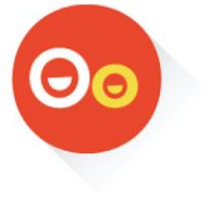


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Webinar:

**Competences and standards: why do we need them
for the early childhood workforce?**

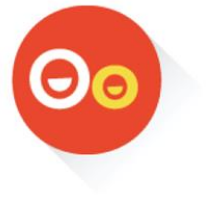
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Supporters:



Competences and standards: why do we need them for the early childhood workforce?

Four topics:

1. **Rationale** for defining competences and standards for the early childhood workforce
2. Non-negotiable and cross-sectoral competences: **pertinence and relevance**
3. Competences and standards, **career development and mobility** in the early childhood workforce
4. Competences and standards and **quality assurance** in early childhood services and systems

Competences and standards: why do we need them for the early childhood workforce?



Moderator: Dr. Mihaela Ionescu

Program Director,

International Step by Step Association (ISSA), The Netherlands



Panelists:

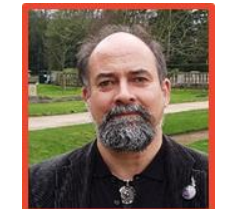
Dr. Karen Whittaker, *Reader, Associate Professor in Child and Family Health, School of Nursing, University of Central Lancashire, UK*



Sherri Le Mottee, *Early Years Consultant and Member of the World Bank Early Years Partnership, South Africa*



Dr. Mathias Urban, *Desmond Chair of Early Childhood Education, Professor at Dublin City University, Ireland*



Vidya Putcha, *Senior Program Officer, Results for Development (R4D), USA*



Working definitions

Competence:

A complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitudes and desire which lead to effective, embodied human action in the world in a particular domain. (Hoskins & Deakin Crick 2010)

Standard

A consensus model of what is most worthy, and most desirable to achieve, in knowledge and practice; measures that provide specifications about levels of achievement. (based on *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*)

Rationale for **defining competences and standards** for the early childhood workforce

Questions:

- What is the relationship between defined competences and standards for EC professions and pre and in-service training?
- To what extent defined competences and standards are important/useful for individual professionals and for services?
- How dynamic are the competences and standards definitions?
- What are the risks if competences and standards are not defined?
- How often there are competences and standards defined for paraprofessionals?

Towards a Competent System

1. A radical shift of perspectives

A shift of perspectives: from the 'self' (Deleuze), the individual practitioner to the community, professional system and the reciprocal relationships between the various actors at the different layers of the system.

The bigger picture: an extended systemic approach across all dimensions of the 'competent system': children in context, practice, research/theory, policy

2. Critical questions and trans-disciplinary dialogue

An ability to encourage and systematically create spaces for dialogue and for asking critical questions – at every layer of the system – and to value the multitude and diversity of answers as a key to creating new understandings
- 'practice-based evidence'

The 'margins within': learning from/with indigenous methodologies / epistemologies for research with marginalised communities

3. Transformative practices

Hope, as an ontological need (Paulo Freire): Educational practice is there for a purpose and it implies change. But the hoped-for has to be debated. Beyond the question of *what works* lie questions of value and purpose

'Why' questions and social justice: radical, critical and transformative inquiry, and resistance to 'normal science'

Pre and in-service training

- Transfer from a state of focused attention on standards, to situations where consideration is less of apparent.
- In-training requires progression and 'rights of passage' - dependent on demonstration and articulation of reasons for practice, referencing agreed definitions of practice. Whereas this is rarely asked for when in service delivery. Nevertheless the same standards remain as important once in service.

Importance

- The need to quality assure service. Families need to be able **to trust** service providers, as without trust essential services won't reach children. In healthcare this includes uptake of developmental reviews or programmes of immunization.
- Both have societal as well as individual impacts if these public health activities are not taken up.
- Ensuring practitioners are working to agreed standards, safeguards the public and the practitioner.

Image and demands of service

- Transparency and realistic expectations of what practitioner based services are capable of providing.

Risks if competences and standards are not defined?

- Practice variations, thereby inequity. Limited accountability. Difficult to govern.

Competences and standards defined for paraprofessionals?

- The standards that paraprofessionals work to are likely to be defined locally by employers. Written as job descriptions and person specifications for given positions.

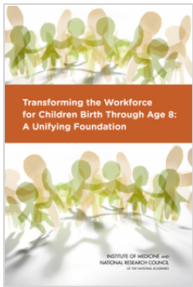
Non-negotiable and cross-sectoral competences: **pertinence and relevance**

Questions:

- Are there competences that are non-negotiable for each sector and for all sectors?
- To what extent such non-negotiable competences can be a starting point in recruiting the workforce especially in systems that are underdeveloped?

Non-negotiable and cross-sectoral competences: **pertinence and relevance**

Publication



Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation

Released: April 1, 2015

REPORT AT A GLANCE

- Report Brief (PDF)
- Figure 8-1: Factors that contribute to quality professional practice (PDF)
- Figure 12-1: Interacting elements of supporting quality professional practice (PDF)
- Figure 12-2: A blueprint for action (PDF)
- Figure 12-3: Shared and specialized standards for Birth to 8 professionals (PDF)
- Figure 12-4: Components in implementing minimum bachelor's degree requirements (PDF)
- Discussion Guide for Interactive Community Mapping Tool (PDF)
- Interactive Community Mapping Tool (HTML)
- Practitioner's Guide (HTML)
- Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation – Report Brief for Educators and Caregivers (PDF)
- Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation – Strengthening Policy and Practice (PDF)
- Child Development and Early Learning: A Foundation for Professional Knowledge and Competencies – A Summary Booklet (PDF)

Institute of Medicine and
National research Council
of the
National Academies,
Washington DC;

<http://www.earlychildhoodworkforce.org/node/111>

Relationships Matter

- **“An environment of relationships”** are essential for early brain development (Harvard Centre for the Developing child accessed 2018) – nurturing care extends beyond families to include community caregivers and support for families. (Lancet 2017)
- In other words, **nurturant care** occurs through bi-directional interactions, initiated by both children and caregivers, and sustained by their environments. (Lancet, 2017)
- **Developmentally supportive interaction** or relationship-based care practices are a priority area for practice and policy initiatives in infant and toddler early care and education settings (Schmit & Matthews, 2013).
- **Relationship-based care practices** build trust, comfort, security, and represent a partnership in the care of the child.
(www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/nitr_inquire_may_2016_070616_b508compliant.pdf)
- **Coach adult care-givers on serve-and-return interaction** in a wide range of settings (Harvard Centre for the Developing Child)

Global landscape analyses on two elements to support and strengthen the early childhood workforce



Competences and standards, **career development and mobility** in the early childhood workforce

Questions:

- To what extent do the defined competences and standards have an impact on deciding the level of qualification for each profession?
- Is the way competences and standards are defined limiting or encouraging career mobility?

How can competences support professional development and career mobility

Key Findings from global landscape analysis:

- Help to ensure relevance of training
- Form the foundation for supervision and other ongoing support
- Incentivize workers to pursue professional development

Spotlight: Singapore's Professional Development Masterplan

- Roadmap with key competences and responsibilities for various ECEC roles
- Core milestone courses help to prepare workers for roles with greater responsibilities
- Upon completion of courses, workers may receive bonuses and expanded job roles

Competences and standards, **career development and mobility** in the early childhood workforce

Question from the audience:

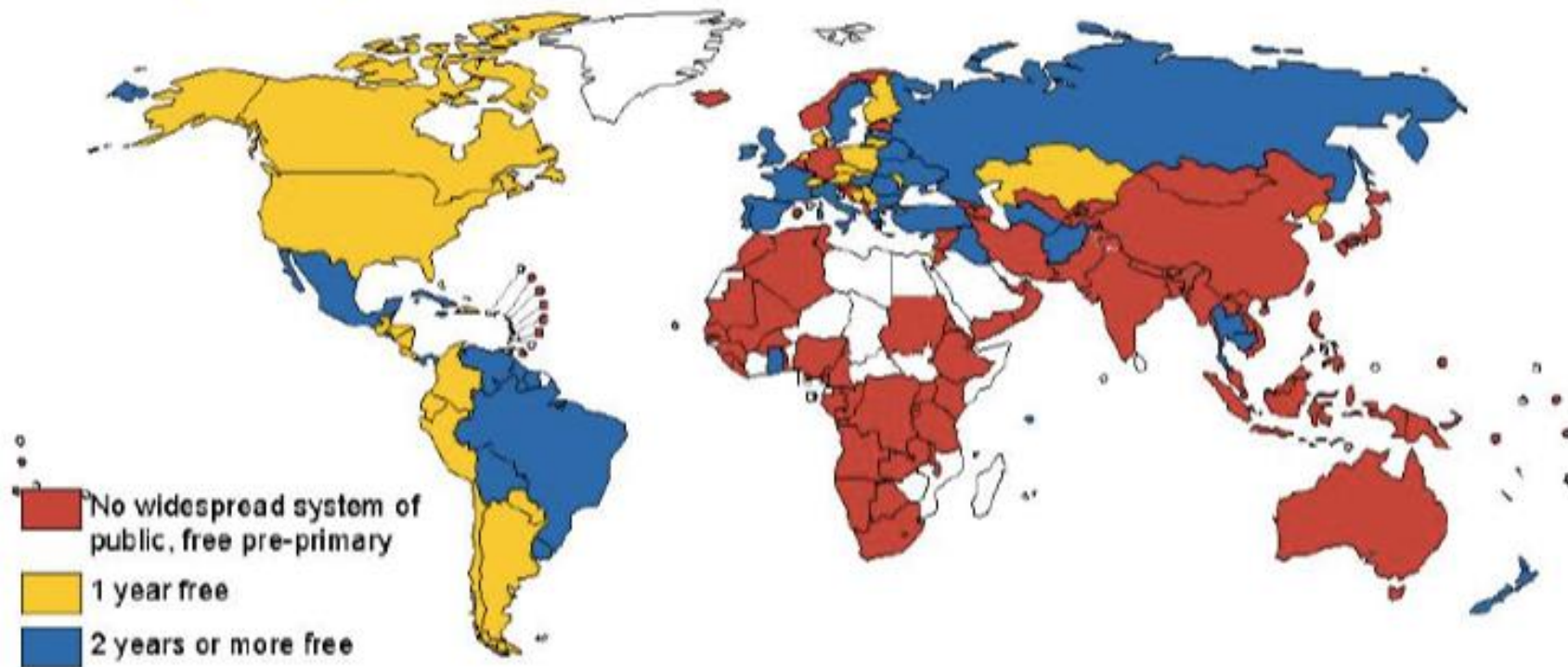
- Low and middle income countries cannot afford the time and sometimes the resources to get more skilled pre-primary teachers. The entry level in training center is at least at secondary school degree level and they have to spend two years of training. To remedy to this gap, these countries recourse to para professional with primary school level or more and some weeks of training.

Question: Do you think that it is possible to get quality teaching by having such paraprofessionals in pre-primary services? If yes, what are the conditions to be met?

FROM ZERO TO HERO: Counting the Context

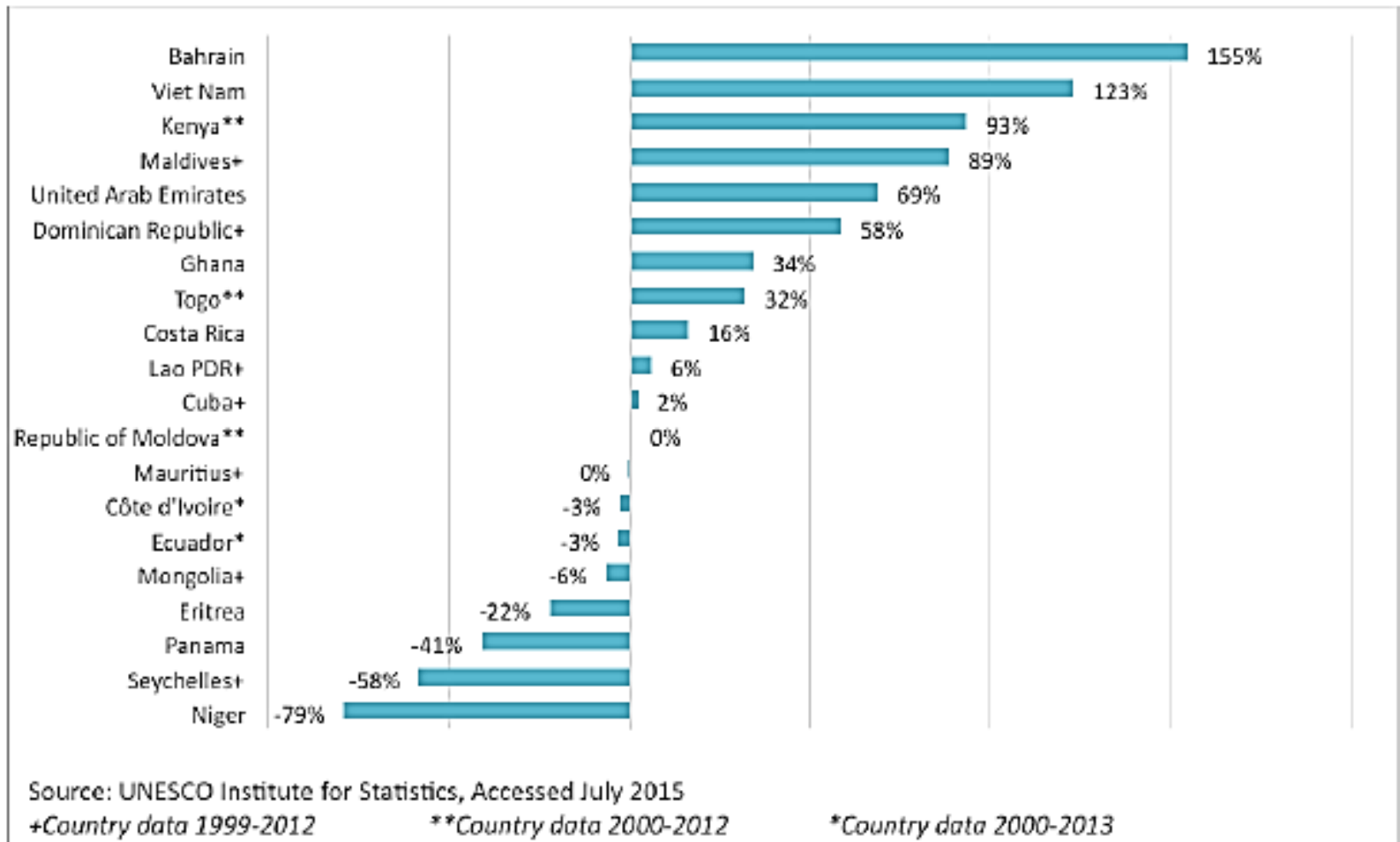
Be simultaneously ambitious and realistic?

Free pre-primary education



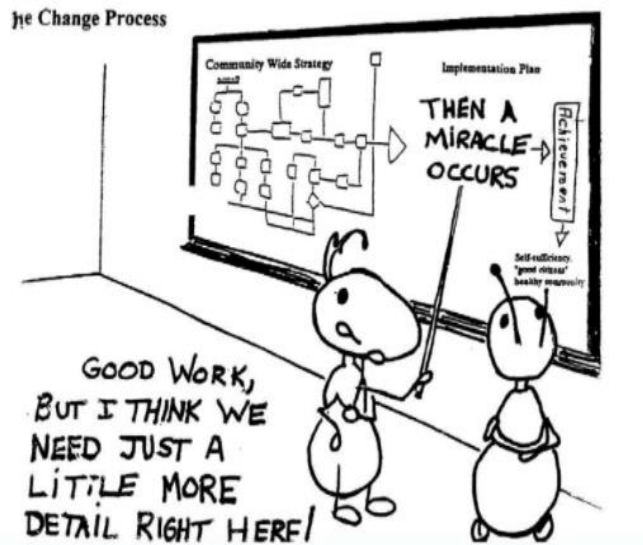
Changing the teaching landscape

Portion of trained pre-primary teachers 1999 - 2013



Think Systems: You need a Plan

- Service expansion globally has been slow and uneven – non-state actors have traditionally been providers – can't achieve scale without the state
- Large portions of the workforce are paraprofessional (often unqualified workers)
- With increased emphasis on increasing enrolment – increasing demand for/on teachers
- Most countries in LMIC context do not have enough teachers – most teachers are not 'qualified' (required to have a tertiary education)
- Many practitioners are poorly paid (sometimes voluntary), the work is low status and working conditions unsatisfactory



Building from Ground Zero

Start with what is already in place!

The Story of Tanzania

- Introduced free pre-primary education policy (2014) – enrolment shot up.
- Workforce shortages were critical, 2016 data showed a total of 7,499 teachers with a pre-primary certificate of which 4,029 were employed across the 15,802 government schools (about 1 for every 4 schools).
- Estimates were that of this number, 80% of teachers were not suitably qualified.
- To address the shortage, a number of the existing cohort of primary school teachers were deployed to teach pre-primary classes in addition to the grades they already taught.
- It was a partial and less than ideal short term solution leading to some extent to an improvement in the teacher to learner ratios from 158:1 in 2013, to a still impossible, 131:1 in 2016.
- Indications are that a new intake of 53,000 teachers will be needed to achieve the desired 25:1 ratio.
- A further knock on of these changes was the loss of the paraprofessional workforce who dwindled from 20% of the workforce in 2016 to 2% in 2017.

Innovate to find Solutions

Scaffold and Converge Pathways

South Africa

- Training is regulated by the National Qualifications Framework for Early Childhood Development.
- Training provided by a range of institutions supporting teachers who lack strong academic backgrounds to provide children with stimulating activities.
- Qualifications begin with a Level 4 Paraprofessional Qualification.

(Michelle Neuman, 2015)

Lesotho

- College of Education established a two-year in-service training course for early childhood teachers to complement the Certificate in Early Childhood Education.
- Employs a cascading capacity building model whereby national teacher trainers are able to train district and community-level teachers to cater to the training needs of experienced but unqualified staff.

(Michelle Neuman, 2015)

Competences and standards and **quality assurance** in early childhood services and systems

Questions:

- To what extent are the competences and standards used for monitoring the quality of services?
 - At what level – individual, service, system?
 - How are they monitored and to what consequent action is the monitoring leading?
- Are there examples when professional standards are used for the development of quality improvement plans?

How can competences support quality assurance and system planning

Key Findings from global landscape analysis:

- Understanding of competences required can help to support recruitment and right mix of skills/roles
- Competences/standards for workforce can feed into program standards
- Licensing/certification requirements which are aligned with competences for roles can help to assure quality and professionalize the workforce

Spotlight: Pennsylvania Keystone STARS

- Includes performance standards for preschool and childcare programs
- Linked to a comprehensive professional development system which includes the *Big Ideas Framework* and *Core Knowledge Competences*

Competences and standards and **quality assurance** in early childhood services and systems

Monitoring Quality

- Within healthcare, professional standards are routinely used to assess the proficiency of training programmes to prepare workforces. In-service adherence to standards - part of quality 'kite mark' processes – when an organization (or service) is seeking recognition for service delivery quality.
- By contrast competence is appraised as part of investigations – when acceptability of practice is questioned (individual level).
- However, it may be 'insiders' who monitor – existing members of the profession.
- 'Systems' due to the power of key stakeholders, may be +++challenging to monitor. But important as they shape the context for the service and the situation within which individuals exercise their agency – abilities and skills.
- Bias in monitoring needs to be avoided. A risk when those monitoring have a vested interest in the maintaining the existing arrangements (status quo) e.g. to preserve jobs, existing ideas, protect privilege for sections of a population etc.

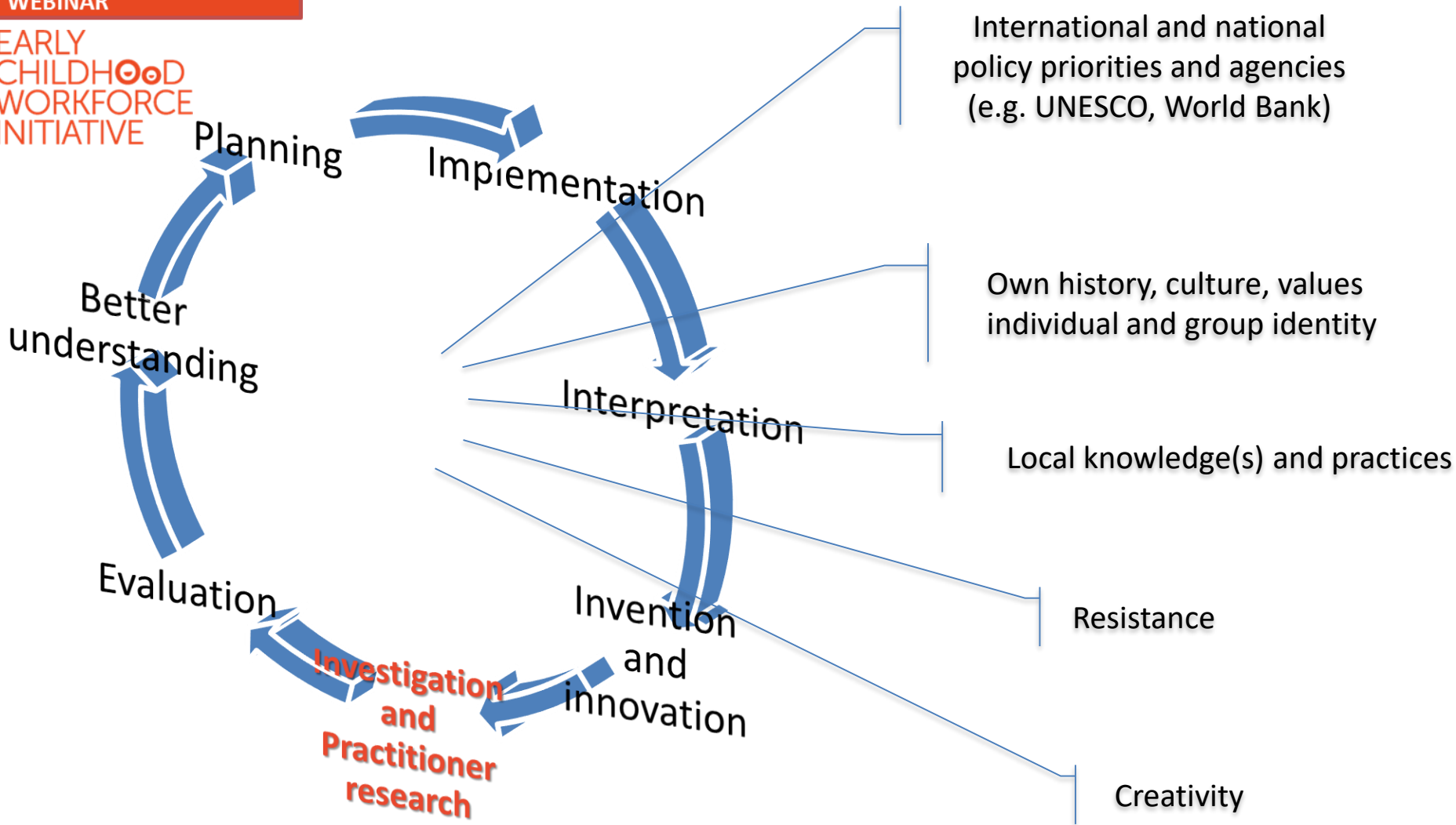
Competences and standards and **quality assurance** in early childhood services and systems

Examples when professional standards are used for the development of quality improvement plans

- In UK public health nursing, the professional standards have been used to inform the development of service specifications within individual organizations planning and delivering universal child health services.
- They can act as a benchmark. The standards are a useful guide for determining the scope of the practitioner role. This can be reviewed against the needs of the community.
- Standards and Quality improvement plans can be mutually dependent.
- Services are not static – they need to evolve. Therefore standards may also need to evolve too.
- If working together, service providers, community representatives and in-service education/training providers - can review the extent to which the practitioner roles and activities meet the service requirement needs and question whether the education post qualifying needs revisiting or extending. Whether future generations of workforce need to work to revised standards.

Critical questions

- What does it mean to be a child, to live and to grow up in our society?
 - What is the purpose of early childhood services?
 - What is our understanding of the relationship between the private (family) and the public (society)?
 - What do we mean by education? School readiness (literacy / maths)? – or **Educação**, a political, emancipatory practice of liberation?
- Who takes part in the process of defining ‘purpose’ and ‘quality’?
 - Whose knowledge and expertise is seen as relevant?
 - Whose values, traditions, hopes and aspirations are informing the process?
 - What do we see as success and good practice?
 - Who is excluded and silenced in the process?
 - What other ways are there to ensure more just and equitable outcomes for all children and families?



**‘Grassroots’ competent systems in ECEC:
for diversity, equality, and social justice**

If you want to send any feedback
related to the content
of today's Webinar, please contact:

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Stay tuned for the **Next Webinar!**



Thank you!

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Spotlight archive

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Upcoming Events

VII International Conference "Early Childhood Care and Education" (ECCE 2018)

Wednesday, May 16, 2018 to
Sunday, May 20, 2018

70th OMEP World Assembly and Conference

Monday, June 25, 2018 to Friday,
June 29, 2018

ICECET 2018: 20th International Conference on Early Childhood Education and Technology

Thursday, July 19, 2018 to Friday,
July 20, 2018

28th Annual EECERA Conference

Tuesday, August 28, 2018 to Friday,
August 31, 2018



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