

RIGHT TO FREE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Literature review and policy recommendations
for Viet Nam

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Special thanks to Ms. Hoa Nghiem

The motivation: informing ongoing policy discussion in Viet Nam



- Viet Nam is a LMIC with highest female labor participation in the economy (71%).
- Universal preschool for children aged 5 has been enacted since 2019 in Viet Nam.
- Recent political will to expand universal preschool education for children aged 3 to 5:
 - The Party Politburo approved the direction in Resolution 42 in Nov 2023
 - The National Assembly plans to enact the resolution in Oct 2024



Research questions

1. What are existing international normative frameworks to ensure the right to universal preschool education?
2. How have the rights been implemented in Viet Nam?
3. What are policy recommendations for Viet Nam?



Timeline

May - Aug 2023

- Conduct literature review from human rights perspective
- Discuss with mentor

Sep - Dec 2023

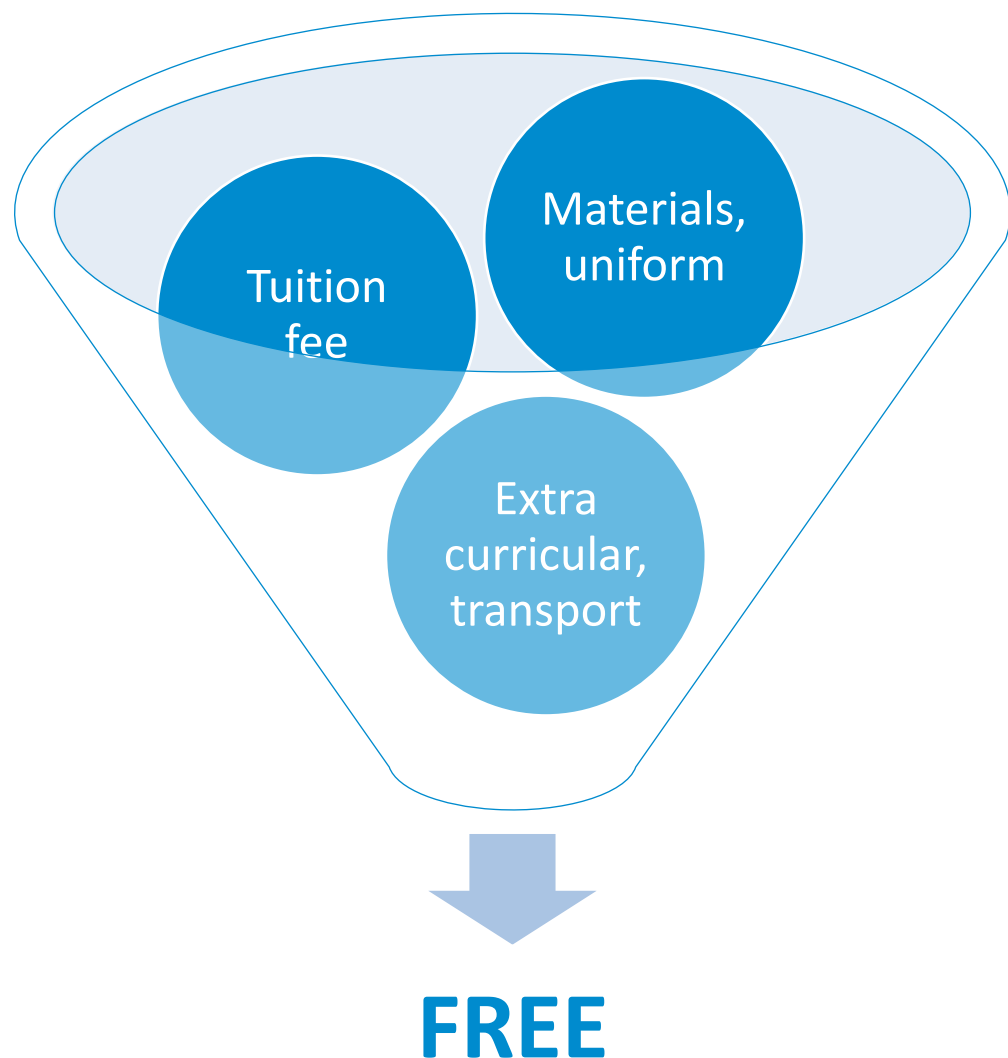
- Consult with CRWG, SUN CSA and MOET* experts

Jan - Apr 2024

- Finalize report and policy paper
- Disseminate at relevant expert meetings

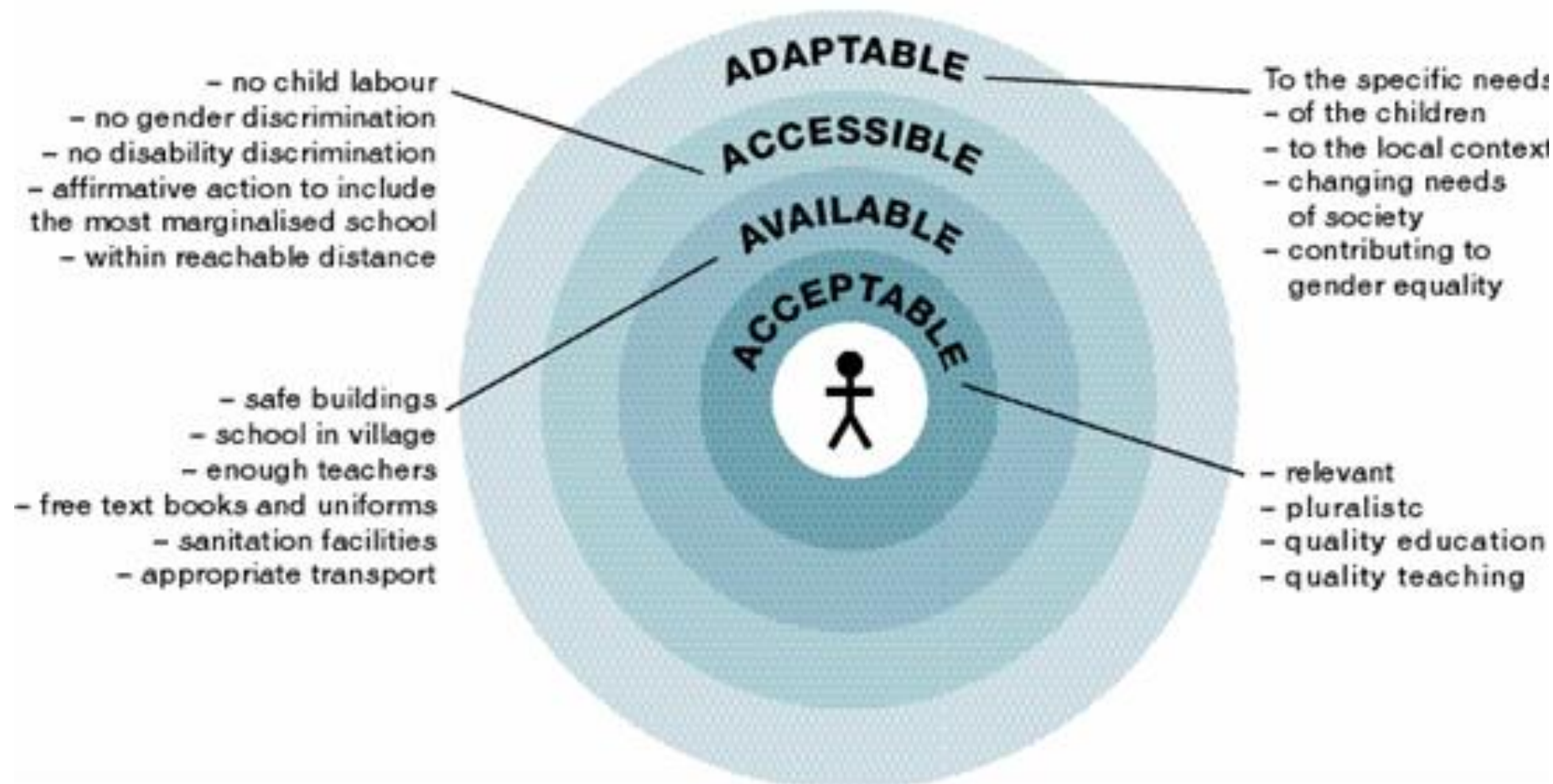
*SUN CSA: Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance, CRWG: Child Rights Working Group
MOET: Ministry of Education and Training, Department of Early Childhood Education

Definition of free universal preschool education



Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) emphasizes the duty of states to provide free education at least in the elementary and *fundamental stages*.

4As Framework - “education, in every form and at every level, should embody four fundamental qualities”



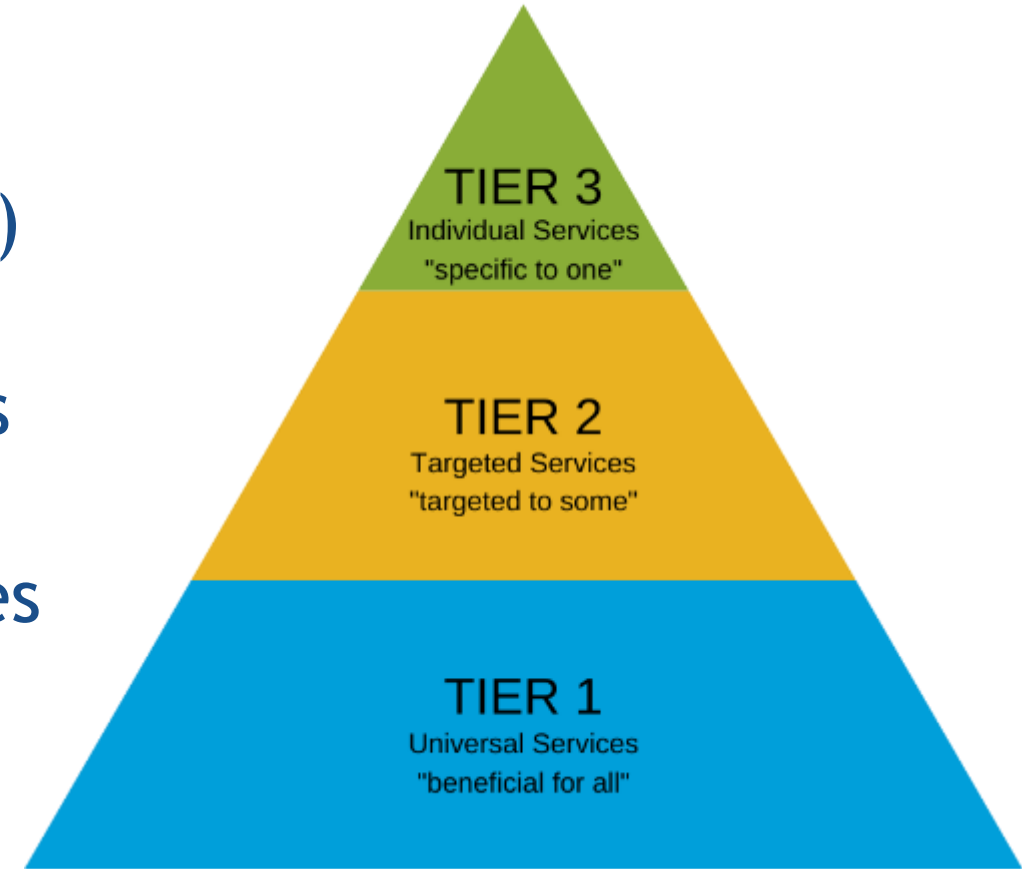
International normative framework to ensure rights to preschool education



- Although no specific article in the CRC addresses preschool, its requirements are embedded in articles 2, 5, 6, 18, 27, 29.
- General Comment 7 and 19: adequate public funding is pivotal
 - The Education 2030 Framework: 4-6% of GDP to education or 15-20% of public expenditure
 - UNICEF: earmark at least 10% of their total education budget for early childhood education.

Universal or targeted free preschool education for children aged 3 to 5?

- Free primary public schools - why not preschool? (Duncan & Magnuson, 2013)
- Low-income families benefit the most in socioeconomically diverse programs (Magnuson & Waldfogel, 2005)
- Targeted programs create disincentives for income improvement and social divisions (Morrissey, 2013)



→ A **phased** development of universal program is recommended.

How are the rights enacted in Viet Nam?



Structural indicators

- Constitution, Children Law, Education Law recognize education for all, not preschool
- Resolution 42 included goal for progressive introduction of free preschool

Process indicators

- No routine monitoring data
- No tuition fee but enrollment and indirect fees applicable
- Private/ public schools: 15,480/ 16,000

Outcome indicators

- 28% children aged 3-5 enroll in preschool (compared to 99% children aged 5)
- No data on enrollment of children aged 0 – 3



Policy recommendations for Viet Nam

- The government must expand universal rights to preschool education for children aged 3 to 5 by providing:
 - Tuition exemption, lunch support, and learning materials support
 - Monthly allowance for teachers
 - Preschool facilities and learning materials for some disadvantaged provinces

(Instead of provision dependent on budget availability)

- A phased development of a universal program, with the understanding that initial stages may not achieve 'high quality' uniformly.



ECDAN

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