



Japan International
Cooperation Agency



Accomplishment report on The Project for Quality Improvement of Early Childhood Development

(from June 2017 to October 2021)

Project Team:

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This project is being implemented within the framework of the memorandum of cooperation signed by JICA and the Ministry of Social Solidarity on February 7, 2017 for technical cooperation through "The project for Quality Improvement of Early Childhood Development" The project started implementing its' activities since June 2017 and will continue until October 2021 .

The project aims to develop 50 nurseries ran by NGOs in 5 governorates which are: Port Said, Ismailia, Suez, Kafr El-Sheikh and Qalioubia with 10 targeted nurseries in each governorate.

Project background:

This project is based on the activities carried out by the Japanese volunteers sent by Japan International Cooperation Agency - JICA. It has sent more than 70 volunteers with experience in the field of early childhood development for about 20 years, who ensured the importance of the principle learning through play and its impact on the children. Japanese volunteers helped in building the capacity of supervisors (facilitators) and administrators through their activities, such as workshops, seminars, and creating educational materials for early childhood development.

The Protocol:

The project works on improving the quality of childcare in nurseries through introducing learning through play in the pilot areas.

Expected outputs of the project

- 1- Improving the ability of nursery facilitators to implement learning through play.
- 2- Improving the monitoring system of nurseries in order to ensure their quality service.
- 3- Improving the surrounding environment that is appropriate for implementing learning through play.

Project Plan

General plan: In order to achieve the mentioned outputs, the project carries out some activities, such as: (1) Producing learning materials (2) Providing training for supervisors (facilitators) and trainers. (3) Carrying out awareness campaigns for parents, (4) Providing technical support in relation to quality standards and the unified educational curriculum, (5) Supporting the monitoring and follow-up system on nurseries. (6) Providing a training program in Japan to get to know the learning strategy through play and learn about the models of Japanese nurseries.

Project accomplishments until June 2021 in the field of:

Human Resources Capacity Building:

(1) Carrying out training for supervisors (facilitators), nursery managers, and directorates' staff.

- Training in Egypt:

In order to build the capacities of nursery facilitators, nursery managers and directorates' staff, JICA experts, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and its directorates, organized intensive training for nursery facilitators and employees of the Social Solidarity Directorate in the five target governorates, covering eighteen topics related to early childhood, based on the curriculum taught in colleges of Early childhood care and education in Japan.

The training was implemented in Cairo and in the five targeted governorates from January to July 2018

Training topics are: Principles of child care and learning, family and childhood welfare, social welfare, counseling and support, social protection , theories of caregivers (facilitators): Child Psychology (1) - Child Psychology (2) - Child Health (1) - Child Health (2) - Child nutrition - Family Support Theories - Theories of Childhood care

Curriculum - Overview of theories of childhood content - infant care - care for children with special needs - social protection - consultation and support for child care.

Exchange tours were conducted during the second half of 2018 to inspect the impact of training and lessons learned to exchange experiences between governorates (directorates and nurseries). The JICA team is working in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Solidarity to enhance the impact of training with the aim of improving the second round of training scheduled for implementation in 2019.

Meetings were held in the five governorates, in which all the facilitators who completed the training session made a presentation of what they learned from the training and how this affected the quality of work in nurseries, as a kind of exchange of experiences.

The Certificates of completion of the training course were delivered to 74 facilitators who have completed attending 15 subjects out of a total of 18 training subjects or more. The second round of the local training was implemented in Cairo from December 28, 2019 to February 9, 2019. It was with full coordination with the ministry and the national program. Alexandria University implemented the training.

The training consists of two phases, the first phase is the foundational one which focuses on the following subjects: Amendment of child's psychological and behavioral problems - child development and education- first aid, child safety and security - child nutrition and health - introduction to nurseries - Methods of raising and educating children - psychology of communication and speech disorders - psychology of play.

As for the second phase, it was practical, in which training has been made on:

Planning nursery child activities - Planning and organizing the child's environment - Children's motor performance games - Children's songs and corals - Children's stories and tales - Children's theater and puppets - Psychological programs for early intervention for children with special needs - Early detection and methods of evaluating the child - Child art and performance skills - Family partnership - Production Teaching methods for the child.

51 facilitators/managers from 31 targeted nurseries participated in the training. Where some nurseries sent more than one facilitator to participate in the training. 42 participants, those who attended 75% of the training or more received certificate of attendance.

Batch three of the training covered 13 subjects in 10 days(2 days per week) carried out by professors from Alex University; training was held in 5 governorates on two batches including in total 209 facilitator from 209 non- target nurseries. Facilitator's training (batch 1) started in 20th of June and ended in 4th August 2021 including 108 facilitator/manager from each nursery , while facilitator's training (batch 2) started in 22nd of August and ended in 4th of October including 101 facilitator/manager from each nursery . For further details, please check information below.

Batch three (batch 1 & batch 2)

Suez :48 Facilitator Kafr el sheikh :43 Facilitator Portsaid : 46 Facilitator

Ismailia : 38 Facilitator Qalyubia: 34 Facilitator

Some pictures for 2018 training in Cairo and the governorates



Some pictures for 2019-2020 training in Cairo



Exchange of experiences in Japan

The first batch of 13 trainers from the Ministry of Social Solidarity and its directorates in Port Said, Suez and Qalubia traveled to Japan in November 2017. The trainees gained a deeper understanding about the concept of "learning through play" and how to implement it on the ground through a twenty-day integrated training at Tsurumi University and some Japanese nurseries.

The second batch was sent to participate in the training in Japan (observation tour) in November 2018, for 5 days. It was specifically designed for senior officials in the ministry and its directorates, and those who are expected to be a leader in the field of early childhood development, in order to know more about the policies of early childhood development in Japan and the educational / scientific content related to the qualification of service providers, as well as visiting the main models of the Japanese nurseries. Mrs. Sahar Mashhour, former Advisor to the Minister for Social Welfare and Dr. Atef Adly, Dean of the faculty of Education for Early Childhood - Cairo University participated in this observation tour, in order to emphasize the importance of communication between the Ministry's side and the academic side represented in the faculty.

The third batch of 15 trainees from the following governorates: Ismailia - Kafr El Sheikh - Qalioubeya - Cairo - Giza - Alexandria - Aswan - Red Sea (including the members of NGOs under the National Program for Early Childhood Development) , visited Japan during November 2019. The training was carried out from November 24, 2019 until December 14, 2019.

Training in Japan for
2017



Training in Japan for
2018



Training in Japan for
2019



(2) Observation tours:

In October 2018, The five targeted governorates exchanged visits to make use of the experiences. For example, a working group from Suez directorate visited the Ismailia directorate, and they made a presentation about the challenges facing the directorate and how to overcome them. They also talked about the means of working and monitoring in the directorate, and then visited one of the distinguished nurseries in



Ismailia. The same happened with the other governorates, as nursery managers and facilitators participated in the observation tour to other governorates.

The second round of exchange of experiences between the governorates was carried out, where these observation tours focused on corner play and how nurseries implement them. It was from October 15, 2019 to November 7, 2019.

(3) Production of educational materials:

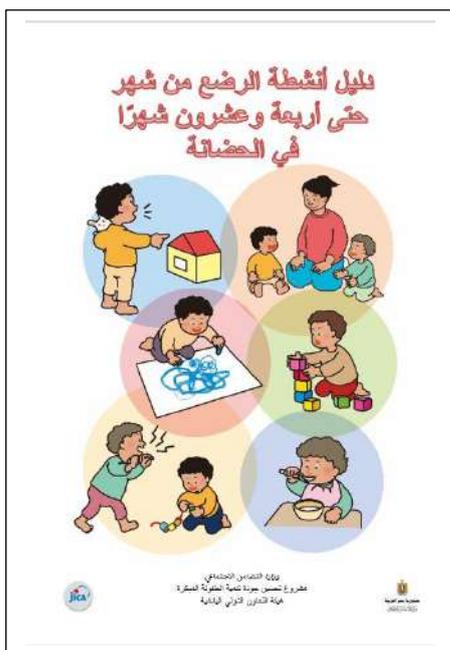
The draft of Learning Through Play booklet from the age of 0 to four years has been submitted to MOSS. This booklet explains the development of children through 4 basic skill areas, which are learning emotional and social skills, Physical skills , cognitive skills , language and communication skills, align with “the National Quality Standards for Nurseries” dated on September 27,2020.

This booklet is divided according to age groups, every -3 months for infants from one month to one year, and every 6 months for children from one to three years, and each year for children above age 3 years.

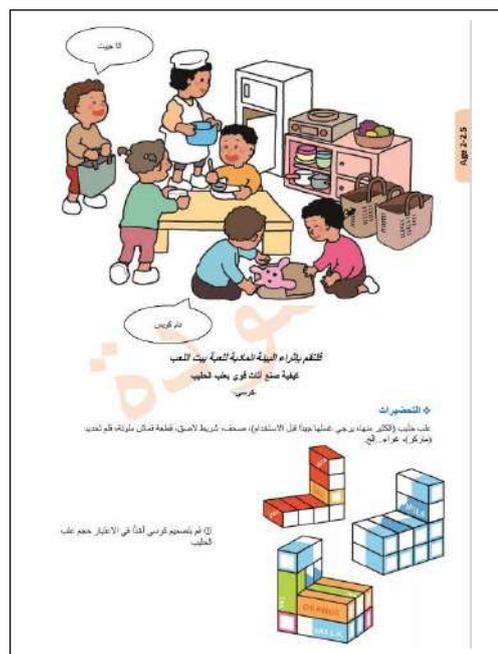
This booklet contains clear examples of how to develop child's skills through multiple activities that the facilitator can implement according to the skills that she wants the child to acquire. This guide is designed to be a harmonious and integrated tool with the unified educational curriculum developed by the MOSS.

The following are the Activity booklet finalization schedule:

- Activity booklet Orientation was held in 9 governorates (Ismailia-Portsaid-Suez-Qalyubia-Kafr el sheikh-Gharbeya-Cairo-Giza-Alexandria) including approximately 95 nurseries starting from 21st of June until 30th of June.
- The testing finished by the end of July.
- Data collection was at the beginning of August.
- Confirmation about the contents from Alex University was done.



Samples



(4) Sessions on Infants' Care and Education

One of the projects' experts organized those sessions about infants' care and education from birth until 24 months, focusing on the interaction between children and facilitators, during February 2020. Some handmade toys suitable for that age group were displayed. During these sessions, the project provided the targeted nurseries (which has infants) with toys appropriate to the age group, and the learning materials for infants' care.



(5) Cooperation with TOKKATSU project

ECD project shared some educational materials with the basic education in the Japanese schools' project such as: Sand Pit Maintenance Manual.

The total number of 192 facilitators of the targeted nurseries from the project, and the supervisors of kindergartens of Egypt Japan schools exchanged the views and experiences on the following topics:

- 1- Activities that develop skills by playing with sand
- 2- How to enhance parents' understanding of the importance of playing in sand pits
- 3- Efforts to enhance playing in sand pits
- 4- How to keep sand pits clean and safe.

The maintenance manual and other materials for sandpits prepared by the Project was attached to the Teachers Guide for KG under Egyptian Japanese schools.

Raising Parents' Awareness.

The project has carried awareness campaigns based on the slogan "Eat well, play well , sleep well " as well as disseminating the importance of Learning through play .

(1) Food Education Lectures:

The project team carried out food education campaigns for "Eat Well" section during 2019 with informative lecture by Dr. Magdy Nazih - Nutrition Consultant Doctor and Professor and Head of the Nutrition Education Unit at the National Institute of Nutrition, the head of the Scientific Foundation for Food Culture and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Journal of Food and Nutrition.

Portsaid:

Day one, 26 January, 2019.

Attendance: approximately 100 beneficiaries

Day two: 27 January, 2019

Attendance: approximately 110 beneficiaries

Kafr el-Sheikh:

Day one, 2 February, 2019

Attendance: approximately 230 beneficiaries

Day Two: 9 February, 2019

Attendance: approximately 125 beneficiaries

Suez:

Day one, 16 February, 2019

Attendance: approximately 60 beneficiaries



Day Two: 23 February, 2019
Attendance: approximately 35 beneficiaries

Ismailia:

Day one, 2 March, 2019
Attendance: approximately 45 beneficiaries
Day two: Date: 9 March, 2019
Attendance: approximately 11 beneficiaries

Qalyubia:

Day one, 16 March, 2019
Attendance: approximately 127.
Day two: 23 March, 2019
Attendance: approximately 160 beneficiaries



The total number of participants for 2019 is around 1003 beneficiaries.

Having the successful impact of the campaign in the target governorates of the project, The project expanded the campaign in the governorates under the National ECD Program from 15 January, 2020 to 13 February, 2020.

Hurghada:

16 January, 2020 Attendance: approximately 169 beneficiaries

Aswan:

20 January, 2020 Attendance: approximately 150 beneficiaries

Gharbya:

27 January, 2020 Attendance: approximately 195 beneficiaries

Cairo:

3 February, 2020 Attendance: approximately 139 beneficiaries

Giza:

10 February, 2020 Attendance: approximately 135 beneficiaries

Alexandria:

13 February, 2020 Attendance: approximately 105 beneficiaries

The total number of participants for 2020 is around 893 beneficiaries.

(2) Workshops on Physical Exercise:

As for "Play Well", a project expert had conducted workshops for parents on physical activities with parents and children. The project conducted a pilot workshop in Suez in June 2019. The workshops in the rest of the governorates took place during July 2019 (Ismailia, July 16, 2019 - Port Said, July 18, 2019 - Suez, June 18, 2019 - Qaliubiya, July 3, 2019).

The seminars was organized at Qaliubiya and Portsaid, in the presence of 3 professors from universities from Japan, who told the attendees about children's health and proper nutrition, in addition to carrying out a workshop in the presence of parents and their children on the importance of physical exercises.



(3) Seminars on the Importance of Reading

As for the "Sleep Well" section, the project, and Dar Al Balsam Publishing house, cooperated to conduct awareness-raising seminars for parents on the importance of reading picture books for children before bed, with the participation of one of the picture book's author, "Ms. Rania Hussein Amin."

Ismailia:

2 July, 2019

Attendance: approximately 28 beneficiaries

Qalyubia:

3 July, 2019

Attendance: approximately 45 beneficiaries

(Ms. Noriko Suzuki, the vice-president of JICA, attended)

Suez:

6 July, 2019

Attendance: approximately 13 beneficiaries

Kafr el-Sheikh:

9 July, 2019

Attendance: approximately 33 beneficiaries

Portsaid:

13 July, 2019

Attendance: approximately 34 beneficiaries



The total number of participants in seminars is around 153 beneficiaries.

Improving the Physical Environment of Nurseries

(1) Sand Pits

JICA's experts have trained facilitators on how to use sand pits to promote the growth and development of children, as sand pits activities develop the cognitive, emotional, social and motor skills of children.

The ministry decided to support the establishment of sand pits in nurseries included in the investment plan of the Department of Family and Childhood.

The establishment of sand pits in 12 nurseries was completed using the ECD-JICA project's budget and 5 nurseries using the budgets for the nurseries themselves. The Ministry of social solidarity funded the establishment of sandpits at 27 nurseries (4 nurseries set up sand pits indoors).

The project also funded the establishment of sunshades and covers for the sand pits in the 12 nurseries and provided toys suitable for sand playing.



(2) Corner Play

The project's team introduced the concept of corner play in all target nurseries through workshops for nursery facilitators. Children can choose the toys they want through corner play, like the book corner or the building blocks corner or other corners that develop curiosity and interest. Besides having fun, children's cognitive, social and motor skills can be developed through corner play.

Toys has been distributed to the target nurseries to promote corner play. (Kitchen tools, building blocks, vegetables and fruit made from cloth).



(3)Picture Books:

In 2018, the project provided 23 picture books and book shelves to the target nurseries in order to encourage facilitators to read books for children. Those books were chosen in coordination with the Department of family and childhood, Ministry of social solidarity.

In 2019, the project distributed 85 more picture books to the target nurseries selected through a committee formed by the staff of the family and childhood department and its five target Modereyas.

(A total of 4250 picture books were distributed to the target nurseries)

"Recommendation guide for picture books" which summarized 111 picture books with their educational goals were distributed to the target nurseries as a reference for facilitators and parents when choosing the stories.



(4)Scales and measures

Emphasizing the importance of measuring children's weight and height regularly, and how this contributes to discovering different types of health problems early (such as dwarfism), the project distributed a length and a weight scale for each of the targeted nurseries in Port Said and Ismailia, and an expert carried out workshops on how to benefit from scales and the importance of periodic recording of height and weight.



(5)Stackable tables

Noting the importance of providing space for the child to move freely, and the importance of classrooms not being stacked with tables and chairs, the project provided tables designed in a way that makes it easy to stack on top of each other, so that they can easily put them aside in classrooms and utilize space for the whole classroom so that children can play. The project, in cooperation with the Modereyas, collected requests for the number of tables each nursery needed based on the number of class room, and the total number of tables was 197 tables for the five governorates. They were distributed to nurseries in the targeted governorates during March 2019.



Policy and Strategy Support

ECD-JICA project submitted the followings for the reference of Ministry of Social Solidarity.

- (1) The comments on " the draft of Quality Standards for nurseries".(2017)
- (2) The proposal for the feasible monitoring model for testing in the 50 target nurseries.
- (3) The translation of the Handbook for the implementation of special activities (Tokkatsu).
- (4) The booklet "Guidelines for Early Childhood Care and Education in Nurseries" in Japan.
- (5) The article on moral education in Japan through special activities.
- (6)The translation of a Japanese book about home nurseries.
- (7) The guideline for the prevention of infectious disease.
- (8) The comments on " the draft of Quality Standards for nurseries, Sep 2020"

Additional support in light of the spread of COVID 19

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the project was forced to suspend its activities from March to November 2020.

Right after resuming the project's activities on November, the project decided to expand the scope of the project to 300 nurseries in the five target governorates, and to provide training on precautionary measures and goods needed (e.g., hygiene kits, ventilator fans, shoeboxes, colouring books), those are required to reopen nurseries.

Training Achievements (Batch1&2)

Qaliobeya 83 nurseries: 94 people

Kafr Sheikh 63 nurseries: 78 people

Suez 37 nurseries: 63 people

Port Said 60 nurseries: 70 people

Ismailia 58 nurseries: 90 people

Results as of June 13, 2021 301 nurseries: 395 nursery personnel







*All photos are uploaded to the project's Google account. If you want to view them, kindly contact our office