











INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The Promise of Early Childhood Development – Investing in the Early Years



CONFERENCE REPORT

25 – 26 September, 2019

Report Prepared by:

Ms. Mehwish Aziz, Manager Communications & Outreach Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood (PAFEC)

Edited by:

Ms. Khadija Khan, CEO Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood (PAFEC)

Designed by:

Mr. Ahmad Milad Amini Al-Jaffari

Partners and Supporters













Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Day 1- Wednesday 25 th September, 2019 Opening Session	3
Plenary I- A Life-course Perspective on ECD: The Nurturing Care Framework (good health, adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, security & safety, opportunities for early learning)	12
Session I: Policy Framework and Initiatives (Multi-sectoral Aspects of ECD)	18
Session II: Policy Framework and Initiatives (Multi-sectoral Aspects of ECD)	21
Session III: Policy Framework and Initiatives (Language Development in the Early Years)	24
Session IV: Policy Framework and Initiatives (Workforce Development in ECD)	27
Session V: What Works in ECD (What We Know Works Well: Noteworthy Inclusive Practices in ECD)	31
Session VI: What Works in ECD (Role of Technology in ECD: Noteworthy Practices)	33
Workshop: Fostering Language Skills in Early Childhood Setting: In the Context of Urdu	37
Plenary II-Thursday 26 th September, 2019 Transitioning from Home to ECD Centre, Pre-school and to Formal School	38
Session I: Role of Parents in ECD: Parental Education and It's Impact on Child Development	46

Session II: Transitioning from Home to ECD Centre, Pre-school and to Formal School	49
Session III: Transitioning from Home to ECD Centre, Pre-school and to Formal School (Teachers Role in ECD)	52
Session IV: What Works in ECD (What We Know Works Well: Role of Play in ECD)	55
Session V: What Works in ECD (What We Know Works Well: Note Worthy Practices)	58
Session: VI: Early Childhood Development: What's at Stake	61
Round-table Discussion	66
Poster Presentations	69
Closing Session	72
Appendix I: Conference Recommendations	7 5
Appendix II: Conference Programme	7 6
Appendix III: List of the Conference Core Committee & ToRs	89
Appendix IV: MoU Between Allama Iqbal Open University & Rupani Foundation, Pakistan	92

Executive Summary

This Report documents the proceedings of the two-day International Conference on Early Childhood Development (ECD), with the theme 'The Promise of Early Childhood Development – Investing in the Early Years'. The Conference was held during September 25-26, 2019, at the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Islamabad, Pakistan.

The Conference was organised by a consortium of national stakeholders, including Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood (PAFEC); Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad (AIOU); Rupani Foundation, Pakistan (RFP); SUN Secretariat, Nutrition Section, the Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform (MoPD&R); the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFE&PT); and the Karakoram International University, (KIU); in collaboration with UNICEF; Open Society Foundations (OSF); UNESCO; the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), Pakistan; the Association for Academic Quality (AFAQ), and other key partners and sponsors.

This Conference was the result of close collaboration and coordinated efforts among the above mentioned stakeholders and partners, who have been working together for the past many years to create awareness and demand for ECD, to prepare draft policy for integrating ECD in national planning and development strategies to promote professional networks and to mobilise institutional support for building a sound foundation to support ECD initiatives throughout Pakistan. Relevant government ministries, departments, and private development agencies and foundations have been involved in these endeavours, which have produced encouraging results. However, much more needs to be done, as the challenge ahead is to sustain this momentum and instil the importance of holistic ECD in our national development policies and programmes.

The specific purpose of the International Conference, 'Investing in the Early Years' was to foster and further consolidate the growing collaboration among national stakeholders and international partners. This collaboration seeks to promote, mainstream and institutionalise holistic ECD in Pakistan as a key crosscutting theme and to develop it as a critical missing link in national education, health, nutrition, childcare and protection and human development strategies.

Contributing to this Conference were a series of national level initiatives and events, including two national conferences, a two-day seminar on ECD at Karakoram International University (KIU), GilgitBaltistan and consultative sessions on ECD organised by the above organisations at different locations in the country. These initiatives have created a momentum for promoting holistic ECD in Pakistan through devising an independent ECD policy from zero to age eight, backed by necessary legislation.

As the previous conferences organised on ECCE in Pakistan, this Conference also had full support of the government, especially by the relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training; Ministry of Planning, Development & Reforms and the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination. The Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Shafqat Mehmood and Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Muhammad Azam Khan Swati attended the inaugural session.

Dr. Zafar Mirza, Special Advisor to Prime Minister for National Health Services only visited the ECD Expo due to another important engagement and could not participate in the Conference.

The inaugural session was addressed, among other distinguished participants, by the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Zia-UI-Qayyum and Mr. Nasruddin Rupani, Chairman, Rupani Foundation, besides educationists, researchers and practitioners in the field of ECD from across the country and abroad.

The two-day International Conference featured an opening session, plenaries with ten international speakers (eight face to face and two online presentations), and a closing session, as well as an exhibition of workable ECD Models focusing on a multi-sector approach to promoting holistic ECD from conception to eight years in the country. The Conference brought together over 580 participants, including legislators and policy-makers responsible for health, nutrition, child protection, education and social welfare. ECD experts from national and international bodies, practitioners, researchers, donors, academicians and parent representatives, deliberated and shared their ideas on the theme and sub-themes of the Conference to evolve an integrated, multi-sector approach, and how to operationalise it to promote holistic ECD in the country from conception to eight years.

In addition to the opening, closing and plenary sessions, the two-day International Conference featured 13 well-attended parallel sessions, a workshop on 'Fostering Language Skills in Early Childhood Settings', a round-table discussion and poster presentation on key topics.

Along with the Conference, an Expo on Early Childhood Development was also organised. The Expo was the first of its kind in Pakistan which featured early learning products, facilities, educational materials (digital & printed), branding, and franchise services from different parts of the world. This Expo brought a wide array of companies, manufacturers, distributors, suppliers, franchises and service providers working on Early Childhood Development on a common platform. The Expo provided a perfect platform for building brand awareness, disseminating and exchanging information related to Early Childhood Development products, trends and facilities. The Expo provided an opportunity for learning, interacting and growing network and business products through exchanging ideas and sharing experiences.









Opening Session Day 1

Wednesday 25th September, 2019

The opening session of the Conference was presided over by Mr. Muhammad Azam Khan Swati, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs. The session started with the recitation and translation of a verse from the Holy Quran, by Dr. Sana Ullah followed by a welcome address by Prof. Dr. Zia-Ul-Qayyum, Vice Chancellor AIOU.





Prof. Dr. Zia-Ul-Qayyum, Vice-Chancellor of the AIOU welcomed the Conference participants and speakers to the International Conference on ECD. He started off by thanking the Conference organisers and key supporters, particularly Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood, Rupani Foundation, Open Society Foundations, UNICEF, the Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan, AFAQ, UNESCO, the Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform and KIU for their dedication and support to the cause. He also thanked Mr. Muhammad Rafique Tahir, Joint Educational Advisor, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, for his leadership in initiating and promoting enabling activities for ECD in the country.



Prof. Zia-Ul-Qayyum said that ECD is relatively a new concept in Pakistan and we do not hear much about it in the academia and government organisations. He further added that previously Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) was used to address childcare and development, but this year it has been rephrased to Early Childhood Development (ECD), in order to give a holistic view to the phenomena of childcare and development. He further added that ECD encompasses health, nutrition, stimulation, protection, and other aspects of well-being of a child.

While talking about the governmental intervention in ECD, Prof. Zia-Ul-Qayyum said that when conferences like this take place, usually a disconnect between policymakers and academia is seen therefore not much is being heard about it in the acdemia but this

Conference is unique in the sense that it has been successful in bridging the gap between policy-makers and academia. Talking about the importance of ECD, he said that the phase from -1 till the age of eight is the most crucial period for child development, as the brain develops at a higher speed during these years so it is important to provide key nutrients which include childcare, nutrition and early learning to the brain during this phase to develop optimally. He added that health and education are the priority areas of the current government and the theme of the Conference fits well with the vision of the current government.

Prof. Zia-Ul-Qayyum concluded by saying that stunting is a serious issue in Pakistan. This Conference, he said, will address the issue of stunting in a multifaceted and multidimensional way, contributing to a productive dialogue and identifying actions necessary to address the issue. He concluded by thanking the audience and extended a special thanks to the international speakers of the Conference.

Mr. Nasruddin Rupani, Chairman, Rupani Foundation, presented the objectives and background of the Conference. Reflecting upon the theme of Conference, 'The Promise of Early Childhood Development-Investing in the Early Years', he said that it builds on the themes and results of the last two conferences. Highlighting the objectives of the Conference he said that the focus of this year's Conference is on integration of multidisciplinary ECD themes and initiatives in Pakistan. To do this, the Conference will aim to develop a road map for the early years from conception to age eight and identify specific actions for its realisation. Mr. Rupani said that providing opportunities to ECD stakeholders to understand the cross-cutting nature of ECD will enable them to recognise each sector's responsibility to promote holistic ECD in the country. He further said that the conference will provide opportunities for sharing the status of ECD in Pakistan and opportunities under the leadership of the new government and sharing of research-based knowledge on noteworthy ECD programmes, innovative approaches, models and best practices, advocating for implementing the Nurturing Care Framework in collaboration with communities, parents and civil society organisations to achieve the goal of holistic, inclusive and multi-sector ECD from conception to age eight.

Mr. Rupani said that the timing of this Conference could not have been more opportune and conducive. He said that the democratic government of Prime Minister Imran Khan is in the process of revamping the system of education, health, well-being and human development in Pakistan. Without a doubt, ECD can be a critical ingredient to this national strategy, as investments in the early years, are guaranteed to have the highest returns and realise most effective outcomes in all dimensions of human development: from improved health and nutrition, child protection to high quality education and skills development, productivity, growth and equal opportunity in Pakistan for the coming generations.



Mr. Rupani highlighted the misconceptions about ECD and clarified it by saying that we think ECD is limited only to a child's development, whereas it is the development and nurturing of the whole family, which ultimately leads to the development of healthy and productive citizens. Mr. Rupani further added that his foundation is working hard to address this misconception through involving parents, family members, community leaders and policymakers. Referring to the health of would be mothers, Mr. Rupani proposed the concept of minus two (-2), years, and asserted that early childhood development should start from minus two (-2), instead of conception till the age of eight and requested scholars, ECD practitioners, academicians and policymakers to re-define the appropriate age bracket for ECD. He said that a mother who is going to conceive a child should be healthy (mentally & physically) because her well-being will affect the health and development of the child.

Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui, the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Modern Languages, highlighted the challenges of twenty-first century. He maintained in his speech that credibility, curiosity, communication, critical-thinking, collaboration, adaptability and leadership are skills of the twenty-first century and said that these skills are equally applicable to ECD. Dr. Shahid added that our young children will go into jobs that we sitting here cannot even imagine, we do not know what those jobs will be but we have to prepare our young children by inculcating 21st century

skills in them.

While talking about early interventions in ECD, Dr. Shahid referred to the work of Dr. Laura Jana and said that it is important to foster Me skills, We skills, Why skills, Will skills, Wiggle skills, Wobble skills, and What If skills in children from an early age. He further elaborated that:

- Me skills: those skills pertaining to the self, such as self-control, introspection, and self-awareness
- We skills: these focus on working with others, like communication, teamwork, and empathy
- Why skills: this set focuses on fostering curiosity in young children, teaching them questioning and looking for understanding
- Will skills: a can-do attitude is the goal of these skills, aiming to encourage initiative and determination
- Wiggle skills: not usually considered a skill, wiggling is thought to power the Will and Why, by giving children the free reign to explore and channel energy into passions
- Wobble skills: this is all about recovery; skills that teach children to come back from failure and learn from it
- What If skills: passion and hypothetical are two things that are more necessary in this world



Dr. Shahid emphasised that ECD interventions should make sure that the above skills are inculcated in children starting very early through providing them with enabling environment to acquire and nurture these skills. He further said that kindergarten and elementary schools should integrate these skills into classrooms. He also drew attention to the risks of ECD and said that ECD centres can become enclosure of providing technologies which could lead to predetermined outcomes, over uniformity and normalisation of standards. These are serious issues and need attention. Furthermore, he said that it is important to prepare children to make them learn what is already known to them and what is not known to them, which is yet to be created. He concluded his talk by urging the audience to help children in seeing

through other eyes, the world which is known to others and not to them.

Mr. Muhammad Azam Khan Swati, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs was the guest of honour of the opening session. Mr. Azam Khan Swati commended the efforts of Rupani Foundation in ensuring the provision of quality ECD services in the country. He also extended his thanks to UNICEF, UNESCO, Open Society Foundations, and the Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan, for extending support to organise the Conference. Mr. Swati said that Pakistan is faced with several developmental issues and one of them is stunting. Explaining this issue further, he said that about 44% children in Pakistan are suffering from malnutrition and stunting, which is a serious threat for the future generations. The government especially the Prime Minister, he said, is fully aware of this issue and the government is making efforts to ensure best health and nutrition facilities are available to the children at an early age to let their brain develop properly.



Mr. Azam Khan Swati added that Pakistan is heading towards a population crisis, which is a challenge but also an opportunity because the largest percentage of Pakistan's population consists of young people. Investing in young children and involving our youth in the development of our children can turn this challenge into an opportunity as investment made in early years of life can yield highest returns, he said.

Discussing the benefits of ECD, the honourable minister said that it not only contributes towards the holistic development of the child but lays the foundation for lifelong learning, changes social and emotional behaviour of the child and affects the status of nutrition and health of the individual. He concluded his speech by saying that

investing in the human capital development is the key to address underdevelopment of any country and, assured his full support for ECD interventions in the country.

Dr. Aisha Yousafzai, Associate Professor of Global Health & Population at the Harvard T.H Chan School of Public Health delivered a virtual presentation entitled as *'The Promise of Early Childhood Development: Investing in the Early Years'*. In her presentation, she gave an overview of the science to action that supports young children's development. She focused on the following four key points:

- The science of Early Childhood Development
- Transforming science to action: The Nurturing Care Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Evidence from Pakistan: supporting children and supporting caregivers
- The way forward: investing in the building blocks for scale

She said that in the last twelve years Lancet has published three high level reviews on the global state of children's early development. The first series published in 2007 highlighted the global challenges of a high number of children unable to meet their developmental potential due to both biological risks, such as malnutrition and psycho-social risks, understood as inequality in early learning opportunities and maternal depression.

The second series published in 2011 highlighted good evidence from neuroscience about the importance of early intervention investments for brain development (including the first 1000 days of life from conception to two years) and there is also a growing body of evidence from large trails of what works in Pakistan in promoting early childhood development.

The third series highlighted that a life-course approach of investing in early childhood development by multisectors supported by strong national policies is crucial.

She said that globally, 250 million children are unable to meet their developmental potential in the first five years of life due to complex set of co-occurring risks and inadequate access to early interventions and children in the lower and middle-income countries suffer the most.



She suggested the following four key evidence-based strategies guided by the national intervention for ECD. Evidence for these strategies is drawn from neuroscience, economics and implementation of research:

- a. ECD intervention should begin early; early does not mean when children start school, early means starting with the first moments of life
- The interventions should support not only children but their parents and all other significant caregivers in the child's life
- The interventions should include a multi-sector approach to provide multiple protective inputs for nurturing care
- d. These multi-sector inputs should be supported by boosters

While talking about brain development, Dr. Yousafzai said that it is a robust process: genes provide the blueprint while the environment, experiences and the relationships in which children are exposed to, shape the quality of their brain development. The most rapid period of brain development, she said, occurs in the first three years of life during which the pathways for future health, learning and behaviour are established. In this period, she said, healthy brain development requires adequate nutrition to feed the brain, stimulation to spark learning and protection to buffer children against harm.

She further added that support for caregivers should build on their values and positive traditions of nurturing care strengthening their knowledge, experience and giving them practical advice for behaviour change, linking them with resources and giving them practical skills (e.g. vocational), enabling them to invest in their children. Dr. Yousafzai mentioned that ECD interventions are well recognised for improved maternal and child

health outcomes. In addition, it is significant to pay attention to maternal mental health, said, Dr. Yousafzai. She quoted that 15.6% and 19.8% of women in low and middle-income countries are at the risk of antenatal and post-partum depression, respectively.

To illustrate the importance of multiple inputs, she used nutrition and early development as an example and said that both inputs are necessary at the start of life. Nutrition interventions she said alone benefit child nutrition outcomes only and have a small benefit to children's development. Therefore, she urged the health sectors for creating holistic multi input packages of care following a life course approach such as provision of early nutrition and learning interventions in the first 1000 days and stable and timely transition to preschool and from preschool to primary schools for children to continue to benefit. She explained that there are global levels evidences of the benefits of such systematic interventions, including examples from Pakistan.

The example from Pakistan includes the programme to enhance ECD in the first 1000 days with Lady Health Workers (LHWs) in both Sindh and Punjab, and improving quality of pre- primary education, called Releasing Confidence & Creativity (RCC) designed by the Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan and implemented in Sindh, Balochistan, and Gilgit-Baltistan through partnerships with government and non-government stakeholders. The ECD interventions with LHWs focused on responsive care, play and communication providing practical guidance and counselling to parents and caregivers to overcome problems they encountered. This programme was delivered in routine monthly home visits and group sessions with routine LHW service while RCC focused on building the capacity of government and private schools to provide high quality and integrated ECD services. For moving ahead Dr. Yousafzai recommended the following key points:

- Multi-sector coordination These strategies she said address supply, demand, access and quality. For example, what mechanisms exist to support referrals from one sector to another (e.g. between health and social protection)
- Workforcedevelopment-ECDWorkforcedevelopment cannot be dependent on volunteers-alongside appropriate salaries, training and supervision systems must support professional development and career pathways to recruit and sustain a committed and skilled workforce
- Broaden data and evidence systems- Adopt tools

and integrated questions on ECD to track progress in national surveys

- Costing and financing for sustainable and scaled up program delivery – Demonstrated political will is to increase committed investments in the early years across sectors
- Advocacy and communication strategies to build demand - Large scale awareness campaigns are needed to raise awareness and demand
- Governance and leadership Governance structures are necessary for accountability

Dr. Yosuafzai concluded her presentation by saying that the case for investing in the early years is strong and evidence has clearly shown that a combination of multi-input packages is essential for nurturing care instead of single sector intervention. She said that there is a clear evidence how these multi-input interventions can be feasibly delivered and how demand is created for these interventions. She emphasized on greater investments to support the ECD workforce, paying attention to delivery of each component (e.g. health, nutrition, protection, responsive care-giving and early learning) effectively, and promote, cross-sectoral coordination among government and partners.

Mr. Muhammad Aslam Shaheen, Chief Nutritionist, SUN Focal Person, Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform updated the Conference participants on ECD status and developments in Pakistan. He introduced his topic by saying that investing in early years yields some of the highest rates of return to families, societies, and countries.



Moreover, he highlighted the factors that put children at the risk of poor development, including poverty, malnutrition, poor sanitation, severe childhood diarrhoea, iron deficiency, anaemia, substandard housing, domestic violence, harsh physical punishment and maternal depression. Mr. Aslam further said that nearly half (43%) children younger than age five in

low-income and middle-income countries are at risk of not attaining their development potential because of extreme poverty and stunting.

Talking about the directives and initiatives of SUN in Pakistan, Mr. Aslam mentioned that Pakistan Multisector Nutrition Strategy 2018-2025 (PMNS) has already been launched. While sharing the future plans of the Ministry, Mr. Shaheen stated that the Provincial and Regional Multi-sector Nutrition Strategies and the Multi-sector Nutrition Action Plan will be finalised soon.



He further added that PC 1 for Nutrition Improvement Initiative is almost finalised which focuses on stunting and other nutritional issues. Mr. Shaheen talked about the initiatives taken by the Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform to promote ECD which includes the formation of a high-level National Task Force (NTF) on ECD to develop an independent policy from age zero to eight. The NTF is comprised of representatives of all the relevant ministries at the national level and departments from provinces, including education, health, Scaling-Up Nutrition, child protection, nutrition, ECD experts, and representatives of UN agencies. This Task Force provides a national platform for developing ECD policy framework, planning, implementation strategy, and coordination. He concluded his speech by saying that presenters in this Conference will share their work around the diverse sub-themes of ECD, such as potential multi-sector collaborations for ECD, public-private partnerships, best practices in ECD, and networking from Pakistan and around the world.

Ms. Aida Girma, the Country Representative of UNICEF in Pakistan presented the UNICEF's perspective on Early Childhood Development in Pakistan. Ms. Girma started off by thanking the government of Pakistan and the organisers for hosting the International Conference on ECD. She added that the Conference reflects the strong

commitment and dedication towards the children of Pakistan. During her speech, Ms. Girma mentioned that capitalising on ECD is a wise investment for governments and societies. She said that it is an investment that guarantees healthier, better educated, and stronger work force. Ms. Girma quoted that for every dollar spent on ECD, the return on investment can be as high as thirteen dollars. Talking about the importance of early years, Ms. Girma mentioned that during these years almost one thousand brain cells connect every second and these connections are the building blocks of human brain. She added that UNICEF is fully cognizant of the importance of early years in a child's life for the development of a family and society at large. While talking about the steps to prioritise ECD in Pakistan, Ms. Girma stated that in 2018, UNICEF, WHO and the World Bank Group jointly developed the Nurturing Care Framework as a simple way of conceptualising and planning the ECD interventions. Ms.Girma in her speech said that her organisation is working closely with different government counterparts, both at national and provincial level, to ensure that the rights of the youngest children are upheld in Pakistan. She said that UNICEF strives to support the governments to invest in young children of deprived communities.



Moreover, she said that effective Early Childhood Development services should be accessible in the homes, schools, communities, and health clinics of deprived communities. At the end of her speech, Ms. Girma expressed hope that the Conference will be an opportunity to reflect on what can be done differently and better to increase the investment for ECD in Pakistan.

Dr. Jamal Thabet Nasher, Coordinator-Health Systems Development of World Health Organization (WHO) shared the perspective of WHO on ECD in Pakistan on behalf of Dr. Palitha Gunarathna Mahipala (WHO Representative in Pakistan). Dr. Nasher said that Early Childhood Development is a priority area for WHO.

- The first 1000 days, starting from conception, are a period of special sensitivity for child development
- The most formative experiences of young children come from Nurturing Care
- Early investment is essential, and benefits are lifelong and intergenerational
- The cost of inaction is huge
- Policies, information and services are essential to create enabling environments
- Multi-sectoral collaboration is essential, and the health sector has a special role to play



Health sector, he said, can take the lead in delivering healthy and multi-sectoral interventions for optimal development of the children. While sharing the initiatives of WHO, Dr. Nasher mentioned that WHO and UNICEF supported by Partnership for Maternal, New-born & Child Health (PMNCH) globally launched Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development in 2018.

'Nurturing, protecting and supporting babies from pregnancy to age three is essential to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and help countries achieve the targets of the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health' said, Dr. Nasher. WHO representative lauded the government of Pakistan's commitments towards strengthening human capital as well.

Ms. Nargis Sultana, Senior Programme Officer Education, Foundation Open Society Institute—Pakistan (FOSI) updated the gathering on the initiatives of Open Society Foundations for ECD in Pakistan. Ms. Nargis said that collaboration among various ECD stakeholders is important to advance the cause. She commended the role of Rupani Foundation and Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood (PAFEC) especially, Mr. Nasruddin Rupani, in patronising the efforts to promote ECD in Pakistan.



While talking about the initiatives of the Open Society Foundations for ECD in Pakistan she said that PARWAAN, and Education & Development Centre of Excellence has have been established in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education and Children's Global Network Pakistan. Through PARWAAN, course content on ECD has been developed for teacher trainers at Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad. Ms. Nargis also talked about the work that FOSI has done in collaboration with the Teachers Resource Centre, Karachi on developing content for creative thinking skills, and its incorporation in the curriculum and text-books.

Concluding her remarks, Ms. Nargis appealed to the government officials to implement Article 25A – Right to Education (RTE) of the Constitution, in its letter and spirit in Pakistan.

Prof. Dr. Attaullah Shah, Vice Chancellor, Karakoram International University, Gilgit-Baltistan delivered closing remarks and vote of thanks at the closing of the inaugural session. Prof. Attaulla Shah said that the journey of this Conference began a year ago when KIU and Rupani Foundation in collaboration with other partners organised a two-day seminar on ECD in Gilgit. At the concluding session of that seminar he said the partners announced to have this International Conference here at AIOU and today the dream came true because of the untiring efforts of the partners especially of Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood and AIOU.



He said that ECD is on the top agenda of the University for all the right reasons and the Department of Education has taken some key initiatives on it. He further expressed his concern that malnutrition and stunted growth are serious problems in GB, not only among children but the youth of GB particularly females are under-weight and under-height, he said. One of the main reasons for this problem, he said, is that the soil in GB is not favourable for nutrition. To deal with this issue, he said that the Department of Food & Agriculture at KIU is working closely with the Scaling-Up Nutrition to introduce additional nutrients and supplements.



Talking about collaborations for ECD he said that KIU is actively engaging partners like Rupani Foundation, Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood, Hashoo Foundation, the Aga Khan University, Pakistan and the relevant departments of Gilgit — Baltistan, particularly the Department of Education to build workforce for ECD and to create awareness among communities about the importance of ECD. He also shared his plan for initiating joint efforts with AIOU, using technology for distance learning/education including ECD.

PLENARY I

A Life-course Perspective on ECD: The Nurturing Care Framework (good health, adequate nutrition, responsive care-giving, security & safety, opportunities for early learning)

Presenters:

Dr. Ahsan Qadeer, Consultant, World Health Organization (WHO)

Ms. Caroline Arnold, Early Childhood Specialist & Educationist, Former Director Education, Aga Khan Foundation, Geneva

Dr. Carol Aubrey, Professor Emeritus, University of Warwick, Institute of Education, Birmingham, UK

Mr. Badar Uzaman, Programme Policy Officer, Federal SUN Secretariat, Planning Commission of Pakistan

Proceedings

As the first presenter for Plenary-I, **Dr. Ahsan Qadeer**, representative of WHO, made a presentation entitled, 'Survive, Thrive and Transferring Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development'. He started off his presentation by sharing the following key messages:

- The first 1000 days, starting from conception, is a period of special sensitivity for child development
- The most formative experiences of young children come from Nurturing Care
- Early investment is essential and benefits are lifelong and intergenerational
- The cost of inaction is huge
- Policies, information, and services are essential to create enabling environments
- Multi-sectoral collaboration is essential, and the health sector has a special role to play



Talking about the strategic initiatives of the World Health Organization and the unique convergence of evidence and political momentum for ECD for the last couple of decades, Dr. Qadeer shared 'The Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health 2016 - 2030' which expands the scope from child's survival to child's health, and development. Adding further he said that WHO, UNICEF, and World Bank, in collaboration with other partners have developed the Nurturing Care Framework (NCF), which was launched at the time of 71st World Health Assembly in 2018.

He presented the following road map as outlined in $\ensuremath{\mathsf{NCF}}\xspace$

- Why efforts must begin in the earliest years, from pregnancy to age three?
- How nurturing care protects children from the worst effects of adversity?
- What caregivers need in order to provide nurturing care?

He threw light on the components and enabling environment for nurturing care, explaining that nurturing care components are interrelated action areas, including good health, adequate nutrition, responsive care giving, security & safety. Opportunities for early learning and enabling environment consists of caregivers capabilities, empowered communities, support services and enabling policies. The Framework, he said, is for a broad range of stakeholders which includes national policy-makers, programme managers, service providers, education institutions, professional associations, academia, parliamentarians, community leaders, civil society groups, development partners, funding initiatives, private sector, media, families, parents, and other caregivers.

NCF is aligned with the five key targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which directly address ECD, aiming at providing a world in which every child is able to develop optimally. For moving forward, he recommended the following four strategic action areas:

- Lead and invest
- Focus on families with a special emphasis on the needs of families with disable children and maternal mental and physical health. Strengthen services
- Monitor progress
- Use data and innovate

Ms. Caroline Arnold, former Director, Education, Aga Khan Foundation, Geneva, started off her presentation, by lauding Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood (PAFEC) for its excellent work to promote ECD. The title of her presentation was 'Bringing up Children in an Uncertain World. Who's Right? Whose Rights?'. Highlighting the importance of early childhood, she said that it lays critical foundations for a person's entire life — physical and mental health, emotional security, cultural, and personal identity and competencies are all formed in these early years of life. This is a finding demonstrated not only by the latest advanced research in neuroscience and epigenetic but also by nutrition and

child development studies and programme evaluation data, including from AKDN's own programmes, she said.



Explaining the connection between genes and environment, Ms. Arnold said that genes listen to the environment and the environment adapts the genetic blueprint. Elaborating further she said that nurturing, stimulation and nutrition in early life interact with genetic predispositions to sculpt the architecture of the brain and its neural pathways, influencing learning, behaviour, physical and mental health for life.

Ms. Arnold presented some basic principles for Early Childhood Development such as the context in which children grow should be supportive of children's overall development - physical, cognitive, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual. She urged to treat children equally as developing to their full potential is the right of every child. Support to children she said should be built on what parents and other caregivers already know and do, instead of starting everything a fresh as there is no one right way of raising children. She emphasised on drawing upon cultural strengths using indigenous knowledge and creating new knowledge and ideas, equipping children with values, attitudes, knowledge and skills, to interact with their uncertain world so that they are able to contribute to their families, communities and wider society.

Talking about capacity building materials for parents she talked about the parenting packages developed by WHO & UNICEF and said that they help parents/ caregivers develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to support their children's overall development and access services such as pre- and ante-natal care. They reinforce what parents/caregivers already do well and provide a platform for sharing successes, problem-solving, and exploring what else they can do to create enjoyable interactions with their children and nurture their children's growth and development.

Talking about the role of early relationships of children, she said that they lay down pathways influencing one's entire life, creating intergenerational consequences for well-being, productivity and social cohesions so it is essential to build healthy relationships e.g., empathy, gratitude, emotional intelligence, social belonging right from the beginning. She highlighted some key challenges of school readiness approaches globally; she said a narrow focus on measuring cognitive and academic achievement/learning outcomes, judging children by their literacy test scores and ignoring the personal qualities of children, the fun part of learning and their independent thinking is a 'Poison Pill'. Quoting from research she said, 'pushing children academically begins to backfire as soon as they are required to think more independently and take more responsibility for their own learning' (Marcon, 2002).

Emphasising on this point she posed the question, 'how do we support countries to move forward with the rapid expansion of ECD programmes without having them to be transformed into a developmentally inappropriate downward extension of Grade 1'? She stressed upon realising the long-term consequences of the choices we make for our children. She said that we must pay attention to address systemic/structural social justice issues that exclude and marginalise certain children and families leaving them in the vicious circle of poverty. She concluded her presentation by recommending the following key strategies and emphasising to give attention to:

- Pre- conception to age eight
- Quality workforce development
- Inclusion reaching the marginalized
- Nurturing the qualities, we care about
- Recognising and building on strengths
- Longitudinal research
- Media to highlight good practice
- Partnerships across sectors, levels, government/ civil society to scale up

Mr. Shafqat Mahmood, Federal Minister for the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training was the chief guest of the inaugural session and Plenary I. He started his speech by commending the role of Rupani Foundation especially, Mr. Nasruddin Rupani for his efforts in promoting ECD across the country. He also congratulated AIOU for organising the Conference in collaboration with other partners. He said that ECE is something new to him as he never realised that early childhood education starts even before the child

is born. He further added that there are elements of ECE which he is learning these days and he is pleasantly surprised to learn how important it is to start early education of children. This area needs a great attention of the government and of all key partners sitting here, he said.



He shared that the Ministry for Federal Education & Professional Training is in the process of developing a single National Curriculum for the country in which he said ECE will be given the due consideration. He further explained that though the mandate of the government is to give free and compulsory education to children from age 5 – 16 but since ECE is so important for children therefore, it will be given the due consideration in the curriculum with the help of the experts in this field.

He further said that there are several challenges for the education system in Pakistan including rural-urban gap, income disparities, and lack of awareness especially about ECE. He reiterated to focus on giving awareness to parents especially mothers about the importance of ECE so that they are able to help their children start learning before they access to formal education. The other model which he said can be beneficial in promoting ECE especially in remote areas is effective use of technology as demonstrated in the ECD Expo outside. He said we can reach to thousands and thousands of children and their parents through technology. He assured his full support to implement effective approaches to promote ECD in the country.

Dr. Carol Aubrey, Professor Emeritus, University of Warwick delivered a presentation entitled as 'How Can We Manage Multi-agency Contexts for Promoting Early Childhood Development?' Dr. Aubrey started off by saying that exposure to risks (poverty, disease, parental stress) places the child on a trajectory of poor development and exclusion. She further said

that all countries should be supported in efforts to promote investments in order to fulfil children's rights. Dr. Aubrey said that back in 1997, the UK government took an initiative called *'Child Poverty Pledge'* to eradicate child poverty. It comprised of local community-focused early interventions initially targeting 250 poorest neighbourhoods which doubled to 500 by 2000.

She further said that in 2004 Children's Act (2004) was designed to provide the legal basis for social services and other agencies dealing with issues relating to children. She added that the Children's Act (2004) brought children's services together under the Minister for Children and a Director for Children's Services at local authority level. Describing the key services provided by the *'Child Poverty Pledge'* Dr. Aubrey shared the following points:

- Information and advice to parents
- Outreach and family support services
- Drop-in sessions and activities for parents, careers and children
- Child and family health services
- Links to 'Job-centre Plus' and employment advice
- Support for childminders
- Additional local needs might be added to this



While talking about the impact of the programme she shared the following outcomes:

- Children's centres initiative was successful as they played a crucial role in the development of services
- Popular with parents and families and high take-up
- By 2010 a new Coalition government showed renewed interest in early intervention, families with complex problems and commitment to children's centres
- After 2010 widespread public concern about closures at a time of austerity
- 2013 training of new early years teacher and expansion of free childcare of 15 hours a week for

2-year-olds living in poverty (3-4-year-olds enjoyed 15 hours of free education and working parents may gain further 15 hours of childcare)

Dr. Aubrey, shared key findings from the 2015 Oxford University Evaluation of *'Children Poverty Pledge'*:

- Centres can promote broad benefits to family, mother and child
- May translate into child outcomes if families engage with high-quality childcare
- Continued need for 'early help' strategies, health visitor contact and outreach services
- Universal services alone cannot combat social disadvantage
- Shift in target focus to most deprived demands highly skilled and trained staff
- To work effectively substantial time and expenditure is required
- New roles/responsibilities needed to be made explicit
- Joint training is important
- Information-sharing, budget allocation and resourcing a major challenge
- Parents moved into paid work
- Modest improvement in family functioning and child outcomes (less harsh discipline in the home, low rates of family chaos and richer home environment
- Governmental role is essential in achieving the outcomes
- Good design and planning ongoing adjustments are crucial in attaining the targets
- Evaluation allows learning and improvement in implementation
- Multi-dimensional programmes are needed
- Community participation increases ownership

Based on the lessons learnt from the 'Child Poverty Pledge' programme, Dr. Aubrey said that an integrated approach best addresses multiple vulnerabilities. She further asserted that development and strengthening of ECD must take a multi-faceted and coordinated approach because integrated, multi-dimensional ECD best addresses the social and economic vulnerabilities that are faced by children and their families. Furthermore, she emphasised on engaging key players including government, NGOs and academia in integrated approaches as one of the key lessons UK has learnt.

Mr. Badar Uzaman, Programme Policy Officer at SUN Secretariat presented an update on the ECD Policy Framework for Pakistan being developed by the Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform. He started his presentation by sharing the scope

of the ECD Policy Framework which includes:

- Identifying the existing approaches & strategies for ECD in the country
- Defining institutional and administrative structures to implement the framework
- Orientating the existing sectoral strategies and guidelines for children & caregivers particularly aged between 0-8 years
- Raising the visibility of ECD for young children and their families
- Identifying strategies to address the needs for optimal development

Sharing the process and journey of the policy formulation, he said that the process consisted of five phases:

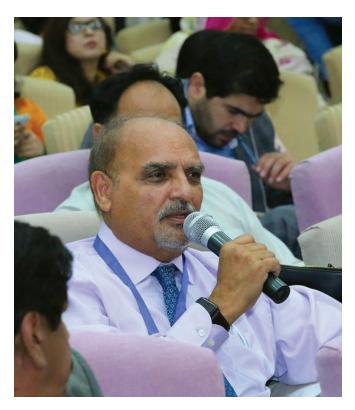
- a. Preliminary Phase- formation of the National Task Force supported by a technical resource person and a technical working group
- b. Analysis & Consultation-mapping exercise was carried out which included extensive review of ECD literature global & national and review of the existing models, interventions and services available, interviews of key ECD experts/informants (44 individuals), focused group discussions (239 participants) and provincial consultations (279 multi-sectoral participants
- c. Draft Policy Framework prepared & presented at the National Policy Dialogue - jointly organised by MoPD&R & UNICEF on 28th & 29th October 2019
- d. Final Draft Review & endorsement by TWG & NTF this is yet to happen
- e. Implementation of the Policy Framework includes developing action plan with clear targets & support mechanism, communication strategy, advocacy plan, monitoring & reporting



Talking about the key findings of the mapping exercise, Mr. Badar said that limited knowledge on the importance of ECD even among professionals prevails. He further said that lack of inter-sectoral coordination, integrated ECD services, and responsive care-giving knowledge & practices aggravates the situation.

He concluded his presentation by highlighting some opportunities which the ECD Policy Framework can create. He said that the much neglected ECD sector will have an independent policy which will enable the government to develop focused action plans and allocate adequate budget leading to a multi-sector approach for ECD interventions.

Concluding his remarks, he said that he is looking forward to joining the ECD experts to deliberate on the key themes of the Conference, such as leadership, management and governance of ECD, assessment practices, pedagogies, and use of ICT in ECD. In the end, he thanked all the participants and wished them a very successful conference.





Concurrent Session I

Policy Framework and Initiatives (Multi-sectoral Aspects of ECD)

Presenters:

Dr. Ghazala Rafique, Director – Human Development Programme, Aga Khan University, Karachi

Mr. Yusaf Khan, PhD Scholar, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad

Dr. Zaheer Ahmed, Lecturer, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad

Dr. Ghazala Rafique, Director – Human Development Programme, Aga Khan University started the concurrent session with an informative presentation. Her presentation was titled as *'Early Childhood Development and Learning Benchmarks for Pakistan (ECDL-BP)'*. The presentation aimed at sharing the Early Childhood Benchmarks in Pakistan with the Conference participant and seeking their suggestions/ recommendations through detailed discussion to improve them further.



Dr. Ghazala stated that benchmarks are important to track the trends and learning outcomes. After sharing the tool, she presented the details of her study which she conducted to test the benchmarks. The sample of her study consisted of 313 children from public and private schools of Karachi. While presenting the development and layout of the ECDL-BP, Dr. Ghazala shared that eight domains of learning and development were selected as indicators. They include gross & fine motor skills, language and emerging literacy, cognitive, social, emotional development, early mathematics, creative arts, and world knowledge.

Dr. Ghazala also highlighted the sample items against each domain which were measured. In her presentation, Dr. Ghazala highlighted the interaction between family monthly income and children's mean Early Childhood Development and Learning (ECDL) scores. She shared that the children coming from better off families scored better, as compared to the children coming from the families whose monthly income is less than five thousand rupees. She further said that the nurturing and stimulation by the educated parents is better which results in higher school scores of their children. Key findings of Dr. Ghazala's presentation:

 Private school children – higher performance on all the domains of Early Childhood Development and Learning Benchmarks for Pakistan (ECDL-BP)

- Location of the school matters children studying in slum areas schools showed lower performance
- First born children showed better performance
- Children of educated mothers scored better than mothers who have no schooling
- Children whose fathers have higher education performed better
- Mother working status and child's gender did not show any effect on child's performance

Concluding the presentation, Dr. Ghazala said that Early Childhood Development and Learning (ECDL) Benchmark is a valid, reliable, and culturally appropriate tool with good psycho-motor properties. She said ECDL Benchmark:

- Is ready for use
- Can track the early child development and learning at the population level
- Can be used to assess school readiness
- Is available in both English and Urdu languages
- Can be used for national and global comparisons and evaluation of SDG 4.2.1

Mr. Yousaf Khan, PhD scholar made a presentation titled as 'Critical Study of the Psycho-physical Bases of Behaviour in Early Childhood Care and Education'. His study aimed at analysing the psycho-physical bases of behaviour in children for devising strategies for care, training, and educational practices at early years. The study investigated the basic components of stimulus and response, central and peripheral nervous system, senses, and their sensation, to assess the characteristics of psycho-physical system.



While explaining the methodology of his study Mr. Yousaf said it was historical and qualitative in nature, consisting of extensive and intensive review of various disciplines: biology, psychology, sociology, computer science, and cognitive science. Based on data analysis, interpretation, and inferences, Mr. Yousaf drew that the individual senses and nervous system facilitate and hinder the psycho-physical growth and development of behaviour. That is why the child needs special care, healthy child rearing practices, training, and education at the early stages of childhood development; supported by strategically devised and inclusive programmes.

Mr. Zaheer Ahmed, Lecturer at AIOU, presented his paper titled as 'A Study to Judge the Pedagogy and Curriculum Understanding of ECED Teachers'. He started off by saying that Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is the most important phase of children's academic life as it provides the basis for cognitive, moral, social, and emotional development. Considering the importance of ECD, he said that greater emphasis is laid on the training of principals and teachers worldwide, to ensure excellence in academics.



Mr. Zaheer's study aimed at investigating the capacity and understanding of the teachers to implement ECEC curriculum in government schools of Punjab. While explaining methodology of the study he said that a questionnaire consisting of 21 items based on the curriculum was developed. The instrument was given to 17 experts in the field of education, he added.

Mr. Zaheer concluded his presentation by saying that a substantial majority of teachers in Punjab do not have the proper understanding of ECEC curriculum, and potential to teach content of ECEC; thus, there is a need to hire qualified and trained staff to teach ECEC curriculum.

The session chair, **Ms. Caroline Arnold,** Early Childhood Specialist & Educationist concluded by saying that Early Childhood Development & Learning Benchmarks (ECDL-BP) will be helpful in reporting of the SDG 4.2.1, which targets on young children's care, development, and early learning. She expressed her pleasure to see the excellent interventions in ECD such as developing a tool like ECDL-BP, research on key themes like ECD teacher's pedagogy, and understanding of curriculum in Pakistan. She reiterated to continue these efforts by building on the strengths of each initiative and creating partnerships to have multiplier effects.



Concurrent Session II

Policy Framework and Initiatives (Multi-sectoral Aspects of ECD)

Presenters:

Ms. Saira Shahab, Project & Training Manager & Ms. Tabina Jabeen, Member of Training & Development Team, Teachers Resource Centre (TRC)

Ms. Saman Mujeeb, Research Administrator, Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Research Network (MNCHRN)

Ms. Shabana Dilawar, PhD Scholar, International Islamic University

Dr. Hana Mahmood, CEO, Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Research Network (MNCHRN)

Ms. Tabina Jabeen along with Ms. Saira Shahab, faculty members of the Teachers Resource Centre, Karachi, talked about 'Fostering Critical Thinking in Early Years'. They started off by describing thinking skills as tools that help children to go beyond acquisition of given knowledge and helping them creating their own knowledge and ideas. They further said that early years of life play a crucial role in developing critical thinking skills in children. They said that the most rapid period of brain developments take place in the first three years of life, and the pathways for future health, learning, and behaviour are established during this phase. Capitalising on the potential of the child's brain during this phase, they said it is important to give new skills to young children as well as nurture their natural skills. These skills include curiosity, communication, teamwork, and empathy.

They further highlighted that early experiences of children stay with them for the rest of their life; therefore, it is important to expose children to a variety of concepts and learning opportunities through engaging learning activities, giving them freedom of choice. Concluding their presentation, they said that it is the need of the hour to inculcate credibility, curiosity, communication, critical-thinking, collaboration, adaptability, leadership, and problem solving in children at early years.

Ms. Saman Mujeeb of Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Research Network (MNCHRN) made a presentation titled as 'Understanding the Reasons for Delay in Seeking Care for Pneumonia Among Caregivers of Children Under Five in Pakistan'. She started off by saying that pneumonia, a preventable acute respiratory infection, contributes to 16% of the total under five mortality in Pakistan, and the country is ranked among the top five countries contributing to this state. She further said that each year around 90,000 children die due to pneumonia in the country. Evidence shows that over 38% of these deaths occur in households; due to lack of knowledge regarding prevention and delayed care.



Ms. Saman shared that her study aims at establishing an understanding of associated factors of delayed care of under-five pneumonia. While discussing the methodology of the study, she said that, it comprises of three phases:

- a. Preparatory Phase: encompasses of systematic review, formative research, mobile app & scheduler development and pre-intervention survey
- Intervention Phase: covers trainings of the LHW's and execution of mhealth (mhealth or mobile health defined by WHO as provision of health services and information via mobile and wireless technologies)
- Post Intervention Phase: includes post intervention surveys, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, and reporting

Ms. Saman concluded her presentation by saying that Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Research Network (MNCHRN) will conduct a study using the abovementioned methodology. The results of the study she said will inform policymakers and managers to translate it into actions to reduce pneumonia related morbidity and mortality and developing responsive programme strategies.

Ms. Shabana Dilawar, PhD Scholar delivered a presentation titled as 'The Effect of Story-telling Method on the Achievement of English Subject at Early Years'. Ms. Shabana started off by saying that teaching of English is a challenging task for Pakistani teachers due to the lack of training and inadequate language skills. She further said that there are many methods of teaching English in which storytelling is the best way of teaching for young learners as they love stories. Ms. Shabana continued that children are always eager to listen to stories and even they have their own stories to tell when they meet their friends.

Ms. Shabana's study aimed at investigating the extent to which story telling can improve the young learners' cognitive domain at sub level of knowledge, comprehension, application, and analysis. Her sample consisted of 60 children from Grade I - V of Islamabad Model School, G/10-2. These 60 children she said, were divided into experimental and controlled groups. A pre and post-test of these children was conducted. Sharing the results of the study, she said that it proved that all the children in the experimental group, taught through storytelling, performed better in knowledge, comprehension, application and analysis achievement scores than the controlled group who were taught through conventional method.

Concluding her presentation, she said that story-telling method is more effective than conventional methods to teach English language at primary level. She further suggested to train language teachers to use this method properly using relevant materials. This method can be beneficial for young children in learning language and vocabulary, she added.

Dr. Hana Mahmood, CEO, Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Research Network, made a presentation on 'Exploration of Pneumonia Related Policy Formation and Implementation in Pakistan'. Dr. Hana shared that pneumonia contributes to 16% of under-five mortality in Pakistan with annually around 65,000 children dying due to the disease. She said that over the last three decades, pneumonia control policies have been formulated and implemented through various programmes in Pakistan. However, these programmes, she said, have not been successful in eradicating the disease. Dr. Hana substantiated her claims by mentioning Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) Control Programme launched in 1989 and Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) launched in 1998. Despite these initiatives' pneumonia mortality remained unchanged in the country, she added.



She continued that in order to address the gap and to improve the understanding of the process of pneumonia related policy formulation for achieving better outcomes Maternal, Neonatal, and Child Health Research Network will launch a study. She said that the study will be conducted in two phases, Phase I and Phase II. Phase I will include:

Interviews of relevant and influential players involved in the process

Content analysis of pneumonia related policy and programme documents

In-depth analysis of 23 government endorsed policy/ program documents While talking about the criteria of in-depth interviews, Dr. Hana further added that respondents who are directly involved or knowledgeable about pneumonia related policy environment belonging to Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, KPK, and Islamabad will be included. She continued that respondents belonging to Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) will not be the part of the process. She further said that reasons of their exclusion are newly developed governance system in GB, separate governance in AJK, and security threats in FATA.

She concluded her presentation by saying that the research is commissioned by the UK National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Global Health Research Unit on Respiratory Health (RESPIRE). She further said that after the completion of the study findings and recommendation will be shared with public through various platforms.

Mr. Aien Shah, Head of Education, Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan concluded the session with the following key messages:

- Learning, teaching, and parenting heavily depends on the nature of relationship between children and parents and teachers; healthy and deep relationship always boosts the child's confidence and trust; leading to positive learning outcomes
- Encouraging children to explore, discover new things, and giving them the liberty of asking questions, helps them become critical thinkers
- Story telling if used as a teaching method in its true sense has a proven impact on child's creativity and comprehension.
- Focusing on primary health care, nutrition, and early learning helps children grow in a balanced manner



Concurrent Session III

Policy Framework and Initiatives (Language Development in the Early Years)

Presenters:

Mr. Ejaz Shah, Programme Director, I Can Read, Singapore

Dr. Sadruddin Qutoshi, Assistant Professor, Karakorum International Univeristy, Gilgit-Baltistan

Ms. Farah Ilyas, Academic Advisor, Ala-ud-Din Academy-Girls High School Baghbanpura, Lahore

Ms. Shamaila Haleem, Lecturer, G-10/4 Model College for Girls, Islamabad

Mr. Ejaz Shah, Programme Director – I Can Read Singapore, delivered a presentation on 'The Role of Language and Communications Skills Development at Early Years'. In the first part of his presentation, Mr. Ejaz discussed the establishment and evolution of I Can Read. He said that I Can Read System originally came into being through research conducted between 1995 and 2000 by Antony Earnshaw and Annabel Sergeant. Moreover, Mr. Ejaz added that I Can Read is Asia's leading literacy provider. He substantiated this by saying that they have over 270,000 success stories in more than 160 centres, spanning over to 14 countries, in the last 19 years. Presenting I can Read as a success model, he said that the teaching methodology and the courses being offered make the model a unique and effective one: Below are the key elements of the model:

- I Can Read uses a specialist coding system
- First reading system in the world to use sound and letter clusters in a unique manner
- Uses visual cues to aid language acquisition
- Helps in improving students' retention and transition rates

The courses he said are:

- Based on ability
- Focused on individual progress
- Structured and progressive
- Engaging, fun, and activity-centered



Mr. Ejaz established that due to the above interventions their students learn to read independently and become fluent in reading and speaking English. He further said that English literacy as communication skill is vital for the achievement of desired results within the framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He continued that children entering school with some proficiency in English, have generally better educational outcomes than those with little or no knowledge of English. He recommended to adopt I Can Read's model to teach English language to young children in Pakistan.

Dr. Sadruddin Qutoshi, Assistant Professor at Karakoram International University, Gilgit-Baltistan, made a presentation titled as *'Perception of Teachers About Their Role in Improving Children Reading Skills in English Subject at ECD Level'*. Dr. Sadruddin started off by sharing some figures with the audience from his research. He cited that 52% of children cannot identify letters in their local languages and 89% of children cannot read words in English at Grade I and II. He said that these figures show that it is essential to develop reading habits in children at their early ages.



Dr. Sadruddin said that the role of teachers is very crucial in developing reading skills. He further elaborated by highlighting that effective teaching by properly trained teachers can better develop reading skills of children. It is crucial to teach young children sounds, recognition of letters, making words, and sentences at a young age using relevant materials and creating reading environment, he said.

Talking about the methodology of his study, he said that case study approach, semi-structured interviews; classroom observations of two ECD teachers and four primary school English teachers were conducted to capture qualitative experiences, opinions, beliefs, and perceptions of purposefully selected researchers.

The findings of the research, he said confirmed the following:

- Teachers play a vital role is in developing children's English reading skills
- Reading skills are developed right from early years
- It is important to create a reading culture among young children to develop reading skills

Ms. Farah Ilyas, Academic Advisor at Ala-ud-Din Academy-Girls High School Baghbanpura, Lahore presented her paper titled as 'Effects of News Paper Reading on Vocabulary Development Among Early Graders'. The purpose of her study as she shared was to see the effect of newspaper reading on vocabulary development, comprehension, and pronunciation of children among early graders. The Pre-test,Post-test Equivalent Control Group Design was her methodology. The sample of her study consisted of Grade II children of Baghbanpura, Lahore. Describing her study, she said that a questionnaire was developed for testing vocabulary of the children.

In the light of data collected, Ms. Farah argued that the experimental group was considerably upgraded to an average total of acquiring fresh words, understanding and pronunciation that formed vocabulary development than the control group which showed that reading newspaper can enhance learning process and critical thinking abilities of children. She further said that newspaper reading can play a crucial role in developing vocabulary of children following a logical sequence listening, speaking, reading with understanding and correct pronunciation. Ms. Farah revealed that newspaper articles help learners acquire reading abilities at early years. Therefore, she recommended that kids should be immersed in fresh words at early years, for prolonged periods, both in oral and written which is key to building vocabulary.

Ms. Shamaila Haleem, Lecturer at G-10/4 Model College for Girls, Islamabad presented her paper titled as 'Information Processing Approach of Cognitive Development in Early Childhood: Need and Value'. Ms. Shumaila started her presentation by defining cognitive development. She said that it deals with thinking, concepts, memory, perception, language, problem solving, and information processing. She further said that cognitive development is a very important aspect of a child's mental development and needs much attention at early years. Describing the information processing approach — theory of

cognitive development, she said, is about manipulating, monitoring, and processing of the information. The aim of her study was to unearth the need and value of information-processing approach of cognitive development in early childhood. She used qualitative method and Interpretivist Paradigm to understand the cognitive development of children.

She concluded her presentation by suggesting that information processing approach is very much needed and valuable in the early years. She argued that there are many educational implications of information processing approach that can help teachers in cognitive development of their children, such as making connections, coding information, making chunks of information, retrieving, retaining, and prioritsing information.

The session chair, **Ms. Brenda Taggart,** Honorary Senior Research Associate Principal Investigator/Research Coordinator, concluded that:

- About 52% of children not being able to identify letters is their native language is alarming
- Ms. Taggart suggested for further investigation to devise appropriate strategies to help children develop necessary language skills
- Teachers certainly play a crucial role in the learning process
- Building vocabulary through newspapers is an innovative idea
- Cognitive development underpins the learning process, reading, and vocabulary skills
- It is important to create happy, loving, and nurturing environment for a child's learning



Concurrent Session IV

Policy Framework and Initiatives (Multi-sectoral Aspects of ECD)

Presenters:

Mr. Hamza Sarfraz, Research Associate, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi

Ms. Zenab Mohammad, Master Trainer, Badri's Institute of Resource and Development

Ms. Naheed Wasi, Director, Institute of Early Childhood Education and Development (IECED)

Mr. Hamza Sarfraz from Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi made a presentation titled as 'Quality, Equity, and Governance for Early Years: Lessons from Punjab Pakistan'. In the first half of his presentation, Mr. Hamza argued that ambiguity exists around what constitutes the provision of ECE in Punjab as multiple pre-primary streams are operating under traditional names such as katchi, nursery or pakki along with the new budgeted scheme of formal ECE classrooms.



Mr. Hamza established in his presentation that parents are aware of high ECE returns; however, there is little counselling for parents on parental education related topics. He further said that regular meetings between parents and teachers are organised and these meetings are mostly used for negative/complaints about the child instead, of utilising them for important positive information flows. Mr. Hamza shared the following important statistics of the ECE grades in Punjab:

- Only 34% of children aged between 3-5 are enrolled in official ECE programmes (MICS 2017-18)
- Nearly 52% children in rural Punjab are enrolled in formal ECE programmes (ASER 2018) – 62% in government schools and 38% in private sector
- Girl's enrolment is less than boys' enrolment (ASER 2018)
- Of those enrolled in ECE, older children (5+) are more likely to be enrolled than younger ones (ASER 2018/ ELP-Punjab 2018)

Mr. Hamza also shared the following development outcomes in early years in Punjab:

- Nearly 59% of children aged 3-5 are developmentally on track in 3 out of 4 domains (MICS 2017-18)
- Only 27% are developmentally on track in literacynumeracy domain and 52% in socio-emotional domain (MICS 2017-18)
- Nearly 33% had foundational reading skills and just

5% had foundational numeracy skills (MICS 2017-18/ percentage of children aged 7-14)

He also shared the below details of budget allocation for ECE in Punjab:

- ECE financing <1% of the total development budget for education
- 225 million PKR are allocated in Fiscal Year 2019 2020 for introduction of ECE in 2250 schools

Talking about the quality of physical environment, curriculum, and development of children in early learning he shared the following findings:

a. Physical Environment:

Government ECE programmes have relatively better facilities than non-government programmes such as:

- More classroom spaces
- Play areas for gross motor skills
- Seating/furniture and access to age-appropriate writing surfaces

b. Personal and Social Development:

- Slightly more than half of the children (50.4% in government and 57.7% in non-government programmes) gave appropriate answers for perspective taking/empathy
- Most children (79.1% in government and 84.6% in non-government programmes) were able to name things that made them happy and unhappy
- c. ECE Service Provision: Findings from Informant Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) Public Schools:
- Provision of a strong curriculum, teaching, and learning materials
- Head teacher, teacher, caregiver/assistant, parents, and school council training programme as part of the ECE support package
- Hiring and training of ECE assistant teacher/caregiver paid through NSB

d. Private Schools:

- Irregular provision of curriculum, teaching and learning materials
- Lack of caregiver/assistant
- Teachers from non-government schools are relatively less qualified

- e. Financing of Early Childhood: Findings from the MODEL Survey and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):
- No school fees in government/Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) schools but parents are burdened with additional charges (such as uniform, books, transport etc.)
- School fees in private schools along with other charges paid by parents; pressure on household finances with low disposable incomes
- Inability to translate financial contributions into an effective voice for accountability, especially in nonstate schools
- Lack of disposable financial resources restricts alternative options for parents and diminishes exit power
- Space for collective and voluntary financial contributions by parents and communities

Ms. Zenab Mohammad from Badri's Institute of Resource and Development delivered a presentation titled as 'Impact of Computer Assisted Language Learning on the Teaching and Learning of English as a Second Language at Early Years'. Ms. Zenab said that using computers or gadgets to teach English language is an innovative method and is commonly known as CALL. She argued in her presentation that technology and language teaching is an interesting combination (tried and tested). It gives the young learners their most favourite toy, gadget, she added.



The study aimed at:

- Investigating the different ways of use of computer technology in English language teaching and learning specifically in early years
- Evaluating strategies and techniques through which English language teachers can teach English language in an effective way
- Differentiating between CALL and traditional method of teaching English language
- Discussing the long-term impacts of CALL on the professional and academic achievements of English language teachers and English language learners

While discussing the methodology, Ms. Zenab said that 60 children of Grade II and III of Badri High School were selected for the study. Based on observations from two usual classrooms and two implementing CALL, the following results were drawn:

- Children were happy to see internet and gadgets being used in the classroom (positive body language), whereas without gadgets they didn't show any special reaction
- The check list showed that the focus of the children during CALL lessons was unwavering whereas without gadgets the attention span was short
- Children seemed reluctant to talk to each other in CALL lessons because they were busy with their gadgets

She concluded her presentation making the following recommendations:

- Computer technology is something to befriend with
- A digitally literate classroom can promote English language skills in a much better way as it connects the classroom to practical reality
- For young learners, it is the perfect age to embed the concept of meaningfulness of technology
- Basic online tools such as DuoLingo, YouTube, Emagine should be used frequently by the teachers
- For speaking lessons, it is recommended to remove the gadgets after using them
- Literacy Planet (Badri High School's CALL application) or any other such application should be used to provide a firm background of teaching and assessing young learners in alignment with the curriculum

Ms. Naheed Wasi, the founding Director of Institute of Early Childhood Education and Development (IECED) delivered a presentation titled as 'Role of Institute of Early Childhood Education and Development to Train ECD Professionals and Human Resource'. She started off by saying that despite knowing the fact that Early Childhood Development (ECD) has a strong, positive impact on children's development, the due attention is still not being paid on the development of ECD professionals who are the backbone of quality ECD Programmes. Commenting on the status of teaching profession in Pakistan, Ms. Naheed said that teaching profession is increasingly losing its attraction among young and aspiring professionals. This is due to lack of opportunities for professional development, inadequate support from head teachers and less recognition from communities, inadequate teaching materials and poorly maintained school environments.

She said that for a long time, teacher training has remained lectured based, focused on developing rote learning approaches, lacking an active teaching & learning culture. She said that this training methodology does not help ECCE teachers because they need to learn about age appropriate learning needs, child psychology, and individual learning styles.

All this, she said, requires teaching active learning techniques and child-centered approaches to ECCE teachers, giving them in-depth knowledge of ECD and ECCE. Ms. Naheed said that the purpose of her research study was to explore IECED's role as a training provider in the field of ECCE and the changes it has brought about in the context of ECCE. Qualitative exploratory study was selected as a method of data collection, she added.

Findings of the research revealed that the programmes offered by IECED helped ECCE professionals to reconceptualise their notions of teaching and learning in early childhood contexts/settings. Management and community stakeholders revealed that the Institute brought positive changes in the field of ECCE with respect to teaching young children, curriculum development/implementation, awareness about ECCE, teacher training and research.



Concurrent Session V

What Works in ECD (What We Know Works Well: Noteworthy Inclusive Practices in ECD)

Presenters:

Ms. Shagufta Khanum, PhD Scholar, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad

Mr. Zabar Hussain, PhD Scholar, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad

Dr. Hina Noor, Lecturer, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad

Ms. Shagufta Khanum, PhD scholar at AlOU, presented her paper titled as 'Assessment of Depressions and Procrastination Among Parents of Autistic Children'. Ms. Shagufta started off by saying that Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurological and developmental disorder that begins early in childhood and lasts throughout a person's life. She said that in developed countries ongoing researches are conducted on depression in parents with autistic children but in the developing countries especially in Pakistan, it is a neglected area.



She said that her research is an attempt to investigate this much neglected area. Ms. Shagufta said that her study aimed to assess the level of depression and procrastination among parents of autistic children. The sample of her study consisted of parents (n=100, fathers=50 and mothers=50) of autistic children based in Lahore and Faisalabad. She explained that depression is positively correlated with procrastination among parents of autistic children. In the light of the data collected from the selected sample, she said that the level of depression is high among mothers as compared to fathers and level of procrastination is high among fathers as compared to mothers of autistic children.

Ms. Shagufta concluded off by saying that government and non-governmental organisations should take actions including arranging workshops and seminars for counselling of the parents with disable children so that they are able to deal with their children in an informed manner and are able to take part in the rehabilitation of them.

Mr. Zabar Hussain, PhD Scholar at AIOU made a presentation titled as 'A Study to Explore Presence of Social Skills Among Hearing Impaired Children'. Mr. Zabar started off by saying that social skills is a term used to describe a child's knowledge of, and the ability to use; a variety of social behaviours that are

appropriate to a given inter-personal situation. He said that the current study aims at exploring presence of social skills among hearing impaired students. The sample of his study he said, consisted of 200 mothers of hearing-impaired children.

He shared that results of his study revealed that 82% of hearing-impaired children have low level of social skills and 18% high level of social skills. He further explained that there is a significant difference in social skills of children living in urban and rural areas. Mother's working status has a positive impact on the social skills of the children as working mother's children demonstrated high level social skills. He concluded his presentation by recommending that an inclusive approach focusing on individual's needs will help children with hearing impaired to develop their social skills.

Dr. Hina Noor, Lecturer at AIOU, presented her paper titled as *'Educational Needs of Hearing-impaired Children in Learning Mathematics'*. Her study was focused on determining the target needs of hearing-impaired children for learning Mathematics and its compatibility with existing curriculum of Mathematics. Her sample consisted of 200 pupils of Grade IV & V- 100 hearing and 100 hearing impaired pupils. In the light of the data collected from the selected samples, Dr. Hina drew the following findings:

- The present National Curriculum for Mathematics taught to hearing impaired pupils at primary level is not conducive for building new concepts
- Hearing impaired pupils learn Mathematical concepts through cramming due to lack of visual aids and tools
 She concluded her presentation with the following recommendations:
- A new curriculum should be designed for hearing impaired children with attractive, colourful and activity-based material
- In-service training for Mathematics teachers must be arranged
- Proper attention should be paid to the language development of deaf children
- Remedial classes must be arranged for hearing impaired children

In the light of these deliberations, the session chair, **Prof. Dr. Abdul Hameed** from University of Management & Technology, Lahore remarked that:

- Inclusive ECD programmes should be designed and launched in the country
- Early interventions in ECD for differently able children is need of the hour

Concurrent Session VI

What Works in ECD (Role of Technology in ECD: Noteworthy Practices)

Presenters:

Mr. Nasarkhudo Dastambuev, Director of Programs: Early Childhood Development, Tajikistan, Open Society Foundations (OSF)

Ms. Saleha Bibi, Special Educator/Clinical Psychologist, Army Special Education Academy, Rawalpindi

Ms. Shahida Sultan, Head of Education, Hashoo Foundation, Pakistan

Ms. Saba Khurshid, MS Scholar, Foundation University Islamabad

Mr. Karim Aman, Faculty Member, ITREB Pakistan

Mr. Nasarkhudo Dastambuev from Foundation Open Society Institute, Tajikistan delivered a presentation titled as 'Children's Animation Project in Tajikistan - Joint Initiative of FOSI, UNICEF and Ministry of Education and Science'. He started his presentation by sharing the context and status of ECE in Tajikistan. Mr. Dastambuev said that access to quality and affordable ECE services is extremely low in Tajikistan. He shared the data according to which ECE sector is underfunded in Tajikistan with only 0.85% of the total education budget. He further said that incremental approach (ECE setting) to increase the coverage is slow and requires improved regulatory framework, expansion of services, and enough investment.



Mr. Dastambuev said that as part of its initiatives for ECE, Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation and UNICEF in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Aga Khan Foundation and some other private companies created 'Sanduqchayi Zulbiyo' (Magic Box) an educational TV Programme. The purpose of the project, he said, was to promote Early Childhood Development through a series of 50 animated cartoons of 15 minutes each. Mr. Dastambuev continued that the broadcast of the series started from November (2018) on children's TV channel on daily basis.

He shared the following goals and outcome of the programme:

- Provide information and the Early Childhood Development opportunities for children and their caregivers in Tajikistan, particularly those who do not have access to pre-school education
- Promote a TV programme for pre-school children that is inclusive, diverse, holistic, and entertaining

Expected outcomes of the programme:

- Early Childhood Development opportunities for children are provided, particularly to those who do not have access to pre-school education
- 50 series of inclusive, sensitive to diversity, pro-social, holistic, entertaining, and educational television programmes for pre-school children are provided
- Parents develop confidence and are proactively involved in boosting their children's intellectual, cognitive, social, emotional, or physical development; all necessary to ensure developmental readiness for schooling

Mr. Dastambuev shared the following results/ achievements of the programme:

- The capacity of national animators enhanced to develop and produce a wide range of researchinformed, developmentally, and culturally appropriate media for young children and their families which address children's needs and rights holistically
- 25 television animation series developed and ready to be aired on national television expanding ECE opportunities to over 50% of under-served rural population
- Phase II (new 25 series) has started in partnership with UNICEF and the Aga Khan Foundation, Tajikistan
- National Campaign 'Education Starts from Early Years' initiated and reached out to children and parents in remote areas

Mr. Dastambuev highlighted that the project was successful in attracting the interests of a wider audience including policymakers in Tajikistan. He said that the Project has the potential to extend it to Afghanistan, China and Pakistan. While talking about future initiatives, Mr. Dastambuev shared with the audience that a theatre project and further print communication can be based on the animated TV programme.

Ms. Saleha Bibi from Army Special Education Academy made a presentation on 'Internet Addiction and Psychological Well-being Among Children'. She conducted the study to assess the relationship between internet addiction and psychological well-being among children. The sample of her study comprised of 225 children from government and private schools of Rawalpindi.



The findings of her study are:

- Children who scored high on internet addiction scale were having poor psychological well-being
- Internet addiction was more prevalent among boys than girls

Ms. Shahida Sultan, Head of Education, Hashoo Foundation made a presentation on the 'Use of Technology in the Early Years and It's Effects (Positive & Negative) on Child's Development'. She started her presentation by sharing the purpose and methodology of her study; which she said, is to gain insights from literature about the use of ICT for young children. Moreover, the study also aims at gathering views of ECE teachers, parents of young children, and educators; so that a policy discussion on the use of ICT in ECE classes can be garnered.

Talking about the exposure of young children to use of ICT she said that one can hardly imagine an education institution (of any stage) today without any presence of ICT.



She said that as per UNESCO 2010, P.19; more and more children encounter computers before they go to school,

even before they go to preschool. It is then natural to notice that they are exposed to both positive and negative impacts of digital technologies, she added. Highlighting the importance of productive use of ICT for early learning she said that there has been much debate in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) field with regard to the use of technology in the curriculum, but there is now general consensus that children need some access in order to become familiar with a range of hardware and software. Furthermore, she said that effective ICT programmes can contribute to learning. She substantiated her claim by referring to an American educational children's TV show 'Sesame Street'.

In the second part of her presentation, she threw light on the risks being associated with the use of technologies. She said that screen use is linked to risks such as radiofrequency damage, musculoskeletal problems, eyestrain, and sleep disturbance. She further added that allowing toddlers to spend lots of time using screens may delay their development of skills such as language and sociability. Based on her study she shared the following recommendations:

- Screen time should not be encouraged for children under 18 months
- On average one hour of technology use is appropriate per day, inclusive of time spent at home and in early learning settings and across devices (US Department of Education, 2016)
- Developmentally appropriate technologies should be introduced through an integrated approach for young children in ECE classrooms
- Curriculum guidelines for use of integrated technology should be developed at national level to enhance learning outcomes for children
- ECE teachers capacity should be developed for effective use of technology
- Technology should be used to ensure inclusion of children with special needs
- Technology should be used to increase access to learning opportunities for all children

Mr. Karim Aman, faculty member of ITERB gave a presentation on 'ECD in the Era of Technological Revolution – Prospects for Future'. He started off by saying that our young children will go into jobs that we sitting here can not even imagine, we do not know what those jobs will be but we have to prepare them for those jobs.



He emphasised on fostering credibility, curiosity, communication, critical-thinking, collaboration, adaptability, and leadership skills in young children. He said that emerging technologies particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI) and biotechnology, will drastically change the way ECD is addressed today. He emphasised on investing in the following fields:

- New technologies- AI and biotechnology
- Human sciences especially ECD
- Culture, spirituality, and ethics
- Liberal arts education

Mr. Karim also referred to the World Economic Forum Report – 2016, and cited that "In many industries and countries, the most in-demand occupations or specialties did not exist 10 or even five years ago, and the pace of change is set to accelerate." He further added that the World Economic Forum cites that 65 percent of children entering school at ECD will end up in jobs that do not yet exist. He emphasised on renewing the understanding and interpretation of education in general and of ECD in particular. Mr. Karim suggested to include the following core literacies in ECD curriculum:

- Social and cultural literacy (multiculturalism and pluralism)
- Civic literacy (democracy and governance)
- Environmental literacy (education for sustainable development)
- Financial literacy (economics, business, and entrepreneurial skill)
- Global awareness and media (information literacy)
- Health literacy with a special emphasis on mental health
- Education and compassion
- AI, biotechnology, and ethics

He concluded his presentation urging the participants to develop in young children the concept of Khud Shinasi (self-actualisation) as described by Allama Muhammad Iqbal in his poetry.

Ms. Saba Khurshid, MS Scholar at Foundation University Islamabad, delivered a presentation titled as 'Exploration of Parents Apprehensions About Emotional and Social Development of Their Children in Ever Changing Digital World'. Her study aimed at exploring parents concerns and apprehensions regarding their children's social and emotional development in the context of an increasing screen time.



While explaining the methodology, Ms. Saba said that three independent focus group discussions were carried out with parents to conduct the study. She drew the following conclusions from her study:

- Parents concerns about adolescent's use of digital technology are increasing
- Technology addiction can have adverse effects on a teenager's life
- Digital technologies can cause emotional, physical and social problems in children

The session chair, **Dr. Muhammad Ramazan**, Dean Faculty of Education & Social Sciences, Karakorum International University concluded the session with these remarks:

- Technology based projects for ECD in relevant to Pakistani culture should be designed
- Parents should be vigilant about technology usage of their children
- Smart parenting for smart kids is the need of the hour

Workshop: Fostering Language Skills in Early Childhood Setting: In the Context of Urdu

Facilitator: Mr. Sajjad Khan, Association for Academic Quality (AFAQ)

Mr. Sajjad Khan from Association for Academic Quality (AFAQ) started his presentation with the introduction of language. He defined language as a system of communication consisting of a set of sounds and written symbols; used by the people of a particular country or region for talking or writing. Mr. Sajjad further discussed the stages of language acquisition—first understanding, then one-word utterances, then two-word phrases, and so on.

During his presentation, he briefly touched upon the Pre-talking stage / Cooing (0-6 months), Babbling stage (6-8 months), Holophrastic stage (9-18 months), the two-word stage (18-24 months), Telegraphic stage (24-30 months) and Later multi-word stage (30+months).

In the end of the presentation, Mr. Sajjad built a connection of first-language acquisition with four skills of language learning. He said that in the context of first-language acquisition, the four skills are most often acquired in the order of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. He concluded off by mentioning receptive and productive skills. Receptive skills are listening and reading during which learners do not need to produce language: they just receive and understand it. Whereas productive skills are speaking, and writing during which learners must produce language, he added.





PLENARY II Day 2

Thursday 26th Sepetmber, 2019

Transitioning from Home to ECD Centre, Pre-school and to Formal School

Presenters:

Dr. Mary A. Khetani, Associate Professor, University of Illinois Chicago, USA

Ms. Brenda Taggart, Honorary Senior Research Associate Principal Investigator/Research Coordinator, Institute of Education

Ms. Heidi Victoria Gustanski-Geary, Director Education, Family Educational Services Foundation (FESF)

Dr. Naeem Zafar, Head of Child Rights Department, The University of Lahore

Ms. Tina Hyder, Deputy Director and Dr. Nurbek Telehsaliyev, Early Childhood Programme, Open Society Foundations (OSF)

Mr. Arshad Khan, Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education, KP

Dr. Mary A. Khetani, keynotespeakerfor Plenary-IIdelivered a detailed presentation on *'Building Organisational Capacity for Family-centred and Participation-focused Practice in Early Childhood'*. Dr. Khetani discussed the following points in her presentation:

- Importance of and challenges to family-centred and participation-focused practice in early childhood
- Participation and Environment Measure (PEM) and PEM+ for harmonising the design and delivery of family-centred and participation-focused practice in early childhood
- Lessons learned from implementation PME and PEM+ in early childhood



Dr. Khetani started her presentation by talking about the significance of family-centred and participation-focused practice in early childhood, saying that rehabilitation of young children and families is a common form of service delivery in the United States, and it is integrated in two primary forms. Dr. Khetani shared that the first form of the service delivery is Early Intervention (EI); tailored for 0-3 years, and the second form is Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE); designed for children aged between 3-5 years.

While highlighting the importance of participation of family in Early Intervention (EI) services, Dr. Khetani said that participation of family in early activities can enhance the cognitive, social, and motor development of a child. She further said that participation in EI services help families in detecting problems at early ages.

Talking about the challenges to enacting family-centred and participation-focused practice in early childhood, Dr. Khetani discussed the following points:

- What to assess?
- When and who to assess?
- · How to assess?

Dr. Khetani explained in her presentation that what to assess comprises of attendance and involvement of a child across many activities. She further elaborated that in the current contemporary models of children's participation, it is considered that participation is a highly complex concept. Also, there are many important situations (multiple perspectives, intrinsic and extrinsic factors) of a young child that comprises of in-home and community-based activities. So, while capturing the profile of a child's participation she emphasised that one must not only ask how often a child participates in these activities, rather one must capture the experience of the child in taking part in a particular activity. The second challenge, she said, is when and who to asses; as lot of information is already available on delivery of services. However, more opportunities need to be explored (cross-sectional versus longitudinal and detecting unmet rehabilitation), need to analyse the relationship between services and its outcomes.

Discussing the last challenge, how to assess outcomes, Dr. Khetani said that it is time to move away from semi structured interviews and paper-based patterns to use technological innovations and smart ways to gain efficiency to collect family voices, other relevant information, such as stakeholders capacity and structures, is the need of the hour.

Moving further, Dr. Khetani discussed Participation and Environmental Measures (PEM) approach, which is one of the popular approaches of assessment in the United States as well as in other countries. Sharing the details of the tool, Dr. Khetani said that it comprises of parents and caregivers perspective, report questionnaire, young children's instrument, and youth self-report. She further said that parents and caregivers report questionnaire targets children and caregivers aged between 5 to 17 years; whereas the young children's instrument targets children from birth to 5 years and youth self-report deals with individuals between 12-30 years of age.

Sharing the lessons learned from PEM, Dr. Khetani said that PEM is conceptually grounded, psycho-metrically sound, and a versatile way to harmonise the delivery of participation-focused practice in early childhood. She further added that it is a feasible and acceptable electronic health intervention to enhance the utility of the participation-focused care plan. She concluded her presentation by emphasising on building authentic research partnerships with educational foundations and donor organisations.

Ms. Brenda Taggart, Honorary Senior Research Associate / Principal Investigator / Research Coordinator, shared research findings of the 'Effective Pre-school, Primary, and Secondary Education Project: Europe's Largest Longitudinal Study'.



Ms. Taggart started off by highlighting the challenges of the modern world, saying that by 2050, there will be many demographic changes, both in industrial and developing countries. The biggest challenge, she said, will be the significant increase in elderly age population whilst the decrease in working population. She said that to get economic sustainability it is essential to address this challenge through maximising workforce and equipping them with both academic and non-academic skills (cooperation and teamwork). The solution, she said, lies in investing in the early years as attainment of these skills in a much cost-effective manner. This is only possible if we invest in our children at a young age. She further justified the investment in the early years from a moral and economic perspective, showing the trends of returns on investment on different age groups.

She said that disadvantaged groups are at greater risk of poorer health, behaviour, social & emotional skills, cognitive, language & numeracy development, and employability. They make poorer educational progress and have higher levels of criminality. Highlighting the economic benefits of early investment, Ms. Taggart argued that investment in the early years has high returns later to the economy, for example, American research shows that one dollar invested in early years the return on investment can be as high as 13 dollars. She further said that Pakistan cannot afford not to invest in the early years.

While sharing the context of investing in the early years, Ms. Taggart said that in early 1990's England

was very concerned about the educational standards, so a study was designed to look at the effectiveness of the pre-school provision. The aim of the study was to compare the progress and attainment of children from different social and cultural backgrounds: rich, poor, rural, and urban children availing different preschool services. Thus, 3,000 children from six regions in England, between the ages of 3 and 16+ years were selected for the study. She further shared that since it was a longitudinal study, therefore, the progress and attainment of these children was documented for 17 years.

Sharing the factors which influence learning outcomes of children; she said that social class, parental education, living in poverty (which are difficult to change), has a huge impact on learning outcomes, home learning environment, and pre-school education which can be changed easily also has a significant influence on learning outcomes of children. Presenting the details of the pre-school influence at age 16, she shared the following findings:

- That older pupils performed better than younger children
- Females obtain higher attainments than males
- Bangladeshi heritage children have higher total GCSE scores
- Early health and behavioural problems are predictors of lower attainment
- Three siblings or more predict lower cognitive achievement
- Pupils of higher qualified parents are high achievers
- Pupils living in poverty (eligible for free school meals) have lower attainments
- Pupils with higher socio- economic status have higher attainments
- High quality of early learning environment at home and in pre-school are predictors of high attainment

Talking about the quality pre-schools Ms. Taggart said that they focus on the following elements:

- Workforce
- Curriculum and environment
- Practices

Explaining the above points, she said that workforce encompasses qualifications of the staff, leadership and continuous professional development, curriculum and environment defines learning standards, engaging activities, space and resources (adult: child ration); while

practices include theoretical knowledge & expertise of the individual, capability of working in teams, addressing individuals' needs, building healthy relationships, and providing safe spaces for children to learn.

Elaborating quality of pre-schools, Ms. Taggart said that high quality does not always require large amounts of money, rather it can be ensured even with inexpensive toys and less resources. Giving examples, she said that early literacy skills can be developed in children by singing poems & nursery rhymes with them, and introducing mathematical concepts, big, bigger, and the biggest, using sticks. Effective pedagogy, she said can play a vital role in improving the quality of education at any level which includes the following:

- Quality of the adult-child verbal interaction
- Knowledge and understanding of the curriculum
- Knowledge of how young children learn
- Adult's skill in supporting children in resolving conflicts
- Helping parents to support children's learning at home

Concluding her presentation, Ms. Taggart recommended to ensure provision of high-quality pre-primary education, to improve overall performance of children and equity by reducing socio-economic disparities among children. Pakistan cannot afford not to invest in its young children, she said.

Mr. Arshad Khan, Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education (E&SE), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), highlighted the efforts of the Provincial Government in promoting ECE in the province.

Mr. Arshad said that for the last five years the Provincial Government has focused on building infrastructure for ECE in the schools along with improving the quality of education through teacher training. He further added that the same efforts will continue in the next five years with more emphasis on the provision of quality ECE services. He shared some important statistics about the total population of children aged 4 -5 in the province, and the total children enrolled in kachi. The numbers he shared show that there is a total population of 5,45,118 boys aged 4-5, in the province; out of which 3,88,563 are enrolled in the kachi grade and 1,56,555 are not enrolled in any pre-primary facility. The girls' total population is 4,84,212 and out of that, 3,87,492 are enrolled in kachi and 96,620 are not enrolled.



Sharing the ECE implementation plan, he said that UNICEF in the 1st phase, supported Education Department in developing minimum standards of an ECE classroom, including teaching learning materials, equipment, furniture and fixtures; which are cost effective, practicable, scalable, and conducive for early learning of children. The Elementary and Secondary Education (E&SE), he said, allocated Rs.112.37, 122.5 and 124 million on ECE trainings during 2015-2016, 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 respectively.

The number of ECE classrooms he said, will be increased up to 10,000 as part of the 5-year Education Roadmap developed by Elementary and Secondary Education (E&ES). These 10,000 kachi classrooms he said, will be converted into ECE centres in KP and Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) by 2023, replicating the 'Prototype ECE Classroom' developed in collaboration with UNICEF. He said that UNICEF will replicate the 'Prototype' in 350 selected schools, whereas E&SE Department, Government Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, will replicate it in 1000 schools in KP and 1,000 schools in Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) through its own resources.

He concluded his presentation by sharing the following key information with the conference participants:

- ECE policy and implementation framework in collaboration with UNICEF is in progress
- Elementary and Secondary Education (E&ES) initiated data collection on ECE in EMIS from 2019
- Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS), developed and notified
- Ongoing support and revision of teachers training manual initiated
- Planned training of 250 teachers on ECE
- Prototype ECE model classroom developed in the Government Girls Primary School, Peshawar
- Distribution of ECE Kits in KP and Newly Merged

Districts (NMDs) is planned

• Training of 250 teachers on ECE is also planned

Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan, Member, Food Security & Climate Change/Chairman ECD National Task Force, Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform, thanked the conference organisers for arranging the International Conference on ECD. He said efforts like this, are essential to share latest research and best practices in ECD around the globe, so that we are able to benefit our children in an informed manner. Sharing his views on the status of ECD developments in Pakistan, he said that a lot of information and awareness on the importance of nutrition has been raised by MoPD &R, but it still requires concentrated efforts and support to achieve desirable results.



He urged the UN agencies such as UNICEF, WFP, WHO, and private sector to extend more support to the government and collaborate with it to reverse the existing situation of stunting in the country. He emphasised on effective public-private partnerships to reduce the gap in the provision of quality healthcare, child welfare, and early education.

Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan, also expressed the desire to collaborate with Rupani Foundation, Pakistan, to promote holistic ECD in the country in close coordination with local communities.

Dr. Naeem Zafar, Head, Child Rights Department, the University of Lahore & President, PAHCHAAN (Protection and Help of Children Against Abuse and Neglect) made a detailed presentation on *'Child Development During the First 1000 Days : Role of Positive Parenting'*. Dr. Zafar started off by highlighting the importance of the first 1000days, the period from conception to age two. He said that this period is crucial

for brain development, as the brain forms more than one million new neural connections per second in this phase. This development process he said, requires early stimulation and nutrition, and this is only possible if the mother (to be) is physically and mentally healthy. He also said that the mother (to be) should be above the minimum age of marriage, which is 18 years in Pakistan.



Dr. Zafar further highlighted the importance of the formative years by sharing the following points:

- By age two, a baby's brain reaches almost 80% of its adult size. The quality of experiences during the first 1,000 days of life establishes either a strong or fragile foundation for everything that follows
- Before the age of five, it takes less time, intensity and repetition to organise the developing neural systems than it does to reorganise already-developed neural systems
- Early relationships, environments and experiences affect all aspects of a child's development
- Nurturing relationships with parents/caregivers in the early years are critical
- The first 1000 days from pregnancy to two years is a time period that can have a profound impact on a child's growth and development
- Early interventions are critical for optimal life course outcomes because these physiological disruptions can persist far into adulthood, and lead to lifelong impairments in both physical and mental health

Dr. Zafar argued that based on evidences from neuroscience and economics, investing in the early years is a compelling investment. He said that children who get the right start during the first 1000 days are:

- Ten times more likely to overcome the most lifethreatening child diseases
- Less likely to drop out of school
- Earn 21% more in wages as adults

- More likely as adults to have healthier families
- Have an average 10-point higher IQ than peers

Highlighting the risk Factors that prevent children from developing to their full potential, he said that poverty and associated health, nutrition, and social factors prevent at least 200 million children in developing countries from attaining their developmental potential.

While talking about negative consequences of inadequate foetal and infant growth, Dr. Zafar shared the findings of the Nutrition Commission Report and argued that inadequate foetal and infant growth can lead to four main areas of negative consequences:

- One is death, since one half of child deaths have under nutrition as an underlying cause, i.e. they would not have died from the infection if they had been better nourished
- The second is that brain development is affected, leading to long term damage to cognitive and educational performance (increased school repetition rates etc.)
- The third is that the size of the body is compromised (stunting) and tissue development impaired, such that work capacity is reduced, as is immune capacity
- The fourth area of consequence is that of metabolic programming to cope with a resource scarce environment, (the thrifty phenotype) which leads to all the chronic degenerative disease of adulthood, including obesity

Moving forward, Dr. Zafar emphasised that parenting during first 1000 days should be based on Nurturing Care Framework developed by WHO, UNICEF, World Bank (WB) and other partners. The key components of the framework are health, nutrition, responsive caregiving, security & safety and opportunities for early learning. Talking about health aspect during pregnancy and birth, he stressed upon taking care of the following areas:

- Proper antenatal care with regular health follow ups and maternal vaccination
- Safe delivery and immediate new-born care
- Initiation of breast feeding in first hour and no top feeding or bottle feeding
- Use of safe water and proper hand washing before food and after toilet use
- Regular immunisation

While sharing the current status of health in Pakistan he presented the following statistics:

- Deliveries with trained birth attendants is 39%
- Maternal mortality 178 deaths/100000 live births
- Neonatal mortality rate 49 per 1000 live births (298,000 per annum) more than 90% of these are preventable
- 79 million people lack decent toilets
- 22 million people do not have access to clean water close to home
- 11.5% of people defecate in the open

While discussing nutritional factor of the Nurturing Care Framework, Dr. Zafar shared that optimum nutrition:

- Promotes healthy growth and development
- Lowers morbidity and mortality rates
- Lowers risk of chronic diseases
- Promotes better overall and especially cognitive development

Talking about exclusive breastfeeding, he said that it provides babies with the best start in life, making them smarter with higher intelligence, and helps in optimal development. While malnutrition, he said, causes stunted physical growth, delayed milestones of development, behavioural disorders, impediments to cognitive development, and deficiency in learning. Dr. Zafar defined responsive care-giving as a method where the caregiver pays close attention to what the child is signalling and then provides a response that meets the child's needs. He shared that care giving enhances brain development, and reduces stress, ensuring positive health and development outcomes in young children.

While talking about security and safety Dr. Zafar said that violence, abuse, neglect, and traumatic experiences produce high levels of cortisol and when cortisol levels remain high for too long, they produce toxic stress, which limits brain connectivity in children. He elaborated the opportunities for early learning saying that young children show higher cognitive functioning with additional cognitive stimulation or learning opportunities. Language and cognitive development are especially important during first six months to two years of life, he said. While lack of stimulating environment for early learning leads to lower cognitive, social, and behavioural development. Dr. Zafar concluded his presentation by saying that Nurturing Care is the best gift a parent can give to her/his baby.

Ms. Heidi Victoria Gustanski, Director Education, Family Educational Services Foundation (FESF) highlighted the early learning resources for deaf and special children in Pakistan and some of the best practices from around the world.



Ms. Gustanski shared the journey of establishing the Family Educational Services Foundation (FESF) in Pakistan. Ms. Gustanski said that she and her husband Richard Geary started Deaf Reach Programme back in 1989, with only 20 children in Karachi. From those small beginnings she said, Deaf Reach has grown into seven schools, in seven different cities across Pakistan, providing transformational education to thousands of children and students from pre-school to college level.

She said that there are over one million deaf children in Pakistan, yet less than five percent of them have access to education. She further added that deaf population living in rural areas do not get access to quality learning, due to lack of trained teachers and lack of trained resources in their native language, which is the sign language. Talking about the teaching and learning processes, Ms. Gustanski said that holistic approach to education is applied in Deaf Reach Programme which includes training of parents of how to involve their children's care and learning. Training of sign language is also conducted with parents, once a month to enable them to communicate with their children in that language, and in this whole process they become literate as well.

Talking about research evidences about the capacities of deaf children, Ms. Gustanski explained that according to research, all children both deaf and hearing are born with the same basic capacities for learning language. Most of them acquire their language in their formative years from birth to five years of age. Hearing children, she said, are able to speak and understand 1,000s of

words and use them in a sentence while five-year-old deaf children often have a vocabulary of less than 50 words, most often home-made gestures. Deaf children whose parents do not sign, grow up in a language vacuum, therefore, early exposure to sign language with family support is crucial as after 5 years of age, language learning becomes much more difficult, she said. She further emphasised on sign language saying that it helps deaf children develop literacy skills and learn language on equal terms with their hearing peers. The problem, she said, is that in Pakistan parents of deaf children are not aware of what to do, as they are unaware of the methods such as sign language, to teach their children. She suggested that such parents should not only have early accurate scientific and audiological information about the problem but should also have the right training to teach their children both written and sign language.

Ms. Gustanski further shared that deaf children lag far behind in Pakistan from their hearing peers in language acquisition due to language deprivation in the formative years. To address this problem, she shared with the audience the practical strategies developed by the Deaf Reach Programme, that includes the first ever Pakistan Sign Language (PSL). It also includes a 6000-word dictionary in English and Urdu, benefiting over 1200 deaf children and their parents yearly, giving them fluency in three languages; Pakistan Sign Language, English, and Urdu. Sharing detailed examples of all these resources she said, they are available in all the seven FESF schools in print and digital form for people to benefit widely.

She concluded her presentation by saying that the pathway for linguistic information for deaf children is through vision, printed words, and accompanying graphics. These two visual methodologies she said, are the key to literacy growth along with their native sign language. In the end, she emphasised for adopting an inclusive approach to address the needs of all differently able children in Pakistan. Inclusive is the solution, she said.

Ms. Tina Hyder, Deputy Director of the Early Childhood Programme, London, Open Society Foundations (OSF) along with Dr. Nurbek Teleshaliyev, Programme Officer, Early Childhood Programmes, OSF gave a virtual presentation on 'Best Practices in ECD Supported by Open Society Foundation's Early Childhood Programme'. Ms. Hyder said that Early Childhood Programme based in London is one of the longest

running programmes of Open Society Foundations. The Programme, she said, focuses on two main areas; first building the field of ECD and second, supporting the children. Giving a brief introduction of OSF, she said that it is an international grant network that is active in 120 countries, giving thousands of grants worldwide, on a range of diverse topics addressing issues such as poverty plan, women's rights, access to justice, and economic empowerment. The ECD Programme which is one of the longest programmes of the Foundation, promotes well-being of young children through rightsbased approach and commitment to social justice, she said. She further explained it, mentioning that the Programme focuses on two main areas; first building the field of ECD and second, supporting children and parents who face profound disruption or systematic discrimination; including refugees and migrants, children with disabilities, and developmental delays, and those who are from gypsy community. Sharing the geographic spread of the Programme, she said that it is currently active in Central Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Southern and West Africa, Asia, and Middle East, with growing engagements in Latin America.

Talking about OSF's work on ECD worldwide, she said that it includes initiatives like 'Big Belly Business' in Niberia and West Africa, which promotes good nutrition and health care during pregnancy, initiatives to reduce infant mortality rate in Central and Eastern Europe. It is also collaborating with the University of Education in Myanmar to introduce first National Diploma in ECD, establishment of the National ECED Centre of Excellence in collaboration with the Children's Global Network in Pakistan, and introduction of formal courses in partnership with AIOU. This enables it to provide distance learning opportunities to ECD practitioners and extending support to Agah Walidain - Informed Parents in Sindh which focuses on holistic development of children including early learning, simulation, parenting, pre and post-natal health, childcare, child rights, and protection.

She also shared the 'Jamaican Home Visiting Programme' which introduced an approach delivered by community health workers to improve children's development by showing parents simple ways of interacting with their children using inexpensive, homemade toys, books and conservation. She said the Programme demonstrate dramatic benefits later in lives the children in the intervention; it was discovered that these children did better in school, were happier and as adults had higher IQ, better mental health, demonstrated less violent

behaviour and earned more money than the similar children who did not benefit from the Programme.

Talking about the initiatives in Zimbabwe, she said that OSF in collaboration with the University of West Indies and Great Zimbabwe University, conducted a randomised control trial of the home visiting initiatives in a rural area. The sample, she said included 200 pairs of mothers and children and the home visitors. Explaining the details of the trial she said children's development was assessed using the Griffith mental scale and mother's knowledge of child's development, and maternal depressants symptoms were assessed through questionnaire and stimulation of the home was also assessed with the home observation tool. Sharing the primary outcomes for children, she said, it included increased knowledge and skills of sorting and matching, picture recognition, threading and writing control, and language development. She shared the following secondary outcomes:

- The Programme brought families closer and taught caregivers to spend time with infants patiently
- Increased number of fathers attending group meetings
- Fathers conducted activities with their children if the mother was busy
- There was increased knowledge on personal hygiene and on how to make toys for their children using recyclable materials
- Caregivers no longer used baby language to talk to children, hence better language development was observed

Concluding her presentation, she said that the long-term goal of the grants for ECD programmes is the commitment of OSF to building the ecosystem for ECD focusing on elements including a compressive intersectoral ECD policy addressing the needs of families and children from birth to age of eight, developing trained workforce, research base, and helping the civil society, that is actually engaged in holding governments to account for the provision of ECD



Concurrent Session I

Role of Parents in ECD: Parental Education and It's Impact on Child Development

Presenters:

Ms. Ansa Jamil, M.Phil Scholar, Kinnaird College for Women University, Lahore

Mr. Raquib Ibrahim, Programme Officer, Mellow Parenting, UK

Ms. Ansa Jamil of Kinnaird College for Women University, Lahore delivered her presentation entitled as 'The Father and Child's Early Childhood Education and Development'. She started by saying that the involvement of father's in the educational activities of children result in better academic achievements of their children. She further said that involvement refers to participation, interaction, association, attention and bonded relation with children. Father's involvement is a direct interaction between a father and his children; it is the availability of father to his children when they need him, she added.

Ms. Ansa said that the nature of her study was qualitative, and it aimed to explore the effective involvement of fathers in the educational activities of young children especially in the pre-school setting since it has remained an unfocused area in Pakistan. She argued in her presentation that fathers who are more involved in their children's education and development are more satisfied than those fathers who do not take part in such activities. She further said that children's whose fathers are more involved in their children's education and development, are more social than children's whose fathers are less involved, she added.



While discussing the findings of the study Ms. Ansa said that parental involvement help extend teaching outside the classroom; it creates a more positive experience for children and helps children perform better when they are in school. When fathers are involved in children's lives, they are less likely to become school drop-outs, she added. She further said that when father's involvement in Early Childhood Education (ECE) increases, children achieve more, regardless of ethnic or racial background, socioeconomic status, or parents education level. Children achieve better grades, test scores, and attendance, they have better self-esteem, are more self-disciplined, and show higher motivation

towards school, she added.

In the end, Ms. Ansa said that father's involvement needs to be considered as a vital aspect of children's Early Childhood Education and Development. She concluded off by urging fathers to spend some time with their children, helping them in their homework and fun activities.

Mr. Raquib Ibrahim of Mellow Parenting, UK gave a presentation entitled as 'Impact of Mellow Parenting Programme – Early Years Development Through Supporting Parents Across Cultures'. In the first part of his presentation, he gave a brief introduction of Mellow Parenting. He said that Mellow Parenting is an NGO, based in Glasgow, Scotland (UK) which does research, develops, evaluates and implements attachment-based interventions. He further said that the vision of Mellow Parenting is to make sure that every child, wherever the child is in the world, to be part of a safe and nurturing family that will allow him or her and future generations the best possible start in life.



He shared the following key areas which Mellow Parenting Programmes focuses on:

- Parent-child relationship and attachments
- · Quality of parent-child interaction and play
- Parental mental health and well-being

Mr. Ibrahim discussed early interventions of Mellow Parenting in reference to Mellow Dads. Mellow Dads is an attachment and relationship-based group intervention for dads who have babies and young children. He said that mixtures of reflective and practical techniques are used in the intervention to allow parents to address their personal challenges and the challenges they face with their children. A typical Mellow Dad's group will run for 14 weeks, one day a week, he added. Explaining it further he said that Mellow Dads comprise of personal group, parent-child activity and parenting workshops.

In personal group parents discuss and reflect on their own parenting experiences. In the parenting workshops parents own videos are used to build on existing skills.

They get feedback from their peers and practice new ways of relating to their children as well. In parent-child activity sessions, the parents and children eat together and participate in joint activities.

He concluded the presentation by saying that Mellow Parenting has been implemented in the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, New Zealand, Iceland, Germany, Russia, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Turkey.

The session chair **Mr. Nasruddin Rupani,** Chairman Rupani Foundation, concluded that:

- ECD is not only the development of the child, it is the development of the parents, family, community, and society through the child
- Human development comes through ECD, so it is important to start at the right age engaging all the key stakeholders



Concurrent Session II

Transitioning from Home to ECD Centre, Pre-school and to Formal School

Presenters:

Mr. Haq Nawaz, PhD Scholar, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab

Ms. Lubna Mir Anees, Research Coordinator, Teachers Development Centre

Ms. Madiha Riaz, M.Phil Scholar, The University of Lahore

Mr. Haq Nawaz, PhD Scholar, Institute of Education & Research University of the Punjab, Lahore presented his paper entitled as 'Effects of Cognitive and Emotional Factors in Promoting Early Childhood Development: Teachers Demographic Perspectives'. Mr. Haq started his presentation by highlighting the importance of ECD; this period he said lays the foundation for the child's learning and well-being throughout his/her life. At eacher at early childhood stage he said plays an important role to help children develop; therefore, considering this fact the present study aims to investigate health and safety challenges faced by teachers working in public sector schools of district Lahore.



While explaining the methodology of the study, Mr. Haq said that it was descriptive in nature and used quantitative study design. A questionnaire, he said was developed to collect data from participant and it was distributed among rural, and urban public-school teachers of Lahore. He said that the immediate findings of his study showed that female teachers are more aware of health and safety challenges of children as compared to male teachers. Moreover, he said that the study also showed that rural teachers of public schools have a weak understanding of health and safety issues of children. Based on the findings he recommended to develop needs-based training programmes.

Ms. Lubna Mir Anees from Teachers Development Centre presented her paper entitled as 'The Role of Neuro-linguistic Programme in Early Years Development - Inclusive Teacher Education'. Ms. Lubna started her presentation by expressing the need to revamp the education system of Pakistan, especially for early years. She said that ECE needs more innovation and an out of box thinking approach.

Explaining the Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) she said that it offers an innovative and distinctive

methodology of teaching. She further added that it is a high time for teachers to know NLP, learn NLP and use NLP techniques tactically in order to make teaching-learning process effective both for teachers as well as learners as effective utilisation of NLP and its techniques will pave the way for the growth and development of teaching and learning process. Ms. Lubna shared the below key questions which she used to conduct the study:

- Does NLP contribute to teaching learning process at ECE level?
- Are ECE teachers of private school in Karachi aware of NLP and its applications?



While explaining the methodology and sample of the study she said that the overall strategy of the research was descriptive in nature and data was mainly collected through literature review, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. Her sample she said, included two private schools with 20 teachers and 20 children each. Ms. Lubna concluded her presentation with the following remarks:

 Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP)can enhance the teaching-learning process at ECE level

- It can significantly improve communication skills of children
- Majority of the ECE teachers are not aware of the benefits of Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP)

She concluded off by saying that Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) can be an additional tool to deal with challenging behaviours of children.

Ms. Madiha Riaz, M.Phil scholar at the University of Lahore delivered a presentation entitled as 'Parents and Religious Training in Home-based (ECD) to Formal School'. She started off by saying that parents play a crucial role in the development and success of a child. Involved parents she said, can make a positive and lasting impact on their children's learning abilities. She further said that it is parents duty to provide their children with religious environment at home for transmission of religion or other world-views to the next generation which does not occur only through institutional religious education but trough home environment.

Emphasising further on parents role she said that parents should encourage their children to learn about Holy Prophet's Seerah, morals, and other religious practices encouraging children from young age to pray, recite the Quran and perform wudhu.

She concluded her presentation with a Hadith, of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), "When a man dies, his action discontinues from him, except three things, namely, perpetual sadaqah (charity), or the knowledge by which benefit is acquired, or a pious child who prays for him."

The session chair, **Dr. Mary Khetani** concluded the session with these comments:

- Lesson plans can be an effective method to measure the outcome of interventions
- Understanding the sources of stress for teachers can lead to better quality of service



Concurrent Session III

Transitioning from Home to ECD Centre, Pre-school and to Formal School (*Teachers Role in ECD*)

Presenters:

Dr. Naila Shakeel, Senior Subject Specialist, Quaed Academy for Educational Development

Ms. Meher Fatima Kamran, Headmistress/Preschool Teachers Trainer, Nasra School

Ms. Ameena Hafeez Mobeen, Lecturer & Ms. Rabia Aslam, Lecturer, Quaid-i-Azam University

Dr. Naila Shakeel from Quaed Academy for Educational Development made a presentation entitled as 'Challenges Primary School Teachers Face in the Implementation of Early Childhood Education: Teachers Perceptions'. Dr. Naila started off by saying that Early Childhood Education (ECE) is critical to holistic development, academic success and the future achievements of children. Teachers play an important role in developing children so it is important to investigate the challenges and problems they face in implementing the Early Childhood Education (ECE), she added. While explaining the methodology of the study, Dr. Naila said that descriptive research design was used to investigate the factors that influence the implementation of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in public schools. The sample of the study comprised of 200 primary school teachers out of which 100 were male and 100 were female. A structured questionnaire she said was used for data collection. She shared the following points as immediate findings of her study:

- Facilities in public ECE schools are below average
- Learning material such as ECE kits and teachers guides are available in public schools
- Majority of the ECE teachers are unaware of the Early Learning Standards
- Female teachers better understand the Early Learning Standards as compared to male teachers at ECE level

She concluded by saying that ECE teachers need more training and adequate facilities for the implementation of Early Childhood Education Curriculum.

Ms. Meher Fatima Kamran of Nasra School shared an action research report entitled as 'How Reflection Helps Teachers in Their Professional Development?' with the audience. Ms. Meher started off by saying that action research is applied to programmes as an educational technique to learn more about teaching practices. She further said that it provides a wide variety of evaluative, investigative, and analytical research methods designed to diagnose problems or weaknesses—whether organisational, academic, or instructional—and helps educators in developing practical solutions to address the problems.

Ms. Meher shared that the main purpose of the action research was to make Nasra School teachers aware of the importance of reflection in teaching practices. She further said that teachers have a critical impact on children's learning. There are many teacher characteristics that correlate with positive learning

outcomes of children, including their knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience, she added.

While explaining the research procedure, Ms. Meher told the audience that David Kolb's Experiential Learning model was used. She further said that 31 teachers of Nasra School participated in the study. Explaining the steps, she said; first, cycle of the study comprised of workshops, group discussions and demonstrations and the second, cycle comprised of reflection writing while third cycle covered the evaluation and feedback on reflections, she added. She shared that her study revealed that:

- Most of the teachers were unaware of any type of reflection in teaching. They were unaware of the role it plays in teacher development or teaching planning
- Teachers of Nasra School were not aware of new techniques and methods to tailor and improve their teaching practices for better results and grades of children
- There is no culture of visiting each other's classes, giving critical feedback to each other and doing selfcriticism on their own teaching practices

Ms. Meher shared that teachers should be educated on the importance of reflection in teaching; they should know how to write a reflection on their own teaching practices and they should be motivated to do it on a regular basis to improve their professional skills.

Sharing the immediate benefits of her study she said that after conducting the study, participants incorporated reflection writing in their teaching practices. They also developed basic understanding about how to tailor their way of teaching so that it impacts their children's learning outcomes positively.

Ms. Meher concluded her presentation by claiming that critical reflection enables teachers to improve their teaching practices, including challenging traditional mode of teaching. Elaborating further, she said that teacher's abilities to think critically, plan, organise, observe and create can be developed through reflection.

Ms. Ameena Hafeez Mobeen and Ms. Rabia Aslam of Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad presented their paper entitled as 'Gendering and Beyond: Analysing Children's Early Years Education and Teaching Methodologies Deployed in Islamabad's Private Schools'. Ms. Ameena started her presentation by saying that the network of private schools is growing day by day and the expansion is allowing all types of individuals to join the teaching force, thus lowering the standards of the profession. The education system whether it is public or private, treats education as a banking system; imparting knowledge to children considering them as depositors of knowledge and expecting them to reproduce it, she said.

The aim of their study she said was to explore the role of teachers in confining children (between the ages of 3-12 years) to gender binaries and to explore classroom practices and their implications on children and society. The methodology of their study as she described was qualitative in nature, including participant observations along with focus group discussions. The sample she said, comprised of five English medium schools in Islamabad which are affiliated with some international schools in United Kingdom and USA. 15 teachers from these schools participated in the study, she added. She explained the reasons for choosing these schools and argued that they draw their teaching methodology and curriculum from the American and British systems of education, thus claiming to be progressive and forward looking in their scope of education and child development.

In the light of the data collected from these selected schools, Ms. Rabia, the co-presenter shared the following findings:

- Ambiguity exists among teachers about a clear definition of sex and gender as they were not aware about the difference
- Majority of the teachers associated the nurturing and caring role with females
- Teachers were adherent advocates of gender binaries, segregation and stereotyping. She substantiated this by saying that teachers were reinforcing the stereotypes in children in schools; for example female pupils were encouraged to play with toys and male pupils were encouraged to play basketball. She further said that boys were encouraged to take part in all the games which required running, chasing and agility and play areas were decorated separately for boys and girls thus reinforcing the gender roles and

stereotypes

 Gendering binaries in professional choices were also reinforced in children in schools by telling female pupils that they can be teachers or nurses and male pupils were told that they can make a carrier in sports, traditionally associated with men, she said



While discussing the impact of gender binaries, segregation, and stereotyping on child and society, Ms. Rabia said that gendered constraints restrict children's thought processes, forcing them to think in a box. Moreover, she said that these binaries and sex related stereotyping create the consumerist perspective which at both ends benefits the capitalist either it is market, school or owners of these enterprises. Ms. Rabia concluded by saying that the study shows that schools are major contexts for gender socialisation. She further said that teachers exhibit the gender stereotypes in behaviour and attitudes in schools. Moreover, she said that the teaching pedagogies employed in the private schools are polarising gender identities by limiting the options for multiple vision in the child's mind. Likewise, she said that the teaching pedagogies in private schools are the examples of building blocks of children's gendered socialisation and further this gender bifurcation travels from the elementary to secondary and higher secondary education system in Pakistan.

Session Chair, **Dr. Carol Aubrey,** Professor Emeritus, University of Warwick concluded that:

- In order to ensure the quality of early learning it is important to work on the quality of qualifications and credentials of early years teachers
- In pre-school setting only two to three percent of teachers are men in Pakistan so there is need to bring more men into the profession

Concurrent Session IV

What Works in ECD (What We Know Works Well: Role of Play in ECD)

Presenters:

Ms. Tayyaba Irum Shakil, Research Fellow, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad

Mr. Muhammad Sulman, PhD Scholar, University of Central Punjab, Lahore

Ms. Salma Khurshid, Independent Researcher

Ms. Tayyaba Irum Shakil, presented her paper entitled as 'Investigating the Role of Pretend Play in Developing Creativity Among Preschoolers'. Ms. Tayyaba started off by defining play, saying that play is a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain limits of time and place, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by a feeling of tension, joy and consciousness that is 'different' 'from ordinary life'. She then defined free play saying that free play is both child-initiated and child-directed, where children are not abided by any rules and regulations, rather they innovate their own naive rules and directions. The study aimed at investigating the role of pretend play in developing creativity among preschoolers. She further said that in recent years, play is not considered as necessary as academics; more emphasis is given on building strong academic foundation of a child while ignoring role of play in the child's development, she added.



While explaining the methodology of the study, Ms. Tayyaba said that it was a qualitative study conducted through observations and interview. Explaining it further she said that five sessions of free play, 30 minute each, were videotaped for two weeks. Interviews of class teachers were recorded and open-ended questions regarding development of preschoolers through these sessions were asked, she said. Sharing the sample of her study, Ms. Tayyaba said that it was carried out in a small-middle standard street school situated in Punjab with 19 children (from 3.5 to 5 years of age). Children were provided with high and low —structured objects to elicit pretend play, she added.

Based on observations and interviews of teachers the following results were drawn:

- Isolated play turned into associative and cooperative
- Real life stories and characters to pretend

- Problem solving the most practiced skill
- No argument or fight
- Repetition of affect-laden themes
- Correct representation
- Gender free choice of selection of toys and play

Ms. Tayyaba said that pretend play can have a positive effect on preschoolers behaviour, helping them learn skills like sharing, collaboration, taking turns and using their own ideas to create things. Explaining the relationship between play and development she said that play can be used as diagnostic tool as it reflects the developmental level of a child. She concluded her presentation by sharing the following recommendations:

- Free play and pretend play must be considered as open forums for the preschoolers to learn essential skills which could not be taught by academics
- Creativity through play can be nurtured through play intervention programmes
- It is important to give awareness to parents and teachers that playing is not just having fun rather it is learning too

Mr. Muhammad Sulman, PhD Scholar, University of Central Punjab, Lahore presented his paper entitled as 'Psychology of Learning a Foreign Language: Efficacy of Interactive Musical Play'. Mr. Muhammad started off by saying that school-based experiences especially playtime is very critical in understanding that how foreign language learning takes place. He further said that the research was designed to explore that how interactive musical play can facilitate foreign language learning among preschoolers. While explaining the sample of the study, Mr. Muhammad said that it included three kindergarten school teachers and 20 preschool children, aged between 4-6 years. The teachers were trained prior to the study on musical play; tasks in five sessions, each session lasting for 30 minutes, he added. He said that the sample was pre-screened for their basic skills in English, including vocabulary, sentence formation and grammar accuracy. He further said that children were videotaped during free play (rated on domains of language) by three independent teachers in order to mark their typical performance and interaction patterns. The pre-trained teachers on musical tasks demonstrated their skills of training the children on foreign language through the musical playful tasks, he added.

In the light of the study, he shared that quantitative and qualitative improvements in children exhibiting their

foreign language skills were marked, after active exposure through musical play for a duration of two months. The study he said also revealed that these social interactions such as musical play, support and facilitate learning of English language. Mr. Muhammad concluded by saying that the benefits of play-based learning outweigh the traditional methods of teaching. He stressed on incorporating musical play in the classroom for facilitating foreign language learning.

Ms. Salma Khurshid, an independent researcher made a presentation entitled as 'Role of Play on Academic and Social Enrichment in Early Childhood Development'. She started off by saying that play is essential to development because it contributes to cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development of children and youth. She further said that due to its significance, play has been recognised by the United Nation's High Commission for Human Rights, as a right of every child. She further highlighted the importance of play by saying that infants who are more active physically and are able to explore more at the age of five months, show more success in school at age four. Despite the benefits derived from play for both children and parents, time for free play has been markedly reduced for some children, she said.

Presenting the purpose of the study she said that it was to explore how play can boost academic and social enrichment in Early Childhood Development. While explaining the methodology and sample of the study, Ms. Salma said that it is a qualitative study and data was collected through semi-structured interviews and observations. The study was carried out on a selected sample of 30 preschoolers and their home teachers, she added. She shared that the following steps were followed while conducting the study:

- Workshops on play were conducted for teachers
- Observations were made and information regarding children's activities was collected with the help of teachers
- Playful activities were introduced to enhance social and academic skills of preschoolers
- After one month, interview sessions were conducted with teachers

She said that below activities increased social and academic skills of children:

- Morning meeting
- Circle time

- Engaging children in games with their class-fellows
- Friendship postcards
- Story time
- Show and tell activities
- Group art activity
- Jigsaw puzzles

Based on these activities following results were drawn:

- Children who did not want to involve in social activities, started to make social relationships and showed good academic performance
- Play encourages socialisation thus children learn how to socialise

In the end, Ms. Salma said that play gives children opportunities to explore the world around them and to build connections with ideas and skills. She shared that play is not a break from learning, it is the way young children learn. She concluded her presentation by suggesting that Early Childhood Education should introduce learning through play instead of lengthy syllabus. Government and private sector should introduce training programmes which enhance early childhood educators skills to use different playful activities with preschoolers, she added.

The session chair, **Mr. Iqbal Jatoi**, Country Director, Right to Play, remarked:

- Play is a human right therefore; it should be an integral part of learning in Pakistan.
- Play empowers children
- Play is essential for academic success
- Play has the transformative power and it can really change lives



Concurrent Session V

What Works in ECD (What We Know Works Well: Note Worthy Practices)

Presenters:

Ms. Rashida Saifuddin, Teacher/Trainer of ECE, Badri High School

Ms. Misbah Waqar, Senior Special Educator, Army Special Education Academy

Ms. Rashida Saifuddin from Badri High School made a presentation entitled as 'Significance of Outdoor Classroom in Holistic Development in Early Years of Education'. Ms. Rashida started off by sharing a quote from Dr. Maria Montessori "Education is a natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words but by experiences in the environment." She said that learning outside the classroom supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles by offering children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement, and promoting a sense of well-being. She further said that it gives them contact with the natural world and offers them experiences that are unique to outdoors, such as direct contact with the weather and the seasons. Outdoor play also supports children's problem-solving skills and nurtures their creativity, as well as providing rich opportunities for developing their imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness she added.

Furthermore, Ms. Rashida said that the outdoor environment offers more space than indoors therefore, it is particularly important to those children who learn best through active movement.



Sharing the aim of the study, she said that it aimed to find out the significance and advantages of an outdoor classroom specifically in early years teaching and learning. It also aimed to build a connection between pre-school teaching and learning. While discussing the methodology of the study, she said that the study was experimental in nature and focused on a deductive approach. The sample of the study consisted of 60 children from the play group of the pre-primary section

of the school. Random sampling technique was used, and 30 children were randomly selected for observation for a period of one week. Based on the data, Ms. Rashida drew the below findings/results:

a. Response:

Children responded very positively to the idea of going outside the classroom and studying, which ensured half the progress of the study, as the children were happy and willing to learn and share what they had learnt.

b. Connectivity to Nature:

As the outdoor classroom provided access to the nature and its constituents such as sand, water, sunlight and air, the children felt readily connected to the nature which in turn accelerated the learning speed and retention of memory psychologically.

c. Interest:

An outdoor classroom focuses experiential learning which ensures that nobody from the class is left out in trying or demonstrating a certain action which fills them with vigour and interest to pursue this learning journey.

d. Independence:

Children are not dependent only on the facilitator and the material which is used inside four walled classrooms.

e. Holistic Development:

The study and its results clearly indicate that a child taught in a four walled classroom might not be able to respond to situations compared to a child who has experienced outdoor play & learning. There is a clear evidence of skills development and critical thinking ability along with a sound physical development because of access to microbes which can be found in nature only.

f. Many in One:

A single activity in a four walled classroom functions as a single activity while the same activity conducted in an outdoor classroom can lead to different perspectives of learning because of the availability of bigger space and resources available in the nature. It can also facilitate groups of different physical and same mental age leading to better communication and effective collaboration.

g. Decision Making:

Children are empowered to take their own decisions in an outdoor classroom because of minimum dependence on the facilitator and the material. In the light of the results of the study, Ms. Rashida concluded

that outdoor learning activities contribute to cognitive, linguistic, motor and social emotional development of preschool children. She recommended that outdoor activities given in a framework of a programme should be increased in preschool years. Teachers should be informed about benefits of outdoor learning through pre- and in-service teacher training programmes and it should also be incorporated into teacher education curricula.

Ms. Misbah Waqar of Army Special Education Academy, Rawalpindi gave a presentation entitled as 'Mediating Role of Self-concept in Moral Development and Risktaking Behaviour Among Children'. She started off by saying that early childhood is the time during which children should be taught moral values and they should be encouraged to practice them otherwise children become more prone to be indulged with moral disengagement and risky behaviours in their adolescents.

The study aimed at exploring the role of self-concept as a mediator between moral development and risk taking behaviour among children. While discussing the sample and methodology of the study, Ms. Misbah said that the sample comprised of 300 school and college students of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Survey method using questionnaire based on demographic data sheet, Sensation Seeking Scale and Bandura Moral

Disengagement Scale was designed and used for the data collection after seeking consent from respondents, she added.

Ms. Misbah drew that self-realisation is a strong mediator of moral development and risk taking behaviour among children. Furthermore, her study revealed that self-concept is a strong predictor of moral justification, distortion of possible consequences, diffusion of responsibility, dehumanisation and attribution of blame. Her study also revealed that girls scored significantly high on moral justification, distortion of possible consequences and diffusion of responsibility whereas boys scored significantly high on the risk taking behaviours.

The session chair, **Dr. Ghazala Rafique**, Director- Human Development Programme, the Aga Khan University remarked:

- The concept of outdoor classroom is fascinating and it is important to adapt it. It encourages learning and development through outdoor and interpersonal activities
- Whatever behaviour a child develops, it is deeprooted in early years. The environment, stimulation, surrounding, interactions and the social environment has maximum impact on the child
- It is important at some point in time to introduce the concept of self-realisation in children



Concurrent Session VI

Early Childhood Development: (What Works Well and What's at Stake)

Presenters:

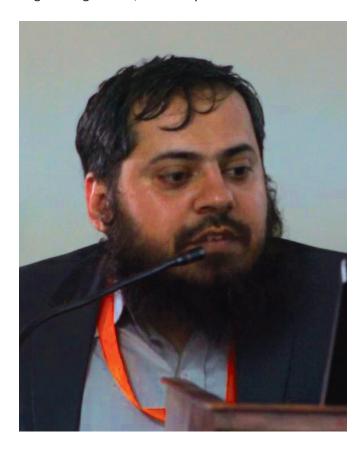
Mr. Altaf Hussain, Dy A. Director in NW & IS department NADRA

Mr. Muhammad Imran Ali, Lecturer, Lahore Leads University

Mr. Salman Ali, Head of ECD Programme Rupani Foundation, Gilgit

Ms. Bushra Khan, Assistant Manager Curriculum Early Years Beaconhouse Head Office Education Operations, Beaconhouse School System

Mr. Altaf Hussain of Networks and IS (Dept) HQ NADRA presented his paper entitled as 'Cyber Security Impact on Children at Early Age'. Mr. Altaf said that starting a discussion about information security at an early age is very crucial as it may prevent children from the information security attacks, harmful effects, privacy and online security in using the technology (internet). He further said that major cyber security threats to kids at early age include links to malicious websites, cyberbullying, location-sharing, cat-fishing, cyberstalking, cybergrooming, paedophile, malware, social engineering attacks, and many more.



Mr. Altaf briefly discussed cyberbullying, cyberstalking and cybergrooming. He said that cyberbullying is the process of attacking, insulting, belittling, humiliating, blackmailing, or otherwise harming someone online. He further added that cyberstalking is a criminal offense for victims using electronic communications such as email or instant messaging (IM) or messages sent to a website or forum. A cyberstalker masquerades as an unknown person to enable him/her to spy on victims and is performed to scare or harm the victims physically or emotionally, he added.

Mr. Altaf defined cybergrooming as the process being used by cyber-offenders to make use of their targets by pretending to be friends with children in cyberspaces.

He further said that child pornography starts with the threat of cybergrooming. According to Mr. Altaf, the younger the child is, the higher the chance to get exposed to online risks such as stalking, grooming and bullying. Mr. Altaf shared the below internet safety guidelines for parents:

- Keep online browsing in common family areas where you can see what the kid is doing
- Create an email account for your child if necessary and monitor the messages they get
- Check privacy settings in the devices used by your kids
- Teach children to protect themselves by maintaining their privacy and not to provide or publish their personal information on the internet such as private images, name, home address, phone number, name of the school, in order to avoid exploitation or distortion
- If your children visit chat rooms or video games that require a login name, help them choose that name, and make sure they do not reveal any personal information
- Manage the time of internet access and gaming in a balanced and fair way
- Make sure that the game programmes are appropriate for their age in terms of content
- Do not hand over any internet connected device before you know yourself how it works
- Encourage your children to share their internet experience with you and enjoy online activities together.

In conclusion, Mr. Altaf shared the following recommendations:

- Federal and provincial parliaments should design new laws against information security
- Training on information security must be given to academicians and teachers
- Awareness programme about information security should be designed for parents
- Government should ban applications which target children

Mr. Muhammad Imran Ali of Lahore Leads University presented his paper entitled as 'Challenges of Online Sexual Abuse of Children in Early Years in Pakistan: New Frontiers to National Legislation'. He started off by saying that Online Child Sexual Abuse (OCSA) is a growing area of concern and includes a wide range of actions and events ranging from viewing sexual content online to live streaming sexual acts. He further said that it also includes the recording of offline child

sexual abuse. Literature review method was used for conducting the study, he added.



Discussing the Online Child Sexual Abuse (OCSA), Mr. Muhammad said that Pakistan is one of the eighth in Muslim States after Egypt, at the top of the list, browsing pornographic content. He further said that social media groups and forums from different schools, colleges and universities show sexual conversations to young people. To limit unethical traffic, the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) had to block approximately 64,000 websites containing pornographic, blasphemous and immoral content he added.

According to him, Online Child Sexual Abuse (OCSA) is a serious problem in Pakistan, yet there is no national surveys or official statistics available. He gave the below overview of the legislative response to Online Child Sexual Abuse (OCSA) in Pakistan:

- The Criminal Law (Second Amendment) Act was enacted in 2016. This Act introduced some new Sections in the Pakistan Penal Code such as Section 292-A relates to the exposure to seduction, Section 292-B defines child pornography and Section 292-C provides punishment for child pornography
- Pakistan has enacted the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA, 2016) in 2016. The offences included in PECA may be classified into access, interception and interference, and content-related offences. PECA deals with electronic crimes including child sex offences and child pornography. The sexual

offences against children via email or other messaging services are included in PECA. Article 22 defines child pornography which includes the intentional production, distribution or offering of materials which depict minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct. PECA has provided higher punishment for online sexual offences against children but is not comprehensively addressing OCSA.

He concluded off by saying that the cybercrime has become a great threat to society and online offences against children demand improved legislation for prevention and control.

Mr. Salman Ali, Head of ECD Programme Rupani Foundation, Gilgit made a presentation entitled as 'Communal Response Towards Early Childhood Development: Challenges and Opportunities'. Mr. Salman started his presentation by sharing the key statistics from Gilgit-Baltistan. He said that infant mortality in the region is 74/1000 (below 5 years). He further said that vaccination rate in Gilgit-Baltistan is 47% and only 28% families avail family planning services.

Mr. Salman shared that the purpose of his study was to investigate the Knowledge, Aptitude, and Practices (KAP) prevailing in communities regarding Early Childhood Development (ECD) and to find out areas for intervention in the future. Sharing the methodology, he said that the research comprised both qualitative and quantitative tools. The qualitative part encompassed of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the community notables and social workers while the quantitative part consisted of Knowledge, Aptitude and Practice (KAP) survey, he added. The survey was included 146 mothers whose children were enrolled in the Agah Walidain-Informed Parents centres.



Mr. Salman drew the below findings from the threemonth long research, conducted in nine villages of Gilgit-Baltistan during 2017 before the replication of Agah-Walidain (Informed Parenting) Programme:

a. Baby Preference:

- 74% of parents chose baby boy as their preference
- 4% of parents prefer baby girl
- 22% of parents happy with either

b. Positive Timing:

- 36% of the fathers and 9% of the mothers do not give time to their children
- 28% mothers and 14% fathers give 1-2 hours to their children
- 26% mothers and 20% fathers give 2-3 hours to their children
- 15% of the mothers and 16% of the fathers give 3-4 hours to their children
- 22% mothers and 14% fathers give more than 4 hours to their children

c. Postnatal Check-ups:

- 74% of mothers go for post check-up only when they are ill
- 19% of mothers go for check-up on a monthly basis
- 3% of mothers go for check-up twice a month
- 1% of mothers consult a doctor on weekly basis
- 3% of mothers do not visit a doctor at all

d. Parental Check-ups:

- Low income households tend to have less check-ups as compared high income households.
- 41% of the low-income households tend to have check-up when ill
- 21.4% of the high-income households tend to have check-up when ill

e. Family Practices:

- 47% parents punish their children physically
- 14% sometimes punish children physically
- 83% parents force their children to do homework

Based on the above findings, Mr. Salman concluded that though there are several models working for ECD in GB but still there is a huge need to develop and implement integrated programme to benefit the child holistically.

Ms. Bushra Khan from Beaconhouse School System (BSS) gave a presentation entitled as 'The Use of Technology in Early Years and It's Positive and Negative Effects'. In the first part of her presentation,

Ms. Bushra talked about the proficiency of teachers in using the available technology and resources at the BSS Beaconhouse School System (BSS). Ms. Bushra said that although teachers were using technology in the classrooms, however its utilisation was limited to teachers exposition. She further said that use of early learning tools was either over ambitious or just for the sake of its usage.

In the second part of her presentation, she shed light on the inter-school collaboration model; she said that inter-school collaboration model was developed to address the challenges and difficulties of teachers and curriculum coordinators such as developing lesson plans, class activities and projects. She further explained that inter-school collaboration arrangements ensure that the benefits of technology are fully utilised in schools and in the classrooms. In this model, lesson plans, learning stories, orientation plans, tutorials and other course content is made accessible to school heads, cluster coordinators, school coordinators and teachers through Google Drive. According to Ms. Bushra, interschool collaboration model is based on the strengths of the teachers and it cross-pollinated by those strengths and ideas among others.



Ms. Bushra that the inter-school collaboration arrangements aim at:

- Developing networks of teachers
- Developing technology proficiency in teachers and students
- Exchanging school-based initiatives
- Building knowledge
- Promoting a stimulating curriculum
- Developing creativity, thinking skills, and problemsolving children

While explaining the sample and methodology of the study, Ms. Bushra said that the research was conducted in the eight early years schools of Beaconhouse School System (BSS). She further said that both quantitative and qualitative monitoring tools were used to collect the data. Surveys, photographs, videos, classroom observations and interviews were used to identify the core issues and practical solutions she added.

While discussing the structure of inter-school collaboration arrangements she said that through these inter-school collaboration professional learning communities emerged and they consisted of teachers, coordinators and heads of early years schools. She further said that the schools coordinators were the representatives of their schools and among these representatives, two cluster coordinators were selected on a rotation basis. Ms. Bushra drew the below results/findings of inter-school collaboration arrangements:

- Exchange of school initiatives
- Standardised reading practices across the schools
- Online accessibility to lesson plans
- Curriculum timeliness was aligned to match the curriculum pace

- Schools developed a repository of technology embedded lesson plans
- Online projects provided lifelong learning opportunities to children

Ms. Bushra concluded off by saying that technology embedded teaching strategies/practices can improve the learning process and teaching. Moreover, interschool projects and interactive sessions among teachers can enrich the teaching and learning experience, she added.

The session chair, **Dr. Muhammad Ramzan**, Dean Faculty of Education & Social Sciences, KIU remarked:

- Impact of cyber security on children needs further research
- Agah-Walidain- Informed Parents is a wonderful initiative by Rupani Foundation and it should be scaled up in the whole country
- Technology based ECE curriculum should be introduced in schools and ECD centres



Round-table Discussion

Presenters:

Mr. Raheeb Anjum, Founder, Act of Career Exposure (ACE)

Ms. Shumaila Haleem, Lecturer, G-10/4 Model College for Girls, Islamabad

Mr. Muhammad Faisal Rafique, Independent Researcher

Raheeb Anjum, Founder of the Act of Career Exposure (ACE) presented his paper entitled as 'The Impact of Brain Hemispheres in Education'. Mr. Raheeb started off by saying that in human beings the right hemisphere (visuospatial) develops its functions earlier than the left (language abilities). Every human brain has a dominant hemisphere and it has a connection with learning patterns and outcomes, he added.



Mr. Raheeb said that there are differences among children's learning abilities which should be considered while teaching them because they can learn better in their preferred learning style. He further said that every child can learn and acquire information, skills when their learning style is compatible with the teaching methodology. It was a quantitative study, collecting data through survey method, he said. The sample of the study comprised of 200 children (male=100 and female=100) from seven schools each from Sindh and Punjab and six from Khyber Pakhtunkhawa, he added. Mr. Raheeb drew the following results of the study:

- Most of the sampled female pupils were left brain dominant
- The right brain hemisphere dominant female pupils

- were less in numbers, but they preferred to work in their own domain and expressed willingness to work in activity-based environment
- The left-brain hemispheric dominance among the male pupils was also found and such pupils preferred to work logically, in a systematic, ordered and structured environment as they showed their interest in reflector and theorist learning style

Mr. Raheeb concluded off by saying that the current scenario of the teaching strategies and methodologies in Pakistan, are outdated and unproductive. Teachers should identify children's preferred learning styles and design the teaching strategies accordingly to enhance their learning, he added.

Ms. Shumaila Haleem, Lecturer at G-10/4 Model College for Girls, Islamabad started off by saying that the effectiveness of Early Childhood Education is based on its curriculum thus it requires a lot of attention. Ms. Shumaila highlighted the significance and scope of different early childhood curriculum approaches in her study. Her study was qualitative in nature and based on literature review by using the interpretivist paradigm of research. She made the following points while discussing various curriculum approaches:

- The High Scope Approach was initiated by Dr. David Weikart, a Michigan educator, in 1970 and it focuses on promoting learning experiences as for example arranging things in order, counting and telling time as well as more creative and linguistic activities such as singing and dictating stories
- The Reggio Emilia Approach was formed in Reggio Emilia, Italy after WWII and it believes that Early Childhood Education is the joint job of parents, teachers and community
- The Waldorf Steiner Approach started with the establishment of the first Waldorf School in 1919 and it stresses on creative learning, for instance playacting, story readings, singing, and cooking
- The Montessori Method is based on the work of Maria Montessori and considers children as the individual learners with teachers as guides
- The Project-based Learning promotes skill application and positive learning habits by attempting to make learning as pleasant and self-motivated as possible
- The Bank Street Model considers children as active learners and the surrounding world is regarded as to be the best teaching instrument
- The Dodge Creative Curriculum was instigated by Diane Trister Dodgea and is based on well-known

development theories using suitable environment, a properly planned schedule and good teacher student interactions

- The Kamii DeVries Constructivist Approach was evolved by Constance Kamii and Rhetta DeVries and is based on Piaget's constructivist principle of learning by interaction with the world.
- The Direct Instruction Model focuses on academics particularly the content of intelligence and achievement tests
- Multiple Intelligence Theory is presented by Dr. Howard Gardner and considers the diverse learning preferences of children.
- Play-based Approach works under the rule that children become skilled at the most while they interact with materials in a pleasurable and attractive method

Ms. Shumaila concluded off by saying that the above discussed approaches of early childhood curriculum are significant in their own way and one can design the curriculum based on these approaches depending upon the goals, priorities and situations.

Mr. Muhammad Faisal Rafique, an independent researcher presented his paper entitled as 'Parental Education for Early Childhood Development'. Mr. Faisal started his presentation by saying that parents play a critical part in ensuring Early Childhood Development of their children.

He further said that involved parents have a longlasting and positive impact on the learning abilities of their children. Children who get proper stimulation from their parents during their early years, especially from birth to age five tend to perform better than those children who do not get proper stimulation during their formative years, he added.

Elaborating parental involvement further, Mr. Faisal said that children who get proper stimulation from their parents and have a healthy relationship are more likely to complete their schooling, perform better academically, and lead healthier and more productive lives as adults.

The session chair, **Prof. Dr. Abdul Hameed,** University of Management & Technology, Lahore, remarked that:

- Pakistan has the world's second-highest number of out-of-school children (OOSC) which is the biggest challenge for the country
- Cultural and human diversity should be recognised and respected in classrooms
- All students should be given an equal opportunity to learn
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) should be part of the curriculum



Poster Presentations

Presenters:

Mr. Abdul Momin Rizwan Ahmed, Assistant Professor, The University of Lahore (UOL), Islamabad Campus

Ms. Saima Siyal, Research Specialist, The Aga Khan University, Karachi

Dr. Muhammad Sharif, Deputy Diretor Intervention Unit & Dr. Abdul Latif, Post Graduate Programme Coordinator, Prime Institute of Public Health (PIPH), Peshawar

Ms. Nadia Nazir, Lecturer, Mohi-ud-Din Islamic University, AJ&K

Ms. Shumaila Haleem, Lecturer, G-10/4 Model College for Girls, Islamabad

Mr. Abdul Momin Rizwan Ahmed, Assistant Professor, The University of Lahore, Islamabad Campus presented his poster entitled as 'A Survey of Powdered Milk Available for Children in Pakistani Market'. Mr. Abdul started off by saying that powdered milk has long been used in developing and developed countries for the nourishment of children. He further said that only 37.7 % of Pakistani mothers breastfeed their children up to six months of age which is an alarming figure in terms of Early Childhood Development. Mr. Abdul said that the study was quantitative in nature and a survey was conducted to collect the data. He further said that four most famous and sought-after brands of powdered milk were examined for the total content of carbohydrates, fats and proteins. The study found that 16.07 (+ 9.51, -9.51), 5.45 (+1.63, -1.63) ,5.95 (+2.79, -2.79) grams of carbohydrates, proteins and fats were present in one serving of powdered milk respectively. The study also found that the average number of calories provided by one serving of powdered milk were 140.25 (+23.38, -23.38). In the end, he said that significant variations were found among various brands of powdered milk in terms of carbohydrates, proteins and fats content they provide. He also said that usage of powdered milk for children should be highly discouraged.

Mr. Abdul Momin Rizwan Ahmed, Assistant Professor, The University of Lahore, Islamabad Campus presented a paper entitled as 'Calcium Deficiency Among University Students in Islamabad; A Reflection of Poor Childhood Development'. Mr. Abdul started his presentation by saying that calcium deficiency has been identified to be among the leading public health nutrition problems in Pakistan by the National Nutrition Survey, 2011. Mr. Abdul conducted a cross-sectional study at the Department of Diet and Nutritional Sciences, The University of Lahore, Islamabad Campus. The study concluded that only 4% of the students were taking adequate amount of calcium daily and found no relationship between calcium deficiency and socio-demographic factors.

Ms. Saima Siyal, Research Specialist at the Aga Khan University, Karachi gave a poster presentation entitled as 'An Innovative Strategy to Recruit and Train Females Youth (18-24) from Rural Disadvantaged Communities to Deliver an Early Childhood Care and Education Programme in Pakistan'. Ms. Saima started off by saying that demand for youth vocational training and employment is particularly high in Pakistan as 64 % of the country's population is under the age of 29. Yet, significant number of youths are Not in Education,

Employment or Training (NEET), and disparities are particularly stark for female youth and those living in rural communities, she added.

Furthermore, she said that if provided with opportunities for higher education, training and employment, young educated females (18-24) in rural communities can contribute to the workforce however, in rural communities in Pakistan, female youth may find it challenging to take-up opportunities because of cultural barriers. In order to address these barriers, she said that LEAPS-a community-based programme was designed to offer vocational training to female youth to deliver early childhood care and education service in their communities. The programme was implemented in Naushahero Feroze, Sindh, Pakistan, she said.



While sharing the details of the programme with the audience, Ms. Saima said that a total of 29 candidates were identified through a selection process, out of which 19 attended the workshop. In the second step, 14 candidates were selected for the certified training, out of which 10 candidates were selected for the vocational training programme, she said. Only young females took part in the programme actively and 90 % completed their contracts, she added. She concluded her presentation

by saying that the programme was quite successful and now it has been scaled-up in four other districts of rural Sindh in partnership with the National Commission for Human Development, Pakistan.

Ms. Nadia Nazir, Lecturer at Mohi-ud-Din Islamic University, AJ&K presented her poster entitled as 'An Analytical Study of Early Childhood Education Facilities in Public and Private Sector Schools in Azad Jammu & Kashmir'. Ms. Nadia started off by saying that early childhood is a vital stage of life in terms of physical, social and emotional development of a child. She further said that from natal to age six, growth of mental and physical abilities progress at an amazing rate and a great amount of learning takes place. This is the time when children mainly need high quality learning experiences and personal care, she added.

The study was conducted in 10 schools of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K), out of which five were public and five were private schools, she said. Her study aimed at assessing the availability of physical, academic and sports facilities and the overall quality of learning environment for ECE in public and private schools. It was a quantitative research and data was collected through questionnaire, she said.



Based on her research finding, Ms. Nadia concluded that Public schools of AJ&K offer better facilities with relatively better environment as compared to private schools of the region. Moreover, she said that the private schools were not following the ECCE curriculum.

Dr. Muhammad Sharif and Dr. Abdul Latif from Prime Institute of Public Health (PIPH) delivered a poster presentation on 'Health Based ECD Pilot Project for a Suburban Community of Peshawar'. They shared that Prime Foundation / Peshawar Medical College (PMC)

introduced Early Childhood Development (ECD) in the health sector for the first time. They further explained that 'Garhi Sherdad Programme' was the first of its nature which provided ECD services to the suburban community of Peshawar. The programme they said disseminates information on all aspects of ECD such as child health, maternal health and well-being, food and nutrition and many more. ECD facilitators and assistants are trained to follow the track of cognitive, social, emotional development and well-being of children through a purpose-built recording tool which documents all episodes of a child's consultation, they added. They concluded off by saying that the focus of this pilot project is to identify the communities which need ECD services and care and depending upon the results the project may be replicated in other areas of Peshawar.

Ms. Shumaila Haleem, made a poster presentation entitled as 'Role of Family in Linguistic Development of a Child in View of Vygotsky's Theory'. She started off by saying that Lev Vygotsky, a Russian psychologist has presented the theory of thought and language development based on social interaction. Ms. Shumaila referred to Vygotsky's work and said that language develops from social interaction. Language she said, is the greatest tool for communication with the outside world. During her poster presentation, she also differentiated between three types of languages:

- Social speech
- Private speech
- Silent inner speech

She said that social speech is external communication with others and starts from age two. Private speech is directed towards self and silent inner speech is underground self-regulating function typical from the age of seven, she added. She conducted a qualitative study mainly based on literature review. The study revealed high positive co-relation between social interaction and private speech in children, she said. The study also found that high delays in private speech development of children is characterised by low verbal and social exchanges in environment, she added. She concluded off by saying that Vygotsky's theory is based on social constructivism and involves the role of family in language learning of a child.

Closing Session

The concluding session of the two-day International Conference was presided over by Prof. Dr. Zia-Ul-Qayyum, Vice-Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University,Islamabad and Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan, Member, Food Security & Climate Change, Planning Commission of Pakistan/Chair ECD National Task Force, was the guest of honour of the closing session.

The session includes remarks by the dignitaries, presentation of the Conference Recommendations, and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AIOU and Rupani Foundation, Pakistan to establish Centre of Excellence for ECD.

Prof. Muhammad Rafique Tahir, Joint Educational Advisor was the first speaker of the concluding session. By thanking the Conference organisers and participants, he expressed immense pleasure to see the journey of ECD moving forward with the same momentum being generated back in 2016. He congratulated every single person who had contributed to make this Conference successful. While talking about the journey of ECD in the country, he commended the role of Engr. Muhammad Baligh-ur- Rehman, former Sate Minister for Federal Education & Professional Training for patronising the efforts to promote ECD/ECCE in Pakistan including hosting the first National Conference on Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) in 2017 and initiating the revision of the National Curriculum for ECE in the same year soon after the Conference.



He said that he started dreaming about ECD back in 1999 when he was working as a teacher with a small group of ECD teachers. He formally started working on ECD in the year 2000 when the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training launched the Education Sector Reform Programme (ESRP). He said that though he was a junior officer at that time, yet he managed to convince the decision makers to make Early

Childhood Education as a key component of the ESRP. The government allocated budget for this component and decided to introduce kachi grade for children from age four to five in the government schools. The implementation of this decision began from the schools of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) under his leadership, gradually becoming part of the government education system in all the provinces and regions. The MoFE & PT nominated him as the National Focal Person for ECD in 2003 and since then he has been working on the policy, curriculum, linkage development for ECD & ECE at national and international levels. During this time, he said he learnt a lot about ECD through interacting with ECD professionals, attending courses, international conferences and policy forums in around 30 countries of the world.

Talking about the private sector's contribution in ECD, he said that though the private sector especially the private schools and foundations have been doing an excellent job in Pakistan for the last many decades, yet their contribution is not recognised and accounted for. To mainstream the private sector's work, he said he formed a National Steering Committee in 2006. The first meeting of this committee held in Islamabad in which around 56 stakeholders from the public and private sector institutions participated. He said that for the first time ECE was recognised and it was agreed to formalise it in the government education system, learning from the best practices of private sector. National Curriculum for Early Childhood Education was developed in 2006 which was revised in 2009 and then in 2017. A dedicated section on ECE was made part of the National Education Policy 2009.

Expressing his views about Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood, Mr. Muhammad Rafique Tahir said that in a short span of time the 'Alliance' has built bridges between the government and private sector providing platforms for knowledge sharing and networking. He urged all the key stakeholders to extend support to the 'Alliance' to build on this work. He praised Mr. Rupani for his selfless service to the country in the field of ECD. He said due to Mr. Rupani's personal efforts, ECD has been highlighted at the highest forums in the country through arranging national and international conferences, capacity building workshops and seminars and most importantly he said providing an approach for holistic development of children from 0 to 8 years of age through implementing Agha Walidain-Informed Parents.

Dr. Sughra Choudhry Khan, Director Education, AKF, Pakistan shared reflections about the two-day International Conference. She congratulated the conference organisers for their wonderful work which resulted into a successful conference. The Conference, she said provided an opportunity to listen to presenters with diverse topics such as multi-agency & inclusive approach, holistic ECD, use of technology in the early years and ECD from gender's perspective which increased awareness.



She said that the experts talked about 21st century skills which include critical thinking, creativity, curiosity, collaboration and many more but the question she paused was, 'are we developing these skills in our children'? Our young children she said will go into the jobs that we sitting here cannot even imagine, we do not know what those jobs will be but we have to prepare our young children for those jobs building on the skills they already have. Moreover, she said restrictive upbringings and strict schooling kill these natural skills instead of nurturing them. She inquired whether the existing systems and structures give children the liberty to ask questions, be creative, develop freely, play and enjoy their life or they restrict their freedom making sure that all children think alike. Talking about values and ethical decision making she said whether children are taught the values such as tolerance, patience, respect, and embracing diversity which they require to live in a globalised world.

Dr. Sughra said that children learn in an environment of relationship and these relationships should be nurturing, caring, loving, validating, inspiring and fun loving. She concluded her talk by praising the role of Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood in bringing different stake- holders including the ministries, practitioners, private sector and donors on a single platform for the cause of ECD.

Mr. Nasruddin Rupani, Chairman Rupani Foundation, sharing his reflection about the Conference said that the commitment and enthusiasm demonstrated by the government and other key partners renewed his passion to work even more for ECD. He said his Foundation was focusing on children from 0-8 years old but from now onwards, Rupnai Foundation will start working from adolescence focusing on their mental and physical health.

He urged key partners to support the Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood to make it a regional Alliance so that it can play an important role in the entire region. He concluded his reflection by announcing that Rupani Foundation, Pakistan will sign an MoU with AlOU to build a Centre of Excellence at AlOU. This centre, he said, will not only produce trained ECD workforce but will also generate quality research which will ultimately help improve the ECD services.

Dr. Nasir Mehmood, Dean Faculty of Education, AIOU and Ms. Khadija Khan, CEO Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood jointly presented the Conference Recommendations which are appended below as Appendix I.

Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan, Member, Food Security & Climate Change, Planning Commission of Pakistan/ Chair ECD National Task Force was guest of honour of the closing session. He said that when projects are launched on a large scale, usually their implementation, sustainability and cost effectiveness become a challenge. Therefore, he said that the need is to focus on long-term programmes to get effective results. He concluded off by saying that the Conference provided an opportunity to learn the best practices in ECD which are practiced in various regions of the world including Pakistan.



Prof. Dr. Zia-Ul- Qayyum, Vice Chancellor Allama Iqbal Open University, AIOU, was the chief guest of the closing session.

Closing the Conference proceedings, he thanked all the participants for attending it and all the speakers, particularly the international speakers for making presentations on diverse topics. He congratulated the organisers for arranging a successful Conference and commended the hard work put in by everyone and especially by the Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood to achieve the goal. Commenting on the partners contribution he said that without depending on public funds they organised this Conference which provided evidences from latest neuroscience, research and economics for investing in early years. The government, especially the Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform should be convinced and ready to allocate budget for this purpose now, he said. He further added that Pakistan is one of the most charitable nations in the world; the country can easily mobilise resources together for steering and promoting the cause of ECD. The University he said has been a long partner in the journey of ECD so in continuation of its commitment to the cause he said he will allocate some funds from the statutory budget for the Centre of Excellence.

He suggested to conduct an impact analysis to see the results of the programmes implemented by the government for ECD & ECE. He reiterated that it is important to know the worth of money, being spent so that moving forward, one can make informed decisions.

He said since he is a technologist and after visiting the stall in the ECD Expo which was showing how to use technology for providing online education through distance learning, he is fully convinced that AIOU can get huge benefit from it. Explaining further he said that with the help of online education technology, AIOU from its centres in the province, AJK and GB can reach out to thousands of ECD teachers to train them in this field. The centres he said will be upgraded with video conference facility and necessary equipment to facilitate learning.

He further shared saying that while visiting the ECD Expo with Mr. Shafqat Mehmood, State Minister for Federal Education & Professional Training, he requested the Minister to develop a national curriculum from 0-16 instead of 4-16, incorporating the emerging themes in ECD and the innovative approaches being demonstrated by technology, providing a national

standard to the whole country. Emphasising on value-based education he said that we should not only talk about the values such as tolerance and co-existence rather we should teach these to our children starting at early years.

Talking about the national commitments, he expressed his concern that our country has missed the goal of Education for All (EfA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) but as a nation we should achieve the goals of SDGs. The government should actively engage partners like AlOU to achieve these goals, he said.







Appendix I

Conference Recommendations

- Legislate to recognise ECD from zero to five (0-5) years of age, (Act 25A is only from 5- 16 years of age)
- Finalise the National Policy Framework (NPF) which is in the process of development
- Adopt a multi-sector and integrated approach for main-streaming ECD in policy making, budgeting and implementation
- Institutionalise for sustainability and scalability political will for investing in the early years
- Allocate adequate budget and finance for ECD especially from zero to five (0-5) years of age
- Develop knowledgeable workforce (caregivers, ECD experts, researchers, ECD managers, practitioners etc.)
- Awareness for parents for early screening and referral services
- Broaden data and evidence system through monitoring and evaluation
- Create behaviour change communication strategy and initiate advocacy
- Target programme delivery to specific population subgroups
- Inclusive Education for disadvantaged and children with special needs
- Parental education on the upbringing of children both mother and father
- Build upon current practices (document the existing models and scale –up the most effective ones)

Appendix II

Conference Programme

OPENING SESSION	
Venue: W.M. Zaki Auditorium, Academic Complex	
08:00am - 08:45am	Registration of participants and to be seated
08:45am - 09:00am	Guests to be seated
09:00am	Arrival of the Chief Guest
09:00am-09:05am	National Anthem
09:05am -09:10am	Recitation and Translation from the Holy Quran by Dr. Sanaullah
09:10am -09:20am	Welcome Address by Prof. Dr. Zia- Ul-Qayyum, Vice Chancellor Allama Iqbal Open University, AIOU
09:20am -09:30am	Objectives & Background of the International Conference by Mr. Nasruddin Rupani, Chairman Rupani Foundation
09:30am -10:00am	Keynote Speech by Dr. Aisha Yousufzai, Associate Professor of Global Health & Population at the Harvard T.H Chan School of Public Health Topic: The Promise of Early Childhood Development: Investing in the Early Years
10:00am -10:10am	Speech by Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddique, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, National University of Modern Languages
10:10am-10:25am	ECD Status & Developments in Pakistan by Dr. Muhammad Azeem, Member Food Security & Climate Change (FS&CC)/Chair ECD Technical Working Group (TWG), Planning Commission
10:25am-10:35am	Early Childhood Development in Pakistan - UNICEF's Perspective by Ms. Aida Girma, Country Representative of UNICEF in Pakistan
10:35am-10:45am	WHO's Role in ECD in Pakistan – Dr. Palitha Gunarathna Mahipala, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Pakistan
10:45am-10:55am	Foundation Open Society's Initiatives in ECD in Pakistan by Ms. Nargis Sultana, Senior Programme Officer, Education, FOSI-Pakistan
10:55am -11:00am	Vote of Thanks by Prof. Dr. Attaullah Shah, VC, Karakoram International University
11:00am -11:15am	Address by the Guest of Honour, Mr. Muhammad Azam Khan Swati, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs
11:15am	Presentation of Conference Shield by the Organisers to the Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker and Group Photo, Expo Visit & Tea

PLENARY-I: A Life-course Perspective to ECD: The Nurturing Care Framework (good health, adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, security & safety, opportunities for early learning)

Venue: W.M. Zaki Auditorium, Academic Complex

Session Chair: Mr. Shafqat Mehmood, Federal Minister, Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training Moderator: Mr. Muhammad Aslam Shaheen, Chief Nutrition/SUN Focal Person, Ministry of Planning, Development & Reforms

Rapporteur: Dr. Batool Atta, Assistant Prof. Institute of Education, University of AJ&K

12:00pm -12:30pm	Keynote: Launching of the Nurturing Care Framework Presenter: Dr. Palitha Gunarathna Mahipala, WHO Representative and Head of Mission in Pakistan
12:30pm -12:55pm	Topic: Bringing up Children in a Changing World. Who's Rights? Whose Rights? Presenter: Ms. Caroline Arnold, Early Childhood Specialist & Educationist, Former Director Education, Aga Khan Foundation, Geneva
12:55pm -01:20 pm	Topic: How Can We Manage Multi-agency Contexts for Promoting Early Childhood Development? Presenter: Dr. Carol Aubrey, Professor Emeritus, University of Warwick, Institute of Education, Birmingham, UK
01:20 pm-01:35 pm	Topic: Update on ECD Policy Framework Presenter: Mr. Badar Uzaman, Programme Policy Officer, Federal SUN Secretariat, Planning Commission of Pakistan
01:35 pm-01:50 pm	Q & A
01:50 pm-02:00pm	Conclusion by the Chair
02:00 pm-02:15pm	Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair
02:15 pm-03:15pm	Visit ECD Expo & Lunch

Session I: Policy Framework and Initiatives (Multi-sectoral Aspects of ECD)

Venue: Room No.104

Session Chair: Ms. Caroline Arnold, Early Childhood Specialist & Educationist, Former Director Education, Aga

Khan Foundation, Geneva

Moderator: Dr. Sughra Choudhry Khan, Director Education, AKF, (Pakistan)

Rapporteur: Mr. Badar Uzaman, Programme Policy Officer, Federal SUN Secretariat, Planning Commission of

Pakistan

1 111	
03:30pm-03:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator
03:35pm-03:55pm	Topic: Bringing Up Children in a Changing World. Who's Rights? Whose Rights? Presenter: Ms. Caroline Arnold, Early Childhood Specialist & Educationist, Former Director Education, Aga Khan Foundation, Geneva
03:55pm-04:15pm	Topic: How can we Manage Multi-agency Contexts for Promoting Early Childhood Development? Presenter: Dr. Carol Aubrey, Professor Emeritus, University of Warwick, Institute of Education, Birmingham, UK
04:15pm-04:35pm	Topic: Update on ECD Policy Framework Presenter: Mr. Badar Uzaman, Programme Policy Officer, Federal SUN Secretariat, Planning Commission of Pakistan
04:35pm-04:55pm	Q & A
04:55pm-05:20pm	Conclusion by the Chair
05:20pm-05:40pm	Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair
05:45pm	Visit ECD Expo & Lunch
06:00 pm	TEA & NTWKG

Session II: Policy Framework and Initiatives (Multi-sectoral Aspects of ECD)	
Venue: Room No.105	
Session Chair: Mr. Aien Shah, Head of Education, Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan Moderator: Dr.Naeem Zafar, Head Child Rights Department, University of Lahore Rapporteur: Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal Mir, AIOU	
03:30pm-03:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator
03:35pm-03:55pm	Topic: Understanding of Reasons for Delay in Seeking Care for Pneumonia and Recurrent Wheeze Among Caregivers of Children Under Five in Pakistan Presenter: Dr. Hana Mahmood, Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Research Network
03:55pm-04:15pm	Topic: Fostering Critical Thinking in Early Years Presenters: Ms. Tabina Jabeen& Ms. Saira Shahab, Teachers Resource Centre (TRC)
04:15pm-04:35pm	Topic: The Effects of Story Telling Method on the Achievement of English Subject at Early Years Presenters: Mr. Tariq Mehmood Sheikh & Ms. Shabana Dilawar
04:35pm-04:55pm	Topic: Exploration of Pneumonia Related Policy Formation and Implementation in Pakistan Presenter: Ms. Hira Kiani, Maternal, Neonatal and Child health Research Network
04:55pm-05:20pm	Q&A
05:20pm-05:40pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair
05:50pm	Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair
06:00 pm	TEA & NTWKG

Session III: Policy Framework and Initiatives (Language Development in Early Years)	
Venue: Room No.106	
Session Chair: Ms. Brenda Taggart, Honorary Senior Research Associate Principal Investigator/Research	
Coordinator	
Moderator: Dr. Rehmatullah Bhatti, AIOU Rapporteur: Dr. Muhammad Sami Ullah, AIOU	
03:30pm-03:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator
03:35pm-03:55pm	Topic: The Role of Language and Communications Skills Development at Early Years Presenter: Mr. Ejaz Shah, I Can Read
03:55pm-04:15pm	Topic: Perception of Teachers About Their Role in Improving Children Reading Skills in English Subject at ECD Level Presenter: Dr. Sadruddin Qutoshi, KIU
04:15pm-04:35pm	Topic: Effects of News Paper Reading on Vocabulary Development Among Early Graders Presenters: Ms. Farah Ilyas, Dr. Muhammad Samiullah Imran and Mr. Imran Arshad
04:35pm-04:55pm	Topic: Information Processing Approach of Cognitive Development in Early Childhood: Need and Value Presenter: Ms. Shamaila Haleem
04:55pm-05:20pm	Q&A
05:20pm-05:40pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair
05:50pm	Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair
06:00 pm	TEA & NTWKG

Session IV: Policy Framework and Initiatives (Multi-sectoral Aspects of ECD)	
Venue: Room No.107	
Session Chair: Dr. Carol Aubrey, Professor Emeritus, University of Warwick, Institute of Education, Birmingham, UK Moderator: Ms. Nargis Sultana, Sr. Programme Officer Education, Foundation Open Society Institute Rapporteur: Dr. Syed Nasir Hussain, AIOU	
03:30pm-03:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator
03:35pm-03:55pm	Topic: Quality, Equity and Governance for Early Years: Lessons from Punjab Pakistan Presenter: Mr. Hamza Sarfraz, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi
03:55pm-04:15pm	Topic: Impact of Computer Assisted Language Learning on the Teaching and Learning of English as a Second Language at Early Years Presenters: Ms. Zenab Mohammad, Ms. Salma Nazir, Badri's Institute of Resource and Development
04:15pm-04:35pm	Topic: Role of IECED to Train ECD Professionals and Human Resource Presenter: Ms. Naheed Wasi, Institute of Early Childhood Education and Development
04:35pm-05:00pm	Q&A
05:00pm-05:20pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair
05:20pm-05:30pm	Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair
06:00 pm	TEA & NTWKG

Session V: What Works in ECD (What We Know Works Well: Noteworthy Inclusive Practices in ECD)	
Venue: Room No.108	
Session Chair: Prof. Dr. Abdul Hameed, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Management & Technology Lahore Moderator: Dr. Nazia Murtaza, Visiting Faculty of Abbottabad University of Science & Technology Rapporteur: Dr. Muhammad Tanveer Afzal, AIOU	
03:30pm-03:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator
03:35pm-03:55pm	Topic: A Study to Explore Presence of Social Skills Among Hearing Impaired Children Presenter: Ms. Shagufta Khanum, AIOU
03:55pm-04:15pm	Topic: Assessment of Depressions and Procrastination Among Parents of Autistic Children Presenter: Ms. Hifsa Batool
04:15pm-04:35pm	Topic: Educational Needs of Hearing-impaired Children in Learning Mathematics Presenters: Dr. Shaista Majid, Ms. Hina Noor and Ms. Ummay Kalsoom, AIOU
04:35pm-05:00pm	Q&A
05:00pm-05:20pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair
05:20pm-05:40pm	Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair
06:00 pm	TEA & NTWKG

Session VI: What works in ECD (Role of Technology in ECD: Noteworthy Practices)	
Venue: Room No.110	
Session Chair: Dr. Muhammad Ramazan, Dean Faculty of Education & Social Sciences, Karakorum International University (KIU) Moderator: Dr. Zahid Majeed, AIOU Rapporteur: Dr. Hina Noor, AIOU	
03:30pm-03:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator
03:35pm-03:55pm	Topic: Children's Animation Project in Tajikistan - Joint Initiative of FOSI, UNICEF and Ministry of Education and Science. Presenter: Mr. Nasarkhudo Dastambuev, Director of Programs: Early Childhood Development, Tajikistan
03:55pm-04:15pm	Topic: Internet Addiction and Psychological Well-being Among Children Presenters: Ms. Misbah Waqar and Ms. Saleha Bibi, Army Special Education Academy
04:15pm-04:35pm	Topic: Use of Technology in the Early Years and Its Effects (Positive & Negative) on Child Development Presenter: Ms. Shahida Sultan, Hashoo Foundation
04:55pm-05:15pm	Topic: Early Childhood Development and Education in the Era of Technological Revolution Presenters: Mr. Karim Aman & Ms. Seema Lassi- AKU-HDP
05:15pm-05:30pm	Q&A
05:30pm-05:40pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair
05:40pm-05:50pm	Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair
6:00pm	TEA & NTWKG

Workshop: Fostering Language Skills in Early Childhood Setting: In the Context of Urdu	
Venue: Room No.109	
Session Chair: Dr. Muhammad Ajmal Choudhry, AIOU Moderator: Dr. Batool Atta, Assistant Prof. Institute of Education, University of AJ&K Rapporteur: Dr. Farkhanda Rasheed, AIOU	
03:30pm-03:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator
	Facilitator: Mr. Sajjad Khan, Association for Academic Quality (AFAQ)
	Introduction to Language
	Language and the Absorbent Mind (Dr. Maria Montessori)
	Receptive and Productive Skills
03:35pm-05:30pm	Oral Language Exercises
	Teaching of Reading
	Writing
	Areas for Further Study
05:30 -05:40pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair
05:40-05:50pm	Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair
6:00pm	TEA & NTWKG

PLENARY-II: Transitio	ning from Home to ECD Center, Pre-school and to Formal School
Venue: W.M. Zaki Auditorium, Academic Complex	
Session Chair: Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan, Member Food Security & Climate Change, Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform Moderator: Dr. Nasir Mehmood, Dean Faculty of Education, AIOU Rapporteur: Dr. Munazza Ambreen, AIOU	
09:30am-10:00am	Keynote: Building Organisational Capacity for Family-centered and Participation-focused Care in Early Childhood Presenter: Dr. Mary A. Khetani, Associate Professor, University of Illinois Chicago, US
10:00am-10:25am	Topic: Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Project - Findings of Europe's Largest Longitudinal Study Presenter: Ms. Brenda Taggart, Honorary Senior Research Associate Principal Investigator/Research Coordinator, Institute of Education, Bedford Way London
10:25am-10:50am	Topic: Early Learning Resources for Deaf and Special Needs Children: A Pathway to Basic Literacy and Numeracy Presenter: Ms. Heidi Victoria Gustanski -Geary, Director Education, Family Educational Services Foundation (FESF)
11:05 am 11:30am	Tea Break
11:30am-11:55am	Topic: Child Development During the First 1000 Days: Role of Positive Parenting Presenter: Dr. Naeem Zafar, Head Child Rights Department, University of Lahore
11:55am -12:20pm	Topic: Best Practices in ECD Supported by Open Society Foundations, Early Childhood Programme Presenters: Ms. Tina Hyder, Deputy Director, Early Childhood Programme, OSF and Dr. Nurbek Teleshaliyev, Programme Officer, Early Childhood Programmes, OSF
12:20pm -12:40pm	Topic: Foundations for Early Learning: Scaling up Early Childhood Education (ECE) Model in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Presenter: Mr. Arshad Khan Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education, KP
12:40pm-01:00pm	Q&A
01:00pm-01:10pm	Conclusion by the Chair
01:10pm-01:20pm	Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair
01:20 pm	Poster Presentation & Lunch Break

Poster Presentations	
Venue: Corridor & Lobby 1st Floor	
Coordinator: Mr. Arshad Mehmood Qamar and Mr. Salman Khalil Ch Rapporteur: Dr. Naila Naseer, AIOU	
02:30pm-04:00pm	Topic: The Use of Technology in Early Years and its Positive and Negative Effects Presenter: Ms. Bushra Khan
	Topic: A Survey of Powdered Milk Available for Children in Pakistani Market Presenter: Mr. Abdul Momin Rizwan Ahmed
	Topic: Calcium Deficiency Among University Students in Islamabad; A Reflection of Poor Childhood Development Presenter: Mr. Abdul Momin Rizwan Ahmed
	Topic: An Innovative Strategy to Approach and Recruit Young Females from Rural Disadvantaged Community for an Early Learning Programme in Pakistan Presenters: Dr. Aisha Yousafzai & Ms. Saima Siyal
	Topic: Health Based ECD Pilot Project for a Suburban Community of Peshawar Presenter: Dr. Saeed Anwar, Peshawar Medical College
	Topic: An Analytical Study of Early Childhood Education Facilities in Public and Private Sector Schools in Azad Jammu & Kashmir Presenters: Ms. Nadia Nazir & Nazir Haider Shah
	Topic: Role of Family in Linguistic Development of a Child in View of Vygotsky's Theory Presenter: Ms. Shumaila Haleem

Session I: Role of Parents in ECD : Parental Education and it's Impact on Child Development			
	Venue: Room No. 105		
Session Chair: Mr. Nasruddin Rupani, Chairman Rupani Foundation Moderator: Mr. Imtiyaz Alam, UNESCO			
Rapporteur: Dr. Sidra Rizwan, AIOU			
02:30pm-02:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator		
02:35pm-02:55pm	Topic: The Father and Child's Early Childhood Education & Development		
	Presenter: Ms. Ansa Jamil, Kinnaird College for Women University		
02:55pm-03:15pm	Topic: Impact of Mellow Parenting Programme – Early Years Development Through Supporting Parents Across Cultures		
Presenter: Mr. Raquib Ibrahim			
03:15pm-03:40pm	pm Q&A		
03:40pm-03:50pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair		
04:00pm	04:00pm Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair		

Session II: Transition	ing from Home to ECD Centre, Pre-school and to Formal School		
Venue: Room No. 10	Venue: Room No. 104		
Session Chair: Dr. Mary Khetani, Associate Professor, University of Illinois Chicago, US Moderator: Dr. Muhammad Athar Hussain, AIOU Rapporteur: Dr. Azhar Mumtaz Saadi, AIOU			
02:30pm-02:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator		
02:35pm-02:55pm	Topic: Effects of Cognitive and Emotional Factors in Promoting Early Childhood Development: Teachers Demographic Perspectives Presenter: Mr. Mehboob-ul- Hassan, Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore		
02:55pm-03:15pm	m-03:15pm Topic: The Role of Neuro-linguistic Programme in Early Years Development Inclusive Teacher Education Presenter: Ms. Lubna Mir Anees, Teachers Development Centre		
03:15pm-03:35pm	-03:35pm Topic: Parents and Religious Training in Home-Based (ECD) to Formal School Presenter: Ms. Madiha Riaz		
03:35pm-03:50pm	Q&A		
03:50pm-04:00pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair		
04:15pm- Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair			

Session III: Transitioning from Home to ECD Center, Pre-school and to Formal School (Teachers Role in ECD)		
Venue: Room No. 107		
Session Chair: Dr. Carol, Professor Emeritus, University of Warwick, Institute of Education, Birmingham, UK Moderator: Mr. Amir Zeb, Director Training AFAQ Rapporteur: Ms. Tooba Saleem, AIOU		
02:30pm-02:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator	
02:35pm-02:55pm	Topic: Challenges Primary School Teachers Face in the Implementation of Early Childhood Education: Teachers Perceptions Presenters: Dr. Naila Shakeel, Quaed-e-Academy for Educational Development & Ms.Aneela Aslam, PhD Scholar, Punjab University, Lahore	
02:55pm-03:15pm	Topic: How Reflections Helps Teachers in Their Professional Development Presenter: Ms. Meher Fatima Kamran, Nasra Schoo	
03:15pm-03:35pm	Topic: Gendering and Beyond: Analysing Children's Early Years Education and Teaching Methodologies Deployed in Islamabad's Private Schools Presenters: Ms. Ameena Hafeez Mobeen and Ms. Rabia Aslam, Quaid-i-Azam University	
03:35pm-03:50pm	Q&A	
03:50pm-04:00pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair	
04:15pm-	4:15pm- Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair	

Session IV: What Works in ECD (What We Know Works Well: Role of Play in ECD)		
Venue: Room No. 108		
Session Chair: Mr. Iqbal Jatoi, Country Director Right to Play Moderator: Ms. Samina Ghafoor, ECD Expert Rapporteur: Dr. Zafar Iqbal Lilla, AIOU		
02:30pm-02:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator	
02:35pm-02:55pm	Topic: Investigating Role of Play in Developing Creativity Among Pre-schoolers Presenter: Ms. Irum Tayyaba, AIOU	
02:55pm-03:15pm	Topic: Psychology of Learning a Foreign Language: Efficacy of Interactive Musical Play Presenter: Mr. Muhammad Sulman, PhD Scholar, University of Lahore	
03:15pm-03:35pm		
03:35pm-03:50pm	Q&A	
03:50pm-04:00pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair	
04:15pm	04:15pm Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair	

Session V: What Wor	rks in ECD (What We Know Works Well: Note Worthy Practices)		
Venue: Room No. 109			
Session Chair: Dr. Ghazala Rafique, Director Human Development Programme— Aga Khan University Moderator: Ms. Shafia Rafique, CEO & Principal, Little Fellows Day Care & Elementary School Rapporteur: Dr. Sarwat Maqbool, AIOU			
02:30pm-02:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator		
02:35pm-02:55pm	Topic: Significance of Outdoor Classroom in Holistic Development in Early Years of Education Presenters: Ms. Rashida Saifuddin, Dr. Salma Nazir, Ms.Zenab Mohammad, Badri High School		
02:55pm-03:15pm	12:55pm-03:15pm Topic: Mediating Role of Self-concept in Moral Development & Risk-taking Behaviour Among Children Presenters: Ms.Misbah Waqar and Ms. Saleha Bibi, Army Special Education Academy		
03:15pm-03:45pm	Q&A		
03:45pm-04:00pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair		
04:15pm-	Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair		

Session VI: Early Childhood Development: What's at Stake			
Venue: Room No. 110			
Session Chair: Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ramzan, Dean Faculty of Education & Social Sciences, KIU Moderator: Dr. Naveed Sultana, AIOU Rapporteur: Dr. Aftab Ahmad , AIOU			
02:30pm-02:35pm	Opening of Session by Moderator		
02:35pm-02:55pm	Topic: Cyber Security Impact on Children at Early Age Presenter: Mr. Altaf Hussain, Networks & IS(Dept) HQ NADRA		
02:55pm-03:15pm	Topic: Challenge of Online Sexual Abuse of Children in Early Years in Pakistan: New Frontiers to National Legislation Presenter: Mr. Muhammad Imran Ali, Lahore Leads University		
03:15pm-03:35pm			
03:35pm-03:50pm	Q&A		
03:50pm-04:00pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair		
04:15pm	04:15pm Presentation of Conference Shields to Speakers and Chair		

THURSDAY- SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

Round-table Discuss	ion		
Venue: Room No. 106			
Session Chair: Prof. Dr. Abdul Hameed, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Management & Technology, Lahore Moderator. Dr.Faryal Razzaq, Assistant Professor – SZABIST Islamabad Rapporteur: Ms. Nargis Sultana, Sr Programme Officer Education, Foundation Open Society Institute			
02:30pm-02:35pm			
	Topic: The Impact of Brain Hemispheres in Education Presenter: Mr. Raheeb Anjum		
02:35pm-03:40pm	Topic: Parental Education for Early Childhood Development Presenter: Muhammad Faisal Rafique, University of Karachi		
	Topic: Early Childhood Curriculum: An Analysis of Various Approaches Presenter: Ms. Shumaila Haleem		
03:40pm-03:55pm	Q&A		
03:55pm-04:05pm	Conclusion by the Session Chair		
04:15pm-	04:15pm- Q&A		

CLOSING SESSIO	ON		
Venue: Main Auditorium, VC Secretariat, AIOU			
4:30 pm	Guests to be seated		
4:45pm	Arrival of the Chief Guest		
4:50pm	National Anthem		
4:55pm	Recitation and Translation from the Holy Quran by Dr. Arshad Iqbal		
5:05 pm	Welcome Note by Mr. Muhammad Rafique Tahir, Joint Educational Advisor, Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training		
5:20pm	Reflection on the Conference by Mr. Nasruddin Rupani, Chairman Rupani Foundation and Dr. Sughra Choudhry Khan, Director Education AKF, Pakistan		
5:35pm	Conference Findings, Recommendations and Way Forward by Dr. Nasir Mehmood , Dean Faculty of Education , AIOU & Ms. Khadija Khan , CEO Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood		
5:40 pm	Address by the Guest of Honour, Dr. Muhammad Azeem, Member Food Security & Climate Change (FS&CC)/Chair ECD Technical Working Group (TWG), Planning Commission		
05:55pm	Address by the Chief Guest, Prof. Dr. Zia-Ul- Qayyum, Vice Chancellor Allama Iqbal Oper University, Islamabad		
	Presentation of Conference Shield to the Chief Guest		
	Group Photo		
	Refreshments		
	Departure of the Chief Guest		

Appendix III

List of the Conference Core Committee & Terms of References

ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY (Registrar's Department)

No.F.2-16/2019-Admn/

NOTIFICATION

Dated: August, 2019.

The Vice Chancellor has been pleased to approve the following Core Committee for the International Conference on Early Childhood Development (ICECD)to be held on 25th– 26thSeptember, 2019atAIOU, Islamabad: -

S. No.	Name	Designation/Organization	Committee Position
1	Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum	Vice Chancellor	Conference Chair
2	Mr. Nasruddin Rupani	Chairman, Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood Education	Co-Chair of Conference
3	Mr. Muhammad Rafique Tahir	Joint Education Advisor, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training.	Co-Chair of Conference
4	Prof. Dr. Ata Ullah Shah	Vice Chancellor, Karakorum International University, Gilgit	Co-Chair of Conference
5	Prof. Dr. Nasir Mehmood	Dean F/o Education, AIOU	Convener
6	Ms. Khadija Khan	CEO, Pakistan Alliance for Early Childhood Education	Co-Convener
7	Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ramazan	Dean F/o Social Sciences,Karakorum International University, Gilgit	Member
8	Dr. Samra Mazhar	Ministry of National Health Services Regulations & Coordination	Member
9	Dr. Shughra Chaudhry Khan	Director Education, Aga Khan Foundation	Member
10	Dr. Qudsia Uzma	World Health Organization (WHO)	Member
11	Mr. Badar Uzaman	Ministry of Planning Development & Reform	Member
12	Mr. Waseem Samad	CEO, Rupani Foundation	Member
13	Mr. Jan Madad	Sr. Education Specialist, UNICEF	Member
14	Ms. Nargis Sultana	Sr. Programmer Officer, OSF	Member
15	Ms. Mehjabeen Zameer	Education Advisor, DFID	Member
16	Ms. Fakhra Najeeb	Director, Power99	Member
17	Ms. Mehnaz Aziz	President, PARWAAN	Member
18	Ms. Nazia Seher	JICA	Member
19	Ms. Vibeke Jensen	Country Rep, UNESCO	Member
20	Dr. Fazal ur Rahman	Associate Professor/ Chairman Dept of ECE & ETE	Secretary
21	Dr. Muhammad Athar Hussain	Assistant Professor, Department of ECE & ETE	
22	Dr. Saddruddin Qutoshi	Assistant Professor, Karakorum International University, Gilgit	Coordinator
23	Ms. Maryam Yadgari	Coordinator, PAFEC	Coordinator

ToRs of the Conference Core Committee

The Conference Core Committee shall be responsible for:

- Overall management of the Conference, including operational, logistics, travel, outreach and financial matters
- Making policy decisions about the Conference activities
- Planning and developing all the activities of the Conference
- Coordinating all the committee's matters/activities
- Correspondence within AIOU, Pakistan and abroad
- Update all the committees regarding progress, problems and new plans
- Update the Vice Chancellor/Conference Chair
- Arranging and conducting meetings of committees with Vice Chancellor/Conference Chair and with each other
- Assisting and helping the foreign delegations regarding all the matters i.e. conference information, visa, accommodation etc.
- Assisting the committees in any problem or issue that may arise
- Managing the activities through conference secretariat
- Update the Minister of State for Federal Education & Professional Training about the Conference preparations and implementation
- Provide guidelines to all sub-committees of the Conference

Appendix IV

MoU Between Allama Iqbal Open University & Rupani Foundation, Pakistan





MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION TO ESTABLISH CENTER FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

BETWEEN

ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY

&

RUPANI FOUNDATION

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

This Memorandum of Understanding is made on the 26th of September, 2019 between Allama Iqbal Open University (here-in-after called AIOU) and Rupani Foundation [here-in-after called RF). The term of the MOU shall commence upon signature by both parties. The MOU can be extended with mutual consent and by written MOU between the parties.

ABOUT RUPANI FOUNDATION

Rupani Foundation was established in 2007 in order to create employment, promote equity participation, and reduce poverty in the marginalized and underserved mountainous as well as urban and rural Communities living across Pakistan. The mission of Rupani Foundation is to engage these regions by integrating underprivileged areas and people into the evolving global socio-economic society during the coming decades. Our focus is to develop programs such as Gem Cutting and Polishing Training Centers and Early Childhood Education Centers for the growth socio-economic conditions of the people living in inaccessible areas.

Since its inception, Rupani Foundation has quickly grown into an NGO that communities can rely upon. Rupani Foundation firmly believes that the Northern and far Southern Areas of Pakistan possess significant potential. The Foundation is encouraged and inspired by the resilience, educational achievement, work ethics, dedication, and determination of the people to improve their living conditions. It is highly appreciative of the social and human capital cultivated by a multitude of development agencies over the last several decades.

However, Rupani Foundation believes that there is substantial benefit to these communities by unleashing the potential of the private sector. The Foundation's objective is to create economic opportunities, knowledgeable leadership, and 'aristocracies of merit' for the marginalized communities, particularly women and youth. In order to accomplish this, Rupani Foundation is mobilized to deploy the required technology and financial and human resources to facilitate market access and support the transition to a market-based economy. We work with communities, governmental and non-governmental organizations to achieve sustainability, transparency, and effectiveness of our programs.

2

3051

ABOUT ALLAMA IQBAL UNIVERSITY

Allama Iqbal Open University, the first Distance Education University in South Asia, that caters to the educational needs of 1.3 million students annually to enable them to study at their own place, at their own pace and at their own convenience. The University goes to the doorsteps of the students, irrespective of the distance and location of students. One can become a student of this university at any age as education is a life-long and continuous process.

The University has a vast menu of educational programs at different levels, starting from basic literacy programs to the PhD programs. The courses are regularly revised in order to keep them contemporary, relevant, and internationally compatible. Self-explanatory course material helps the students to comprehend the course concepts without physical presence of the teacher. The self-assessment activities, included in the books, help ensure the acquisition of learning outcomes.

Keeping in view the importance of earlier years in terms of education, development and growth AIOU is launching post-graduate diploma in ECE. The program aims to equip the graduates with necessary quality trainings and skills for ECE. It will be a thirty credit hours program expected to produce quality early childhood education teachers/instructors and planners so that they can pursue career successfully.

PREMABLE

Under this MoU, the AIOU and RF agrees to collaborate for the establishment of a national centre of for early childhood care and education at AIOU, Islamabad

PURPOSE OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The main object is to develop a collaboration and partnership for resource mobilization, curriculum, content and material development for the establishment national center for early childhood care and education at AIOU.

3

zasi

agreement. It is also understood and agreed that no information will be exchanged or disseminated under any collaborations pursuant to this MOU

2. Duration

The Parties to this Memorandum of Understanding hereby confirm their agreement to its terms by the following signatures:

5

3 mbs

your

Signatories This MOU is issued in duplicate and signed by the parties. DATE: 26 409, 2019 WASEEM SAMAD **CEO RUPANI FOUNDATION** 30182 DATE: Sept 26, 2019 REGISTRAR ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD



■ Email: secretariat@pafec.org

www.facebook.com/pafec.org

o www.instagram.com/coordinatorpafec

@AllianceEarly

www.pafec.org