



This event is part of the

EaP | Eastern Partnership



Funded by
the European Union

Rapid Education Diagnosis (RED) Armenia

Main findings and proposed recommendations

**Education Policy Workshop,
Holiday Inn Yerevan, Thursday 30 January 2025**

*EU-funded Support to Education Reforms and skills (SER)
for Eastern Partnership countries*



Introduction (1/3) : Background and objective

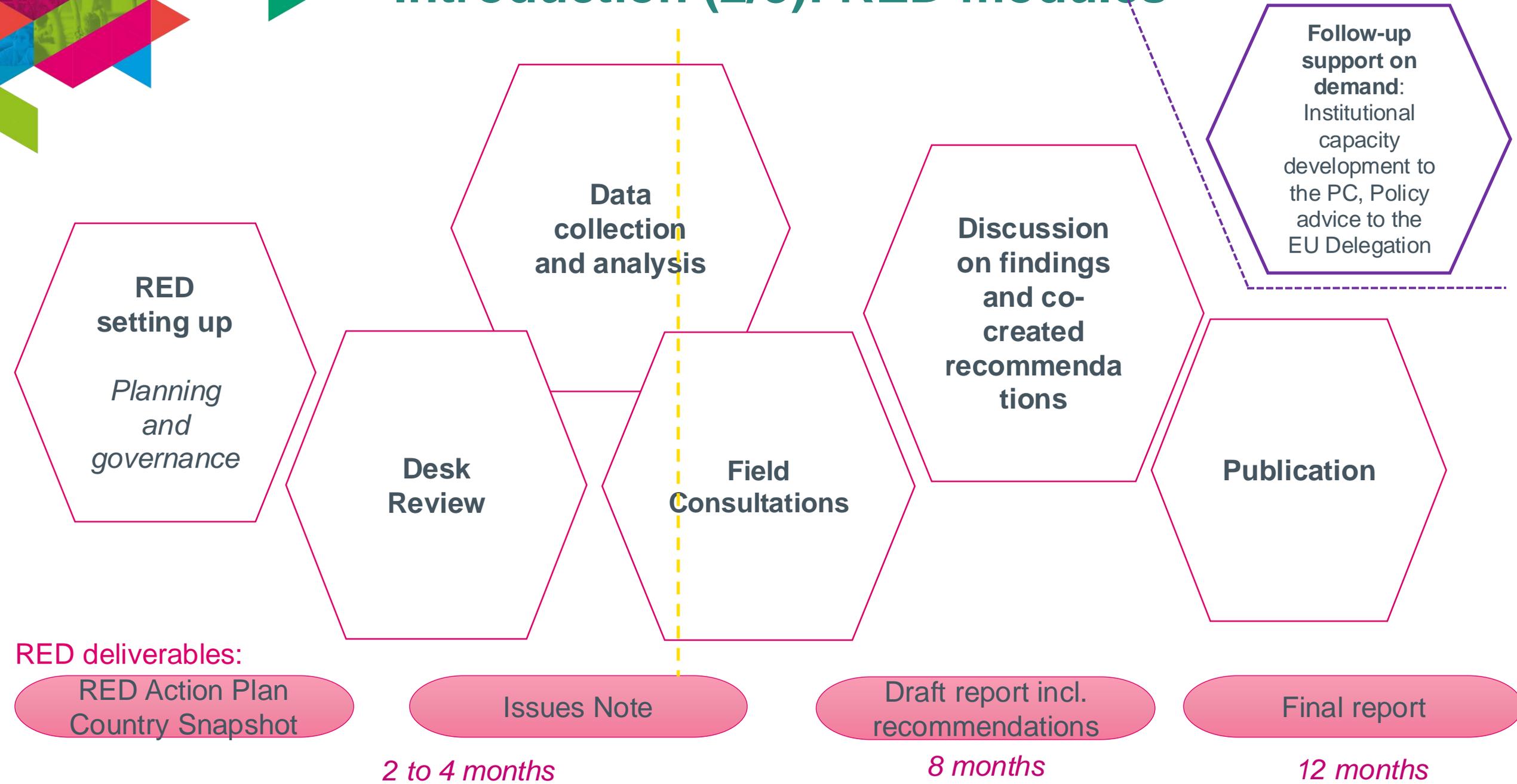
Rapid education diagnosis (RED) is part of the **regional programme ‘SER’** (Support to Education Reforms and skills):

- implemented by the ETF
- at the request and with the funding of the European Commission
- targeting the 5 countries of the Eastern Partnership
- Implementation period 2024-26, budget 2.5 million Euros

Objective: to highlight the **most critical (‘red’) challenges of the education sector** (Pillar 1, RED), in order to :

- **Inform bilateral sector support, policy dialogue as well as national policy reforms.**
- identify needs for institutional capacity reinforcement (Pillar 2) and common policy issues for peer exchange (Pillar 3),

Introduction (2/3): RED modules





Introduction (3/3) : Implementation process in Armenia

- Multi-disciplinary expert team, mainly based in Turin (ETF specialists) and Yerevan (3+1 consultants)
- Comprehensive desk review, to collect **secondary evidence** (significant volume of bibliographic references used)
- Data collection and analysis from NCET, Statistical Committee of Armenia and international data sources to gather or create additional **quantitative evidence**
- Field missions (2, incl. in Kotayk and Gergharkunik), Bilateral interviews (8) and Focus groups (5) to add **qualitative evidence**, suggestions for improvement/recommendations, and apply a participatory approach as a model for effective policy making
- Stakeholders consulted through focus groups:
 - Teachers (12)
 - School principals (15)
 - Representatives of Regional Education Departments (4)
 - Representatives of Higher Education Institutions (4)
 - Teacher Training Service Providers (7)
- **Findings** clustered around 3 priority themes **Inequalities, Financing, Governance**, in the process of being channelled into **recommendations** as much as possible related to the current education strategy

CHAPTER 1

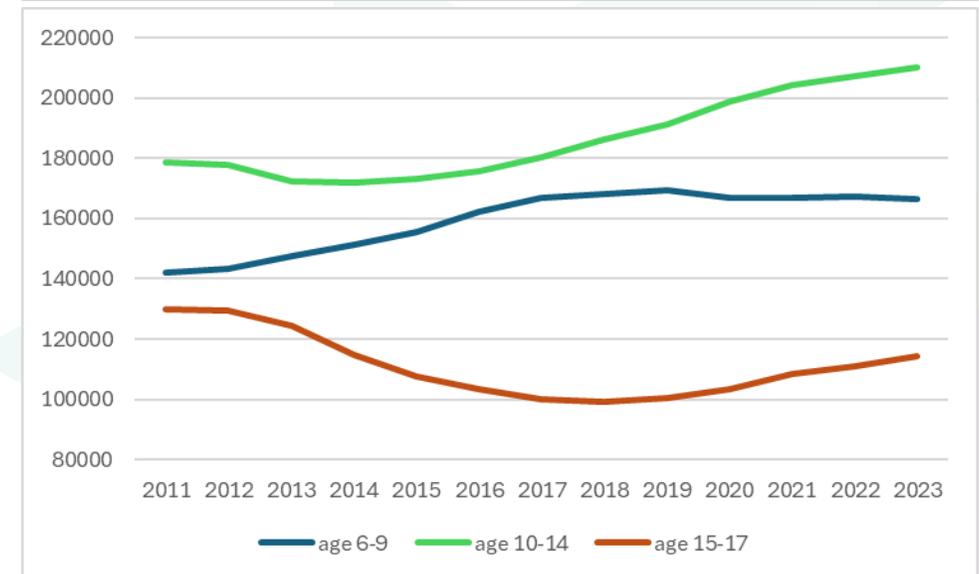
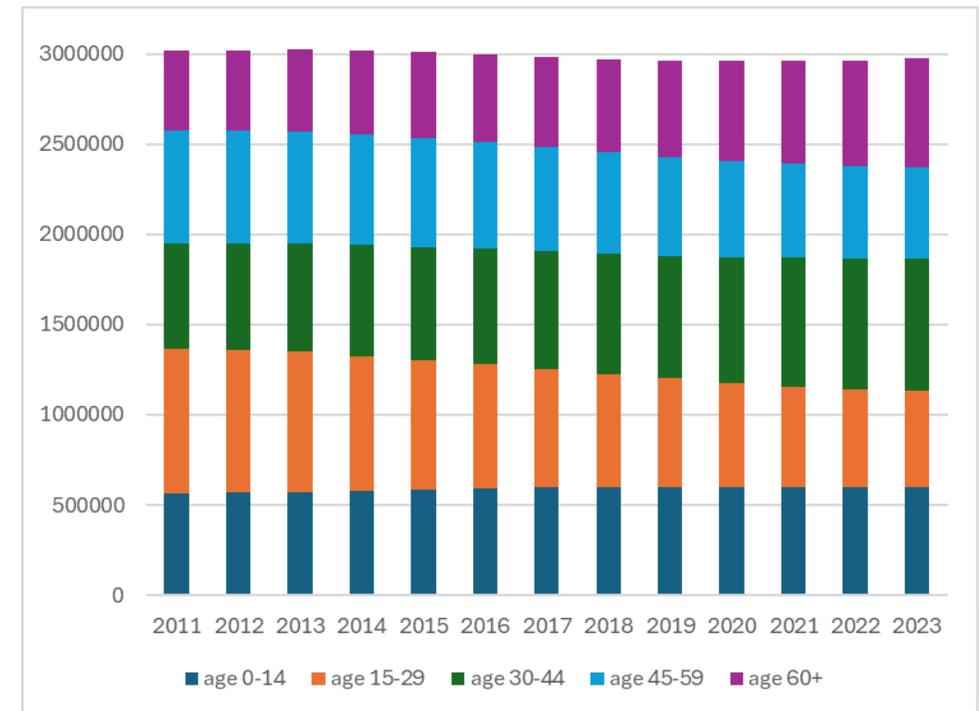
RED MAIN FINDINGS



Context of the education policy

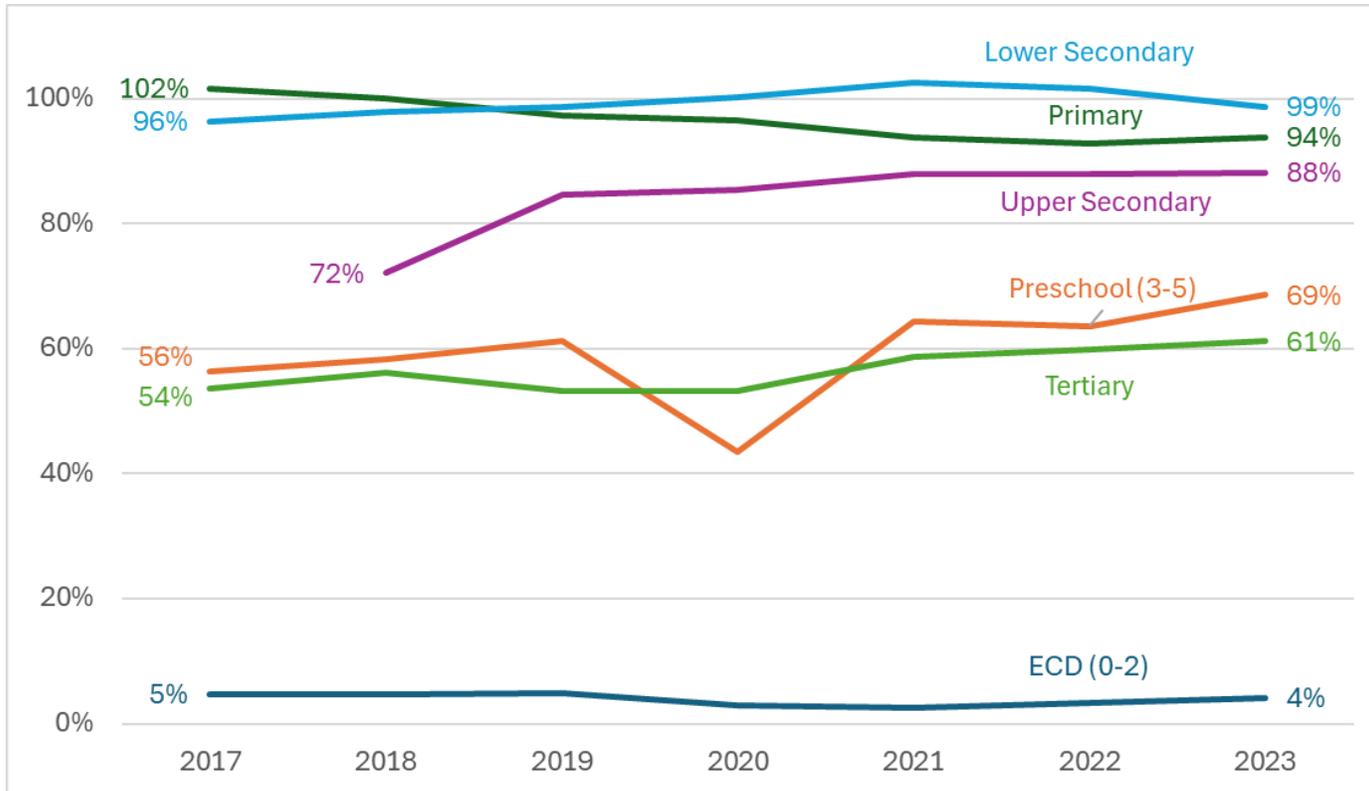
- **Demographic shifts** demand a focus on quality, inclusivity and attractiveness
- **Socio-economic challenges** create resource constraints
- **Geopolitical instability** underscores the need for resilient education system
- **Political and policy dynamics** focus on aligning with European standards, but facing implementation (absorption capacity) challenges

Demography evolution of Armenian population and focus on school aged population (Source: ARMSTAT)



The Armenian education system at a (data-based) glance

Enrolment rates by education level



Source: UIS UNESCO for primary to tertiary education, ARMSTAT for preschool

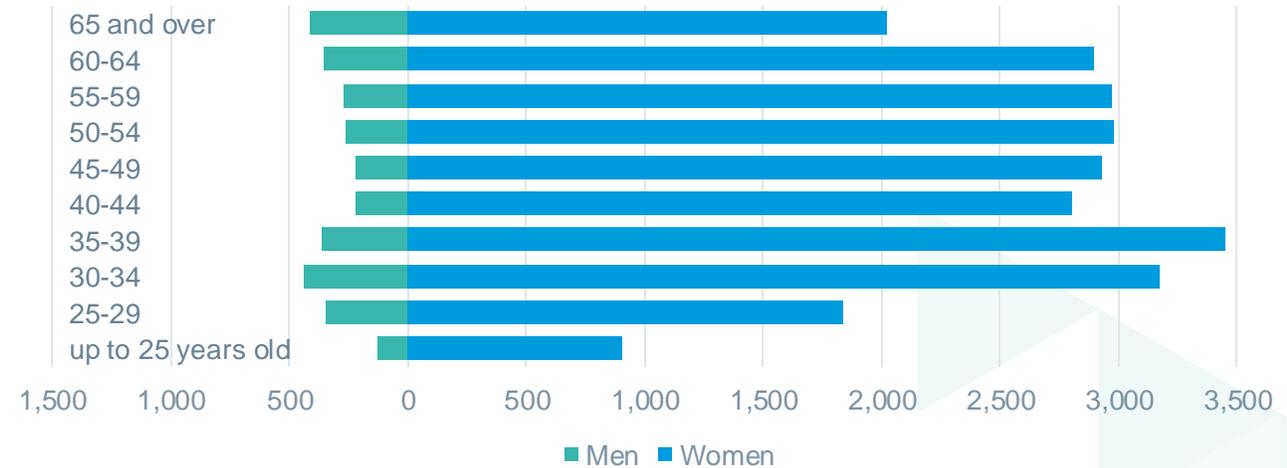
- **High enrolment rates in primary and secondary** compared to international benchmarks (strong increase in upper secondary)
- **Enrolments in preschool are still low** compared to 12-year compulsory education
- **Higher Education participation steadily increasing**

QUICK FACTS General education in 2023 :

- 1,352 state schools (and 47 non-state schools)
- Almost 37,000 **teachers** in state schools
→ **decreasing** trend (in 2010 they were ~ 40,000)
- ~ 413,000 **pupils** in state schools
→ **increasing** trend (in 2010 they were ~ 365,000)

Inequality in quality: the teaching and learning conditions

- **The teaching force is aging, with concerns about its renewal**

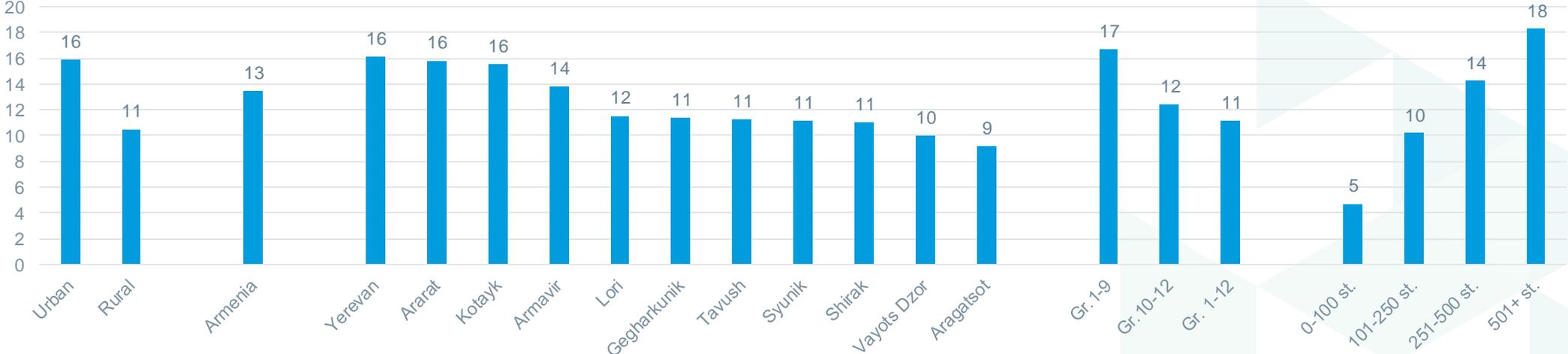


- **There is a teacher shortage, particularly acute in STEM subjects, arts, foreign languages, and physical education, especially in rural areas.**
- **The low level of the average teacher's salary - significantly lower than the national average makes the career little attractive.**
- **Additionally, the 2022 regulation requiring teachers to have a higher education degree and pedagogical qualifications, risks exacerbating the shortage.**

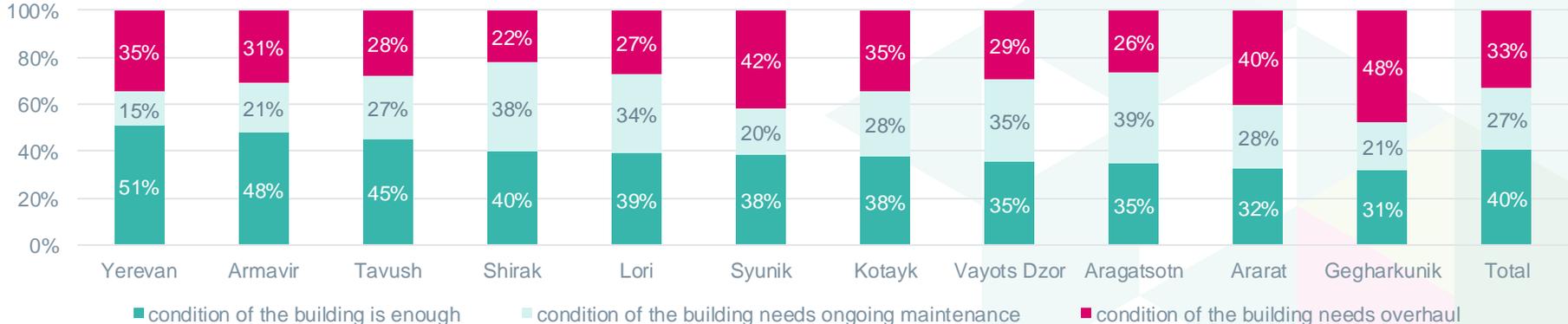
Inequality in quality: the teaching and learning conditions

School sizes, teacher shortages and financial resources create **inequities in learning conditions:**

- In 2022/23 PTRs range from 5 in small schools to 18 in largest schools (considering only teachers exclusively engaged in teaching activities)



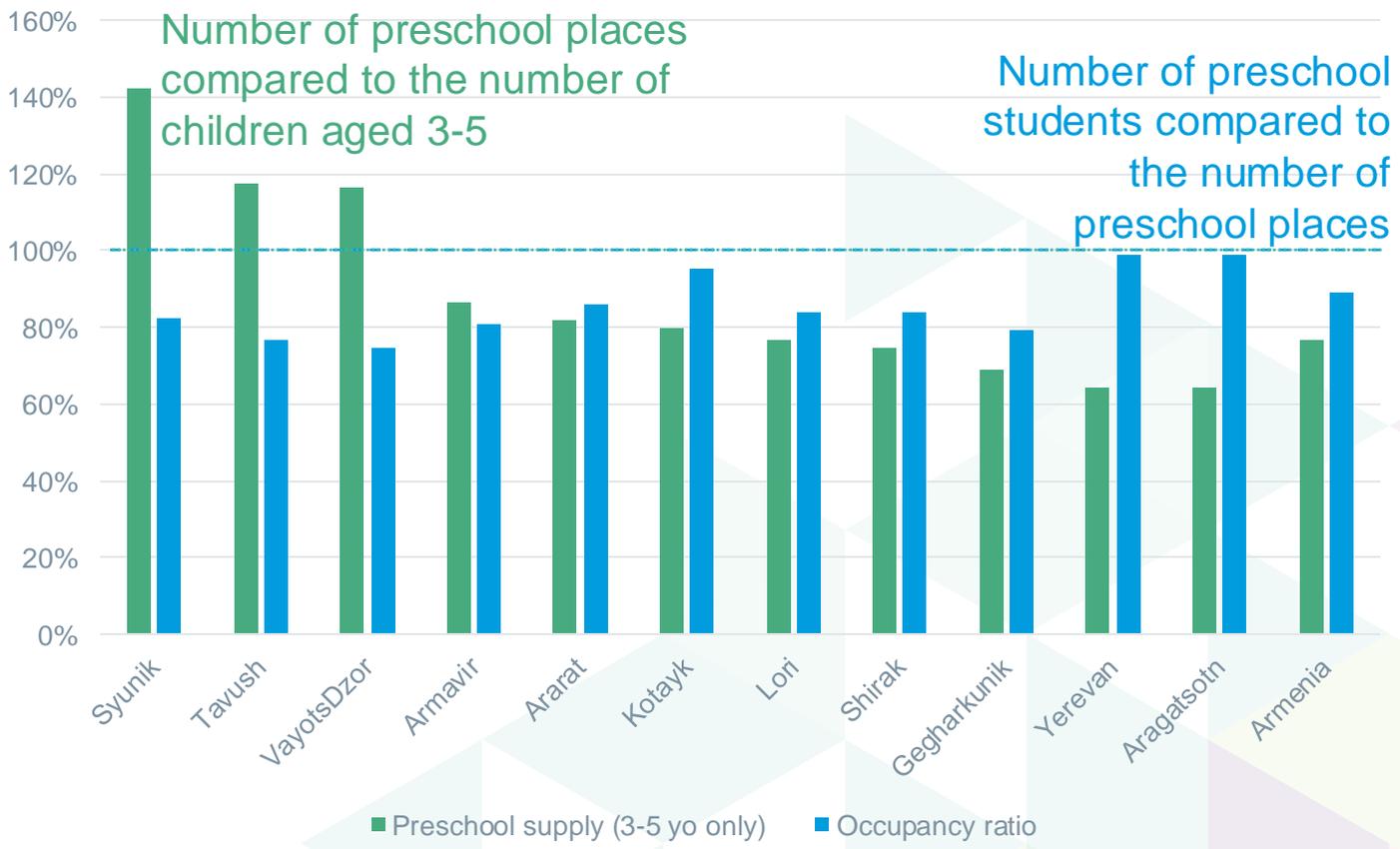
- In some regions, nearly half of the schools need major renovations



Inequalities in access

Access to pre-school, which is not compulsory, is made **inequitable by the lack of offer** and illustrates the **inequality between rural and urban areas and between regions**

- Limited capacity: fewer places than eligible children:
 - only 37% of potential demand (0-5 yo),
 - or 77% of 3-5 yo population
- Regions with few places in comparison with 3-5yo population are the ones with an occupancy ratio around 100% (Yerevan and Aragatsotn)



Source: ETF's calculations on ARMSTAT data

Financing analysis

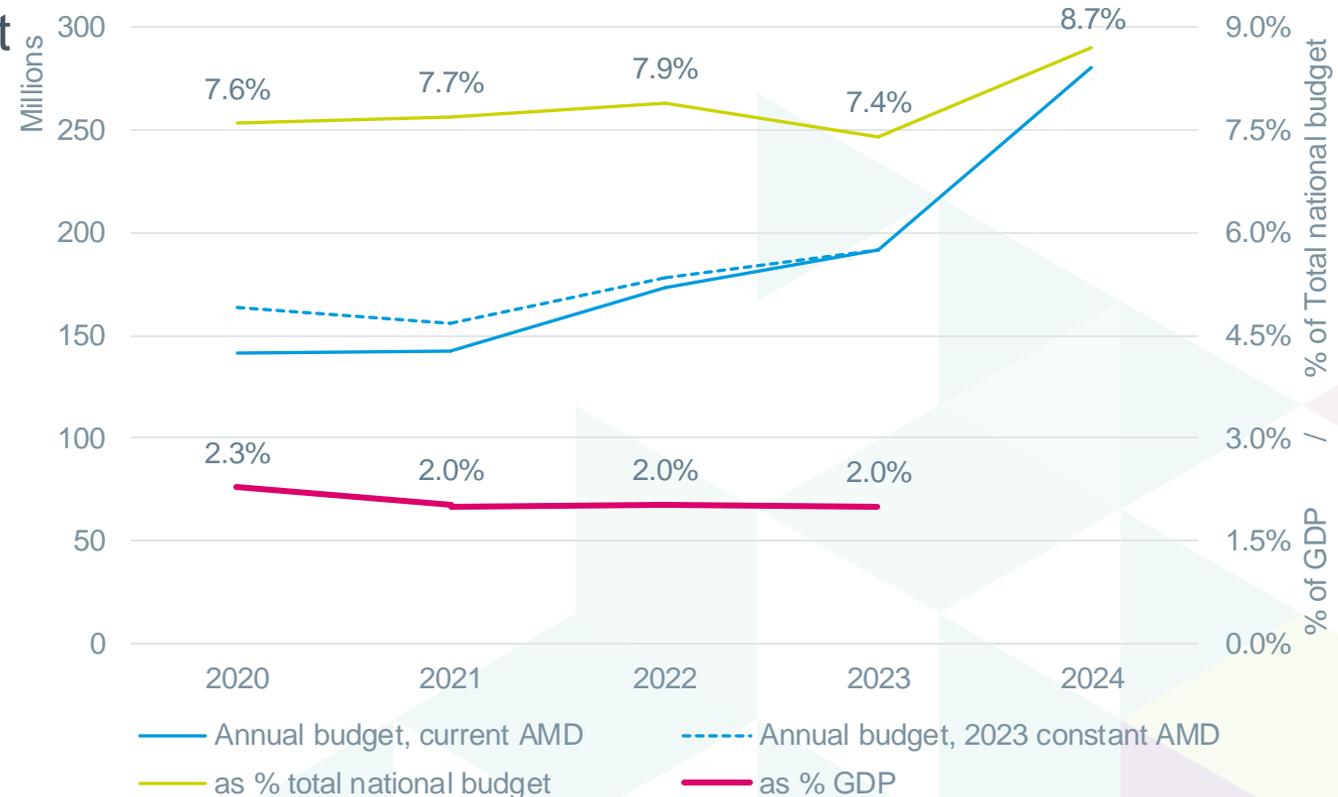


Financing analysis : budgetary aspects

Low Public Spending on Education: recent increase but still below regional benchmarks and international good practice:

- Important effort towards education budget (almost doubled between 2020 and 2024)
- In FY2024 Education budget represents 8.7% of the State budget – international benchmark 15-20%
- 2.0% of GDP in 2023 – international benchmark 4-6%

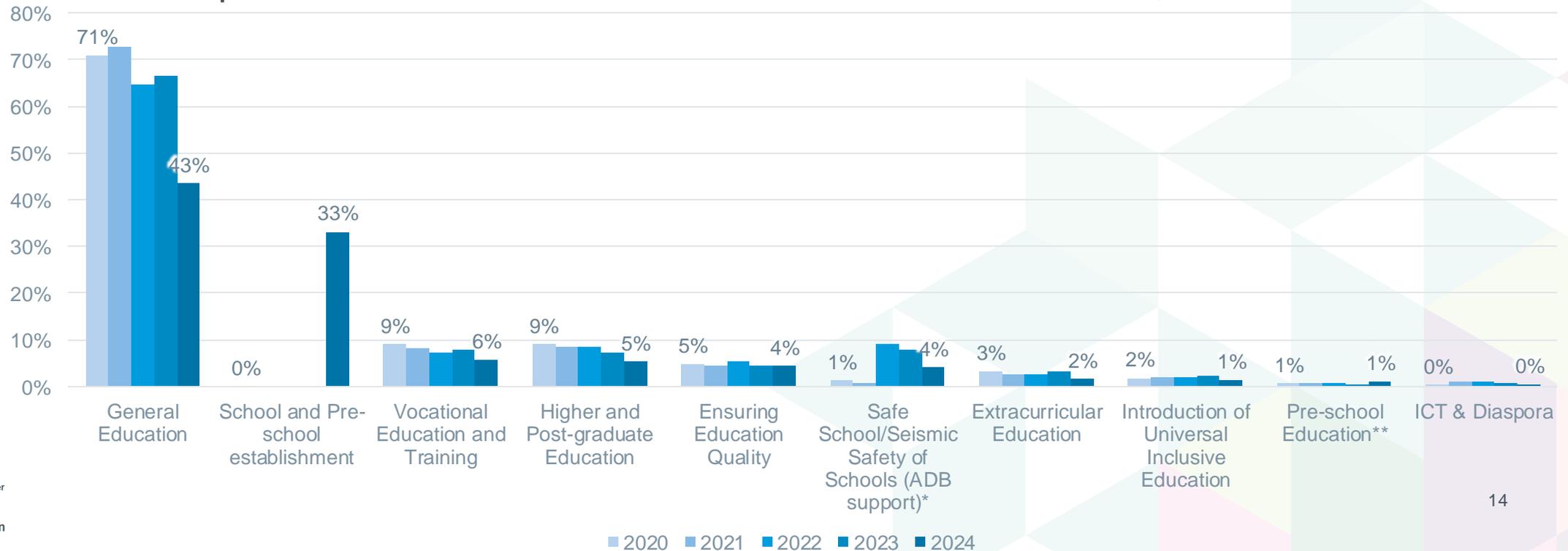
Low Budget execution below 85%



Financing analysis : budgetary aspects

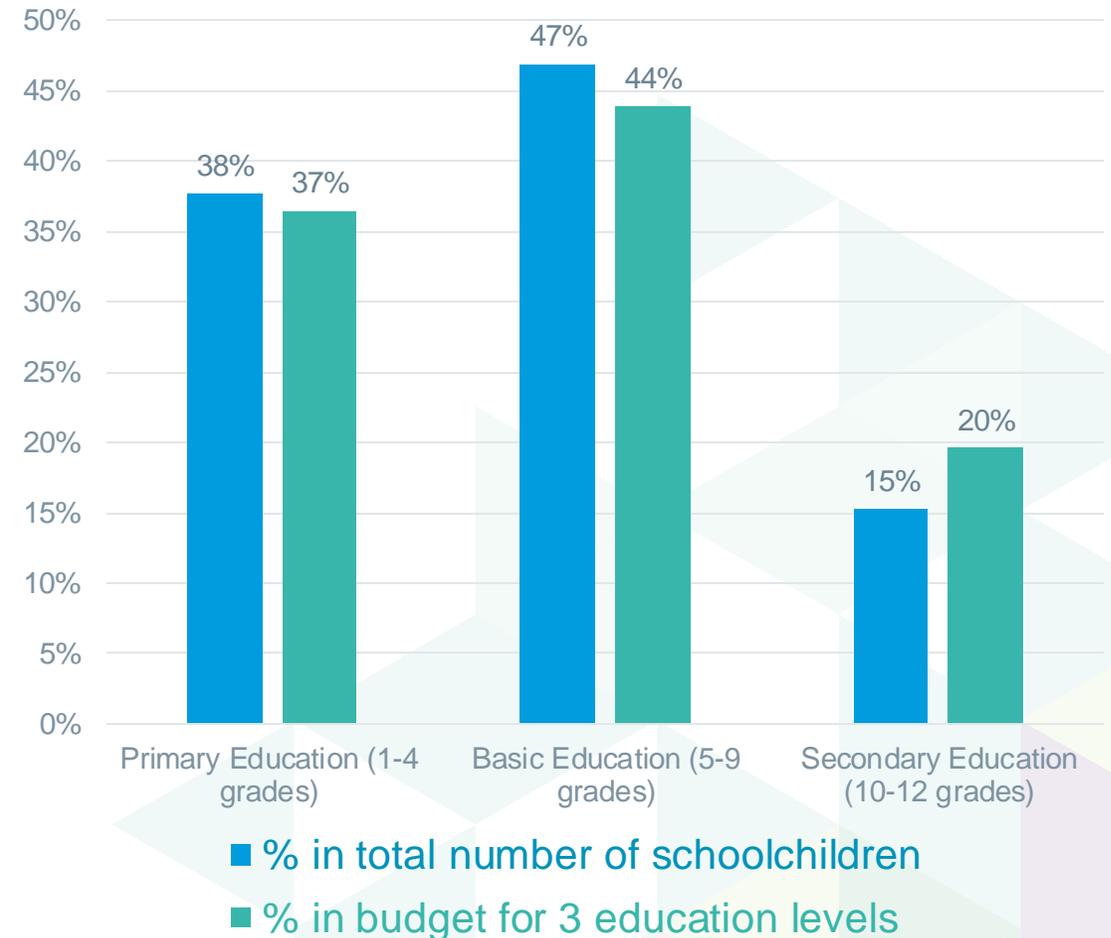
Budget Allocations:

- Budget distribution across education levels – largest public spending on General Education, on average 63% of Education Budget 43% in FY 2024
- Capital investment prioritized in FY2024



Financing analysis : Resource allocation to schools

- The funding formula to schools ensures a good coherence of GE budget relative to the number of students by level
- The revision of the Formula funding urges to abide by the norms and standards for class size, pupil teacher ratio, hence to have data to monitor these
- Issues reported concerning **capacity of the EMIS system to accommodate reforms in financing general educational institutions**



Financing analysis : costing and funding of the education policy

- **Cost estimate** of the State Education Development Programme 2030 exists – uncertainty about the level of secured funding
- MoESCS Reports on the implementation of the Action Plan of the State Education Development Programme 2030 do not include financial reporting, to allow for effective financial analysis and planning of reforms

Governance analysis



Governance analysis

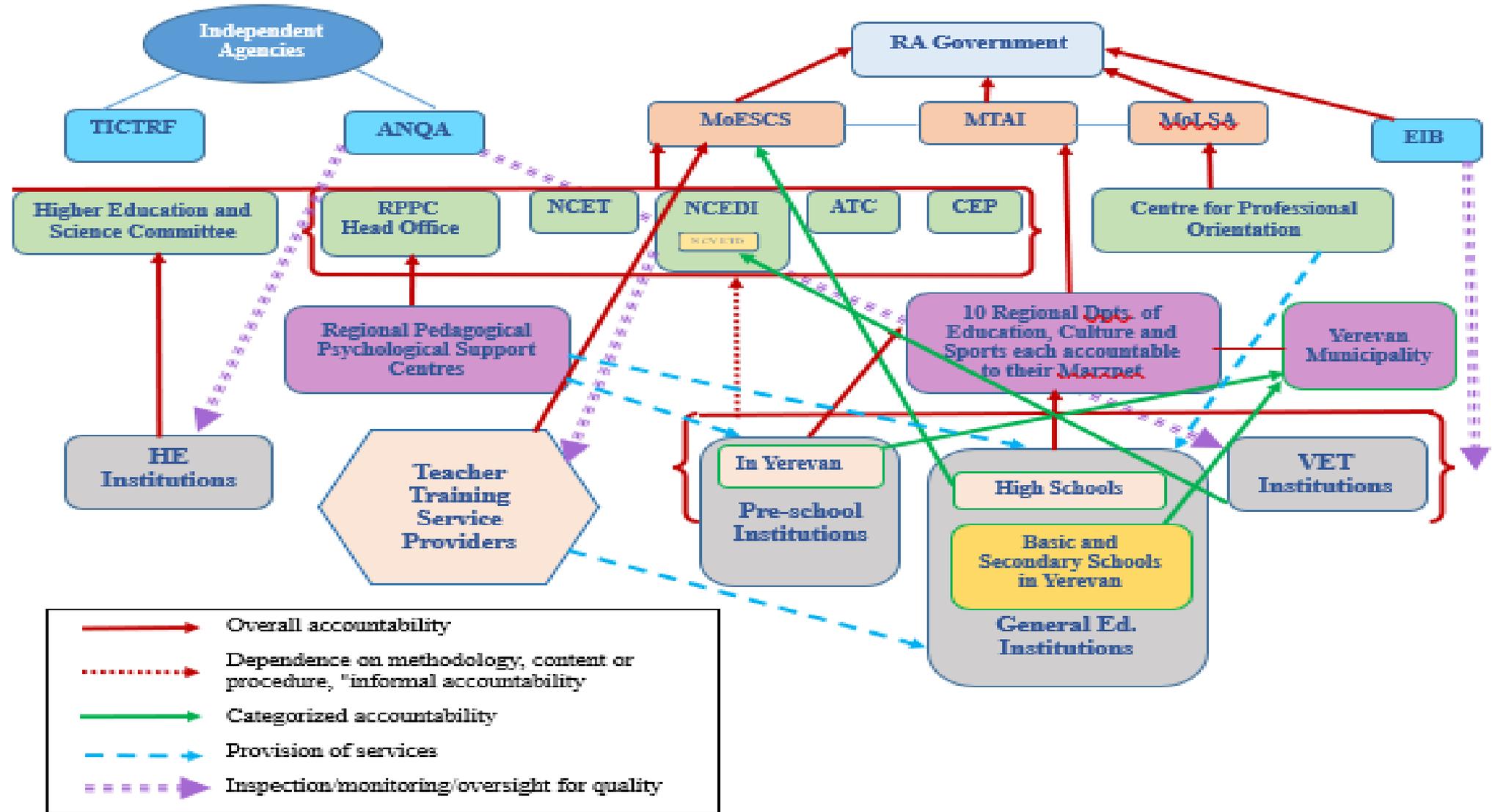
1. Responsibility, accountability, coordination

- Limited **autonomy** and (human) resources for regional education authorities
- Lack of **coordination** across agencies and joint **monitoring** frameworks, impacting effective policy implementation and monitoring
- Many new measures, demonstrating **remediation and adjustments efforts**. However, **inception time**, including for proper and timely **communication campaigns** to beneficiaries and implementing partners, and for piloting and evaluating new initiatives often insufficient.
- Challenging for beneficiaries to effectively locate legal documents and lack of skills to understand their hierarchy

2. Strategic vision and role of partners, incl. donors

- Strong MESCS leadership – Education strategy is the only national strategy passed at Parliament level (out of 150, and 8 approved in total)
- Commitment to modernization and alignment with European standards, supported by the EU
- Continued, **at times overlapping**, support from donors like the EU, UNICEF, Worldbank, USAID, bilateral agencies, and attention to effective governance reforms – but (over?) important attention

Governance analysis: Infographics of the Armenian Institutional setting



Governance analysis

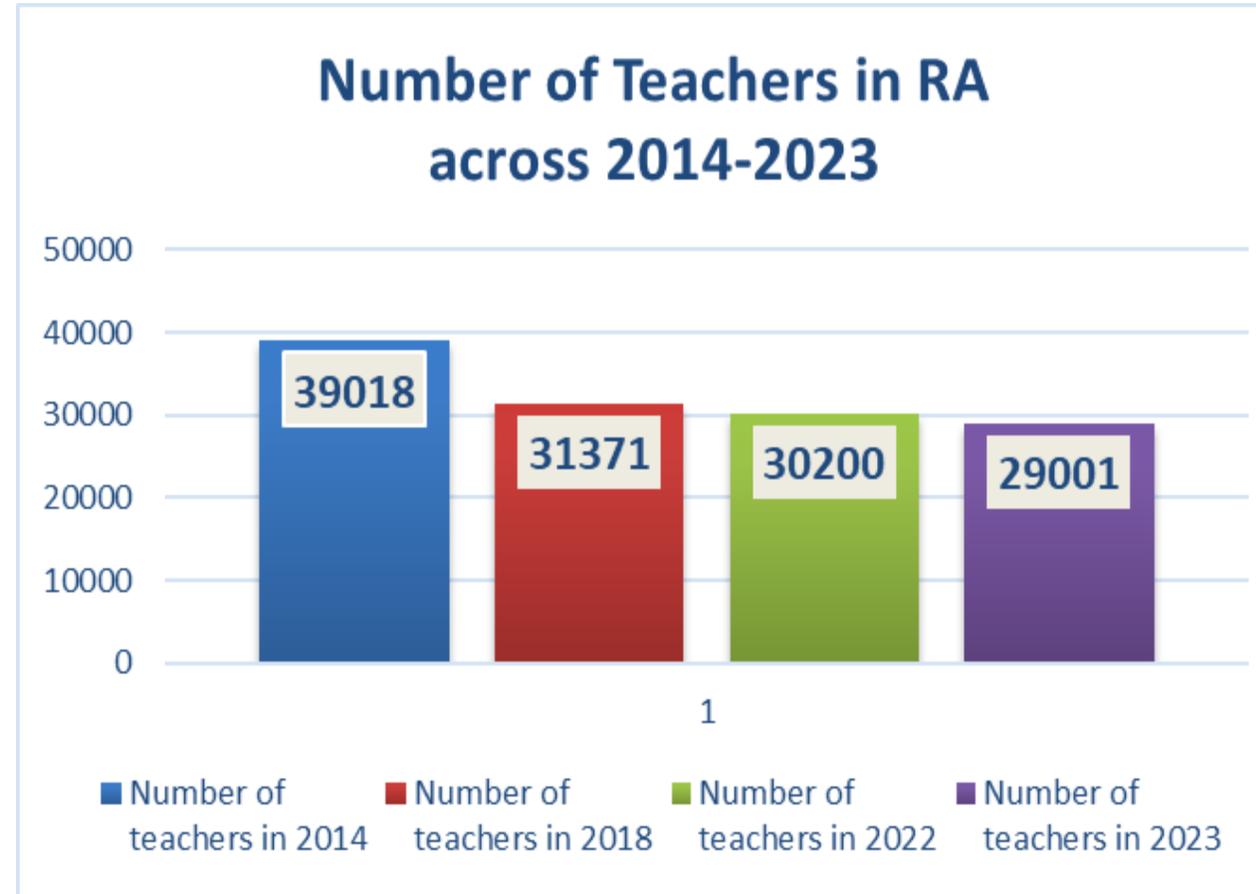
3. Management and implementation of priority/Flagship reforms: some points of vigilance

Management of Teaching Profession

- **Depletion issue:** In 10 years 10 000 teachers less in schools, with 30% of them in 2023 aged 55 and over.

VERSUS

- **high (increasing) requirements** to access the teaching profession (qualifications)



(Source ARMSTAT data)

Governance analysis

3. Management and implementation of priority/Flagship reforms

School Networks

- **232 "small-size" schools** continue being financed by "per student" formula
- Perspectives of Educational Complexes

New VET Law

- Work-based learning (WBL) introduced
- Dual education opportunities expanded
- Evidence-based articulation with the skill needs of the labour market to be clarified
- Issues with VET budget share and specializations' attractiveness persist

Academic City

- Lack of participatory and inclusive approach during the design phase
- Controversy and stakeholders' concerns over the feasibility of smooth implementation
- Uncertainty on regional universities and possible implications of the future territorial landscape of higher education

Governance analysis

4. Use of data along the policy cycle

Data collection gaps

- Teacher vacancies
- Enrollment rates per region
- Pre-school service providers
- No financial data/flows inserted in EMIS

Data Management and Usage Issues

- Despite customized access to EMIS data for stakeholders, overall better but still poor independent use
- No centralized responsibility for data; Data dispersed across agencies, and discrepancy of data among various agencies
- Public availability issue for transparent data-driven decision-making.

5. Institutional capacity

- **Resilience and preparedness of education institutions and schools**
- School Disaster Risks Management Plan submitted to Regional Rescue Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs: awareness and skill enforcement among staff, students and parents needs further

CHAPTER 2 PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOM. Area 1: Governance and Coordination of Reforms (1/2)

1.1. Strategic planning and reform monitoring

Objective: Enhance the effectiveness of the Action plan as a robust roadmap for the Education Programme 2030 implementation

Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adjust the template and the revision process of the action plan, to enable using this document as an operational document, useable for guiding reform implementation and supporting monitoring and evaluation of progress ✓ Add a chapter on the governance of the programme ✓ Create an on-line reporting tool and prepare a reporting template on the plan to fill-in and share at the annual joint sector reviews 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Organise participatory meetings of different and complementary nature around the action plan 	X	X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Formalise regular feedback loops with the stakeholders and beneficiaries 		X	

1.2. Institutional reinforcement

Objective: Optimise the institutional setting of the MoESCS and authorised bodies at central and sub-national levels

Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Explore room for manoeuvre and opportunities for relatively urgent improvements in the mandate or positioning of certain departments and executive bodies 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conduct a comprehensive organisational audit (or institutional review) of the MoESCS and the executive agencies, including the regional level 		X	

RECOM. Area 1: Governance and Coordination of Reforms (2/2)

1.3. Participatory governance of the system

Objective: Enhance the relevance and acceptability of education policy through a more participatory approach to policy making

Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adjust the deadlines of legally foreseen public consultations to allow sufficient time for useful contributions, and follow-up with sharing (anonymised) information on the feedback collected ✓ Organise an open discussion with representatives of the main stakeholders of the education system on the current mechanisms of policy dialogue and collect improvement suggestions in terms of channels, regularity and desired content for a two-way effective communication 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Set up a mechanism or an on-line tool to regularly collect lessons learned from the ground 		X	

RECOM. Area 2: Education Financing

2.1. Public financial management

Objective: Improve the efficiency of utilisation of public funds

Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
✓ Make an analysis of the previous years' underspending and in-year revisions of the budget	X		
✓ Enhance the capacity of relevant stakeholders to use the EMIS as the main basis for budget preparation and financial reporting (and update EMIS fields as needed)		X	

2.2. Education policy funding

Objective: : Improve linkage between education public policy and education budget

Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
✓ Improve the regulated collaboration between the Department for Strategic Planning and Monitoring, the Finance and Budget Department and the line departments within the MoESCS	X		
✓ Introduce a component of financial reporting into the framework of MoESCS reporting on the education strategy implementation			
✓ Ensure appropriate level of funds for deploying well facilitated pilots of new policies/measures and their proper evaluation		X	
✓ Ensure the sustainability of the results of small-scale policy pilots during their national scale up			

Objective: Expand and diversify the funding sources for the public education system, including through promoting diaspora, private companies' contributions and school income generating activities

Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
✓ Promote private sector contribution	X		
✓ Review the legislation for school income generating activities		X	
✓ Create Incentives for Diaspora Contributions			
✓ Create a transparent, government-endorsed "Diaspora Education Fund"			X

RECOM. Area 3: Use Of Statistical And Legal Data For Effective Steering of the Education System

3.1. Data management

Objective: Ensure a comprehensive, genuinely data-driven design and implementation of education policy

Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establish an exhaustive list of missing or redundant data (incl. financing data) in EMIS, relating them to their expected use ✓ Make a review the whole education data cycle process from collection to use 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Design a capacity building plan for the various actors on data, seek resources and implement it 		X	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Facilitate the stakeholders' and beneficiaries' "legal literacy" on the education system by developing and updating a user-friendly public storage of the legal documents on the MoESCS website, including a search engine by keywords 		X	

RECOM. Per Chapter of the Education Plan

Preschool Education			
<i>Objective: Increase pre-school offer, especially in rural areas by proposing alternative management models for pre-school institutions</i>			
Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
✓ Different models of pre-school management	Develop in March 2025 – March 2026	Pilot in Sept 2026	
<i>Objective: Use pre-school potential to (contribute to) levelling inequalities by prioritising access to vulnerable children</i>			
Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Discuss, define and publish transparent selection criteria related to the vulnerability of children ✓ Make some waiting lists in each school ✓ Adjust EMIS fields 	Apply in Sept 2025		
General Education			
<i>Objective: Increase efficiency of the schools network</i>			
Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
✓ Optimise the use of premises by combining the different education offers or streamlining the number of buildings in use			X
Vocational Education and Training			
<i>Objective: Improve the vocational education and planning offer in relevance to quantitative and qualitative labour market skill needs</i>			
Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
✓ Evaluate the current functionality of the sectorial committees and explore the possibility of transforming them into more active Sector Skill Councils	X		
✓ Adjust the norms for places by specialty		X	
✓ Tracer studies		X	X

RECOM. Per Chapter of the Education Plan

Non-formal Education			
<i>Objective: Formalise the articulation of NFE with the formal education system</i>			
Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop a national framework of standards, learning outcomes and credits for non-formal educational activities in alignment with the formal learning ✓ Explore shared use of premises 		X	
Diaspora			
<i>Objective: Expand the funding sources for the public education system by establishing mechanisms to channel diaspora remittances directly into educational initiatives (add a dimension of mobilisation to the strategic approach of diaspora)</i>			
Action	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create Incentives for Diaspora Contributions ✓ Explore relevance and options of creating a transparent, government-endorsed "Diaspora Education Fund" 		X	X

SESSION 2 – DISCUSSION TIME BY TABLE

1. PRIORITY SETTING Which of the RED findings do you find most important to act upon? 10'

> Select 1 per table for further discussion

2. ENRICHING THE ANALYSIS: Is this finding sufficiently documented/well captured? If not, what information /data (based on your perspective) would you like to add?

3. CO-CREATING RECOMMENDATIONS:

1/ OPERATIONALISING PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS / Do you think the recommendation(s) proposed to respond to this issue are appropriate? What would be your advice to operationalise them further? Please focus on :

WHO should lead / who should be involved

WHAT tasks should come first

PRE_REQUISITS to be met

2/ SUGGESTING ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS Did RED miss any important recommendation, as concrete as possible, that you would like to suggest for the final report ?

Next steps towards RED finalisation

By 15 February 2025:

> Comments and suggestions on the RED draft report to be sent to ETF: vita.Glushko.ext@etf.Europa.eu

By end March

> Final RED report ready for translation and publication

> Further dissemination opportunities (on-line platforms and/or events/meetings) to be identified by MoESCS