



ARNEC

Asia-Pacific Regional Network  
for Early Childhood

2024

Annual Report

Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development

Penang, Malaysia | 27-30 May 2024

INVESTING IN ECD

way for building resilience and boosting sustainable



## About the photo

YB Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Shukri, Minister of Women, Family, and Community Development of Malaysia, along with Dr. Sheldon Shaeffer, Chair of the ARNEC Board of Directors and Prof Datin Dr Mariani Md Nor of the ECCE Council of Malaysia, opened the 2024 Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Penang, Malaysia on 28 May 2024.

During the opening ceremony, the three officials watered a young tree, symbolising the shared commitment to nurture young children and foster their growth to their full potential and well-being.



# Message from ARNEC

Dear ARNEC Partners, Members, and Supporters,

ARNEC is pleased to present to the ECD community in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond the progress we have collectively achieved in 2024.

This Annual Report captures ARNEC's approach: to leverage on our network advantage, collaborate with partners at the regional and country levels, and catalyse transformative change in ECD systems to yield meaningful outcomes.

It is important to acknowledge that ARNEC comprises a diverse network of stakeholders, including regional and country-level partners, national ECD networks, Board of Directors, Steering Committee members, Institutional

Members, National Representatives, donors, the academic community, and our Core Team and Strategic Partners. Together, we collaborate to advance the agenda for early childhood development in this region.

Reflecting on our collective achievements in 2024 enables us to celebrate the connections that unite us and the momentum we generate to foster the resilience of young children, their families, and communities. Our collective efforts have consistently prioritised the holistic development and well-being of young children.

We nurture the momentum we established in 2024 to ignite a movement that will continue to progress in 2025 and beyond.

With gratitude,



**Evelyn Santiago**

Executive Director, ARNEC Secretariat



**Sheldon Shaeffer, PhD**

Chair, ARNEC Board of Directors

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## Connecting. Aligning. Producing.

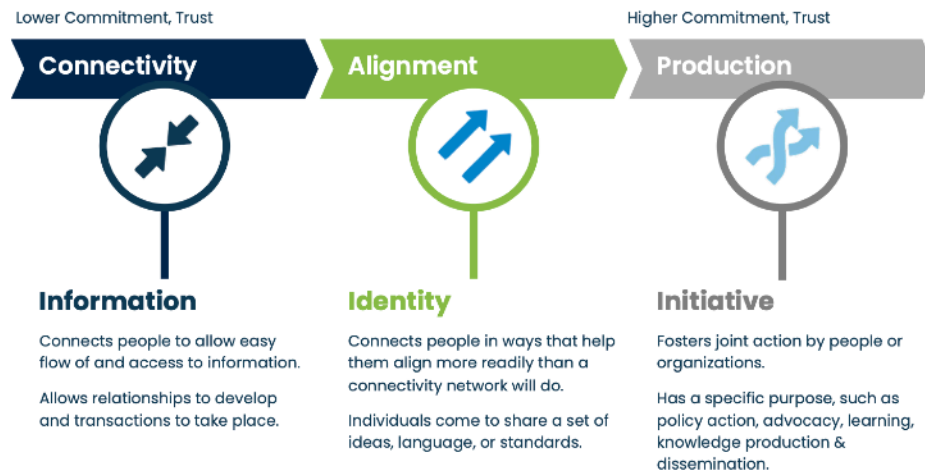
In the assessment of ARNEC in 2024, Network Impact shared three fundamental functions that define the role of networks: connecting, aligning, and producing outcomes.

The Annual Report underscores these network functions. To connect with the ECD community in the region and beyond, ARNEC has continued convening the ECD community for knowledge-sharing and co-creation through conferences and other learning platforms. By engaging in cross-country learning and advocacy priorities, ARNEC has ensured

alignment with regional and country-level ECD agendas. Furthermore, ARNEC has focused on country-level arrangements with national ECD networks and other partners, enabling collective efforts to produce shared impacts.

The primary objective of ARNEC is to advance the well-being of young children. Through connectivity, alignment, and production, ARNEC works with partners and stakeholders to drive the ECD agenda and create a better future for young children within the region and beyond.

### Networks have three basic functions...



Source: Network Impact, 2024





ARNEC Board of Directors, Steering Committee Members, Institutional Members, National Representatives, the ARNEC Secretariat, and other partners at the 2024 Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development in Penang, Malaysia, May 2024

# In 2024, ARNEC...

## connected

### *with partners*

ARNEC convened partners from the government, civil society, the academe, donors, and other stakeholders to advance investing in early childhood development (ECD) as an effective pathway for building resilience and boosting human development in the region.

This was the theme of the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on ECD in Penang, Malaysia in May 2024.

## aligned

### *to advance the ECD agenda*

Guided by the advocacy priorities outlined in the ARNEC Strategy, partnerships within and outside the network focused on shared objectives:

- promoting parenting and responsive caregiving;
- supporting multisectoral approaches to ECD;
- promoting clean, safe, and secure environments for ECD; and
- championing the capacity and well-being of the ECD workforce.

## and produced

### *impactful results*

ARNEC demonstrated its network impact by collaborating with partners at the country level to pursue context-appropriate systems change and to facilitate cross-country learning and advocacy at the regional and global levels to move the ECD agenda further.

Two cases are presented here: Indonesia's ECO RISE movement under the auspices of the National Coalition for Holistic Integrative Early Childhood Development (HI ECD Coalition) and integrating SEL in a University curriculum in the Philippines, both of which demonstrate country-level impacts from the partnership with and influence of ARNEC.



# ...had itself assessed as to network health, capacity, and impact



ARNEC has evolved from being a network mostly known for annual conferences to one that is pioneering important ECD priorities such as the intersection of ECD and climate change.

Excerpt from the Assessment Report by Network Impact, 2024

# ...received positive feedback from partners

1

Examples of impact support all **four of ARNEC's strategic goals**, especially increasing the knowledge base on ECD and strengthening ARNEC's reach and impact at the country level

2

More than any other type of impact, respondents highlighted the **increased capacity of national networks, including the capacity of their local network members**

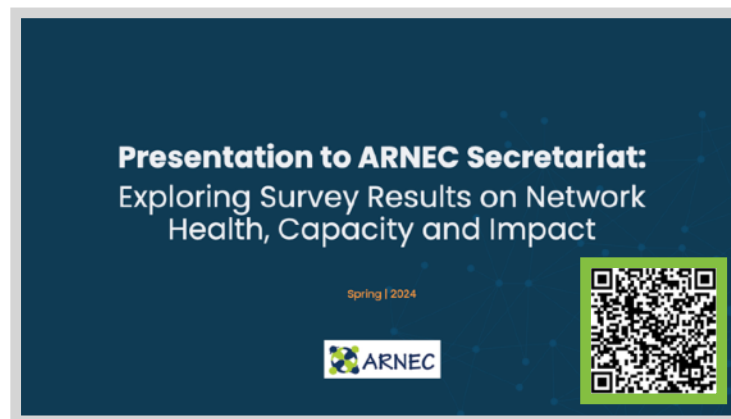
3

In addition to national-level capacity, respondents also highlighted examples of **national policy change and increased capacity among national policymakers**



4

The second most cited type of impact was ARNEC's overall **increased network capacity, influence, and reach**



Scan the QR on the left to access the Network Impact Survey Report for ARNEC, 2024 or click this link: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LYRpdikJL9JeRJYGX443eDIOxmh8miUQ/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LYRpdikJL9JeRJYGX443eDIOxmh8miUQ/view?usp=share_link)

# ...improved in advocacy focus and leadership

The **game changers for ARNEC**, based on the views of partners, had been:

- A well-organised conference in Manila in 2014 followed by even stronger conferences in Beijing, Nepal, Cambodia, Ha Noi, and Penang
- A strategy that guided ARNEC's work from 2015-2020 (*Vision 2020*) and the current strategy from 2021-2025
- Genuine engagement of the countries in advocacy priorities starting in 2016
- Articulating the link between ECD and climate change that started as early as 2019 during the Ha Noi Conference
- Agility demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic managing weekly webinars for 2-3 months to reach the ECD community in the region and beyond
- Engaging diverse partners including foundations and academic institutions
- All these breakthroughs occurred despite ARNEC's limited resources

Source: Reflection Workshop with Partners, Year-End Assessment and Strategic Planning, Bangkok, December 2024







# In 2024, ARNEC...



*2024 Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development*

Penang, Malaysia | 27-30 May 2024

## **INVESTING IN ECD**

An effective pathway for building **resilience** and boosting **sustainable development**





# ...held a regional ECD conference in Penang



**Penang opened its doors to more than 500 participants from 48 countries** for the 2024 Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Early Childhood Development (ECD), May 28-30, focusing on

investing in ECD to build resilience and boost sustainable development.

YB Dato' Sri Hajah Nancy Binti Shukri, Minister of Women, Family and Community Development of

Malaysia, opened the Penang Conference.

The 2024 regional conference emphasised the urgency of investing in ECD as a powerful tool for nurturing resilience among young children.

Click here for more information:  
<https://arnec.net/news/arnec-conference-calls-investment-young-children-climate-resilience-sustainable-development> or scan the QR code below.



# ...convened two high-level meets on ECD gains and climate change actions for young children



Minister Jess Gasper of the Republic of Marshall Islands chair the high-level discussion

To access ARNEC's report on the two government convening during the Penang Conference in May 2024, scan the QR code on the right.



UNESCO, UNICEF, government officials, civil society partners, philanthropic orgs share insights on ECD gains in the Asia-Pacific region

# ...showcased insights and expertise of keynote speakers on ECD, climate change, and investment

**Keynote speakers** were Dr. Joan Lombardi, Reflections, Resilience, Rowing Forward; Bhavreen Khandari, Clean Air, Strong Families; Dr. Chiam Heng Keng, Navigating the ECD Landscape in Malaysia; Dr. Frances Aboud, Approaches to Building Resilient ECD Programs: Evidence from the Field; Professor Yoichi Sakakihara†, Nurturing Resilience for Sustainable Future Citizens; and Srihari Govind, Resilient Homes, Resilient Children.

To access the videos and slides of our keynote speakers, click this link: <https://mailchi.mp/arnec/2024-regional-conference-for-early-childhood-development-news-and-updates-13867925?e=902b7bdcba> or scan the QR code below.





# ...connected people and partners to advance ECD investment for resilience and sustainable development

**Members of Parliament and Senior Government Officials:** Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Marshall Islands, and Samoa

**Participants:** 500+ from 48 countries

**Four sub-themes:** (1) building resilient partners; (2) building resilient homes and families; (3) building resilient programs and services; and (4) building resilient ECD systems

**40 individual paper presentations** aligned with the four Conference sub-themes above



To access the Documentation Report on the 2024 ARNEC Conference, scan the QR code on the right.







# Aligning



**On promoting  
responsive  
caregiving and  
playful parenting**

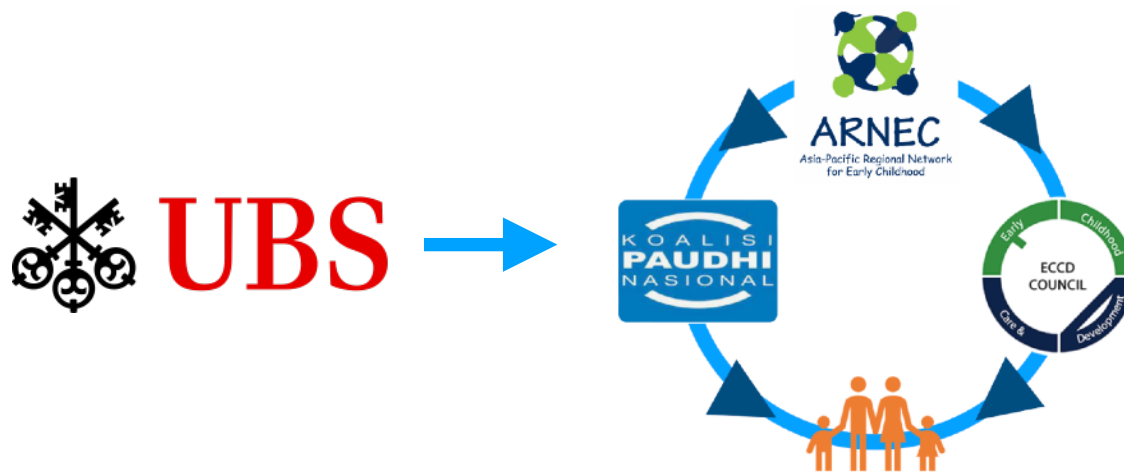




**In 2024, ARNEC...**



# ...co-designed a proposal called **MORECare4YoungChildren** for evidence-based reform of parenting and caregiving programs in Indonesia and the Philippines



The design and implementation of MORECare4YoungChildren unlock the potential for system-level improvements in the existing parenting and caregiving programs in Indonesia and the Philippines under the institutional guidance of the Family Planning Board (BKKBN) with the assistance of HI ECD Coalition in Indonesia and the ECCD Council of the Philippines, respectively.



In both countries, national ECD networks selected urban and rural local government units (LGUs) in urban and rural settings to pilot the implementation of enhanced parenting and responsive caregiving programs. The evidence and knowledge from implementation will drive

opportunities for improvement in parenting and responsive caregiving systems in these countries.

ARNEC and partners co-developed the program to improve parenting and

responsive caregiving capacities, ensuring pathways to scale beyond the pilot LGUs.

Scan the QR code above to read more about the launch of the MORECare4YoungChildren Project in Penang.



## ...also co-developed with Indonesia and the Philippines a system-influencing proposal to improve men's participation in parenting and caregiving called M-nurturing engagement



Drawing from the insights and workshop discussions facilitated by the Early Childhood Regional Networks (ECRN) Fund in Penang, ARNEC, HI ECD Coalition, and ECCD Council of the Philippines jointly developed the M-nurturing engagement project to promote fatherhood and male engagement (FME) in existing parenting and responsive caregiving programs in both countries.

The proposal built on ARNEC's network arrangements to demonstrate system-level change with FME as entry point at the country-level. ECRN approved the proposal and implementation started last quarter of 2024.

Scan the QR code on the left to access highlights of the ECRN-facilitated FME workshop with Regional Networks at the ARNEC Conference in Penang.



Early Childhood  
Regional Networks  
Fund

Influencing government systems in  
Indonesia and the Philippines to  
promote fatherhood and male  
engagement (FME) in parenting/  
caregiving



ARNEC  
Asia-Pacific Regional Network  
for Early Childhood



Network impact will be demonstrated here at two levels. At the country level, national ECD networks will use evidence to locate entry points for FME being integrated in the existing parenting and responsive caregiving programs of government in Indonesia and the Philippines. At the regional level, ARNEC will draw knowledge from implementation and use cross-country learning mechanisms to share lessons learned, good practices, and opportunities for scale.



# On supporting multisectoral approaches to ECD





In 2024, ARNEC...



# ...developed a country-level partnership approach to mobilise national ECD networks for shared agenda and impacts

## BUILDING STRONG NATIONAL ECD NETWORKS

*A Holistic Framework for Multi-Sectoral Coordination in ECD*



In 2024, ARNEC developed a guidance document titled *Building Strong National ECD Networks – A Holistic Framework for Multi-Sectoral Coordination in ECD*.

This document provides information on how to strengthen coordination across sectors for ECD.

The holistic framework for multisectoral coordination aims to help national ECD networks collaborate with different stakeholders and promote innovations improving local governance capacity for ECD.

ARNEC partnered with Network Impact to deliver a 3-part training series that strengthened ECD networks across eight Asian countries. The sessions focused on enhancing member engagement, assessing network health, and building long-term sustainability.

Thirty five participants gained practical tools such as value proposition surveys and health scorecards, improving strategic alignment, and

enhancing communication and financial planning skills.

This initiative significantly advanced ARNEC's mission to promote resilient, collaborative, and future-ready ECD networks in the region. The focus was on building stronger national ECD networks to support the implementation of multisectoral approaches in ECD.

From South Asia, ARNEC focused on improving the capacities of the Bangladesh ECD Network, Bhutan ECD Network, Alliance for Early Childhood Development Nepal (AECDN), and Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood.

On the other hand, the Network on Early Childhood Care and Development in Cambodia, HI ECD Coalition in Indonesia, and ECCD Council of the Philippines comprised the Southeast Asia cohort under ARNEC's program.

For East Asia, the Mongolia ECD Network also participated in ARNEC's network-building program.



# ...invested in co-development processes with selected national ECD networks to influence system-level reform



**ARNEC**  
Asia-Pacific Regional Network  
for Early Childhood



ARNEC, HI ECD Coalition, and ECCD Council co-developed proposals for UBS Optimus Foundation and ECRN.

They developed Theories of Change, intervention designs, results and risks matrices, project governance arrangements, and joint budgets and financial assumptions.

Donor approval has provided opportunities to test capacities for

implementation monitoring, strategic communication, data management, evidence generation, knowledge management, and managing for results.

These projects support ARNEC's commitment to demonstrating its network capacity by mobilising national ECD networks to produce meaningful ECD results through system-level reform at the country level.



**On ensuring clean,  
safe, and secure  
environments to  
support ECD**





**In 2024, ARNEC...**



# ...co-developed with Oxford University, UNICEF, and other partners a proposal on ECD and climate change impacts; inter-regional networks collaboration supported

ARNEC and Oxford University shared expertise and ideas to advance evidence-based actions to influence policy and practice on climate change impacts on young children at the regional and local levels.

This resulted in a joint proposal that demonstrated the power of networks, partnership and joint learning, and research-based knowledge co-creation to inform advocacy for policy and practical reforms at the regional and local levels.

Leading the proposal development on behalf of regional ECD networks, ARNEC has also drawn the participation of the African Early Childhood Network (AfECN), International Step by Step Association (ISSA), and Arab Network for Early Childhood Development (ANECD) to support cross-country, inter-regional learning.

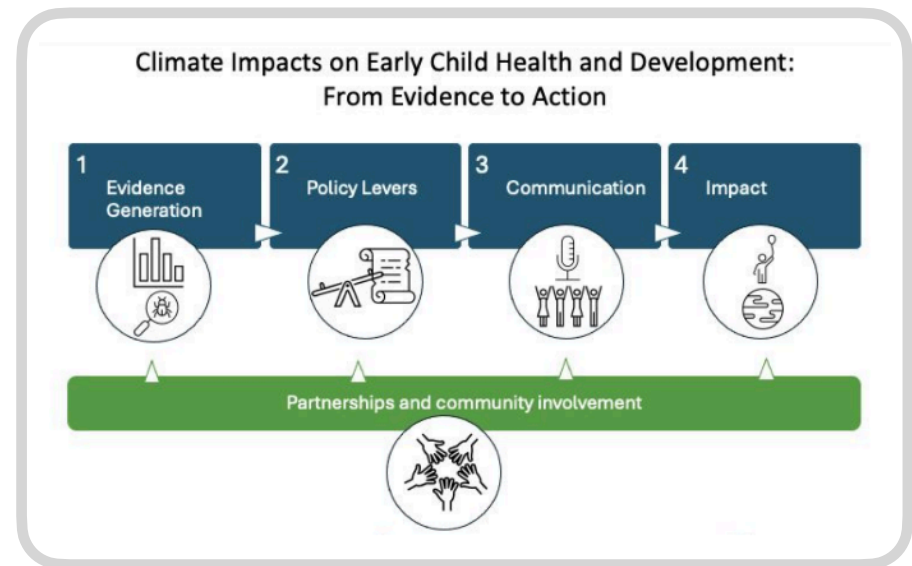
In addition, Oxford University has also brought in UNICEF and the International Center for Equity in Health to the proposal development.

Collaborating with Oxford University and other partners is among ARNEC's pathways to diversify partnerships in support of advancing the inter-linkages of climate change and early childhood in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

Building on partnerships approach and community involvement, the proposal focuses on evidence generation, opportunities for policy reform, communication, and results.

Oxford University submitted the joint proposal to the Wellcome Trust.

Wellcome Trust approved the proposal in 2024.





# ...completed with Vital Strategies factsheets on heat and lead poisoning affecting young children; and a series of factsheets issued on ECD, climate change, and environmental degradation

## A call to action: Air pollution in early childhood

The evidence is clear: Air pollution is harmful in early childhood, and can also lead to lifelong health and developmental impacts. In this brief, we provide more information about this issue and suggest a list of actions that we can take, whether as individuals or collectively, if you would like to learn more and get in touch, please email [arncclimate@gmail.com](mailto:arncclimate@gmail.com).

Air pollution is deadly, estimated to kill an average of 7 million people every year. And even when it doesn't kill, it affects every organ in the body and increases the risk of many diseases, including stroke, heart disease, diabetes, cancer and depression. Even at low levels it is visible in the raised eye, air pollution can cause noticeable differences in the health of populations. Air pollution affects not just young children's health. The toxic effects prevent them from reaching their full potential in life.

ARNEC Vital Strategies

## A call to action: Flooding and early childhood development

Flooding is one of the most destructive consequences of climate change, harming both families and children, while negatively affecting all the components of nurturing care.

As climate change intensifies, flooding has emerged as a significant health and environmental hazard. The impact of flooding disproportionately affects people living in poverty, with 89% of the world's flood-exposed people living in low- and middle-income countries. Between 2000 and 2016, there was an estimated 24% increase in the proportion of people exposed to floods.<sup>1</sup>

Today, 1.6 billion people—23% of the world's population—are directly exposed to the risk of intense flooding, with 124 billion living in South and East Asia.<sup>2</sup> In the coming years, the proportion of people exposed to floods will increase due to land subsidence, coastal development and climate change affecting years of progress in poverty reduction and development.

70% Globally, 70% of people exposed to flooding are located in South and East Asia

Figure 1: Absolute population exposure to risk of 15 cm or more of flood runoff South and Southeast Asia some of the most flood vulnerable regions in the world

1. Rentscher, J., Salahi, M., & Johns, R. A. (2022). June 9th. Flood exposure and poverty in 191 countries. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360400430>

2. Nelson, S., Salahi, M., Johns, R. A., & Salahi, M. (2023). Flooding and poverty in 191 countries. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360400430>

## Fact sheet: Effects of heat on early childhood

Extreme heat affects us all, but pregnant women and young children are particularly vulnerable. This brief aims to deepen understanding of this issue and propose actionable steps.

Since the 1950s, heatwaves have been steadily increasing in frequency, duration and intensity across the world, causing more deaths globally than any other extreme weather.<sup>1</sup> According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a heatwave is a period of abnormally hot weather, lasting from two days to months. However, there is no universal given temperature that defines what is extreme heat. Heatwaves are relative to a location's typical climate: the same meteorological conditions can constitute a heatwave in one place but not in another.

In recent years, Asia has been particularly affected by heat, having experienced warning that has nearly doubled since the period of 1985-1990. In April and May 2024, parts of South and South-East Asia experienced intense heat, causing a humanitarian crisis in parts of the region.

3 out of 4 children in South Asia are exposed to extreme heat (compared to 1 in 3 globally).<sup>2</sup>

Figure 1: Separation of children in the region by age group by region Source: <https://www.unicef.org/indicators>

1. IPCC (2022). <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wgii/>

2. <https://www.unicef.org/indicators>

## A Call to Action: Lead Poisoning and Early Childhood Development

Lead (Pb) is a highly poisonous heavy metal that is particularly harmful to young children. Lead exposure affects one in every three children globally, with the majority residing in low- and middle-income countries. Learn more about the devastating impacts of lead on children's health, and what we can do about it.

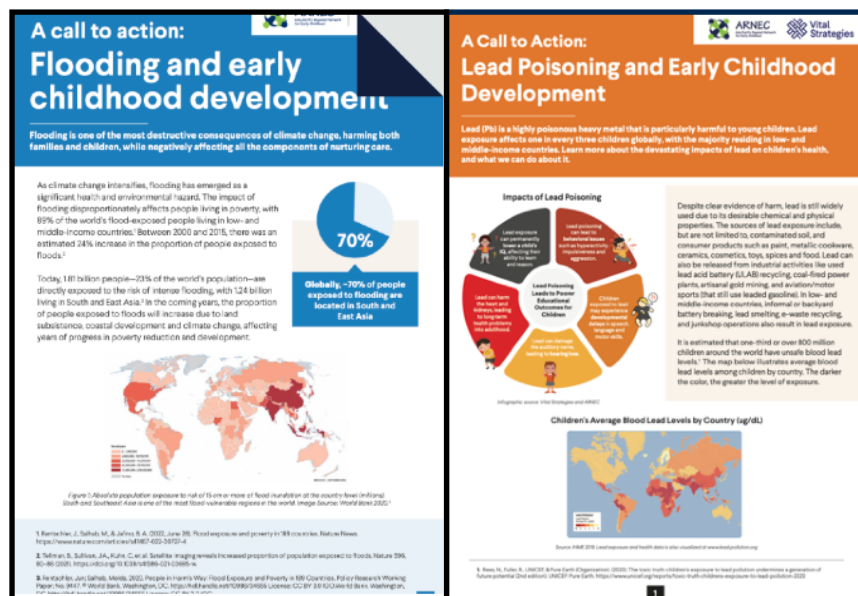
Despite clear evidence of harm, lead is still widely used due to its desirable chemical and physical properties. The sources of lead exposure include, but are not limited to, contaminated soil, and consumer products such as paint, metallic cookware, ceramics, cosmetics, toys, spices and food. Lead can also be released from industrial activities like used lead acid battery (ULAB) recycling, coal-fired power plants, artisanal gold mining, and aviation motor sports that still use leaded gasoline. In low- and middle-income countries, informal or backyard battery smelting, lead smelting, e-waste recycling, and jewelry operations also result in lead exposure.

It is estimated that one-third or over 800 million children around the world have unsafe blood lead levels.<sup>1</sup> The map below illustrates average blood lead levels among children by country. The darker the color, the greater the level of exposure.

Figure 1: Children's Average Blood Lead Levels

1. <https://www.unicef.org/indicators>

Scan the QR codes above to access the factsheets on ECD, environmental degradation, and climate change ARNEC and Vital Strategies co-created for the ECD community in the region and beyond in 2023-2024.



## ICYMI: webinar recordings available

ARNEC and Vital Strategies co-hosted webinars to launch these two knowledge products in 2024. Please access the links below to watch the webinars in the ARNEC Youtube Channel:

- Flooding and young children: <https://youtu.be/KUd2icLVm2k>
- Lead poisoning and young children: <https://youtu.be/wo5BbBfMNzc>

# ...completed micro studies with partners on young children and the environment in India and Indonesia

ARNEC, in collaboration with partners in Indonesia (Envolvement – Environment Youth Involvement) and India (Mobile Creches), undertook micro-research studies on waste management and ECD, and on air pollution and its impact on children in the first 1000 days.

These studies generate evidence on the intersection of environmental risks and early childhood, strengthen understanding of localised challenges, and highlight practical responses that integrate ECD into environmental and climate action agendas.

They also contribute to system-level change by engaging research institutions, government, and civil society stakeholders in dialogue and advocacy at national and regional levels.

Scan the QR code on the right to access the micro studies completed in 2024, as well as those done in 2023.

A graphic titled "Micro-research Studies" featuring a photograph of a young child in a brown shirt standing next to a blue bicycle in a grassy park area. The title is overlaid in large white text. Below the image, there is a QR code and a short paragraph of text.

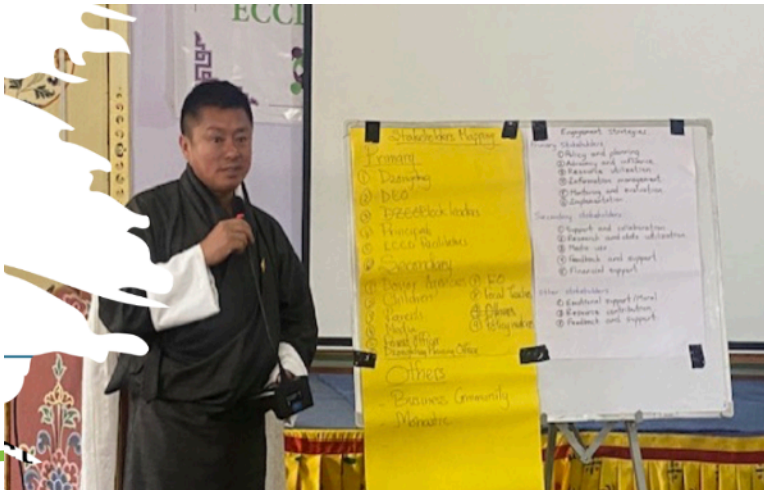
**Micro-research Studies**

ARNEC has also undertaken micro-research studies in high-risk settings on ECD and climate change, in collaboration with country partners.





# ...facilitated ECD-climate 101 learning workshops to build climate resilience capacities at the country level



ARNEC completed a **learning workshop in Bhutan in 2024 (left photo) building on the pilot activity in Indonesia last year (right photo)** to develop the capacity of key national stakeholders to understand, explain, and advocate the interlinkages of early childhood development and climate change.

These workshops led to country action plans, research, and consultations with government stakeholders. A key message in these national learning workshops was the need for predictable and



adequate ECD financing as a pathway to building climate resilience and boosting sustainable development.

Another national learning workshop is being designed for Bangladesh. ARNEC's demand-driven approach to holding ECD-climate 101 workshops at the country level ensures willingness of and ownership by local ARNEC partners and stakeholders. Scan the QR code above for more information about the said ECD-climate 101 workshops.

# ...engaged youth champions to speak for younger siblings, ECD, and climate resilience



Click here for more information: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=968926978611498&set=pcb.968928551944674>

ARNEC actively engages the youth in the Asia-Pacific region to advocate for their younger siblings at home and in communities. ARNEC amplifies their voices to support ECD, climate resilience, and sustainable development.

Srihari Govind, ARNEC Youth Advisor, emphasised this message during his keynote presentation on *Resilient Homes* at the 2024 Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on ECD in Penang, Malaysia. (Link to Srihari's video recording and presentation slides are available on page 10 of this Annual Report.)

Additionally, ARNEC regularly convenes Youth Champions in the region to facilitate learning exchange and provide capacity-building and evidence generation support for their advocacy efforts on ECD and climate resilience.

At the ARNEC Conference in Penang, a youth-led challenge was organised

to provide a platform for discussing ECD and climate resilience from the perspectives and experiences of the youth.

ARNEC is training its youth champions in the use of photovoice and social media to capture lived realities demonstrating the intersection of ECD and climate change. These captured experiences will be then utilised for advocacy at the country, regional, and global levels.

The photograph on the left shows ARNEC's Youth Champions from Nepal (Sagar Koirala), the Philippines (Nica Quindoza), Cambodia (Vouch Davath), India (Katyayani Goswami), Indonesia (Erwin Mahendra), Bangladesh (Mehedi Hasan), and Bhutan (Namgay Lham).

ARNEC aims to expand its pool of young advocates in the region by attracting and mobilising additional youth champions.





## ...also co-designed with ITA Pakistan a proposal to integrate ECD in crisis situations

In recognition of the significance of emergency preparedness and response, ARNEC collaborated with Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) Pakistan to develop a proposal that aims to enhance the visibility and operationalisation of ECD in disaster risks reduction and management protocols, especially at the household and community levels.

The proposal comprises three distinct activities. The first activity entails conducting a case study on the adverse effects of flooding in Pakistan. The second activity involves mapping the existing resources and guidelines on ECD in Emergencies within the region. Drawing upon the knowledge gained from both activities, the final activity focuses on capacity-building and training initiatives within the region.

ECRN approved ARNEC and ITA's proposal.

The project ensures that young children are at the center of emergency responses through a standardised approach to ECD in emergencies. It strengthens preparedness for climate-related emergencies, builds partner capacity to integrate child-focused priorities in emergency planning, and promotes cross-sectoral collaboration with practical strategies for ECD.

In addition, the project also drives system-level change by engaging government and civil society stakeholders in dialogue and consultations at national and regional levels.





**On championing  
the capacity and  
well-being of the  
ECD workforce**





2024 Regional Conference  
on Early Childhood Development

Penang, Malaysia | 22-26 May 2024

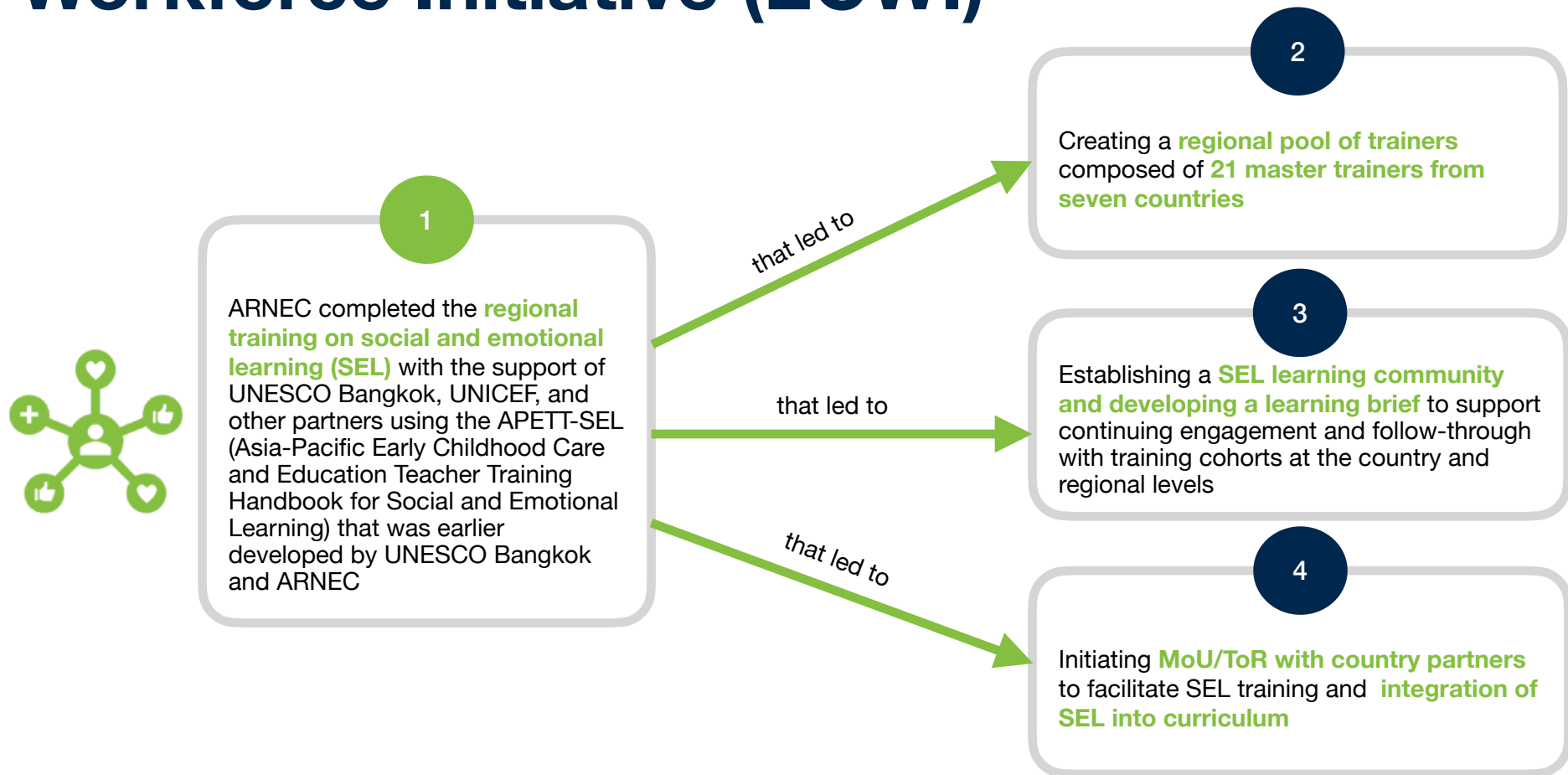
**INVESTING IN ECD**

An effective pathway for building resilience and boosting sustainable development

**In 2024, ARNEC...**



# ...intensified regional and country engagement to support the Early Childhood Workforce Initiative (ECWI)





# ...produced results based on ECWI objectives at the regional and country levels



## Results at the regional level:

1. *Regional Training of Trainers (ToT)*: Trained 21 master trainers from seven countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Vanuatu) using the APETT-SEL Handbook.
2. *Regional Learning Community*: Established a cross-country learning community with 50+ stakeholders (educators, policymakers, trainers). Conducted three regional meetings focusing on implementation strategies, supportive environments, and assessment.
3. *Pre-Conference workshop on SEL and the parallel session on building resilience in the ECD workforce*: Amplified good practices and innovations, as well as challenges

and opportunities for system-level change at the country- and regional level at the 2025 Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on ECD in Penang, Malaysia.

4. *Regional Mapping Exercise*: Mapped ECCE workforce priorities and SEL needs across 6 countries (Bangladesh, Singapore, Philippines, Nepal, Malaysia, Indonesia). Engaged 661 early childhood educators.
5. *Regional Policy and Advocacy Brief*: Developed evidence-based policy briefs advocating for (i) professional development opportunities and (ii) teacher well-being and SEL competencies.

For detailed insights, read the full Advocacy Brief here: [ARNEC\\_Regional Advocacy Brief.pdf](#)

# ...produced results based on ECWI objectives at the regional and country levels

## Results of country-level engagement

### Philippines:

1. Integrated Social and Emotional Learning (**SEL**) into **teacher training programs by PNU**.
2. Revised Early Childhood Education curriculum to include SEL competencies.
3. Trained pre-service and in-service teachers, impacting over 1,000 educators.

### Sri Lanka:

4. Conducted a **national** Training of Trainers (**ToT**) on SEL, engaging **53 master trainers** to scale SEL across **provinces**..
5. Integrated SEL as a **key focus** area within the **National Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework**.

### Bangladesh:

6. Combined SEL and mental health into BRAC's Play Labs, with trained play leaders and para-counsellors.
7. Advocated for **government-led SEL integration**, focusing on **humanitarian** setting

### Malaysia:

8. **Integrated SEL into ECCE teacher training program**, equipping educators to foster emotionally supportive classrooms.
9. Conducted **nationwide workshops**, reaching **500+ educators** to scale SEL implementation.



**First two columns of photos from left:** The Philippine Normal University (PNU), an Institutional Member of ARNEC, participated in the SEL and ECWI training interventions and, subsequently, has been mobilised to augment ARNEC's pool of master trainers to lead on-site and virtual training and learning interventions in the Asia-Pacific region.

One outcome of PNU's participation in ECWI/SEL training interventions, exposure to UNESCO's APETT SEL, and engagement in ARNEC's network-based partnership and impact arrangements is the integration of SEL in the University curriculum for pre-service and in-service early childhood teachers in the Philippines.

**Third and fourth columns of photos from left:** ARNEC in collaboration with UNESCO and UNICEF facilitated a national

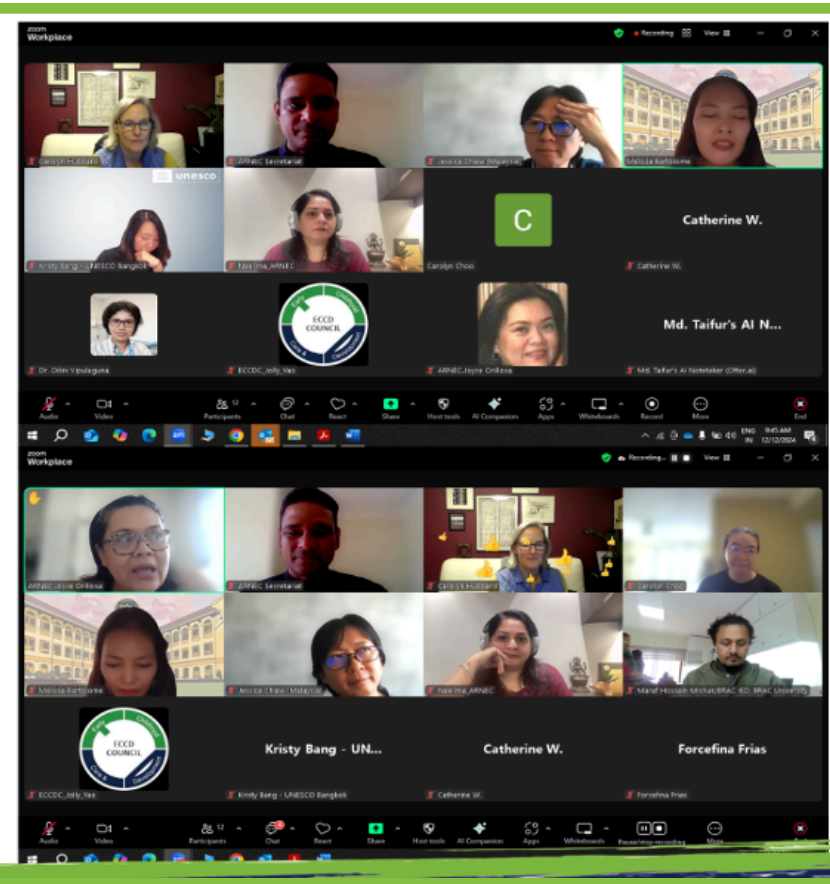
Training of Trainers (ToT) on SEL and ECCE in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The ToT aimed to create a national pool of trainers to deliver SEL and ECCE training to sub-national, district, and local governments, which often lack learning and professional development opportunities, especially for ECCE teachers at the community level.

Scan the QR code on the right for more information.







ARNEC has organised a **SEL learning community** to sustain post-training engagement and reinforce curriculum and other system-level interventions to support the professional development and well-being of ECCE teachers in the Asia-Pacific region.

The virtual approach facilitates cross-country exchange to learn from each other's good practices, innovations, and opportunities for improvement on SEL integration and adaptation to national and local contexts.



# Producing





**In 2024, ARNEC  
demonstrated...**

# ...network-driven outcome harvest in Indonesia: ECO RISE rising to advance climate resilience



ECO RISE (or the Early Childhood for Resilient Environment) is a product of collaborative efforts at the regional level through ARNEC and the National Coalition for Holistic, Integrative Early Childhood Development (HI ECD Coalition) in Indonesia, which facilitates country-level advocacy.

The HI ECD Coalition exerts influence over policies and behaviours of country-level partners, particularly government ministries, the civil society, and the youth. It also aims to engage these stakeholders to advocate for and represent young children on the interlinkages of early childhood and climate change, among other ECD priorities in Indonesia.

ECO RISE was initiated to address the multifaceted challenges of climate change by providing a pathway for change: raising awareness on the impacts of climate change on young children in Indonesia and emphasising the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration to enhance the adaptation capacities of young children and their families and communities.



# ...network-driven outcome harvest in Indonesia: ECO RISE rising to advance climate resilience

## Emerging outcomes of ECO RISE

System-level change opportunities identified after doing stakeholder mapping in Indonesia

1. Opportunity for collaboration between MoECRT and MoFE for green education program (Adiwiyata) to include ECCD
2. SPAB (Disaster-Safe Education Unit)—entry point to introduce integration of CC and ECD
3. Intersection of CC and ECCD integrated in ECCD schools

Advocacy targeted at influencing behaviors of stakeholders and government systems on ECD and CC

1. Evidence from studies on ECD and CC localized to the context of Indonesia to inform awareness-building
2. Awareness-raising campaigns supported by research evidence (on the inter-linkages of environmental degradation, climate change, and early childhood, addressing exclusion and vulnerabilities of young children)



# ...network-driven outcome harvest in Indonesia: ECO RISE rising to advance climate resilience



The ECO RISE movement in Indonesia has yielded results.

Although the ECCD curriculum does not explicitly mandate green education, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (MoECRT) through the P5 approach has led to the voluntary incorporation of climate change issues in various ECCD centers.

MoECRT Regulation No. 33 of 2019 established SPAB (Disaster Safe Education Unit), which can be used to approach and introduce ECCD in disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation.

In 2025, MoECRT will include ECCD as part of 13-year compulsory education, with one year dedicated to early childhood education and 12 years for

primary and secondary education. This is an opportunity to advocate for the integration of the Adiwiyata program (Green Education Program), which can now include ECCD. Previously, the program only covered primary education and above.

HI ECD Coalition's ECO RISE also addresses limited research-based evidence. ARNEC studies and resource materials are being translated to Bahasa, and ECO RISE conducts its own studies to support advocacy and social media campaigns on topics like air pollution, diaper use, water and electricity savings, clean air at home, early childhood exposure to climate change, and environment-friendly toys.

These messages raise awareness about the detrimental effects of climate change

and environmental degradation on young children.

**For instance, the diaper disposal message highlights alarming data: 17.4 million diapers are disposed daily in Indonesia, generating 3,488 tons of waste. This evidence has helped ECO RISE and partners campaign for eco-friendly alternatives.**

Similarly, the indoor pollution message emphasises the impact of poor outdoor air quality on children, urging parents to ensure clean air indoors.

HI ECD Coalition collaborates with partners like ARNEC, Tanoto Foundation, and Save the Children Indonesia to raise awareness and develop competencies on early childhood in the context of climate change risks and vulnerabilities.



# ...network-driven outcome harvest in the Philippines: integrating SEL at system-level

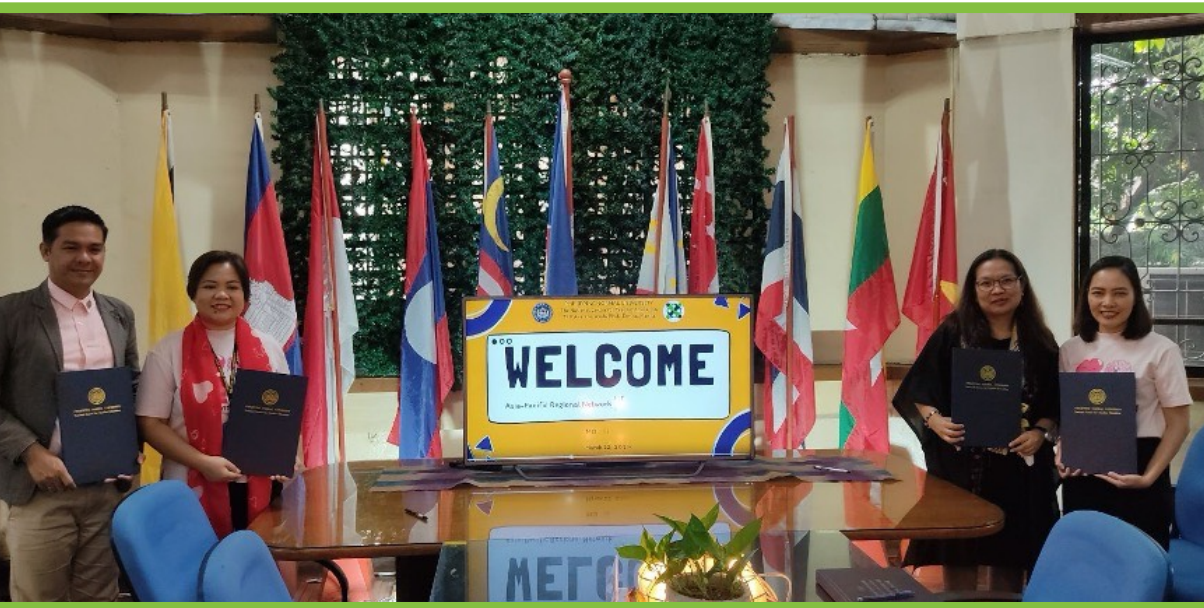
ARNEC partnered with the Philippine Normal University (PNU) through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and, because of this collaboration, SEL has been integrated into the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECEd) curriculum, which was approved by the PNU Board of Regents.

In addition to the updating of the Early Childhood Education curriculum to include SEL competencies, PNU also mainstreamed SEL principles into the Teacher Training Program to ensure sustained professional development for educators.

PNU in collaboration with the Philippines Department of Education's (DepEd) Bureau of Learning Delivery has expanded the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) training integrating SEL as a core component to equip a large network of teachers with essential SEL skills and fostering emotional intelligence and resilience.

Scaling this effort nationwide will contribute to long-term workforce capacity-building and strengthened SEL integration within the national education system.

Participants engaged in practical exercises to apply SEL in classroom scenarios. The program also focused on mindfulness, the connection between brain development and SEL, and the integration of SEL into daily routines and academic areas.



# ...network-driven outcome harvest in the Philippines: integrating SEL at system-level



The training concluded with hands-on activities for designing SEL-focused classroom practices and an introduction to assessment tools for evaluating children's social-emotional development.

Participants reported gaining a deeper understanding of SEL and acquiring practical strategies to integrate SEL into classrooms. They appreciated the

engaging and interactive nature of the training, focusing on practical strategies for nurturing empathy and emotional regulation in students, as well as teacher well-being.

The training program equipped them with tools to create a supportive learning environment, emphasizing continuous SEL practice in their professional lives.

The PNU training, supported by ARNEC at the country level, was informed by UNESCO

Bangkok's Asia-Pacific ECCE Teacher Training on SEL (APETT-SEL) Handbook.

# ...network-driven outcome harvest in the Philippines: integrating SEL at system-level

To access documentation of outcomes, use this link <https://www.earlychildhoodworkforce.org/content/arrec-integrates-social-and-emotional-learning-teacher-training> or scan the QR code on the right.



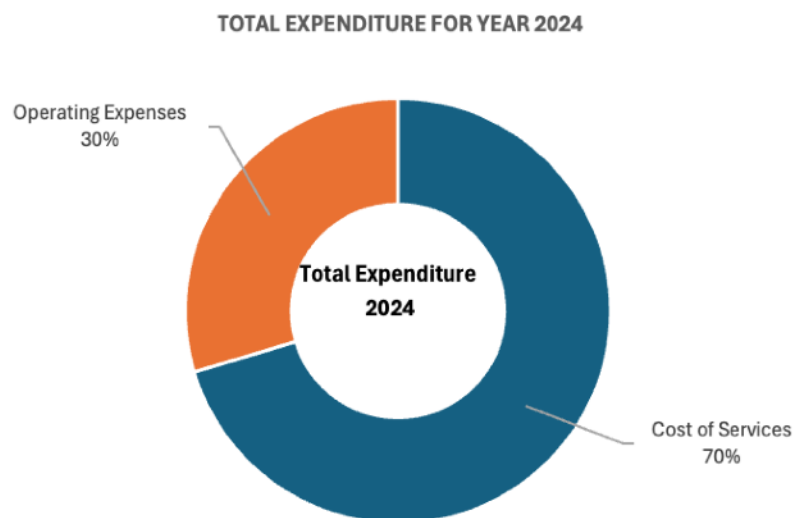
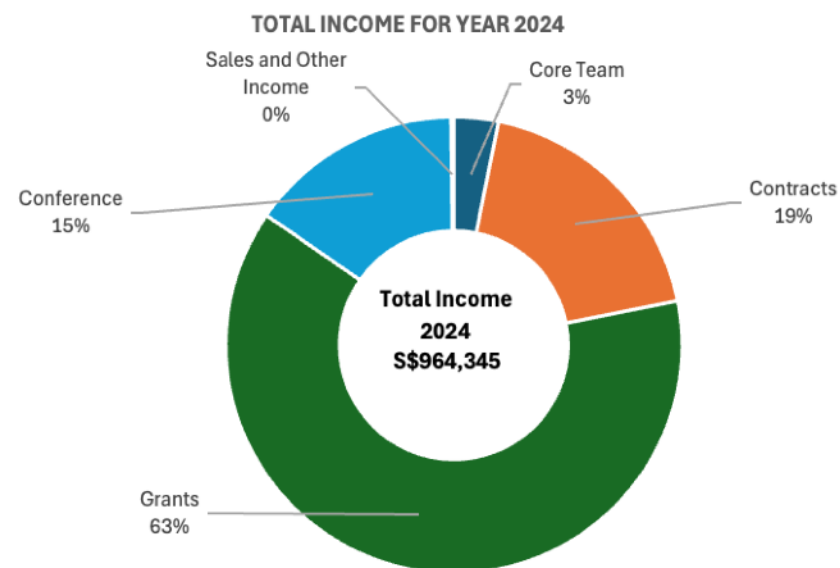


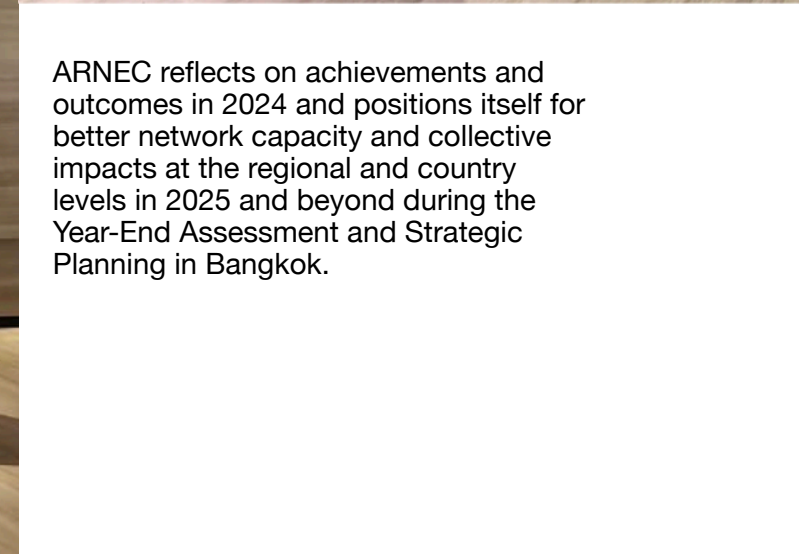


## **ARNEC sustained standards of financial health**

<b>Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood Limited</b>		
<b>Audited Financial Statement For The Financial Year Ended 31st December 2024</b>		
<b>Expressed in Singapore Dollars</b>		
<b>STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITIONS</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
Fixed Assets	6,574	28,155
Trade Receivables	0	378,093
Contract Assets	23,132	6,961
Other Receivables	68,463	9,973
Cash and Cash Equivalents	706,657	330,731
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>804,826</b>	<b>753,913</b>
<b>Equity &amp; Liabilities</b>		
Revenue Reserve	303,638	297,958
Contract Liabilities	424,268	418,171
Other current and non current liabilities	76,920	37,784
<b>Total equity and liabilities</b>	<b>804,826</b>	<b>753,913</b>
<b>STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
Core Team	30,342	43,236
Contracts	180,812	280,204
Grants	605,077	525,132
Conference	146,289	0
Sales and Other Income	1,825	9,833
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>964,345</b>	<b>858,405</b>
Cost of Services	674,537	574,695
Operating Expenses	284,128	279,289
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>958,665</b>	<b>853,984</b>
<b>Profit for the year, representing total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>5,680</b>	<b>4,421</b>
Certain comparative figures have been reclassified to conform to the current year presentation		

ARNEC was able to sustain its financial health in 2024 with income generated from grants, contracts, and core team contribution.









## Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC)

ARNEC is a network established to build strong partnerships across sectors and different disciplines, organisations, agencies and institutions in the Asia-Pacific region to advance the agenda on and investment in Early Childhood.

<https://arnek.net>

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