

Evaluation of Early Childhood Care and Education Project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Initiative Summary

Initiative Name			
AidWorks initiative number	INJ785		
Project Commencement date	20 May 2011	Project Completion date	30 April 2015
Total Australian \$	AUD18,383,219		
Delivery organisation(s)	Save the Children Australia		
Implementing partner(s)	Save the Children Federation International		
Country/Region	Pakistan		
Primary sector	Education - Early Childhood Education		
Initiative objective/s	<p>The goal of the ECCE–KP project is to “improve educational outcomes and access for children in government schools by increasing opportunities for learning and development, and by improving transitions into primary school”.</p> <p>The project had the following six objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance access to quality and gender-sensitive ECCE opportunities that prepare children for school success by establishing and/or refurbishing ECCE classrooms in KP primary schools and by establishing supplementary community-based ECCE classrooms where needed 2. Improve the pedagogy of pre-primary (<i>katchi</i>), Grade 1 and 2 teachers and improve the quality of learning in early primary grades, with a focus on learning outcomes (literacy and numeracy) and child-centred approaches to teaching and learning 3. Develop a sustainable and institutionalised model for pre- and in-service teacher training by building leadership and instructional capacity among provincial teacher training institutes 4. Enhance the capacity and knowledge of ECCE among parents and community members and develop strong home-school partnerships 5. Build ECCE capacity among district and provincial government officials to ensure their effective support to teachers and ECCE classrooms 6. Initiate and sustain rigorous ECCE research and documentation in order to establish the evidence base needed for successful advocacy and policy activities. 		

1. Evaluation Summary

1.1 Evaluation Objective:

The primary purpose of this evaluation was to assess the potential for further scale up of the models piloted under this project, including any changes to the design of the project, within the existing human resource capacity and fiscal space available to the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The secondary purpose of the evaluation was to meet DFAT's accountability requirements by evaluating the program's achievements more broadly using DFAT's evaluation criteria as a guide (addressing, where appropriate, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, gender equality, monitoring and evaluation and analysis and learning).

1.2. Evaluation Completion Date: 31 March 2014

1.3. Evaluation Team:

- **Independent Consultants:**
 - Diana Guild, Team Leader
 - Amima Sayeed, Education Sector Specialist
- **DFAT Team:**
 - Kate Chamley, First Secretary, Islamabad Post
 - Arif Amin, Senior Education Adviser
 - Aadia Asghar, Program Manager-Education (Evaluation Manager)

2. DFAT's response to the evaluation report

2.1. Background

- The project has a three-year time frame and was due to end on 30 May 2014. In consultation with DFAT, Save the Children (SC) requested an 11-month extension to the project to inform the possibility of a second phase to the program and broader Community of Practice Learning.
- The Independent Evaluation (IE) of the program was conducted from 19 December 2013 to 31 March 2014. The evaluation assessed the extension, and the potential for scaling up the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) models piloted, including any changes to the design of the project.

2.2. Brief Overview of DFAT's Assessment of the Report

DFAT's overall assessment is that it is a strong evaluation report and meets the DFAT Monitoring and Evaluation Standards. The following reasons contribute to the high quality of the report:

- The independent consultants were engaged through the Education Resource Facility (ERF) which quality checked the IE report before submission of the draft and final versions.
- The evaluation process adhered to the DFAT Evaluation Guidelines.
- Each stage of the process involved participation of the Save the Children Australia and the in-country team, the Education team at Post and Desk and input from DFAT's Evaluation Support Section, while also retaining the independence of the report and findings.

2.3. Future Direction of the Program

- Overall, the IE report found that the ECCE program was performing well and delivering outputs according to the agreed timeframe. In keeping with this progress, the IE recommended that the ECCE program be extended in order to incorporate some of the lessons learned into further refinement of the model and to build the basis for a further phase of the program.
- **Management decisions based on the Independent Evaluation report:** Four questions were posed as part of the evaluation to guide Australian aid management decisions regarding future support for this project. A summary of the responses to these questions is below.

- ***Does the Australian aid program need to implement any changes to the delivery of the existing project before completion of the project?***

Changes to the project should not occur before its end date of May 2014. The ECCE-KP pilot project has made progress on achieving its objectives and it is recommended that analysing the data collected throughout the project be the priority focus of the extension phase. .

- ***Should the Australian Government consider continuing support to Save the Children for the existing ECCE model in KP, or make changes in the approach and design of the project?***

The Australian aid program should continue to provide support to SC for the existing ECCE model in KP province. Changes in the approach and design, as indicated through lessons learned and key recommendations in the IE report, should be considered in any future phases of the project.

- ***What changes, if any, need to occur to the current model/approach to ensure that it can be integrated into the government's education system?***

Integration of the pilot project approaches to ECCE into the GoKP education system has been somewhat successful, given the short period of implementation. Institutional changes take time, and the project taskforce has been working consistently to bring about systemic change at both the provincial and district levels. It is recommended that SC focus on the following three areas to ensure integration into the GoKP education system:

- the use of the project taskforce to bring about systemic changes;
- the use of public-private partnership (PPP) approaches to work with the GoKP in exploring alternative channels of financing the demand for the community based Early Childhood Care and Education Home Centres; and
- an emphasis on prompt analysis of the intervention models by the project team.
- use of lessons of the Evaluation to inform the DFID Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Education Sector Program.

- ***Is the interim extension proposed by SC sufficient to ensure that the investments made to date can be maintained, so that any subsequent phase of engagement can build quickly from the base provided in this phase?***

Subsequent phases of the project are needed to integrate ECCE fully into the education sector. Time is needed to measure the impacts of the project and to link the approaches of the pilot project towards sustainability. The IR report recommended that the Australian aid program grant an extension for the ECCE-KP pilot project. The interim extension is considered sufficient to ensure that the investments made to date can be maintained and can inform subsequent phases of the pilot project. An extension will also allow SC to:

- continue to provide technical support to teachers in schools and ECCE homes to ensure the application of training and materials;
- continue to make progress under the ECCE taskforce and to provide technical support to the GoKP during its implementation; and
- enable findings and recommendations from this evaluation report to be considered and to develop plans to address lessons learned.

2.4. DFAT's Response to the Findings and Recommendations

The Independent Evaluation Report recommended that the Australian aid program grant an extension for the ECCE-KP pilot project.

In March 2014, the delegate approved the extension of the project. The Deed of Amendment has been signed by DFAT and Save the Children.

DFAT's response to the specific recommendations made in the report

DFAT met with SC on 30 April 2014 to discuss the actions required to progress the Evaluation recommendations. The below actions are based on the discussions between DFAT and SC. The detailed work plan (31 May 2014 to 30 April 2015) will be submitted by SC by 25 May 2014 which will include the key activities required for actioning the recommendations from the IE report.

Recommendation	Response	Actions	Responsibility and Timeline
<p>. A report for the GoKP that includes various costed scenarios and strategies for the management of a government-financed ECCE program. The pilot project has demonstrated best practices for an effective ECCE program. However, given the technical and financial constraints of the GoKP, it will not be able to replicate or sustain them at the current level. Therefore, the report will need to advise the GoKP what outcomes can be achieved under low, medium, and high cost scenarios. This report will be an essential advocacy tool for securing a sustainable commitment from the GoKP through the development of an ECCE policy that leverages outcomes and resources. It will also act as a template for assisting the GoKP to deliver an ECCE program that can be financed within its budget.</p>	<p>DFAT agrees to this recommendation, being carried out under the ECCE Task Force established by the GoKP and chaired by the Secretary of Education. A Plan has already been developed by SC, with input from DFAT, and has been approved by the Secretary of Education to develop an ECE/ECD policy and three models that could be delivered by the Elementary and Secondary Education Department under low, medium and high cost scenarios.</p>	<p>Consultants with Policy, ECCE, Analytical, contextual competencies will be contracted.</p> <p>TORs developed for the consultants</p> <p>Focal person for this task will work with the consultants in the extension phase to finalize the ECCE Policy Framework including the low, medium and high cost scenarios for the GOKP.</p>	<p>Save the Children 15 May 2014</p> <p>Save the Children 15 May 2014</p> <p>Save the Children End October 2014</p>
<p>1. SC complete the analysis of data collected (including Quality Learning Environment assessment, weekly health education sessions for children, use of Book Banks, parent feedback on ECCE radio segments, global hand washing days, and action research projects) to use as a basis for any remedial action needed or proposed extension interventions, and achievement of the overall project goal and performance indicators</p>	<p>DFAT agrees to this recommendation</p>	<p>The project M&E Plan has identified the assessments and studies to be carried out.</p> <p>Analysis of data will be undertaken by an integrated team of Monitoring Evaluation Accountability Learning (MEAL) and Management Information System (MIS) and project team.</p> <p>Dissemination plan developed</p> <p>Research findings shared with stakeholders based on the Dissemination Plan.</p>	<p>Save the Children 15 May 2014</p> <p>Save the Children May to July 2014</p> <p>May/June 2014</p> <p>Save the Children Mid-August 2014</p>

2. SC monitor the current KP-ECCE cohort of students in intervention schools and compare their ASER study results to non-intervention cohorts for evidence of achievement that could be attributable to the pilot project	DFAT agrees to this recommendation	ASER raw data will be acquired assessed to see if the ASER assessment has been conducted in intervention schools. Based on the findings, it will be assessed if it is feasible to carry out the recommendation. Further analysis on baseline and midline will be carried out with the current sample of project schools and comparison will be made based on the findings of the endline survey.	Save the Children After completion of the endline survey of the project in early 2015
3. SC explore alternative channels of financing ECCE Homes through local and social corporate philanthropy and responsibility initiatives or finding a loan scheme offered through various government initiatives	DFAT agrees to this recommendation, noting, options of sustaining the ECCE Home model could also be explored, including the option of introducing a minimum fee to cover the costs of the staff at the Centre ¹ .	A strategy for sustainability of the ECCE Homes will be developed and implemented across the board	Outreach Coordinator, Save the Children 15 May 2014
4. SC focus future teacher training sessions on classroom-based, child-initiated, best ECCE practice teaching, learning, and assessment activities.	DFAT agrees to this recommendation	Classroom support strategy has been developed and is rolled out in ECCE intervention schools. Refresher training with a focus on emergent literacy will be rolled out for Katchi and class one teachers.	15 May 2014 Manager Child Development and Research, Save the Children September 2014
5. SC explores options for teacher training via an e-learning platform in order to reach more teachers or enrich their trainings through regular monitoring and feedback.	DFAT agrees to this recommendation	Technical and financial feasibility of the options for teacher training via an e-learning platform will be carried out in the extension phase of the project. This recommendation is linked with the roadmap on ECCE viable model for implementation in KP. It will also be explored whether this can be scaled up through the GoKPs plans.	Save the Children End October 2014

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This would not violate Article 25-A of the Constitution because children benefitting from these Homes are outside the scope of Article 25-A that covers children between the age of 5-16 years.

6. SC work with the GoKP to formalize agreement on and implement the <i>katchi</i> and Grades 1-2 curricula in TTI pre-service teacher education programs	DFAT agrees to this recommendation	This recommendation is currently being implemented by SC and is work in progress in collaboration with the Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education.	Manager Child Development & research, Save the Children June/July 2014
7. SC, through the ECCE task force, continue to encourage the involvement of the GoKP Planning and Development (P&D) staff in the ECCE sector. Planning & Development staff are trained in ECCE teacher education and curriculum development and program planning. They would be responsible for working with Teacher Training Institutes and Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education staff to plan core activities related to ECCE, thus increasing staff planning skills and P&D staff ECCE knowledge	DFAT agrees to this recommendation	Awareness raising around ECCE will be part of the extension plan activities. This will include other stakeholders as well. Training around Planning Skills will be planned during the extension phase.	Save the Children Completed by end of project
8. The GoKP and Australia Awards explore offering scholarships for specialist ECCE graduate study programs with the aim of improving the capacity of TTIs to provide high level teacher education and training	DFAT agrees to this recommendation	Australia Awards currently includes a priority focus area of Education with 50% of the scholarships reserved for public sector candidates and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as one of the priority provinces. DFAT to engage with Coffey International to discuss possibility of orienting the Save the Children team on the scholarships program. Save the Children will play the role of facilitation in further disseminating the information.	DFAT and Save the Children January/February 2015
9. SC, through the ECCE taskforce, continue to engage in discussions with GoKP on education sector planning issues and challenges.	DFAT agrees to this recommendation, but suggests that SC only focus on the ECE sub-sector within the Education Sector Plan (ESP) and provide inputs in the revision of ECE policies and strategies as the government is planning to initiate the revision of the ESP.	SC will remain engaged with the ECCE Taskforce to develop the ECCE Policy Framework. SC will assess how the ECCE Policy Framework fits within the broader Education reforms in KP.	Save the Children End October 2014