



## Pakistan Country Profile

# Early Childhood Education



### Challenges

- Lack of access to public ECE programs in the rural and urban areas.
- Low ECE policy prioritization with primary focus placed on formal primary schooling.
- Low ECE demand from parents and unwillingness to take advantage of private ECE provision in rural and remote areas.

### Priorities<sup>4</sup>

- Encourage wider participation of children age 4-5 in ECE programs, including one year of universal access to State-provided pre-primary education.
- Improve holistic ECE quality by requiring teachers to undergo two-year specialized training on the revised ECE National Curriculum.
- Improve governance of ECE programs by attaching ECE to primary schools with increased resources.

### Noteworthy practices

**Community engagement for inclusive ECE** (Implemented by Aga Khan Education Services Pakistan or AKESP)

- Introduction of early learning by involving parents/communities in hard-to-reach areas of Gilgit-Baltistan. Strategies include individualized attention to children, multilingual teachers, resourceful environment, and addressing the needs of differently-abled children.
- Achievements: Children have greater appreciation for diversity, positive self-identities, confidence, and positive learning outcomes.

**ECD in Public Sector Consolidated Schools** (Implemented by Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Shaheed Institute of Science and Technology)

- ECD center established in a rural area, Shaheed Benazirabad, by a private university in public consolidated school with the support of Sindh Government. 3-year ECD program instead of a formal one-year Katchi class in public schools. Strategies include personalized attention to children, government teachers trained and engaged, preferences given to children from low income group.
- Achievements: Greater engagement of government officials. Children are better engaged, open to diversity, and have positive learning outcomes. Overall trust on public sector improved.

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### General information about ECE in Pakistan<sup>1</sup>

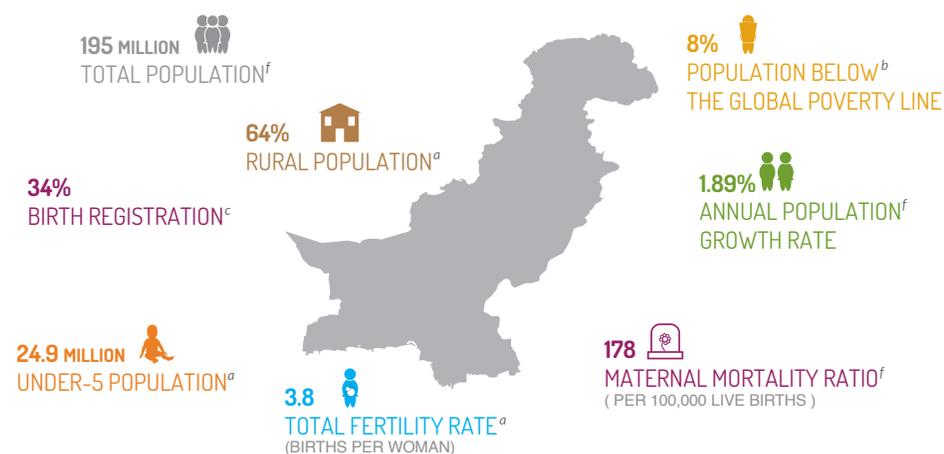
The term ECE is generally used in Pakistan to refer to “katchi” or one-year pre-primary education in public schools for children between 3 and 5 years of age (in private settings, children 4-5 years undergo 1 year of education, mostly in the form of Kindergarten or Montessori). Following the 18th amendment in the constitution, ECE is under the responsibility of the provinces - some of which have developed clear ECE policies and plans.

The National Education Policy 2009 states that ECE shall be based on a concept of holistic children development through stimulating, interactive environment, including play. At least one-year of preprimary education shall be provided by the State and universal access to ECE shall be ensured within the next ten years in all public schools. The first formal ECE Curriculum developed in 2002, and revised in 2007, provided policy and curricular guidelines pertaining to ECE in Pakistan.

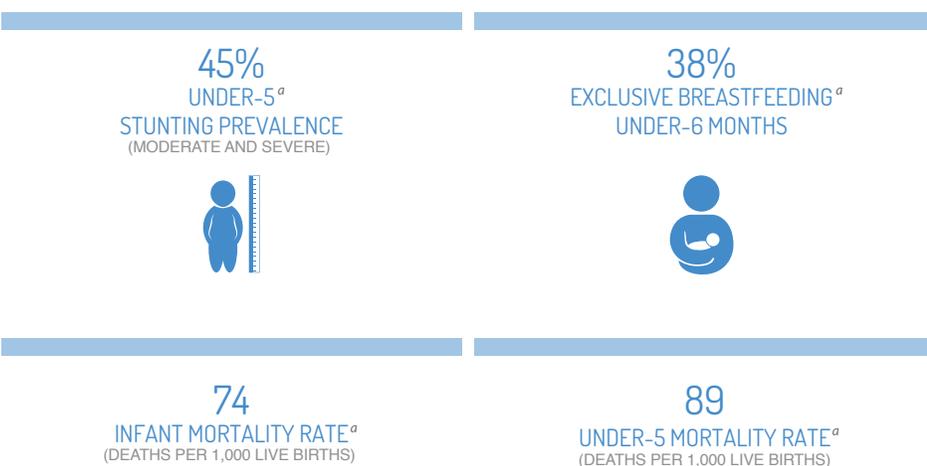
Pakistan has elevated its attention on children in the recent years. Under-five mortality rates have declined<sup>2</sup>. The Government has also taken measures to establish a National Emergency Plan for Polio Eradication in 2014 with a clear priority on halting polio among all children<sup>3</sup>.



## DEMOGRAPHICS<sup>5</sup> AND PRENATAL



## BIRTH TO 5 YEARS



Sources (year)

<sup>a</sup> Pakistan Demographic Health Survey (DHS) <sup>b</sup> World bank (2010) <sup>c</sup> SWOC (2005-2013)  
<sup>d</sup> UIS (2014<sup>6</sup>) <sup>e</sup> UIS (2013) <sup>f</sup> Economic Survey of Pakistan (2015-16)  
<sup>g</sup> Education Statistic of Pakistan (2014-15)

Disclaimer: Numbers have been rounded except for fertility and population growth rate. Data is as of May 2016.

## SCHOOL READINESS



### Key policies

ECE-specific national policy not available. Policies related to ECD are referenced within the National Education Policy (1998-2010).

- National Education Policy (revised in 2009)
- Provincial ECE Policy of Sindh (draft) (2014)
- Provincial Education Sector Plans of Sindh (2014-2018)
- Provincial ECE Plan of Balochistan Province (2011-2015)
- National Plan of Action for Education for All (2001-2015)
- Education Sector Plan by Punjab Province
- ECE scaling strategy of Punjab Province
- National ECE curriculum.

**Ministries in charge:** Provincial Ministries/Departments of Education (in Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtoon Khawa, and Balochistan). Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training coordinates national policies since the devolution of the education ministry to the provinces. Women Development Department, Health Department, Education Department.

### References

- <sup>1</sup> UNESCO International Bureau for Education (IBE). (2006). Pakistan ECCE programmes. Country profile prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2007 - Strong Foundations: Early Childhood Care and Education. Geneva: IBE.
- <sup>2</sup> Rao and Sun. (2010). Early childhood care and education in the Asia Pacific region: Moving towards goal 1. (Paper commissioned for the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific's World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education (WCECCE) in Moscow 2010).
- <sup>3</sup> Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. (2014). National Emergency Action Plan 2014 for Polio Eradication.
- <sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education Government of Pakistan. (2009). National Education Policy 2009 (pp. 35).
- <sup>5</sup> World Bank. (2015). World Bank Open Data (Accessed May 3, 2016).
- <sup>6</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). (2016). Education dataset (Accessed May 3, 2016).