

RIGHT TO EDUCATION & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT;

South Asian Perspectives

September 16-17, 2014 - Pearl Continental Hotel Karachi, Pakistan



Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) **Karachi Consensus Statement**

17th, September 2014

The **ECED Karachi Consensus Statement, September 2014** is an outcome document coordinated by eminent ECCE/ECED leaders¹ and 200 diverse stakeholders.

It was Adopted by the Senior Minister Education Mr. Nisar Ahmed Khuro, Government of Sindh, the Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) Education Government of Sindh Dr. Fazal Ullah Pechuho and all participants of the regional conference on September 17, 2014.

The Karachi Consensus Statement may be translated and widely distributed locally, nationally, regionally and globally to advocate its comprehensive recommendations and actions

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ECED Karachi Consensus Statement

Sept. 17. 2014

Introduction: The Education and Literacy Department (E&LD), Reform Support Unit (RSU) Government of Sindh Pakistan, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi(ITA) and the South Asia Forum for Education Development (SAFED) in collaboration with its development partners (Open Society Foundations-FOSI-Pakistan; Dubai Cares; UK AID and Oxfam GB) convened the regional conference on ***the Right to Education & Early Childhood Education and Development; Foundation for Quality Learning-Evidence from South Asia***- in Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan from September 16-17, 2014. The conference was attended by 200 senior government officers from across Pakistan, practitioners, policy makers, academics, civil society organizations and development partners from Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and Nepal

The objectives of the conference were to:

- Upgrade the ECE/ECED profile in education initiatives - policy, curriculum, standards, care, teacher education, assessment and research and innovation as part of the right to education movement in Pakistan and South Asia;
- Underscore ECE/ECED's critical positioning as a cross cutting multi-sectorial goal to meet several indicators in the Post 2015 Development Agenda (Child and Maternal Health/Food security/Poverty/Education/Gender Equality/Inclusive Cities etc.) and
- Create a South Asia Learning and Research Platform for ECE/ECCE/ECED supported by SAFED, ARNEC, CECED, UNICEF, UNESCO & Other Stakeholders to enable collaboration across borders

Recognizing, ECE/ECCE/ECED² as a comprehensive learning and multi-sectoral agenda for all children (0-8 years) within diverse contexts and multiple models of ECED in South Asia, acknowledging, its uneven presence in RTE laws, budgets and policies; the, **ECED Karachi Consensus Statement September 17, 2014** covers 09 key principles, 48 recommendations and actions for five key thematic areas that must be considered by each South Asian government, stakeholders, and the UN General Assembly (UNGA)'s 69th Session- September 16 to 26, 2014 to improve the capabilities of young children, reduce inequalities, and promote inclusive social and economic development in South Asia.

There are Nine Proposed Guiding Principles for the ECED Karachi Consensus Statement:

1. ECED be envisaged as an integrated approach to facilitate the holistic development of children aged 0-8 through health, nutrition, education, care and community support.
2. Universal coverage of ECED founded on a rights based approach
3. Embedded in equity and inclusion
4. Customized to national and sub-national contexts responsive to diversity and gender
5. Encourage and test models of ECED in South Asia for effectiveness and scalability
6. Backed by innovative approaches and innovative financing
7. Monitored by robust data for accountability and evidence
8. Supported by partnerships with public, private sector, academia and civil society
9. Linkages of ECED with all SDGs be pursued for bundled approaches and optimum gains

² Early Childhood Education (ECE) is restricted to learning readiness for 3-5/8. whilst Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and Early Childhood Education Development (ECED) are terminologies covering 0-8 age group comprehensively.

Key Actions/Recommendations (42) for the five thematic areas are

1. ECED- Policy and Right To Education (RTE)

- 1.1. Amendments to the RTE laws be made to include the ECED age group
- 1.2. A specialized cadre of teachers/care givers must be created with appropriate pay scales and qualifications specified
- 1.3. A common policy inclusive of fundamental principles of ECED to be developed for age group 0-8 or 3-8 according to developmentally appropriate practices
- 1.4. For holistic integrated ECED, inter-sectoral government coordination must be ensured
- 1.5. Budget for education must be enhanced to 4-6% of GDP ensuring consistent ECED allocation through schools, institutional and community based programs
- 1.6. Mother tongue must be encouraged for ECED age groups where appropriate with second/third languages support through appropriate content and trained personnel
- 1.7. Adequate attention to marginalized/disadvantaged groups (living in extreme poverty, remote areas, minorities and indigenous communities, children with disabilities, children in conflicts, displacement and disaster situations, etc).
- 1.8. A comprehensive communication strategy be developed to reach all stakeholders
- 1.9. Under the proposed EFA target No. 1 (Muscat Agreement), “at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education” must be changed from “at least one year to one to five years” as many countries already practicing an expanded ECED program
- 1.10. For the proposed OWG/SDGs Goal No. 4, target 4.2 on ECED must be shifted as target 4.1 for sequence, progression and linkage with primary and secondary education
- 1.11. Monitoring and evaluation of ECCD policy, programs and models must be based on clear definitions, standards, indicators and measures for quality programming, accreditation and implementation regulated by public and private representatives.
- 1.12. Public funding for ECED must support economic constraints of marginalized groups through social safety nets
- 1.13. Form a South Asian ECED network – of thinkers, practitioners and activists linked to other regional and global networks

2. ECED Curriculum and Standards

- 2.1. The ECE and Primary Curriculum be reviewed for systemic linkages, ensuring it is developmentally appropriate, contextually relevant and culturally sensitive.
- 2.2. Determine quality standards such as child/teacher ratio, number of hours of care/ schooling for different age groups, curriculum standards and benchmarks at ages 3, 8 and 10 for all broad domains: cognitive; socio-emotional; moral/spiritual and physical as well as parenting and community involvement, teaching/ learning approaches, care and coordination among multiple actors/departments.
- 2.3. Holistic learning and development, outcome standards (e.g. early learning and development outcome standards, EAP-ECD Scales) must be contextualized and aligned with existing policies and curricular standards and benchmarks.

- 2.4. Remedial decentralized support be extended where standards are not met
- 2.5. A variety of developmentally appropriate teaching/learning materials based on from the learning outcomes related to all domains should be ensured in all ECED centres.
- 2.6. Ensure timely dissemination and access of curriculum, resource guides and teaching learning materials in relevant languages to stakeholders (teachers, head teachers, parents, care givers, education and monitoring institutions)
- 2.7. A review after every 3 years of the ECE/ECED curriculum to be conducted based on research evidence.

3. ECED - Teacher Preparation

- 3.1. All pre service and in service teachers/care giver education programs should prepare teachers to meet the ECED Curriculum and Care standards**
- 3.2. Only qualified teachers (2 years and/or ideally 4 years of professional development- through flexi programs following higher secondary education Gr XII), care givers and heads having qualifications in ECED should be appointed.
- 3.3. A separate cadre and career ladder with specific qualification for ECED teachers and care givers be developed within the public services framework with minimum pay scales for providers from all sectors (public and private)
- 3.4. A Teacher-Education curriculum be designed for ECED teachers and care givers which prepares them to meet the professional development standards.
- 3.5. ECED Centres and Classrooms should have minimum learning materials, safe standards and be provided with recurring budgets for meeting continuous needs.
- 3.6. A monitoring and mentoring mechanism for ECED teachers be developed to ensure curriculum standards are being met and professional support is present.
- 3.7. Career promotions of ECED teachers/caregivers be based on qualifications and performance reviews
- 3.8. A portal must be developed to share best practices/ teaching and learning materials from the region for caregivers/ parents/ ECED teachers with maximum e -access; CDs, Television, mobile phones etc.

4. ECED Assessment and Research

- 4.1. Integrated, multi-disciplinary research on ECED should be encouraged to demonstrate links with multiple sectors and effects on individuals, the community and society in all sectors and economic growth.
- 4.2. Competencies given in the National curricula to be used as the framework for research on learning and assessment benchmarked for different age groups.
- 4.3. Relevant, valid and reliable data, especially for vulnerable groups must be generated with greater harmony among data from different sectors and/or organizations.
- 4.4. Clear, standardized, age-appropriate outcome indicators and measures along with relevant assessment tools and mechanisms must be developed to address all ECED domains (as mentioned above).
- 4.5. Assessment frameworks must be formative and not labelling and stigmatizing undertaken throughout the year, through child-centered approaches such as checklists, observations, anecdotal records and portfolios.

- 4.6. ECED assessment and research forums and networking to be encouraged in each country and across the region.
- 4.7. Budgets to be ensured for assessment and research (action/longitudinal studies).
- 4.8. All research and assessment findings must be disseminated to stakeholders to inform policy and practice.

5. ECED - Innovations

- 5.1. Current and emerging research on brain development, learning, care, parenting, mother tongue, multi-grade teaching and ICTs should be utilized to develop innovative pedagogies for incubation, evidence and up scaling ECED models.
- 5.2. Innovations must be encouraged in holistic development, learning outcomes and assessment to nurture non-cognitive skills, global citizenship and lifelong learning.
- 5.3. A paradigm shift is needed for learning in ECED classrooms through meaningful human and materials interactions, away from text based approaches
- 5.4. Basic needs of the child; nutrition, care, rest, play, cleanliness and active learning are of prime consideration as are innovative schedules for daily activities.
- 5.5. Learning pedagogy from ECCE/ECED transitions up to primary and not vice-versa.
- 5.6. Innovations in service delivery must be introduced to reach the most marginalised groups and communities as specified in 1.7
- 5.7. Mitigate resources for extra teachers required in supervising achievement of developmental milestones, by soliciting help of family and community members.
- 5.8. Allow for the development of innovative models of ECCE/ECED as per the requirements and resources of local communities and not one size fits all approach
- 5.9. Innovative financing models must be devised and promoted to ensure greater access and effective programming for ECED through inter-departmental and public private partnerships, matching grant models, community financing and subsidies.
- 5.10. Establishing and/or expanding new and existing portals and development forums for learning and sharing ECED innovations in South Asia and other regions globally.
- 5.11. Undertaking field visits to successful ECCE programs for spreading innovations.
- 5.12. Commission research on innovations and share through seminars/conferences, workshops/documentation to disseminate good practices and to learning.

Annex: 1

Reference Texts Muscat Agreement Targets 1 and 2 /SDGs OWG Targets 4.1 4.2 : Education For All & Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

Muscat Agreement	SDG Targets (Basic Education)
Target 1: By 2013, at least X% girls and boys are ready for primary school through participation in early childhood education care and education, including at least one year of free and compulsory pre-primary education, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized; Target 2: By 2013, all girls and boys complete free and compulsory quality basic education of at least 9 years and achieve relevant learning outcomes, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized.	Target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. Target 4.2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

Annex 2:

Group Themes & Coordinators

1. Policy & Right to Education Status on ECED;

Moderator: Dr. Mohammad Memon AKU-IED

2. Curriculum and Standards;

Moderator: Dr. Audrey Juma- Notre Dame Institute of Education (NDIE) and Rana Hussain - Education Expert Sindh Education Sector Support Program (SESSP)

3. Teacher Preparation (Pre & In-service);

Moderator: Dr. Bernadette Dean - Director VM Institute of Education (VMIE)

4. Research and Assessment;

Moderator: Dr. Ghazala Rafique, Aga Khan University - Human Development Program (AKU-HDP) - ARNEC

5. Innovations: Access, parenting & materials

Moderator: Dr. Shanta Dixit - CEO - Rato Bangla Foundation (RBF)

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