

Institute for Human Development &
Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health

International Conference on Nutrition & Early Human Development

Nurturing Care:

**From Global "Pacts" to National
Action, From Thriving Childhoods
to Sustainable Livelihoods**

24-26 October 2019
Aga Khan University

Abstract Book



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THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

ABOUT AKU

Aga Khan University was established in 1983 as an international university with an objective to promote human welfare in general, and the welfare of people in the countries in which it operates, by disseminating knowledge and providing instruction, training, research and service in the health sciences, education and such other branches of learning as the University may determine.

As an international institution, the University has 11 campuses and teaching sites spread over 8 countries in Asia, Africa and Europe.

AKU is a non-denominational institution open to all, irrespective of religion, ethnicity, gender or national origin. It has a diversified workforce of over 10,000 employees worldwide.

ABOUT IHD

The Institute for Human Development is a system-wide research and development entity encompassing AKU and the wider Aga Khan Development Network. Its vision is to build capacity and drive innovation in research and higher education, to produce and disseminate new knowledge on human development that advances the quality of individual lives and contributes to the building of successful pluralistic societies, with a particular focus on resource-poor regions of the world.

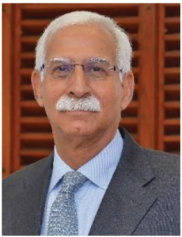
IHD's four-fold mission is to generate new knowledge through basic and applied research; apply knowledge from research to inform programmes, services, and practices; influence policy formulation and implementation in ways that reap the benefits of the systematic research produced at the institute and elsewhere; and deliver education programmes at multiples levels of study to prepare a wide range of human development specialists and professionals.

ABOUT FUNDING FOR THIS CONFERENCE

- ◇ Aga Khan Foundation USA
- ◇ Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
- ◇ Templeton World Charity Foundation
- ◇ Office of the Provost, Aga Khan University
- ◇ Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health, AKU
- ◇ Institute for Human Development, AKU

MESSAGES FROM AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

President Firoz Rasul



On behalf of all of us at the Aga Khan University, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to our Campus and to our Institute for Human Development's 3rd International Conference on Early Human Development. As you well know, the field of early human development has evolved in an increasingly interdisciplinary direction over time. So too has this conference, which this year is, for the first time, jointly sponsored by the Institute and AKU's Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health. As the Centre has been a longtime leader in the field of nutrition research in Pakistan and beyond, and as the WHO/UNICEF Nurturing Care Framework explicitly recognizes the importance of nutrition for development, this year's conference will include a special focus on maternal and child nutrition. AKU's Institute for Human Development is the result of the conviction of the University's Chancellor, His Highness the Aga Khan, that increasing our understanding of early human development will improve quality of life and contribute to the building of successful pluralistic societies. It also reflects the vision of the late Dr. Fraser Mustard, a former Aga Khan University Trustee and a pioneer in human development, who would doubtless have been exceedingly gratified to see so many leading scholars and professionals in human development from around the world convening on this campus. I hope that this week's presentations and discussions will help to advance the state of knowledge, galvanize much-needed action and fulfill our shared vision of a world in which everyone has the opportunity to fulfill their potential.

Dr Carl Amrhein, Provost and Vice President



I am delighted to see the Institute for Human Development and the Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health join hands to give due prominence to issues related to early maternal and child nutrition, a core thematic focus of this conference. In doing so, the two entities of the Aga Khan University are underscoring the benefits of leveraging institutional synergies to both add value to work being done across the university and position us to embark on bolder initiatives within the larger context of the Aga Khan Development Network. Last June, the Centre of Excellence launched in Islamabad the largest nutrition survey ever conducted in Pakistan. The nutrition strands of this conference have been designed to bring global expertise to the table to further discuss the results of the survey, share insights from related research in other parts of the world, and, above all, draw implications and provide guidance for policy action to drive effective real-world intervention programmes. The Board of Trustees and senior leadership of AKU are committed to positioning the university to become a leader in research aimed at finding lasting solutions to the problems of malnutrition and undernutrition in our region. I have no doubt that the deliberations and outcomes of this conference will inform our commitment and offer strategic directions towards the vision of reducing the prevalence of nutrition-related health and

developmental vulnerability in the region. As I congratulate the Institute for Human Development and the Center of Excellence in Women and Child Health for their joint sponsorship of this important conference, it also gives me great pleasure to welcome you as delegates and thank you for what you variously bring to the three days of active engagement and networking.

Dr Adil Haider, Professor and Dean, Medical College, Pakistan



I am pleased to welcome you to the Institute for Human Development's 3rd International Conference on Early Human Development. This year's event, being hosted in Karachi-Pakistan, is truly a testament to the system-wide reach and vision of the Institute to positively impact the lives of children. The joint sponsorship of the conference by the Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health to bring attention to challenges associated with early maternal and child nutrition in our region underscores our College's commitment to university-wide cross-entirety collaboration in the pursuit of answers to the challenging problems of our times. Over the past few years, despite the reality that Pakistan has seen periods of high economic growth, our progress in all aspects of human development has been but modest. Our health and educational outcomes have remained mostly unaffected even with increasing incomes and decreasing poverty. The result is compromised quality of life for millions of children. At the Medical College, we have advocated for human development by adopting a multidisciplinary, integrated approach involving education, service and research — particularly focused on improving early child development and maternal health. We look forward to working closely with the Institute to advance projects and initiatives that enhance prospects for people to lead better, healthier and more productive lives. In bringing together some of the brightest minds and leading experts in human development today, I am hopeful that our collaborative exchange of ideas, experience and expertise will aid in shaping and informing policy, developing human capacity and making meaningful impact on the communities with which we work.

Dr Zulfiqar A. Bhutta, Professor and Founding Director, Center of Excellence in Women and Child Health, Aga Khan University; Robert Harding Chair in Global Child Health & Policy; Co-Director, Centre for Global Health, Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada



This is a landmark meeting for many reasons; firstly it follows in the immediate wake of the large National Nutrition Survey of Pakistan (2018) which provides district-specific estimates of the burden of maternal and child undernutrition in Pakistan and progress. Secondly, given the findings of the key importance of early nutrition, epigenetic and perinatal factors with early child development and long-term outcomes, this brings the nutrition and human development communities together. And it follows in the tradition of the Aga Khan University (AKU) exploring new frontiers of knowledge and improving outcomes for the poor and marginalized. Over

the last three decades, AKU has positioned itself as a global leader in the quest for solutions addressing intractable challenges facing low- and middle-income countries around the world: the unrelenting deleterious effects of poor nutrition (fetal malnutrition, stunting, wasting etc.) on children's wellbeing and life outcomes, and, ultimately, on human capital development societally. The Institute for Human Development and the Center of Excellence in Women and Child Health are using their joint sponsorship of this conference to provide a forum for a broad conversation on early human development, with a particular emphasis on nutrition and global health. The conference will feature a special thematic focus on early maternal and child nutrition with plenary and concurrent sessions on the latest research findings on malnutrition/undernutrition that will help raise and address important policy questions within Pakistan, across the South-Central Asia region, and globally. Over the years to come AKU will be the powerhouse for scholarship to optimize human capital in the very geographies it serves and that these benchmarks will make it easier for us to measure our success. *Human capital* is regarded by many to be the stock of habits, knowledge, social and personality attributes (including creativity) embodied in the ability to perform labour and bring economic value to society. One way of measuring this through the new Human Capital Index which includes outcomes such as child survival, early hardwiring of children for success, optimizing student learning, and adult health – all issues that lie at the core of the AKU value system. These conferences help underscore the journey that AKU has led in its quest to advocate for the Sustainable Development Goals. Optimizing the interface of maternal and newborn health, nutrition and promotion of nurturing care are both possible and the *raison de'être* for much of what we do at AKU. We trust that you will find the deliberations at the Conference stimulating and food for thought as Pakistan embarks on this journey.

Dr Fauziah Rabbani, Professor and Associate Vice Provost, Research



This conference calls for a radical rethink of the nexus between nutrition and early childhood and human development. It is my strong belief that without civil society involvement, national and international governance and viewing this paradigm from an international human rights perspective, the “right to food and the right to health” will all but remain a dream in the less developed countries where AKU operates. Authoritative and evidence-based guidance is available on effective measures to tackle these challenges. For example, in this UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016-2025), a UN Panel of experts has recommended State actions to address malnutrition in all its forms. While acknowledging cultural differences across geographies, this conference will go a long way in mobilizing multi sectoral and interdisciplinary action for achieving the relevant Sustainable Development Goal targets in Agenda 2030. I wish the organizers the very best in their endeavours to organize a series of such conferences across AKU campuses.

Dr Anjum Halai, Professor and Vice Provost (Asia & UK) and Interim Dean, Faculty of Arts and Sciences



The International Conference on Nutrition and Early Human Development is being hosted in Karachi at the ‘parent campus’ of the Aga Khan University and is jointly sponsored by the University’s global entities, the Institute for Human Development and the Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health. The Aga Khan University is committed to the development of human capacities through knowledge discovery, dissemination and application through service. To further this mission AKU engages in cutting edge research and innovation to influence societal change and to inspire young minds and future generations. It is in this spirit of supporting research with societal impact that the University regularly hosts research conferences on such significant and relevant topics. The scientific programme of the conference aims to highlight significant issues in child development, especially those related to malnutrition and stunting as a global problem which manifest themselves particularly strongly in low and middle-income countries. A strength of the programme is that it provides a platform for scientists in this field to share their research and, perhaps more significantly, it provides a forum for dialogue among policy makers, practitioners, researchers and students. I wish a warm welcome to all the conference delegates and hope that you will enjoy the traditional Pakistani hospitality and also see some of the sights of Karachi, the *City of Lights!*

Dr Sajid Ali, Associate Professor and Interim Dean, Institute for Educational Development, Karachi, Pakistan



I am delighted to welcome the delegates to the Institute for Human Development’s 3rd International Conference on Early Human Development. Nutrition plays a key role in maternal and child health. In particular, healthy nutrition in the early years builds a strong foundation for long-term health. Undernutrition affects children’s cognitive, physical, emotional and social development. It increases the risk of illness and mortality. These early conditions have lifelong consequences and are, therefore, extremely important to address. The current government in Pakistan is keen on improving the situation and I hope the recommendations emerging out of the deliberations at this conference will provide effective policy guidance. I am sure delegates will interact with seasoned researchers, scholars and practitioners to learn and network. The platform provided by this conference will hopefully open up opportunities for cross disciplinary research that could benefit our region. I am especially pleased to welcome our international delegates to Pakistan and the city of Karachi. The city has a very lively outlook and hospitable people. There are many places to visit and shop. I hope your stay will remain pleasant. I thank you for enriching this conference by your presence.

Dr Ghazala Rafique, Associate Professor and Director, Human Development Programme of the Institute for Human Development



It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you to the third International Conference of the Institute for Human Development being organized jointly with the Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health. The early years of a child prepare the foundation for successful individual lives and by extension prospering and happy societies. The knowledge world is moving at a fast pace and significant gains are being made in early child and human development. This conference attempts to harness these gains through the sharing of ideas, presentations of research findings, discussions and dialogues on critical issues facing the field. It is my hope that the conference proceedings will be stimulating and productive and serve as inspiration to explore new avenues for knowledge production, influence policy making and implementation leading to advances for long and short term gains to benefit the people in the region in particular and the world in general. I would also like to extend to you a warm welcome to the city of Karachi, with its busy, fast paced life. I hope that in addition to being involved in the scientific and academic discourses, you will find opportunities to enjoy the diversity in culture, food and social life that Karachi has to offer. Happy conferencing and happy visiting!

Dr Kofi Marfo, Professor and Foundation Director, Institute for Human Development



Early in its establishment as an AKDN-wide entity within the University, the Institute for Human Development gave priority attention to the creation of what could hopefully become one of AKU's notable contributions to the Majority World—a permanent, biennial multi-disciplinary conference providing a much-needed forum for researchers and other human development professionals around the world to share knowledge and engage in meaningful dialogue on questions and issues with relevance to low- and middle-income countries. Following the 2015 inaugural conference in Nairobi, Kenya—an event which attracted 220 participants from 22 countries—the 2017 Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) convening affirmed the conference's relevance and potential growth in geographic reach when it attracted some 340 participants from 43 countries distributed across five regions of the world. This year's conference constitutes a noteworthy milestone for the Institute. It is being held for the first time in Asia, and on AKU's parent campus. It embodies the promise of an authentic system-wide entity under which intellectual and knowledge resource capital across the institution can be harnessed through collaborative mechanisms to attain country- or region-specific responsiveness within the larger context of an overarching global vision. The joint sponsorship of this conference by the Institute for Human Development and the Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health is illustrative of the remarkable agentic function of such cross-entity collaboration. The imperative to confront the challenges of malnutrition and undernutrition is a

global one, but the collaboration between these two entities made it possible to design the conference to particularly bring attention to policy action and intervention possibilities that are germane to Pakistan and the broader South-Central Asia regional context. As I welcome participants from far and near to this convening, I cherish the fervent hope that the Institute will (1) continue to attract external goodwill and funding support to sustain the conference series well into the future and (2) become even more adept at building effective internal collaboration across AKDN to harness the diverse forms of knowledge produced across the institution for the benefit of society. May your individual and collective contributions to this conference move us closer to the dream of a healthy, prosperous world in which national governments are astutely responsive to challenges of the times and the future of our children is bright and secure!

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

DAY 1, THURSDAY OCTOBER 24, 2019

08:00-09:00	Registration
09:00-11:30	OPENING CEREMONY, AKU AUDITORIUM
09:00-09:05	Tilawat
09:05-09:15	Introduction to the conference <i>Dr Kofi Marfo, Foundation Director, Institute for Human Development</i> <i>Professor Zulfiqar Bhutta, Founding Director, Centre of Excellence in Women & Child Health</i>
09:15-09:25	Welcome remarks <i>Provost Carl Amrhein</i>
09:25-09:35	Opening remarks <i>President Firoz Rasul</i>
09:35-10:05	Inaugural address 1: Importance of maternal and child nutrition and human capital <i>Dr Francesco Branca, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland</i>
10:05-10:35	Inaugural address 2: Quality Early Childhood Development Programs and Policies: Global evidence, local solutions <i>Dr Hirokazu Yoshikawa, New York University, USA</i>
10:35-10:40	Introduction of Chief Guest
10:40-11:00	Speech by Chief Guest
11:00-11:05	Vote of thanks <i>Dr Ghazala Rafique, Associate Professor and Director, Human Development Programme of the Institute for Human Development</i>
11:05-11:30	Refreshments
11:30-13:30	PLENARY ADDRESSES, AKU AUDITORIUM THEME: Global & Regional Burden and Consequences of Maternal and Childhood Malnutrition Session Chair: <i>Dr Baseer Ahmad Achakzai (Ministry of Health Services, Regulation & Coordination, Islamabad)</i>

11:35-12:00	Pakistan nutrition situation and changing epidemiology <i>Professor Zulfiqar Bhutta, Aga Khan University, Karachi & Centre for Global Child Health, the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada</i>
12:05-12:30	Nutrition situation in Africa: A snapshot <i>Dr Stanley Luchters, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya</i>
12:35-13:00	Micronutrient deficiencies and impact on health and development, <i>Dr Shabina Raza, Head of Nutrition Program, Nutrition International</i>
13:00-13:15	Questions and discussion
13:15-14:15	LUNCH
14:15-15:50	PLENARY ADDRESSES, AKU AUDITORIUM Session Chair: <i>Dr Sughra Choudhry Khan, Education Director, Aga Khan Foundation Pakistan</i>
14:15-14:40	ECD's own developmental trajectory as an interdisciplinary field: Advances, prospects, and challenges <i>Dr Kofi Marfo, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya</i>
14:45-15:10	What the evidence tells us about designing effective holistic packages of early childhood interventions: New directions for interventions research <i>Dr Aisha Yousafzai, Harvard University, USA (via Video Link)</i>
15:10-15:35	Childhood Disability: Epidemiological trends and recent developments in interventions <i>Dr Amina Abubakar, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya</i>
15:35-15:50	Questions and discussion
15:50-16:05	Tea/coffee break
16:10-16:30	PLENARY KEYNOTE, AKU AUDITORIUM Human capital and impact of nutrition, <i>Meera Shekar, The World Bank (awaiting confirmation) by Video Link</i>
16:30-18:00	POSTER SESSION Medical College Courtyard
18:30-20:00	CONFERENCE DINNER Pool Side, Sport & Rehabilitation Centre

DAY 2, FRIDAY OCTOBER 25, 2019

8:00-08:20	Registration
08:20-08:30	Summary/Recap from Day 1

08:30-10:30 PLENARY ADDRESSES, AKU AUDITORIUM

THEME: Addressing maternal and child undernutrition; solutions and innovations
Session Chair: *Dr Eric Alain Ategbo, UNICEF*

08:30-08:35 Session introduction

08:35-09:05 Stunting exemplars: what has worked where?
Nadia Akseer, Centre for Global Child Health, Toronto

09:10-09:40 Evidence based nutrition actions; what can be done?
Dr Jai K Das, Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health, The Aga Khan University

09:45-10:15 Improving outcomes with complementary feeding: the experience of a novel supplementation strategy (Ying Yang Bao) among poor populations in China
Professor Feng Cheng, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

10:20: 10:50 Questions and answers

10:55-11:10	Tea/coffee break
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PLENARY SESSION CONTINUED, AKU AUDITORIUM

11:10-11:35 PLENARY PAPER

Session chair: *Dr Shahnaz Ibrahim, Professor & Pediatric Neurologist, Aga Khan University Medical College, Karachi, Pakistan*

Looking beyond 2030 For Impact on the Health and Wellbeing of Children With Disabilities?
Dr Robert Armstrong, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya

11:40-13:00 PARALLEL SYMPOSIA

Lecture SYMPOSIUM 1

Hall 1 Paediatric HIV in low- and middle-income countries: Developmental impact and interventional approaches

Session chair: *Dr Rehana Siddiqui, Associate Professor, Department of Community Health Sciences, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan*

Stimulating psychological development for HIV infected children in SSA

Dr Amina Abubakar, Institute for Human Development, Aga Khan University, Kenya

Effectiveness, feasibility and acceptability of integrating the Xpert® HIV-1 Qual test in routine settings on early infant diagnosis of HIV in Myanmar, *Dr Stanley Luchters (Kenya), Dr Hla Htay, Dr Win Lei Yee, Dr Yasmin Mohamed, Dr Latt Kyaw, Dr Paul Agius, Dr Claire Ryan, Dr Steve Badman, Dr Andrew Valley, Dr Angela Kelly-Hanku, Dr David Anderson, Dr Htay Tin*

Evaluation of Early Childhood Development in children exposed to HIV
Dr Megan S. McHenry, Indiana University, USA

Lecture
Hall 2

SYMPOSIUM 2

THEME: Nurturing care in conflict and emergencies

Session Chair: *Juliet Harris, Aga Khan Foundation USA, Washington, DC, USA*

Discussant: *Dr Sweta Shah, Aga Khan Foundation (Global), Washington, DC, USA*

Preschool healing classrooms for Somali and Eritrean refugee children: A case study with highlights from implementation research,
Shewaye Tike, International Rescue Committee

ECD interventions for internally displaced children in Syria
Rasha Faraj, Aga Khan Foundation, Syria

Ahlan Simsim
Phoebe Sloane, International Rescue Committee

Lecture
Hall 3
/ASLS

SYMPOSIUM 3 (CONCURRENT SESSION PAPER):

THEME: Early child development and school readiness

Session chair: *Dr Jan Sanderson, Red River College, Canada*

School readiness in Tanzania: learning from the Madrasa Early Childhood programme to take quality school readiness to scale
Lucy Palmer, United Kingdom

A systems approach to parental and community engagement in Early Childhood Education (ECE): Findings from the ELP survey in Punjab
Saba Saeed, IDARA-E-TALEEM-O-AAGAH, Pakistan

Social-emotional functioning: Comparison among urban and rural preschool children in Pakistan
Seema Laasi, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

Early Child Development and Learning Benchmarks for Pakistan (ECDL-BP)
Sanobar Nadeem & Dr Ghazala Rafique, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

Discussion and questions

13:15-14:15	LUNCH
14:15-16:40	<p>PLENARY ADDRESSES, AKU AUDITORIUM</p> <p>THEME: Adolescent nutrition Session chair: <i>Dr Shagufta Zareen, PSPU, Government of Punjab</i></p>
14:15-14:20	Session introduction
14:20-14:45	Adolescent Health and Nutrition and implications for development, <i>Professor Marleen Temmerman, Aga Khan University, Nairobi</i>
14:50-15:15	<p>Micronutrient deficiencies in pregnant adolescents and the effects of multiple-micronutrient supplementation <i>Emily Keats, Centre for Global Child Health, Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada</i></p>
15:20-15:45	<p>Nutrition actions for adolescence; what does the evidence indicate? <i>Dr Rehana Salam, University of Adelaide, Australia</i></p>
15:50-16:15	<p>Reproductive health and nutrition outcomes; evidence from Asia and implications for the Belt & Road initiative <i>Kun Tang, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China & Global Child Health Fellow, Centre for Global Child Health, Toronto, Canada</i></p>
16:15-16:40	Discussion and questions
16:40-16:55	Tea/Coffee Break
16:55-18:30	PARALLEL SYMPOSIA
Lecture Hall 1	<p>SYMPOSIUM 1</p> <p>THEME: Child stunting reduction trends, determinants and impact on human capital in low and middle income countries: Global evidence, stories of success, opportunities and challenges in Pakistan Session Chair: <i>Professor Abdul Gaffar Billoo, Karachi, Pakistan</i></p> <p>Child stunting: An overview of global burden, trends, determinants, drivers of decline, and consequences for human capital development <i>Tyler Vaivada, Nadia Akseer, Selai Akseer, Ahalya Somaskandan, Marianne Stefopoulos, Zulfiqar Bhutta</i></p> <p>Successful stories of child stunting reduction in low and middle income countries: Case study methods, key findings from countries <i>Nadia Akseer, Luis Huicho, Roman Mogilevskii, Raj Kumar Subedi, Mohamadou</i></p>

Sall, Seifu Hagos, Zulfiqar Bhutta

Cross-country findings from stunting exemplars: Implications for Pakistan
Emily Keats, Nadia Akseer, Zulfiqar Bhutta

Lecture
Hall 2

SYMPOSIUM 2

THEME: Supporting early child development and wellbeing in marginalized communities: Studies within the Child Development in Marginalized Communities (CDMC) Project

Session Chair: *Dr Shaheen Kassim-Lakha, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, USA*

Child development in urban, marginalized communities: Framing the issues
Dr Amina Abubakar & the International CDMC Project Team, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya

Towards the design and implementation of an integrated early child development intervention for native Kenyans and embedded refugees in an urban informal settlement: Insights from community engagement activities and a household survey
Margaret Kabue & the International CDMC Project Team, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya

What we have learned, through county, sub-county, and community partnerships, about the prospects and challenges of implementing an intervention with sustainable impact on families and service delivery systems
Joyce Marangu, Eunice Njoroge & the International CDMC Project Team, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya

Validation of contextually relevant measures of early childhood development in an urban informal settlement
Dr Amina Abubakar & the International CDMC Project Team, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya

ASLS

SYMPOSIUM 3—WORKSHOP:

TOPIC: Experience and Potential of the Science of Early Child Development Knowledge Resource

Session Chair: *Yasmeen Mehboob, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan*

Facilitators:

Leonard Falex, Aga Khan University, Nairobi

Dr Ghazala Rafique, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

Jan Sanderson, Red River College, Canada

Dr Sweta Shah, Aga Khan Development Network

18:30-20:00 DINNER ON YOUR OWN

DAY 3, SATURDAY OCTOBER 26, 2019

07:30-08:20	Registration
08:20-08:30	Summary/Recap from Day 2
08:30-10:30	<p>PLENARY ADDRESS, AKU AUDITORIUM</p> <p>Session Chair: <i>Dr Emma Pearson, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom</i></p>
08:30-09:00	<p>Connecting the Dots in Early Child Development</p> <p><i>Dr Ghazala Rafique, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan</i></p>
09:05-10:35	<p>PLENARY SYMPOSIUM</p> <p>THEME: Contributions of donor agencies, international NGOs, and partnership platforms to the advancement of the ECD field</p> <p>Session Chair: <i>Dr Kofi Marfo, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya</i></p> <p>How unlikely partnerships spark change in resource poor settings <i>Dr Shaheen Kassim-Lakha, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, USA</i></p> <p>Supporting Integrated ECD: Reflections from Dubai Cares' support to ECD programs, research and advocacy <i>Nadeen Alalami, Dubai Cares</i></p> <p>Toward a holistic approach in ECD <i>Dr Sughra Choudhry Khan, Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan</i></p> <p>The Hilton Foundation, Aga Khan Foundation, and the Institute for Human Development at Aga Khan University: A partnership advancing workforce development, research capacity building, and policy action <i>Dr Kofi Marfo (with Leonard Falex, Juliet Harris, Dr Hezborn Kodero & Dr. Sveta Shah) Institute for Human Development, Aga Khan University</i></p>
10:35-11:50	Tea/coffee break
11:50-12:10	<p>PLENARY SESSION CONTINUED</p> <p>Plenary paper</p> <p>Session chair: <i>Professor Sameen Siddiqui, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan</i></p> <p>No safe place: Violence among unaccompanied refugee children seeking asylum in Kenya <i>Dr Rosalind Raddatz, Aga Khan University</i></p>
12:15-13:30	PARALLEL SYMPOSIA
ASLS	<p>SYMPOSIUM 1</p> <p>THEME: Maternal/Child health interventions and experiences</p>

Session Chair: *Dr Kausar Waqar, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan*

The Mbereko+Men Model: a community based intervention to improve maternal mental health, uptake of MNCH services, and care and support in the home in Manicaland, Zimbabwe

Dr Stanley Luchters, Aga Khan University, Nairobi

Women's Experience of Facility Care During Ante Natal Care, Delivery and Post Natal Care

Adelaide Lusambili, Aga Khan University Medical College-East Africa, Nairobi, Kenya

Barriers and facilitators in identification and support provision to Children of Parents with Mental Illness (COPMI) – a systematic review of qualitative and quantitative studies

Dr Batool Fatima, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

Lecture
Hall 2

SYMPOSIUM 2

THEME: Nurturing Care through the health sector: Experiences in Syria, Tanzania, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyz Republic

Session chair: *Juliet Harris, Aga Khan Foundation, Washington, DC*

Syria

Dr Maher Aboumayaleh, Aga Khan Health Services, Syria

Tanzania

David Siso, Aga Khan Foundation, Tanzania

Tajikistan

Guldarbogh Sadonshoeva, Aga Khan Health Services, Tajikistan

Kyrgyz Republic

Jypara Tashmamatova, Aga Khan Foundation, Kyrgyz Republic

Lecture
Hall 3

SYMPOSIUM 3 (CONCURRENT PAPERS)

THEME: Building programmes, measuring impact

Session chair: *Dr Adelaide Lusambili, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya*

Equal start for Urban Children in the First 1,000 Days of Life, *Jefferson Gregario, affiliation goes here*

Investigating the benefits of integrated approaches to Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Cambodia

Emma Pearson, University of Sheffield, UK

Impact of Cash Transfers on the Wellbeing of Caregivers and Vulnerable

Children in a Kenyan Context

Joyce Marangu, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya

Towards systematic reviews of AKU's research in early child development and sustainable development goals: A bibliometric analysis

Peter Gatiti & Dr Anil Khamis, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya

FOB SYMPOSIUM 4 (CONCURRENT PAPERS)

THEME: Mixed topics: Language development, science learning, practitioner knowledge, and support for vulnerable children

Session Chair: *Dr Hezborn Koderu, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya*

Caregivers' capacity development need in contexts of poverty: The foundation for success in children's early language development

George Andima, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya

Sciencing activities and science learning outcomes in pre-primary school in Ibadan, Nigeria

Dr Eileen Akintemi, University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Integrated support structure for children with disabilities in Tanzania, a case of children with albinism"

Fortidas Bakuza & Gamariel Mboya, Aga Khan University, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Building practitioner knowledge to create best practice early literacy experiences for children under 3 years old: Experience of a field-based professional development model from Pakistan

Dr Almina Pardhan, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

13:30-14:30 LUNCH

14:30-17:00 CLOSING PLENARIES, AKU AUDITORIUM

14:30-15:45 PLENARY SYMPOSIUM

Early childhood development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Chair and discussant: *Dr Anil Khamis, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya*

UNICEF nutrition and ECD programmes in the region (via Video Link)

Dr Harriet Torlesse, UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia

State's ownership of early childhood education: From policy promises to implementation

Honorable Mehnaz Aziz, Member, National Assembly of Pakistan

The Sustainable Development Goals and the agenda of ECD

Dr Hirokazu Yoshikawa, New York University, USA

Discussant's remarks

Dr Anil Khamis, Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya

15:50-16:05 CLOSING PLENARY SESSION

16:10-16:45 Conference Action Highlights and Communique
Professor Zulfiqar Bhutta & Dr Kofi Marfo

16:45-17:05 Comments by Provincial Representatives

17:05-17:25 Early childhood development: Taking charge of our collective responsibility
Ms Aida Girma, UNICEF Representative, Pakistan

17:25-17:30 Comments by Dr. Baseer Achakzai
Director, Nutrition, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination

17:30-17:40 Comments by Dr. Carl Amrhein
Provost, Aga Khan University

17:40-17:45 Vote of Thanks
Asghar Ali, Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health

ABSTRACTS

Peer-Reviewed Symposia Abstracts

Paediatric HIV in Low and Middle-Income Countries: Developmental Impact and Interventional Approaches

Amina Abubakar (amina.abubakar@aku.edu)

Aga Khan University, Nairobi, Kenya

Although considerable progress has been made in eliminating HIV among children, pediatric HIV remains a public health challenge especially in Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs). Globally, 1.8 million children less than 15 years of age are living with HIV, more than 90% of these children are from LMICs. While there are about 180,000 new infections occurring every year among children only 52% of these children have access to treatment including antiretroviral therapy (ART) implying that many children who are HIV infected are still at a high risk of poor outcomes. The general objective of this symposium is to describe the neurodevelopmental outcomes of HIV infected children and highlight recent advances in providing targeted services aimed at enhancing their outcomes. In the first paper, Dr. Abubakar will summarize the literature on the developmental outcomes and their correlates among HIV infected children. Based on this literature she will try to answer the question: How best can we stimulate development in these at-risk groups to improve their development outcomes and quality of life? In the second paper, Dr. Lutcher, will present the results of a multi-country pragmatic implementation trial whose aim was to assess the effectiveness, feasibility and acceptability of the point-of-care Xpert® HIV-1 Qualitative an early identification diagnostic test for infants. There was a clinically significant improvement in the proportion of infants tested and receiving results, as well as time to results communication when the Xpert® HIV-1 Qual test was integrated into routine services in Myanmar. Implementation challenges could generally be overcome, and scale-up should be considered where feasible and practicable. This data is crucial as early identification and initiation of ART can greatly reduce both mortality and morbidity. The third paper in this symposium looks at the issue of early identification of neurodevelopmental delays in the context of HIV. Worldwide, few children receive close monitoring of growth and development after receiving immunizations. Children exposed to HIV are much more likely to interface with the healthcare system until 2 years of age, when confirmatory HIV testing is performed. In this presentation, Dr. McHenry will discuss the methods of evaluating early childhood development within the healthcare setting in children exposed to HIV. Specifically, she will describe the development of an integrated; neurodevelopmental screening program aimed at identifying HIV exposed children with delays in the first 2 years of life. This symposium brings together a multidisciplinary team of experts to discuss the latest developments in addressing the needs of HIV infected children.

Child Stunting Reduction Trends, Determinants and Impact on Human Capital in Low and Middle Income Countries: Global Evidence, Stories of Success, Opportunities and Challenges in Pakistan

Emily Keats (emily.keats@sickkids.ca)

Centre for Global Child Health, Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada

Chronic malnutrition manifests as linear growth stunting, a condition that impacts a child's health, development, cognition, and long-term productivity. Using country-specific examples of successes and challenges, this symposium will undertake a comprehensive review and analysis of child stunting—including trends, determinants, and impact on human capital. The first presentation outlines a conceptual framework for understanding the determinants of child stunting, and provides results from a systematic review that examines the drivers of global stunting decline over the past 3 decades. Presentation 1 concludes with a discussion of the relationship between stunting, early childhood development, and long-term outcomes including human capital. Presentation 2 provides results from mixed-methods analyses

used to study stunting “exemplar” countries (Peru, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Senegal, and Ethiopia), and synthesizes a set of cross-country learnings and recommendations for policy/programs that can be scaled to reduce stunting globally. The symposium concludes with a paper presenting analyses of stunting in Pakistan, a country chosen as a counterfactual to the exemplar countries because of its significant challenges in stunting reduction. We will present data on trends, inequalities, and determinants of stunting, along with a novel analysis that will determine resource allocation optimization strategies to minimize stunting and long-term impact on human capital in Pakistan.

Nurturing Care through the Health Sector: Experiences in Syria, Tanzania, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyz Republic

Sweta Shah (sweta.shah@akdn.org)

Aga Khan Foundation, Washington, DC, USA

As part of operationalizing the Nurturing Care Framework, there is a global movement to understand how to best equip parents and caregivers with the knowledge and skills to support their children get on a positive life trajectory and fulfill their developmental potential. The WHO/UNICEF Care for Child Development package was originally developed for delivery by community health workers but is increasingly being implemented by other front line workers. Equipping frontline workers with knowledge and skills about child development and the importance of stimulation and play positions them to better support parents and caregivers through interventions delivered across a wide range of settings. This symposium brings together experiences and results of evaluations from four countries (Syria, Tanzania, Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic) to (1) illustrate how the Care for Child Development package has been adapted and implemented in various contexts and (2) examine the degree to which the intervention may be increasing parents and caregivers’ knowledge and skills around child development and, in the process, enhancing children’s developmental well-being. In addition to highlighting the positive aspects of these experiences, the symposium papers will highlight the challenges with (1) integrating CCD interventions within public service delivery systems and (2) scaling at a national level.

Nurturing Care in Conflict and Emergencies

Sweta Shah (sweta.shah@akdn.org)

Aga Khan Foundation, Washington, DC, USA

Young children living in crisis and conflict-affected contexts face added disadvantages associated with the stress of exposure to violence, displacement and family separation, and are vulnerable to the long-lasting effects that prolonged stress has on the developing brain and the stress response system. Without intervention, young children living in adversity face cognitive, physical and social-emotional disabilities that not only impact how they learn, grow and interact with others, but can also impact the well-being of future generations. The papers in this symposium present profiles and models of interventions that various NGOs are delivering to meet the needs of vulnerable children in conflict-affected countries. The first presentation focuses on the International Rescue Committee’s implementation of the Preschool Healing Classrooms intervention model in camps in Ethiopia serving the needs of Eritrean and Somali refugees. The second paper presents the Aga Khan Foundation’s strategy for the provision of ECD interventions for internally displaced children in Syria to ensure that these children not only survive but thrive. The final presentation focuses on how the Sesame Street model is being used in Syria (and other conflict-affected countries) to provide mass early childhood education to millions of children.

Workshop on the experience and potential of the Science of Early Child Development (SECD) knowledge resource

Facilitators:

Leonard Falex (leofaxiconex@yahoo.com) , Aga Khan University, Nairobi

Dr Ghazala Rafique, Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan

Dr. Jan Sanderson, Red River College, Canada

Dr Sweta Shah, Aga Khan Development Network

The 2016 Lancet ECD Series lays out a clear Pathway to Scale. The Nurturing Care Framework brings clarity and international agreement on the critical areas for action and the imperative of integrated strategies. The policy and practice priorities for international ECD have never been clearer. To propel us forward we need informed, engaged policy makers to champion and operationalize integrated investments in early child development and a cross-trained workforce to implement interventions at the front lines.

The goals of this workshop are to:

1. Share the AKDN/Red River College experience with developing and implementing the International Science of ECD (SECD) suite of multi-media resources as a common foundational approach to workforce education.
2. Profile international approaches to modifying, blending, tailoring SECD as a motivational tool, a strategic planning intervention, a booster for existing investments and a partner in fund-raising.
3. Explore the specific example of a recently piloted workshop designed to reach policy makers, deepen their understanding of the science of ECD, reflect on their current ECD investments, and support them to create an Action Plan on Nurturing Care.

Participants are invited to share experiences in workforce development

Concurrent Session Abstracts

Sciencing Activities and Science Learning Outcomes in Pre-Primary School in Ibadan, Nigeria

Eileen Akintemi (eileen_akintemi@yahoo.com)

University of Ibadan, Nigeria

There is evidence that pre-primary children exhibit poor Learning Outcomes in Science (LOS; knowledge and process skills) in Ibadan, Nigeria. This trend has been attributed to teachers' non-use of science-related (sciencing) activities for children. This study was carried out to determine the effects of sciencing activities on pre-primary school children's LOS in Ibadan. The pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental design and phenomenological approach were adopted. An intact pre-primary class was selected from three Local Government Areas in Ibadan and randomly assigned to Formal Sciencing (FS - 17), Informal Sciencing (IS - 19) and Control (C - 24) groups. Instruments used were Modified Science Learning Assessment Test ($r=.91$), Science Process Skills Rating Scale ($r=.73$) and field notes. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and ANCOVA, whereas qualitative data were thematically analyzed. There were significant effects of the treatment on children's science knowledge and science process skills. Ethnic affiliation had a significant effect on science process skills but not on knowledge. Both FS and IS activities fostered classroom interactions and engagements, and should be adopted for science learning at the pre-primary level.

Caregiver's Capacity Development Need in Contexts of Poverty: The Foundation for Success in Children's Early Language Development

George Andima (george.andima@aku.edu)

Aga Khan University, Institute for Human Development

Evidence from research indicates that relationships and interactions children have with the primary caregivers in poverty contexts do contribute to their learning outcomes later in life. This critical role caregivers play in engaging and supporting children's cognitive development in these contexts is often affected by the limitations in the care giving environments. This is more pronounced for children who often suffer from the negative consequences of poverty and inadequate learning opportunities. Even when caregivers make earnest attempts, to execute this role, they are often inadequate to guarantee quality early learning outcomes. This paper reports findings of a study on caregivers' thoughts on the use of early language stimulation practices in one of the informal settlements in Kenya. The study was a survey in which a self-reporting questionnaire was used in data collection. The participants were 72 caregivers offering early language stimulation to 3-5 year olds children. The findings showed that there was a remarkable disconnect between what caregivers did and what they ought to have done in supporting children's early language development in contexts of poverty. The paper suggests how caregiver education programs can be used to raise their capacity to support early language development in contexts of poverty.

Integrated Support Structure for Children with Disabilities in Tanzania: A Case of Children with "Albinism"

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Aga Khan University Institute for Education Development East Africa

Albinism is a rare genetic condition that results in lack of melanin in the skin, eyes and hair causing low vision, sensitivity to sunlight, and skin cancer. Albinism is hereditary, and has nothing to do with environmental conditions. Children who are born with albinism grow up in isolation, a situation that subjects them to both social and learning barriers that deny them access to health and social protection, and creates barriers to their full development potential. This paper employs the 'charting the life course'-- a universally designed framework that may be used by any person or family making a life plan, regardless

of life circumstances to discuss the current status of children with albinism and issues they face in growing up. Personal experience of one presenter enriches the presentation on the role of the family, schools and other institutions in accepting, understanding and providing the necessary support for children with albinism. Although the paper will use examples and literature from across the world, it focuses on Tanzania as a case to identify challenges and opportunities for children with albinism.

Barriers and Facilitators in Identification and Support Provision to Children of Parents with Mental Illness: A Systematic Review of Qualitative and Quantitative Studies

Batool Fatima¹ (batool.fatima@gmail.com), Lisa-Marie Dobener², Melinda Goodyear³, Ingunn Olea Lund⁴, Ingrid Zechmeister-Koss⁵, Annette Bauer⁶, Jean Lillian Paul⁷ & Hanna Christiansen⁸

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Children of parents with mental illness (COPMI) often remain invisible and are not able to get the support they need for their optimal development. This paper presents a summary of barriers to and facilitators in identification and support of COPMI. Seven electronic data bases were searched for articles published on this topic up to April 2018. Articles meeting the inclusion criteria were identified and reviewed independently by two authors for relevance and quality. The authors extracted 105 articles most of which were written from studies conducted in developed countries such as Australia, UK, US, and European countries. The reviewers identified barriers and facilitators at system and structural levels with regard to staff, parents and children. It was concluded that increasing identification and improving support mechanisms requires changes at all levels; and that strategies to increase the facilitators to improve the wellbeing of children should be put in place.

A Bibliometric Analysis: Towards Systematic Reviews of AKU's Research in Early Child Development and Sustainable Development Goals

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Aga Khan University's contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was demonstrated in a recent bibliometric analysis conducted in 2019. Publications by AKU-affiliated authors' which are indexed in Scopus, a citation database of peer-reviewed literature which indexes over 15,000 titles, formed the basis of the bibliometric analysis. The analysis showed exponential growth in research, scholarship and publications related to the SDGs, particularly in the health sciences (SDG 3) by AKU affiliated researchers. The paper focused on bibliometric analysis (using arora query lists) related to ECD from an inter-sectoral perspective: SDG 3 (health) and SDG 4 (education). The paper identified areas for further research particularly the need to undertake systematic reviews of ECD and the SDGs research output by AKU. It also identified bibliometric indicators including trends in high-impact publications along with citation analyses of articles, h-index, journal rank, impact factor, and societal impact. Finally, it made a scholarly contribution on research output and analysis in a key human development area, ECD, through the lens of the global SDG framework.

Equal Start for Urban Children in the First 1,000 Days of Life

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Save the Children, Philippines

Save the Children Philippines (SCP) has been implementing a maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition (MNCHN) program in selected poor communities and informal settlements in the cities of Malabon, Navotas and Caloocan in Manila. The program is focusing on the first 1,000 days of life that was adopted by the Nurturing Care Framework. SCP used context-specific strategies that address peculiar urban challenges that impede the supply of universal access to quality services. These include: (1) Health systems strengthening using the WHO Building Blocks of Health System in the supply side; (2) Community and resource mobilization to address the demand for access to services; (3) Capacity development for service providers and local government units to deliver quality services; (4) Social behavior change communication to improve the utilization of quality services; (5) Advocacy and partnership among local stakeholders to ensure ownership and sustainability; and, (6) Nurturing Care Framework as the road map for action and integration. In early 2018, prior to the passage of the Republic Act 11148 (F1KD Law) in November 2018, the city governments of Navotas and Malabon already enacted their own local ordinances following the pilot-testing of SCP's F1KD-focused MNCHN program that adopted the Nurturing Care Framework.

Women's Experience of Facility Care during Ante Natal Care, Delivery and Post Natal Care

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Under the Free Maternity Policy, Kenya has witnessed an increase in health facility deliveries and decrease in home deliveries involving traditional birth attendants, resulting in improved maternal and neonatal outcomes. Despite these gains, maternal and infant mortality and morbidity rates in Kenya remain very high. Using data from the Access to Quality Care through Extending and Strengthening Health Systems project, we examined and described women's maternity care experiences in Kisii and Kilifi, Kenya. Data was collected from female adolescents, women, men and community health committee members through interviews and focus group discussions. Key findings showed that nursing and medical care offered were sometimes disrespectful and neglectful; and that young women were more likely to be abused, and women with disabled children stigmatized. It was concluded that Kenya needs to implement and enforce the quality of care guidelines for pregnancy and delivery; and to ensure that the guidelines are followed, measurable benchmarks for maternity care established, and hospitals regularly monitored for adherence.

Social-Emotional Functioning: Comparison among Urban and Rural Preschool Children in Pakistan

Seema Lasi (seema.laasi@aku.edu) & Karim Aman,

Aga Khan University

Social-emotional development provides a strong foundation for academic success. This quantitative research with cross-sectional study design was employed to assess and compare social-emotional competence of preschool children from urban (n =297) and rural (n = 205) backgrounds of Sindh, Pakistan. Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire (SDQ) was used to measure social-emotional competence. According to the findings, 18.5% of children from urban areas were identified as having emotional and behavioral problems as compared to 58% children in rural areas.

The Mbereko+Men Model: A Community Based Intervention to Improve Maternal Mental Health, Uptake of MNCH services, and Care and Support in the Home in Manicaland, Zimbabwe

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Aga Khan University-East Africa

Social support, women's economic empowerment, and men's positive engagement in family health are important enablers to improve access to essential MNCH services. We conducted a two-arm cluster-randomized controlled trial of a gender-synchronized, community based intervention (Mberekoto+Men), to assess effectiveness on maternal mental health and uptake of MNCH services in Zimbabwe. Eight rural health clinic catchment areas (clusters) were equally randomized into no intervention or the Mberekoto+Men intervention, which included separate women's and men's discussion groups. Pre-intervention, and after 18 months of intervention implementation, maternal mental health was assessed among women who gave birth within six months, using the validated Shona-language Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS). In a pre- and post-intervention, we enrolled 459 women (228 control; 231 intervention) and 433 women (227 control; 206 intervention), respectively. Mean EPDS scores pre-intervention were 7.21 (SD=6.43) among control and 8.01 (SD=6.45) among intervention participants, and post-intervention these were 3.97 (SD=4.72) and 2.96 (SD=4.89), respectively. Using GLMM, predicted EPDS scores reduced over time in both groups.

Impact of Cash Transfers on Caregiver and Child Wellbeing in a Kenyan Context

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Social cash transfers have been widely acknowledged as an important strategy in alleviation of vulnerabilities associated with poverty. However, gaps exist in the measurement of the impact of cash transfer programming. The objective of the study was to measure the effects of the Cash Transfer for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (CT-OVC) on caregiver and child subjective self-assessments of health, education, material and social wellbeing. A quasi-experimental design involving a random sample of 225 participants, consisting of children 7-14 years and their primary caregivers was used. Quantitative data were collected through interviewer-administered questionnaires, while qualitative data were collected through 8 key informant interviews. Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between program participation and wellbeing outcomes for both children and caregivers. Results indicated that there was a significant relationship between participation in the CT-OVC and caregiver material, health and social wellbeing. There was also a significant association between program participation and child social wellbeing, but no significant correlations in the other wellbeing indicators. The study concludes that social cash transfers are a useful strategy in promoting wellbeing, especially for caregivers, but less so for children. Implementers should explore ways of increasing supports offered alongside cash transfers for improved holistic wellbeing.

Ahlan Simsim: Learning from the Largest ECD Initiative for Humanitarian Response

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International Rescue Committee

Responding to the urgent, unmet needs of young children affected by conflict and crisis in the Middle East, IRC and Sesame Workshop won the MacArthur Foundation's award (100&Change) in 2017 to restore hope and opportunity for a generation of children in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Ahlan Simsim aims to reach more than a million children through direct early childhood services and millions more through a new, locally-produced, Arabic-language version of Sesame Street. In December 2018, the LEGO Foundation joined MacArthur by offering additional award to Sesame Workshop, BRAC, IRC and New York University—Global TIES for Children to bring the power of learning through play to children affected by the Rohingya and Syrian refugee crises. The first impact evaluation focused on the adaptation of the Reach Up and Learn home visiting program integrated within IRC's community health services in Jordan. In preparation, measurement research was conducted to identify appropriate measures for assessing child development, home visiting quality, parent-child interaction, and caregiver well-being.

This paper provides an overview of Ahlan Simsim and findings from the measurement research conducted in early 2019.

Effects of Indigenous Alphabet Game on the Yoruba Alphabet Knowledge of Preschool Children in Nigeria

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Game-based instructional strategies are effective in the acquisition of pre-reading skills such as alphabet knowledge. Research findings have shown that most preschool centers in Nigeria have failed to implement the language policy provision which has led to failure in the development of appropriate local games suitable to facilitate pre-reading skill. This explains why most children struggle with reading and writing in Yorùbá language. In this quasi-experimental study, 25 children in Nursery II intact classes from two private schools in Ibadan were involved. Indigenous Alphabet Game and Conventional Strategy were used in experimental and control group respectively. Indigenous Alphabet Game pack, Preschool Children Indigenous Alphabet Knowledge Rating Scale ($r = .86$), Teachers Assessment Guide and two instructional guides research instruments were used. Data were analyzed using ANCOVA, and *Bonferroni Post hoc* tests. There was a significant effect of treatment on indigenous alphabet knowledge of preschool children, $F(1,17)=15.26, p<.05, \eta^2=0.12$, but cultural background had no significant effect, $F(1,17)= 2.4, p>.05, \eta^2= 0.12$. Based on the findings, preschool teachers should be trained on how to use Indigenous Alphabet Game to improve children's indigenous alphabet knowledge.

Effectiveness of Government Led Multi-Sectoral Coordination in Scaling Up Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD): Siaya Experience

*Elizabeth Omondi (lizomondi2012@gmail.com)
County Government of Siaya*

Multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration is advocated for by both international and local organizations as a good strategy for promoting early childhood development to scale. Improving early childhood development requires effective and sustained multi-sectoral action. The aim of this study was to evaluate the government led multi-sectoral coordination in scale-up of nurturing care in Siaya County. The study adopted a qualitative research design. Ten semi-structured interviews and one focused group discussion were conducted with members of the IECD multi-sectoral coordinating committee. The results showed evidence of goodwill from the political wing together with enhanced prospects for sustainability of interventions, built trust between sectors and participating organizations, synergy and maximum use of resources, and modeling of relationships within the collaboration. While some of the effects were unanticipated, they resonated well with insights from the literature on multi-sectoral partnerships. These results are significant in informing future partnerships. Such collaboration requires baseline assessment of individual and organizational capacities to inform planning, and development of frameworks for evaluation of partnership influence on outcomes.

School Readiness in Tanzania: Learning from the Madrasa Early Childhood Program to Take Quality School Readiness to Scale

*Lucy Palmer¹ (lucy.palmer@mottmac.com), Rupert Corbishley,² Vincent Katabalo,³ Erick Kilala⁴ & Daniel Waistell⁵
Mott MacDonald¹, Aga Khan Foundation², EQUIP-Tanzania³, EQUIP-Tanzania⁴, Cambridge Education⁵*

Data from 2016 showed that only 47% of children enrolled in pre-primary education were at the right age, with long distances to the nearest preschool being the main barrier. In 2015 the Tanzania Institute of Education, Cambridge Education and Aga Khan Foundation collaborated to develop a 12-week, community-run, cost-effective, School Readiness Program (SRP) and piloted it in 1,000 remote locations,

enrolling 50,000 pupils marginalized by distance to existing provisions. The program was developed from a competency framework and focused on approaches which drew heavily on the experience, evidence, and learning of the Madrasa Early Childhood Program. The approach centered on learning through play, singing and storytelling. Now operating in over 3,000 centers, this approach has been scaled and is producing impressive learning outcomes, with SRP pupils out-performing those from formal pre-primary and no pre-primary when they reach Standard 1. This paper discusses how this model was developed and implemented, looks at recent attempts to build on the SRP to develop more integrated ECD provision, and considers the effect the program has on the national debate on ECD in Tanzania.

Building Practitioner Knowledge to Create Best Practice for Early Literacy Experiences for Children Under 3 Years Old: Experience of a Field-Based Professional Development Model from Pakistan

Almina Pardhan¹ (almina.pardhan@aku.edu), Zahra Virani², Amber Shahzad² Sonia Asif², Razia Aziz², Gulistan Bano², Durdana Hameed², Shamim Humayun², Ambreen Jaria², Hina Jiwani², Nadia Najam², Saira Nasir², Zameerun Nisa², Sumaira Rahim², Aliza Sadruddin², Naureen Saleem², Sunita Shahzad² Ayesha Sohail² & Sara Tariq²

Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development¹

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Key early literacy variables such as alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, print awareness, oral language and narrative ability predict later literacy outcomes in children. Educators' knowledge of these variables is important in maximizing children's language development potential. However, educators' limited early literacy training and knowledge is a global problem, particularly in countries like Pakistan where the least qualified educators usually teach young children from diverse language backgrounds. This study examined the best-practice early literacy professional development model. It was a collaborative study conducted by a university early childhood faculty specialist and educators in Pakistan. The participants in the study were 18 educators who were working with children under 3 years old. This paper reports how demonstration, modeling, coaching and reflection were used to bring change in the educators' literacy-enhancing practices. In addition, changes in the educators' early literacy perceptions and practices are reported; lessons learnt based on reflection, analysis and implementation experiences are presented; and implications for best practice field-based early literacy professional development suggested.

Investigating the Benefits of Integrated Approaches to Early Childhood Development in Cambodia

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This paper reports findings from a baseline study that provided a basis for analysis of integrated early child development (ECD) programs implemented in Cambodia by Plan International. Variability in status of implementation of programs across the two provinces where data was collected provides a basis for analyzing the differential and combined impact of community preschool and parenting programs at a particular point in time. A total of 228 children and one of their parents/caregivers were sampled from 8 villages across one province with no existing ECCD provision (n=120), as well as 4 villages with only a parenting education program (n=53) and 4 with both a parenting education program and a community preschool (n=55). The findings, which indicate differential and combined benefits of parenting education and availability of preschool education on unique domains of child development, are discussed in the paper.

A Systems Approach to Parental and Community Engagement in Early Childhood Education: Findings from the ELP Survey in Punjab

Hamza Sarfraz (hamza.sarfraz@itacec.org), Baela Raza Jamil & Saba Saeed
Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi

The role of client engagement in Early Childhood Education (ECE) is vital to encourage provider accountability, positive feedback loops and grassroots improvement in the education system. However, there is a dearth of research on ECE in Pakistan, especially pertaining to issues of engagement and accountability. This paper investigated parental engagement in preschools and in the overall development of children enrolled in those schools. Quantitative data collected from 96 pre-schools, 672 children and 484 mothers/caregivers, and qualitative data from 17 schools and 120 parents in the three districts (Rawalpindi, Toba TekSingh and Bahawalpur) in Punjab. Initial findings indicated that there are wide age variations among children enrolled from 2-10+ years, and that parents' awareness of child development was stronger in socio-emotional domains than in literacy and numeracy. The paper also reported that the major barriers on engagement for both parents and teachers were: information asymmetry, skewed client-provider relationships, sub-optimal use of current engagement mechanisms, and limited provider capacity for engagement. The paper provides insights on critical challenges facing holistic ECCE implementation in Pakistan.

Early Child Development and Learning Benchmarks for Pakistan

*Sanober Nadeem (sanober.mubeen@aku.edu) & Ghazala Rafique
Aga Khan University, Karachi, Pakistan*

The early years of life provide an opportunity for children to grow, learn and thrive in later life. Sustainable Development Goal 4 and Target 4.2 were developed to ensure that children are offered access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education. To achieve this target, there is a need for national benchmarks to assess the quality of child development and the learning environment. The majority of available assessment instruments are not culturally relevant in Pakistan. Aga Khan University's Human Development Program has developed 'Early Child Development and Learning Benchmarks for Pakistan (ECDL-BP)' for children between ages 3 and 5 years. The 77 benchmarks assess children in eight domains of learning and development including: gross motor, fine motor, language and emerging literacy, cognitive development, social-emotional development, early mathematics, creative arts and world knowledge. The program has been piloted-tested in English and Urdu languages on both public and private school children. This paper reports the findings of the pilot and the implications of using the ECDL-BP tool to report progress on the SDGs in Pakistan.

Poster Session Abstracts

Qualitative Study of Indigenous Plays in Fostering Resilience Skills of Traumatized Children in Nigeria

*Damilare Adeniran (adenirandamilare2020@gmail.com), Babawande Oduolowu & Esther Abiola
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Children in Egbeda South Western Nigeria are constantly traumatized by incidences of flooding. There is evidence that they are deficient in the resilience skills of confidence and connection as a result of isolation, constant break in academic activities, insecurity, emotional disorder and diseases caused by flooding. This study explored the use of Yoruba indigenous physical plays to foster the resilience skills of confidence and connection in traumatized children. Phenomenological approach of qualitative research type was adopted. One Local Government Area constantly affected by flooding was purposively selected from Oyo State, Nigeria. Field note was used to collect data. Data collected were thematically analyzed. Findings revealed that indigenous physical plays fostered the resilience skill of confidence in children as they exhibited courage, boldness, strength and endurance while engaged in the plays. It fostered the resilience skill of connection as they were observed communicating, cooperating and holding hands while engaged in the plays. Indigenous physical plays are effective tools for fostering resilience skills in children, there is need for collection and documentation of these plays, workshops should be constantly organized to train teachers on the use of indigenous plays to foster the resilience skills of children.

Early Childhood Development and Education in the Era of Technological Revolution

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Developments in science and technology are reshaping world views about every sphere of life including education. On the one side, ICT is shifting the knowledge symmetry empowering learners through increased direct access to a global framework of knowledge. On the other side, it has linked educational value to market forces creating moral dilemmas about the meaning and purpose of education. In not very distant future, development in artificial intelligence and biotechnology will revolutionize the education sector and Early Childhood Development/ Education (ECD/E) will face a world of unprecedented opportunities and challenges. Some of these challenges may be moral, social, pedagogical and infrastructural in nature. It is in this context that an analysis will bring together an insight in to the future of ECD/E and propose a framework of engagement at policy and curriculum level. Questions will be raised on a few key notions such as meaning and purpose of education, the role of Emotional Intelligence Quotient (EIQ) and moral reasoning with special reference to ECD/E in this technological era. Both eastern and western literature available on the topic have been consulted and discussed with special reference anchored in the concept Khudi of Allama Mohammad Iqbal to create a cultural empathy.

Impact of Breastfeeding Promotion on Breastfeeding Rates in a Hospital Cohort

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This study evaluated the impact of education and counseling on breastfeeding practices during the first 6 months of life. An interventional study was conducted in AKUH, Pakistan. The sample comprised of 500 mother infant dyad consisting of full term singleton infants followed till 6 months of life. The babies in the intervention group were part of Multicenter Body Composition Reference Study. A comprehensive package was developed for the intervention group which comprised educational leaflets, monthly telephonic follow ups, breastfeeding sessions and free postnatal clinics by neonatologist for reinforcement on breast feeding practices. Mothers assigned to control group received standard breastfeeding education

and support as per hospital guidelines. Result showed that more women exclusively breast fed across the intervention group, as compared to the control. In the intervention group, 30% exclusively breastfed their infants till 6 months vs.12.3% in control group. EBF significantly reduced the risk of respiratory infection (4.2% vs. 7.1%) and diarrhea (2.8% vs. 8.6%) compared to non-EBF. The gender, occupation of mother and education had no significant association with breast feeding practices. However, multiparous mothers were more likely to EBF compare to primiparous mothers (OR 0.238; 0.10-0.54; $p = 0.001$). It was concluded that the interventions improved breast feeding rates to 30 %. These findings demonstrate that repeated contact with mother by healthcare professionals can improve breast feeding rates.

How it is Modifying Traditional Teaching Concepts and Students Critical Thinking

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Social-emotional development is an integral part of holistic child development. Early years of life are the best window of opportunity for children to acquire self-regulation, which is an executive function they require throughout their lives. Home and school contribute to the development of knowledge, attitude and skills required for optimal development of social-emotional skills. Currently, there is a substantial rise in behavioral, emotional and mental health problems among school children. It is therefore, important to investigate teachers' perceptions on these problems. This qualitative study is part of a randomized controlled trial which was done to assess the effectiveness of teachers' professional development on social-emotional learning (SEL). This study was conducted in Karachi urban and rural, and in Northern Areas, Gilgit. A total of five focus group discussions were conducted with each group comprising 8 to 10 teachers. Results showed that urban school teachers had a better understanding of social-emotional development than rural school teachers. It was also found that social-emotional skills are important for school readiness and adjustment to new school environment by school children. It was concluded that teachers should be trained on how to foster social-emotional skills among preschool children.

Effects of Play Stimulation in a Hospital Setting in Karachi, Pakistan

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Hospitalized children may suffer from both organic diseases and inorganic disorders. These children tend to feel sad, angry, irritated and fearful. A model involving play stimulation was created to minimize the effects of hospitalization on organic diseases and inorganic disorders in children. This study used descriptive statistics to examine the positive and negative effects of hospitalization before and after play interventions. A total of 618 play therapy sessions were given to children aged between 3 months to 18 years between March 2018 and March 2019. Four hundred and two (402) children received one session, 111 received two sessions, 46 received three sessions and 23 children received four sessions. Eighty one (81) diseases were identified from 228 discharge summaries, out of which the most common was pneumonia ($n=20$), followed by the disease ventral septal defect ($n=9$). Different moods of hospitalized children were assessed before and after play sessions. The results were as follows: anger before ($f= 16$), after ($f= 3$); fearful before ($f= 81$), after ($f= 33$); happiness before ($f = 10$), after ($f= 164$); and relaxed before ($f= 81$), after ($f=81$). The effects of moods on the diseases of heart were as follows: anger before ($f=6$), after ($f=3$); fearful before ($f=6$), after ($f=3$); and irritable before ($f=6$), after ($f =3$). The effects on the diseases of lungs were also prominent and were as follows: fearful before ($f=8$), after ($f=3$); and pain before ($f=2$), after ($f= 0$). It was concluded that play stimulation at hospital reduces negative effects of organic diseases and inorganic disorders in children.

Holistic Approach to Early Childhood Development through Nutrition Program in Nepal

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This paper highlights the efforts made to ensure the holistic development of children through nutritional program. Although the program focuses on nutrition it has integrated health, protection, psycho-social aspects for physical, social, emotional, cognitive development of children in an integrated manner. The young children aged from neonatal to early childhood were the most beneficiaries of our program. The integration of nutrition, health, hygiene, and psychosocial components have proved to be effective strategies in ensuring the holistic development of marginalized and orphaned children living orphanages and children's homes.

BEing Parenting™: A Parenting Program for Parents and Caregivers of Young Children

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This paper presents BEing Parenting™, a program designed for parents and caregivers of young children. Based on the assertion that the best way to help children is by helping their caregivers, BEing Parenting™ infuses self-reflective exercises with well-researched models of parenting in experiential sessions that guide caregivers to understand how their own inner experiences serve as obstacles to effective parenting. BEing Parenting™ has adopted the Iceberg concept that advocates for exploration of issues 'beyond what we see', to finding the root causes of behavior. This concept, referred to as the Heartberg™ Model, helps caregivers explore the condition of their hearts as they interact with their children. Caregivers are invited to explore their mistaken thoughts and beliefs about parenting and children. A major outcome of this program is to get them to focus more on improving the dynamics of their relationships with their children, as opposed to simply trying to change the children's (mis)behaviors. The program compels the caregiver to improve their self-awareness, encourage self-reflection and adopt conscious parenting as a lifestyle. Caregivers meet in their familiar spaces as communities of parents in schools, churches and small groups so that they can explore these issues in a comfortable environment.

The Relationship of Stunting and Wasting with Body Composition in Cohort of Pakistani Infants

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The study aimed to report the prevalence of malnutrition and to compare body composition of stunted and wasted children with healthy cohort. A longitudinal observational study was carried out at Aga Khan University Hospital, Pakistan. A total of 170 full term healthy infants were followed longitudinally at 3,6,9,12,18 and 24 months. At each follow up, anthropometric measurements were taken and body composition was assessed using stable isotope by applying the deuterium dilution technique. The results showed overall stunting, underweight and wasting levels were found to be 5.5%, 6.7% and 6.6% respectively. In stunted children (LAZ= <-2SD) there is significant reduction in fat free mass (5.56 ± 1.61 vs. 6.69 ± 1.71 ; $p = <-2SD$) there is a significant reduction in both Fat Mass % (16.13 ± 4.37 vs. 21.07 ± 5.96)

Domestication of Clinical-Psychometric Assessment of Children with Special Needs in Kenya

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Under both County and National Governments, through the major transformative actions and projects, Kenya has made great achievements in education which will in the long run deliver multi-sectoral benefits

considering the multiplier effects of education. These achievements include the developed infrastructure and the already recruited staff. However, there exists in the country children with special needs, a majority of whom can be made useful members of society while others who are in the educable category can undergo some form of education beyond ECD level. But to provide for them, there is need for a competent psychometric assessment, classification and subsequent recommendation of the educational provisions for each child. The individual specific assessment normally covers Hearing and Visual impairment, Mental, Neurological, Speech, Behavioral and Learning Disorders. The paper details the nature of clinical and psychometric tests that should be adopted in such an assessment as well as the rubrics for test result interpretation. The outcome will be a working manual for adoption and use among such special children with testing and classification forming a basis for remediation, teaching and instruction.

A Qualitative Approach to the Influence of Child Labor on the Social Acceptance of Children in Low Income Families in Nigeria

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Children, have proven to be more of bane than a boon for the World, in which, both the developing and developed nations are working tirelessly to solve what remained unsolved about their development. Despite the effort of the government, research has shown that child labor is increasing in Nigeria, which is a major concern to the stakeholders. This study used a phenomenological qualitative research approach to examine the influence of child labor on children's social acceptance among low-income families in Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 20 children for the study. A self-administered research instrument entitled "Children Social Acceptance Interview Schedule (CSAIS)" and audio recording were used to collect data. The data obtained were transcribed and summarized to provide basis for interpretation, and was analyzed thematically. The major finding revealed that children had low self-esteem and hatred toward themselves and people around them. Based on the findings, special reorientation program should be organized for children to increase their social acceptance.

Nurturing Care: From Global "Pact" to National Action; From Thriving Childhoods to Sustainable Livelihoods

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Early child development (ECD) encompasses physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and motor development between 0-8 years of age. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), call for quality early childhood development and effective learning outcomes for all children. The burden of children at risk of sub-optimal Early Child Development (ECD) facing especially in developing countries is a concern at both national and global level because sustainable livelihoods as envisaged by the United Nations Agenda 2030, Sustainable Development Goals can only be realized through thriving childhoods. The objective of the study was to identify intervention measures to relieve developing countries of their burden of children at risk of sub-optimal ECD; to identify challenges to the delivery of interventions; and to identify measures to counter the challenges. This survey involved analyzing documented peer-reviewed literature on the research objective. The major findings revealed that a worryingly high number of children in developing countries were unable to realize their full development potential and that the delivery of interventions and overcoming challenges to the delivery of interventions requires the collective partnership of governments, the public and the private sector. The results of the study bear significant national policy implications on ECD and SDGs relevant to all pertinent stakeholders.

Effects of Integrating a Play-Based Interaction Guideline for Parents of Hospitalized Children with Congenital Heart Disease in the Pediatric Ward at Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), Karachi
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Hospitalization is a terrifying and traumatic experience for any individual, especially children. Children may develop emotional distress and illness because of hospitalization. One way to decrease developmental and emotional distress for hospitalized children is by integrating Play Therapy (PT) in hospitalized setting for pediatric patients. Congenital Heart Disease (CHD), is a condition in which multiple defects may have occurred at birth, causing difficulties in the function of the heart. In Pakistan, it was reported that 40,000 infants are born with CHD, of which 15,000 were critical and most of them occurred in rural communities. This study investigated the effects of PT on CHD-patients length of hospitalization, levels of engagement during therapy, and changes in vital signs. The time-lag controlled design was used, with a control group being before start of the program, and the intervention group being when PT was administered. The participants were CHD patients from 0-18 years in the cardiac ward. The chosen intervention method was developmentally appropriate therapy through play that is given by parents coached by clinical psychology students. The students were supervised by a trained clinical psychologist. The main outcomes were decreased length in hospital stay and positive changes in the vital signs.

Communicating Interpersonally to Prevent Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV: A Quasi-Experimental Approach in South Western Kenya

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It is estimated that 110,000 children aged 0-14 years are currently living with HIV in Kenya, with 8,000 new infections among children in 2017. A contributing factor to these infections is mother-to-child transmission of HIV during pregnancy, labor, delivery or breastfeeding. Challenges to preventing these infections include, lack of knowledge on HIV transmission and PMTCT, lack of knowledge of HIV status and lack of adherence to the PMTCT cascade. Furthermore, many of the PMTCT campaigns by the government of Kenya have relied heavily on media messaging. Interpersonal communication for PMTCT has been found to be more appropriate than traditional media due to personalization and the interactive learning process which it provides. Using the Convergence Theory of Lawrence Kincaid and the Social Influence Theory of Herbert Kelman, this study used a quasi-experimental approach in Homa Bay and Kisumu counties in south western Kenya to: Determine the effect of the interpersonal communication through the mentor mother program on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV; Identify the role that compliance, identification, internalization and mutual understanding play on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV; and establish the perceptions of mentor mothers on the prevention of mother-to-child program.

Social-Emotional Development in Preschool Children: Teachers' Perspectives from Urban and Rural Context of Pakistan

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Social-emotional development provides a strong foundation for academic success. This quantitative research with cross-sectional study design was employed to assess and compare social-emotional competence of preschool children from urban (n = 297) and rural (n = 205) backgrounds of Sindh, Pakistan. Strength and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ) was used to measure social-emotional competence.

According to the findings, 18.5% children from urban areas were identified as having emotional and behavioral problems as compared to 58% children in rural areas.

Public-Private Partnership in Health Care for Optimum Child Development: A South African Early Childhood Development Intervention Supporting Parents and Caregivers

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Children under five in South Africa are not reaching their full developmental potential. This is evidenced by high rates of stunting and unequal access to quality early learning, which has resulted in poor educational outcomes. The National Department of Health has introduced a campaign aimed at the caregivers of children under five-called Side-by-Side – referring to the relationship between the caregiver and the child, as well as the relationship between the caregiver, health workers, and the community who assist in ECD through togetherness and support. The campaign’s central tool is the Road to Health book (RTHB) – the immunization, growth and health record of the child. The new RTHB is designed for the caregiver and contains messages on the full scope of child development including responsive care, stimulation, social services, and maternal mental health. The RTHB is issued to all new born children in South Africa. Additional campaign communication channels are a weekly public radio drama series reaching up to 4.2 million people each week, printed materials, and Facebook. The campaign was conceptualized and designed with the support of private partners who also support local government in implementation of the campaign. The design of Side-by-Side incorporates behavior change theory with communication best practice, while attempting systemic change in public health system thinking and practice. The campaign’s design and implementation considers existing power imbalances in side-by-side relationships, diverse languages and cultural practices, and leveraging existing health system activities and resources.

Investing on Marginalized Children’s Strong Beginnings

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This paper reflects on Save the Children Philippines’ work in the first 1,000 days of life as a strategic focus for its Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and Nutrition program. It illustrates how it applied the Nurturing Care Framework as the overarching strategy to build local government and health service networks capacity in delivering health and nutrition services to children and their mothers in a culturally-diverse population in South Central Mindanao, Philippines. The program is directed to populations who are migrants, Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and Moros who are marginalized and considered as vulnerable community groups with poor access to quality health and nutrition information and services. The intervention in the first 1,000 days focuses in strengthening public health system and service delivery through provision of technical assistance and capability building to community leaders, service providers and community members. The platform of delivery is through partnership with local government units, government agencies and local civil society to deliver context-specific programs. The program is supported by communication and advocacy plan to assist local government units in developing child-sensitive programs. This led to the passage of contextualized ordinances for the first 1,000 days with appropriated budget to sustain the program.

Lady Health Workers’ Perspective on Detecting Perinatal Depression in their Routine Work: A Qualitative Study from Islamabad Capital Territory

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Perinatal depression is a leading cause to maternal morbidity. In Pakistan, mental health is neglected, and women with perinatal depression go undetected and untreated. Detection of perinatal depression, through

non-specialists is the first step of integrating evidence-based perinatal mental health interventions and task-shifting at the community level. This study explored the perspective of Lady Health Workers (LHW) who are well-known and credible community based health workers, on detection of perinatal depression. A qualitative study was conducted in Islamabad Capital Territory, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were carried out with Lady Health Workers and Supervisor. Discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed, and qualitative content analysis was done. The results provided a detailed feasibility and acceptability of integrating detection of perinatal depression by LHWs, it was seen as a manageable addition to their routine work, they showed positive attitudes towards getting trained for it, and considered anything that helps mother and child as part of their duty. It was concluded that there is a potential of integrating detection of perinatal depression into the existing LHW platform. Policy makers need to be informed of this possibility of task shifting at the community level, this can help de-stigmatize mental health needs and services.

An academic-Local Government Partnership in Kilifi County, Kenya

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Kilifi, a coastal County in Kenya, has been experiencing an increase in adolescent (15-19 year olds) pregnancies and now has one of the highest rates in the country at 22% as compared to 18% national rate. This concern has prompted a desire to better understand why and how to respond to this rise. An Academic-County partnership between Kilifi and the Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Women and Child Health of the AKU has formed a new model to help mitigate this concern. A memorandum of understanding between the two was drawn up and the CoE was made a formal membership of the multi-agency Adolescent Pregnancy Taskforce. The CoE provided technical public health advice, intervention development expertise and is developing an implementation science based programmatic framework for the local strategy. Issues uncovered include high rates of child marriage and a patrilineal culture. Solutions include technical interventions and also working with local politicians who have law-making powers. This model has considerable value in improving the health of local populations and generating new insights for furthering academic research. The governance arrangements provide the vehicle for effective joint working.

“Skillful Parenting” to Improve Early Childhood Development within Farmer Cooperatives, Village Savings and Loaning Associations in Agboville and Nawa Regions of Ivory Coast.

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Investing in Children and their Societies (ICS SP) through TRECC initiative tested the implementation and effectiveness of the Skillful Parenting model in addressing early child development and child maltreatment in cocoa-growing communities in Ivory Coast. Skillful Parenting is a support to parents and families program. It was implemented in Agboville and Nawa regions; reaching 576 farmers directly and 1,900 children indirectly. Data was collected before the beginning of the intervention, during implementation and end of the pilot. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected through individual surveys, focus groups, key informant interviews and through direct observations. The results showed statistically significant improvement from baseline to end-line for 4 out of 8 knowledge and practice indicators for age appropriate parenting and in addressing child maltreatment. Also noted was a significant increase in the proportion of beneficiaries able to identify at least 2 stimulating activities with their child. The percentage of caregivers who reported having engaged in 7 or more child-rearing practices in the last three days having increased by 20% from baseline to end-line. Finally, a significant increase in the exclusive positive child discipline methods for the past 30 days reaching 29% at end-line compared with 18% at baseline.

Complementary Feeding Practices and their Determinants in Infants and Young Children on Follow Up at a Private Tertiary Hospital in Nairobi

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Worldwide, maternal and child under-nutrition is the underlying cause of more than one-third of all deaths in children under five. Despite provision of nutrition education at Aga Khan University Hospital-Nairobi (AKUH-N), both stunting and over-weight trends have been observed. This study investigated caregivers' knowledge, attitude and practice of complementary feeding (CF) of infants and young children on follow up at AKUH-N well baby clinic based on WHO guidelines. Furthermore, it sought to evaluate the factors influencing compliance with these guidelines. This was a mixed method and cross-sectional study involving 290 caregivers recruited for the quantitative arm by convenience sampling. Twenty-one caregivers were purposively sampled for in-depth interviews. Caregivers had an average to high knowledge score, but less than half of caregivers were fully compliant to the WHO CF guidelines. Younger age of the infant and caregiver's education of at least college level were found to be significantly associated with better compliance with WHO guidelines. Factors that hindered compliance to WHO CF guidelines included lack of specific and practical guidelines, lack of time resource and a fear of allergies.

Quality Education: Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum for Early Grade Learners

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Life-long process of learning, unlearning, relearning and discovery especially among the formative years is mostly referred to as education. Sustainable Development Goal 4, quality education, embody our highest aspirations for a better world and reflect our greatest responsibility as a global community. Formative education is significant in the realization of human potentialities necessary for sustainable and inclusive development. The state and non-state actors' core mandate is to revamp the education sector through innovative reforms like establishing the early grade learners' competencies, which resonate with the national needs and global trends of change. In response, the state promulgated a new learning model called competency-based curriculum that shifts focus from summative assessment to all-time evaluation based on the learner's competencies (trainable skills, knowledge, attitude, talents and proficiency). Competencies are adoptive mechanisms that make learning malleable and build self-innovation and invention necessary in this digital era. This paper argues that for learners to successfully contribute to sustainable development will be in their ability to think, communicate, learn and collaborate across the boundaries that divide these perspectives. Opportunities, skills and investment provision to the early grade children today to meet tomorrow's needs and to build better futures for themselves and their societies.

Influence of Gender and Socio-Economic Factors on Maternal and Child Nutrition Practices in Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique

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Malnutrition remains high across most regions of the world especially sub-Saharan Africa. In Mozambique, 1 in 2 children is nutritionally deficient, with 44% of the children under 5 years being stunted. This study explored how social, cultural and economic factors in Cabo Delgado province influence

nutritional attitudes and practices of pregnant women and children below two (2) years. This was a qualitative study in which key informant interviews, in-depth individual interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data from 237 participants. Findings suggest that, although Mozambique has made remarkable efforts to put in place policies that are geared towards improving food security and nutrition, ecological, economic and social cultural factors still play a central role in nutritional experiences and decisions making on food consumption. Overall, prevailing norms, traditional knowledge and beliefs around food with respect to what is acceptable diets for pregnant women and children, the gender relations at household level on decision making around food consumption determines what to grow, buy and eat as well as feed young children. The findings illustrate a nutrition gap that requires urgent intervention through policies and culturally congruent programs.

Healthcare Providers' Practice and Perception on Integration of Play Sessions in Maternal and Child Health Clinics: A Siaya County Experience

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County Government of Siaya

Globally over 200 million children do not reach their developmental potential in the first 5 years of life. Health care providers interact with caregivers during the most important window of opportunity for ensuring optimal development and prevention of risk of long-term damage (from pregnancy through the first five years of life). Siaya County health department adopted the integration of play and communication activities in all MNCH service delivery platforms to promote stimulation of children and strengthen caregiver's child interaction. The aim of this study was to evaluate healthcare providers' practice and perception of the integration of play sessions in maternal and child health clinics. In this qualitative research, data was collected through direct observation, in-depth interviews and focused group discussions. A total of ten key informants were interviewed and 25 were involved in the focus group discussions. The results showed that integration of play and communication activities in MNCH service delivery platforms has not only improved CCD, but has also improved the assessment of developmental milestones, triaging of sick children and prompt referral of children needing further management. It was concluded that integration of play and communication activities in existing service delivery platform is feasible, cost-effective and sustainable.

The Do's and Don'ts of Nurturing Children's Brain Development: Student Mothers' Stories from Selected Higher Institutions of Learning in Western Kenya.

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Mothers are key actors in children's growth and development. However, the extent to which mothers nurture their children's development vary along a continuum ranging from intentional activities that involve specific routines to sporadic activities that happen by chance. With more students becoming mothers, this study examined strategies the young mothers use to nurture their children's brain development. Eighty student mothers from selected institutions in Western Kenya were involved. Questionnaires, Focus group discussions and interview data from the participants were analyzed using a multi-modal perspective. The results indicated that the younger respondents made use of their peers and Google to build their knowledge base with regard to their children's growth and development. The student mother's discussions concerned four conceptual themes: unplanned conception; routine activities; sporadic activities and physical growth and development. Nurturing their children's brain development was not an intentional activity for most of the student mothers. Overall, inconsistencies existed between the expected and the strategies used by the student mothers in nurturing their children's brain development. In conclusion, the results were discussed from an ecological perspective, and suggestions to improve student mothers' knowledge base of intentionally nurturing their children's brain development during the critical period were made.

Impact of School Feeding Program on Preschool Children's Attendance and Classroom Participation in Oyo State

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School feeding program (SFP) is a target safety net program designed to provide educational and health's benefits to children. However, limited evidence exists regarding the impact of this program on children's school attendance and classroom participation in pre-primary school. This study examined the impact of SFP on preschool children's attendance and classroom participation in Oyo State. The study was a survey, using Multi stage sampling technique to select 20 public schools in three Local Government Areas of Oyo State. Data were collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Two research instruments used in data collection were: Attendance Records Sheets (ARS) and Class Participation Observation Sheets (CPOS). The quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics whereas the qualitative data was analyzed using narrative technique. The study revealed that attendance of preschool children improved more than what it was before the commencement of the SFP. Also, it was found that the SFP increased children's level of participation in class activities. It was recommended that government should continue with the SFP since it has a positive effect on children. Development partners such as UNICEF and WHO should continue to partner with the governments of Nigeria to ensure continuity of the SFP.

Malnutrition in Pakistan: From a Curative to a Comprehensive Life-Cycle, Preventative Approach

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Nutrition services in Pakistan have focused on treating acute malnutrition. At 17.7%, wasting is at crisis levels and warrants immediate action. Using a health systems strengthening approach, KP and Punjab provinces have expanded their treatment services using UK aid to improve the functionality of OTP sites in terms of availability of trained staff, equipment and supplies, regularity of reporting and quality. Functionality and cure rates for acute malnutrition have significantly improved as a result. Less attention has been paid to stunting, which, at 40.2% is coming down too slowly. A lack of preventative guidelines to address chronic malnutrition and a lack of nutrition-related indicators in routine monitoring of healthcare services was a challenge. The Technical Resource Facility (TRF+) worked with Punjab and KP programs to develop a cost-effective, evidence-based comprehensive package of nutrition interventions to ensure a continuum of care. This package highlighted the need for a life-cycle approach, starting with a focus on nutrition during adolescence, pregnancy and lactation, and early childhood. The resultant packages aim to address gaps in nutrition services through specific interventions and an effort on improving communication. If implemented as designed, this initiative will bring about a visible shift from therapeutic to preventive nutrition services.

Passage of a National Law on the First 1,000 Days Incorporating the Nurturing Care Framework in the Philippines: Experiences on Legislative Advocacy and Campaign

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Save the Children Philippines' (SCP) Maternal, Newborn, Child Health and Nutrition (MNCHN) program has been implementing quality integrated interventions since 2015 by increasing access, improving demand, and establishing policy enabling environments, focusing on the first 1,000 days (FIKD) of life to

respond to high stunting rate and improving maternal and infant mortality. It documented improved wasting rates in marginalized communities. From 2016 to 2018, SCP's legislation advocacy work utilized evidence-based MNCHN programming, media campaign and published three researches: *Sizing Up*, 2015; *Cost of Hunger: Philippines*, 2016; and, *Lives Cut Short*, 2017. In 2017, a F1KD Law was crafted at the Philippine Congress. SCP provided technical inputs during public hearings and media interviews. A Media Awards encouraged reporters to cover hunger and malnutrition issues increasing public awareness and influence in policy decisions. On 29 November 2018, the Philippine President signed the Republic Act 11148 that provided integrated programs for adolescent females, pregnant and lactating mothers and children aged 0-2 years. On 2 May 2019, the law's Implementing Rules and Regulations were signed by the DOH Secretary. SCP was instrumental in pushing the Nurturing Care Framework to implement RA 11148 for quality integrated safe motherhood and early child development services with funding allocation.

NURTURE Initiative

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NURTURE initiative aims to understand the current situation of nurturing care for ECD in Kenya and Benin covering the preconception period and first 1000 days of life. This intervention comprises several facets and disciplines spanning preconception, antenatal and postnatal care. The choice of East and West Africa is evidence of South-South collaboration among heterogeneous populations, with the ultimate aim being the ability of these interventions to be scalable in sub-Saharan Africa. We conducted the pilot study in the Maragua sub-County Hospital, Murang'a County, Kenya. The pilot study shows that the fundamental knowledge of neurodevelopmental science amongst healthcare workers is weak, which lead to delayed initiation of the learning/stimulation. There is a misconception that learning only begins after children start schooling. Besides there is a major concern about safety, the majority of the participants do not have adequate information regarding the correct pathway of referring suspected or confirmed child abuse. In addition, our team did put together a play corner in the children's ward and made toys from recycled material in Maragua Hospital. Over a period of one year, since the project was initiated, ~730 admitted children and 5,000 who came for outpatient services have benefited from play and joyful learning using the nurturing care framework.

Play and Early Years

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During the early years, play, love, care, attention and education are basic developmental needs. The Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Development (2007) stresses the importance of play as part of curricular activities. Play can be used to facilitate the learning and its importance recognized in early years education and development. This study has explored early childhood teachers' perceptions and practices about associative play to support young children's cognitive development. The study which was conducted in a private school of Karachi involved 3-4 years children. It examined the role of teachers in promoting associative play as a part of teaching-learning process. To carry out the study, qualitative exploratory method was used, which included in-depth observations of teachers practicing associative play in their classrooms. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted to further explore teachers' perceptions about associative play and its integration in curricular activities. The findings showed that playing with peers contributed to effective learning in children. Moreover, integration of associative plays in teaching lead to efficacy in student learning outcomes. The study recommended that associative play should be entrenched in the curriculum for children, and that novice teachers should be trained to integrate the process of play in their teaching.

Trends in Dietary Diversity and Its Determinants in Children aged 6-24 Months: Evidence from a Longitudinal Study in Urban Pakistan

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The aim of the study was to assess the pattern of dietary diversity (DD) amongst infants and children of up to 2 years of age. A hospital based longitudinal observational study called Multicenter Body Composition Reference study was conducted at AKUH, Karachi from October 2014 to 2017. Longitudinal feeding data was acquired from 159 full term healthy infants at 6, 9, 12, 18 and 24 months of age. Counseling session on age appropriate Infant and Young Child Feeding was given to mothers of this cohort. The results showed that the proportion of children who met the MDD and meal frequency were 44.1% and 84.7 % respectively. There was a linear increase in dietary diversity with age from 12 to 24 months (OR =2.44; 95% CI: 1.49-3.98).

An Innovative Strategy to Approach and Recruit Young Females from Rural Disadvantaged Community for an Early Learning Program in Pakistan.

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Young educated females in rural disadvantaged communities if provided with opportunities for employment and professional growth can contribute to the society. However, in such communities it can be challenging to approach females for employment opportunities due to cultural and familial barriers. This study shared an innovative strategy to recruit young females in a rural disadvantaged community for an early learning program in rural Pakistan. A structured recruitment strategy was implemented in 4 steps: 1) Trained female research mobilizers approached eligible female candidates through male village leaders, 2) motivational meetings with candidates were conducted, 3) the candidates participated in a 1-day recruitment workshop 4) and the shortlisted candidates completed a 4-week certified training. A total of 29 candidates were identified, out of which 19 attended the recruitment workshop, 14 candidates were shortlisted for the training, and 10 candidates were selected for the program. The participants took active part in the program and 100% of them completed the project. It was concluded that the team was successful in recruiting and sustaining the young females for using the innovative strategy. This strategy is now being tested in a scaled up project in 4 districts of rural Sindh to verify the conclusion.

Nursing Workforce Development Continuum: Development of a Compassionate Nursing Mentorship Program for Pediatric Nurses Working at AKUH, Karachi

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Evidence suggests that mentorship programs can improve nurses' satisfaction, increase retention, and ensure optimal patient outcomes. A baseline survey of 173 pediatric nurses revealed that the existing system did not respond to the workforce needs and made them disengaged. Thematic analysis of the causes of their disengagement revealed three main themes; professional growth, fair accountability at work place and inability to manage work related stress. As a result, we developed and implemented an on-job nursing

mentorship program, using compassionate framework aimed at enhancing employee satisfaction and engagement. We utilized Theory of Change (TOC) model to develop a solution for the problem. A nursing mentorship manual was developed, followed by basic training workshop for nurse mentors in June - July 2018. Post training feedback showed that mentors started demonstrating compassion in their behaviors. From June 2019, the training was rolled out for the all the frontline nursing staff to teach them principles of compassion. These trainings will be completed in five months. For sustainability, the responsibility to mentor the nurses was built around Job Description (JD) of the supervisors. Our overall aim is to create a “mentoring mentality” in the departments which will create a compassionate environment for our workforce development.

Effectiveness of an Integrated Program to Reduce Maternal and Child Malnutrition in Western Kenya: Lessons Learned from the First Year of Implementation

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Malnutrition is a major health problem in Kenya, with 26% of children less than five years stunted and 42% of pregnant women anemic. Several studies have shown the impact of food supplementation, behavior change and WASH interventions on child malnutrition separately, but effective scalable approaches have been rarely documented. With its extensive experience providing smallholder farmers with agricultural products and training, One Acre Fund (IAF) has the potential to transform its successful program into the world’s largest ‘nutrition network’ for farmers. IAF has designed two cluster-randomized controlled trials (RCT) to test the effectiveness of providing caregivers of children less than 5 years old and pregnant women with an integrated bundle of products and training to reduce child malnutrition. The trials were launched in 2018. IAF hired and trained 36 Health Field Officers (HFOs) who provide monthly training and fortnightly home visits to the participants. The trials are now in the second year of implementation with many lessons learned from the first one. Adherence to the intervention is a continuous challenge which highlights critical considerations in RCT design: mobilization of participants to attend group training; logistics to procure, store and deliver products regularly; retention of control participants, or HFOs’ motivation to create change in the communities.

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