Ensuring Quality ECE for All in Resource Poor Settings

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Aga Khan Foundation

Improving the Quality of Early Childhood Education Services for All in the CEECIS Region
4-6 June 2012
Aga Khan Development Network
Education

Early Childhood Development
Strengthening early childhood care and education
Pre-school/nursery school operation
ECD resource institutions
Human Development Programme
Science of ECD (online course)

Primary and Secondary
Schools in rural and urban areas and Aga Khan Academies – development and operation
School Improvement Programmes (public, private, community)
Professional Development Centres
International Academic Partnership

Higher Education
AKU – Faculty of Health Sciences, Institute for Educational Development, Institute for Human Development
University of Central Asia
Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan
Aga Khan Humanities Project
Continuing Education
Programme in Islamic Architecture

Cross Cutting
Education policy reform activities
Learning Organizations: Monitoring, Evaluation, Studies and Research
Curriculum development
Early Childhood Development and Quality

Major emphasis for AKDN:
- 40% of AKF’s education budget
- Double the reach since 2008

• ECD Training and Resource Institutions
  - 19 (University-based; CSO; Government)
  - Online Resource and Course -108 participants from 20 countries

• Programme Studies (2011):
  Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Portugal
  *Improved learning environment and learning achievement*
Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

Challenges

- ECD system’s collapse following dissolution of USSR
  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Kyrgyzstan: # of KGs</th>
<th>Tajikistan: # of KGs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>944</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>486</td>
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- Inappropriateness of Soviet model for 21st century:
  - High Cost (for government and parents)
  - Limited coverage for disadvantaged students
  - Focused on meeting childcare needs more than child development needs

- Limited Parental engagement

- Lack of local language books for young children
Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

Strengths and Opportunities

- History of child development expertise and leadership as part of Soviet Union
- Human Resources (experts, trained teachers, Ministry personnel etc.)
- Government interest and openness to new approaches
- Highly educated resourceful population
- Demand for ECE
- Under-utilized facilities in many rural areas
The Question

How can we use the strengths and opportunities in the CEECIS region to address the challenges and achieve quality at affordable cost?
Ensuring Quality Early Learning Opportunities in Remote Areas of Kyrgyzstan

Core programme area:

Remote mountain districts in **Osh and Naryn Oblasts**

**Work at the national level**
Education Programme

– **Entry Point ECD**: Develop and promote alternative ECD models
  Work with **Kindergartens (KGs)** - Response to the crisis in this part of the education system

– **Reading for Children** – Response to i) the lack of books for young children and ii) parents lack of confidence in ability to support their children’s development

– Supporting Transition into **School** followed
Models and Innovations
in partnership with Government and Communities

Increasing Access and Ensuring Quality

- **System of linked Central and Satellite Kindergartens (KGs)**
  - **Satellite KGs**: in homes, schools and other public buildings
  - **Jailoo KGs**: learning opportunities during months in summer pastures

- **Shift (half-day) system in Central KGs**
  Shift / satellite fees are one sixth of the full day fees in rural areas
  - affordable for all
  - doubles coverage

- **Cost-Sharing / Financing / Sustainability**
  - **AKF a catalyst**: supports establishment and training
  - **Government**: covers salaries and other operational costs
  - **Communities contribute to establishment (Ashar tradition)** and boost income and nutrition for KG (goat, dairy and potato projects)
Reach and Impact

**Increase in ECD access**
- KG programme benefits 10,470 children in 131 KGs (more than two thirds would not have had access to a KG without the new models)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Percentage Enrolment of 4-6 year-olds</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<td>Chon-Alai,</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alai</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
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**Improved abilities of teachers**
- through training by the Institutes for Upgrading of Teachers (interactive child-centered approaches) and mentoring

**Improved Learning environment**
- More learning materials and good use of low-cost / no-cost local materials such as bones and felt
Learning Achievement Studies
(Data from 2007 and 2009)

- 1st Study used teacher assessments. 2nd study used curriculum-referenced tool and external data collectors. Very similar findings.

- Grade 1 students who participated in ECD scored 16% higher on learning achievement assessments than students with no ECD experience.

- No difference between children who attended central and satellite KGs.
Reading & Writing by ECD Experience & Type of KG

Grade 1 Learning Outcomes

Percent Score

No ECD
 Satellite KG
 Central KG

78  77  79
 89  88  89
 87  85  88

All  Boys  Girls

AKF/MSDSP Kyrgyzstan Grade 1 Learning Achievement Study 2009
Policy and Practice

2009 Pre-school Law:
- Full endorsement of the alternative ECD models developed by international organizations in partnership with government and communities
- Provides for equal pay for kindergarten and primary school teachers

New government policy:
- All children to participate in a 240 hours school preparedness programme.

Replication:
- Replication of Jailoo kindergartens in Chui, Talas, Issyk Kol oblasts planned as result of the visit of government officials led by Ex-President Roza Otunbaeva.
Models and Innovations

**Reading for Children**

Being read to as a child: One of the most robust predictors of educational success

- Mini-libraries and Parent Workshops:
  - Access to books for young children in Kyrgyz language
  - Parents read to/with children at home
  - Supports for children’s overall development
Reading for Children: Reach

• **Mini-libraries** in schools, community libraries, satellite KGs, yurts
  > **23,000 users**, Workshops for > **12,000 parents/caregivers**

• **35 original Kyrgyz-language children’s books published.**
  + Books with pluralism theme in multiple languages

• TV show: *Adventure to the World of Books*
RfC Impact, Reach and Sustainability

• Children whose families access RfC outperform others on learning achievement assessments (75% versus 64%)

• Village Education project under MoE purchased AKF books for all schools in country. AKF’s revolving fund channels money from sales into new titles

• 10 other countries adapted and replicated RfC

• Partnership with TRT Avaz to develop new episodes & also broadcast TV show in Turkey
Advantages of models:

1. **Increases coverage** of pre-school children with quality services at **reduced cost** for government

2. More affordable and easily accessible for parents and therefore better able to **reach disadvantaged children** who need it most

3. **Developmentally appropriate** for children

4. Increases access to/ enthusiasm for books improving school readiness and re-inforcing emerging literacy skills amongst primary students

5. **Effective use of media**
Ensuring quality early learning opportunities in remote areas of Tajikistan
Tajikistan Context

- ECD Access: 9%
- Government KGs
  - Located in urban areas
  - Quality needs substantial improvement
  - Focus on care rather than overall development
  - Lack of appropriate resources and learning materials
Developed ECD alternative model (2009) drawing on successful experience in Kyrgyzstan

- Relevant to communities’ needs
- Cost effective and affordable
- Uses underutilized classrooms in schools
- Focus on holistic development
- Support from Government and communities
- Sufficient dosage (4 hours a day, 5 days a week)
• Develop children’s love for reading from early years
• Enhance parent capacity in effective reading and story telling-techniques via trainings and support
• Improve children’s and parents access to reading materials in rural areas via set up of mini libraries
• Provide additional information increasing parents awareness and knowledge about their children’s overall development and how to support this
Coverage and Quality Impact

- Government teacher training institute capacity built in ECD
- Over 70 ECD classes established (2500 children)
- More than 180 ECD teachers trained
- Increased coverage from 9% in 2009 to 27% in 2011 in GBAO
- National scale up by Government and UNICEF
Coverage and Quality Impact

- > 40 mini libraries established in government libraries and schools
- > 100 RfC Facilitators trained
- > 5500 parents and children benefited
- Local group of story book developers trained
- 12 story books developed
Institute for Professional Development – GBAO
ECD Study 2011

– Children’s learning achievements
– ECD teachers’ practice
– Community involvement,
– Communities’ perceptions and likely sustainability of the model

Qualitative & Quantitative methods
Overall Score on Individual Assessments

Learning Outcomes

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<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Attended an ECD Centre</th>
<th>Has not attended an ECD Centre</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 to 5 year olds</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 7 year olds</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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AKF/IPD ECD Impact Study 2011
Coverage and Quality Impact

Test Scores for 4 & 5 year old children

- Language, cognitive, social skills: Program Scores (higher) vs. Non-Program Scores
- Math skills: Program Scores (higher) vs. Non-Program Scores
- Literacy skills: Program Scores (higher) vs. Non-Program Scores
Perceptions of Parents and Village Stakeholders

- Children who attend an ECD centre
  - Positive attitude
  - Better thinking and communication skills
  - More respectful towards adults
  - Better prepared for school
Sustainable model

• Strong community ownership
  - Communities pay ECD teachers salary
  - Safeguards to reach poorest
  - Strong demand and enthusiasm from communities to expand programme

• Schools pay some operation costs

• Discussions with Gov to cover portion of teacher salaries
Policy

• Model endorsed by MoE for national wide replication as an alternative
• Part of National Education Development Strategy for Education (2012-2020) for wider scale up
• Presidential Decree to allocate gov. budget for start up costs
• GPE funds (2013-2017)
• Contributed to national ECD curriculum
Ensuring Quality ECE for All in Resource Poor Settings

- Resource Poor ???

- Strengths of Models
  - High Quality at Affordable Cost.....more equitable
  - Learning Achievement Studies affirm quality
What’s Key for Success?

• Demand from Families and Communities (see benefits in neighbouring villages)

• Joint Government and Community Ownership

• Creative use of local resources - available expertise, under-utilized facilities, local materials etc.

• Data and Research Studies
  – what’s working and what needs improving
    - Equity (an issue in CEECIS)
    - Quality
What Next?
Some of the things which still need to happen

Kyrgyzstan
• Completion of normative legal instruments guaranteeing support for operation of alternative models
• Extension of the mandated 240 hour pre-primary provision to a full year of pre-primary
• Expansion of Early Literacy initiatives

Tajikistan
• Finalization of Pre-School Education Law, ECD education programme, teacher training package, methodological resources
• Government support for operational costs including teacher salaries (not only start-up costs)
Children Ready for Schools
and
Schools Ready for Children

Thank You!