

An Overview of Early Childhood Care and Education in Pakistan

(An Initial Survey and Situational Analysis)

**Prepared by Sofia Shakil, Consultant
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I. Introduction and Background

1. Brief Overview/Background

- 1.1 The Aga Khan Foundation, in partnership with and support from USAID, is embarking on a pilot initiative in the area of Early Childhood Education (ECE). “*Releasing Confidence and Creativity: Building Sound Foundations for Early Learning in Pakistan*” (RCC)¹ is a project designed to improve basic education through qualitative reforms and increased participation in targeted geographical areas of Balochistan and Sindh provinces. Through this project, AKF aims to help the Government of Pakistan (GoP) test and implement innovative activities at the pre-primary and early primary level in clusters of public schools, to strengthen the management and administration of public education in the targeted districts, and to support operational research and a policy dialogue with federal, provincial, district and local education officials to encourage demand-driven and sustainable reform and practice in the public school system. Working in collaboration with partners, AKF aims to contribute towards building the foundations for strong early childhood learning in Pakistan.
- 1.2 The five main components of RCC include: a) human and institutional capacity development (with a focus on developing ECE curriculum, materials; teacher, school head and administration development; capacity strengthening of NGOs, parents, communities; resource centers); b) improving the physical and learning environment; c) community-level interventions (including training of school management committees, PTAs; awareness raising, etc.); d) training for local government, especially union and village councils, Citizen Community Boards to enhance their accountability and the effectiveness of community outreach; and, e) learning and dissemination of lessons and policy dialogue for education reform in the area of ECE. These will all be implemented in the mainstream public sector, with collaboration of NGO and other local partners, by piloting innovative initiatives that can later be taken to scale for wider implementation by the public sector.
- 1.3 This effort of AKF coincides with the GoP’s commitment to the Education for All (EFA) agenda that places importance on ECE, as a result of which *katchi* class has now formally been recognized and is being institutionalized in the public system. The GoP has also included ECE as one of its main components under the Ministry of Education-led Education Sector Reforms (ESR), which gives RCC an opportunity to make an entry into supporting these GoP efforts.
- 1.4 One of the preparatory activities in the early stages of the program is to conduct a national review of ECE in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding about

¹ RCC is being supported by a USAID Basic Education Grant, from September 2001 – September 2003, with a total budget of about US\$ 1.8 million over the two-year period. The program is being managed by AKF (Pakistan) and AKF USA, and the main implementing agency is AKF (P) with partners that may include other technical agencies such as the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan, the Institute for Educational Development at the Aga Khan University, and others including NGOs and Government partners.

the situation of ECE provision and programs in Pakistan to better inform the AKF for the design and implementation of the RCC. This study has been commissioned to undertake an initial mapping exercise of the “state of play” for work in the area of ECE, including an examination of major initiatives and programs being implemented with various donor and public support (including the practice in the public sector), and a review of the resources and materials available, and methodologies and approaches being used for ECE.

2. Objectives of Study

2.1 The overall objectives of this study are:

- to describe broadly the current provision of and support for ECE in Pakistan;
- to highlight areas of opportunities, gaps and challenges; and,
- to make recommendations for addressing the opportunities and gaps in the next two to three years to further enhance the provision of ECE in Pakistan.

2.2 In particular, the study aims to inform AKF and its partners about the contextual background of the environment for ECE in Pakistan and to provide AKF solid recommendations and suggestions for possible interventions that it can make both in the immediate scope of the RCC project, and also for a longer-term role that AKF can play in helping shape the development of the ECE sector in Pakistan.

3. Scope of Study, Methodology & Limitations

3.1 Scope of Study. The review of the provision of and support for ECE in Pakistan is based on an examination of several major programs and initiatives being implemented or supported, both in the private and public sector by donor agencies, NGOs, and the GoP itself. The initiatives studied include various programs being supported by UNICEF in the area of Early Childhood Care for Development (ECCD); ECE programs being implemented by NGOs such as the Aga Khan Education Service (AKES,P), Teachers’ Resource Center and Plan International, and others being developed by Save the Children UK (SCF-UK) and the Institute for Educational Development (IED) at the Aga Khan University; and the efforts to promote ECE in the public sector, including the *katchi* class materials development at the Primary Education Project-Improved Learning Environment (PEP-ILE) supported by GTZ in the NWFP. In addition to these specific initiatives, the overall programs being implemented and initiatives being planned under the leadership of the MOE, including the implementation and practice of ECE in *katchi* classes in the public sector were also reviewed.

3.2 Methodology. The study has been undertaken in two parts: the first being a mapping of ECE provision in Pakistan, and the second being observations of ECE/*katchi* class in practice. The mapping exercise is based on a general literature and statistics review and analysis, and consultations with institutions and programs involved in ECE provision. Major reports and documents relating to international practice and research in ECE, program documents of agencies working in Pakistan, and policy

reports and documents of the GoP were reviewed.² Additionally, data based on the MOE's reports for EFA (which itself is based on several different data sources, including the National Education Management Information System and the Population Census Organization data) were used as the standard reference for indicators used for the purposes of this paper. The consultations with organizations and programs involved in the provision of ECE also informed the mapping exercise, and included detailed discussions with relevant program staff on their ECE/ECCD interventions, the approaches and methodologies used, the materials (if any) developed and being used, their partners and beneficiaries.³ A field visit to one of the communities where ECCD training was imparted by MOSW with UNICEF support was also undertaken. Together, the literature and statistics review, and the institutional consultations provided a basis for completing the mapping exercise.

- 3.3 Visits to select schools in NWFP, Punjab, Islamabad Capital Territory, and Balochistan were undertaken to observe ECE practice in *katchi* class and early primary.⁴ Additionally, the consultant gained familiarity with work in Sindh through visits to agencies implementing ECE programs and also to a district in connection with some other work. The observations and school- and district-level discussions provided an added dimension to the mapping exercise as it not only gave insight into the conditions at the classroom level and a better understanding about what exactly is being “taught” at the pre-primary and early primary levels, but also provided a peak into the window of opportunity that exists for bringing improvements in the delivery of pre-primary and early primary education in Pakistan.
- 3.4 Limitations. Effort has been made to be as comprehensive as possible in the review of institutions and programs engaged in provision of ECE in Pakistan. However, it should be noted that as the provision of ECE is “piecemeal” and spread out over a wide landscape, and as there has not been an effort to coordinate actively among implementing agencies, this study has undoubtedly not covered all the provision that is taking place (particularly in the NGO and private sector). Only those major programs that are better known in their interventions and support for ECE have been included in the review. A further limitation to note is that documentation of some of the programs (such as the UNICEF interventions) was not readily available as the pilots and projects are still being implemented and have not been documented for public distribution, and in some cases documentation was generally weak at the institutional level. Further, the analysis of classroom practice in *katchi* and early primary is based on a small sample of observations at the school level in various districts and provinces. However, effort there even has been made to select districts that would have varying conditions, allowing for the sample to be generally representative of the overall situation of *katchi* and early primary class practice in Pakistan.
- 3.5 Given these limitations, and also with the caveat that ECE in Pakistan is not yet a fully mature and developed nor fully understood sector, effort has been made to be present an overall situation analysis of the current provision of and support for ECE

² A complete list of documents reviewed is contained in Annex III.

³ A list of all institutions (and individuals) consulted is contained in Annex II.

⁴ Please see the table summarizing observations of the school visits in Section II of this paper.

in Pakistan. This analysis is based on a mapping exercise, whose findings are detailed below in Section II, and on observations at the classroom level, and it seeks to identify gaps and opportunities based upon which concrete recommendations are made for AKF's work as it develops in the ECE sector in Pakistan.

4. ECCD/ECE Scope and Definition

- 4.1 The early years of a child's life provide the foundation for the development of life-long skills and all subsequent learning. International experience now suggests that interventions in the early childhood provide a unique opportunity to avoid future learning problems, including reducing drop-outs in later primary school years, in addition to benefiting the family and society. Several studies have been carried out that scientifically demonstrate the benefits and returns of investment in early childhood development programs. For example, many studies have shown how there is less repetition and better progress towards completion of primary schooling for those children who had participated in an early childhood program. Similarly, among other studies that have reported on academic performance, several have indicated better performance by children who had participated in early childhood programs.⁵ Studies, as well as prevalent project experience, have also established that early childhood interventions that aim to bring about better nutrition and health also contribute towards greater cognitive and intellectual development, which also leads to not only better performance but higher retention rates in primary school. It is believed that children with "consistent, caring attention are better nourished, less apt to be sick, and learn better than children who do not received such care."⁶
- 4.2 Although the field of Early Childhood Care for Development (ECCD), of which ECE is a component, is a relatively new and emerging sector, it is gaining recognition among many policy makers for being an essential cornerstone of development planning and programming largely because of the types of benefits it reaps as mentioned above. The accepted definition of ECCD includes pre-natal development to the age of eight, and programming in ECCD is usually divided into stages that start at birth to about three years of age (0-3) where interventions generally include perinatal programs, child health and nutrition programs, and community-oriented programs aimed at parents and other care providers; the pre-primary years (3-5) where interventions are aimed at pre-primary schooling programs (ECE) as well as community motivation initiatives; the early primary school years (5 or 6, depending on the area-specific context, to about 8) where the focus is on programs that creating

⁵ Without going into the technical details of the various types of studies conducted, it is being noted that a wealth of research, both scientific and studies based on project experience, has been carried out globally on the benefits of and rationale for investing in early childhood programs. These include studies such as a review of nineteen longitudinal evaluations of the effect of early intervention in Latin America by Robert Myers, and other research of his in the 1980s and early 1990s; the Carnegie Task Force's findings on meeting the needs of young children in 1994; project experience based on a variety of early childhood programs in Colombia, Turkey, India and other developing countries; and numerous other very valuable pieces of research that have been carried out in the area of early childhood development. Although it was beyond the scope of this paper to review the findings of international research in this area, a good source that summarizes much of this work and that has been consulted for this paper is Mary Eming Young's *Early Child Development: Investing in the Future*.

⁶ From ECCD Briefs in CD ROM for *Early Childhood Counts* (Evans & Myers).

and improving the learning environment so that children acquire basic life skills enabling them to not only complete their early schooling but to pursue it beyond. Some agencies and initiatives are stretching the horizon of ECCD programming to include adolescent youth programming and more sophisticated community-oriented programs.

- 4.3 In the context of Pakistan, ECCD programs are being implemented for the 0 – 3-age group (by, for example, UNICEF-supported initiatives, and those by other agencies working in the health and nutrition sector), and other initiatives are also being experimented with. However, in the case of early childhood learning, the definition and scope of ECE is generally limited to the concept of *katchi* (pre-primary) class in the formal school environment. The understanding of the ECE sector has been shaped by the notion that a focus on ECE means a stepped up effort to improve the learning environment at the pre-primary class level. Although much remains to be done even within the confines of the classroom, the concept of ECE in Pakistan is slowly being extended to and tested in settings outside the *katchi* and early primary classes, with some NGOs implementing community-based learning centers and other similar initiatives. Because of the emerging and experimental nature of ECE interventions in Pakistan, there is much room for helping shape the definition and scope of the ECE sector in Pakistan.

II. Overview of ECE in Pakistan

This section describes the current provision of and support for ECE in Pakistan by first giving a summary of the general policy environment (including Government policy and practice), and a brief synopsis of the trends in indicators and data. An overview of the programs being implemented in ECE follows, and is then concluded with a description of the trends in *katchi* and early primary class based on classroom observations.

5. Policy Environment for ECE in Pakistan

- 5.1 Historical Treatment of ECE/*Katchi* in Pakistan. The concept and understanding of early childhood education has been largely confined to *katchi* class (and *pukki*, or Class 1). Although the Government announced last year the policy to “formalize” *katchi* and introduce an ECE curriculum starting from the 2002 school year⁷, in practice, *katchi* class has existed since the beginning of the public school system in Pakistan. Traditionally, the “informal” *katchi* class that has existed has catered to children as young as 3 and 4 of age, but also has been used by the primary school teachers to place children of 5 or 6 years of age that appear to not be ready for a proper Class 1 curriculum (so in most cases, one would find children from ages 3 all the way up to 5 or 6 in a typical *katchi* class). Although *katchi* class has existed in

⁷ The 2002 school year began in April 2002, and it is the aim of the Ministry to implement the new policy starting this year. The Ministry sees the formal *katchi* class as a pre-primary class for 3 – 5 year olds with a curriculum that is specifically designed to address the needs of this age group, and teachers that are trained to deliver this curriculum.

practice, the curriculum taught to the pre-Class 1 children has not been designed keeping in mind the special needs of that age group, nor has adequate research and development taken place to appropriately reflect the developmental needs at that stage. Teachers for *katchi* class specifically have also not existed, as one of the primary school teachers (usually the one teaching Class 1 and 2) provides oversight of the *katchi* class (see also footnote number 16 for further discussion on this).

- 5.2 The Government policy to “formalize” *katchi* has emerged in response to the overwhelming existence of the pre-primary school aged children in schools, and is a result of the recognition by the public sector leadership that while dismal conditions exist at the pre-primary level in public schools, the very fact of the prevalence of this informal *katchi* shows a demand for early learning. This public sector leadership also recognizes the prevalence of *katchi* class as a potential springboard for introducing a formal curriculum and learning environment. There is commitment at the senior level in the Ministry of Education (starting with the Minister herself who is very much committed to ECE), and within the technical wings of the Ministry towards the importance of ECE. At the provincial level, although the sense of priorities is based on a need to balance available resources with greatest need (for inputs such as physical infrastructure, investing in middle and higher schools, etc.) with variation across the provinces, most officials do recognize the importance of formalizing *katchi*. And most officials, whether at the senior Ministry level or at the district level, realize that any verbal or policy commitment is not effective unless it is backed by financial commitment. In the context of EFA and ESR (as discussed below), the Government has committed financial resources to back its formalization policy, and has taken steps towards implementing it.⁸
- 5.3 EFA Context. In agreement with the Dakar Framework of Action, agreed to by Pakistan along with 183 other countries in April 2000, the MOE has prepared a National Plan of Action (NPA) for EFA (2000-15) in 2001 that it presented at the Ministerial Meeting in Beijing last year. The NPA reflects the targets, strategies, programs and actions that Pakistan commits to undertake to promote literacy and basic education in Pakistan. Of the six goals of EFA, the first is the commitment to expand facilities for pre-school and preparatory or early childhood care and education.⁹ According to the EFA’s definition adapted by the MOE, ECCE “prepares a child for formal education in his/her early years in such a way that he/she finds learning a joyful act and acquires basic skills and attitudes which facilitate later school education.” The MOE acknowledges that there is no formal provision for ECE in Pakistan, and that the NPA aims to institutionalize and formalize *katchi* class and further expand ECCE facilities for the *katchi* class. Beyond recognition of *katchi* class, the NPA calls for provision of an additional room (if needed) and a teacher for the *katchi* class in each school¹⁰; activity-based textbook and other learning material; teaching kit and audio-visual aids for ECE.

⁸ The Curriculum Wing of the MOE is already working closely with TRC to develop a curriculum and identify training needs for implementing this across the provinces and areas starting this school year.

⁹ The six goals of EFA include: ECCE; Free and Compulsory Primary Education; Learning Needs of Young and Adults; Adult Literacy; Gender Disparity; and Quality Education.

¹⁰ Given the prevalent bans on new recruitment, it is most likely that these teachers will be hired on contract basis.

Table 1: ECCE Targets & Projections under EFA

	Phase I (2001-02 to 2005-06)	Phase II (2006-07 to 2010-11)	Phase III (2011-12 to 2015-16)
ECCE Centers	11,200	11,300	20,000
Additional Enrollment	400,000	450,000	800,000
ECCE Teachers	13,450	13,550	24,000

Source: EFA, MOE

5.4 Education Sector Reforms. The ESR¹¹ is a three-year action plan that is designed to close the gap in imbalances in service delivery, ranging from early childhood to the tertiary level. The major thrust areas of the ESR include: adult literacy; universalizing primary education/Education for All; revamping of science education; introduction of technical stream; quality assurance and higher education; innovative programs (including early childhood education, public-private partnership initiatives); and rehabilitation of elementary education. Its preparation has been led by the MOE but is based on extensive consultations with the provinces and other stakeholders such as the Ministries of Finance, Health, Women's Development, Science & Technology, etc. The ESR supports the provincial education programs by providing additional development funds (beyond the provincial resources) to the districts through the provinces (for which the districts are responsible for identifying and developing proposals (PC-1s) for approval and implementation at the district level). Out of the total ESR budget of Rs. 3,574 million for the current year (FY 2001-02), Rs. 74 million has been earmarked for Innovative Programs.¹² Given that the majority of the ESR funds are designated to support the rehabilitation of elementary education, only about 2% of the total funds are available currently for ECE initiatives. It should be noted, however, that ESR is an additionality to the provincial resources and beyond providing funds, it helps to set a policy and priority framework. The fact that ECE has been specified in the ESR should be seen as a positive opportunity to be taken advantage of.

5.6 Donor Involvement and Support for ECE/ECCD. Apart from the support committed by USAID to AKF for the RCC project, and the on-going country program work of UNICEF, there is very little other donor support for specific ECE/ECCD programs. Discussions with some representatives of donor agencies and a review of their evolving country programs reveals that education is certainly the number one priority for most of the bilateral (such as DFID, EC, Japan) and multi-lateral donors, however this support is targeted more broadly at primary and elementary education (ADB, DFID, World Bank, EC), with increasing attention being paid towards supporting secondary, higher, and technical education (Japan and others). Donors, including private foundations, are supporting initiatives in ECCD for health and nutrition (especially child survival) programs¹³, however these are confined to the health sector largely and are not being integrated into early education programming.

¹¹ *Education Sector Reforms Action Plan 2001-2004*, Ministry of Education.

¹² An additional Rs. 860 million has been allocated for rehabilitation schemes this year through the President's Program (a fund for education supported by additional donor grants secured for education in the post 9/11 scenario). The President's Program is being implemented alongside the ESR.

¹³ For example, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is supporting the Saving Newborn Lives Initiative being implemented by Save the Children (USA).

5.6 Despite the lack of articulation of donor support specifically for early childhood education, the GoP has made it easier for donors to easily target areas they want to support by identifying different priority sub-sectors within the goals of the EFA and the ESR framework. Both opportunity and room exists for agency such as AKF to work within these frameworks and priority areas of the GoP to expand programming in the ECE sector. (See Sections III & IV below).

6. Trends, Data

6.1 EFA data based on EMIS and the Population Census Organization (1998) shows that out of the official population of 8.6 million of the 3 – 5 year age group, only 734,455 children of that age are enrolled in school – a GER of only 8.5. This situation is most severe for girls in Sindh, where the GER is 1.9 for this age group. Table 2 below captures this trend for all of Pakistan for girls and boys.

Table 2: Gross enrolment ratio in early childhood development programs

		Enrolment	Official age-group ²	GER	Gender Parity
		Total	Population (or 3-5 years)	Gross Enrolment Ratio)	Index
NATIONAL	TOTAL (MF)	734,455	8,607,912	8.5	0.5
	Male (M)	501,244	4,401,369	11.4	
	Female (F)	233,211	4,206,543	5.5	
Punjab	TOTAL (MF)	444,345	4,508,257	9.9	0.4
	Male (M)	325,891	2,303,229	14.1	
	Female (F)	118,454	2,205,028	5.4	
Sindh	TOTAL (MF)	54,320	2,041,522	2.7	0.6
	Male (M)	35,407	1,049,544	3.4	
	Female (F)	18,913	991,978	1.9	
NWFP	TOTAL (MF)	124,449	1,254,274	9.9	1.3
	Male (M)	54,871	639,671	8.6	
	Female (F)	69,578	614,603	11.3	
Balochistan	TOTAL (MF)	21,605	490,109	4.4	0.8
	Male (M)	12,015	252,480	4.8	
	Female (F)	9,590	237,629	4.0	
FATA	TOTAL (MF)	68,606	210,763	32.6	0.2
	Male (M)	57,416	105,382	54.5	
	Female (F)	11,190	105,381	10.6	
FANA	TOTAL (MF)	19,194	65,747	29.2	0.3
	Male (M)	14,580	32,475	44.9	
	Female (F)	4,614	33,272	13.9	
Islamabad	TOTAL (MF)	1,936	37,240	5.2	0.8
	Male (M)	1,064	18,588	5.7	
	Female (F)	872	18,652	4.7	

Data Sources: NEMIS, AEPAM 1997-98, Islamabad, all EMIS provincial units, Population Census Organization 1998 – for public sector only

6.2 The enrollment indicators and trends for overall primary levels not only are equally disturbing with GER for primary at less than 70% ¹⁴, and less than 50% of primary students surviving till Grade 5¹⁵, they are no doubt exacerbated by the poor foundations of the pre-primary levels. These trends are aggravated by severe disparities between the urban and rural areas, gender disparities and income-related poverty inequities. Further, all sources of data for Pakistan (EMIS, special surveys, PIHS, etc.) show that the highest rate of drop out occurs in the earlier years of primary – in Class 2. As international experience suggests that investing in the pre- and early primary years will only enhance the performance of overall primary education indicators and trends, it becomes even more imperative in Pakistan to expand the opportunities for completing primary school by building a stronger foundation at the early stages through deliberate efforts that support early childhood education programs. Table 3 below provides a summary of primary GER rates.

Table 3: Primary Gross Enrollment Rates (%)

	1991	1995-96	1996-97	1998-99
Punjab	..	73	73	76
Sindh	..	70	64	56
NWFP	.	66	68	67
Balochistan	..	63	58	58
All Four Above	..	71	70	69
Azad J & K	..	..	..	101
Northern Areas	..	..	..	75
FATA	..	..	..	39
Pakistan – Urban	81	88	87	91
Pakistan – Rural	59	64	63	61
Pakistan – Male	78	81	78	78
Pakistan – Female	53	60	61	60
Pakistan – Aggregate	65	71	70	69

6.3 The indicators and trends in the health sector as it affects young children have fared better than the performance of the education sector. The 1990s brought significant improvements in the infant mortality rate (IMR) and total fertility rate (TFR). The IMR declined from over 120 deaths per thousand live births at the beginning of the decade to about 85 per thousand in 1999. The TFR (the average number of children born to a woman over her lifetime) declined from 6.4 at the beginning of the decade to around 5 towards the end of the decade. Despite this progress, the IMR and TFR continue to be high by regional standards, as other countries in the region have surpassed Pakistan’s performance (e.g., the IMR in both India and Bangladesh at the end of the 1990s was about 70, while the TFR in both countries was slightly over 3). More than 400,000 infants die each year during the first twelve months, largely due to diarrhea, ARI, and birth-related complications.

6.5 Trends in other key child health indicators are not as promising: the percentage of fully immunized children 12-23 months of age is still far from satisfactory at about

¹⁴ Pakistan Household Integrated Survey (PIHS), Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan. 1998-99.

¹⁵ EFA Data based on EMIS and Census.

52 percent overall (1998/99 PIHS), with large discrepancies between urban and rural areas. Despite widespread immunization efforts through campaigns and National Immunization Days, immunization rates are lower in Pakistan than in other countries in the region: for example, only 58% of one-year old children in Pakistan are fully immunized against polio, as opposed to 99% in Sri Lanka, and 90% in China. Further, the incidence of malnutrition is high and underreported: majority of those children that enroll in primary school go to school without a morning meal, leaving one to not need factual evidence to explain the factors contributing towards low performance and retention rates. Unlike in neighboring countries, there are few school nutrition programs despite their proven global success.

- 6.6 Table 4 below shows the trends in infant mortality against household characteristics, with one of the highest incidence to be noted among those children whose mothers have no education.

Table 4: Infant Mortality (Below 1) by Household Characteristics (Per 1000 Live Births)		
	1991 (From Poverty Assessment for Pakistan, World Bank)	1998-99 (PIHS Data)
All Pakistan	127	83
Urban		70
Rural		88
Male		85
Female		81
By Mother's Education:		
No Education	134	90
Some Education	81	56
Drinking Water:		
Piped Indoor	117	70
Outside Home, Covered	121	90
Open Source (River, Pond)	156	83
Drains:		
Covered Underground	94	54
Uncovered Open	120	86
None	141	89

7. Major Programs and Initiatives in ECE

- 7.1 Several major programs and initiatives being implemented in the ECE sector in Pakistan were reviewed. As mentioned previously, these included various programs being supported by UNICEF in the area of Early Childhood Care for Development (ECCD), such as the pilot project for ECCD in Islamabad Capital Territory being tested in 30 villages with the Ministry of Social Welfare, and an Early Childhood Resource Center at the Home Economics College in Lahore; the Improved Pre-Primary and Primary Education in Sindh (IPPS) project being implemented by AKES,P in community-based schools in rural Sindh; the Early Childhood Education Program (ECEP) being implemented in government schools in Karachi and other parts of Sindh by the TRC; the community-based ECD centers being facilitated by Plan International in Chakwal District (Punjab). Other agencies consulted with included those that are in the process of planning ECE programs – SCF-UK, which intends to extend its current initiative of school health in Sindh to incorporate early

childhood development programming in the next phase; and the IED, which is planning to enter into ECE beginning this year. Beyond these programs, the experience of ECE/*katchi* interventions of the government (including those of the provincial education departments) was also reviewed. All of these were reviewed in order to develop a comprehensive understanding about the landscape of ECE programs and interventions in Pakistan – specifically, to understand better what types of programs are being implemented, what approaches, methodologies, and materials are being employed and used, and what support and coordinating mechanisms, if any, exist in the overall ECE sector in Pakistan.

- 7.2 The following encapsulates the key attributes of the ECE sector, including the scope of programming (i.e., coverage, design, implementation arrangements), the approaches and methodologies being employed, and materials developed and being used. A detailed summary of each program and initiative reviewed is contained the matrix in Annex I.
- 7.3 Scope of Programs. Almost all of the programs being implemented by the NGO/private sector are small in their scale and outreach, and limited to a defined program area.¹⁶ Most of them, especially the NGO programs, are being implemented through community-based schools or centers and target the pre-primary and primary age group (3-8 age group). AKES,P's IPPS, for example, is being implemented in about 17 community-based schools in rural Sindh, directly in communities that it has mobilized around this project. Teachers from the community are trained by AKES,P in child-friendly ECE practices, and are provided with rigorous ongoing support by the IPPS team. Similarly, Plan International is facilitating 7 community-based early childhood education centers in Punjab (Chakwal District) directly through community groups that it has formed for the purpose of setting up the ECE centers. Plan International provides training to volunteer caregivers from the community who then, for a small monthly stipend, deliver a Plan-developed syllabus to children in the 3 - 5 year age group. These types of interventions, although based on and adapted through indigenous learning, are limited in not only geographic scope but thus far also in the sharing of the rich program experience they have been gaining.
- 7.4 On the other hand, although the ECEP is being implemented by the TRC in a limited number of schools (currently about 40 government and district municipal corporation schools in Karachi and other districts such as Shikarpur), the fact that TRC is training teachers through the government district education officers (now District Officers), and that they have been proactive in their policy level dialogues and networking with

¹⁶ In addition to the ones formally reviewed, there are numerous other very small private sector and NGO programs that are supporting interventions for *katchi* and early primary classes as part of their education programs, however since these are many and scattered (as mentioned in Section I), it was not possible to study all of them. Just as an example, agencies such as ABES in Rawalpindi, SAHE in Punjab are involved in ECE either through materials development or teacher training interventions. Of course, the private sector, particularly in urban areas in Pakistan, is large and growing but this for-profit sector has not been included in the review. *It should be noted with caution, however, that the private for-profit sector is growing and does indeed offer pre-primary classes, and anecdotally does account for a growing enrollment of the younger age group, even among the lower income groups in rural areas. The quality of teaching is unknown, as there are no widespread teacher training programs for ECE aimed at this private sector (barring the Montessori system).*

the Government, their potential scope to influence early childhood programming in the Sindh government public school system and beyond has been larger. TRC, in conjunction with the Sindh Education Department, sponsored a much-acclaimed awareness and action seminar about ECE in late 1999 that brought together Government and private sector policy makers and practitioners to share experiences about early childhood development programming in Pakistan.¹⁷ Building upon this, TRC has remained actively engaged with the Government policy makers on the subject of ECE, as a result of which it has been identified by the MOE as a technical support agency to assist the MOE develop a national curriculum for a formalized *katchi* class. A draft curriculum (teachers' guide and notes) has just been developed and is being reviewed by the MOE for adoption in the public sector hopefully over the next several months.

- 7.5 UNICEF-supported programs in the area of ECCD are being implemented on small scale in partnership with Government counterparts. The ECCD pilot in 30 villages in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) is being implemented through the frontline field workers of the Ministry of Social Welfare (MOSW). The capacity of MOSW's Social Welfare Workers is built whom then as Master Trainers train community members in awareness about early childhood care issues, mainly centered on care-giving and health-related issues for the 0 - 3 age group. In the same pilot villages, UNICEF intends to expand into ECE to target the pre-primary aged children (3 - 5) by experimenting with community-based pre-primary schools (currently under design phase). UNICEF is also supporting an Early Childhood Resource Center based at the Home Economics College in Lahore that has been, since its establishment about two years ago, training field workers of the Ministry of Health (Lady Health Workers) and MOSW in community-oriented techniques so that they can impart training to local communities in the area of early childhood care and development. This Center was established in late 1999 and has since then has targeted about 3000 households in 15 villages in 1 union council of Lahore, through training of MOH field workers in collaboration with local NGOs. Although UNICEF is implementing these programs as pilots for the mainstream public sector, they are small in scale and outreach, with the intention of serving as a lesson for wider scale adoption by the public sector.
- 7.6 Apart from these types of project-based interventions with the public sector, there is the experience of the mainstream public sector for *katchi* class. ECE has existed *de facto* for decades in public schools in terms of the *katchi* class environment (see below for a description of conditions and environment of *katchi* class based on observations during field visits). At the provincial level, efforts have been made by the education departments to promote child-friendly learning in the pre-primary levels through the limited resources that had been available in the regular Government budgets. Some innovative initiatives such as the Sindh Education Foundation's (SEF) Adopt-a-School Program have also encouraged and created avenues for improving the learning environment for pre-school-aged children. It is only recently, however, that in line with the commitment to EFA, the MOE has announced a policy to formalize *katchi* class and to introduce a specially designed ECE curriculum for implementation on a wide scale across the nation's public school

¹⁷ Early Childhood Education Program Seminar held on November 23-24, 1999 in Karachi, sponsored jointly by the Education Department, Government of Sindh, and TRC.

system. Although this development will take time to implement and will require considerable technical assistance and support, it provides an opportunity for the first time for the introduction of ECE in the public sector for reaching out to the majority of aged 3 – 5 children in Pakistan.

- 7.7 Approaches Being Used. The ECE programs being implemented by agencies such as TRC, AKES,P and other NGOs generally include direct interventions for the classroom, as well as training of teachers, development of materials, and training of other stakeholders such as community members and facilitators. Emphasis on community and parent involvement in schooling is a common feature, with formal parent-community committees at the school level playing an important role in various aspects of the ECE programs (e.g., the Community Based Education Societies formed by AKES,P in the IPPS community based schools). They are child-friendly and focused on creating an enabling environment for building strong foundations for continued learning throughout primary school (for example, the simple child-focused curriculum developed locally by Plan International). Training of teachers (or community-based caregivers as is in the case of Plan International) is a strong element in all of these programs, and is considered key to successful program implementation, along with close follow up and refresher training.
- 7.8 There is a tremendous amount of learning and expertise that has been gained by these NGOs in the area of ECE in Pakistan. And, although there is some collaboration and cooperation with local government schools in a few of these programs, no prominent experience exists in the NGO sector of supporting or implementing capacity building programs for public sector officials in the ECE sector (except for some collaborative programs such as TRC's and those of the Society for Community Support for Education in Balochistan, and UNICEF's pilot project for building awareness among communities in ECCD that includes capacity building of the MOSW team, to enable them to impart training to community members). The absence of capacity building programs for the public sector and lack of adequate learning through exchange field visits has resulted in much of the innovative approaches being confined to the small scale level of the NGO programs.
- 7.9 In the public sector, historically and currently, in general the approaches used to impart teaching to pre-primary children (3 – 5 years of age) are very traditional, and have not kept up with the changing practice of child-friendly teaching and learning. However, there are initiatives within the public system that have been taken to improve the learning environment (e.g., PEP-ILE, SEF's efforts to improve conditions in public schools through its Adopt-a-School Program, and other singular efforts at the local level by motivated teachers and communities). In all provinces and areas of Pakistan, teaching of *katchi* class has been taking place for decades, mentioned earlier, however, *katchi* has not been understood as a pre-school phase for preparation for primary school, but rather as an extension of Class 1. Generally, even the curriculum that has been used by the provinces for *katchi* class teaching is the beginning portion of the Class 1 *qaidas* (books). Teachers in the public sector are not trained in ECE.¹⁸ The description below of the *katchi* class environment provides

¹⁸ As described further in 8.2 below.

more insight into the approaches being used for pre-primary teaching in public schools.

- 7.10 Materials Developed & Being Used. The material developed and being used by agencies such as AKES,P, TRC and other NGOs such as Plan International is truly valuable, not least because it is based on practical field knowledge and practice, and very suited to the local learning environment. AKES,P's IPPS, for example, has developed a unique collection of low-cost locally-crafted material (including charts, board games, flash cards, models, and other resources) that is used as teaching and learning aids). Plan International has also introduced and is further developing simple material that is low-cost. The *Pehla Taleemi Basta* (learning kit bag) developed by TRC includes similar teaching and learning aids, and has been acknowledged by the Government as a useful model for ECE material. In these cases, the programs have developed sets of learning material for the children, and teaching aides or guides for the teachers and facilitators. Similarly, UNICEF has developed a set of materials contained in a practical carry bag that are used as resources by the community based trainers for ECCD programs and activities in communities for all the different age groups. Undoubtedly, other organizations (especially smaller NGOs) not reviewed for this study but implementing pre-primary and primary school programs, particularly community-based models, have developed a wealth of material that is only being used in isolation.¹⁹
- 7.11 In the public sector, there have been efforts to improve the material that is being used in *katchi* class in almost every province and area. Largely, however, these efforts have been limited to the realm of textbooks and teachers' guides, and that, too, based on the type of content that is based on the earlier segments of Class 1 curriculum. For example, the Education Department in Punjab developed a series of Teachers' Guides for Class 1-5 in the early 1990s for all subjects. The first six weeks of Class 1 was adapted as a module that is being used for teaching children in *katchi* class by most schools. It is not an illustrative or child-friendly guide nor is it developed keeping psycho-social needs of pre-primary children in mind, but it does provide the teachers with guidance on how to deal with very young children in order to harness their desire and curiosity for learning and for socializing with their peers and elders. This same material/module has been used as a reference and adapted by almost all other provinces and used as a base for developing their own ad hoc and formal teaching material for *katchi* class.
- 7.12 In NWFP, efforts in the public sector for ECE material have extended beyond textbook development. GTZ, under the auspices of the NWFP Primary Education Program (PEP), has implemented an ECE textbook and materials development initiative through the PEP-Improved Learning Environment component (PEP-ILE). Working in conjunction with its counterpart, the NWFP Textbook Board, GTZ has been able to influence and develop age-appropriate textbooks (well-illustrated and child-friendly) and material for the *katchi* class (in addition to Class 1 – 5), enabling

¹⁹ Based on the consultant's familiarity with early primary school programs through prior associations, it is evident that there are lots of locally developed materials that are in use by small stand-alone private and community schools. Of course, given the "piecemeal" nature of such initiatives, it is difficult to catalog these without coordinated networking that brings together such experiences.

the NWFP Government to introduce these as part of the regular curriculum in its pre-primary sector (although *katchi* class has existed in NWFP public schools for a long time, specific textbooks and material was not in use until more recently in the late 1990s as a result of this support from PEP-ILE.) Textbooks for Urdu, Maths, and Pushto along with teachers' guides were developed in 1996 and have been revised each year, and science textbooks and guides are in the process of being finalized. Teachers have also been trained to use these textbooks in *katchi* class.

- 7.13 To ensure the implementation of ECE in the entire public system, the MOE is now considering, under the formalizing of *katchi* class initiative, developing a formal and standard curriculum, with child-friendly material and teachers' guides for implementation nationwide. This has been initiated with technical support from TRC, and the MOE (Curriculum Wing) is working out details, including systems and programs for teacher training.
- 7.14 Coordinating Mechanisms & Documentation. The wealth of material that has been developed by the various ECE programs, and the learning and adaptation based on field experiences that has taken place have not been shared across the broad spectrum of agencies working in or interested in developing ECE programs. Further, documentation of these experiences by these programs is more for internal or donor reporting purposes rather than for dissemination to a wider audience. It was found that even among agencies located in the same city, there is very little regular coordination or sharing of resources and experiences. No one agency or groups of programs have taken the initiative or emerged as resource centers for early childhood, although individual agencies have developed their own resource libraries and centers for their staff and trainees. Whether it is among implementers or donors, or between implementing agencies and donors, there is no regular networking effort in the area of ECE.²⁰

8. Description of Trends in and Characteristics of Katchi Class

- 8.1 A small sample of public schools was visited in areas of ICT, NWFP, and Punjab to observe trends in and characteristics of *katchi* class (see Table 5 below for summary). Overall, the situation in public schools for *katchi* and early primary classes as observed is deplorable. There is generally no provision for a separate classroom, as the *katchi* students are housed in the same classroom as Class 1 (and sometimes also Class 2) children, sharing the same physical facilities and resources available to the other classes. The classrooms where the *katchi* children were housed were overcrowded in most cases, and other physical facilities such as toilets and water were missing.
- 8.2 The teachers have not been trained in ECE practices and are not entirely familiar with techniques that are age-appropriate for the 3 – 5 age group, although in almost all

²⁰ The TRC and DOE, Sindh seminar on ECE is one of the few examples of an opportunity that program implementers and policy makers had to converge around this sector in Pakistan. There are other networks, such as donor groups on education, or NGO groups on community-based initiatives, but not specifically for the ECE sector.

cases they were friendly.²¹ Although in most cases visits by the district education official (now termed District Officer, Education) were regular²², these were generally supervisory in nature (or to provide the small repair and maintenance funds) and not oriented towards providing technical guidance to the teacher. Further, a meeting with the DO in Peshawar revealed the lack of understanding about ECE among the DO cadre, and thus their inability to provide technical support in this area to the teachers. Generally, the textbooks and material being used is basic, as described in the previous section (except for ICT²³ and schools in Peshawar where charts and other teaching material were observed), and teachers reported that most students do not even possess these texts or do not bring them to school. The learning material, what little was available, is not addressing young children's learning needs, as it is not designed specifically for *katchi* class (except in NWFP where efforts have been made through previous UNICEF projects, and now through the GTZ PEP-ILE support).

- 8.3 None of the schools had any experience of special interventions in the area of nutrition or school feeding programs²⁴, and the local health workers (such as community-based lady health visitors) were reported to never visit the schools. Community participation and involvement of parents was found to be non-existent, with teachers complaining that they were not getting any support from parents with regards to the young children's education. School management committees were not functional in these government schools (although they do exist on paper in most places, especially in NWFP, according to the teachers and discussions with some parents, they did not appear to be functional).
- 8.4 In almost all the cases, there appears to be a high rate of drop out and incidence of low attendance. In one school in Balochistan, the enrollment trend revealed a mere 10% retention rate between *katchi* and Class 6. The average ratio of girls to boys is about 40:60 in these schools. Teachers in particular attribute this to the poor physical conditions of the school (including lack of water and toilet facilities) and general poverty of the parents, although two parents that were met with in different schools also sited reasons of poor learning environment.

²¹ As *katchi* class has been taught informally, there are no teachers designated currently for *katchi* class. In fact, given the Government policy in almost all provinces towards bans on teacher recruitment, there are generally two teachers per primary school who practice a sort of multi-grade teaching by grouping two or three classes in one room. All primary school teachers are trained (Primary Teaching Certificate qualification is a pre-requisite for hiring) but this training is not geared towards early childhood education. In this context, usually the teacher who is teaching Class 1 and 2 will also teach the alphabet and basic numeracy to the younger (pre-Class 1) children. As mentioned before, under the new policy to formalize *katchi*, new pre-primary teachers will be recruited on a contract basis (not as part of regular government service). Primary school teachers in girls schools are female, and in boys schools male as a general practice.

²² Except for one school in Punjab (Rawalpindi) that had not been visited by an education official since 1984!

²³ Generally in ICT, the situation was better for the entire primary school.

²⁴ The Government of Pakistan is launching the Tawanna Pakistan Program, a school nutrition program targeting girls. Although this is still in the development phase, it is based on successful experiences of other school nutrition initiatives (such as the one implemented in Sindh under the Sindh Primary Education Development Program with AKU assistance and NORAD support; and in other areas with World Food Program support). This new initiative can be a potential resource for improving the *katchi* environment.

Table 5: Summary of Schools Visited

School	Overall Physical Condition of <i>Katchi</i> Class	Overall Teaching & Learning Environment	Outside/special interventions, including supervision	Parental/community involvement
FG Primary School Nurpur Shahan (Bari Imam), ICT	Very crowded, sharing room with Class 1; but good furniture, fans. 78 students admitted with 30 drop outs. Toilets only for teachers.	Some learning material available (pictures, science models, charts) but old. Teacher strict and children sitting very obediently.	No special outside interventions. District Education Officer visits once every two months to check records.	Very little parental involvement, except on a special annual day.
FG Middle School Alipur Punjgirah, ICT	Good physical facilities (spacious room with furniture, water, toilets). 50 students enrolled, with only 5 <i>katchi</i> students attending that day.	Pictures, charts available but old. Teacher very playful.	No special outside interventions in health or nutrition. DEO visits often but only for formal supervision.	No parent involvement according to teacher.
Govt Girls Primary School Gul Bihar Colony Peshawar	Crowded but <i>tats</i> (mats) available. 170 enrolled, with 40 drop outs.	Teaching charts, maps, kits available and being used but is obviously from older class. Teacher very disciplined and rigid.	None. Regular DEO visits (to provide money to school for minor repairs) and to check records.	Very little parent and community involvement. Teacher expressed that parents should be more proactive.
Govt Boys Primary School Irrigation Colony Peshawar	<i>Katchi</i> class sharing with Class 1 & 2; crowded but furniture available. 80 students enrolled, with 4 drop outs.	Charts, kit boxes available but old. Playful atmosphere created by teacher.	No special interventions. DEO regular visitor but for inspection of records.	No parent or community involvement.
Govt Girls Primary School Faizabad Rawalpindi	<i>Katchi</i> class sharing with Class 1 & 2; crowded, no furniture or other facilities. 25 enrolled in <i>katchi</i> , 10 drop outs.	No special material – only blackboard and faint chalk.	None. And no DEO or other official visit since 1984!	No parental or community involvement.
Govt Girls Primary School Ara Burgi Sihala	<i>Katchi</i> class sharing with Class 1 & 2. Crowded, but fan, toilets, water cooler. 30 enrolled, 26 attending that day.	Science models, charts available. Very friendly teacher but not trained to handle very young children.	None in school, but vaccination drive in community for children. DEO regular visitor but only supervision.	No formal parent involvement but parent in discussion said that they try to monitor teacher attendance.
Khilay Adam Khan School (Community School), Balochistan	Well-furnished and equipped school with facilities (decent latrine, water supply), however <i>katchi</i> class students were seated in rows of desks/chairs without room for floor activity.	<i>Katchi</i> students had the <i>katchi</i> texts, <i>takhtee</i> and ink; but overall lack of understanding of ECE and how best to utilize funds for <i>katchi</i> class. Urdu as language of instruction was a problem in this multi-lingual and multi-ethnic environment.	No significant supervision, other than the routine. No special outside interventions in health, nutrition reported.	Better parent and community involvement due to CSP.
Fateh Bagh Government Girls Primary School, Balochistan	Very poor physical environment, especially for smaller children. Crowded classroom for <i>katchi</i> class (96 children in 12 sq.ft.)	Poor learning environment – old chalkboard, very little material.	No significant supervision, other than the routine. No special outside interventions in health, nutrition reported.	No significant parent or community involvement.
Khilay Ahmed Khan Government Girls School, Balochistan	A very small school with low attendance, however slightly better quality building (water supply, latrine).	Highly motivated teachers who encourage students by displaying their work on the walls.	No significant supervision, other than the routine. No special outside interventions in health, nutrition reported.	Parent dissatisfaction with the poor quality of teaching and facilities, and lack of teaching material.

- 8.5 Discussions with parents and other community members in a few of the school communities showed that parents were not fully aware of the longer-term benefits of schooling for the younger children. The attitude common among them reflected that they see sending their 3 and 4 year olds to school as a way to relieve them of childcare responsibilities (particularly mothers)²⁵. Most recognized that their young children were not gaining much formal “learning” in school, but that they were nonetheless being exposed to a formal learning environment which might prepare them for Class 1 and 2.²⁶ Generally, the parents showed very little interest or desire for involvement in what is going on in the classroom, and almost all parents expressed that it was the teacher’s responsibility to worry about “learning” issues. It is clear that parent and community involvement are weak in most communities visited.
- 8.6 It should also be noted that none of the teachers of the schools were familiar with the new Government policy to formalize *katchi* class and to introduce an ECE curriculum for the pre-primary group. Although most teachers welcomed this initiative, they cautioned against introducing a curriculum that would tax the mental capacities of the young children, and were of the view that illustrative and friendly material would be better than more rigorous subject material. Two teachers also expressed that it would be more appropriate to introduce a single textbook that covers a variety of subjects in an introductory and friendly manner rather than over-burdening the children with separate textbooks for mathematics, science, Urdu, etc.
- 8.7 Overall, none of the schools demonstrated an appreciation and understanding about ECE nor about approaches to work with *katchi* class students. With a prevalent situation of room-sharing with students of Class 1 and sometimes also Class 2, the physical environment is not conducive to appropriate teaching and learning methods for young children. Although some appeared dedicated and friendly, the primary school teachers are not trained for *katchi* class, and most often use “recite after me” method which encourages rote learning, with the students not really understanding what it is they are reciting. The supervision and technical support environment for primary teachers is weak, with little emphasis on mentoring and more on supervision of records and books. Clearly, there is much room for improvement in the overall physical and learning environment of primary schools, and more directly for the *katchi* class and early primary classes.

²⁵ This was observed especially for those children that had older siblings enrolled in the primary school, and therefore it was convenient for the parent to send the younger one(s) along.

²⁶ In discussion with two different school communities, parents expressed that at least their children were not running around and getting dirty in the streets and were being made to sit in a formal environment where they could learn about discipline.

III. The Gaps and Opportunities within the Challenges

9. Major Shortcomings / Gaps

- 9.1 One of the biggest shortcomings in the ECE sector has been the **lack of networking and coordination** among agencies and institutions implementing and developing ECE programs. Especially in an environment where there are many programs being implemented across a widespread landscape in diverse areas, it becomes ever more essential to have some deliberate effort to bring these experiences together. The lack of coordination and networking results in a loss of lessons sharing and program development based on practical experience. Many agencies have developed unique and appropriate material and resources that are not being shared, resulting in duplication in research and development efforts. A further gap related to coordination is that many donors are also not familiar with the efforts that have been made in this field (at such low cost, using cost-effective methods). It is only more recently that the public sector is becoming familiar with the ECE initiatives on the ground. Related to this gap is the issue of **lack of adequate documentation** of existing experiences, and a **missing database** that catalogues programs implemented (including training), materials developed, and other information on the ECE sector.
- 9.2 Another limitation in the ECE sector in Pakistan has been that the **experience and programs of the NGO/private sector**, albeit dynamic and innovative, are **restricted in scope and scale**. Understandably, NGOs and private sector do not have the financial and human resources required to implement a program at the scale that the public sector can, but what it can do, and has not done thus far in Pakistan, is to project its on-the-ground experience as tested models for the public sector to potentially adapt and replicate on a larger scale. Of course, as discussed above, the TRC has been able to make a breakthrough in influencing the shape of *katchi* curriculum development with the MOE for implementation throughout the public sector. However, a gap still exists at the level of demonstrating practical implementation of ECE programs, particularly low-cost and innovative ones, including how communities can be involved and how a great difference can be made with such little input (e.g., the IPPS experience has not been shared that widely, even among local government officials.²⁷). The approaches and material that have been developed and are in use by the NGO programs could be replicable on a larger scale, but without piloting or testing their viability and suitability for public sector programs, it will be difficult to ascertain their potential for replication at scale. The valuable experience and learning emerging from IPPS and other NGO programs has certainly not been translated into lessons for policy makers. This can also be attributed as a result of the gap in coordination and networking.

²⁷It was noted during a field visit to a district in rural Sindh (in connection with the consultant's other engagements) that the local education official (EDO) articulated his interest in developing a proposal for ECE for the ESR but he said that he was not familiar with the technicalities of ECE. This was in a district where IPPS is being implemented.

- 9.3 A further major gap in the ECE sector exists in the **public sector context – the paradigm of policy versus practice**. As described earlier, ECE has traditionally and historically not been defined as a sector that builds the foundations for life-long learning in the child’s progress through schooling. Rather, it has been confined to the *katchi* class framework, which itself has been seen as an extension of Class 1 rather than a year for pre-primary education. This is changing now, at least at the policy level, as demonstrated by the articulation by the MOE in the EFA’s NPA. The fact that ECE has been included as a critical sector under the Innovative Programs thrust area of the ESR is a significant watershed. However, this is where the gap exists – the relative importance of ECE within the context of wider education sector priorities and programs. Because of the magnitude of shortcomings in the elementary education sector, and also because of the emerging priorities for higher and technical education, there are few practitioners in the public sector (it would be safe to say even among donor agencies) who see the relevance and importance of investing in ECE. There serious impediments to overcome if the policy of formalization of *katchi* (that includes new teacher recruitment, additional classroom space, materials etc.) is to be put into practice: ensuring that funds now allocated for ECE are utilized by the implementing authorities so that they do not lapse and providing adequate and appropriate training for teachers (both existing primary school teachers and any new recruits) specifically for ECE²⁸ are just a couple of the challenges.
- 9.4 **Capacity in the public sector**, particularly at the planning and implementation level (i.e., district), is also an issue to be flagged. This is especially of concern in the context of the devolution system where the responsibility to identify, plan and implement programs (especially in the service delivery sector) rests with the new district governments and structures. Not only are the regular provincial funds being spent and accounted for by the districts, but the proposals (PC-1s) for ESR funds (as described above in paragraph 5.4) are also being developed, approved and implemented entirely by the district staff (EDO-Education, EDO-Finance, EDO-Planning, along with their support officers, and DCO play critical roles in this process). While capacity to undertake the process of planning and budgeting is a wider issue that cuts across sectors and programs, and will be addressed by district capacity building programs in the coming years, the area to flag is that of the capacities that exist and those that need to be harnessed in the education sector, in addition to the issue of lack of complete understanding about the technical aspects of ECE as mentioned above. If the capacity to plan is not developed, then the risk of non-utilization of the available funds could lead to lapsing of funds for this category. Given ECE’s/ECCD’s cross-cutting nature, capacity of other local line departments (health, social welfare, etc.) may also need to be kept in mind.
- 9.5 Last but not least, one of the most important gaps that exists currently in the provision of ECE/*katchi* class delivery, and perhaps one that can most immediately be addressed, is that of the **poor quality and non-availability of appropriate and adequate learning material** that is available in the public sector for *katchi* class. No doubt that a wealth of material has been and is being developed by the NGO/private

²⁸ Given that the majority of primary schools across the country are under-staffed, it must be ensured that an additional teacher for *katchi* class is not pulled towards other classes.

sector, and there are also efforts of the same in the public sector through special project interventions, but this is yet to be seen in the schools where young children are enrolling and subsequently dropping out. Related to this is the gap in training for teachers to use materials that have been developed and introduced, in addition to the culture of keeping new material locked away (especially charts and learning kits) for fear of wear-and-tear and theft. While the MOE is embarking on introducing an ECE curriculum throughout the nation's public schools, the need for and training in use of supplementary materials is critical and to be kept on the agenda. Some cynicism has been noted among public sector implementers about the MOE's initiative (i.e., that it is not the first time that a *katchi* class curriculum is being introduced; that precious resources should not be wasted on this sector but should be used to address the bigger gaps in primary education). However, to ensure that the current initiatives do not resemble past failures, the practical applicability of anything new that is introduced and technical follow up will be essential.

- 9.6 Another issue to be noted in this paper, although it reaches beyond ECE into the overall ECCD sector, is that of the **lack of integrated programming** for ECD. Globally, several successful ECE programs are those that are integrated into wider ECCD programs that start intervention at the 0 – 3 age group (targeting mothers, caregivers, community members in the area of community mobilization, health, gender, etc.) to build the demand for 3 – 5 age group programs. Integrated ECE programs also go beyond the pre-primary years to address the continuing challenges posed by early primary years to ensure a health completion of the primary school cycle, and even beyond to address adult literacy needs. So far in Pakistan (like in many other countries), integrated ECE/ECCD programs have not yet taken root, although UNICEF has attempted to demonstrate the value of integrated programming through its pilot initiative in ICT. Many organizations are implementing programs in just health or just education, and have not considered planning for a holistic approach. This lack of integrated programming often is a result of the separate “line” departments that exist (not just in the public sector, but often the sector programs in donor agencies and NGOs do not undertake joint planning).

10. Opportunities

- 10.1 Although there are several gaps in the ECE sector, some of which have been identified above, there exists within these gaps a window of opportunity to help in the development and maturity of the ECE sector in Pakistan. No doubt lot can be done, from implementing a larger-scale ECE initiative to ambitious research and development efforts, but keeping a practical focus with the medium-term in view, the following are some ideas for opportunities that can be seized in the immediate timeframe and implemented over the medium-term, to build a foundation for lasting impact.
- 10.2 Immediately in the context of the gaps that exist in the current lack of networking and sharing of experiences, and in the lack of demonstration of practical lessons and models to the public sector, the greatest opportunity that exists is for creating or enabling a network of practitioners and policy-makers in the ECE sector in Pakistan.

Such a network would be designed to not only allow experience sharing among known NGO programs, but would also help identify those others that are working on a very small scale or those that are interested in expanding their community-based program experience into the ECE sector. This would enable the ECE providers and implementers a platform to share and disseminate their experiences, not only among themselves but also with the public sector, to demonstrate the impact about the experiences to date. It could also further enable agencies working in different sectors (beyond education) to come to the table with their program experience (e.g., nutrition, health, social development).

- 10.3 Given that the public sector has adopted a policy to formalize *katchi* class and to introduce a formal ECE curriculum in the mainstream public school system, a tremendous opportunity exists to inform and guide this initiative as it is implemented. Of course, TRC has already taken initiative in this by getting involved in the early stages of curriculum design and development, but there is a lot to be done if the MOE is to successfully and widely enable its implementation across the provincial programs, and at the district level. Three areas of opportunity exist to support the public sector: a) technical assistance in the development of supplementary learning material to support the curriculum that is being introduced; b) technical assistance to the district Governments, particularly to familiarize the district education staff with examples of ECE programs and the skills to develop basic proposals to introduce innovative activities to promote ECE in *katchi* and early primary classes; and perhaps most importantly, c) to assist the public sector in the social marketing of ECE to raise public awareness about the importance of education. The first could be done by helping to create a repository of existing materials that have been developed and are in use, and by supporting and promoting research and development for useful locally applicable and appropriate material based on international best practice to help the MOE in its efforts to implement ECE in the provincial programs.²⁹ The second could be done through a combination of exposing district government officials to experiences that exist on the ground (e.g., IPPS, TRC, Plan International, etc.), including how these organizations planned and developed their programs, including how they have managed to utilize minimum resources for efficient gains; and through direct assistance, with donor support, to districts by imparting training modules on local level planning, and monitoring, in the education sector. Social marketing of ECE can be done within the context of a wider public campaign to increase awareness about education, by facilitating the Government's efforts to launch such a campaign.³⁰
- 10.4 A third strategic opportunity exists in creating an environment for joint or integrated programming in the ECCD sector beyond the facilitative environment through networking as mentioned above in paragraph 10.2. Actual implementation of a pilot or small project/initiative that addresses the needs of the different age groups (0 – 3, 3

²⁹ Discussion with the MOE also pointed towards the need for assistance in both supplementary material development based on regional and international best practice, and for training of education department staff in using, maintaining, and improving these materials.

³⁰ The MOE has expressed its intent to launch an awareness campaign although this is very much still in early planning/conception phase. Dialogue with Government officials at this early stage would be extremely valuable.

– 5, 5 – 8) in an integrated manner to demonstrate the relationship between activities that cut across sectors and that have an impact on the overall development of the child as a member of society.³¹

IV. Conclusion & Recommendations

The above section on opportunities has provided a set of more general recommendations that can be useful for various stakeholders that are interested in supporting the development of the ECE sector in Pakistan. The following, in conclusion, is a list of specific recommendations for AKF to consider as it embarks upon expanding its own capacity to work in the ECE sector to be able to contribute towards the development of the ECE sector in Pakistan.

- Given the umbrella of the RCC, AKF is well-positioned to take the lead in creating and supporting a network of ECE practitioners in Pakistan. Such a network could, in the first instance, be formed among implementing agencies, and could later be expanded to include policy-makers and donors. Membership could be expanded to include non-education programs (health, nutrition,³² etc.) that are linked to ECCD programming. AKF is already recognized globally as a key partner in the dialogue on and development of ECE, and its experiences in East Africa and southern Pakistan are well-respected. This network could also help facilitate the Government's efforts to plan for a public awareness campaign for education, with the intention to ensure that ECE is factored into such an endeavor.
- As an extension of this networking, another area in which AKF can play a potential role is in helping to create a resource center that serves as a repository for ECE teaching and learning material, both based on international and regional practice as well as the wealth of material that has been developed by programs in Pakistan, and that maintains an updated directory of institutions and organizations working in, developing or interested in supporting ECE provision in Pakistan.³³ (This could include facilitation of evaluations of on-going ECE programs). This “resource center” need not necessarily be in the shape of a physical building – it could be a combination of a newsletter and a well-developed and maintained database that can be accessed by a variety of stakeholders. Further, it need to be necessary to house this within AKF itself, but to support a partner organization's efforts. For example, TRC is already established as a resource center for educators and could be a potential home for an ECE Resource Center. The IED/AKU is another potential partner for

³¹ Although there are examples of programs being implemented that indeed cut across the health (child health, nutrition, etc.) and education sectors (such as ADB's planned small grants project to support innovative community interventions that include health and ECE, or other small NGO community-based programs – e.g., an NGO that may be implementing a community health awareness program along with running a non-formal education center), there is a gap in planned programming for the ECCD sector that includes interventions for the different age groups which are linked to one another. Given that AKU is also undertaking some design work in the area of human development, an on-the-ground pilot might help to demonstrate what possibilities exist for integrated ECCD programming.

³² Including representation of programs such as Tawanna Pakistan, and other related emerging initiatives to help leverage the impact of these and channel the resources towards ECE.

³³ Such a resource would be a valuable source of knowledge and assistance for the MOE and provincial education departments as well.

this. If a virtual resource center is created, it could be housed anywhere, and it could be built up by support from “regional” resources (such as dynamic education foundations like the SEF, or other Government sector institutions that are interested in taking this role on).

- During the course of RCC’s implementation, AKF could potentially develop a training / capacity building initiative that is targeted at building the capacity of district (education) officials in the area of education and ECC in particular. Given that RCC is planned to be implemented in select districts of Sindh and Balochistan, it would make sense to build in a capacity building component in each of these districts. The training program could be set up in modules that include planning, budgeting, community-based monitoring of education projects as more general areas that target district education, planning, finance officials; and more specific modules that include technical aspects of ECE. It could also include more basic issues such as how to creatively work within the existing constraints and environment to improve the learning environment for ECE with existing resources.
- Finally, on issues of overall public sector capacity, there are several initiatives that various provinces have embarked upon in the education sector. One of these, as mentioned earlier, is the Adopt-a-School programs that are being promoted by SEF in Sindh, and by the Frontier Education Foundation in NWFP. Other provinces are also taking an interest in promoting this type of programs as well as widening other avenues for public-private partnership (such as evening shifts in Government schools by NGOs, etc.). The Government, under its overall education reform efforts, has opened many windows of opportunity. Although support for ECE under the ESR might be a small amount, there are other channels such as these public-private partnership programs that can be used for ECE development. There is much room for identifying appropriate activities that can be promoted under these windows, both at the provincial as well as district level. An agency like AKF can play a strategic role, both at the policy level as well as at the implementation level, to help in the identification of the types of schemes that can be initiated, and the kinds of partners that exist for the public sector to work with.

ANNEXES

Annex I
Annex II
Annex III

Summary Matrix of Programs Reviewed
Persons Consulted
Documents Reviewed

11. Summary Matrix of Major ECE/ECCD Programs & Initiatives in Pakistan

Agency	Scope of Program (coverage, design implementation arrangements, partners if any, etc.)	Approaches being used	Materials designed and/or being used	Any other information
UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting various initiatives, including: a pilot project for ECCD in Islamabad Capital Territory (30 villages) since 2001; Early Childhood Resource Center at the Home Economics College in Lahore since 1999 (20 ECD workers trained in collaboration with local NGOs in 15 villages of 1 union council) Developing a new program for ECE – community based pre-primary/katchi classes in ICT area Working through Government counterparts (Ministry of Social Welfare in ICT; DOH staff in Lahore) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have interventions for 0-3 age group (e.g., nutrition, motivational and education programs targeting caregivers); 3-5/6 (pre-primary, katchi); and also 6 – 9 (introducing materials for primary years) Promote community-based and motivational interventions The Early Childhood Resource Center undertakes research and top supervision of community ECD workers training (ECD workers are drawn from MOH field staff – e.g., LHW) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-designed package of material for ECCD (“blue bag”) that includes booklets, video, charts. Counterpart staff (e.g., Social Welfare Officers trained to use the material with communities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although working on small-scale projects, UNICEF supports the mainstream public sector effort with the aim to develop replicable models. Has found that working with the MOSW is providing more of an ‘integrated’ programming approach so that interventions in health, education, and gender can be programmed in a coordinated manner (rather than just working with MOH for health sector ECCD interventions, etc.). However, even in the ICT pilot, although MOSW is the lead focal counterpart agency, the other line ministries are also involved in planning and implementation. Documentation is not yet available, although agency requires evaluations that are expected to take place
Teachers Resource Center -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing the Early Childhood Education Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intervention targeting the 3 – 5 for pre- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Pehla Taleemi Basta</i>: a “readiness” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TRC has been proactive in its engagement with

ECEP	<p>(ECEP) since 1998 in Karachi government and district municipal corporation schools, as well as government schools in Shikarpur district of Sindh.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in close collaboration with Department of Education district level staff as main focal points. 	<p>primary class through teacher training and materials development in use of ECE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has developed core competency in serving at the pre-primary level in both public and private schools, and has developed a curriculum framework with supporting guidelines for teachers, training and learning materials, and monitoring tools to evaluate progress in teaching and learning. 	<p>folding cloth bag that includes learning aids for vocabulary enrichment, reading, writing, maths and science activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers guides and handbooks • Booklets & activity books, charts • Newsletters 	<p>policy makers, particularly the DOE, Government of Sindh, and the MOE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRC has been identified and selected as the technical agency for MOE's efforts to develop and implement a national curriculum for <i>katchi</i> class in public schools. TRC has developed a draft curriculum that includes a teachers guide along with guidelines for training and learning, etc. and this is currently being reviewed by the Curriculum Wing of the MOE for distribution to the provincial education departments for implementation.
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Agency	Scope of Program (coverage, design implementation arrangements, partners if any, etc.)	Approaches being used	Materials designed and/or being used	Any other information
Aga Khan Education Service Pakistan, Sindh – IPPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing Improving Pre-Primary and Primary Education in Sindh (IPPS) since 1995 in about 17 community-based schools in rural Sindh (Badin, Hyderabad, Thatta Districts). • Working with local community groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based and motivational approach – formation of Community Based Education Societies as major partners in the children’s development (responsible for provision of schools buildings, management of schools, identification and selection of community women for teacher training, setting and collection of fees). • Teachers trained to use child-centered learning techniques for pre-primary to primary classes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum designed to use material and resources which are low-cost and adaptable to the local environment. • Bright charts, card games, board games and other material for maths, science, nature, vocabulary development – all developed by a very small and energetic team of IPPS with virtually no outside support. • Material is constantly adapted and improved to suit the local environment and needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPPS is a small yet dynamic project that has drawn valuable lessons in community-based schooling, and can be a potential resource agency for community-based ECE interventions. The material it has developed and accumulated is valuable, but it has not been shared or disseminated among other partners/NGOs that could find it to be of use. • IPPS has also developed some unique teacher development techniques, particularly for community-based teachers.
Plan International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since January 2002, has started an ECCD program to run pre-primary community centers. • Is currently running 7 centers in Chakwal District in Punjab • Works in collaboration with local communities, and wants to develop partnership with government schools at the local level (with the aim that children of these centers will feed into government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed own syllabus and material – child-friendly and based on local research for the 3 – 5 age group. • Mobilize communities to identify caregivers from the community (young women) who are then trained and given monthly refresher courses. • Plan provides careful supervision and support to caregivers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-designed material (teaching guides, charts, other material) that forms a monthly syllabus (given to the caregiver in monthly phases). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very new initiative being implemented currently on a small scale with intense supervision. • Program is still under development as the syllabus is developed on monthly basis. • Given their regional and international experience, Plan International could potentially draw upon valuable global learning as a resource and network partnering agency

	primary schools better prepared for primary education)			
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Agency	Scope of Program (coverage, design implementation arrangements, partners if any, etc.)	Approaches being used	Materials designed and/or being used	Any other information
Save the Children UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently in process of designing a program that builds upon experience of existing partnership with IED (in the area of school health) to address ECE development in Sindh. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has developed a small package of resource material on ECCD based on international best practice (small charts). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to Plan, could be a valuable networking partner given its global and regional experience.
Institute for Educational Development, AKU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is in the process of planning to start up an ECE program. Has held initial round of meetings with senior faculty members and other primary stakeholders, and has identified capacity building / training as the first series of activities IED will undertake (to both strengthen its own capacity in ECE, as well as extending the training to partner institutions including some government) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given its well-established programs and experience in the area of educational development and research, IED is well-placed to potentially undertake ECE research and to develop capacity to serve as a resource institution on quality assurance and competency building (in conjunction with institutions such as TRC, etc. that have the on-the-ground expertise). Additionally, it's links within the AKU, especially with Community Health Sciences, allows for it to potentially tap into coordinated planning to ensure synergies across the sectors. AKU has initiated an exercise to look at the development of a Human Development Program (for which ECE will be a cornerstone component). A consultant has been engaged to do the identification and planning.

Agency	Scope of Program (coverage, design implementation arrangements, partners if any, etc.)	Approaches being used	Materials designed and/or being used	Any other information
Government Programs in ECE / <i>Katchi</i> Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECE in Government schools has existed <i>de facto</i> in terms of the <i>katchi</i> class environment for decades. • In line with the commitment to EFA, the MOE has announced a policy to formalize <i>katchi</i> class and to introduce especially designed ECE curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically and currently, in general the approaches used to impart teaching to pre-primary children (3 – 5 years of age) is very traditional, and has not kept up with the changing practice of child-friendly teaching and learning. However, there are initiatives within the public system that have been taken to improve the learning environment (e.g., PEP-ILE, Sindh Education Foundation’s efforts to improve conditions in public schools through its Adopt-a-School Program, and other singular efforts at the local level by motivated teachers and communities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Education Department in Punjab developed a series of Teachers’ Guides for Class 1-5 in the early 1990s for all subjects. The first six weeks of Class 1 has been adapted as a module that is used for teaching children in <i>katchi</i> class by most schools. It is not an illustrative or child-friendly guide, but it does provide the teachers with guidance on how to deal with very young children in order to harness their desire and curiosity for learning. • This same material/module has been adapted by almost all other provinces and used as a base for developing their own ad hoc and formal teaching material for <i>katchi</i> class. • The MOE is now considering, under the formalizing of <i>katchi</i> class initiative, developing a formal and standard curriculum, with child-friendly material and teachers’ guides for implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the ESR, the MOE is making funds available to the districts directly (through provincial channels) for supporting development activities in the seven thrust areas that the MOE has identified as critical for basic education. For these funds, the district governments have to prepare proposals (PC-1s) that get approved at the district level. One of the thrust areas is Innovative Programs, and ECE has been identified as component of this. There is very little understanding and much interest generally at the district level about early childhood education, and although some districts have prepared proposals (for playgrounds, e.g.), there is very little capacity currently to develop ECE proposals. This gap provides an opportunity for an agency such as AKF through RCC to help build the capacity for identification and development of proposals, as well as direct training and capacity building of

			nationwide. The MOE (Curriculum Wing) is working out details of this, including systems and programs for teacher training.	education staff to impart ECE.
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Initial Survey and Mapping of ECCE in Pakistan

Institutions / Persons Consulted

Ministry of Education

Dr. Haroon Jatoi, Joint Education Advisor, Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad.

Other Government Departments / Projects

Mr. Babar, Ministry of Social Welfare, Islamabad Capital Territory, Islamabad.

Mohd. Anwar Khan, Director Education, Government of Balochistan, Quetta.

Dr. Reinhard Sauer, GTZ Primary Education Program Improved Learning Environment Office, Peshawar.

Various Officials, Department of Education, Primary Education, Government of NWFP, Peshawar.

Mr. Anwar Ali Zai, Additional Secretary, Department of Education, Government of Sindh, Karachi

Various District Officials (NWFP, Sindh, Punjab)

UNICEF

Ms. Khalida Ahmed, UNICEF, Islamabad.

Ms. Serap Maktav, UNICEF, Islamabad.

Mr. Tariq Saeed, UNICEF, Lahore.

The Aga Khan University

Dr. Jim Irvine, Consultant, Human Development Program, The Aga Khan University, Karachi.

Dr. Gulzar Kanji, Institute for Educational Development, Aga Khan University, Karachi.

Donors Representatives

Mr. Ameer Hussain Naqvi, World Bank, Islamabad.

Ms. Hazel Bines, DFID, Islamabad.

Implementing Agencies

Ms. Mahenaz Mahmud, Teachers' Resource Center, Karachi.

Ms. Raffat Nabi, IPPS, Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan, Karachi.

Mr. Jiwan Das / Ms. Samina Sardar, Save the Children (UK), Karachi / Islamabad.

Ms. Janat Hur, Plan International, Islamabad.

Mr. Fawad Shams, Society for the Advancement of Health and Education, Lahore.

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Teachers' Guide. Class 1. Department of Education, Government of Punjab.

Katchi Class Textbooks and Material (GTZ support), Government of NWFP.

IPPS Pre-Primary Material.

UNICEF. Blue Bag.

Plan International. ECE Material.

Save the Children (UK). ECE Guide Sheets.