

A graphic featuring a light blue globe with a darker blue house icon on the left. A ring of small, colorful hands (purple, blue, green, yellow, orange) encircles the globe. The background is a solid blue.

The Early Advantage Inconvenient Truths



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16 May 2019



Table of Contents

<i>Part I:</i>	<i>Real and Inconvenient Truths</i>
<i>Part II:</i>	<i>Study Goals and Methods</i>
<i>Part III:</i>	<i>Framing Findings</i>
<i>Part IV:</i>	<i>Finding 1: The Importance of Context</i>
<i>Part V:</i>	<i>Finding 2: The Importance of Multiple Bests</i>
<i>Part VI:</i>	<i>Finding 3: The Importance of Synergy</i>
<i>Part VII:</i>	<i>From Truths to Social Change</i>



The background of the slide features a blue rectangular area with a white border. Inside this area, there are two stylized globes, one on the left and one on the right. Each globe is surrounded by a circular ring of small, colorful hands (in shades of green, yellow, and blue) that appear to be holding the globe. The text is overlaid on the left globe.

Part I

Real and Inconvenient Truths



Real Truths

Advances in Science

From neuroscience, growing awareness of the importance of the earliest years of life.

From economics and evaluation sciences, growing knowledge about what interventions are most effective and cost-effective.

Advances in Policy

United Nations SDG 4.2

Unprecedented increases in provision internationally and domestically

Expansion of pre-kindergarten

Advances in Practice

More focus on quality

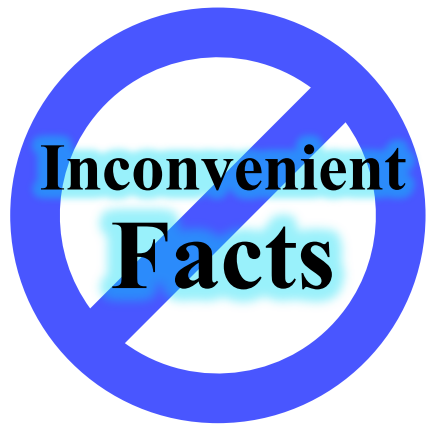
More focus on equity

More focus on workforce issues

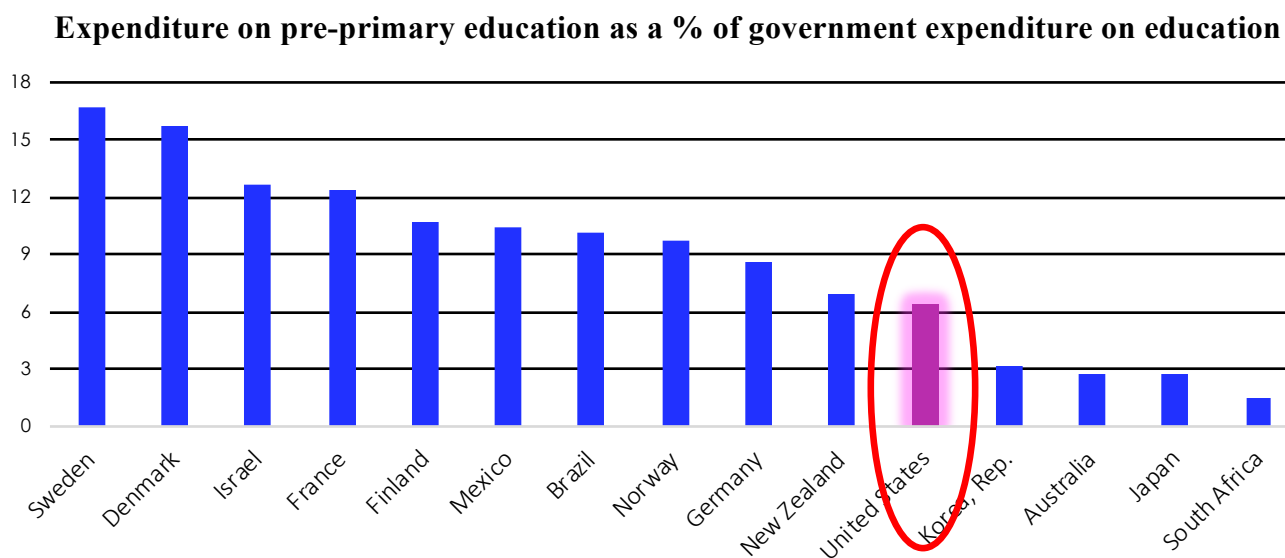
More rhetoric on systems



A Trilogy of Inconvenient Truths



Inconvenient Facts: Investment



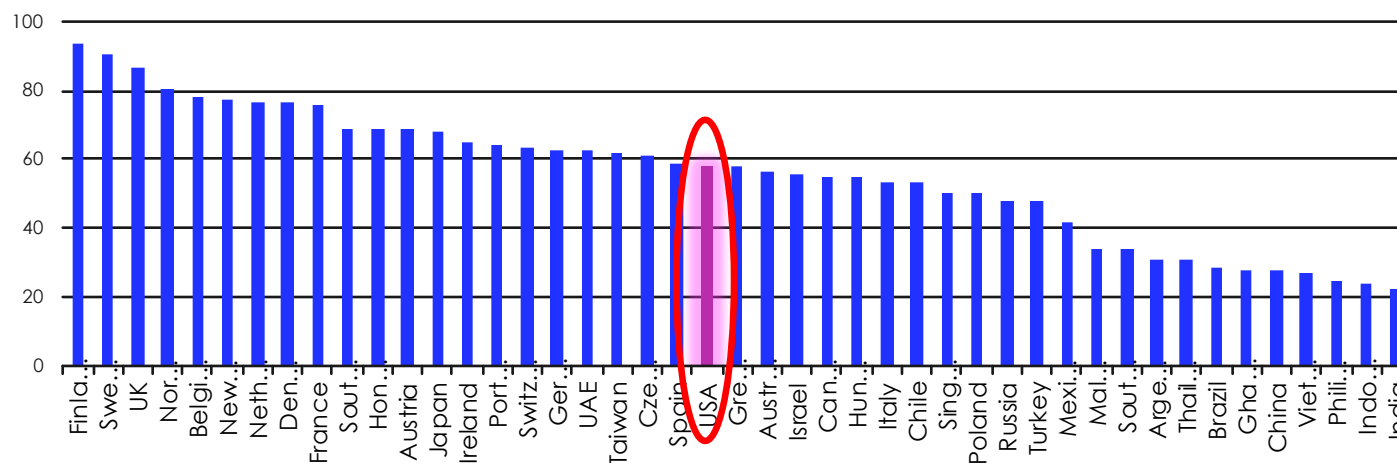
World Bank. (2017). Education Statistics Databank, Indicators 2011-2014. Retrieved from <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=education-statistics--all-indicators>



Inconvenient Facts: Quality



Presence of well-defined quality* guidelines to cover basic ECEC needs



* Quality is assessed according to: student-teacher ratio, average teacher wages, curriculum guidelines, teacher training, health and safety guidelines, data collection mechanisms, linkages, and parental involvement

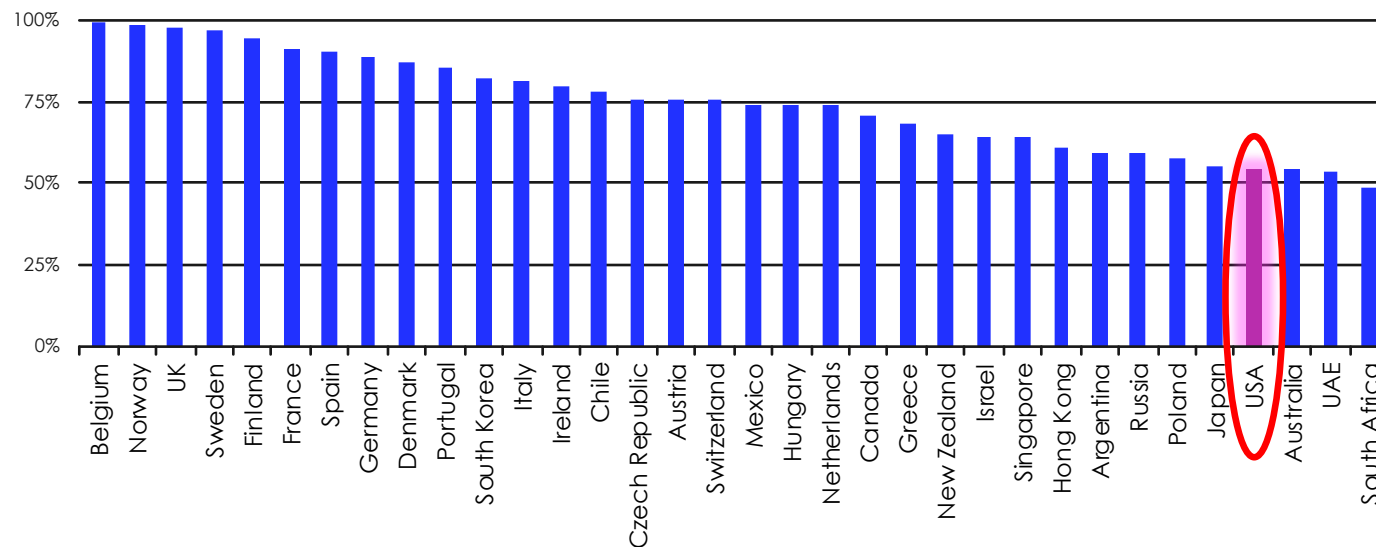
Neuman, M. J., & Devercelli, A. E. (2013). *What matters most for early childhood development: A framework paper. Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) Working Paper, No. 5.* Washington, DC: The World Bank; Adamson, P. (2008). *The child care transition: A league table of early childhood education and care in economically advanced countries.* Florence, Italy: UNICEF.



Inconvenient Facts: Equity



Availability of preschool for families in countries around the world



Unit, E. I., & Britain, G. (2012). *Starting well: Benchmarking early education across the world*. Economist Intelligence Unit.



Inconvenient Presumptions



- We presume it is the government's responsibility to fully fund ECEC, KNOWING in our hearts and heads that government alone will never be able to fund to the levels of quality and equity we need.
- We presume that evaluation results should contour policy, KNOWING in our hearts and heads that they don't effectively measure what really matters and what we value in ECEC.
- We consistently lament that early childhood is not yet a profession, KNOWING that we base our quests for more compensation on professionalism.



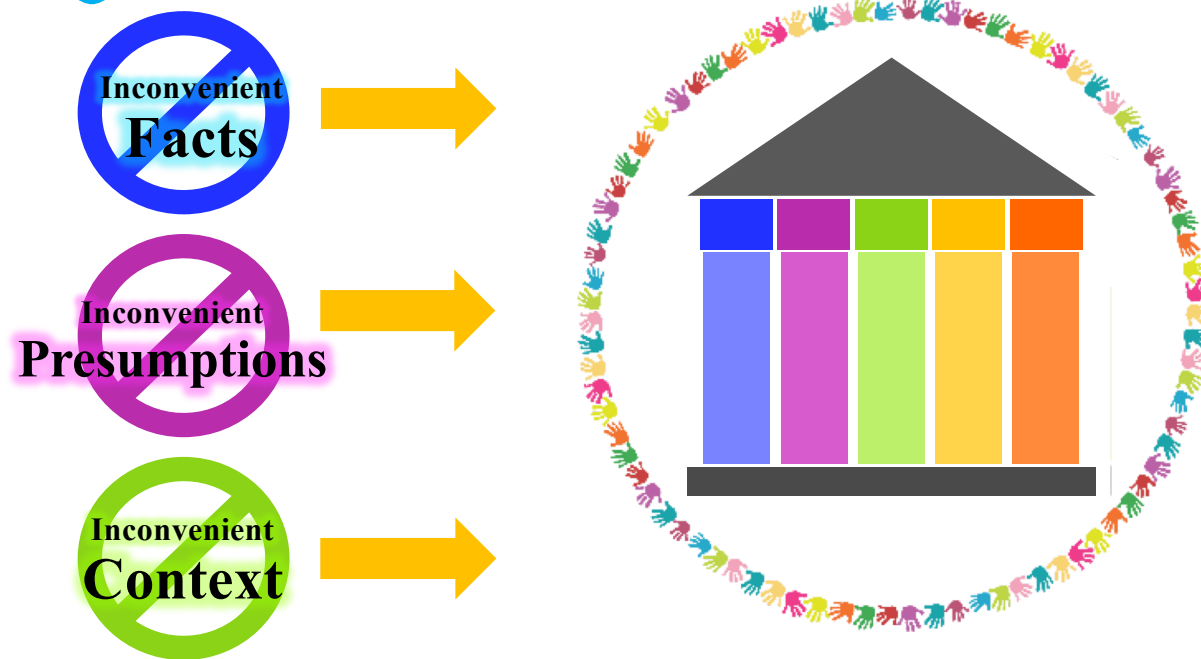
Inconvenient Context



- *Under the “truth” of democracy*, a partisan system of governance reigns.
- *Under the “truth” of freedom and justice*, slavery, Jim Crow, racism, sexism, and a host of other “isms” persist.
- *Under the “truth” of loving children and honoring families*, the USA fails miserably.



From Inconvenient Truths to the Study



The background of the slide features a blue rectangular area with a white border. Inside this area are two globes, one on the left and one on the right, showing the Americas and Europe/Africa respectively. A ring of colorful hands is positioned around the globes, symbolizing global unity or diversity.

Part II

Study Goals and Methods



Addressing the Inconvenient Truths



1. Learn from Best Countries and Best Scholars



2. Create a Rigorous Quality Study



3. Produce Useful Products for Diverse Audiences





Goal 1: Learn from Best Countries and Best Scholars

- Sought countries for academic excellence, geographical/cultural diversity, and ingenuity in ECEC systems
- Two data sets: (i) PISA, (ii) Economist Intelligence Unit Report

	PISA HIGH	PISA MEDIUM	PISA LOWER
ECONOMIST HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Netherlands • South Korea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finland • Belgium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denmark • New Zealand • Norway • England • France
ECONOMIST MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hong Kong • Switzerland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany • Austria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Czech Republic
ECONOMIST LOWER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japan • Singapore • Taiwan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada • Australia 	





Goal 1: Learn from Best Countries and Best Scholars





Goal 2: Create a Rigorous Quality Study

Clear Design

- Rich research questions:
 - **What's:** What ECEC policies and frameworks are in place?
 - **How's:** How is ECEC system effectiveness similar or different?
 - **Why's:** Why do countries vary in their commitments to ECEC?
- Thorough document reviews

Grounded in Theory

- Systems framework
- Theory of change
- Diverse outcomes

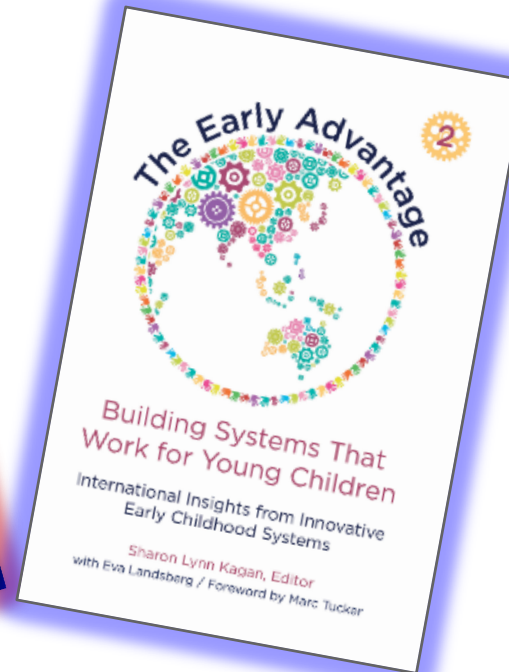
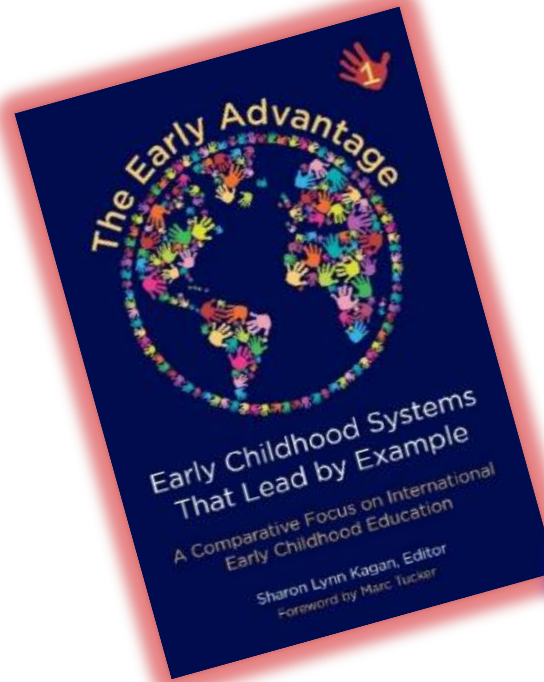
Solid Data and Analysis

- Common and piloted protocol
- Common informant types
- Validated analysis process





Goal 3: Produce Useful Products for Diverse Audiences



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Part III

Framing Findings



Framing Findings

The Importance
of
Context



The Importance
of
*Multiple
Bests*



The Importance
of
Synergies



The background of the slide features two overlapping globes. A ring of colorful hands is positioned around the equator of both globes. The text is overlaid on the left globe.

Part IV
Finding 1:
The Importance of Context



Finding 1: The Importance of Context

Nordic Approach

- Heavy public funding
- Heavy public provision
- Local program monitoring
- No formal child outcome data collection

Asian Approach

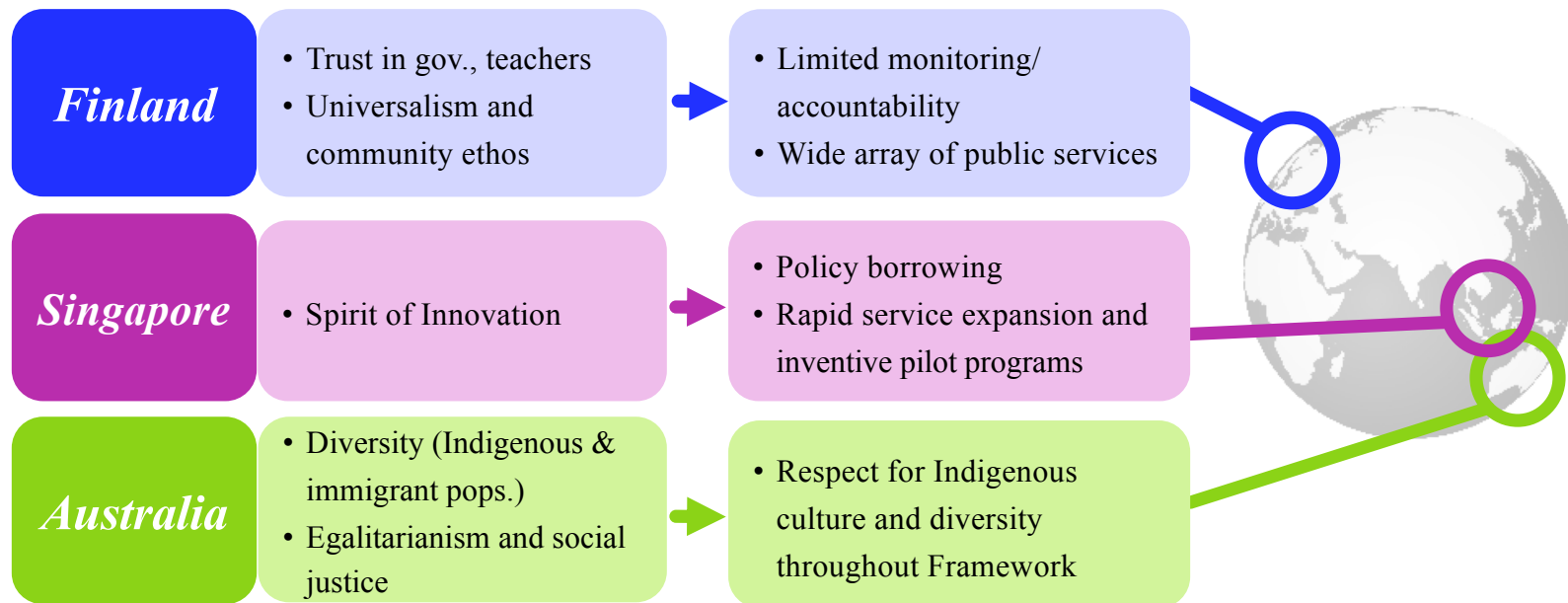
- Moderate to heavy public funding
- Mixed public-private provision
- Moderate to heavy program monitoring
- Limited national formal child monitoring

Anglo Approach

- Limited to heavy public funding
- Mixed public-private provision
- Heavy formal program monitoring
- Moderate to heavy national formal child monitoring



Examples of Finding 1: Context Contours How Things Are Done



Action 1: Honor the Context

Our policy strategy is to pilot and replicate what works, though we face huge replicability and scalability issues.

Context matters and should contour policy and practice





Part V

*Finding 2: The Importance of
Multiple Bests*



Finding 2: Multiple Bests-Comprehensive Direct Services

Pre-Perinatal

All have paid family leave, with many having specific fathers' leave

All have some form of subsidized health care, beginning at pregnancy onset

All have some type of home visiting service

Infants and Toddlers

Most have subsidies for low-income/at-risk families

Most have supports for some form of ongoing parenting support

Preschoolers

All have services for children in the year preceding formal school entry

Most have supports for those working with young children

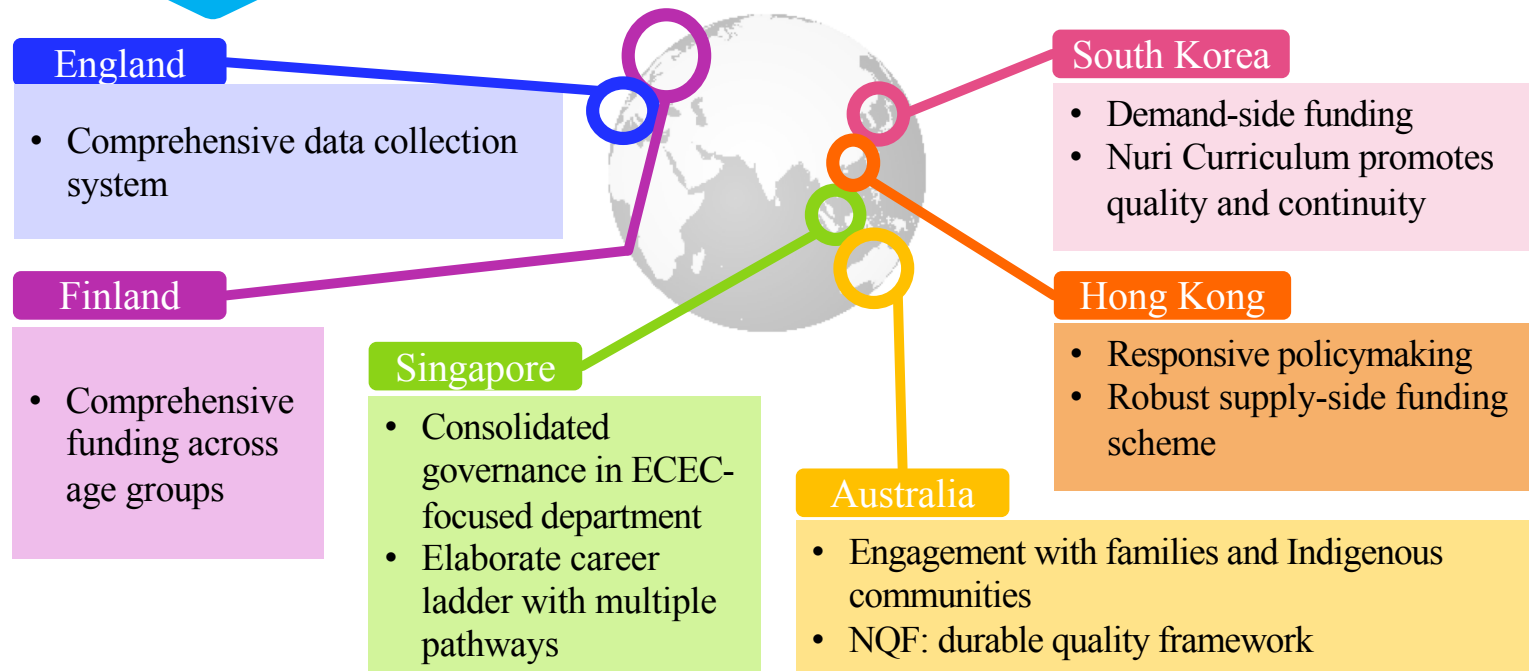
Transitions

All have some form of transitions

Often left to the local level, with growing national government interest



Examples of Finding 2: Multiple Best-Different Approaches to Infrastructure



Action 2: Plan for Multiple Bests

We advance the one program or policy fad of the moment, often ignoring needy populations and leaving huge unserved pockets.

We must pursue multiple bests and multiple services



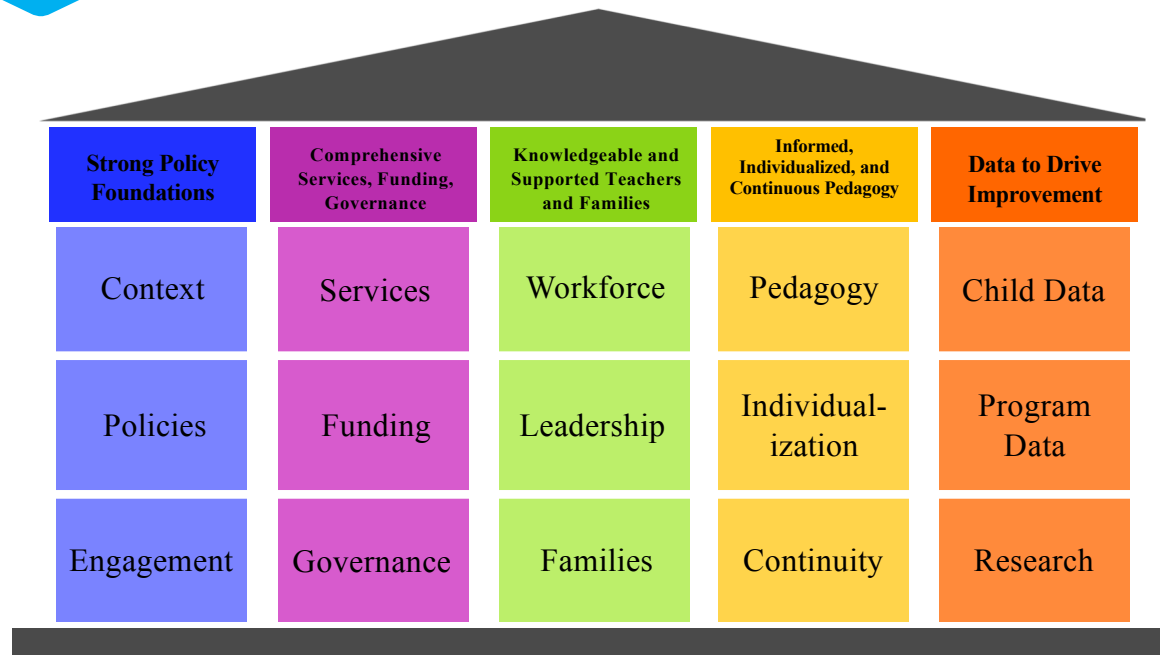
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Part VI

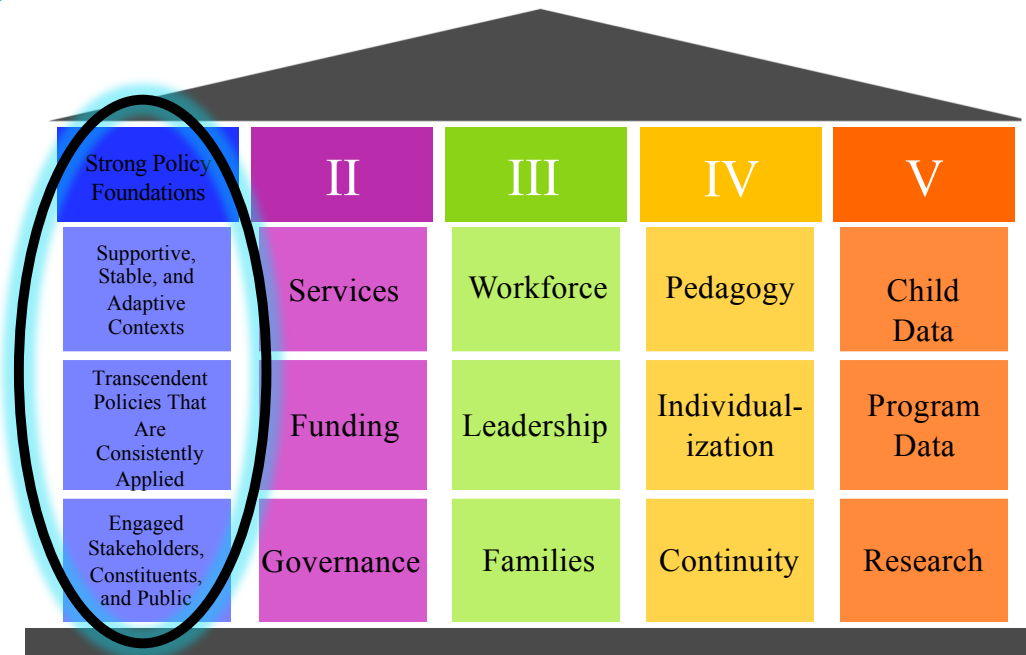
Finding 3: The Importance of Synergy



Finding 3: The Importance of Synergy - Pillars and Building Blocks



Pillar I: Strong Policy Foundations



I. Strong Policy Foundations

Supportive, Stable, and Adaptive Contexts

- Ideological and fiscal support for ECEC from government leaders and the public
- Durable governmental structures and capable ministry staff

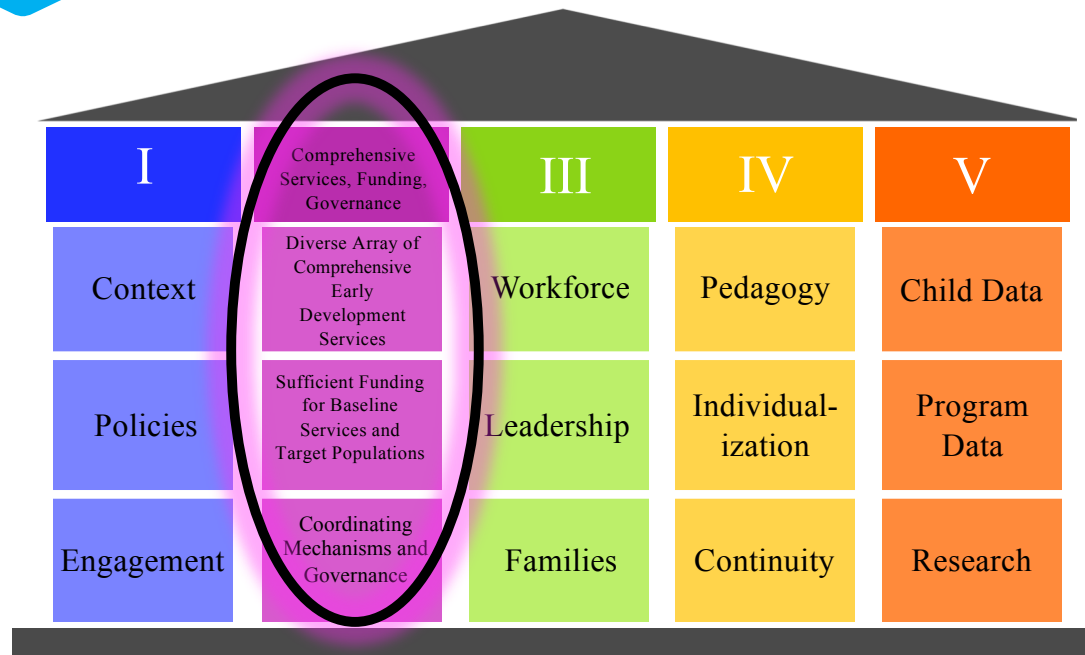
Transcendent Policies That Are Consistently Applied

- Policies/framing documents exist across ministries/departments, sectors, and setting types

Engaged Stakeholders, Constituents, and Public

- Deliberate mechanisms for policy adaptation and responsiveness
- Structural mechanisms for regular constituent engagement

Pillar II: Comprehensive Services, Funding, and Governance



II. Comprehensive Services, Funding, Governance

Diverse Array of Comprehensive Early Development Services

- Distinguish between Comprehensive Early Development (CED) and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)
- Provide diverse options for both

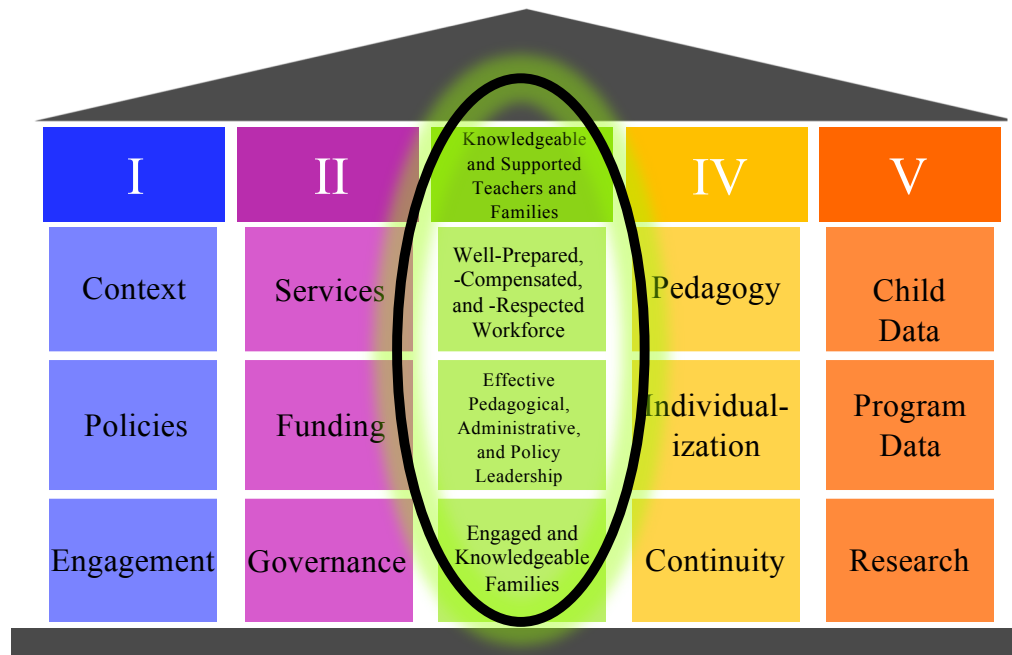
Sufficient Funding for Baseline Services and Target Populations

- Hybridize public and private sector funding strategies
- Adopt progressive universalism; work to fund for all with extra for those in need

Coordinating Mechanisms and Governance

- Coordinate ECEC system governance by creating *structural* entities and/or *functional* mechanisms

Pillar III: Knowledgeable and Supported Teachers and Families



III. Knowledgeable and Supported Teachers and Families

Well-Prepared, Compensated, and Respected Workforce

- Establish common professional titles that are accompanied by uniform job descriptions and entry requirements
- Create common entry, educational, and licensure requirements
- Deploy staff inventively, altering ratios based on ages and teacher qualifications
- Create competencies linked to frameworks

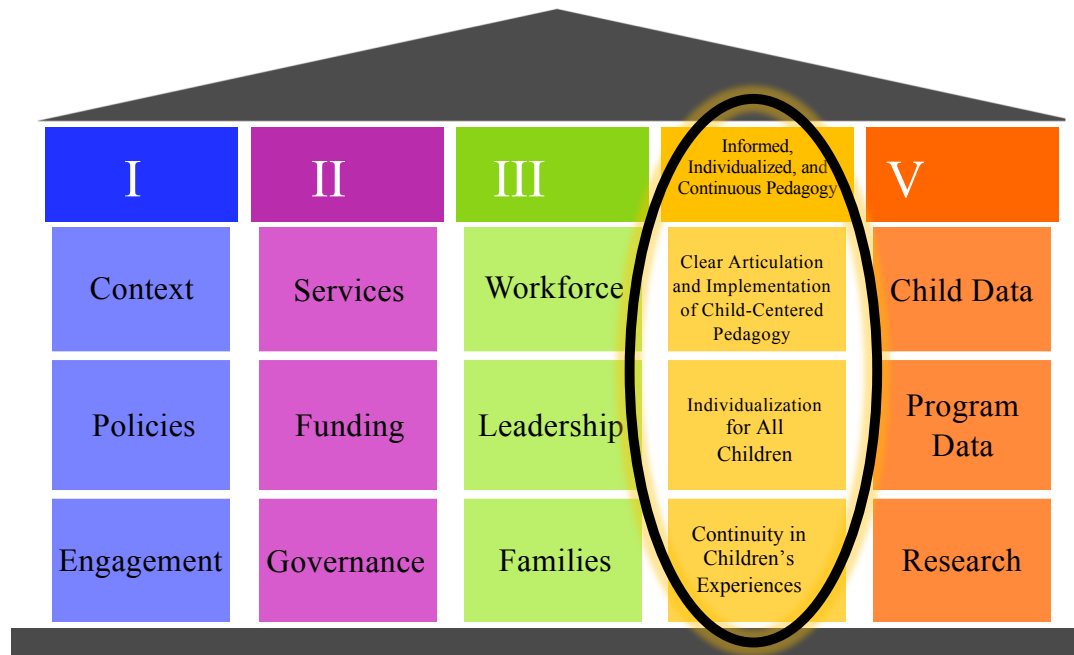
Effective Pedagogical, Administrative, and Policy Leadership

- Focus on both pre- and in-service PD, to promote paths for advancement

Engaged and Knowledgeable Families

- Honor the diversity of families
- Provide for family engagement in numerous ways

Pillar IV: Informed, Individualized, and Continuous Pedagogy



IV. Informed, Individualized, and Continuous Pedagogy

Clear Articulation and Implementation of Child- Centered Pedagogy

- Embrace child-centered, play-based, holistic pedagogies
- Use curriculum frameworks as catalysts for national ECEC reform

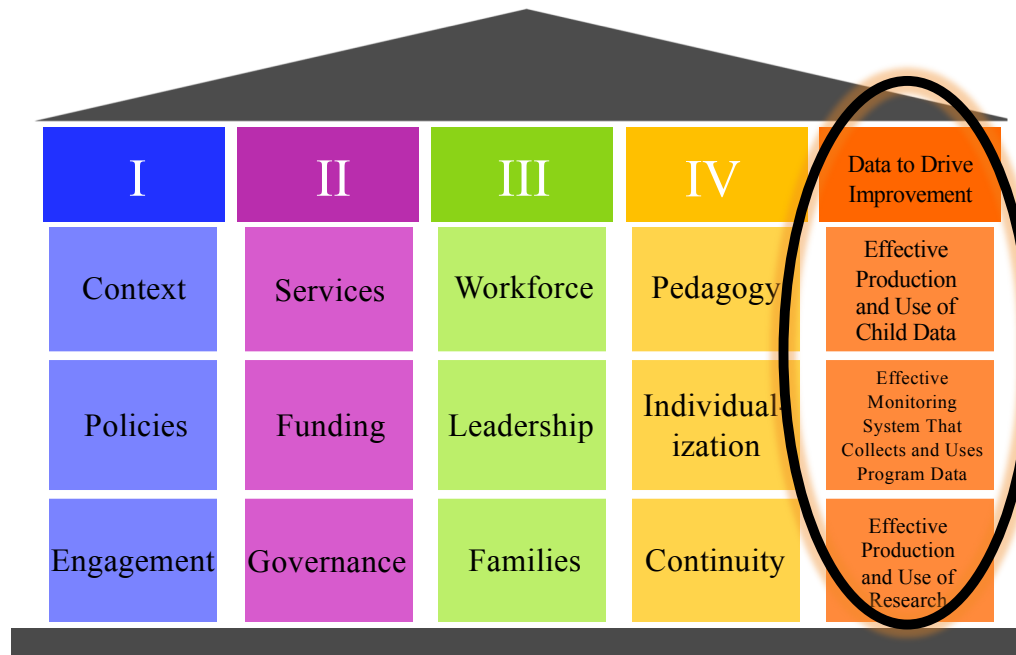
Individualization for All Children

- Realize the essentiality of family and home culture to children's development
- Empower teachers to make curriculum adaptations based on students' needs

Continuity in Children's Experiences

- Use transition activities to ease children's movement into primary
- Focus on alignment of policies, programs, and pedagogies across the ECEC system and beyond

Pillar V: Data to Drive Improvement



V. Data to Drive Improvement

Effective Production and Use of Child Data

- Carefully consider the advantages of collecting child learning data
- Use collected data to improve policies and programs

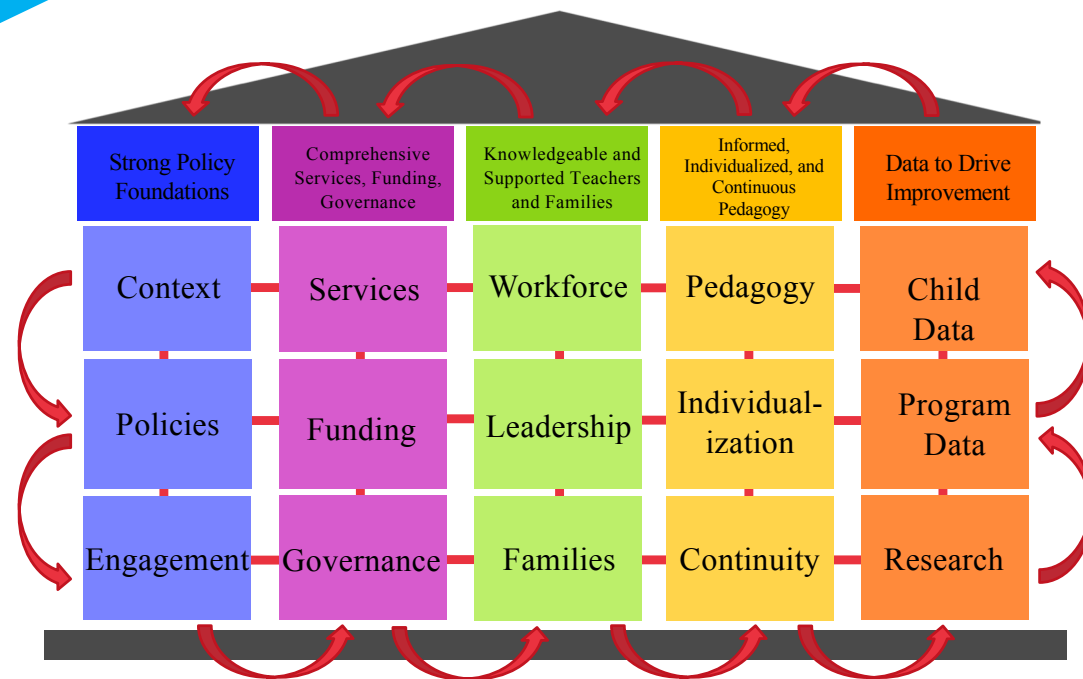
Effective Monitoring System That Collects and Uses Program Data

- Consider aligning program monitoring standards with a national curriculum framework
- Publicize the results to help parents make informed ECEC decisions

Effective Production and Use of Research

- Establish a dedicated research infrastructure built on sufficient funding and well-trained personnel
- Prioritize the translation of research into policy

The Importance of Synergy - Pillars and Building Blocks



Action 3: Strategize for Synergy

We work in parallel
policy lanes, giving
voice without force
to linkages and
continuity.

*We must strategize
for synergies
among elements of
the whole system*



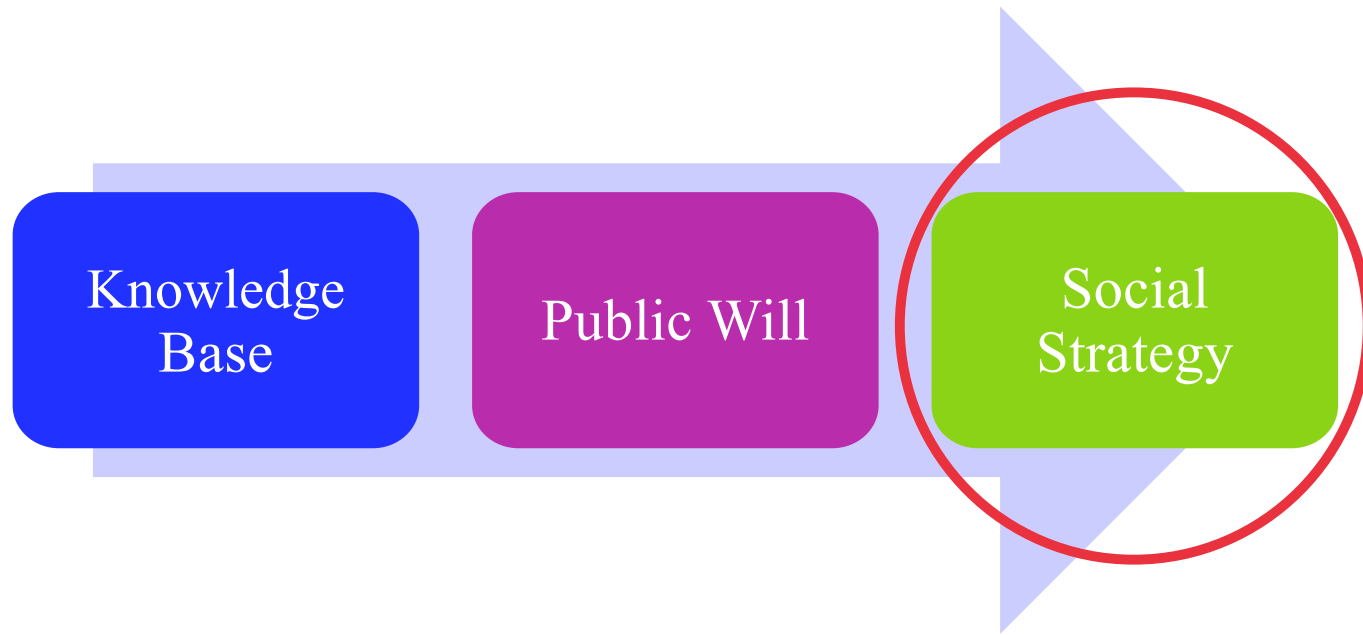
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Part VII

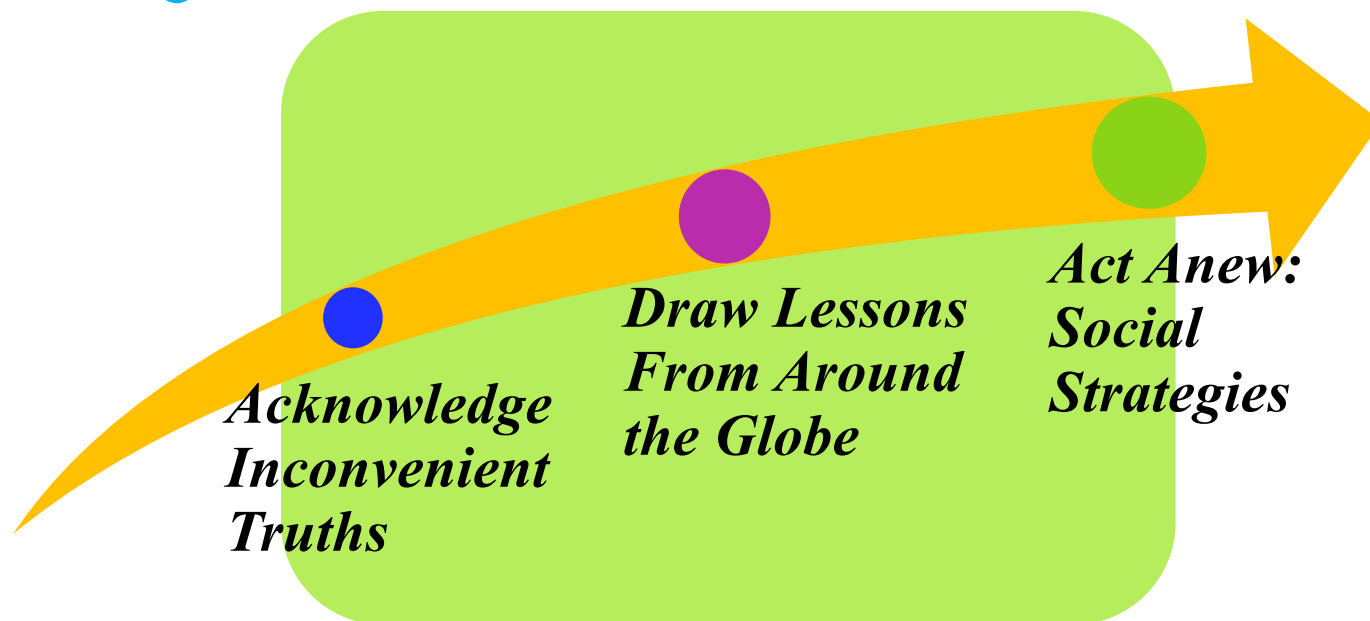
From Truths to Social Change



Richmond Trilogy for Social Change



Focusing on Social Strategy



Acting Anew: Global Lessons

- *Lesson 1:*

- Study countries are all doing well.

- *Lesson 2:*

- Study countries are all doing well, differently.

- *Lesson 3:*

- Study countries face common challenges.

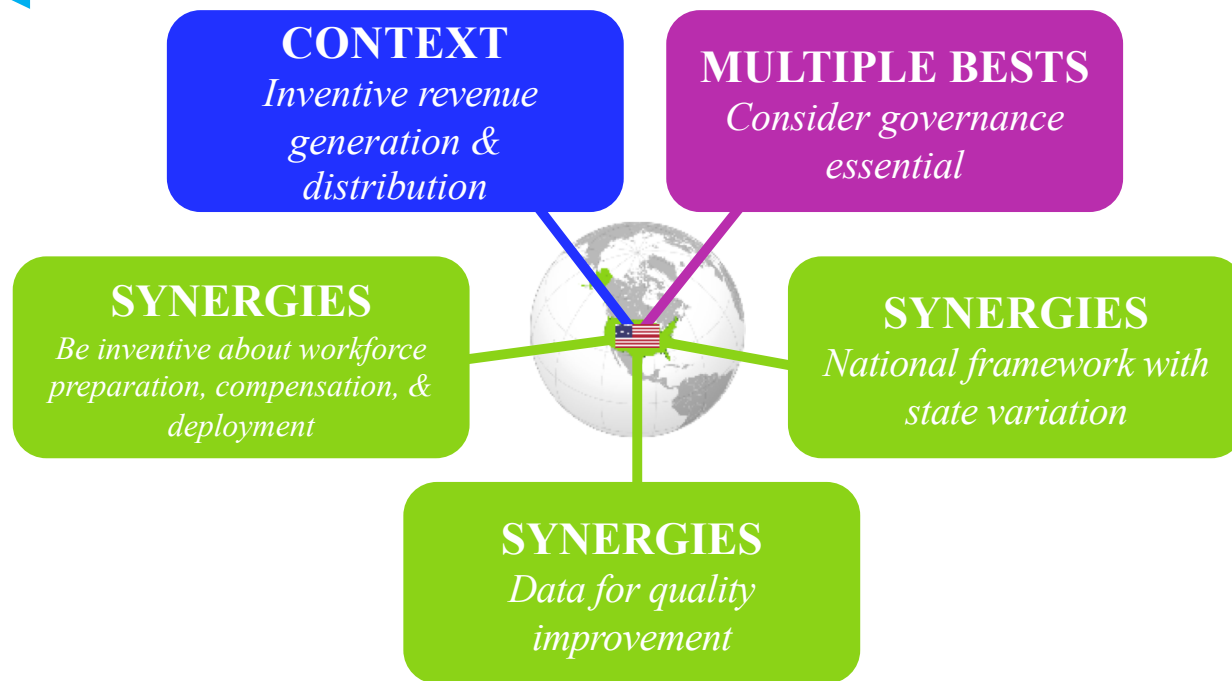


Acting Anew: Study Contributions

- *From The Early Advantage, we see it is possible to:*
 - Un-muddy essential definitions
 - *ECEC and CED*
 - Broaden the vision of outputs
 - *Quality, equity, sustainability, efficiency*
 - Place new emphasis on systems
 - *Address both direct services and the operational infrastructure*
 - Accord respect to what matters
 - *Honor people, time, structures, cultures, and contexts*



Acting Anew – Specific Strategies for Tomorrow



Acting Anew – Specific Strategies for Tomorrow

CONTEXT

Revenue Approaches Fit Economic Structures

- Diverse revenue generation and distribution approaches
- US is entrepreneurial and market-driven, so we need to think about public and private sector fiscal linkages
- Research and incentivize inventive approaches to financing that use all sectors well



Acting Anew – Specific Strategies for Tomorrow

MULTIPLE BESTS

Diverse Approaches to Alignment

Structural Alignment:

- Saw governance bodies that had authority, accountability, and durability (e.g., Singapore)
- No confusion with coordinating bodies

Functional Alignment

- Frameworks, standards, regulations, curriculum, professional development, common competencies that transcend program delivery schemes



Acting Anew – Specific Strategies for Tomorrow

SYNERGIES

Data for quality improvement

- Build comprehensive data systems that collect and use data on: *children, families, programs, personnel, systems*
- Use data to drive improvements in diverse areas, including program quality, teacher training, and funding schemes



Acting Anew – Specific Strategies for Tomorrow

SYNERGIES

Be more inventive about workforce preparation, compensation, & deployment

- Develop career ladders to specify common titles and qualifications and outline pathways for progression
- Think more about competencies, and utilize them in compensation schemes
- Flexibly deploy personnel within programs



Acting Anew – Specific Strategies for Tomorrow

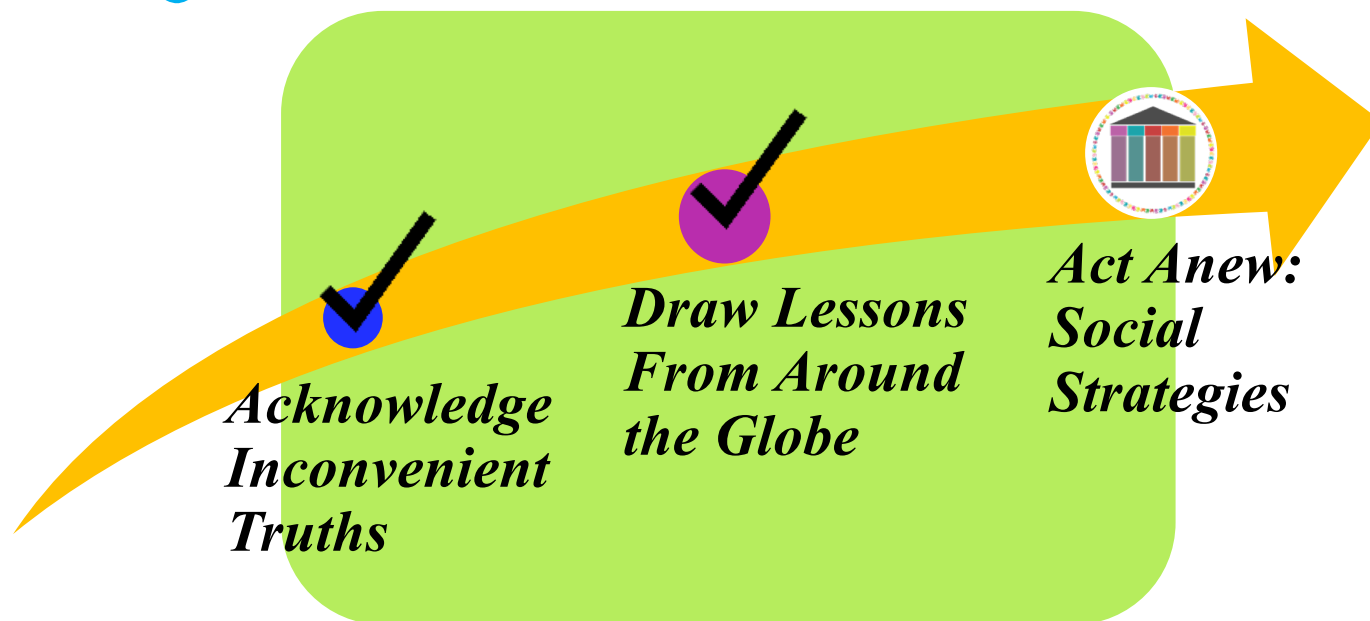
SYNERGIES

National frameworks drive diverse quality, equity, sustainability, and efficiency efforts

- Frameworks begin at the heart of ECEC, outlining how/what children should learn and bringing alignment across programs
- From there, expand to related systemic elements: *program monitoring, financing schemes, workforce qualifications*

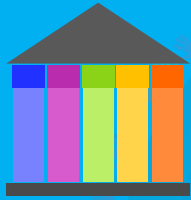


The Real Early Advantage “Truths!”



Respect Rich Context, Diverse People, Quirky Structures





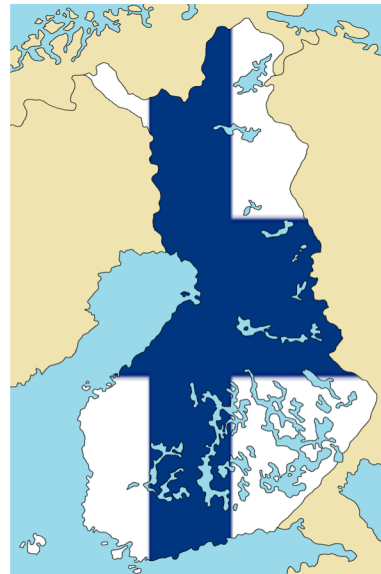
The Early Advantage Understanding Early Childhood in Context: Finland

***Kristiina Kumpulainen**
Playful Learning Center
Faculty of Educational Sciences
University of Helsinki
16 May 2019*



Context and values

- *The Finnish State commits to citizens' universal rights to education, health, and welfare*
- *The system draws on a Nordic welfare model valuing universalism, community ethos and a commitment to equality*
- *The system results in a principled, trusting, personalized and child-centric ECEC system*
- *The system is challenged by recent political, economic, demographic, and cultural changes*



FINN FACTS:

A parliamentary republic

5.5 million people

89% speak Finnish

5.3% speak Swedish

Other languages:
Russian, Estonian, Arabic,
Somali, English

The share of GDP dedicated for
ECEC is 1.3% (OECD average
i0.8%)



Contextual Impacts on ECEC Services

Pre-Perinatal

Free of charge health services,
beginning at pregnancy onset

Paid parental
leave

“Baby box”

Infants and Toddlers

Free of charge health services

Home care allowance or
subsidized ECEC services

Child-benefit scheme

Preschoolers

Free of charge health
services

Free of charge pre-primary
education

Child-benefit scheme

Transitions

Continuity in the
curriculum and pedagogy

Close collaboration
between ECEC,
elementary education and
home



Finland is Proud of

- *Commitment to equality and community ethos*
- *Pays quality attention to early years of life*
- *Trusts and invests on highly-educated ECEC teachers (a 4-year BA-degree)*
- *Draws on child-centered pedagogy and humanistic values*
- *Values diverse learning environments in and outdoors*
- *Cherishes childhood and children's agency: Honors and engages children in planning their activities and programs including Individual Educational Plans and portfolios*



New Learnings from Other Study Countries

The new learnings from other study countries have generated the following questions for Finland:

How to serve increasingly culturally diverse families and children?

- *The nature of ECEC services*
 - *Teacher education and professional development*
 - *Curriculum and Pedagogy*
- 💡 *Lessons from Australia*

How to develop data driven ECEC policy in the cultural context of Finland?

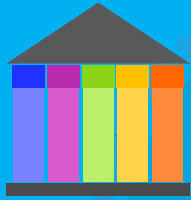
💡 *Lessons from England and Australia*

How to respond to the increase in private, for-profit ECEC services in the Finnish system?

💡 *Lessons from Singapore*

A question for everyone: How to develop working conditions and adequate compensation for ECEC workforce?





The Early Advantage Understanding Early Childhood in Hong Kong

Nirmala Rao

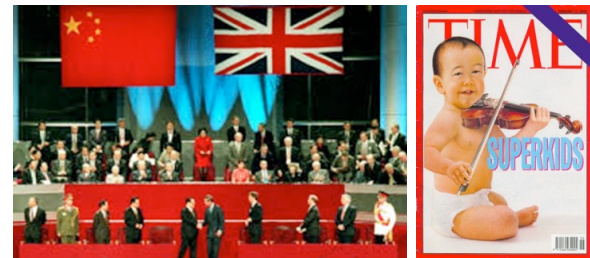
*Serena HC Yang Professor in Early Childhood Development and Education
The University of Hong Kong*

16 May 2019



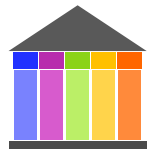
The Country Context

- *Historical/Socio-cultural Values*
 - Fusion of Chinese cultural values and Euro-American beliefs about early learning
 - Education as the path to upward social mobility
- *Recent Trends*
 - Rising income inequality → focus on equity
 - Marked increase in government funding for early childhood services



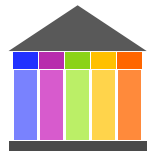
Contextual Impacts on Children's Services

- *Historical Impacts on Children's Services*
 - Opening of child care centres as a welfare service
 - Laissez-faire attitude to early childhood services to a more hands-on approach
 - Reform of the school education system in 2000
- *Contemporary Impacts on Children's Services*
 - Funding of kindergarten education – Free Quality Kindergarten Education Policy (2017)
 - Link between funding and kindergarten quality
 - Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide: Joyful Learning through Play: Balanced Development all the Way (2017)



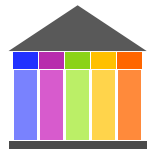
Hong Kong is Proud of

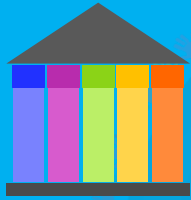
- Responsive policy-making
- Comprehensive and free health services
- Sustained emphasis on quality evidenced by robust quality assurance processes and increasingly stringent benchmarks for operation of kindergartens
- Increased public funding of early childhood services
- Future-oriented early childhood policy



New Learnings from Other Study Countries

- *Australia*
 - Valuing diversity
 - Promoting equity
- *England*
 - Early Years Foundation Stage document
 - Data-informed policy
- *Finland*
 - Considerable public funding of early childhood services
 - Emphasis on the early childhood workforce
- *Republic of Korea*
 - Nuri curriculum
 - Free child care from birth to 2 years
- *Singapore*
 - Rapid implementation of policy
 - ECDA's model of professional growth for early childhood educators





The Early Advantage *Understanding Early Childhood in* *England*

Kathy Sylva

Professor of Educational Psychology

University of Oxford

16 May 2019



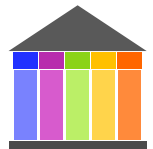
The Country Context and Values

Historical/Socio-cultural/Values

- Stable and centralized government with entwined goals of a *thriving economy* and *social cohesion*
- Since WWII, England is a welfare state with free health care for all, enhanced income support for 'disadvantaged' groups, and support for families that includes paid parental leave for 39 weeks, free early education and care between 2 years and Primary Year 1

Recent/Econo-political/Trends

- Population is increasing slowly, but strong financial growth has slowed.
- Bitter divide, since 2016, regarding the still unresolved decision to leave the European Union, leaving little political appetite for improving public services
- Stagnating economic growth has led to major cuts in local municipal services, including ECEC with consequences especially for workforce development and compensation



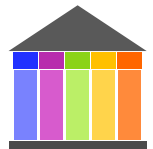
Contextual Impacts on Children's Services

Historical Impacts on Children's Services

- ***England values education***
 - As a means towards a skilled workforce that sustains a strong economy; with the result that investment in ECEC is seen by all political parties as investing in the first stage of a citizen's education
 - As a means of supporting disadvantaged group and encouraging a fair and tolerant society, with the result that all children are entitled by law to a common curriculum with staff well trained in ECEC
- ***England values inspection***
 - As a means of ensuring legal entitlements to high quality for all, with the results that a strong national inspection service publishes individual reports on schools, colleges and ECEC settings

Contemporary Impacts on Children's Services

- Investment in young children has trebled in the last two decades
- Recent policy initiatives has aimed more at 'child care' than at 'education' in an effort to get mothers into full employment



England is Proud Of:

Early Childhood Pedagogy

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), a legal entitlement for *all* children from birth to age 5 in *all* settings, focuses on developmental domains and play-based pedagogy that nurtures the whole child through ***guided play as well as free play and occasional instruction***

Comprehensive Data Collection and Its use for Improvement

- Children: Child development is monitored at 2 years (Health) and 5 years (Education)
- Programs: Ofsted, an independent, national body is responsible for quality-assurance inspections, which are guided published 'framework' and take place every 3-4 years, more frequently if concerns raised by parents or officials
- Availability: Individual reports are available for parents on the internet, summary reports presented annually to Parliament, and form the basis for providing extra support to settings judged inadequate.

Universal Entitlement Through Mixed-Market Providers

- Private Sector provision (including home based) is common for young children
- Government funds follow the child, enabling parents to select Centre or home services
- Public sector provision includes mandatory full-time attendance in the Reception Class in primary school with a degree-holding teacher and assistant who focus on the last year of the EYFS



New Learnings from Other Countries

WORKFORCE

- From Finland – we aspire to an all graduate workforce as fewer than 1/4 of current staff in the private sector have degrees. (The government sector are better trained and paid)
- From Finland – we would like to increase the status of Early Childhood Educators, including higher pay and better conditions
- From Singapore – we seek new models for strengthening professional development, especially in the private and charitable sectors

ENHANCED PROVISION

- From Australia – we want to enhance our provision for children from non-dominant cultures

