



BUILDING STRONG NATIONAL ECD NETWORKS

A Holistic Framework for Multi-Sectoral
Coordination in ECD



This knowledge product has been developed by the Asia Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC) to provide a practical framework for establishing and strengthening national Early Childhood Development (ECD) networks promoting multi sectoral coordination and collaboration.

ARNEC gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the seven national ECD networks that participated in the self-assessment exercise facilitated by ARNEC's Learning Community of Practice and generously shared their experiences, successes, and challenges:

- Alliance for Early Childhood Development Nepal (AECDN)
- Bangladesh ECD Network (BEN)
- Bhutan ECD Network
- Mongolian Early Childhood Development Network
- Koalisi National PAUDHI (National Coalition ECD HI), Indonesia
- Network of Early Childhood Care and Development (NECCD), Cambodia
- The Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood (PAFEC)

ARNEC also expresses its sincere gratitude to the Bainum Family Foundation and the Early Childhood Regional Networks (ECRN) Fund for supporting the development of this framework and for strengthening regional efforts in knowledge generation, coordination, and network-building for ECD across the Asia-Pacific.

We further acknowledge with appreciation Amanda R. Welsh, Senior Consultant at Network Impact, for her insightful review and for strengthening the document with relevant country examples.

Published by

Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC)
1 Commonwealth Lane #03-27
Singapore 149544

© ARNEC, Limited. 2025

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the written permission of ARNEC.

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of ARNEC concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Contents

Why National ECD Network?	2
Purpose of the Framework	3
Establishing a National ECD Network.....	4
Guiding Principles for National ECD Networks	5
Overview of Multisectoral ECD and National Networks	13
Guiding Principles for Multi-Sectoral Coordination.....	13
Strategies for Promoting Knowledge Sharing and Exchange.....	15
Effective Strategies for Promoting Advocacy Efforts in ECD.....	16
Summary and Way Forward.....	17
Glossary of Terms.....	18
Additional Resources	18
References.....	19
Appendix	20

1. Why National ECD Network?

1

A network is formed with a shared mission and purpose, and trust in and between its members to accomplish its goals. Networks facilitate the dissemination of new information and enable the free flow of information to the grassroots level. Networks possess resilience, which allows them to adapt well to the changes occurring in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) field.

ECD requires the involvement of various sectors, institutions, and agencies, making networks the ideal platform to facilitate the process through unique solutions. Holistic ECD cannot be adequately addressed by any single organisation or department, making ECD networks central in building collaboration, strengthening partnerships, and establishing linkages at various levels. Networks serve as a platform where individuals can learn, share, and engage in joint actions, creating a significant impact in ECD.

Coalitions or alliances are also formed to achieve a specific objective and have a broader purpose and scope, encouraging innovation and experimentation. Coalitions and alliances are also powerful frameworks for collaboration, bringing together diverse groups to work toward shared objectives. Coalitions, alliances, and networks can each play significant roles in uniting groups for common goals. Networks have a strong sense of membership identity, promoting focused and coordinated efforts to achieve larger goals. Networks are not considered communities of practice, movements, or social franchises. However, movements often contain many networks.

2. Purpose of the Framework

2

The holistic framework for multisectoral coordination aims to guide the national ECD network in building strong coordination among different stakeholders and promoting innovative measures to strengthen governance capacity for effective implementation of ECD services. The guidelines provided in the framework support national ECD networks in strengthening their network in terms of knowledge sharing, exchange, and advocacy efforts.

Additionally, this framework for multisectoral coordination provides guidance to countries that are in the process of developing a national network and offers a broad idea of how to establish their ECD networks. Existing networks can also adopt the basic principles and practices outlined in the framework. The framework also provides guidance on promoting learning and creating a forum for information sharing, including good practices, innovations, research findings, experiences, and challenges.

3. Establishing a National ECD Network

Establishing a National ECD Network is a critical step towards promoting the holistic development of young children in a country. The formation of such a network can take various forms, with different actors playing a key role in its initiation and management.

1

One approach is a government-initiated national ECD network. This type of network is established and supported by the national government, with the intention of promoting the country's integrated national ECD policies and legislation. The government can play a critical role in coordinating and facilitating the network's activities, including providing national standards, policy, funding, technical assistance, and oversight. The government-initiated ECD network can ensure robust and coordinated approach to ECD programming across the country promoting children's optimal development.

2

Another approach is a civil society-initiated national ECD network. In this model, a civil society organisation takes the lead in establishing and managing the ECD network. Civil society organisations can bring together various stakeholders, including parents, caregivers, and communities, and government to promote children's holistic development. This approach can be particularly useful in countries where the government's capacity to establish and manage ECD networks is limited.

3

A third approach is a network initiated by both the government and civil society organisations. In this model, the government and civil society organisations work together to establish and manage the ECD network. The government can provide the necessary resources and policy framework, while civil society organisations can leverage their expertise and grassroots connections to promote children's development. This approach can help ensure that ECD programming is integrated and comprehensive, and addresses the needs of all children, especially the most vulnerable.

In all these approaches, it is critical to ensure that the national ECD network is designed and implemented in a way that prioritises the holistic well-being of young children. The network's goals and strategies should be evidence-based, context-specific, and responsive to the diverse needs of children and families. They should also be inclusive and equitable, ensuring that all children have access to quality ECD services, regardless of their socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, disability, and/or geographic location.

In conclusion, the establishment of a national ECD network is a complex process that requires collaboration, coordination, and commitment from various stakeholders. Whether initiated by the government, civil society organisations, or a combination of both, the goal of the national ECD network should be to promote children's optimal development and well-being.

3.1 Guiding Principles for National ECD Networks

- **Shared Vision and Purpose:** The shared vision and purpose of the national ECD network should be clearly defined and communicated to all stakeholders involved in ECD services. These should be developed in collaboration with diverse stakeholders to ensure inclusivity and ownership. A shared vision and purpose provide a clear direction and motivation for the network members to work towards a common goal, which is to improve holistic ECD outcomes for children.
- **Defining the Network's Purpose and Objectives:** Once the key stakeholders have been identified, the next step is to define the network's purpose, goals, and objectives. These should be evidence-based, context-specific, and responsive to the diverse needs of children and families. The network's primary purpose should be to promote children's optimal development and well-being, while its goals and objectives should be aligned with this purpose.

Example from the field

Networks at different stages in their development may have different levels of shared understanding among members.

In an exercise by the ARNEC's Learning Community of Practice, seven networks did a self-assessment to better understand their networks' capacity building needs. For shared purpose, they rated themselves on a spectrum from Emergent to Well-Defined and Broadly Shared.

Network Purpose

The network's reasons for being: what the network stands for, what problems members need to address together and what activities members will undertake.



EMERGENT

The network founder or core members may have a proposed goal or see evidence of interest among potential members (e.g., coming out of a gathering), but they are still clarifying the network's purpose.

WELL-DEFINED AND BROADLY SHARED

The network's purpose is clear, and most members understand it.

The results of the assessment showed that most networks were still working toward a shared purpose:



Reflecting on their self-assessment, members highlighted both successes and challenges, as well as ways to keep members aligned in the network's purpose initially and over time:



Bangladesh ECD network's purpose is clearly defined and understood by its members. However, as the network evolves, it might benefit from revisiting and refining its purpose to ensure it remains aligned with changing needs and aspirations. This could involve seeking input from members to enhance the purpose's relevance and impact.

The Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood (PAFEC) stands out for its clear and well-understood purpose among its members, both individual and institutional. This clarity and engagement are achieved through various strategic approaches. Primarily, PAFEC effectively communicates its purpose and objectives via its website and social media platforms. Additionally, the organisation actively involves its members by organising both national and international conferences and seminars. These events are further complemented by advocacy sessions and the provision of online certificate courses. Members play a significant role, not just as participants but also as resource persons in designing and conducting courses on Early Childhood Development (ECD).

- **Identifying Key Stakeholders:** The first step towards establishing and managing the national ECD network is to identify the key stakeholders involved in the process. These stakeholders may include government agencies, civil society organisations, parents, caregivers, and communities. The identification of these stakeholders will help ensure that the network is inclusive and effective in promoting children's optimal development and well-being.
- **Developing a Governance Structure:** To ensure that the network is transparent, inclusive, and accountable, a governance structure must be developed. This structure should clearly define roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes. This will ensure that all stakeholders are aware of their roles and responsibilities within the network.
- **Value Propositions (VPs):** The value propositions of national ECD networks refer to the unique benefits and advantages that the network offers to its members and stakeholders. Value propositions should be clearly defined and communicated to potential members, to attract their participation and engagement. Value propositions should reflect the benefits of being a part of the network, such as access to resources, knowledge sharing, networking opportunities, and collective advocacy efforts. Members have multiple value propositions and those typically change over time.

Example from the field

Bangladesh ECD Network (BEN)

As part of an exercise on exploring value propositions, Bangladesh ECD Network (BEN) considered why their members participate in the network, and drafted a set of individual and collective value propositions. Individual value propositions are benefits to individual members, and collective value propositions refer to the benefits that members receive by working together, which they could not receive by working alone.

BEN then did a pilot survey to test those value propositions with six network members. Pilot surveys are a good way to test how people respond to survey questions, to see if there are any questions that are confusing, to make sure that the tone of the survey is comfortable for respondents, and to see if you are getting the kind of answers you expected. BEN's pilot test results showed that the top three value propositions were:

- Access to expertise (for example, learning from diverse experts);
- Networking and relationships (for example, connecting with professionals in inclusive education, or building a stronger network to advance inclusion); and
- Collaborative opportunities (for example, finding partners, and synergy in creating programming).

Respondents also suggested additional ways that BEN creates value for them that were not included in the original list:

- Professional development opportunities (BEN supports member organisations both directly and by connecting them with other member organisations. By suggesting professional development as a value proposition, members said that these efforts are important to them).
- Research and cross-sector collaborations (value those efforts by BEN create for members).

When asked how well the network was delivering on those top three value propositions, respondents said that the network was delivering the best on networking and relationships, followed by collaborative opportunities.

Bhutan ECCD Network

Bhutan ECCD Network also conducted a value propositions pilot survey to members. Network organisers felt the pilot survey was useful to get a sense of why people were in the network and what they expected from network membership. A team of seven members in different parts of the country participated in the survey. Contributing to ensure that the ECCD program supports holistic development of children was the top value proposition across the group.

One of the primary challenges faced by the Bhutan ECCD Network in the past was a lack of collaboration and fragmentation in its operations. During the pilot survey discussions, network organizers observed a growing desire among participants to collaborate more effectively, which would not only reduce costs but also amplify the network's impact. The third most significant value

proposition identified was the involvement of stakeholders in fostering collaboration and aligning goals. This involved inviting as many members from diverse regions, sectors, and communities as possible. Bhutan, being a small nation, predominantly relies on government intervention in various aspects of its development. However, there are still challenges in effectively reaching all parts of the country. The number of NGOs providing support for the network's work, strengthening its structure, and recruiting additional members is insufficient compared to what network organisers would like to achieve.

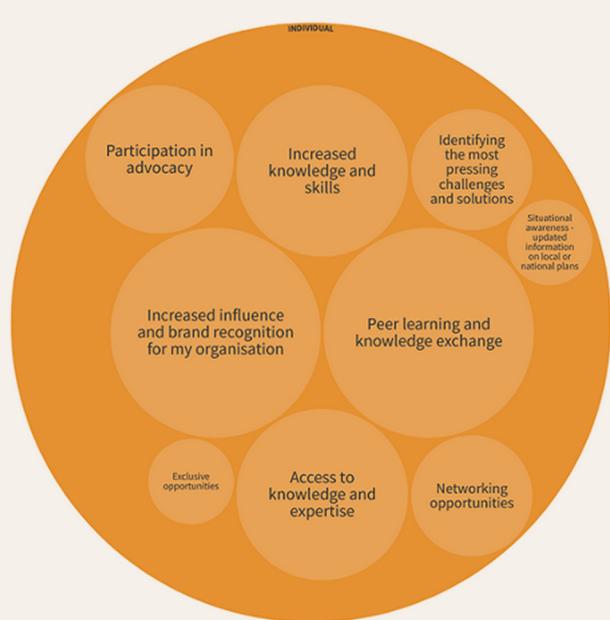
Network of Early Childhood Care and Development (NECCD)

In Cambodia, the Network of Early Childhood Care and Development (NECCD) shared its pilot survey online to its members, and seven members—representing 20% of the network—responded. The primary current value proposition identified was the sharing of knowledge on effective practices, research findings, policies, guidelines, and a national action plan. The second highest ranked value proposition was the advocacy for accelerating the enrollment of children in kindergarten. Regarding future participation, the top-ranked value proposition was the support for the implementation of the National Action Plan on Early Childhood Education (ECE). It was important for network organisers to understand the members' perception of the network's value and their shared objectives.

Recently, network organisers have expressed concerns about the diminishing collective advocacy voice of the network and have agreed upon the necessity of renewing their focus.

Across all seven of the networks who participated in ARNEC's Learning Community of Practice, a number of common individual value propositions stood out:

Top individual VPs across this learning community



- Increased influence and brand recognition for my organisation
- Peer learning and knowledge exchange
- Access to knowledge and expertise
- Increased knowledge and skills
- Participation in advocacy
- Identifying the most pressing challenges and solutions
- Networking opportunities
- Exclusive opportunities
- Situational awareness – updated information on local or national plans

The same was true for collective value propositions:

Top collective VPs across this learning community



- Collaborative advocacy
- Collectively raising the profile of ECD
- Developing a shared understanding of the work
- Supporting alignment within ECD and across sectors
- Collaborative research and programming
- Coordination and co-creation of efforts and solutions
- Joint activities
- Connection and alignment across sectors

Understanding individual and collective VPs and how they change over time is a critical tool for network organisers to help them support the network's overall development and evolution. As networks grow to better understand what they can accomplish together, the needs of network members typically change to emphasise skills and capacities needed for collective work.

Members of the Learning Community offered lessons in programming activities for responding to the VPs of members. In order to support individual value propositions, members:

- Connected to leaders and experts in ECD or other sectors to increase their knowledge and practice
- Built advocacy capacity through trainings
- Created virtual platforms to connect and learn from each other as peers
- Created certificate courses on ECD
- Produced webinars and collected stories to share throughout the network
- Created and shared a database of priorities to advance ECD, and packed those strategies as network trainings
- Organised sessions on inclusiveness
- Organised opportunities for peer exchange with both national and international participants to expand access to the full ecosystem of ECD supports

Learning Community members also designed activities to support their members' collective value propositions:

- Coordinated members' voices on key issues and challenges in the implementation of ECCD interventions
- Represented civil society partners including members in policy dialogue with government agencies
- Supported the creation of mutually agreed on priorities with implementation partners
- Supported local members in their development of action plans that supported national action plans
- Supported the joint development of models and materials used to inform national education policy
- Supported shared resources among members, including sharing vacant spaces in regions that could be used to set up early childhood centres
- Supported social mapping of different ECD stakeholders
- Supported annual conferences to bring member organisations together with agencies and donors to develop action plans

- **Membership:** The national ECD network should be inclusive and diverse, comprising of stakeholders from different sectors such as government agencies, civil society organisations, private sector organisations, and academia. Membership should be voluntary, with members having a shared interest in promoting high-quality ECD services. Membership should be open to all interested parties who share the vision and purpose of the network, and who are committed to working towards its goals.
- **High Voluntary Engagement:** High voluntary engagement of network members is essential for the success of the national ECD network. The network should foster a culture of active participation and engagement among its members, with opportunities for meaningful involvement in decision-making processes, planning, and implementation of integrated ECD services. High voluntary engagement leads to a sense of ownership and commitment among members, which in turn, increases the effectiveness of the network.

Example from the field

Tracking engagement

To track member engagement, the NGO Education Partnership (NEP)/Network of Early Childhood Care and Development (NECCD) in Cambodia measures increases in attendance at their national conference, which sold out for their third conference. They also track member sign-ups for conference organisation and funding support.

The Mongolian Early Childhood Development Network developed regular newsletters to share information, gather feedback for network strategy and planning, and gauge member engagement. They asked members if they had connected or collaborated, even using anecdotal feedback to gauge communication and collaboration. They also plan field visits and ask members to share their stories.

- **Building Collaborative Partnerships:** To build collaborative partnerships, the ECD network should maintain a collective commitment to engage and communicate effectively with stakeholders, including the government. This involves building a comprehensive list of functional agencies and institutions in the country and connecting with diverse ECD professionals, practitioners, members from government institutions, and NGOs working with young children and families. Strengthening ties with these partners is essential for the network to achieve its objectives.
- **Building Strong Human Resource:** Being a member-based organisation, the ECD network must prioritise building a strong human resource base, with a focus on capacity building in various areas. The network should support its members in developing specialised skills, as this is essential for strengthening the network's operation and achieving its objectives.
- **Promoting National and Sub-National Agendas:** The ECD network must actively promote national and sub-national ECD agendas by working closely with policymakers, whether civil society initiated national ECD networks or government and civil society initiated national ECD networks. The network should engage in policy dialogue or implementation, and regularly coordinate with the government, sharing information and data to achieve its objectives.
- **Engaging in Evidence-Based Advocacy:** The ECD network should prioritise evidence-based advocacy, by embracing innovative approaches, and adopting new models of program or service delivery that demonstrate impact. By doing so, the network can then effectively engage the government, share best practices and scale-up projects to reach more children.
- **Prioritising Data Collection and Analysis:** Data collection and analysis are essential to inform evidence-based decision making and program design. This can include the development of national ECD data systems, the promotion of research on ECD, and the development of common data standards and indicators. This will help ensure that the network's activities are evidence-based and effective in promoting children's optimal development and well-being.

- **Technology-Enabled:** Use technology to enhance the should be interchanged—efficiency and effectiveness of the ECD network, such as developing online platforms for sharing information and resources among stakeholders. Use of technology can help national ECD networks to share knowledge and resources, promote coordination, and monitor progress. Introducing innovative technologies such as mobile apps, digital platforms, and social media can help stakeholders share information, coordinate activities, and monitor progress more efficiently and effectively.
- **Developing a Resource Mobilisation Strategy:** A resource mobilisation strategy should be developed identifying potential funding sources for the network's activities. This strategy should also outline how the network will leverage existing resources and partnerships to support its activities. The private sector can be encouraged to support ECD initiatives through corporate social responsibility programs, private sector investments in ECD, and leveraging private sector expertise to support ECD programs.
- **Monitoring and Evaluating the Network's Performance:** A monitoring and evaluation framework should be developed to assess the network's performance in achieving its goals and objectives. This framework should include indicators that measure the network's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. The evaluation process will help identify areas for improvement and ensure that the network is meeting its objectives.
- **Resilience:** Resilience refers to the ability of the national ECD network to adapt and respond to risks and challenges and changes in the environment. The network should have a governance structure that is transparent, accountable, and efficient. The network should have mechanisms in place for continuous learning, improvement, and innovation. Capacity building and training for network members should be an ongoing process, to ensure that the network is equipped to handle any challenges that may arise. By building resilience, the national ECD network can ensure that it remains effective and sustainable over time.
- **Financial Stability and Diversified Funding Sources:** Securing budget support, grants, or contributions from members and external donors can provide a steady financial base. Diversifying funding sources reduces dependency on a single funder, making the network more resilient.
- **Technical Support and Resource Sharing among Members:** Leveraging the expertise, resources, and knowledge of network members promotes collaboration and reduces operational costs. Members can contribute by sharing tools, good practices, and technical skills, which strengthens the network's capacity.
- **Collaboration with Regional and Global Networks:** To enhance the effectiveness and impact of the national ECD network, it is essential to establish collaborations with existing regional and global ECD networks. By collaborating with these networks, the national ECD network can leverage their expertise and resources, share good practices and knowledge, and expand their reach beyond national borders. Additionally, it will provide opportunities for joint advocacy efforts, joint fundraising, and partnership-building.

Through the implementation of these guiding principles, the national ECD network can effectively advance its mission to advocate for evidence-based policies, establish collaborative partnerships, and ultimately achieve enhancing early childhood development for young children and families.

4. Overview of Multisectoral ECD and National Networks

4

In the Asia Pacific region, most countries have implemented policies and legal frameworks to ensure that children have access to high-quality holistic ECD services. However, despite having policies and mechanisms in place, there is often a lack of understanding and capacity for implementation at the national, subnational, and local levels, leading to a gap between policy and practice. Establishing multisectoral coordination mechanisms to promote ECD is challenging for countries, and successful implementation requires advocacy, training, guidelines, and well-designed systems.

A national ECD network can play a critical role in addressing these challenges. The national network can facilitate multisectoral coordination and collaboration between government agencies, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders involved in ECD. This can help to ensure that ECD policies and services are integrated and coordinated across different sectors. The network can act as a strong advocate for ECD at the national, subnational, and local levels, raising awareness among policymakers, stakeholders, and the public about the importance of multi-sectoral ECD. Overall, a national ECD network can play a critical role in bridging the gap between policy and practice by promoting a more coordinated, evidence-based, and multi-sectoral approach to ECD. Through advocacy, capacity building, coordination, policy and program development, and knowledge sharing.

Establishing a national ECD network is just the first step towards promoting children's holistic development in a country. For the network to be effective, it is important to engage in policy development and implementation and bring political support to ECD. Here are some key ideas and approaches that national ECD networks can take to ensure successful multisectoral ECD policy development and implementation:

4.1 Guiding Principles for Multi-Sectoral Coordination

- ➡ **Policy engagement and political support for ECD are essential.** The network should develop necessary frameworks and quality standards to enhance program implementation through multi-sectoral collaboration.
- ➡ **The country's ECD network must participate in high-level coordination mechanisms**, such as national committees, ECD task forces, and councils, for effective implementation of multi-sectoral policies in ECD.
- ➡ **National ECD networks should build consistent leadership and champions** who can influence and involve the Parliament and government, experts, and other stakeholders to support multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms for ECD.
- ➡ **The ECD network should have skilled and well-trained staff** to provide support in implementing a multi-sectoral approach at the country level, with dedicated staff having strong coordination skills.

Effective policy development and implementation require strong coordination among different stakeholders, especially government ministries and departments at various levels. The national level ECD network is critical to bring ECD as a priority while planning and allocating budgets.

The ECD network should create a detailed action plan with activities, roles, responsibilities, and budget projections to effectively support the implementation of policy vision and objectives. It should also include a monitoring and evaluation framework and plan.

The national ECD network should map the existing partners or stakeholders to reinforce multi-sectoral coordination. Working together with key ministries and engaging with non-governmental representatives can enhance progress and sustain momentum for ECD objectives.

The national ECD network should extend to local levels through committees and working groups consisting of multi-sectoral stakeholders, including local government representatives, to support coordination mechanisms at all government levels.

The national ECD network should work with various media to increase awareness of ECD policies for better implementation. Capacity building and clear communication of policies at the local level are critical.

National ECD networks should constantly work towards strengthening monitoring mechanisms for ECD. An approved monitoring and evaluation framework is necessary for each country, and the network can participate in progress review meetings.

The National ECD Network can foster cross-sectoral collaboration by promoting collaboration between different sectors such as health, education, social welfare, and justice and protection. This can be achieved by creating opportunities for dialogue and collaboration, and by promoting a shared vision and purpose.

The National ECD network should be guided by evidence-based research and good practices and utilise data-driven decision-making processes to support the development and implementation of effective ECD policies and services. Also conduct research and evaluation to monitor its impact and effectiveness.

Recognising and valuing the cultural diversity and heritage of the communities served by the national ECD network and ensuring that services are culturally appropriate and respectful.

Encouraging innovation and experimentation in the development and delivery of ECD services and creating a culture of continuous improvement and learning based on evidence.

Foster a community-driven approach, where the local communities take charge of designing and implementing the ECD programs, with the support and guidance of the government and other stakeholders.

Conduct capacity-building workshops and training programs to empower individuals and organisations to contribute to the ECD multi-sectoral design and implementation.

Raise awareness about the importance of multi-sectoral ECD and advocate for increased investment in ECD programs to secure government and public support.

5. Strategies for Promoting Knowledge Sharing and Exchange

5

Knowledge sharing and exchange is critical for the success of any ECD network. Effective sharing of information, experiences, and good practices enables members to learn from each other, improve their skills, and promote innovation. Here are some strategies that the national ECD network can use to strengthen knowledge sharing and exchange among members:

- **Conduct Webinars and Virtual Knowledge Sharing Sessions:** Organising webinars featuring experts and practitioners from the field is an effective way to share knowledge and exchange ideas. Virtual knowledge sharing sessions also provide members with the opportunity to share case studies, research findings, and other relevant information.
- **Set Up Online Discussion Forums:** Setting up online discussion forums where members can exchange ideas, ask questions, and share resources can promote regular communication and encourage knowledge sharing among members.
- **Conduct Face-to-Face or Virtual Discussions:** Organising regular face-to-face or virtual discussions on specific themes or topics can facilitate knowledge sharing and allow members to share their experiences and insights.
- **Facilitate Peer Learning Exchanges:** Peer learning exchanges enable members to learn from each other's experiences and best practices in the ECD sector. Facilitating such exchanges can help build a strong sense of community among members.
- **Facilitate Collaborative Projects:** Collaborative projects among members, where they can work together to do research or develop innovative solutions and approaches to address priority needs in the ECD sector, can promote knowledge sharing and encourage innovation.
- **Offer Mentoring and Coaching Opportunities:** Offering mentoring and coaching opportunities to members from expert practitioners can provide guidance and support to members in building their capacities as specialists in different domains.
- **Organise Exposure Visits:** Organising onsite exposure visits to successful ECD programs in the region or beyond can enable members to learn from the experiences of others and gain new insights.
- **Collaborate on Joint Advocacy Campaigns:** Collaborating on joint advocacy campaigns to raise awareness of key issues and promote policy changes in the ECD sector can create a platform for knowledge sharing and exchange.
- **Design Training Modules/Frameworks:** Designing training modules/frameworks to capture, disseminate, and amplify lessons learnt can promote knowledge sharing and encourage members to apply new knowledge and skills in their work.

By adopting these strategies, the ECD network can strengthen knowledge sharing and exchange among members, promote innovation, and improve the quality of services provided in the ECD sector.

6. Effective Strategies for Promoting Advocacy Efforts in ECD

6

Advocacy is an essential tool for creating awareness, influencing policy, and mobilising resources for the ECD sector. Here are some strategies that the ECD network can use to promote advocacy efforts among members:

-  **Host a National ECD Conference** - A national ECD conference can bring together stakeholders from various sectors to discuss ECD issues, share best practices, and build partnerships. The conference can also be used as a platform to launch new ECD initiatives and advocate for policy changes. This conference could be organised annually or every two to three years.
-  **Build the Capacities of Network Members** - Building the capacities of network members through training and support can enable them to engage in coordinated advocacy-driven activities. Members need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to advocate effectively for ECD policies and programs.
-  **Conduct In-Depth Mapping of ECD Stakeholders** - Conducting in-depth mapping of ECD stakeholders in the country can provide a useful reference for the network to seek support from these stakeholders in their country. This can help to build strategic partnerships and create a common agenda for advocacy.
-  **Design Training Modules/Frameworks** - Designing training modules/frameworks for communication and advocacy can help network members to develop effective communication strategies and advocacy messages. These training modules should be designed to target different audiences, including policymakers, donors, and the general public.
-  **Conduct Multi-Layered/Longitudinal Research and Impact Evaluations** - Conducting multi-layered/longitudinal research and impact evaluations on NCF focused interventions for advocacy can provide robust evidence to support advocacy efforts. These studies should examine the impact of interventions on children, families, and communities, and should also assess the broader social and economic benefits of ECD programs.
-  **Publish Voices and Anecdotes** - Publishing voices and anecdotes through short episodes can increase political will and financing for the early years. These stories can be used to illustrate the importance of ECD programs and services and the positive impact they have on the lives of children and families.
-  **Conduct a Public Opinion Poll** - Conducting a public opinion poll can help to understand public perceptions of ECD issues and identify areas for advocacy. The results of the poll can be used to inform advocacy messages and campaigns.

By implementing these strategies, the national ECD network can promote advocacy efforts among members, build strategic partnerships, and create a common agenda for advocacy. This can help to increase political will and financing for the early years, leading to better outcomes for children and families.

7. Summary and Way Forward

7

The framework discusses the importance of establishing a national ECD network to promote the holistic development of young children. A national ECD network can facilitate multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration between government agencies, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders involved in ECD.

The framework provides guidelines for strengthening national networks and guide the national ECD network in building strong coordination among different stakeholders and promoting innovative measures to strengthen local governance capacity for effective implementation of ECD services.

The framework also offers different approaches to establish a national ECD network, including government-initiated, civil society-initiated, and a combination of both. Overall, a national ECD network can play a critical role in bridging the gap between policy and practice by promoting a more coordinated, evidence-based, and multi-sectoral approach to ECD.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Advocacy – Efforts to influence policies, funding, and public awareness to promote ECD based on expertise, knowledge, and evidence.

Coalition – A group of organisations or individuals collaborating for a specific objective, often broader than a network.

Cross-Sector Collaboration – Engagement between different sectors like government, NGOs, academia, and private organisations to strengthen ECD.

ECD Network – A structured group of individuals or organisations working together with a shared mission to achieve common goals in ECD.

Governance Structure – The system by which a network is organised, including decision-making processes, roles, and responsibilities.

Holistic ECD – An integrated approach to ECD, addressing health, nutrition, education, child protection, and social well-being.

Knowledge Sharing – The exchange of information, experiences, and good practices among network members.

Learning Community of Practice – A group of professionals engaging in knowledge-sharing and collaborative learning to enhance ECD practices.

Multi-sectoral Coordination – Collaboration between different sectors, including government, civil society, and private entities, to implement policies and programs effectively.

Policy Dialogue – Discussions between network members and policymakers to shape and improve ECD policies.

Stakeholders – Individuals, groups, or organisations involved in or affected by ECD initiatives, such as governments, NGOs, and caregivers.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Form follows function follows shared purpose: Network functions and backbone roles - [This blog post from Collective Mind](#) compiles key themes from a number of publications on network backbones, or the administrative staff that provides the infrastructure needed for the network to run effectively. Collective Mind has compiled a number of additional resources for networks [here](#).
- Network Know-How Guides - Network Impact created a series of network Know-How Guides to support early stage networks in different aspects of their development. The guides have exercises for self-reflection and assessment, and cover a range of topics. You can find the guides [here](#).



REFERENCES

1. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2020). Cross-Sector Collaboration and Learning Communities in Early Childhood Education and Care: Insights from OECD Countries. OECD Publishing.
2. UNESCO Bangkok. (2023). Holistic Approaches to Early Childhood Development: Policy Frameworks and Multisectoral Coordination Strategies. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.
3. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2022). Advocacy and Policy Influence for Early Childhood Development: A Global Perspective on Stakeholder Engagement. UNICEF Publications.
4. World Bank Group. (2021). Investing in Early Childhood: Policy Implementation, Resource Mobilisation, and Evidence-Based Advocacy Approaches. The World Bank.



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.

Email: secretariat@ar nec.net

1 Commonwealth Lane #03-27
Singapore 149544

 ar nec.net

 ARNEC

 ARNECnet