



ARAB RESOURCE COLLECTIVE
The Arab Network for Early Childhood Development
Reference Document
(June 2015, updated March 2017)

Introduction

In the context of the Arab Program for Early Childhood Development (APECD)¹ ALECSO and ARC convened the Founding Forum of the Arab Network for Early Childhood Development (ANECD) from 15 to 17 December 2014 in Amman, Jordan. Representatives of ministries of education and social affairs, childhood councils, NGOs, and academia, as well as individual experts, attended the Forum. They came from 15 Arab and foreign countries (list in Appendix 5).

The Forum declared the meeting the “Founding Assembly” of the Arab Network for ECD and mandated the steering team to act as a follow-up Committee. The Founding Forum adopted a concluding document summarising the meeting's outcomes and establishing a roadmap for the deployment of ANECD (Appendix 1).

This Founding Assembly requested the production of this “Reference Document” to facilitate the elaboration of the concept, role, and structure of ANECD. Based on the agreed roadmap, it aims to trigger consultations among members of the Founding Assembly, the Follow-up Committee, and other actors who have a stake in deploying ANECD.

This reference document has been updated in preparation for the network's first annual meeting in April 2016 and will be updated again for discussion at the next annual conference of ANECD (summer 2017).

The document contains two sections:

Section 1: Defining the global and regional ECD context and its strategic priorities.

Section 2: The identity and purpose of the network:

1. Concept and structure
2. The work programme

Section 1 - The importance of Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Investing in the care and development of young children has been recognised as a central component of human development and has been included as a distinct element in all international conventions and agendas adopted in recent decades.

The evidence is based on scientific research in developmental psychology and increasing ECD practice worldwide. It has been strengthened by current research

¹ APECD is hosted by the Arab Resource Collective (ARC), under the umbrella of the Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education Quality (ARAIEQ) based at the Arab League's Education, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO).

on the economics of early human development and on the development of the brain in the early years.

1.1 ECD and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Following the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education For All (EFA), both spanning from 2000 to 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted in September 2015 “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The agenda has 17 specific goals (Appendix 2), elicited in 169 targets.

The global early childhood movement achieved a noticeable success: Early Childhood is included under

Sustained Development Goal 4:
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Target 4.2:
By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and preprimary education so that they are ready for primary education

Indicators:

4.2.1: Percentage of children, under 5 years of age, who are developmentally on track in health, learning, and psychosocial wellbeing

4.2.2: Participation rate in organized learning (1 year before official primary entry age) for all countries

In addition to this specific target and its indicators, the early childhood movement is engaged with other goals (such as health – Goal 3, gender equality – Goal 5 and peaceful societies – Goal 16), where its contribution can make a real difference.

It is important for the early childhood movement in the Arab countries that both governments and civil society focus on developing policies that achieve the commitments made under the SDGs and monitor implementation through the systemic use of the indicators. An active ANECD is the ideal platform for

- identifying the strategic priorities for early childhood in the Arab national and regional contexts, and
- coordinating the regional contribution to the good functioning of the monitoring system.

1.2 ECD in the Arab context.

1.2.1 Background

Early Childhood Development has emerged gradually in recent years as an important component of Arab Governments' approaches to human development.

The Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education Quality (ARAIEQ) was launched following the Doha Declaration on Quality of Education in the Arab World, adopted by the Ministerial Colloquium on Education For All in September

2010. The Arab Program for ECD (APECD) was designed as one of ARAIEQ's five pillars and resulted in the founding of ANECD.

It is noteworthy that a good number of other regional events since 2010, convened by governments and civil society, have identified achievements and challenges in knowledge, capacities and practice in the ECD field².

However, while the APECD was phased out in 2015 due to a lack of funding, it has been possible to deploy ANECD with support from the Open Society Foundation (and the Consultative Group for ECD before it was discontinued in 2016).

As a regional ECD network, ANECD is currently interacting with the development of the ECD Action Network (ECDAN), which is likely to inherit the CG's purpose and constituency. Along with other regional networks, such as the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) and the Asian Regional Network for Early Childhood (ARNEC), ANECD is also interacting with the development of the ECD Action Network (ECDAN).

1.2.2 ECD strategic priorities in the region.

The activities leading up to the launch of ANECD have nurtured an overview of the situation of early childhood in the Arab region³.

Both for mapping the field of ECD and for selecting its programmatic priorities, two inter-linked conceptual frameworks are used: The Holistic/Integrated Approach and the Four Cornerstones (Appendix 3).

The following is a brief summary of the programmatic priorities in order to place the objectives of the Arab Network for ECD within their context. They are identified by

- a) age categories and
- b) generic approaches.

a) Challenges by age category:

It is a commonly accepted approach to distinguish the specific development characteristics of young children by three broadly delimited age categories. Programmatic priorities for each age are then defined accordingly.

A summary of the principles and the situation in Arab countries related to each age category has been placed in Appendix 3. The following table presents only the highest programmatic priorities:

Conception to 3 years	4 to 5 years	6 to 8 years
General approach: Integrated services, namely by the ministries	General approach: Expanding nurseries and KGs will ensure a continuum of care	General approach: The ministries of education give top priority to the quality of

² Two relevant examples are:

- The regional workshop on Advancing the ECCD Agenda in the Arab Region convened by the Arab Resource Collective in Amman on 22-25 March 2010.
- The Regional Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, convened by UNESCO in Damascus on 20-22 September 2010.

³ The report of the regional workshop convened by APECD on 22-24 November 2012 in Amman provides a comprehensive overview of ECD approaches, achievements and challenges in Arab countries. It's available on request from ARC.

of health, social affairs and education.	from home to enrolment in basic education.	teaching and learning in the early grades.
In practice: i. Strengthen mother and child care in the health system, and adopt a holistic approach to the science of child development in the training of health personnel. ii. Partnerships should be developed between the ECD and the health sectors to implement pre- and peri-natal projects for young mothers and fathers. iii. Structured parenting programs are the right response and they are being developed in various contexts in Arab countries, but they remain limited and should be urgently expanded.	In practice: i. Standards should be introduced through legislation and administrative practice by ministries. ii. In successful integrated systems, formal pre-schooling receives from 10% to 20% of the education budget. iii. Specialized teacher training for KGs is developing. Much more is needed, as this sector is expanding rapidly. iv. The private sector has an impressive capital of expertise and should partner with the public sector to disseminate quality. v. Out-of-school structured and affordable programs involving parents can reach out to the 80% who are not enrolled in order to prepare them for entry into primary.	In practice: i. The most qualified teachers have to be allocated to the first grades, contrary to common practice. ii. Linked to that, the status and salaries of teachers in the first grades should be raised. iii. Enhance the knowledge of current teachers of the early grades in the science of child development and train them on effective and active methods of teaching reading and writing. iv. Strengthen the content on the science of child development and active learning in teacher training. vi. Produce attractive reading materials in Arabic for this age. vii. Prioritize the primary in educational reforms. vii. Engage parents in the running of the primary schools

b) Challenges by generic approaches.

The approach by age categories should not divert attention from both the holistic approach to child development, and from the necessity to ensure that every child is engaged in a continuum of care from conception to age eight and beyond.

Generic approaches help in ensuring coherence and integration in the provision of services. Nine approaches have been identified to select strategic priorities for the ECD movement in the Arab countries.

Approach	Remarks
1. National ECD policies and implementation strategies, including child-friendly budgets.	Only a handful of Arab countries have succeeded in implementing a sustained process, but they are good examples to follow.
2. Collection, compilation and analysis of segregated data.	This is indispensable for planning and programming, but there are no effective systems in Arab countries. The World Bank's "Systems Approach for Better Education Results" (SABER), designed for benchmarking the policy and practice of ECD can be implemented in all Arab countries.
3. Inter-sectorial coordination.	There should be one structure, with appropriate authority, to coordinate the early childhood departments in the ministries concerned, and link their work to national development policy, strategies and budgeting.
4. Engaging the parents in the continuum of care for their children.	Parenting programmes are developing in several Arab countries: a practical basis for engaging parents in the structured care for their children up to age 8 and beyond.
5. Quality and standards.	They ensure that the ECD sector improves continuously, particularly as expansion is accelerating. Applicable systems exist, including in some Arab countries.
6. The capital of knowledge in each country and in the region.	Two components, for each of which a coherent strategy at the regional level is necessary.

	- Knowledge resources and training tools in Arabic are being developed at a quick pace, but they need to be utilized, and overall needs remain enormous. - The pool of competent human resources trained in ECD is already impressive, but still very far from being adequate to respond to the increasing demand.
7. The urgency of equity.	Far too many children and their families are excluded from structured ECD services in the Arab countries. Accelerating the expansion of the ECD sector is a question of justice, and works in the national interest.
8. Collaboration among Arab countries.	Conferences are held and resolutions made, but little is done in practice. ARAIEQ/APECD is a beacon of hope!
9. Networking and advocacy.	The launch of the Arab Network for ECD is timely and should develop into an effective mover for the early childhood sector in the Arab region.
10. Care, education and protection in emergencies.	Endemic conflicts in the region have thrown huge numbers of young children and their families in precarious situations of displacement. Quick response programs to provide care, education and protection have become a quasi-permanent generic priority.

1.2.3 ECD is situations of conflict and displacement.

This challenge has been developing as an urgent priority in the region, following the radical social and political processes triggered by what came to be known as the “Arab spring”. Five to six years on, conditions in a sizeable number of Arab countries continue to unfold, some of which have resulted in massive displacement of populations and endemic civil strife.

This imposed a renewed approach to the status of ECD in the region.

Section 2 – The Arab Network for ECD

1. The concept and structure of ANECD

The Founding Forum’s Concluding Document included the initial definitions and guiding principles for ANECD, which constitute the basis for the network’s current practice.

1.1 The concept of ANECD.

Vision:

The development potential of the young child is realized with support from families, communities and states in all Arab countries.

Mission:

The Arab Network for ECD will mobilise expertise and resources for the full development of every young child and for a better future.

General objective:

The Arab network wants to be a community of knowledge, information and practice, and a professional platform for consultation, cooperation and advocacy, that supports the care and development of young children.

1.2 The Membership of ANECD

ANECD will have a voluntary, non-remunerated membership and will include significant actors in the ECD sector who wish to join, both government and civil society. Its membership will include institutions and individual experts with a record of accomplishment in ECD.

Currently, the **Founding Assembly** of ANECD comprises the participants in the Founding Forum in December 2014 (appendix 5). The membership will expand gradually to include the countries not yet represented and prominent ECD actors who could not attend the Founding Forum (details in Appendix 5). Until the next formal general assembly of ANECD, the new members will join through a consultative process facilitated by ARC with the Follow-up Committee.

The broad categories of membership can include the following:

- **Governmental agencies** that have a mandate of care for young children and their families.
- **The League of Arab States:** ALECSO and the Department of Woman, Family and Childhood
- **Civil society organisations, academic institutions, and local, regional, or international networks** that have sustained ECD activities.
- **Individual experts** with a record of more than five years of active involvement in ECD work and are not employed by an institution that is a member of ANECD.
- **UN and multilateral agencies**, such as the World Bank, UNICEF, and UNESCO.
- **Funding Partners.**

1.3 The structure of ANECD

At this stage, ANECD should have a light structure, with the following three components:

i. The Founding Assembly.

Members of the FA will be regularly informed and consulted on

- the major steps related to the deployment of the network, regarding membership, governance and structure, and their translation into by-laws
- the projects implemented by ANECD and its members to encourage participation from their country in regional activities and facilitate implementation in their national context when appropriate.

ii. The Follow-up Committee

The concluding document mandated the steering team of the Founding Forum to become a Follow-up Committee (FC). Although no specific terms of reference were agreed, it can be assumed that the FC will be the first instance to which all matters related to the deployment of the network will be referred before they are submitted to the Founding Assembly.

iii. The Secretariat

Until further notice, ARC will carry out this function in consultation with the FC and will perform the following tasks:

- Initiate the steps required to deploy the network in liaison with the Follow-up Committee.
- Keep the flow of information within the network and develop appropriate tools, such as web page and electronic newsletter.

- Fund-raise and organise the programmatic activities.

iv. Towards a **Constitutional Assembly of ANECD?**

The aim is to convene a constitutional event to consolidate the institutionalization of ANECD soon.

2. The broad lines of a program of work for ANECD

Based on the definition and principles of the network, four major tasks are proposed as core programmatic components:

2.1 Distil and disseminate knowledge and good practice through collective work of the membership.

ANECD will use the following methods:

- **Thematic working groups.** One such group has started working on capacity building and is currently organising a training of trainers on the Arabic course of Science of ECD.
- **Thematic conferences.** Such a conference is planned in 2017 and will focus on ECD in situation of conflict and displacement. A working group will be formed at the next annual member conference to work on this.
- **A regional “open forum” may be convened in the near future.** The purpose will be to:
 - * Raise the profile of ECD in the Arab region.
 - * Bring together practitioners and decision-makers in the ECD field.
 - * Allow the working groups to develop their work and share their findings with a wider audience.

2.2 Support the development of national policies.

ANECD can start by mobilizing expertise in the region and/or globally to facilitate processes related to two inter-linked priorities:

- Promoting **national policies** and their implementation strategies in the Arab countries. Work around the Sustainable Development Goals and their monitoring system should be used for this purpose too.
- Promoting and contributing to the collection, compilation and analysis of **segregated data related to early childhood**. For example, the implementation of the World Bank’s “Systems Approach for Better Education Results” applied to ECD (SABER-ECD) can be used for this purpose.

2.3 Advocate for ECD

As indicated in section 1, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have emerged as the new system at the international level. ANECD should engage with the deployment of the SDGs in two ways:

- Nurture the flow of information among its members about developments at the global level, both within the UN structures and about the work done by the global movement for ECD.
- Disseminate this information within the Arab countries and interact with governments to nurture their knowledge and commitment to ECD.

2.4 Organise a platform and tools for sharing information, namely a website and a digital newsletter.

3. **Current activities.** Continuing to act as the secretariat of ANECD, ARC is pursuin the following activities.

3.1 Funding was provided by the Early Childhood Programme of the Open Society Foundation for a first phase of activities over 14 months (**January 2017 – February 2017**). An interim narrative report is available. Activities included one membership meeting held in April 2016 and the launching of the website and the newsletter. The first phase will conclude in March 2017 with a TOT on the science of ECD.

3.2 A proposal and budget for the second phase of 18 months is now available. It will run from **March 2017 to August 2018** and include the following components:

- a. Consolidating ANECD's structure and governance and developing its programmatic strategy. Two events will be held in 2017:
 - The annual conference of the members of the network in the summer will focus on deploying the network's governance, reviewing the ECD context and programmatic priorities and activatig the working groups.
 - A thematic conference for international and local actors in the autumn to address the urgent challenge of ECD services in the context of conflict and displacement.
- b. Building the capital of knowledge and human resources. Two lines of work:
 - A regional training of professionals on "parenting in situation of conflict and displacement" (spring 2018). The training will both benefit from and nurture an on-going cooperation between ARC and local and international partners in work with refugee parents of young children in Jordan and Lebanon, but it has the purpose of scaling up the work, including expansion to other countries such as Egypt, Lybia and Yemen.
 - Training on the Arabic Science of ECD at the local level (at various dates in the next 18 months). Following the training of trainers in March 2017, ANECD secretariat will trigger and support the training of professionals in at least three countries in the region.
- c. Nurturing communications and sharing information. The bi-lingual website and the electronic newsletter launched in the first phase will be expanded and improved.

Appendix 1 – ANECD Founding Forum Concluding Document

Arab Program for Early Childhood Development The Regional Founding Forum of the Arab Network for ECD Amman, Jordan, 15-17 December 2014

By invitation of the Arab Program for ECD (APECD), hosted by the Arab Resource Collective (ARC), under the umbrella of the Arab Regional Agenda for Improving Education Quality (ARAIEQ) based at the Arab League's Education, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO), the Founding Forum of the Arab Network for Early Childhood Development (ANECD) was convened on 15-17 December 2014 in Amman, Jordan. Representatives of ministries of education and social affairs, childhood councils, NGOs and academia, as well as individual early childhood experts attended the Forum. They came from 15 Arab and foreign countries.

After a program of presentations and debates, the participants adopted the following document for the deployment of the ANECD :

Introduction and definitions:

1. The early childhood development sector is marginalised in most Arab countries.
2. The political level is prepared to give the ECD sector the importance it requires.

This was stated at the 2010 Conference of Arab Ministers of Education in Doha: "Towards Improving Education Quality." ALECSO implemented the Conference's recommendations by creating ARAIEQ with its five program components, including the Arab Program for ECD (APECD).

- There is a conviction that it is necessary to search for the appropriate measures to establish a network that would include representatives of governments, civil society, academia, and individual experts. All the participants in the Founding Forum expressed their commitment to establishing such a network, for the crucial and helpful role it can play in promoting the ECD sector and supporting the activities required to improve the network's role at the Arab regional and national levels.

Under the Umbrella of ALECSO, APECD has already initiated networking among relevant partners in the sector by setting up a think tank, which carried out research, convened thematic and training workshops, and produced needed resources and tools. Doing that paved the way for building the Arab Network for ECD.

APECD, hosted by ARC as part of ARAIEQ and in partnership with ALECSO, has accumulated the expertise required to host the Arab Network for ECD.

- APECD has also built solid partnerships with the actors engaged in the ECD sector in the Arab countries.

The Arab Network for Early Childhood Development (ANECD)

Vision:

Towards a better future with an Arab network mobilising expertise and resources in ECD.

General objective:

The Arab network will produce and disseminate knowledge, share best practice and advocate for policies that support ECD

Operational measures and a roadmap:

1. The Founding Forum declares that the participants constitute the Founding Assembly of the Arab Network for ECD.
2. The Founding Assembly mandates a follow-up Committee made up of the members of this forum's steering team.
3. The Founding Assembly mandates the Arab Program for ECD to manage communications between the Follow-Up Committee, the Founding Assembly, and ARAIEQ.
4. APECD is requested to submit to the Follow up Committee and the Founding Assembly, as well as the Scientific Advisory Board of ARAIEQ, by mid-February at the latest, a draft of the following document:

The “Reference Document” for ANECD detailing the following headlines:

- i. Early Childhood and the Sustainable Development Goals post-2015
- ii. The relevance and necessity of ANECD for defining the needs and addressing the challenges at the regional level, and providing support at the national level
- iii. The composition and tasks of the Founding Assembly of ANECD
- iv. The basic principles for government membership (including the possibility of membership of more than one government agency in a given country) and the criteria for voluntary membership that will give governments the right to establish “focal points” in the future.
- v. The basic principles for the membership of civil society organisations and academia and the criteria for voluntary membership will give APECD, in consultation with ARAIEQ/ALECSO, the right to select future members.
- vi. The network's program of work is in its current phase.
- vii. The methods and sources of funding.

A roadmap and a proposal for funding based on what has been agreed in the Founding Forum

5. APECD receives the feedback from the Follow up Committee and the Founding Assembly by the end of February 2015
6. The Founding Assembly will promote the Reference Document and lobby governments to obtain formal approval where possible.
7. Prior formal approval by individual governments will enhance the opportunity for its adoption by ALECSO's governing bodies and acceptance by funding agencies.

- 8.** The General Secretary of the Higher Council for Childhood in Lebanon has volunteered to convene a meeting for relevant partners, representatives of ministries, civil society organisations, and academia in Lebanon, to reach approval of the draft. She suggested that members of the Founding Assembly do the same in their respective countries.
- 9.** The Reference Document will be shared with the agencies who attended the Founding Forum and other partners, for consultation and support, namely the World Bank, Save the Children, ANERA and ACEV.
- 10.** ALECSO will present the Reference Document to its governing bodies in 2015 for validation.

Appendix 2 – The Sustained Development Goals proposed by the General Assembly’s Open Working Group and included in the Secretary General’s Synthesis Report (December 2014)

Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 2	End hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
Goal4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 6	Ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
Goal 7	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 9	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries.
Goal 11	Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
Goal 12	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
Goal 13	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
Goal14	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.
Goal 15	Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
Goal 16	Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
Goal17	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.
* Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.	

Appendix 3 – Two conceptual frameworks for Early Childhood Development:

1. The holistic/integrated approach to Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD).

(The following is a brief summary of “From Principles to Practice”, the first chapter of the manual: Adults and Children Learning, published by ARC in Arabic in 2003).

The **holistic/integrated approach** is rooted in developmental psychology and child rights.

Studying behavioural changes in individuals from infancy to old age, developmental psychology helps to explain and predict the course of human development. It emphasizes the process of learning through experience in the early years, in which the nature and quality of interaction between children and adults are crucial. The role of adults is to understand the factors affecting a child's behaviour and facilitate the learning process as the child's capacities grow. In doing this, adults themselves must become learners.

The International **Convention on the Rights of the Child** (CRC) recognises children as subjects of rights. Most people are used to thinking of children as having needs, but the CRC frames those needs as rights. The CRC's articles are indivisible, but four of them represent the underlying principles or ‘pillars’ that support the whole Convention.

- Right to survival and development (article 6).
- Right to non-discrimination (article 2).
- Right to Participation (article 12).
- Principle of the ‘best interests’ of the child (article 3).

The approach is ‘**holistic**’ because it is based on a vision of the child as a whole being, comprised of a wide range of needs, characteristics and experiences, all of which are important to their personal development.

Once this is recognised, the approach is ‘**integrated**’ because it needs to integrate all services and provisions relating to children. When attending to a specific need, integrated services recognize the overall needs of the individual child.

The following 14 principles underpin the holistic/integrated approach to ECCD. Initially based on the 10 principles for play developed by Tina Bruce in her book “Time to Play”, they were translated to Arabic, adapted and expanded collectively by a team of early childhood professionals in regional meetings in 1995, 1997 and 1998.

They are a conceptual framework which can help practitioners and policymakers analyse and improve ECCD provision.

The 14 principles of the holistic/integrated approach	
Three FUNDAMENTAL principles (First cluster)	1. The child is a whole being, essential in all dimensions that are interrelated and affect each other 2. Childhood is an essential stage in life, and not just a 'preparation' for life 3. A child's development occurs in stages, which can be predicted – at each one, the child's readiness to learn certain things is at its peak
The ENVIRONMENT cluster	4. Interaction with other people (adults and children) motivates, reinforces, and encourages children in their learning processes. 5. The child's development is seen as an interaction between the child's capacities and his/her environment 6. Developing the child's cultural identity (mother tongue, accumulated cultural wisdom, collective memory, history etc.) is central to the child's healthy and integrated development.
The PROGRAMMES cluster	7. The child's inner life emerges and flourishes under favourable circumstances. 8. Individual differences between children should be valued and celebrated. 9. Intrinsic motivation is central to the development of the different aspects of the child's personality, and child-centered programmes value this. 10. Encouraging the child's self-discipline will help her achieve personal freedom with responsibility. 11. Children have built-in resilience and develop coping strategies and survival skills when living in especially difficult circumstances. They require appropriate support to maintain and strengthen these skills and overcome long-term traumatic effects. 12. Quality programmes for children start by focusing on what children can do (rather than what they cannot do). 13. Integrated programmes and provisions respect the holistic nature of the child. 14. Quality programmes for children must value the role of the parents, the extended family, and the community in the care and development of children.

2. The Four Cornerstones

The Four Cornerstones of ECD were developed by an international group of early childhood actors (including ARC) convened by the Consultative Group on ECCD in connection with the launch of the Education For All General Monitoring Report (EFA/GMR) on early childhood in 2007. They are a convenient framework for programming and have been regularly updated since and translated by ARC into Arabic.

They are:

- **Start at the beginning** (prenatal to 3 years): including early stimulation, responsive parenting, holistic child development, and early intervention
- **Get ready for success** (4 to 5 years): with a focus on access, equity, quality, and professionalism in the learning and education of young children and their transition to formal schooling
- **Improve primary school quality** (6 to 8 years): for more excellent continuity with early learning and education, and in keeping with the principles of child-friendly schooling
- **Include early childhood in policies** (generic): both sectorial and inter-sectorial policies in health, education, and welfare at the international, national, and subnational levels, and ensure that early childhood is integral to planning and budgeting for development and macroeconomics.

Appendix 4 – Summary principles and situation of ECD in the Arab countries by children’s age categories

Conception to 3 years	4 to 5 years	6 to 8 years
Principles: a. Children this age have a right to responsive parenting, good primary health care, a nutritious diet, and a safe and stimulating environment. b. Support from family and community is crucial for optimal development. c. Recent brain research has confirmed knowledge based on experience that consistent care and stimulation in the first years, as well as protection from risk factors, are crucial for optimal development of the child.	Principles: a. Children of this age have the right to a safe and stimulating environment at home, in school, and in the community. Their capacity to learn evolves rapidly. b. They develop their intellectual and social potential best in a play-based and interactive environment, and gain from organized early learning activities. c. Studies in the field indicate that ensuring two years of quality, organized pre-schooling is a sure predictor of success in primary and further education, as well as in adult life.	Principles: a. This age is solidly within the mandate of the education systems, but ECD approaches are crucial in the first years of primary school. b. Child learning and development characteristics in those years still follow the same patterns as in early childhood. c. A successful transition into “schooling” should consolidate the learning patterns acquired through play-based and interactive approaches practiced in pre-schooling. d. As children are made “ready for school” in pre-schooling, schools have also to be “ready for children” coming from home or KGs.
Situation: i. There is progress in caring for the health of mother and child, but also deficiencies: a significant level of low birth weight, malnutrition, etc. ii. Stimulation for a holistic growth of the child, as well as	Situation: i. Nurseries are expanding, but information is scarce. They are likely to be limited to the elite and high-income families. However, achievable approaches are possible to expand this sector. ii. The KG sector has become part of the	Situation: Coverage has improved in Arab countries: 90% gross enrolment, but only 84% net enrolment in 2008 (EFA/GMR 2012). Some 6 million children are still out of school, 58% of them females. Gender parity is almost achieved in the primary.

Conception to 3 yeas	4 to 5 years	6 to 8 years
social protection from the impact of deprivation, is left to families. But many families are in no position to provide appropriate care. iii. There is very little in terms of organized services and programs, whether by the community or the public sector, in support of fathers and mothers in their role as principal carers.	education systems in legislation and policy in most countries. iii. However, statistical data indicate a wide range in practice, from about 1% to 70-80% enrolment. The average is 19% (EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012). iv. Pre-schooling providers are multiple: public, private (mostly for profit), but also by NGOs and community-based programs. v. There is a nascent movement of out-of-school structured programs to prepare children for schooling.	The ratio students/teacher is generally high in the public sector. But what is not known with useable data are aspects related to quality and effectiveness: Information about repetition and drop-out is lacking. There are indications that rates of completion of the primary are growing. No data about the level of readiness at entry into primary, or of achievements at completion. It is accepted that a high number complete basic education with a low level of literacy and numeracy.

Appendix 5 – Composition of the “Founding Assembly” of ANECD



1. Participants of the “Founding Assembly” of ANECD (total: 44)

* Government agencies:

- Egypt (Atef Zakhari, Cairo University),
- Jordan (Alia Arabeiat and Abdallah Kawkazeh, Ministry of Education and Hania Khanji and Lubna Zoobi, National Council of Family Affairs),
- Lebanon (Fadi Yarak, Ministry of Education and Higher Education and Rita Karam, Higher Council for Childhood),
- Libya (Zahaa Al-burousi, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs),
- Mauritania (Mohammad Amin Almustapha, Council of Early Childhood Development),
- Morocco (Aziz Kayshouh: Moroccan Institute for the Development of Primary Education),
- Oman (Amer Al-Aysari, Ministry of Education and Teaching),
- Palestine (Suheir Afaneh, Ministry of Education and Higher Education),
- Sudan (Asmaa Fadel, Centre for Early Childhood Development),
- Tunisia (Fawzia Chabaane, Ministry of State for Woman and Family),
- Yemen (Lamia Al-Ariani, Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood).

* Arab NGOs, networks and foundations:

- Arab Campaign for Education for All, Tasnim Hammuz
- Arab Council for Child Development, Mohammad Fawzi
- Arab NGO Network for Development: Ziad Abdessamad
- Welfare Association, Maha Sader
- Jordan: Rual Hyari, Jordan River Association and Daad Hadaya and Muna Taji, Queen Rania Academy for Teacher Training
- Lebanon: NGO Alliance for Children’s Rights in Lebanon: Alice Keyrouz

- Palestine: Omar Assaf, Centre for Teacher Creativity/Palestinian Education Alliance

* International and UN agencies:

- American Near East Refugee Aid, Palestine: Soliman Mleahat and Mohammad Ghosein
- International Paediatrics Association, Lebanon: Joseph Haddad
- Mother and Child Education Foundation (ACEV), Turkey: Suna Hanouz
- Save the Children, Jordan: Muna Abbas and Sahar Matarneh
- Save the Children HEART program: Sarah Hommel (also ARAIEQ Scientific Advisory Board member)
- UNICEF New York: contribution via video-link by Pia Britto
- UN Population Fund (UNFPA), Jordan: Suad Nabhan
- Yale University, Child Study Centre, USA: contribution via video-link by James Leckman

* Academics and individual experts

Bushra Kaddura, Elie Mkhail, Fadia Hoteit, Haifa Abuljibin and Samir Jarrar

* ALECSO / ARAIEQ

Hayet Wadi and Doha Jaballah

* ARC / APECD coordinators and experts:

Cosette Maalouf, Ghanem Bibi, Ghassan Issa, Lara Aoudeh and Youssef Hajjar

2. Agencies invited or considered but could not attend the Founding Forum:

* Government agencies

- Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Abu Dhabi Council for Education
- Dubai, United Arab Emirate, Ministry of Education
- Egypt, Ministry of Education and National Council for Motherhood and Childhood

* League of Arab States, Department of Woman, Family and Childhood

* Arab NGOs, foundations and networks:

- AGFUND
- Doha International Family Institute, Qatar
- Makassed Schools, Lebanon
- SOUL, Yemen
- Tufula Centre, Palestine

* International agencies:

- Aga Khan Development Network
- Asia-Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood
- Consultative Group for ECCD
- International Step-by-Step Association
- Open Society Foundation, the Early Childhood Program

* Academia:

- Yale University, Child Study Centre, USA (contribution to the Forum via video-link by James Leckman)

* UN:

- UNICEF New York (contribution to the Forum via video-link by Pia Britto)
- UNICEF regional office, Jordan
- UNESCO regional office, Lebanon
- World Bank, Washington

* The hosts of the other 3 programs of ARAIEQ (CNTE, UNESCO Beirut and InjazalArab)