD	DFAT focuses on gender equality and ECD, often combined with WASH initiatives. Their support for education, particularly in crisis-affected regions (e.g., Myanmar, Timor-Leste), shows a strong commitment to these areas.
	WASH in Schools	
	Education for Vulnerable Populations	
NORAD	Gender-Responsive Inclusive Education	NORAD is heavily involved in funding gender-focused education projects, particularly those aimed at preventing child marriage and ensuring gender equality in schools (e.g., in Nepal and Bangladesh).
	Prevention of Child Marriage	
Education Cannot Wait (ECW)	Education for Refugees	ECW focuses on providing education in crisis situations, with long-term programs supporting both ECD and quality education for refugee children (e.g., in Bangladesh).
	Multi-year Resilience Programs	
Prudence Foundation	Safe School Initiatives	Prudence Foundation funds projects that focus on making schools safe and resilient, particularly in disaster-prone areas like Southeast Asia (e.g., Thailand, Indonesia).
	Disaster Risk Reduction in Schools	

Plan International Sponsorship Funds	ECD and Health Integration	Sponsorship funds from Plan International are broadly used across many countries for both ECD and general education projects, often integrated with health and nutrition components (e.g., in India, Laos).
	General Education Improvements	
ASML (Private Donor)	STEM Education for Girls	ASML is likely to continue funding projects related to STEM education, particularly those targeting girls, as seen in their support for the Girls STEM Education project in China.
Lego Foundation	Play-Based Learning	Lego Foundation's focus on ECD is combined with gender equality and play-based learning, as evident in their support for projects like the Let's Keep Playing project in Myanmar.
	Gender Equality in ECD	
European Union	Environmental Education	The EU has shown interest in integrating environmental sustainability with education and supporting inclusive education initiatives, particularly in marginalized regions (e.g., Nepal, Southeast Asia).

2.2 ECD CORE COMPONENT – INDICATOR ASSESSMENT: (SOURCE PMERL)

To evaluate the contribution of APAC projects to ECD by analyzing thematic core indicator results over the specified period of [insert period]. (PMERL Data)

Data source	: PMERL
Data export date	: 22 March 2024
Data Analysis & reporting	: Omer Mirza APAC ME Specialist.
Version	: Draft -1 dated 11 May 2024

All the AOGDs have core components, and within each component, there are one or more indicators and corresponding outcomes that are stated in the policy document, and it is expected that the projects and programs will ensure to achieve those outcomes. This section will present that how and whether the analysis of PMERL data could provide an overview of the achievements and outcomes of ECD core components as of the stated Indicators

Early Childhood Development

ECD Core Components at a glance:

Foundational component:
Gender-responsive Parenting/Caregiving

Complementart componets:
- Maternal, New-born and Child Health and nutrition
- Sanitation and Hygiene
- Early learning

As an organization, we are committed to ensure that our programs and projects are well-designed and aligned with our global strategy and approaches, utilizing evidence for learning, accountability, and continuous improvement.

The core components of AOGDs serve as the fundamental building blocks that uphold the standard of programming within each AOGD. Measurement of AOGD core component indicators, when applied to projects or programs, offers us valuable insights into how our initiatives contribute to GLO strategic priorities.

The AOGD framework, comprising results, indicators, and associated components are mapped in to PMERL. If, our projects and programmes embed core component in to project design, setup projects and programmes in PMERL and regularly update and approve good quality data of target and result in PMERL, then we can generate evidence of our contribution to GLO strategic priorities through PMERL reports.

APAC M&E team in collaboration with the regional education lead, undertook this assessment to identify, aggregate and analysis Project result in APAC region which are contribution to ECD core components. During this assessment we are only focusing on the indicator which are due to report in FY23 and first three quarter of FY 24, **excluding baseline data**. Any data which is not approved by the project manager or by his designate and data have any other data quality issue is excluded from the assessment.

Table-1 outlines the ECD core indicators that should be measured if project or programme is working on that core component.

Result code	Result statement	Indicator code	Indicator statement
ECDO2.6	**Gender Responsive Parenting** Parents, caregivers – male and female – communicate and play with their children, and share equally decision-making, care work	**CDO2.6.1**	% Of parents, caregivers who that they meaningfully engaged with their young child(ren) in activities that are critical to promoting their learning and socio-emotional

		CDO2.6.1	development, in the last 3 days
ECDO2.14	and childrearing responsibilities within the household Parents/caregivers have strengthened skills for resilience and coping and provide continued care to young children in crises.	CDO2.14.1	% Of fathers/male caregivers who engaged in at least two nurturing care tasks equally or more often than their female partners, in the last month.
ECDO2.10		CDO2.10.1	Humanitarian only: Proportion of parenting in emergencies programmes implemented in the past year that adequately include psychosocial support for the parent/caregiver and their young children.
ECDO2.5	**Water Sanitation Hygiene** Parents/caregivers – male and female – adopt and implement the key family practices that are essential for their children's survival, nutrition and healthy growth	ECDO2.5.12	% Of households that are verified as using at least basic sanitation and hygiene facilities.
ECDO2.11	**Maternal, New-born and Child health and Nutrition** Adolescent girls, women, their partners and family members know what maternal healthcare and services are needed	ECDO2.11.1	% Of targeted parents/caregivers and family members who know the key danger signs of an obstetric emergency and the actions that should be taken if a woman presents with these signs.
ECDO3.3	**Early Learning** Community leaders, volunteers and networks support essential interventions for the learning and early years' development of young girls and boys	ECDO3.3.1	Proportion of targeted community-based Early Learning Programmes that meet relevant minimum quality standards

ECDO2.6.1: % of parents, caregivers who that they meaningfully engaged with their young child (ren) in activities that are critical to promoting their learning and socio-emotional development, in the last 3 days

In period[1] under analysis ECDO2.6.1 is due for reporting by **Vietnam and Timor-Leste**, with one project[2] in each office. Timor-Leste uses an input type indicator with unapproved result, therefore not included in the calculation.

1. June 2022 to Mar 24
2. Project-1: TL-Early Learning and Stimulation, Project-2: FY23 - Gender Responsive Parenting to promote ECD SPAD

Between Jun-2022 and Mar-2024 in APAC, Vietnam office interviewed 652 parents/caregivers from five provinces where project was implemented. Among them 23% reported meaningful engagement with their young children (under 5) in activities critical to promoting their learning and socioemotional development in the last three days.

Chart 17: ECDO2.6.1 Target vs Results
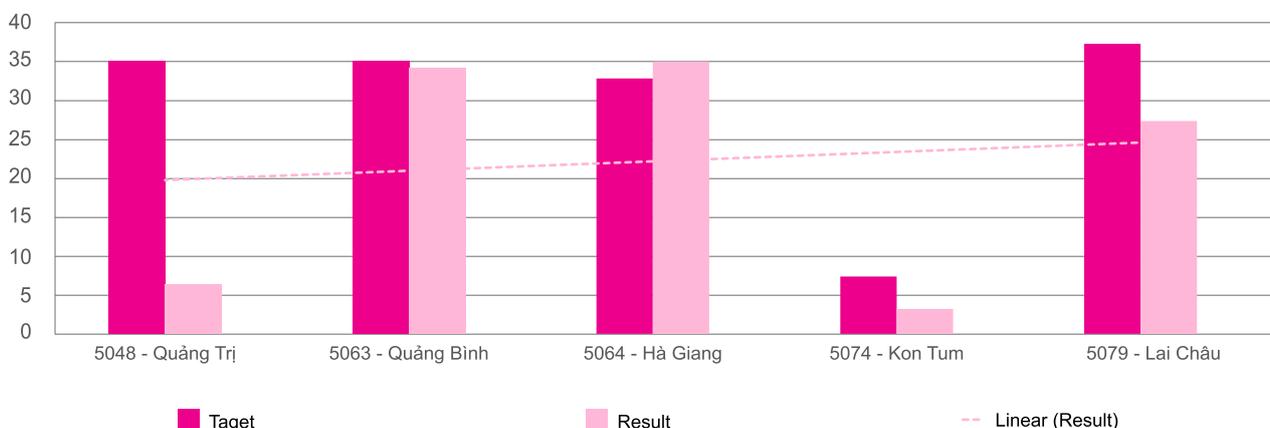
This result is a chivied through the project titled **"FY23 – Gender Responsive Parenting to promote ECD SPAD"** project was designed to scale up community-based activities that support improved child nutrition, maternal and child health care, and gender- inclusive early learning. Under this project **Parenting Clubs** (for parents with children under the age of ten) serve as a platform for a variety of project activities aimed at putting parents and caregivers at the heart of their children's learning and development. The initiative focuses on three primary components: **gender responsive parenting** to assist child development, **improved nutrition** for children under the age of five, and **gender responsive teaching** to promote early learning.

ECDO2.14.1: % of fathers/male caregivers who engaged in at least two nurturing care tasks equally or more often than their female partners, in the last month.
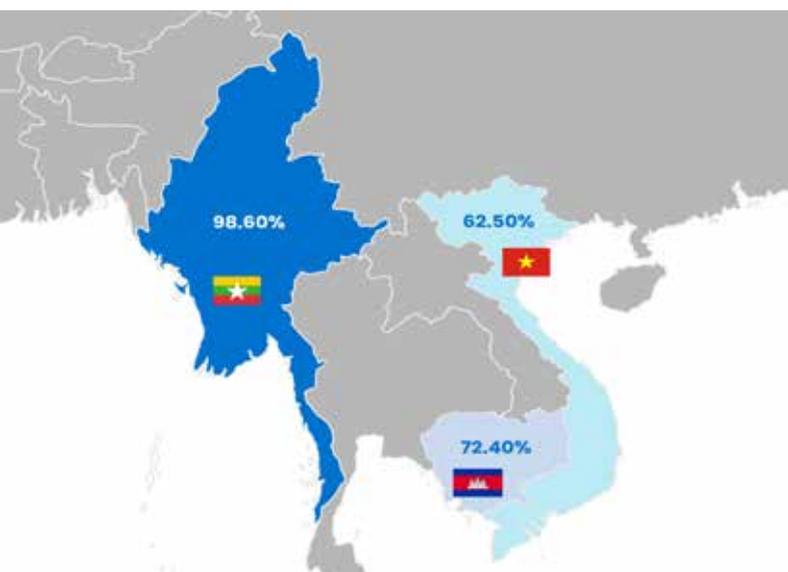
Fathers/male caregivers who engaged in at least two nurturing care tasks equally or more often than their female partners, in the last month

Data for this core component indicator is aggregated from four projects[3] implemented in by Plan offices in Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, all these projects reported data in FY-23.

1087 fathers/male caregivers were interviewed in Vietnam and Myanmar, among them 77% and in Cambodia 72.4% confirmed that that they are engaged in at least two nurturing care tasks equally or more often than their female partners, in the last month.

In Cambodia THRIVE Phase II project conducted an evaluations, quantitative in

Aug 2022 which evaluated the impact of the integrated intervention on nutrition, early child development and WASH. In Evaluation it is concluded that *"**The combined nutrition and WASH (NW) or nutrition, early childhood development and WASH (NEW) interventions showed positive results on nutrition, WASH and early childhood development compared to the implementation of an intervention either with nutrition alone (N) or WASH (W) alone.** Therefore, this study suggests that the integration of various interventions, "nutrition and WASH" or "nutrition and WASH and early childhood development", is better than a stand-alone intervention."*

ECDO2.11.2: % of targeted parents/caregivers and family members who know the key danger signs of an obstetric emergency and the actions that should be taken if a woman presents with these signs

Chart 18: ECDO2.11.2 Target vs Results
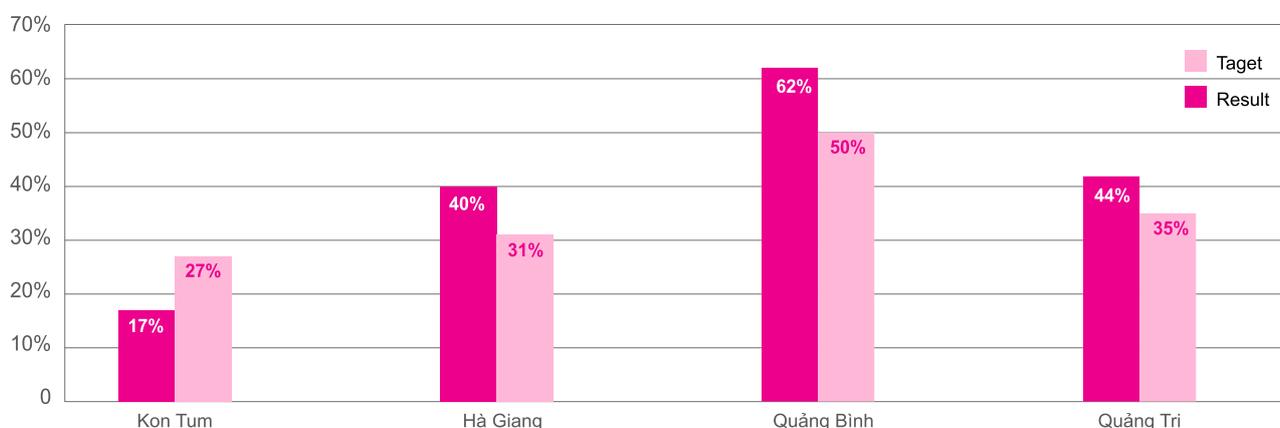
Only one project in APAC region reported data against ECDO2.112 in Vietnam between Jul-2022 and Mar-2024. The data was collected from five provinces Quang Tri, Quang Bin, Ha Giang, Kon Tum, and Lai Chau. Data from Lai Chau is not included in the assessment due to data quality issue.

Data from 1382 parents, caregivers, and family members targeted by project in four provinces confirmed that, ***41% are aware of the key danger signs of an obstetric emergency and the actions that should be taken if a woman presents with these signs.***

ECDO2.5.12: % of households that are verified as using at least basic sanitation and hygiene facilities.

In FY23 and in the first three quarters of FY24, ECDO2.5.12 was reported by 4 CO in the five projects, two project[4] in Cambodia and one project each Myanmar, Thailand and Timor-Leste. Result data from 2 projects are not useable, in one project[5] results are not approved, whereas for 2nd project, denominator and enumerator data is not correct.

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3. 1-THRIVE Phase II: Promoting a Healthy Childhood through quality of iNEW, 2- Community-Based ECCD Project (Woodside Phase 2), 3- FY23 - Gender Responsive Parenting to promote ECD SPAD
4. Change in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Ratanak Kiri and Stung Treng Province and THRIVE Phase II: Promoting a Healthy Childhood through quality of iNEW
5. Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Project.
   Water for improved health and livelihoods.
   TL- Sustainability Access Good Water and Sanitation Project in rural area.

Chart 19: ECDO2.5.12 Target Achivement

Legend: HH verified · HH sruvey
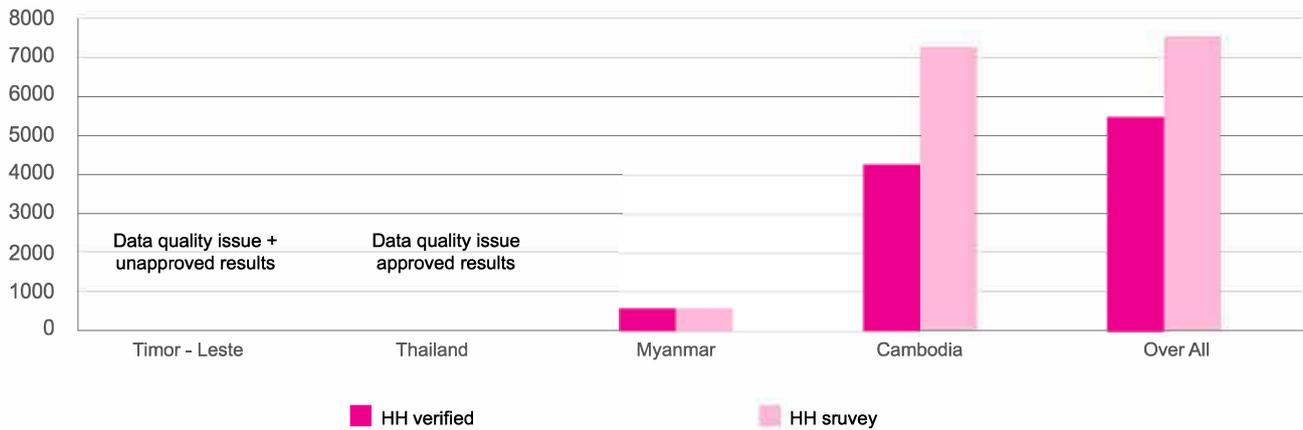
100% of households out of 799 observed HH in Myanmar's Niang U Province are verified as using at least basic sanitation and hygiene facilities in FY23.

In the same period 56% HH of Stung Trang Province in FY-23, and 61.87% HH out of 7092 observed HH in FY-24 at national level are verified using at least basic in two projects of Cambodia.

Evaluation conducted by Plan Cambodia for Project KHM2.P.00286 further reported that 54.2% of households [in the project areas] accessed safe drinking water (improved source) in the wet season and 52.6% in the dry season. Approximately 67% of the households reported having their own latrine with mostly functioning. Approximately one-third of the households reported having no hand washing facilities, while 64.4% reported handwashing with soap at a critical time of at least 3 in the three days. There was a significant improvement in access to hand washing facilities (71%) and access to improved latrines at the household level (67.1%).

ECDO3.3.1: Proportion of targeted community-based Early Learning Programmes that meet relevant minimum quality standards

In the reporting period ECDO3.3.1 was reported by Vietnam in 2 projects, both projects have updated results. However data from the project VNM1.P.00510 result is not approved in PMERL by project manager or its designate, therefor not include in assessment.

In the targeted areas of project VNM1.P.90035 a total 136 early learning programm's observation indicated that 93% of early learning centers met minimum quality standards. These centers were observed using 4 process quality standards and 16 Structural quality standers

Chart 20: ECDO3.3.1: Proportion of targeted community-based Early Learning Programmes that meet relevant minimum quality standards
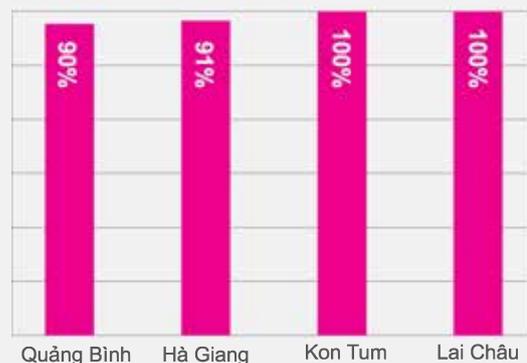
Consolidated assessment of ECD core component in APAC

Chart 19: **ECDO2.5.12 Target Achivement**

Legend:
- ■ Sample Size
- ■ Numeratior
- — % achievement

Data labels: 66%, 23%, 41%, 77%, 93%
X-axis: ECDO 2.5.12, ECDO2.6.1, ECDO2.11.2, ECDO2.14.1, ECDO3.3.1
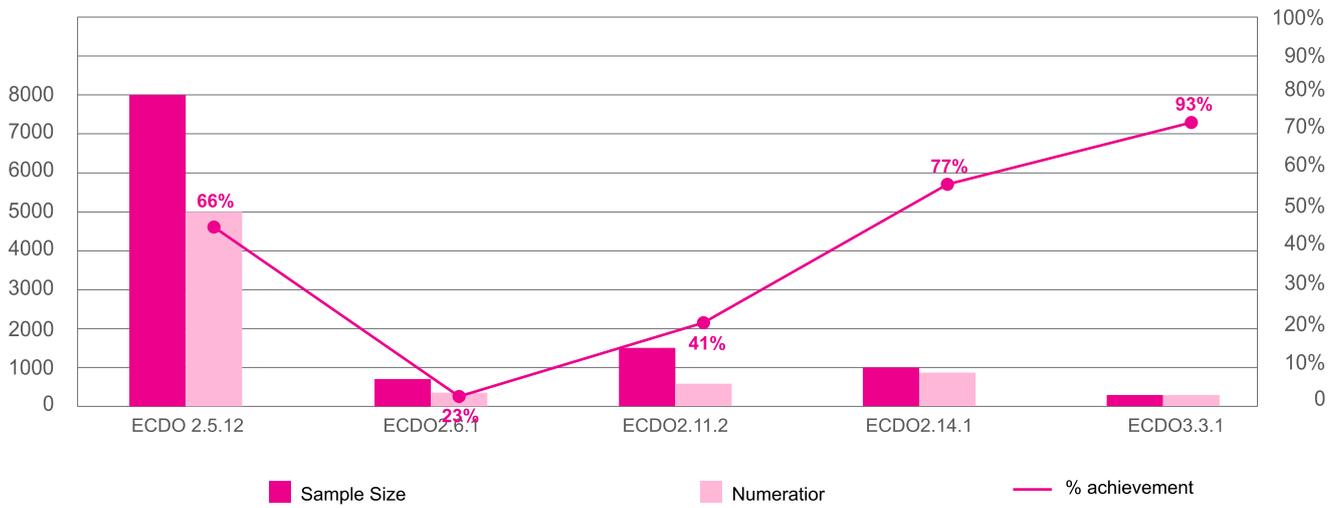
Recommendation

- Strengthen application of AOGD frameworks especially in Project Programmes designe

- Highlight role of Project Manager or her/his designate to ensure quality of targets and result before approval in PMERL.

- Improve PMERL reporting capcity to agregate and analyiss indicatore targets and results conviniently.

OVERVIEW OF ECD AND IQE PROGRAMMES AND PROJECT IN APAC (2020-2024)

As of the mapping, 37 ECD projects and 79 IQE projects had been identified and implemented within the given time range.

The mapping contains information on each project's duration, donor, major interventions, project brief, and key words.

Click to view a list with description of all projects

🔗 *ECD Programme and Project Brief (2020-2024)*

🔗 *IQE Programme and Project Brief (2020-2024), APAC*

Chart 22: Country – wise IQE and ECD Projects (2020-2024)
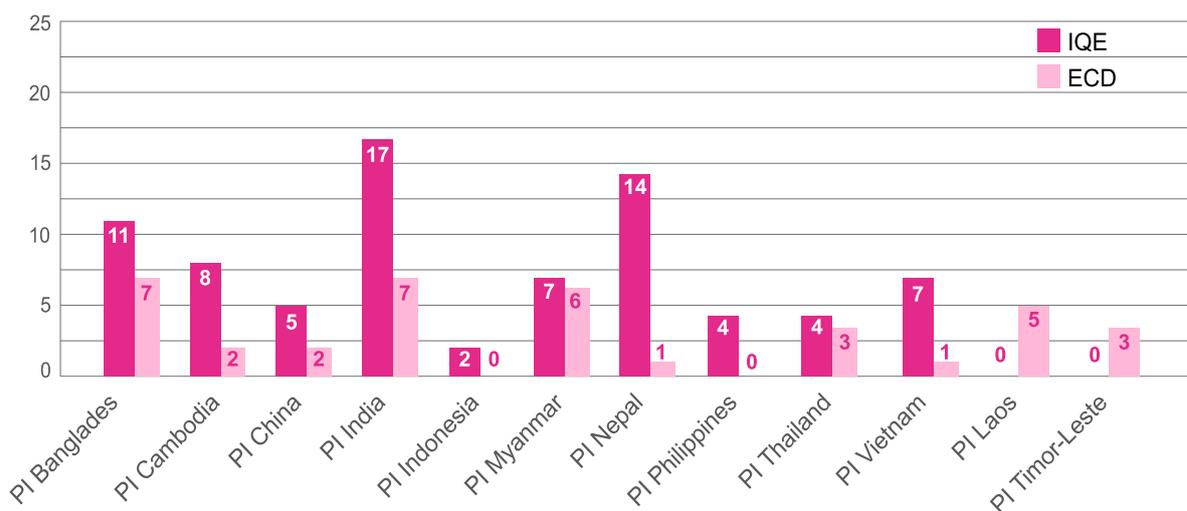
ECD Programmes can be separated into early childhood educational development programmes (for children aged 0 to less than 3 years) and pre-primary education programmes (for children aged 3 to the start of primary school). Gender-responsive community-based Early Learning Programs (ELP) are a core component of the ECD AOGD (formal pre-primary is included in Inclusive Quality Education).

The following section gives an overview of projects under the ECD core component and specifically what is being prioritized to prepare children for school readiness, entry and continue in primary education.

Moreover, the section will also present some of the projects in which the country offices integrate gender equality and gender transformative programming, as well how the projects, from 2020 to 2024, support the resilience, development, and psychosocial well-being of children in emergency settings.

OVERVIEW OF ECD PROGRAMMES AND PROJECT IN APAC (2020-2024)

This section gives an overview of the mapping of projects and interventions on gender transformative Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs carried out by APAC country offices between 2020 and 2024.

It should be noted that not all 37 listed initiatives under the ECD Programme are not addressed here; nonetheless, descriptions of some projects are provided as examples in the explanation of ECD core components.

Download the document by clicking on the link

Overview and Mapping of the ECD Program of APAC (2020-2024)
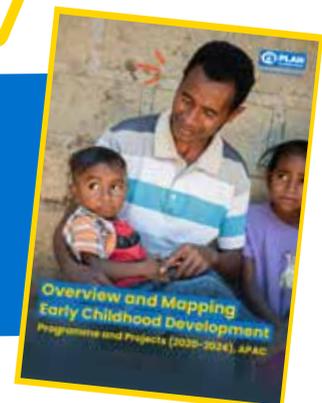
OVERVIEW OF INCLUSIVE QUALITY EDUCATION (IQE) PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES, APAC (2020-2024)

Introduction

Plan International's Inclusive Quality Education (IQE) aims to provide access to age-appropriate, gender-responsive and learner-centered education to girls, young women and other vulnerable children and young people. The work on IQE includes building the capacities of young people to act to address the barriers to accessible and quality of education. This also involves supporting relevant public and private institutions and agencies to deliver accessible and quality learner-centered education and skills for young people to enable them to transition to decent work.

In accordance with Plan International's Global Strategy, the country offices in APAC prioritize girls' rights and gender equality in all programming and influencing, focusing on the most vulnerable school children, out-of-school children and youth, and those most affected by disaster and conflict. All of the countries in Asia Pacific have made significant progress in raising education levels, with girls currently outnumbering boys in terms of enrollment and, in some cases, school completion. However, inequities continue across the country for girls living in underprivileged and rural areas. The Plan International COs in the region promote education by increasing access to gender transformative education for the most vulnerable, girls and women, as well as empowering stakeholders, teachers, and communities to support their children's education.

This section will present a summary and overview of the IQE projects completed between 2020 and 2024. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), climate change adaptation, improved learning outcomes in crisis, and child protection are all part of the emergency scenario. This section includes Bangladesh and Myanmar's education programs under Education in Emergency (EiE), and DRR and Climate Education within the IQE core component of School Environment.

Download the document by clicking on the link

Overview and Mapping of the IQE Program of APAC (2020-2024)

ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATIONS

KEY OBSERVATIONS

6.1 KEY WORD COMPARISON

Key investment areas for ECD and IQE

Key words were used to determine alignment with the three key investment areas within the ToC for ECD and IQE(Figure 2).

The key words showed high alignment between investment areas
one and two for ECD *(Support nurturing care and positive relationships within the family and Promote multi-sectoral community services and supports for young children's development)*. Every country included key words that described these key investment areas. The third key investment area *(Support household resilience for ECD, including during conflict and emergencies)* only 3 countries out of 11 included key words that described this key investment area (Table 1).

KEY INVESTMENT AREAS

SUPPORT NURTURING CARE AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITHIN THE FAMILY

+

PROMOTE MULTI-SECTORIAL SEVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

+

SUPPORT HOUSEHOULD RESILIENCE FOR ECD INCLUDING DURING CONFLIC AND EMERGENCIES

KEY INVESTMENT AREAS

EFFECTTIVE APPROACHES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN (GIRLS, CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY, CRISIS-AFECTED) TO ENTER AND RE-ENTER EDUCATION

+

GENDER TRANFORMATIVE CONTENT, PRACTICES AND BEHAVIOUR IN EDUCATION

+

SAFE AND RESILIENT LEARNING ENVIROMENTS

Figure 2: Key investment areas for ECD and IQE

Table 1: Key Words and Key Investment Areas for ECD

KEY INVESTMENT AREAS (ECD)
1. SUPPORT NURTURING CARE AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE FAMILY
2. PROVIDE MULTI-SECTORAL COMMUNITY SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT
3. SUPPORT HOUSEHOLD RESILIENCE FOR ECD INCLUDING DURING CONFLICT AND EMERGENCIES

Country	Key Words Included in ECD Mapping Document
Bangladesh	SBK (Supplementary Book Kits), child protection, gender blender game, care work, violence, rights, parenting awareness education, community learning centers (CLCs), rights to learn, play based.
Cambodia	Early Learning, Integrated Nutrition, ECCD, and WASH
China	Parenting, Gender Equality, knowledge on infant and toddler feeding, Parent-child reading, hygienic and healthy eating, responsive feeding, community fire safety

India	Nutrition, Childcare, disadvantaged families, self-help groups, entrepreneurship, hot cooked nutritious meals, malnourished, Safe Drinking Water, Waterborne diseases, vulnerable women and families, digital application,
Myanmar*	PUP, PlayMatters, Parenting education, Non-Formal Education (NFE), ECD network groups, Social Enterprise, Toy Maker, nurturing environment, responsive feeding, malnourished, food baskets, moderate acute malnutrition (MAM), severe acute malnutrition (SAM), drop-out, CWD.
Thailand	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), adolescent girls, vulnerable groups, decision-making
Vietnam	Ethnic minority, gender-responsive parenting, malnutrition, caregivers, children's club, child-friendly space
Nepal	Child DREAM Project, Nepal, ECD, pregnant women, lactating mothers, young children, caregivers, Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), Home Mother Groups (HMGs), parenting practices, men in childcare, AOGD Indicator, local ECD policies, integrated ECD strategies, child play centers, malnutrition, hygiene practices, WASH sessions, clean homes
Laos	Integrated Nutrition, WASH, Gender Equality, Parent Education, Teacher Training, Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Curriculum, Pedagogies in the Classroom
Timor - Leste	Early Childhood Development, Children with special needs, early stimulation, mobile libraries, positive discipline, Gender-responsive nurturing, Hygiene behaviors, Sustainable water system, Decision making, Special needs.
PNG, Solomon Islands, Fiji	**No keywords listed in mapping document**

🟨 1. Support nurturing care and positive relationship within the family

🟥 2. Provide multi-sectoral community services and supports for young children's developement

🟦 3. Support household resilience for ECD including during conflict and emergencies

For IQE, there was also high alignment with key investment areas but less strong than for ECD (Table 2).

Table 2: Key Words and Key Investment Areas for IQE

KEY INVESTMENT AREAS (IQE)
1. EFFECTIVE APPROACHES FOR OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (GIRLS, CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY, CRISIS-AFFECTED) TO ENTER AND RE-ENTER EDUCATION 2. GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE CONTENT, PRACTICES, AND BEHAVIOR IN EDUCATION 3. SAFE AND RESILIENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Country	Key Words Included in ECD Mapping Document
Bangladesh	Parent groups, Supplementary Book Kits, Early childhood development, marginalized
Cambodia	Accelerated Learning Program, safe school, Marginalized, Indigenous, Disabilities, Policy, Infrastructure, Capacity Building
China	Gender Transformative and Gender Friendly School Environment, Gender responsive Curriculum, Quality Education, Reading, STEM, Technology in Education, hi-tech, Robotic code, female role model, Social Emotional Skills, Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)
India	Child friendly school, Quality Education, Digital Education, STEM in Education, Career Guidance, preventing drop out and ensure transition & continuity in formal education
Indonesia	Safe School, violence, discrimination, abuse, learning spaces, Gender-transformative climate education, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Child-Sensitive Social Protection Framework (CSSF), Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)
Myanmar	Gender equality, Safe Schools, Disaster Risk Reduction, Emergency in Education, Non-Formal Education
Nepal	Girls, children with Disabilities, children from Dalit Families, gender transformative, inclusive learning environment (physical facilities which includes accessible infrastructure, WASH, MHH, hand washing stations, drinking water scheme, green gardening), inclusive teaching and learning environment (pedagogical environment which includes classroom resourcing, seating arrangement, book corner, print and digital rich), teachers professional development, STEAM approach, ICT integration, inclusive classroom management, low/no cost teaching and learning materials and curriculum, out of school children (OOSC) identification and school enrollment, accelerated class, parenting education, one home one learning corner support, community learning center, reading fair, early grade reading assessment, early screening, Educational Assistance, Remedial class support, safe and resilient school

	environment, strengthening child and girls friendly environment, complaint hearing mechanism (CHM), school governance, School Improvement Plan(SIP), gender transformative inclusive local education policy and plan
Philippines	**No keywords listed in mapping document**
Thailand	Child-led multi risk assessment tools, Reading, Library, Safe School Working Group, Humidity Sensor
Vietnam	Comprehensive sexual education, gender based violence, school capacity, school Infrastructure, gender equality and safeguarding

🟨 1. Effective approaches for out of school children (Girls, Children disability, crisis-affected) to enter and re-enter education.

🟪 2. Gender transformative content, practices, and behavior in education

🟦 3. Safe and resilient learning environments

Six out of ten countries included key words that described key investment area one (one country, Philippines, did not include key words in their project descriptions). Five out of ten included key words that described key investment area two and 7 out of ten included key words that described key investment area three.

Of course, a review of key words alone is not the sole way to ascertain project alignment. But it does provide insight into how countries view their own projects and what themes they prioritize by including certain key words in their project descriptions. It also shows that there are areas, like key investment area three for ECD-support household resilience for ECD including during conflict and emergencies-that deserve a closer look by project and regional teams to understand road blocks and challenges in achieving results in this area.

Areas of focus within countries

The key word analysis also provided insight into what areas countries prioritize. For example, the Plan International Cambodia office included the following key words in the mapping document for IQE: Accelerated Learning Program, safe school, marginalized, indigenous, disabilities, policy, infrastructure, capacity building. The focus of this country is clearly on supporting the education needs of marginalized groups and strengthening the eco-system around them to foster their ongoing education needs.

Table 3: Key Words by country, IQE

Country	Keywords–ECD
Bangladesh	Supplementary Book Kits, child protection, gender blender game, care work, violence, rights, parenting awareness education, community learning centers, rights to learn, play based.
Cambodia	Early Learning, Integrated Nutrition, ECCD, and WASH

Country	Keywords
China	Parenting, Gender Equality, knowledge on infant and toddler feeding, Parent-child reading, hygienic and healthy eating. responsive feeding, community fire safety
India	Nutrition, Childcare, disadvantaged families, self-help groups, entrepreneurship, hot cooked nutritious meals, malnourished, Safe Drinking Water, Waterborne diseases, vulnerable women and families, digital application
Laos	Integrated Nutrition, WASH, Gender Equality, Parent Education, Teacher Training, - Gender Responsive and Inclusive Curriculum, Pedagogies in the Classroom.
Myanmar	PUP, PlayMatters, Parenting education, Non-Formal Education (NFE), ECD network groups, Social Enterprise, Toy Maker, nurturing environment, responsive feeding, malnourished, food baskets, moderate acute malnutrition (MAM), severe acute malnutrition (SAM), drop-out, CWD.
Nepal	Child DREAM Project, Nepal, ECD, pregnant women, lactating mothers, young children, caregivers, Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs), Home Mother Groups (HMGs), parenting practices, men in childcare, AOGD Indicator, local ECD policies, integrated ECD strategies, child play centers, malnutrition, hygiene practices, WASH sessions, clean homes
PIP (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji)	No keywords listed in mapping document
Thailand	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), adolescent girls, vulnerable groups, decision-making
Timor-Leste	Early Childhood Development, children with special needs, early stimulation, mobile libraries, positive discipline, - gender responsive nurturing, hygiene behaviors, sustainable water system, decision making
Vietnam	Ethnic minority, gender-responsive parenting, malnutrition, caregivers, children's club, child-friendly space

The Plan International Vietnam country office is also implementing programs that strengthen stakeholders to carry out their responsibilities, but with a focus on issues related to gender: CSE, GBV and school capacity, school infrastructure, gender equality and safeguarding. Both of these countries seem to be implementing programs with a strategic focus on the critical needs within their countries. Table 3 shows the full list of countries and key words included in the IQE mapping document.

For other countries, a core focus was less clear. The Plan International India office for example, used the following key words in the ECD mapping document: Nutrition, Childcare,

disadvantaged families, self-help groups, entrepreneurship, hot cooked nutritious meals, malnourished, Safe Drinking Water, Waterborne diseases, vulnerable women and families, digital application. While there are some areas that could be considered connected-nutrition, childcare, hot cooked nutritious meals-there are some outliers-digital application, entrepreneurship, self-help groups-that point to the variety of programming the country is undertaking.

In contrast, the Timor Leste country office used key words with a discernible link to early childhood development targeting all stakeholders-ECD, children with special needs, early stimulation, mobile libraries, positive discipline, gender responsive nurturing, hygiene behaviors, sustainable water system, decision making. Table 4 provides a full list of key words used by countries in the ECD mapping document.

Table 4: **Key Words by country, ECD**

Country	Keywords–IQE
Bangladesh	Parent groups, Supplementary Book Kits, Early childhood development, marginalized
Cambodia	Accelerated Learning Program, safe school, Marginalized, Indigenous, Disabilities, Policy, Infrastructure, Capacity Building
China	Gender Transformative and Gender Friendly School Environment, Gender responsive Curriculum, Quality Education, Reading, STEM, Technology in Education, hi-tech, Robotic code, female role model, Social Emotional Skills, Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)
India	Child friendly school, Quality Education, Digital Education, STEM in Education, Career Guidance, preventing drop out and ensure transition & continuity in formal education
Indonesia	Safe School, violence, discrimination, abuse, learning spaces, Gender-transformative climate education, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Child-Sensitive Social Protection Framework (CSSF), Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)
Myanmar	Gender equality, Safe Schools, Disaster Risk Reduction, Emergency in Education, Non-Formal Education,
Nepal	Girls, children with Disabilities, children from Dalit Families, gender transformative, inclusive learning environment, WASH, MHH, hand washing stations, drinking water scheme, green gardening, inclusive teaching and learning environment, teachers professional development, STEAM approach, ICT integration, inclusive classroom management, low/no cost teaching and learning materials and curriculum, out of school children, accelerated class, parenting education, one home one learning corner support, community learning center, reading fair, early grade reading assessment, early screening, Educational Assistance, Remedial class support, safe and / school

	environment, strengthening child and girls friendly environment, complaint hearing mechanism, school governance, School Improvement Plan, gender transformative inclusive local education policy and plan.
Philipines	No keywords listed in mapping document
Thailand	Child-led multi risk assessment tools, Reading, Library, Safe School Working Group, Humidity Sensor
Vietnam	CSE, GBV, school capacity, school Infrastructure, gender equality and safeguarding

The analysis on the areas of focus is obviously limited by a key word review. It is not a complete method to determine how and in what manner countries are prioritizing certain issues. However, it does reveal which countries have a tight and cohesive focus in their work, and which ones are tackling many different objectives. The important piece would be to determine whether countries with a tight thematic focus see more impact and success in their work. This could be an area for further investigation through MERL and other program data.

Trends across country programmes

Finally, a comparison of the key words in the mapping document also proved to be a useful

Table 5: Trends across countries, ECD and IQE

Trends Across Countries: ECD	Trends Across Countries: IQE
Gender Responsive Practices: Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Laos, Timor Leste	**Gender Responsive Practices:** China, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Vietnam, Thailand
Integrated Nutrition: Cambodia, China, India, Myanmar, Vietnam, Nepal, Laos	**DRR and Safe/ Resilient Schools:** Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Vietnam
Parenting Practices: Bangladesh, China, Myanmar, Vietnam, Nepal	**Education, including non-formal and accelerated education:** Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand
WASH: Cambodia, India, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam	

Gender responsive approaches are robust within the APAC region in both the ECD and IQE Domains. Nutrition related activities stand out in the ECD domain, with seven programs citing this area in their integrated approaches. A majority of countries have a focus on DRR and resilience related activities in the IQE domain and while non-formal education wasn't

included by a majority of programs, four countries included various types of programming targeting out of school children and this warrants a special mention (Table 5)

As many country offices are implementing programs that are similar, it would be helpful to further examine each program for lessons learned and sharing best practices. The following projects could be used as case studies for gender responsive practices, integrated nutrition, and parenting practices respectively:

- Nurturing the Future and Promoting Gender Equality in KG-China
- Healthy Start Program (Integrated Nutrition, ECCD and WASH)-Cambodia
- Early Learning and Stimulation and Parenting Education-Timor Leste

6.2 ALIGNMENT WITH THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The key word comparison strategy, while interesting and informative to a certain extent, only leads to a limited amount of information on projects within the mapping documents. The next level of analysis was conducted using the Theory of Change (ToC) for ECD and IQE. As mentioned earlier, the ToC was selected as it is the foundation of each AoGD; it lays out key investment areas, global priorities, strategic partners, and key stakeholders (Figure 3).

The ToC was used assess alignment and strategic approach of programs within ECD and IQE. The sections below provide additional detail into these areas.

Figure 3: Theory of Change, ECD

Alignment with ToC–Early Childhood Development component

Thirteen country offices (the Pacific country office area includes three countries-Papua New Guinea, Solomon Island and Fiji) were profiled in the ECD mapping document with projects ranging from integrated early childhood development and gender responsive parenting to building sustainable water systems and supporting nutrition practices of pregnant mothers.

Four thematic areas were evident across a majority of programming: early learning, nutrition and feeding; gender responsive programming; and WASH.

These four areas tie in neatly with the first dimension of change in the ECD ToC-*Changing norms*, practices, and relationships. Most countries featured integrated ECD projects which included parenting programs to improve caregivers' knowledge and skills for ECD; several countries focus on supporting maternal health and well-being, and in emergency and crisis situations projects worked to adapt parenting programs to emphasize nurturing and responsive care. Within integrated ECD projects, a focus on support(ing) community health, nutrition and WASH agents to provide effective community interventions was evident in most programs.

Alignment with the second dimension of change-*Strengthening resources and safety nets*-is less strong. Key objectives within this area call for **partnerships with public entities** to provide effective community interventions, to **mobilize communities** to manage playgroups and ECD spaces, and to **link families** to social protection and resilience schemes. While many projects have worked on strengthening community groups, most notably in the establishment of community ECD and WASH groups, the engagement with public entities is nor clearly stated in the project description which is an integral part of sustainable program delivery mechanism. For example, the *Clean water for vulnerable group at Thailand-Myanmar border project* installed new pipes and a new water filtration system in an area where the Thai government does not provide any water facilities to local communities. The project worked to build local capacity of community members to manage the new water system, established a water management committee, and provided trainings for community members on the maintenance of water filtration and pipes. These are all important activities, however, the entire management of the project, including its future financing, is dependent on the community. How or whether the local government entities were involved, and how the advocacy was done on insisting for government to uphold their responsibility for providing water to its constituents would have been an effective strategy for the sustainability of the initiative.

While many countries are working to establish and even build new ECE centers, provide training for parents on gender responsive parenting, and working with government partners to incorporate gender responsive teaching into ECE curricula, there are limited examples of community managed playgroups, being set up and run by the community. The one example of a community managed playgroup comes from the *Woodside funded ECD project* in Myanmar. The project description did not provide many details, but mentioned training ECE teachers and playgroup facilitators before handing the project over to the township level ECE network group.

Programs to link families to social protection and resilience schemes are limited. The India

country office includes a social protection project aimed at providing essential services and supports to the most vulnerable women and families and in Myanmar a social enterprise project supported women in toy making and production.

The third dimension of change, *Improving laws, policies, systems and services*, is the least well-represented in program descriptions within the ECD mapping document. As a very basic illustration of this, a key word search for 'policies' in the ECD document showed 9 results; as a comparison, the word search for gender had 188 entries. This dimension requires the support and collaboration of local and national governments to create, implement and monitor policies that provide essential services for young children, are gender responsive and provide sustainable and long-term services to parents and families. China and Laos are examples of countries that have managed to work with governments to integrate ECD policies into the local system. In China, the *Promoting Gender Equality in Kindergarten Education* project lists as a key achievement the addition of gender equality as a key indicator in the annual assessment of local kindergartens by the local education bureau. And in Laos, the *Learn-Plus* project worked with local and national governments to adapt a summer pre-school model into the early learning system, with curriculum, trainings, and learning materials based on the ministry's national standards for early childhood education.

The third dimension of change is focused on making strategic, systemic changes; with most project funding cycles lasting at minimum three to four years, sufficient time is not available to demonstrate a project's efficacy and impact, which are crucial in advocating to government to make marked changes in existing policies and laws. However, in programs with more long-term funding, like Sponsorship, this area should be prioritized and plans developed to support COs to focus on this during the sponsorship life cycle.

Alignment with ToC-Inclusive Quality Education

Ten countries were profiled in the IQE mapping document with projects ranging from accelerated learning and gender transformative inclusive education to school-based disaster risk reduction and comprehensive school safety initiatives.

Three main areas of focus emerged during the key word comparison: a focus on out of school children and provision of accelerated and/or alternative learning was found across nine out of ten of the country programs; half of the programs included some form of gender responsive programming, either focusing on children and youth or on their teachers/community members; and school safety measures were found in over half of the programs profiled.

A more limited emphasis was placed on disability/inclusive education and while all countries discussed elements of quality in individual project descriptions, only two countries mentioned quality in the keywords section.

First Dimension of Change (ToC-IQE) These three main areas align well with the first dimension of change of the IQE ToC-*Changing norms, practices, and relationships*- which advocates for the importance of education for all children, a focus on ending harmful social norms like early marriage and pregnancy, and promoting a culture of safety and resilience in and around schools (Figure 4). Notably, countries have implemented innovative

approaches to providing learning opportunities for out of school children and youth- the Philippines country office's learning kiosks and mobile carts which provide mobile education and learning opportunities; Bangladesh's *Bride to Bookworm* project, which provided continuous learning opportunities to children and youth during COVID-19 school shutdowns; and India's *Digital Learning Centres* that provide technology supported learning to out of school women and girls.

Figure 3: Theory of Change, IQE

Plan International's work in climate justice is relatively new, but the emphasis on programs with DRR features in the APAC region is noteworthy and several case studies of country programming documented in the Inclusive *Community Disaster Risk Reduction and Management* (ICDRM) Booklet as well as in the *ASEAN Safe Schools Initiative* case studies illustrate the extensive work undertaken in this area.

For example, Plan International Bangladesh, along with a local NGO, implemented the Replicable Model in Disaster Risk Management, where children, adolescents, and youth (CAY) were trained to provide information and messages to community members in preparation for natural disasters. The CAY also provided input into disaster emergency plans and sat in on community planning and review meetings.

Second Dimension of Change (ToC-IQE)

This partnership with community organizations is a key component of the second dimension of change-*Strengthening assets and safety nets*-and calls on country programs to

collaborate with, *facilitate*, and *support* organizations that work with out of school children and youth and children with special needs. While most countries are working with NGOs and local organizations, the IQE mapping document did not provide much detail in this area. Two examples from the mapping document come from

> 1) The China country office, which worked with Beijing Normal University to develop evaluation tools for their *Girls STEM* project,

> 2) The Myanmar and Thailand country offices, which work as part of a consortium with Save the Children and other organizations on an Education Cannot Wait funded project on supporting displaced and crisis affected children.

Third Dimension of Change (ToC-IQE)

The third dimension of change is broad and wide ranging- *Improving policy frameworks, budgets, and services*-and calls for inputs into supporting the development and implementation of education sector plans, influencing government to remove legal barriers to education for children, and advocating for a broad curriculum, including comprehensive sexuality education. Similar to the ECD component, this area was the least well represented within the IQE mapping document. Again, a key word search for 'policies' in the IQE document showed 6 results; as a comparison, the word search for gender had 211 entries. One example emerged from the Philippines project DUSU where Youth Peer Educators (YPEs) were trained as advocates on education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, child protection and mental health issues and supported other youth and community members during times of need. Other country programs, such as Cambodia, Indonesia, and Thailand, have worked with their local education counterparts on curricular inputs, but it is not clear whether these inputs are at a national scale and if they are incorporated into national standards and policies.

6.3 STRATEGIC APPROACH (FINDINGS FROM FGD)

The mapping documents only provided a very brief description of the country's approach and overall strategy to ECD and IQE. For example, this is the description that preceded the project list for Plan International Vietnam:

> *In Vietnam, the ECD projects focus on strengthening parenting groups to promote gender-responsive parenting practices. They also aim to improve nutrition, provide outreach health counseling, and stimulate Vietnamese language skills among ethnic minority children.*

For IQE, the India country office described their approach in this way:

Plan India's country programme 'Inclusive and Quality Education' is aligned with the AoGD: Inclusive Quality Education and we aim to ensure all girls and boys from disadvantaged families have access to quality education from pre-primary to senior secondary levels and are enabled to make informed career choices. Four sub-impact areas are covered under

this Country Programme:

> *1) Pre-primary education,*
>
> *2) Elementary education,*
>
> *3) Secondary and Higher Secondary education*
>
> *4) Career and Vocational Guidance.*

Efforts were made to address issues such as high dropout rates, inadequate learning facilities, and limited educational opportunities.

To supplement this limited information, a series of questions focused on program strategy, approach, design, and evaluation were sent to country office staff (the questions and responses can be found in the Annex section). Additionally, project descriptions were analyzed against the ToC for ECD and IQE to determine alignment. The following section describes the alignment of the strategic approach to the ToC.

Strategic Approach

According to FGDs with country office staff, each country works to develop a strategic approach that is linked to the AoGDs but prioritizes needs in their countries. For example, a focus on quality education targeting vulnerable populations is evident in the country introductions in the ECD mapping document of Thailand and Vietnam (Table 7).

Table 7: Thailand and Vietnam

Country	Keywords– ECD	Keywords– IQE	Country introduction– ECD	Country introduction– IQE
Thailand	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH), adolescent girls, vulnerable groups, decision-making	Child-led multi risk assessment tools, Reading, Library, Safe School Working Group, Humidity Sensor	In Thailand, the ECD projects focus on providing clean water, sanitation, and hygiene services to vulnerable groups. They aim to improve accessibility to clean water, proper sanitation, and hygiene practices, especially for children and adolescent girls in rural areas. The Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) projects in Thailand aim to enhance accessibility to clean water, proper sanitation, and hygiene for community members, especially children and	In FY 23, Plan Thailand aims to enhance literacy and knowledge within the target communities. It focuses on raising literacy awareness, particularly for children, youths, educators, nearby schools, and local communities. The projects are working to integrate a Gender Transformative Approach through training to establish an inclusive and empowering environmen

			adolescent girls in rural areas. The projects include providing clean water for vulnerable groups at the Thailand-Myanmar border, improving water for health and livelihoods in Chiang Mai, and providing clean drinking water for vulnerable groups at the Thailand-Myanmar border.	
Vietnam	Ethnic minority, gender-responsive parenting, malnutrition, caregivers, children's club, child-friendly space	CSE, GBV, school capacity, school Infrastructure, gender equality and safeguarding	In Vietnam, the ECD projects focus on strengthening parenting groups to promote gender-responsive parenting practices. They also aim to improve nutrition, provide outreach health counseling, and stimulate Vietnamese language skills among ethnic minority children	The education program in Vietnam aimed to improve learning conditions for children at schools, with a focus on marginalized ethnic minority groups. Efforts were made to provide comprehensive care and education to boys and girls from these groups, while also addressing issues such as gender equality and safeguarding.

Similarly, from the responses to the emailed questions, the Myanmar country office states as its objective:

● ●

Girls and boys in Myanmar, particularly the most vulnerable learners, engage in quality, inclusive and gender-responsive learning in safe, protective environments.

● ●

In addition to the focus on quality and vulnerable populations, certain countries prioritize other issues that affect their populations. The Solomon Islands for example, prioritizes a focus on climate resilience, given their location as an island nation facing massive changes to the built and natural environments due to climate change: (objective taken from *The Girls' Tekem Akson lo Climate Change* (GTACC) project brief).

Support adolescent girls and young people from the Solomon Islands to exhibit **leadership and influence climate change** decision-making at the community, provincial, and national level – and explore opportunities to advance this at a Pacific regional and Global level. The activities comprising GTACC will aim to improve the a**daptive capacity**, and **reduce the vulnerability of individuals**, and their communities, to the **wide-ranging impacts of climate change.**

The India country office has a strong push towards nutrition related activities for young children

and pregnant mothers. Prevention of malnutrition is one of the four sub-impact areas within their country program and all six of the projects they implement under ECD have some element of nutrition programming. And the China country office focuses on capacity building. The following excerpts from the country introductions in the mapping document also show the key words that were included in both ECD and IQE mapping documents (Table 8).

Table 8: China and India

Country	Keywords– ECD	Keywords– IQE	Country introduction– ECD	Country introduction– IQE
China	Parenting, Gender Equality, knowledge on infant and toddler feeding, Parent-child reading, hygienic and healthy eating. responsive feeding, community fire safety	Gender Transformative and Gender Friendly School Environment, Gender responsive Curriculum, Quality Education, Reading, STEM, Technology in Education, hi-tech, Robotic code, female role model, Social Emotional Skills, Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM)	The ECD projects focus on capacity building of service providers through partnerships with influential institutions and organizations. They also emphasize gender-responsive parenting education services and promote gender- sensitive care and education in preschools and kindergartens. The projects aim to integrate gender perspective into the educational management system and parenting programs.	In the area of Inclusive Quality Education (IQE), PIC is mainly focus on three core projects, in FY23, to ensure that girls and boys learn for life through the promotion of gender transformative, inclusive, and quality education in schools, especially those living in rural areas and affected by migration.These three projects have been implemented in Shaanxi and Yunnan provinces through Girls STEM Education, Children Reading Promotion and Gender Friendly School Environment Improvement projec
India	Nutrition, Childcare, disadvantaged families, self-help groups, entrepreneurship, hot cooked nutritious meals, malnourished, Safe Drinking Water, Waterborne diseases, vulnerable women and families, digital application	Child friendly school, Quality Education, Digital Education, STEM in Education, Career Guidance, preventing drop out and ensure transition & continuity in formal education	Our country programme 'Nutrition and Early Childhood Development' is aligned with the AoGD: Early Childhood Development and we aim to ensure all infants, children, adolescents and mothers from disadvantaged families have access to age appropriate nutrition services, and nurturing child care practices for early childhood development. Four sub-impact areas are	Plan India's country programme 'Inclusive and Quality Education' is aligned with the AoGD: Inclusive Quality Education and we aim to ensure all girls and boys from disadvantaged families have access to quality education from pre-primary to senior secondary levels and are enabled to make informed career choices. Four sub-impact areas are covered under this Country Programme:

			covered under this Country Programme:	1) *Pre-primary education*
			1) *Prevention of malnutrition*	2) *Elementary education*
			2) *Management of SAM and MAM children*	3) *Secondary and Higher Secondary education*
			3) *Safe drinking water and prevention from water borne diseases*	4) *Career and Vocational Guidance.*
			4) *Early childhood development*	Efforts were made to address issues such as high dropout rates, inadequate learning facilities, and limited educational opportunities

Table 9: Indonesia and Philippines

Country	Keywords-ECD	Keywords-IQE	Country introduction-ECD	Country introduction-IQE
Indonesia	Not including in ECD mapping	Safe School, violence, discrimination, abuse, learning spaces, Gender-transformative climate education, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Child-Sensitive Social Protection Framework (CSSF), Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)	Not including in ECD mapping	Plan Intl. Indonesia represents a groundbreaking approach to enhancing school safety, targeting senior high school students. Centered on meaningful youth engagement and the adoption of gender-transformative climate education, this project aims to develop a replicable model at the provincial level. Focusing on provinces DI. Yogyakarta and Bali, the initiative involves a collaborative effort with stakeholders at national and provincial levels. Key activities encompass strategic planning, thematic module development, legal framework reinforcement, and capacity-building for duty bearers. The ultimate goal is to establish a robust, adaptable blueprint for

				school safety, ensuring a secure learning environment for Indonesian students.
Philippines	Not included in ECD mapping	No keywords listed in IQE mapping document	Not included in ECD mapping	Plan International's Inclusive Quality Education aims to provide access to age-appropriate, gender-responsive and learner-centered education to Girls, young women and other vulnerable children and young people. Our work on IQE includes building the capacities of young people to act to address the barriers to accessible and quality education. This also involves supporting relevant public and private institutions and agencies to deliver accessible and quality learner-centered education and skills for young people to enable them to transition to decent work. We are targeting the most vulnerable school children, out-of-school children and youth, and those worst affected by disaster events.

Another area that is particularly evident in the country introductions and aligns with the ToC is the concept of mobilizing CAY to engage and improve their communities. From youth being trained to serve as Peer Educators in the Philippines, to setting up student councils in Indonesia for children to participate in DRR planning, the voice and engagement of children and youth is strong in APAC programming (Table 9).

Overall, countries are implementing programs that align with the Theory of Change for the AoGDs. Country programs prioritize issues that are prevalent in their countries while addressing the core components within each AoGD.

A few areas can be further strengthened. According to the Ambition 2027 Strategy, Plan International "intends to be the world's leading international NGO for girls in humanitarian crisis by 2027". Countries like Bangladesh, Myanmar and Thailand have been supporting programming in the context of education in emergencies for several years. But the humanitarian- development-peace (HDP) nexus is not as fully developed as other program areas--education continuity was included in three country project descriptions and

humanitarian related activities was listed by four countries. This is an area that demands further support and development if Plan International is to meet its goal for 2027.

Another area that could be bolstered is centered around the third dimension of change of the ToC-*Improving laws, policies, systems and services.* One measure of improving systems and services is through capacity building. Five countries (China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam) included capacity building either as a key word or in their country introductions. 'Policies' was included by five countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Thailand). Bangladesh and Thailand included enhanced and improved policies as an outcome in their projects and Cambodia designed a project that was already part of the government's quality education strategy. These are the types of encouraging projects that could be increased to move the needle on making long lasting change in this area.

6.4 THE MATIC STRENGTH AND EXPERTISE WITHIN THE REGION

Countries in the APAC region are setting the standard for Plan International's work in many thematic areas, from DRR to ECD. The recommendations below focus on thematic areas that are notable and are part of each of the APAC region country programs. With some refinement, these can be put forward as future Global Programme Models.

Youth Engagement

Plan International is one of a few global organizations that works with youth and young adults to make change at the community level. From DRR and school safety to comprehensive sexuality education and ending early marriage, Plan International's approaches and toolkits provide young people with knowledge, skills, and evidence to make long-lasting change. Countries within the APAC region excel in different areas of youth engagement-School Safety in Indonesia, Peer Educators in the Philippines, CEFMU youth activists in Nepal-to name a few. The blueprint for a youth activism package has already been laid through Global Programme Models like Youth Citizen's Scorecard and Safer Cities. Taking the learnings and successful elements of each of these approaches and creating a package on Youth Activism to be put forward as a Global Programme Model would validate the difficult work done in this area by the APAC region and allow countries in other regions to bring youth activism to the forefront.

An example of a program that has the potential to be a Global Programme Model and has the most comprehensive description in the mapping document comes from the **Philippines' Real Assets Through Improved Skills and Education for Adolescent Girls (RAISE)**

Above project. The three-year project, funded by Dubai Cares, focused on empowering adolescent girls, young women, and young men to realize their rights to education and skills for work in Western Samar, one of the poorest provinces in the Philippines through

> 1) Improving the agency of adolescent girls, young women, and young men over decision-making regarding their education and skills development.

> 2) Increasing the capacity of school systems to address student dropouts, as well as providing gender-responsive Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

> 3) Enhancing the youth's access to skills trainings and job linkages. Key achievements of the project included:

> ❯ *Establishment of learning kiosks with the help of the youth groups and the support of the village leaders, teachers, and communities. The kiosks provided tutorial programs, and easy-to-access teaching-learning resources, and assisted learners in navigating modular distance learning.*

> ❯ *Project DUSU mini-carts provide literacy instruction for CAY and their parents, are mobile, and provide alternative learning opportunities for those that cannot access traditional schools.*

> ❯ *Refurbishment of Technical Vocational and Livelihood (TVL) labs based on government standards.*

Holistic Humanitarian Programming

As more and more human and climate related disasters affect populations around the world, a greater focus on serving these populations is emerging in the development sector. Plan International has responded to a number of these emergencies and provides inputs across thematic areas, using materials developed internally and externally. At the moment, each country responds to emergencies in its own context, using materials and resources developed at the country or consortium level. Recognizing that this work has the potential to become larger than inputs into the development context, Plan International should work to organize all of its inputs into one holistic humanitarian toolkit that can be picked up by any implementing agency during an emergency.

Plan International Bangladesh's work on the Cox's Bazaar Rohingya Influx response is an example of humanitarian programming that provides comprehensive inputs to the entire community and has the potential to be a Global Programme Model. Plan International Bangladesh has worked in Cox's Bazaar since 2018, supported by many multi-and bi-lateral organizations. Plan International Bangladesh works in three main areas of education (ECD, Myanmar Curriculum & Adolescent and Youth Education), serving learners ages 3-24 in the camps and host communities in Cox's Bazar. All of Plan Bangladesh's learning spaces in Cox's Bazar are community-based learning facilities; spaces within homes in the Rohingya and host communities are identified and community members are trained as facilitators to deliver education by and for the local community. In line with Plan International's Global Strategy as well the Bangladesh country strategy, all education programming has a strong emphasis on gender transformative programming and ensuring the needs of girls.

33.750
children reached
through ECD program

10.744
Adolescent and youth
reached through
literacy support

300
Teachers developed in
Myanmar Curriculum through
pre-service capacity
Development (PSCD)

11.219
Youth and
Adolescents received
MHM support

Sponsorship Integrated Programming

Plan International's work in Sponsorship areas focuses on the entire community-from the youngest babies and expecting mothers to elders in the community. Sponsorship programming also has a long-term focus, and this allows for changes to be made based more easily than in donor funded projects. The APAC region is well poised to take the lead on developing a Sponsorship Integrated Programming toolkit based on its excellent and varied work in the region. A Sponsorship toolkit will enable new Sponsorship country teams to better plan projects that are aligned to Plan International's global strategy, design and monitor projects using results indicators developed by the MERL team, and advocate to government and other stakeholders on mainstreaming approaches that protect girls, those with disabilities, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable members of the community.

An example of a country that has strong integrated programming funded by Sponsorship, is the Plan International Bangladesh country office's program in Barguna, Barishal, and Rangpur. The project focuses on parenting, SBK (Supplementary Book Kits), teacher training on child protection, and conducting sessions on various issues for young children and families. It also includes gender transformative features such as a focus on girls, gender blender game, and addressing unpaid care work. The program aims to ensure that all sponsored children, especially girls and young women, are heard, live without fear of violence, and achieve their rights. The program focuses on promoting gender equality, child protection, and safeguarding issues through various interventions.

6.5 PROMISING INTERVENTIONS

Many programs within the APAC region are innovative and are targeting important issues in their communities. Amidst such good work, a few promising interventions are included below and can serve as a starting point for multi-country collaboration and research. These projects are examples of Plan's work across a variety of thematic areas, have been designed

with community members, have strong government support, can be replicated locally and globally, and include evidence of project effectiveness

School Learning Garden Project–Cambodia
The School Learning Gardens project transforms school garden and kitchen spaces into an extension of the classroom and supports teachers to use experiential and hands-on learning techniques. It is working to improve educational quality and learning outcomes for students, as well as provide an enabling environment for both girls and boys to display gender equitable and inclusive attitudes and behaviors at school.
Community buy-in The project is a partnership between the country office and the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport. The country office worked in partnership with local schools that were part of the World Food Program school feeding initiative to design and implement the project. **Government endorsement** In conjunction with the Department of Curriculum Development, a series of teachers guides and activity books were created based on the national curriculum to link with activities within the kitchen garden. **Ability to scale** These materials have been endorsed by the Minister of the MoEYS for national use. **Evidence of impact** An endline evaluation is planned for 2026.

OKY Mobile App–Philippines
The **OKY mobile app** is a menstruation tracking app that was created as part of a UNICEF funded Communications for Development for Alternative Learning System Project. The app provides information about menstruation in fun, creative and positive ways, straight into girls' hands through the tools they use every day – their mobile phones.
Community buy-in The project prioritized the ongoing participation of youth with disabilities in the entire project cycle phase: from consultation, validation, and user app testing. **Government endorsement** The project was developed through a collaborative process with various local and regional department heads. **Ability to scale** The app is available for download on the Google Play Store.

Evidence of impact

Not included in the mapping document. However, approximately 50,000 users have downloaded the app from the

Google Play Store since its launch in March 2023.

Let's Keep Playing/Play Matters–Myanmar
PUP is Plan International Myanmar's flagship program and provides parents and caregivers with training and guidance on the importance of play for young children. Through programs at ECE centers in three different townships, PUP provides parents with tools and resources to strengthen their parenting skills and use the power of play to engage their children.

Community buy-in

Limited information in mapping document.

Government endorsement

Limited information in mapping document.

Ability to scale

The approach is funded by Lego and has been implemented in several countries globally.

Evidence of impact

https://learningthroughplay.com/explore-the-research/coping-through-play

Let's Keep Playing/Play Matters–Myanmar
The project aims to create a replicable model of school safety at the provincial level and is developed through embracing meaningful youth participation in strengthening enabling policies and adopting gender transformative climate education. The project, works to achieve the aim by co-developing the model with stakeholders at the national and province levels through the development of a provincial level safe school strategic plan, targeting safe school institutional capabilities at the provincial level, the growth of qualified provincial safe school facilitators and school-level champions, and the support to the implementation of safe school Action Plan for schools within the authority of the Provincial Government.

Community buy-in

Country offices co-create and contextualize the approach to suit their context. For example, in Bangladesh the model has been used to educate and prepare communities living in low lying areas to prepare for floods during the rainy season and in Indonesia, the country office works in regions that are earthquake prone. The model includes

content on DRR that teachers are trained on and supported to integrate into the regular school curriculum. The model also involves mobilizing and training youth to serve as volunteers who will implement, monitor, and train others in the community on the Safe Schools approach.

Government endorsement

Each country works with its respective governments to implement the model. For example, the Government of Indonesia has shown strong commitment to ensuring school safety and established the National Secretariat for Safe Schools in 2010 and plans to create a Disaster Safe Education unit within the Ministry of Education. And in Bangladesh, local township leaders were involved in designing the project, from start to finish.

Ability to scale

The Safe Schools model is based on the Comprehensive School Safety Initiative developed by the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in Education. The model has been designed to be replicated in a variety of contexts and has been implemented in many Plan country offices in the region, from India to Timor Leste.

Evidence of impact

In Indonesia the Safe School model has improved transition rates to primary and secondary schools and reduced and dropout rates of students and teachers have integrated gender responsive and inclusive education elements in their pedagogy (excerpted from IQE mapping document). Baseline link included in mapping document.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While the scope of this review was limited to the ECD and IQE mapping documents, it was enough to showcase Plan International's impressive work in the APAC region. This work is driven by dedicated staff who are committed to and endorse the organization's mission, objectives, and focus areas. The recommendations in this section build off of this strong work. Fine tuning certain approaches, working more strategically and in partnership with other stakeholders, and tracking outcomes and impact more rigorously will enhance Plan International's ability in achieving goals and objectives set out for the region and beyond.

The recommendations are organized into three buckets: ***Programs and Practice**; *Strategy and Approach;* and *Research and Impact.*

7.1 PROGRAMMES AND PRACTICE

1. Implement the core training package with a training plan on Gender transformative education

Gender transformative education is a cornerstone of Plan International's work and all country programs included in the mapping document implement gender transformative education approaches. In conversations with APAC and global staff, this component was described as one of the most impactful and well-designed approaches and includes, amongst other elements, a framework, guidance note, an e-course, and pedagogy modules. However, none of these are part of one core package and country teams use these various pieces to create their own gender transformative approaches. While it is good for country programs to have autonomy and flexibility in designing bespoke programming, a recommendation is to develop a **core training package** with a training plan that lays out the number and type of modules to be delivered, the optimal time frame programs should be active for in order to achieve maximum impact, the follow-up and support required to ensure that the project is being implemented according to quality benchmarks, etc. Much of this content exists; it would just require a refresh in packaging and socializing with country teams. This approach would allow Plan International to have one cohesive approach, be more strategic with its advocacy on the importance of gender transformative education at multiple levels, especially with government, and have the evidence to back it up. It would also limit the number of programs that implement one element of gender transformative education (for example, Thailand's Hope Library) but have limited funding (in the case of Hope Library, only one year), to carry out a more robust implementation. A core package will elevate and amplify Plan International's ability to tell the story of their gender transformative work more cohesively, with multi-country and long-term data to back up how this element improves quality in education.

2. Training Package on Literacy and Numeracy

Related to the recommendation above, a core package on gender transformative education that also includes training on literacy and numeracy would further enhance Plan

International's ability to scale and replicate its model globally. Donors are still very focused on supporting foundational learning and literacy and numeracy programming is only being implemented by a handful of country programs.

3. Reinforce Creating a Core Training Package for Holistic Development of Youth Programming

Most NGOs focus their work in schools on the primary grades. Plan International is unique in that programming targets youth and young adults as well. Again, in the limited scope of this desk review, the full scope of programming targeting youth and young adults was not evident. However, focusing more on this demographic and creating a core package that includes elements of technical vocational training, gender transformative education, comprehensive sexuality education, and DRR would enable more country offices to holistically serve this population and prepare them for adulthood and beyond.

4. Increased Collaboration between the Humanitarian and Development Programmes

It is more important than ever for increased collaboration between the humanitarian and development segments of Plan International's organizational structure. Staff mentioned during FGDs the need for these teams to work more in tandem on designing and implementing programs and this is also a goal of the Ambition 2027 strategy for Plan International's. It is recommended that the two teams create a concrete strategy on ways of working that is intentional and plays on the strengths of both teams and keeps the needs of communities at the forefront.

7.2 STRATEGY AND APPROACH

1. Develop a How-to Guide on Advocacy

The *Theory of Change* and narrative documents for ECD and IQE are robust resources that steer and guide country teams in planning and designing approaches and in designing individual country strategies. The ToC documents contain many objectives and as described in an earlier section, country teams are primarily working on the first two dimensions of change. The third dimension of change- *Improving Laws, Policies, Systems and Services* (ECD) and *Improving Policy Frameworks, Budgets, and Services* (IQE)- which tackles the important task of advocacy and systems level change is least well represented in the mapping documents. To support country team to achieve objectives within this dimension of change, it is recommended to **develop a how-to guide** on advocacy to help country teams make long-term systems level change. A how to guide can include explanations of different types of advocacy, a timeline that aligns the project cycle with advocacy efforts, online trainings and resources on advocacy, and examples of successful efforts both within Plan and externally of projects that have created meaningful long-term systemic change or supported governments to adopt its policies, practices, or approaches.

2. Partner with Influential Local Organizations

Related to the recommendation above, it is it is critical to partner with influential local organizations working to make systems change to amplify voices and efforts. Plan International sits on important global and regional working groups and committees across sectors. Similarly, it is recommended that **in-country staff join local advocacy organizations** to push forward legislation and policies that will safeguard and protect children and youth.

3. Communication Materials for Influencing

In an organization as large as Plan International, it is difficult to keep track of all of the work that is being done across sectors and regions. It is essential to have **well created and timely communication materials** that tell the impact of programs in user friendly formats to share with government and donors for advocacy and fundraising purposes*.

4. Develop a Climate and Gender Focused Funding Strategy

Plan International works with a number of donors in the APAC region who are familiar with and endorse the agency's ambition and goals. However, there is more room for strategic collaboration, particularly in the emerging area of climate justice and the intersection of gender and climate change. These are two areas that Plan International is poised to respond to and donors are looking for partners with a strong and impactful track record. It is recommended that Plan International **develop a climate and gender focused funding strategy** and look to partners like Comic Relief (climate change), The Packard Foundation (global reproductive health) and Pivotal Ventures (Melinda French Gates new foundation focused on gender equality), to further their work in this critical area

* This recommendation was made by an APAC staff member in a focus group discussion.

7.3 RESEARCH AND IMPACT

1. Sponsorship Programming Framework

The mapping documents present Sponsorship programming very positively-the programs seem well-organized with a cohesive strategic approach, anchored by integrated programming focusing on ECD, WASH, and DRR. From the information available in the mapping documents, however, Sponsorship programming seems to lack a distinct program cycle or methodology that guides the pacing of activities within an impact area. Additionally, there are no evaluations or research documents generated by Sponsorship (listed in the mapping documents), as there were for other donor funded projects and it was not clear how Sponsorship programming evaluates impact of its approach. To ensure that Sponsorship programming is impacting populations its serves and to better, track monitor, and analyze this impact, it is recommended that Plan International invest in creating a **Sponsorship Programming Framework**, similar to the framework developed for Gender Responsive

Education and other programs. The objective of the framework would be to support country teams in the design of their programs, and particularly having clear guidance within the framework for project baseline, midline and endline evaluations.   A side note worth mentioning is that a similar recommendation was also made in the external evaluation of Sponsorship programming conducted by RMIT in 2019-"Plan International should use the child sponsorship dataset more to inform its programmes and to answer questions of importance for the organization" (page 20). Save the Children's Common Approach to Sponsorship Programming module is a good example of a framework that supports country teams in implementing Sponsorship programming.

3. Sharing CO Best Practices in Working in Government Structures and Policies

Inclusive Quality Education is an AoGD and a cornerstone of Plan International's education programming and gender transformative education programming is a core programmatic strategy within this component. It is necessary to show how gender related work makes improvements in quality and what specific elements make this happen. The desk review did not include impact or research documents so it was not possible to gauge whether and how gender transformative education programs have made in impact in improving quality. However, the MERL team has developed rigorous results indicators to monitor quality in programs, including a new gender marker. But in conversations with MERL and other staff members, these tools have not yet been fully socialized or mainstreamed within programs. **It is recommended that MERL and project teams work closely to better understand these tools and to highlight gender transformative education programs that have met quality measures as defined by the MERL team**. Creating a document listing such programs and sharing with country teams would go a long way to support teams in meeting this measure.

3. Sharing CO Best Practices in Working in Government Structures and Policies

Of The mapping documents include descriptions of a few country programs that have successfully advocated to government to include Plan International's approaches into government structures and policies. **It is recommended that these country teams participate in sharing their approach via webinar, in a success story, or as part of a panel discussion** so other country teams can learn from their efforts. Increased sharing of successful practices and approaches was also mentioned by several countries during FGDs.

4. Results Indicator Framework for Program Quality Monitoring

Measuring quality in programs can be a subjective and tricky component of monitoring program success. Thankfully, the Results Indicator framework for IQE has very specific measures of quality for various beneficiaries based on where programs are being implemented-at the school level, in communities, in development programs or humanitarian programs. However, it is not clear whether country teams are actually using these indicators to measure their projects. In the mapping document for IQE, country teams described approaches having quality but despite reading many project descriptions of quality

programming, it was not evident what the term is actually describing. The overuse of the word in project descriptions and project titles has the effect of diluting the importance of this element in achieving program goals. It is recommended that countries be more deliberate in describing what element of quality their projects are trying to achieve and to use results from the **Results Indicator framework to describe how quality improved or changed in their projects**.

5. Multi-Country Research at Region on Best approaches and program of COs

The APAC region has many examples of successful programming spanning a variety of thematic areas. The region is well positioned to take on multi-country research projects that would further validate innovative approaches and provide important data to make informed decisions related to scale and sustainability. Furthermore, data is a critical component of advocacy and working with governments to mainstream and integrate successful approaches into government policy and procedures. It is recommended that the APAC regional management team work with the MERL team to **conduct multi-country research into its Sponsorship funded Integrated ECD Projects; Gender Transformative Education approach; and Safe Schools approach.**

ANNEXES

Here

a. Key investment area table

b. Country and Key Word list

c. Key word analysis-trends

d. Key words and country introductions

e. Focus Group Discussions with Plan International Staff

f. Emailed Responses to Questions from Country Teams

g. Documents provided by Plan International team for review

h. Documents reviewed independently