

Early Childhood Development (ECD) integration in policy documents, governance and program Pakistan (2017- till date)

Embedding nutrition across health and social protection
In financing for nutrition

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What is it about?

ECD initiative and scale up since the formation of a high-level Task Force on ECD chaired by the Minister Planning Development & Special Initiatives, recommended ECD policy framework , followed by the creation of a Steering Committee and Technical Working Group at the federal level, with similar committees formed in provinces.

Based on recommendations from ECD policy dialogues, the government, Key Family Care Practices (positive parenting), standards, and index to ensure quality services. Key policy documents like the Annual & Five-Year Plan of Planning Commission, Pakistan Vision 2025 and 5E's Framework to Turnaround Pakistan have prioritized ECD.

Despite coordination challenges across ministries, these efforts represent a critical step toward ensuring that every child in Pakistan has access to essential health, nutrition, and early learning services, by integrating ECD lens into projects/ program documents, developing new programs, curriculum optimization and capacity building of govt. and other stakeholders.

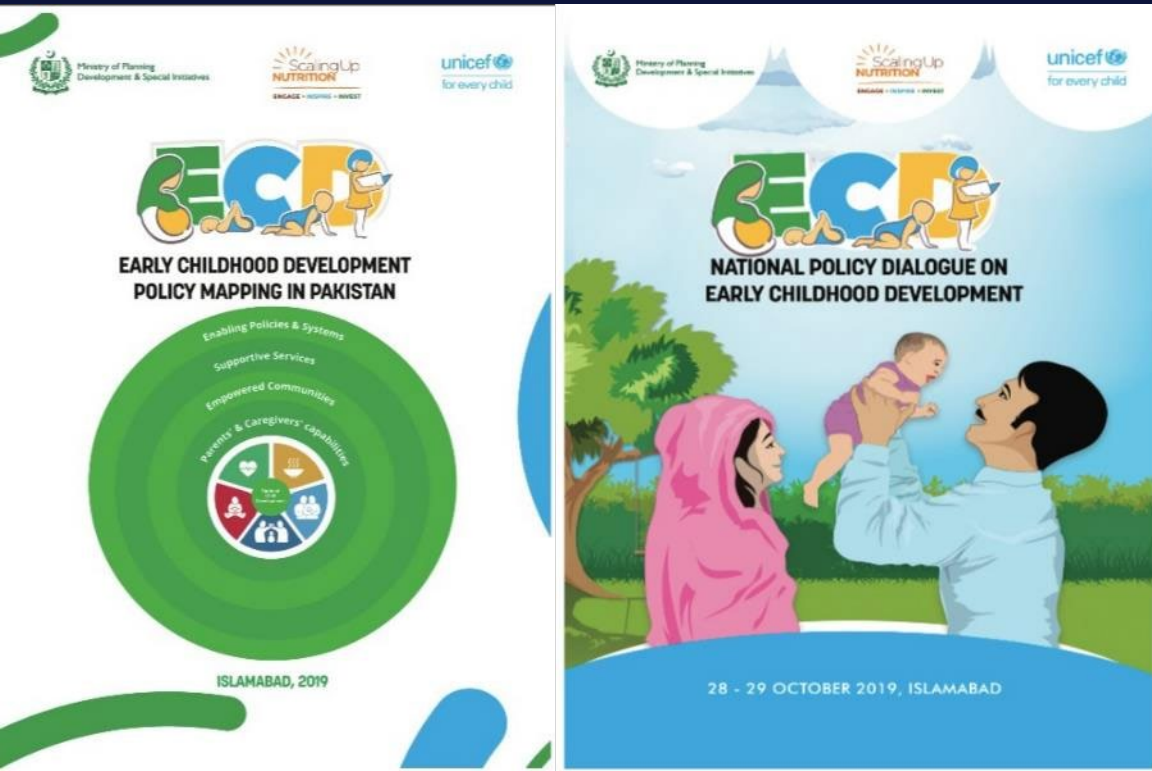


What are the objectives of the success story?

- **Promote National ECD Agenda:** Highlight and prioritize ECD in national policies to ensure widespread access to ECD services for children
- **Enhance Government Ownership:** Strengthen government commitment at all levels by establishing cross-sectoral collaboration & governance structures
- **Capacity Building & Program Development:** Enhance the skills of stakeholders and ensure ECD integration into Project documents & programs for scale up & effective implementation



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How did it happen?

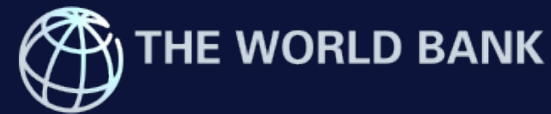
In Pakistan, ECD has gained significant momentum through targeted awareness and advocacy efforts. High-level political engagement has been crucial in driving this agenda, fostering commitment at both national and provincial levels. Capacity building and sensitization initiatives have empowered key stakeholders, enhancing their ability to integrate ECD into policy frameworks, including national health, education and social protection strategies. Furthermore, ECD priorities are now reflected in the Joint SUN annual work planning, ensuring a coordinated and sustained approach to improving outcomes for young children across the country.

Stakeholders Involved

The development of the ECD success story was a collaborative effort, bringing together various stakeholders from different sectors. Key contributors included:

- **Government & Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Secretariat Pakistan:** Led the coordination and alignment of stakeholders, ensuring the reflection everywhere.
- **UNICEF and WHO:** Contributed technical expertise
- **Civil Society Organizations & Development Partners:** Played a critical role in achieving the story's success.

Together, these stakeholders' contributions were instrumental in shaping a comprehensive success story that demonstrates the impact of ECD initiatives in Pakistan.



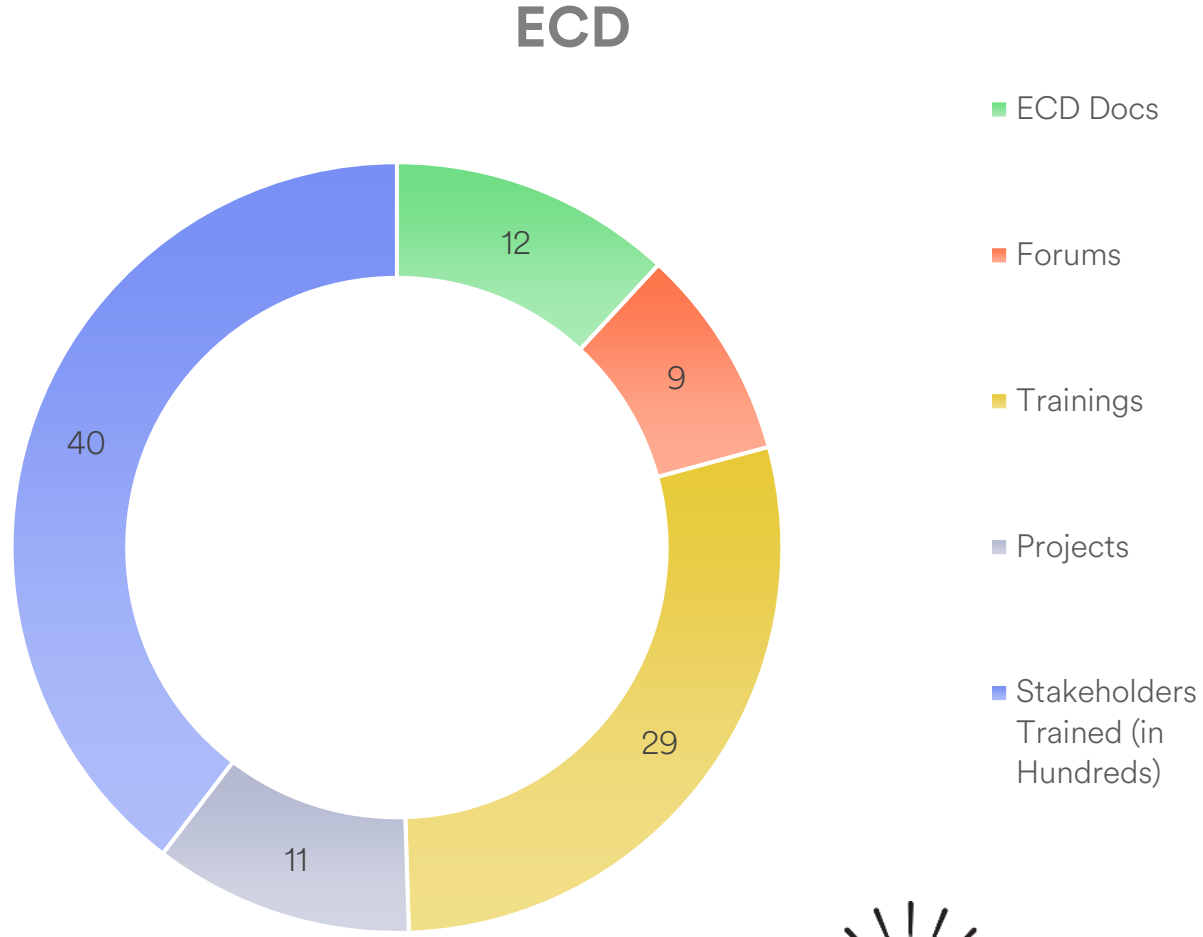
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What is the outcome of the success story?

The success story of early childhood development (ECD) advocacy in Pakistan has resulted in increased national recognition of ECD as a priority. Through sustained high-level political engagement and capacity-building efforts, ECD is now integrated into key policy documents, projects and national strategies.

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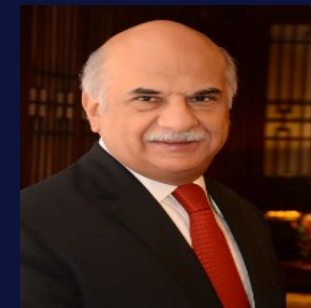


“ECD is a priority area for the Government of Pakistan. National ECD Framework will contribute safeguarding children leading to holistic and sustained child development & provide clear direction, guidelines for all stakeholders for consensus and convergence”.

(Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Government of Pakistan)

“We can’t wait for economic development, we need to invest on human capital and let that be the driver of economic development”.

(Mr. Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission)



“Getting things right from the very beginning is key. We can take advantage of this window through investments in health, nutrition, education, protection, early stimulation, and nurturing care”.

(Mr. Abdullah A. Fadil, Country Representative, UNICEF Pakistan)

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Challenges

- **Coordination Across Ministries:** Effective coordination and inadequate clarity on roles and responsibilities between multiple ministries (health, education, planning, etc.) and other stakeholders posed difficulties, leading to delays in aligning priorities and ensuring consistent implementation.
- **Limited Institutional Capacity:** There was insufficient capacity among government and other stakeholders to prioritize and implement ECD
- **Resource Allocation and Prioritization:** Despite ECD being included in national policy documents, the challenge of securing adequate financial and technical resources remained, with competing priorities often taking precedence.



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Solutions

- **Stakeholders Capacity Enhancement Initiatives:** Targeted training programs were launched to build the capacity of stakeholders, enhancing their ability to integrate ECD lens into existing and new programs & sectoral policies and strategies
- **Formation of ECD Governance Structures:** Establishing an ECD task force, steering committees, and working groups at federal and provincial levels helped streamline efforts and facilitate cross-ministerial coordination
- **Development of ECD Policy Framework:** It helped defining the sectoral roles and responsibilities & strategic objectives for short, medium & long term ECD programming
- **Leveraging National Plans:** Embedding ECD into the strategic government documents/ plans (5 E's Framework/ vision 2035, Annual Plan, Five-Year Plan, and Pakistan Vision 2025).ensured that it remained a priority, guiding resource allocation and sustained focus.

Recommendations

- ECD Mapping
- Capacity building of all stakeholders
- High level political and systems engagement
- Establishing dedicated ECD governance structure
- Integrating ECD into key government strategic document and political manifestos
- Development of ECD policies
- Development of ECD Lens/ Marker
- Putting ECD lens into the curriculum (pre-primary to university)
- Putting ECD lens in existing sectoral projects/ programs

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The image shows the cover of a report titled "EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT POLICY MAPPING IN PAKISTAN". At the top, there are logos for the Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Scaling Up NUTRITION (with the tagline ENGAGE • INSPIRE • INVEST), and UNICEF (with the tagline for every child). The central graphic features the acronym "ECD" in large, colorful letters, with illustrations of a pregnant woman, a crawling baby, and a child holding a tablet. Below this is the title "EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT POLICY MAPPING IN PAKISTAN". The main visual is a large green circular graphic with concentric rings. The outermost ring is labeled "Enabling Policies & Systems". The next ring inward is "Supportive Services". The third ring is "Empowered Communities". The innermost ring is "Parents' & Caregivers' capabilities". At the center of this graphic is a smaller circular diagram with four colored segments (red, orange, blue, green) containing icons representing different aspects of ECD: a heart, a bowl of food, a group of people, and a person. Below the main graphic, the text "ISLAMABAD, 2019" is visible.

Ministry of Planning
Development & Special Initiatives

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ECD

**EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
POLICY MAPPING IN PAKISTAN**

Enabling Policies & Systems
Supportive Services
Empowered Communities
Parents' & Caregivers' capabilities

ISLAMABAD, 2019

MORE INFORMATION

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