

400 Primary & Kindergarten Teachers trained in Early Childhood Education (ECE) – in Rawalpindi and Multan Districts through Public Private Partnerships

Pakistan is blessed with unique partnerships of public sector, NGOs and industry for promoting education in innovative ways. The government of Pakistan and the government of Punjab is open to partnerships which are helping them implement the National Education Policy 2009 in the most critical areas of early learning. The government has also recognized the urgency for healthy partnerships to disseminate the excellent national curriculum on Childhood Education. Compared to other countries in the region, Pakistan is the only one to have integrated katchi or nursery class in the formal primary schools and has developed materials for teachers, curriculum and teacher training. (www.moe.gov.pk)

The four policy actions as committed in the National Education Policy 2009 on ECE are:

1. Improvements in quality of ECE shall be based on a concept of holistic development of the child that provides a stimulating, interactive environment, including play, rather than a focus on regimes that require rote learning and rigid achievement standards.
2. ECE age group shall be recognised as comprising 3 to 5 years. At least one year pre-primary education shall be provided by the State and universal access to ECE shall be ensured within the next ten years.
3. Provision of ECE shall be attached to primary schools which shall be provided with additional budget, teachers and assistants for this purpose.
4. For ECE teachers, a two-year specialised training in dealing with young children shall be a necessary requirement.
5. This training shall be on the basis of ECE revised National Curriculum. The curriculum and support material for ECE shall take account of the cultural diversity of particular areas.

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) Public Trust designed a program for rolling out the actions for ECE training and curriculum in collaboration with Directorate of Staff Development Government of Punjab, Dept of Education of Rawalpindi & Multan districts, Ministry of Education and above all UNILEVER Pakistan. UNILEVER was tapped to for its excellent work in corporate social responsibility, deeply convinced that its responsibility to society is best met through education, health, hygiene and nutrition, the critical links in the human value chain. Its brand surf excel, ITA quickly converted the child centred slogans of khel masti...daagh to achay hotain hain... ideas to

convince the surf excel team to expand the campaign to school teachers for early years and also setting up public and school parks.

The Curriculum Wing of the Ministry of Education officially gave permission to widely print ECE curriculum in Urdu and English, a world class document which needs to be urgently introduced and implemented in all schools. This partnership has resulted in several interventions and support to 400 schools in the two districts.

- Training of 400 hundred primary school teachers and government master trainers (80% from government schools) to teach the National Curriculum for ECE 2007
- Guidelines on Implementation and a Learning Kit **Aao mil kay seekhain** for ECE in 400 schools
- Distribution of the ECE National Curriculum 2007 to all government schools in the district and to 100 private sector schools as well in Urdu & English.

The training was extended to rural and urban clusters alike in and tehsils for wider coverage in Rawalpindi, Gujjar Khan, Taxila, Murree, Shujabad, Jalalpur Pirwala and Multan

The EDOs and their training teams were delighted as were the teachers for this exceptional partnership for early education and requested that this may be extended to all teachers. They appreciated the materials and knowledge extended to their master trainers so that they can replicate this and also follow up on actual implementation in the schools. Dr. Saleem Mohammad, Deputy Education Adviser, Ministry of Education appreciated the contribution of ITA and Unilever team for this novel and much needed idea.

Professor Talat Khurshid principal of the Federal College of Education and Ms. Shahnaz Munir, Vice Principal of GCET, Islamabad were reassured to see such a systematic learning experience and requested that the same skills should be repeated in teacher training institutions of Pakistan. They handed over certificates to the trainees emphasizing that the early years of children (3-5years) is the most critical stage in their physical, linguistic, emotional and intellectual development of children. Professor Talat Khurshid praised the practical training provided by accomplished ITA trainers, to help teachers understand the what and how of ECE as well as time tabling, assessment methods and preparation of a conducive learning environment. Ms. Shahnaz said this program was certainly an example of a win-win program totally committed to the principles of learning through play, love, care and experience. It is a fine example of all partners for education working towards the same goal of promoting quality Education for All in Pakistan, the most critical need for a country facing so many crises of humanity and education.



Training teachers through activity -

