



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION POLICY ACADEMY: NORTH MACEDONIA



The [Early Childhood Education Policy Academy](#)¹ is a multi-year effort by the World Bank designed to help countries identify needs and generate options to improve early childhood education (ECE) at the country level. It offers a unique opportunity for country teams to strengthen policymaker capacity, problem-solve within a global network of peers, and engage in South-to-South learning along some of the world's leading early childhood practitioners and academic experts. The program's first cohort supported 12 countries² from April 2021 to November 2022. This case study showcases how the program specifically supported the North Macedonia country team.

CONTEXT

North Macedonia has made important progress in ECE in recent years. The country has introduced many elements of a strong ECE framework, including the establishment of national learning standards, a child-centered and play-based national curriculum, and most recently, a national system to monitor the quality of ECE based on the Measuring Early Learning Quality and Outcomes (MELQO) instrument. In the face of low access and high inequity in early learning, the national government has committed to expanding access to ECE and improving early learning quality – both of which have been identified as a priority in the Education Strategy 2018-2025. Moving forward, the country aims to improve coordination between ministries and agencies responsible for different aspects of ECE, continue efforts to regularly measure early childhood development (ECD) outcomes, and strengthen parenting practices and community engagement. The ways in which the program has supported these efforts are detailed below.

ECE SNAPSHOT

Access

GER: 43% (2022)

Urban 47% / Rural 20%

Public 96% / Private 4%

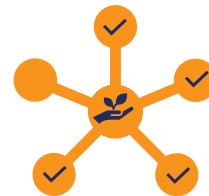
Source: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy/MICS 2018/2019

Enabling environment

Learning standards/curriculum

Coordination body

Measurement system



ECD plan or strategy

Quality assurance

PROGRAM CONTRIBUTION

GOAL 1

BUILD
EFFECTIVE
COORDINATION



- **Contribution:** The program has facilitated relationship building between policymakers from different institutions in North Macedonia and helped them engage more deeply with one another.
- **Next steps:** The country team is proposing the formation of an ECD coordinating body at the national level, drawing on the models explored over the course of the program.

GOAL 2

MEASURE ECD
OUTCOMES



- **Contribution:** The program has provided a valuable platform for the county team to share its journey in establishing the MELQO instrument and how it contributes to country's efforts to generate nationally comparable evidence in ECE. This learning was captured in this [blog](#).
- **Next steps:** The country team is preparing for the second round of MELQO data collection, to be conducted in 2023.

GOAL 3

STRENGTHEN
PARENT AND
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT



- **Contribution:** The country team received Technical Assistance (TA) to support the identification of an inclusive and relevant parent engagement approach with recommendations for the government on possible entry points and examples to be applied in the design of a pilot program.
- **Next steps:** The country team plans to conduct a needs assessment survey to determine content and modes of delivery towards the design of the parenting pilot program.

¹ The Early Childhood Education Policy Academy is managed by the World Bank's Early Learning Partnership (ELP), a multi-donor trust fund that provides resources and technical assistance to support early childhood development and early learning around the world.

² Participating countries included: Cambodia, Central African Republic, El Salvador, Liberia, Morocco, North Macedonia, Paraguay, Senegal, South Africa, Türkiye, West Bank and Gaza, and Uganda.