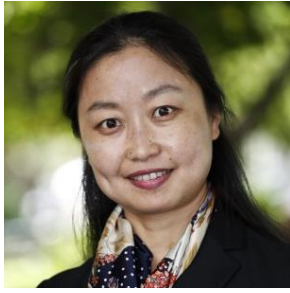


Pathways for gender equality through early childhood teacher policy in China

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ABSTRACT

In spite of efforts to improve the quality of early childhood education for girls and boys globally, incorporating a gender perspective—particularly in teacher policies—remains a gap, including in China. This inattention to early childhood poses an additional barrier for countries to achieve quality education and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In China, gender parity in primary and lower secondary education was achieved almost a decade ago. However, gender-based inequalities in education processes and outcomes—e.g., biased sex ratio at birth, different education aspirations, labor market discrimination, and restricted female leadership—persist as a result of deeply entrenched gender stereotypes that are formed early in life. The next step to improving gender equality in China is to provide a quality, gender-sensitive education for a harmonious and sustainable society. Fortunately, the Chinese government is promoting gender equality in schools and is set to develop policies in early childhood education and teacher quality. This paper highlights the gaps and opportunities in bringing gender equality into early childhood teacher policy in China. Drawing from a review of global examples, the paper concludes by outlining aspects at the education system and pedagogical levels to ensure gender-responsive teaching and learning for all kindergarten children so China can build upon its sustainable approach to gender equality and education development.

A MISSED OPPORTUNITY FOR QUALITY GIRLS' EDUCATION

The international development community has placed adolescent girls and secondary schooling at the center of girls' education policy, and less attention to the gendered realities of girls and boys in early childhood. This oversight begs the question: Can gender and education issues at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels—and beyond—be tackled without paying attention to interventions in the early years?

Studies from the psychological, sociological, neurobiological, and anthropological fields all point to the significance of early childhood care and education (ECCE)¹ on a range of developmental outcomes relevant to gender equality, including the cognitive and affective formation of gender identity and stereotypes, and the range of skills learned by girls and boys through teacher-child interactions and gendered childhood play (Fang, 2010; Jirout, 2015; Levine, 2012; Shi, 2004; Fromberg, 2005; Weinraub, 1984). Children begin to label the gender identity of others around two and a half years-old, and begin to understand gender stability² around three and a half years-old (Kazdin, 2000). Recent research has found that gender stereotypes about girls' and boys' intelligence may be formed as early as age six (Bian, Leslie & Cimpian, 2017). As such, in order to bridge the gender gaps that girls and women experience later in life, evidence suggests that it is critical to begin tackling gender bias early in life (Koch & Irby, 2005).

This raises the importance of gender responsiveness in early childhood teaching and learning—a topic that has gained traction among international advocates—but that has seen little action in country-level policy and practice (Kilsby, 2014; Miske, 2013). It is clear from the literature that early childhood teachers' qualifications and training play a role in children's learning outcomes (Rao et al., 2014). But what has received less attention is the role of early childhood teachers' beliefs about gender, teachers' own gender awareness, and how their expectations and practices can constrain the education and development of girls and boys. A gender approach would give teachers the awareness to create equality and equity³ for all children in education settings, helping girls and boys optimize their natural talents and developmental opportunities.

Observations from countries as diverse as Australia, Hong Kong, and Norway have shown that when kindergarten teachers manifest traditional gender values in the classroom, both teacher and student behaviors reflect gender stereotypes (Meland & Kaltvedt, 2017; Chapman, 2015; Chen & Rao, 2011). Other studies illustrate how teachers' beliefs can shape girls' and boys' choices, their exploration of self, and key socioemotional skills such as connecting to other people, as well as other markers of well-being like self-confidence, peer acceptance, and social support (Lahelma, 2011; Li & Wong, 2016; Verdine, et al., 2014). Yet opportunities for gender sensitivity training are limited. When teachers do have the opportunity to receive training on gender-sensitive approaches, however, girls benefit in positive ways (King & Hill, 1993; UNICEF, 2001). For instance, implementation of gender responsive pedagogy⁴ by the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in several African countries found that girls' self-esteem was enhanced when teachers brought gender awareness to the classroom and tailored teaching to the specific learning needs of girls and

1 ECCE refers to services for children from birth to eight years of age. It includes supporting parental care and helping children learn, as well as providing community-run and formal preschool programs for pre-primary school-aged boys and girls (UNESCO, 2007). In China, it refers to education for children from birth to six years of age, including nursery schools for children under three and kindergartens for children ages three to six. This paper focus on gender issues in kindergartens.

2 Gender stability refers to the understanding that one's own—or other people's maleness or femaleness—does not change over time (APA, <https://dictionary.apa.org/gender-stability>).

3 The gender equality approach highlights equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for girls and boys, whereas gender equity focuses on how girls and boys are treated differently, particularly in teaching practices. The equity approach leads to gender equality. To ensure fairness, compensatory measures must prevent the effects of historical and social disadvantages.

4 Gender responsive pedagogy refers to teaching and learning processes that take into account the specific learning needs of girls and boys. This approach calls for teachers to consider gender in lesson planning, teaching, classroom management, and performance evaluation. See http://www.ungei.org/files/FAWE_GRP_ENGLISH_VERSION.pdf.

boys (UNESCO, 2016). In spite of this emerging body of evidence, few countries are focused on gender equality in early childhood teaching and learning, including China.⁵

⁵ African countries, such as Malawi, have in the last few years started to pay attention to the early childhood years to get ahead of the cultural constraints created by lower societal expectations for girls that have already negatively affected their development pathways by before adolescence (Banda, 2018).

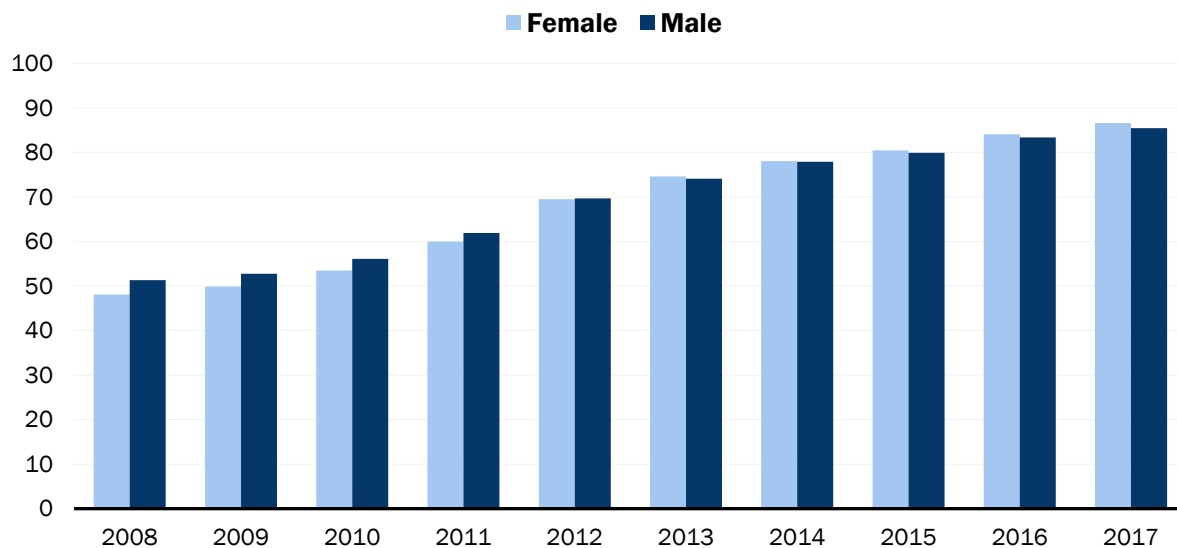
ECCE AS THE NEXT FRONTIER IN CHINA’S APPROACH TO IMPROVE EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

Government leadership in education and gender equality in China has been grounded in the promotion of girls’ education in compulsory education. But despite the achievement of gender parity and in some cases girls outperforming boys in primary and lower secondary education, gender gaps persist—China ranks 100 out of 144 countries on the Global Gender Gap Index,⁶ for example. Additionally, the preference for boys resulted in the world’s most imbalanced sex ratio, contributing to China’s rank at the bottom of the health and survival indicator on the Global Gender Gap Index.

Such outcomes are heavily tied to gender inequalities rooted in deeply entrenched gender stereotypes and cultural norms. In fact, development and education project leaders in China who were interviewed for this discussion paper⁷ commonly reported that gender stereotypes and cultural norms have been the hardest challenge to tackle in the country. This further emphasizes the need for China to pay attention to the formation of gender stereotypes early in life and to the role that ECCE and ECCE teachers play.

As China makes progress in increasing access to ECCE⁸ (see Figure 1), the next frontier is to promote gender equality in ECCE, especially through the integration of a gender perspective in China’s early childhood teacher policy.

Figure 1. Gross enrollment ratios of early childhood education by sex from 2008-2017



Source: China: Data for the Sustainable Development Goals. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. <http://uis.unesco.org/country/CN>

6 The Global Gender Gap Index includes measures for economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. See <http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2017/dataexplorer/#economy=CHN>.

7 This discussion paper solicited input from Chinese experts and leaders focused on girls’ education and development who led impactful projects at national and provincial levels.

8 Currently, there are 50 million children of pre-primary age (three-five years) in China. Due to the cessation of the one-child per family national policy and the start of the two-children per family policy in 2016, there is an anticipated increase of children of ECCE age. Between 2009 and 2016, access to kindergarten increased to 74 percent, and the number of children enrolled in kindergarten increased by 66 percent. However, kindergarten continues to be a weak link in China’s education system (MOE, 2016).

POLICY OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTEGRATING GENDER EQUALITY IN ECCE IN CHINA

The remainder of this discussion paper aims to examine pathways for integrating gender equality in ECCE in China. Each pathway should be explored further by policymakers in China and ECCE experts around the world to identify specific policy action to build upon China's approach to promoting education and gender equality. The areas discussed have been identified from a review of ECCE and teacher policy in China⁹ and a comparative analysis of trends from ECCE policy from Nordic countries¹⁰ that can be applied to the Chinese context. Nordic countries—including Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden—rank among the top on gender equality indexes in the world. In the past decade, they have paid extensive attention to gender issues in early childhood as part of larger efforts to promote gender equality. (See Appendix 1 for a summary of key findings from the analysis of ECCE in Nordic countries).

Develop policy supporting gender equality in ECCE and for ECCE teachers

Research has shown that policy is needed before gender equality can be infused in education management, planning, and staffing (Nanivazo & Scott, 2012; Heikkinen, 2017). Nordic countries share a common policy environment where legislation can ensure gender equality and non-discrimination in early childhood education. Such legislation can have the effect of solidifying national commitment to gender equality in early childhood education, and to help pave the way for gender to be mainstreamed in policies, processes, and practices in education.

In China, however, gender equality issues in ECCE have not been anchored to any particular institution or policy. The government has committed to establish a set of legal measures to raise public awareness and protect gender equality—including a national law on equality between men and women—and laws such as on the protection of maternal and infant health care, and prohibition of induced abortion for preferred sex. The *Program for Development of Chinese Children (2011-2020)* eliminates discrimination against girls, and the *Program for Development of Chinese Women (2011-2020)* targets gender equality in curriculum standards and teaching processes at various levels of education. However, these initiatives have not yet played a role in ECCE. The Chinese government is promoting gender equality in schools (China Women Newspaper, 2018), and is set to develop policies in early childhood education and teacher quality. Therein lies an opportunity for legislation and policy to mobilize both political and public attention to gender equality in ECCE. Moreover, because quality ECCE, gender equality in education, and the elimination of violence against children are all embedded in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets—to which China has subscribed—there is immediate impetus for action.

Strengthen institutional systems for gender equality in ECCE

In addition to policy, there is an urgent need to strengthen institutional capacity to ensure gender-based safety and security in ECCE. Due to a recent crisis of sexual assaults by teachers against kindergarten students in China, the public has called for increased child protection measures in addition to comprehensive sexuality education in ECCE and gender awareness training among ECCE teachers (China Foundation of Culture and Art for Children, 2017). Without a secure school environment, violent threats and bullying hamper children's rights and compromise their safety and ability to learn.

At the teacher level, gender equality training to ECCE teachers to prevent discrimination, harassment, and the violation of children's rights in kindergartens have been inadequate in China. Lessons could be learned from some of the Nordic countries' gender equality plans for ECCE. These not only include embedding gender

⁹ In addition, analysis of policy documents, official data and reports, peer-reviewed journal articles, and book publications on girls' education and early childhood education globally were conducted.

¹⁰ An extensive review of global evidence related to policies and practices on gender approaches to early childhood education was conducted. This entailed finding, selecting, appraising, and synthesizing data and trends contained in the documents gathered.

awareness in teacher training curriculum, but also—in the case of Sweden—training for teachers on the legal frameworks protecting children from abuse and discrimination.

Beyond providing teachers with relevant knowledge and skills, evidence elsewhere suggests that the alignment of teaching and learning is indispensable in establishing an evidence-based accountability system and for targeting policy implementation gaps for improvement (Brown, Irby & Yang, 2005; UNICEF, 2013). For example, to achieve gender parity in basic education, the Chinese government had established an accountability system that monitored girls' enrollment (Wang, 2012). Such a mechanism could be built upon for ECCE accountability systems to ensure the integration of gender equality issues by school management.

If the goal is to strengthen institutional capacity for gender equality in ECCE, then preferential policies and civil society initiatives in poor, rural, migrant, and ethnic minority areas and regions, are especially needed (Chi, Liu, & Bu, 2014). In this way, a localized and integrated approach is particularly important for enhancing ECCE teaching and learning in diverse contexts in China.

In addition, governance mechanisms are important. ECCE policy design and implementation in Nordic countries commonly involve actors from all levels of the education system: from national education authorities, to county-level and municipality authorities, to kindergarten administrators (Heikkinen, 2017). Given the multi-sectoral nature of ECCE and gender equality promotion, such multi-stakeholder engagement can help to avoid institutional isolation among policy actors, build synergy for cross-sectoral coordination, and help to ensure efficient planning and implementation of policies.

Interestingly, over the last seven years, China has seen the Ministry of Education, the National Health Commission, and the State Council of the National Working Committee on Children and Women attempt to institutionalize early childhood education. In more recent years, the Department of Primary Education, the Department of Teachers, and the Department of Integrated Reform have even taken measures to solve persisting challenges in access and quality of ECCE through more specific policy papers. Such attention points to an increasing network of political institutions on which governance mechanisms in ECCE should be developed.

Finance gender equality in ECCE

Budgetary allocation to gender equality in ECCE is notable across the Nordic countries reviewed. Indeed, some Nordic countries have specific budgets for the promotion of gender equality in ECCE, and all the Nordic countries reviewed grant access to alternative resources to fund projects promoting gender equality in ECCE. For example, the Finnish government has funded projects to promote gender-sensitive pedagogy in early childhood learning settings, including a website on gender equality for ECCE teachers. The Norwegian government has created a budget for recruiting male teachers in an effort to achieve gender balance among the ECCE teacher workforce. Sweden uses its funding for research on gender in early childhood. Iceland produces handbooks on gender equality for pre-school educators, and has even budgeted for a permanent position to promote gender equality in preschools (Heikkinen, 2017). Such funding allocations, whether directly in a specific budget or in special projects, incentivize teachers to try innovative approaches related to gender equality in ECCE.

In contrast, there is no budget allocated for gender equality in ECCE in China. In fact, budgetary spending in ECCE in China is lower than any other education levels, and much lower than the average of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. Household spending has long been the main source of funding for both public and private ECCE. National education resources allocation for ECCE in rural areas is especially inadequate (Chi & Velez, 2017; Liu & Gao, 2013; World Bank, 2016). This has led to inequality issues in access to education, as well as other financial burdens for ECCE teachers, including lack of proper payment and remuneration, poor working conditions, and low job status that has posed a challenge to attracting and retaining quality teachers in the field.

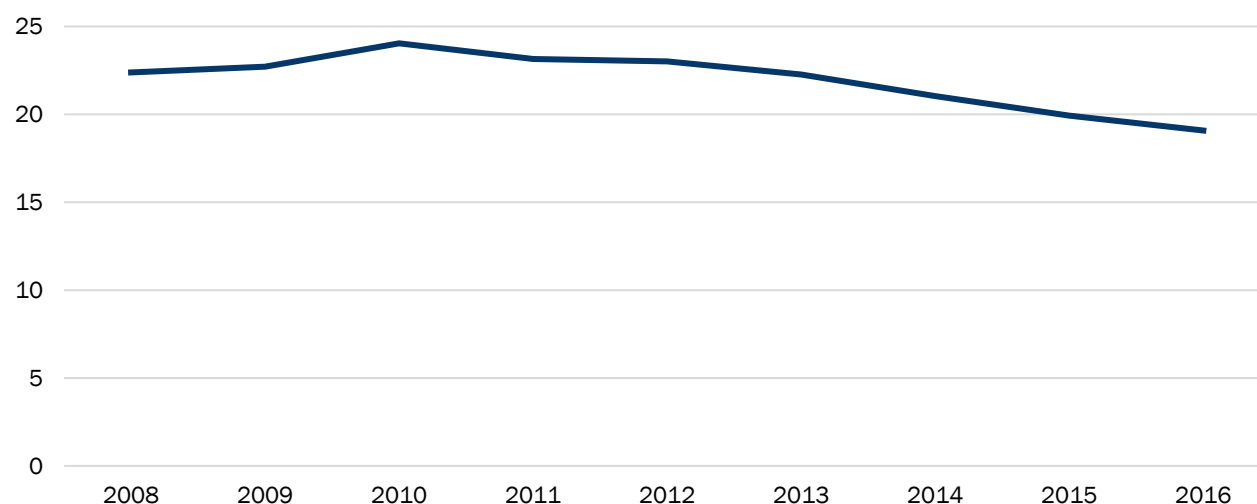
To address the needs of public investment, the government has been increasing financial inputs. Government spending accounts have increased from 1.7 percent in 2010 to 3.4 percent in 2012, and then to 3.8 percent in 2016. In 2016, funding to ECCE was 3.6 trillion yuan, and 5.9 percent will be added each year in the future

(Liu & Gao, 2013). As part of this effort, there is ample opportunity for government budgeting to ensure gender equality commitments are realized.

Improve the ECCE teacher workforce for gender equality

Over the last three decades, government policies in China have focused on teacher quantity and quality challenges, highlighting both the need to improve student-teacher ratios and teachers' qualifications. Currently, there is high demand for qualified ECCE teachers, as well as diversification of the ECCE teacher workforce.¹¹ The need is especially keen in rural areas where there is difficulty recruiting and retaining staff. To meet the shortage of teachers and to foster highly professional kindergarten teachers, the government has set up junior colleges for early education. In addition, recent policy has required that every class have a minimum of two head teachers and an additional nursery teacher to ensure quality teaching and care. As such, student-teacher ratios have been improving (See Figure 2). But the ratio in the rural areas in China can be two times higher, around 45:1 in 2012 (World Bank, 2016).

Figure 2. Student-teacher ratios in kindergartens in China, 2008-2016



Source: China: Data for the Sustainable Development Goals. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2017. <http://uis.unesco.org/country/CN>

To enhance ECCE teacher quality, government policies have been focused on the ECCE system and pedagogy. For example, early childhood teacher policy has encouraged development appropriate practices (DAP) that consider the age and individual needs of the learners and provide teacher guidelines for implementation in classroom teaching. In fact, the extent of teachers' usage of DAP is included in the national kindergarten quality rating criterion. However, despite this progress, ECCE teachers still tend to adopt an exam-oriented approach in daily teaching. Teachers' role in leading curriculum and pedagogy change is hampered by rigid evaluation standards for teachers, and institutional requirements to demonstrate particular skills (Guo & Yong, 2013; Chen, 2016). Therefore, changes need to be made in the assessment of both institutional and teachers' professional development.

China's 2018-2020 goals for in-service professional development and pre-service training include improving ECCE teachers' practical training on instructional and pedagogical skills—as well as the quality of both teacher-child and teacher-family interactions—and applying digital technology in ECCE management and information.

¹¹ There are few male teachers working in ECCE in China.

Despite government efforts to improve teacher quality, gender awareness has been absent in pre-service training and continuing professional development to date. Lack of gender awareness means that early childhood teachers are not equipped with the gender-sensitive knowledge, skills, and attitudes. But even if gender-sensitive training is provided, efforts to support teachers should not stop there. For example, when the Danish government reviewed its initial effort at gender reform in early childhood education, researchers discovered that teachers continued to explain boys' underachievement by saying they were not good at academic learning and could not sit still in the classroom (Heikkinen, 2017). This finding shows that even in countries with established policy, legislation, and training, stereotypical assumptions and practices can persist.

To be effective, teachers need continuous professional development and support in implementing and enhancing gender-sensitive pedagogy in ECCE. In particular, teachers need help dismantling their own gender stereotypes and in changing their existing teaching practices to make them more gender-sensitive (Sperling, Winthrop & Kwauk, 2016; Sahni, 2017). Lessons from Nordic countries suggest that establishing a network of support can strengthen teachers' implementation of gender awareness approaches in the classroom. For instance, Nordic countries have established regional collaborations and teacher support networks to share education resources online (e.g., technology-based learning resources, content knowledge, and pedagogical practices). In China, professional learning communities can be particularly useful for teachers in rural areas with less access to resources and fewer qualifications.

CONCLUSIONS

In order for China to fulfill its education plan and achieve the goals set forward by global education agendas, it not only needs to support girls' and boys' development of core competencies, but also their long-term cognitive and socioemotional development—free from gender constraints. Including a gender perspective in ECCE teacher policy has value far beyond improving the quality of the teacher workforce. It will also unlock children's potential at the very foundation of their development, ensuring that China can tackle persisting gender inequalities and build up human resources for the benefit of households, communities, and for a harmonious and sustainable society.

In summary, this discussion paper presents the possibilities and pathways for policy design and implementation at the system- and teaching-levels that may help to ensure gender-responsive teaching and learning in ECCE. It is necessary for governments to make a conscious decision to tackle the next frontier in quality education and gender equality to achieve its goals defined in its national education plan. Further expert consultations are needed to arrive at specific policy recommendations and monitoring indicators, but this paper is a promising start to charting out the priorities.

Table 1. Summary of policy options for early childhood teacher gender equality policies in China

Policy Pathway	Policy Objectives	Policy Options to Explore
Legislation and policy	Develop a national gender-sensitive policy framework for ECCE and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce rights-based, gender-sensitive legislation on ECCE that protects children's rights and ensures safe and secure ECCE provisions • Design a gender-responsive ECCE teacher policy and action plan that equips teachers and school leaders with gender-responsive pedagogical knowledge, skills, and attitudes; increases ECCE teacher professionalism with regard to gender awareness; supports teachers to implement gender-responsive instruction; provides incentives to ECCE teachers to improve their performance with regard to gender-based approaches; and ensures quality teachers for the neediest children
Institutional accountability and governance	Incorporate an evidence-based accountability system and multisectoral governance structure to ensure cross-sectoral commitment to and implementation of gender equality in ECCE teacher policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor teaching and learning, establish teacher performance assessments that are aligned with indicators of child development outcomes • To improve efficiency in the planning and implementation of ECCE, coordinate across relevant sectors and through public-private partnerships; ensure accountability mechanisms throughout
Financial resources for ECCE	Ensure affordability of ECCE and increase financial support for the promotion of gender equality in teacher education and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate national and local government funds to disadvantaged families to increase their access to quality ECCE • Allocate budgeting for gender awareness in teacher training • Innovate with alternative budgeting, e.g. project funds of gender equality for kindergarten principals to promotion quality of education

<p>Teacher workforce</p>	<p>Expand the number of qualified ECCE teachers—with particular focus on ensuring equal access to ECCE for children in villages and counties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase ECCE teacher education, training opportunities, and service provision and allocation across China, especially in poor, remote, minority, and rural areas, as well as the western regions • Provide educational and vocational guidance and special programming to recruit male ECCE teachers • Expand access to holistic, locally relevant ECCE programming—with the collaboration of private and social organizations to improve ECCE services
<p>Teacher and teaching quality</p>	<p>Integrate gender perspective in ECCE teacher education and development to ensure gender-responsiveness in ECCE teaching and learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support gender-responsive ECCE teaching and learning by designing gender-responsive curricular and training materials • Incorporate knowledge and practices related to gender equality—including dealing with gender-related bullying and sexual harassment—into ECCE teacher education programs, as well as in ECCE leadership and management • Give priority to rural ECCE teacher training tailored to the local context, and develop a strong teacher support network focused on sharing gender-responsive and technology-based learning resources, content knowledge, and pedagogical practices • Include requirements regarding training in gender-responsive pedagogy into ECCE teacher qualifications • Develop teacher training assessment to ensure fidelity of policy implementation in ECCE settings and teacher-child interactions • Provide ongoing professional development support to ECCE teachers, including a skilled mentor for teachers
<p>Legislation and policy</p>	<p>Develop a national gender-sensitive policy framework for ECCE and teachers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce rights-based, gender-sensitive legislation on ECCE that protects children’s rights and ensures safe and secure ECCE provisions • Design a gender-responsive ECCE teacher policy and action plan that equips teachers and school leaders with gender-responsive pedagogical knowledge, skills, and attitudes; increases ECCE teacher professionalism with regard to gender awareness; supports teachers to implement gender-responsive instruction; provides incentives to ECCE teachers to improve their performance with regard to gender-based approaches; and ensures quality teachers for the neediest children
<p>Institutional accountability and governance</p>	<p>Incorporate an evidence-based accountability system and multisectoral governance structure to ensure cross-sectoral commitment to and implementation of gender equality in ECCE teacher policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor teaching and learning, establish teacher performance assessments that are aligned with indicators of child development outcomes • To improve efficiency in the planning and implementation of ECCE, coordinate across relevant sectors and through public-private partnerships; ensure accountability mechanisms throughout

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APPENDIX 1. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM ANALYSIS OF ECCE IN NORDIC COUNTRIES

Country	Legislation and policies supporting gender equality in ECCE	Governance and accountability mechanisms	Finance for gender equality in ECCE	Approaches to improving ECCE teacher quality
Denmark	<p>2014 education reforms and ECCE teacher training prioritizes gender equality</p> <p>No policy, regulation, action plan, or requirement stipulated for ECCE educators to have knowledge about gender equality and equity</p>	<p>Disconnected, no systemic approach</p>	<p>No gender budgeting</p> <p>Nationally funded projects on gender equality knowledge, increasing men in ECCE, and gender equality in educational systems</p>	<p>Lacks a gender approach and perspective in teacher training</p>
Finland	<p><i>Non-Discrimination Act</i> covers anti-sex discrimination</p> <p><i>Equality Act specifies measures to promote gender equality in educational institutions</i></p> <p>“Government Report on Gender Equality” outlines an action plan for gender equality for all education levels</p> <p>No professional qualification on gender equality is required for ECCE teachers</p>	<p>New approach to be implemented by 2020 aims to reinforce long-term, systemic promotion of gender equality, particularly the commitment to the policy implementation at all levels</p> <p>The assessment of teacher performance aligns with learning outcomes of children</p>	<p>No specific gender budget, but various project funds are accessible</p>	<p>Government-provided teacher training includes gender equality, awareness, and pedagogy</p> <p>“Gender equality in early childhood education” website available as a teacher resource</p> <p>Online resources such as “Nordic Gender Equality Promotion E-training” available in multiple languages</p>
Iceland	<p>The legal framework on gender equality in ECCE is vague</p> <p>Since 2000, government has observed gender mainstreaming in school planning and school policies</p> <p>Education policy emphasizes preparing girls and boys equally for the labor market regardless of gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, etc.</p>	<p>Organizational structure lacks systematic approach to promote gender equality in ECCE</p> <p>Centre for Gender Equality is responsible for administration, guidance, and school education assistance</p> <p>A government position of project manager for equality will support implementation of gender equality in pre-schools, compulsory</p>	<p>Budget allocation for a permanent government position for gender equality promotion in schools</p>	<p>Gender studies on teacher education started around 1990</p> <p>Handbooks on gender equality for educators available</p>

	Pre-school national curriculum includes equality as one of the fundamental pillars	schools, and after-school programs		
Norway	<p>Established gender equality policies in education and implemented several action plans</p> <p><i>The Kindergarten Act</i> stated <i>Framework Plan for Kindergartens</i></p> <p>The 2011-2013 plan on early childhood education focuses on three issues: recruiting male ECCE teachers; teacher and staff gender equality awareness; and awareness of gender-based choices in education and occupations</p>	<p>Experts in the Commission for Gender Equality examine the status of gender equality</p> <p>Lack of accountability measures embedded throughout the education system</p>	<p>Budgeting for the recruitment of male ECCE teachers, as well as the specific events such as the sharing of experiences on conferences</p>	<p>Gender equality is established in national competency standards for early childhood teachers</p> <p>ECCE teachers and employees are provided with a 35-day course to improve their knowledge about and practice in gender equality</p> <p>Recruiting male early childhood teachers to better balance teacher-gender ratio</p>
Sweden	<p><i>Discrimination Act</i> delineates the practical work needed to prevent discrimination and harassment in the school system</p> <p><i>Education Act</i> speaks to equality and children's rights</p>	<p>National Agency of Education and the Swedish Schools Inspectorate supervises the <i>Education Act</i></p> <p>Equality Ombudsman supervises the <i>Discrimination Act</i></p> <p>Council for Equality in Preschools awards projects, hosts extensive government investigations, and conducts gender-based analysis of early childhood teacher policy</p> <p>The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions supports municipal needs</p> <p>School principals decide whether to budget for gender equality work</p>	<p>No special gender budget, but preschools can apply to alternative funds</p> <p>Principals allocate school resources on gender equality as they see fit</p>	<p>ECCE teachers participate in training related to the <i>Discrimination and Education Acts</i></p> <p>University courses for teachers include gender equality requirements</p> <p>Schools are staffed with gender advisers</p> <p>Anti-discrimination is mainstreamed across the national curriculum</p>

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