ECE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROFILE
ECCE is not just an educational program, it is the right of every child to be provided with strong foundations for holistic development. With such passion, ITA started the journey of ECE in 2000 inspired by Hima Akhlaque Hussain a pioneer in this field was also the grand educator who gave the name “Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi(ITA)” as a believer in the fundamental power of education and learning for awareness and enlightenment for human development. She started Hima Schools for Children through the Montessori method she learnt in Lewisham London in 1948, in Lahore and Karachi. The founder of ITA was also groomed in the Lahore school. In 2000, ECCE was just beginning to be finally recognized at the policy level (NEP 1998), but was not considered important and mandatory for young children in public sector schools. Only Katchi was available for them as an apology to pass time with non-ECE teachers and spaces/classrooms without materials for a child’s interest, completely failing to attract and retain small children; they were the truly marginalized forgotten children in our schools. A beginning had to be made!

Since 2000 ITA has been making strong efforts with conviction to spread ECCE at local, national level and within a global context. ITA has made remarkable contributions in the areas of influencing policy at provincial and national level, teachers’ professional development programs, emergencies, Teaching Learning Material (TLMs) development, assessment systems for ECCE, advocacy and research. ITA is acknowledged by the public sector partners within different forums. It is also a Friend/member of ARNEC and ECCE networks in Pakistan and the region.

Under large programs of ACL QEFA.US Dept of Labor; Dubai Cares support and all school improvement and rehabilitation programs in emergencies ITA has undertaken systematic establishment of ECCE programs upgrading Katchi and even adding an additional grade of pre katchi with ITA’s own support. Since inception ITA has worked with over 2000 schools (2000-2012) in establishing ECCE classes in government schools in close collaboration with the government on: service delivery, capacity building, research and policy engagement. Balochistan has been engaged with in ECCE since 2012 with support from PPAF and from 2014 with Dubai Cares support in 4 districts. In each of the policies/sector plans /reforms ITA has been an active partner: ESR Action Plan 2001-2005/6 the pilot design; NEP 2009; Education in Emergencies; Sector Plans of provinces, Sindh ECCE Policy 2015 and the Right to Education Acts /rules in all provinces where applicable.
Globally, ITA has been at the forefront of EFA goals (Dakar) and SDGs formulation with major inputs in SDG 4 and SDG 4.2 targets and linkages. ITA’s leadership has been engaged with the recently launched Learning Generation Report by the Education Commission where ECD/ECCE is crafted as part of the ‘innovation transformation’ across sectors of education, health and nutrition and for children, adolescents and adults. [www.educationcommission.org](http://www.educationcommission.org)

**Printing and Nationwide Dissemination of Urdu National Curriculum 2007 for the first time and in English across Pakistan with CSR UNILEVER Support**

With CSR support from Unilever Pvt. Ltd. and “Surf Excel” brand, ITA printed for the first time with the formal permission of the Ministry of Education-Curriculum Wing the Urdu version of the National Curriculum ECE 2007 and has printed over 15000 ECE National Curriculum sets in Urdu and English distributed in Punjab, KP, Balochistan and Sindh.

**Dissemination of National Curriculum to the teachers:**

National curriculum ECE 2007 (Urdu / Sindh/ English) a very fine document achieved through public private partnership by the Government of Pakistan was provided to the teachers in ITA’s partner schools in all provinces. Along with this, a training manual was also developed and distributed amongst all partners schools as a guideline aligned to the directions set in the NC ECE 2006/7

Strategic engagement in teacher preparation using the NC ECE 2007 as a basis together with global networks of ECCE, ITA embarked on a very rich journey of professional development conceived in the continuous professional development mode and through pre service programs of one year B.Ed. (see below)

1. **ECE Component as part of Service Delivery Programs**

Learning begins at birth, it addresses all needs of the child and needs to go hand in hand with care and support from care givers. ITA has been engaged in providing ECD services since 2005 under emergency response program after the earthquake disaster in AJK for the children below 5 years for their rehabilitation through education and with IDPs in Swabi in 2009/10. However it started working more comprehensively on ECD in 2010 establishing 16 ECD Day care centers in the flood affected districts of Punjab and Sindh with linkages of Health, Parental care, Skills and livelihoods for young mothers and older siblings. Named by the beneficiaries as “Sanjha Vehra” or in Sindhi as “ Panjho Vehro” it was a program that needs urgently scale up to reach not just one SDG 4.2 targets but many more targets and goals of SDGs (nutrition, health, maternal
health, gender equality, environment, poverty etc.) targeting children and young mothers sometimes adolescent girls themselves. The details of the program are as follows:

a. Panjho Vehro Program-( this intervention has been mentioned and acknowledged in Sindh Education Sector Plan)

**Time Frame:** April 2011 – June 2013

**Target Audience/Target Group**
- Children – 1 year to 5 years (mainstreaming to schools)
- Local community; parents especially females; Mothers & sisters
- Care Givers/ECD teachers

**Geographical Coverage:** Shikarpur; Sindh

**Core Areas of SV/PV Program:**
- Developmental Milestones- Physical, Cognitive, Emotional & language
- Individualized Child Profile (ICPs) for each child to track all developmental dimensions
- Protection and care, safe spaces made available in the centre
- Nutrition – healthy cooking done once a week
- Learning Readiness activities, paced, interactive – making sense by ourselves
- Aesthetics/creativity - exploring colors, words, body movements; songs and sounds
- Mothers’ Health (pre-post natal), Child Care , Well being- and expressions
- Mothers’ engagement in certified skills/vocations for livelihoods – life skills and DRR

**Results Achieved:**
- The program benefitted 1880 children (including mainstreamed) through health, nutrition and learning interventions
- 80% working females were benefitted providing safe and protected spaces for their children
- 1069 females were benefitted from health sessions organized by Lady Health Workers (LHW)
- Proper record of birth, vaccination, immunization and enrollment was kept and maintained
- Rights Based – Gender Empowerment sessions were regularly conducted with the Community
- Presented the best example of community participation donating a house to establish ECD center for community betterment.
b. More Recently with Dubai Cares the ECCE portfolio has been expanded with 450 ECCE katchi support centres through “Improving learning outcomes, enrolment and transitions from ECE to primary education for especially girls and vulnerable groups in Pakistan”

**Time Frame:** January 2014 – December 2016

**Target Audience/Target Group**
- Children – 3 year to 5 years (mainstreaming to schools)
- Local community; parents especially females; Mothers & sisters
- Care Givers/ECE teachers

**Geographical Coverage:** Karachi, Sukkur, Shikarpur; Sindh

**Core Areas of Program:**
- To provide experiential learning opportunities to 35000-40,000 children in 400 schools over 30 months for successful transition to primary level
- To hire and train 400 para teachers along with 400 school teachers in ECE curriculum, pedagogies and assessment system.
- To train cluster head teachers, and 150 field officers/trainers such as DTEs (govt. District Teacher Educator), supervisors, ADEOs/AEOs and relevant personnel on ECE to make the intervention sustainable for the entire district
- To raise awareness among 2,000 SC/SMC members (400 schools × 05) on the importance and need of ECE.
- To develop modules on ECE curriculum, early learning developing standards (ELDS) and assessment to influence B.Ed ECE courses in pre–service and in-service training of teachers.
- To undertake baseline prior to the launch of the segment with a research design to measure impact through the life of the project

**Results Achieved:**
- 448 ECE rooms (overall- 309 in Sindh) have been established – with provision of furniture and teaching learning materials
- 29,000 children (overall- 19630 in Sindh) have been provided with experiential learning opportunities
- 448 Para teachers (overall- 309 in Sindh) have been hired to support ECE intervention in schools
- 1,112 teachers (overall- 618 in Sindh) have been trained on ECE
- 2,780 SMC Members (overall- 1545 in Sindh) mobilized on the importance and need of ECE

2. **Teacher Training and Preparation: Core Strand of ECCE**
ITA has been committed to teacher training through cluster based, on the job training (OJT) as CPD and pre service programs. Since 2012 ITA has created the Institute for Professional Learning (IPL) for concentrating on all these areas and materials development. Many manuals and guides of ECCE have been produced by ITA for its teachers /assistants in varied geographies of Pakistan.
a. Initiation of One –Year Pre Service Teachers’ Training Program (B Ed. ECE)
Institute of Professional Learning (IPL) in collaboration with ITA has launched B Ed. in ECE in the year of 2013-2014 to prepare well-trained ECE teachers. For this purpose, a set of ten manuals (according to the Scheme of Studies B.Ed. ECE, the University of Education Lahore, and Punjab) was developed in collaboration with VMIE (VM Institute for Education). A shorter version of 10 weeks duration has also been developed on the same topics for a modular approach for teachers needing a faster approach.

Manuals Developed:
- Early Childhood Growth and Development
- Introduction to Early Childhood Education
- Designing Learning Environment
- Young Children's Art and Drama
- ICT in Children's Learning
- Introduction to Pre-School Assessment
- Guiding Children's Social Development and Behavior
- Early Child Care
- Early Childhood Curriculum and Activities
- Children's Literature

The modules have been presented to STEDA for endorsement

b. Ongoing Teacher Training and Capacity Building
ITA has engaged in teacher training and capacity building through IPL and other government/non-government partners since 2002. The record of teachers trained is given as follows:

- 800 partner schools (2 teachers per schools) in 15 districts (KP, Punjab and Sindh) have been given trainings on ECE and growing across Pakistan during 2002-2007
- 1400 teachers from 1200 schools (70% govt. 30% private) have been trained on ECE from 2008-2012 mobilizing CSR (UNILEVER) across Pakistan
- 370 teachers in 185 schools have been trained during 2008-2011 in Punjab under the project of “Enhancing Girls’ Enrolment in remote areas of Pakistan” supported by Dubai Cares
- 150 teachers have been trained in Multan; Rahim Yar Khan; Muzaffargarh; Ghotki, Swabi & AJK under education in emergencies in 2009-2010
- 600 teachers have been trained during 2011-2013 under the project of “Children especially girls aged 2-12 have access to quality education with improved infrastructure and safe learning environment” in collaboration with Dubai Cares in Rahim Yar Khan & Muzaffargarh in Punjab and Shikarpur in Sindh.
- 46 Teachers, 15 Lady Health Workers (LHWs) in RYK, Muzaffargarh (Punjab) and Shikarpur (Sindh) have been trained on ECD in day care centers.
- 800 public and private teachers are being trained in the target districts of Sindh, Baluchistan and Punjab under the project titled “Improving learning outcomes, enrolment and transitions from ECE to primary education for especially girls and vulnerable groups in Pakistan 2014-2016”
• 120 education officers are being given orientation on ECE through a two-days training under DC phase III in 2014-2016
• 400 SCs are being sensitized on the importance of ECE through ECE classrooms’ visit under DC phase III in 2014-2016

3. **Teaching Learning Material (TLM) Development /Assessment and Dissemination**
The development and dissemination of teaching learning materials (TLMs) has been an important part of ECE interventions. During this process, this is carefully considered that TLMs meet not only children’s learning needs but also match to their culture and local context. Undoubtedly in early years, developmentally and culturally appropriate materials improve learning and readiness for next class.

**Star wands (Urdu & English):**
Star wands have been developed for story-telling activity. They help children in comprehending key messages in a story. It also helps to develop critical thinking and reasoning through questions on the star wands.

**ECE Kit (Urdu & Sindhi)**
Inspired by TRC’s Pehla Taleemi Basta, the ECE kit in more robust materials is one of the main learning materials of ITA, developed in Urdu. A Sindhi version along with a teacher guide was developed for the schools in Sindh under NRSP and Dubai Cares project.

**English -Urdu-Sindhi**
Individualized Child Profile (ICP) & Flash Cards:
ICPs have been developed in Urdu (and Sindhi) for child assessment in all development domains; cognitive, emotional, social & personal and language. To date no agency in Pakistan has done this work by domains whilst there have been assessment initiatives by various agencies in which ITA has fully participated.

A Translated Version of Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies, USA
ITA took a unique initiative with kind support and collaboration with ARNEC to make an Urdu translated version of a series of five books based on learning games for the children aged birth-five years. The English version was developed earlier by Teaching Strategies USA. The purpose of developing Urdu version was to benefit maximum parents and teachers who cannot read English. This covers 5 volumes from 0-60 months or 5 years - user friend activity with children by care givers, parents and teachers. It was made possible through support from ARNEC and Dubai Cares.

4. Research and Advocacy
ITA has also enagged actively on research in ECE through ASER and DC impact evaluations:
- Research Papers in ECE at CIES, UKFIET, ARNEC etc.
- ASER data on ECE
- Policy Briefs ASER
- Policy dialogues at Provincials, National and International levels – e.g. Karachi Consensus Statement on ECE held in September 2014 - Right to Education and ASER Pakistan under Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) organized a two day South Asian Right to Education & ECED meeting in Karachi in collaboration with the Education & Literacy Department (E&LD) Government of Sindh for the purpose of bringing forward the need to address the challenges of ECED.
The challenge is immense but ITA and IPL are willing to partners across Pakistan for support to the foundations of learning and life to address Equity, Inclusion and lifelong learning in Pakistan.