



Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority ECA Solar System

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Hello!

Welcome explorer! I'm MahbooB. Some of you may know me from the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority HQ, where I spend most of my time. Today I'll be your fun guide as we navigate the beautiful islands of ECA's achievements and story.

NOW EXPLORING

MARS

Create a robust ecosystem to promote accountability and continuous quality improvement

01 Ensure high-impact ECD policy & legislation



1. Online Advertising of Food to Children

Developed a policy to regulate online advertising of food to children. A decree has been issued by ADEO to approve the initiative, which is now in the implementation phase in coordination with key stakeholders.

2. Reproductive Health Policy Recommendation

Prepared policy recommendation on reproductive health and advised on the potential amendment of the Medical Liability Federal Law based on a proposal prepared in consultation with key stakeholders.

3. Guide on Children's Safety in Cars and At Home

Developed a guide on children's safety in cars and at home and presented it during Trauma and Injury Prevention Week 2023 at Sheikh Shakhboub Medical City

4. Air Quality Policy

Contributed to development of the Air Quality Policy that was adopted into Integrated Transport Centre school bus guidelines which were published by Abu Dhabi Quality Control Council. The policy is expected to improve air quality around schools by -50% annually, and to reduce operational costs (by -5-10 millions AED annually in fuel savings, and -5-10k AED annually in buses maintenance).

5. Abu Dhabi Specifications for Marketing Food for Children

Developed and published "Abu Dhabi Specifications for Marketing Food for Children" in collaboration with Abu Dhabi Quality Control Council and key stakeholders.

6. Wadeema Law Assessment

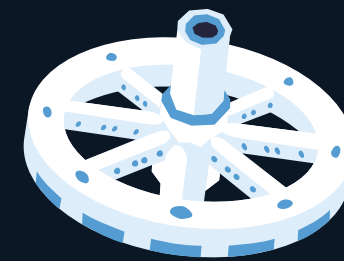
Conducted assessment of Wadeema Law and By-Law and prepared set of Abu Dhabi-based recommendations in consultation with key stakeholders.

7. Child-Appealing Packaging of F&B Products and Toxic Substances in Children's Products

Developed policy recommendations regarding child-appealing packaging of food & beverage products and policy framework regarding toxic substances potentially impacting children in early childhood.

8. Nutrition Guide for Early Intervention

Developed a nutrition guide for early intervention informed by principles of gut health, functional nutrition, eating behaviors and eating disorders.



02 Deliver a sufficient and capable ECD workforce



1. ECCE Upskilling Program

Confirmed that more than 22 participants in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) upskilling program for graduates seeking work in the field of early care and education have received full-time job opportunities or job offers in both the public and private sectors.

2. ECD and Family Protection Manual for Preachers

Developed an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Manual for preachers and religious leaders in collaboration with General Authority for Islamic Affairs and Endowment and Mohammed Bin Zayed University for Humanities which is expected to be launched soon.

3. Golden Visa

Supported 18 professionals working with children in early childhood to be nominated for the Golden Visa in collaboration with relevant partners.

4. ECD Elective Course

Launched an Early Childhood Development (ECD) elective course in collaboration with UAE University covering education and child development, family support, child protection, health, and nutrition, which is currently being offered to all university students from various disciplines to raise their awareness in this area.

5. ECE Master's Degree Sponsorship

Collaborated with UAE University to provide 10 students (including 5 Emiratis) with scholarships to pursue the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Master's Degree which is aligned with the ECA vision and mission.

6. Training Programs

Developed training materials focused on improving Early Childhood Development (ECD) competencies for Housekeepers with Childcare Duties. Launched a pilot in collaboration with Tadbeer and families in Abu Dhabi to evaluate training materials for L1 & L2. A total of 88 domestic helpers from six nationalities were successfully trained. Provided training to 51 teachers and social workers in schools on mental health and substance use and 38 child protection coordinators completed child protection specialist training. Collaborated with the National Ambulance and Abu Dhabi Civil Defence to provide First Aid and emergency training. Conducted a 'Training of the Trainer' (ToT) program for 15 trainers fluent in four different languages. These trainers were selected from Family Care Authority (FCA), Tadbeer, and private training centers in Abu Dhabi. Updated the training materials based on the outcomes from the pilot and ToT programs. Developed an ECD induction program for recent graduates and employees in ECD related positions and commenced pilot training with an initial cohort from FCA. Established an agreement with the American Academy of Pediatrics to train 1000 pediatricians in Abu Dhabi in the field of early detection.

7. ECD Workforce Survey

Completed development of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Workforce Survey and shared with relevant entities for distribution.

8. ECD Competencies

Created international Early Childhood Development (ECD) Competency Guidelines and worked with various partners including HCWG Technical Team, Abu Dhabi Human Resources Authority and Department of Community Development to advance the inclusion of specific ECD competencies in relevant job descriptions.



NOW EXPLORING

MARS

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03 Strengthen the ECD research ecosystem and outcomes



1. Workshop for Emirati Fathers

Hosted a workshop 5 Emirati fathers of children aged 4-6, delivered by Research Grantee Prof. Kay Gallagher and colleagues, focused on the importance of shared reading and the impact that fathers can have on their children's development. A number of fathers from Abu Dhabi are currently participating in a study focused on developing shared reading behaviours and how these can impact the wellbeing of fathers and their children.

2. Institutional Review Board

Delivered a presentation to the Minister of State for Public Education and Advanced Technology during the World Government Summit on the Institutional Review Board (IRB) project, which aims to create a unified and comprehensive IRB body for humanities and social sciences research studies at the federal level. The humanities and social sciences IRB body is intended to provide oversight and protect the welfare and rights of human participants in accordance with all applicable regulations in order to facilitate research and strengthen the research ecosystem. ECA's Abu Dhabi Institutional Review Board project will now be expanded to the federal level.

3. ECD Research Awareness Campaign

Completed the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Research Awareness Campaign, which aimed to increase support for and engagement in ECD research throughout the Emirate, including community activations in City Mall, Al Dhafra Hospital, Hili Mall, Yas Mall and Bawadi Mall. The awareness campaign culminated in a dedicated Research Retreat and Government Roundtable events.

4. Research Grants 2022

Concluded three research projects, including one on absenteeism, one on Children of Determination and the healthcare system, and one on the early education workforce.

5. AD PRAMS

Launched the Abu Dhabi Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (AD PRAMS) pilot in July with 4 participating hospitals across Abu Dhabi Emirate, achieving survey participation rates of over 70%. The information gathered will contribute to a better understanding of Abu Dhabi's maternal and infant wellbeing landscape, and inform potential interventions to lower infant mortality and maternal morbidity, and improve the wellbeing of mothers and their children.

04 Drive excellence & innovation in ECD



1. Childhood Insights Lab

The first lab across the region dedicated to collecting, analyzing and processing multi-sectoral children's data, to be transformed into refined data narratives to inform decision and policy makers to make effective, evidence-based decisions promoting early childhood development.

2. Child Signals System (CSS) Program

ECA commenced the first cross sectoral child risk assessment and proactive intervention project in the UAE.

3. CIS Physical Experience Project

Completed an interactive analog artefact with an innovative design that demonstrates the power of cross-sectoral child data collaboration by offering a unique journey into the intricate world of data that seeks to inspire further collaboration.

4. GenAI Knowledge Assistant Project

Delivered the first phase of the OpenAI-powered knowledge assistant, which allows users to interact with a selection of ECA's data assets through a conversational interface.

5. 2nd Abu Dhabi Child Data Symposium 2023

Successfully organized the second Abu Dhabi Child Data Symposium 2023, bringing together 80+ participants from 28 government entities and facilitating the establishment of a number of new international partnerships.

6. Anjal Z Cohort 04

Launched the call for applications for Cohort 04 of the Anjal Z Techstars Founder Catalyst Program which has closed with 358 applications. Completed the Cohort 04 interview process for startup selection in collaboration with Abu Dhabi Investment Office (ADIO), Hub71, and Techstars. Six startups were selected and the Anjal Z Cohort 04 Virtual Program kicked off on 6 November 2023.

7. Demo Day

Hosted Demo Day including six Cohort 03 startup pitches, keynotes from renowned thought leaders and networking opportunities with startups, mentors, investors and other key stakeholders across the UAE startup ecosystem. Five Cohort 03 startups have already registered tech licenses in Abu Dhabi and launched pilots.

8. Abu Dhabi Youth Challenge

Hosted the Abu Dhabi Youth Challenge (ADYC) that enabled approximately 55 participants to develop Early Childhood Development (ECD) innovation ideas over a period of three days where the top three teams were awarded cash prizes. 12 ADYC participants secured internships and two secured full-time employment positions with Anjal Z startups. Maya Box, a startup formed from scratch at the third edition of ADYC, was admitted into a startup program in Indonesia to continue developing its idea.

9. International Outreach

Led a panel session at TechCrunch Disrupt in San Francisco on the topic of Strategic Partnerships: Unlocking Growth Opportunities for Startups, and exhibited at GITEX's Expand North Star, showcasing startups from across the Anjal Z cohorts.

10. International Awards

Awarded the Startup - Government Award at the Middle East Technology Excellence Awards, and the Future of Work - Innovation in Workforce Development Program at the Go Global Awards 2023, organized by the International Trade Union and sponsored by the Government of Rhode Island, USA.

11. Future Literacy Labs

Conducted two Future Literacy labs in Abu Dhabi, focused on the Future of Parenting and Future of Learning, where participants examined the dynamics of both anticipated and desired future scenarios. The Labs ended with an ideation session to build initiatives around these Futures and the outcomes and insights were presented at the World Future Studies Federation Conference 2023 in Paris.

05 Enhance public engagement and partnerships in the ECD ecosystem



1. Takween

Collaborated with Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism (DCT) to conduct a series of workshops intended to enhance the development of artistic skills among Children of Determination, such as drawing, colouring, shaping, design, and other activities that stimulate motor and visual skills, and to highlight the importance of recycling and sustainability through artistic activities. 85 workshops were conducted in January with 2,073 participants, 142 activities and workshops were conducted during Reading Month with 4,282 participants, 68 workshops were conducted during Summer Break for 1,578 participants, and a Fun Run event was delivered for more than 712 participants in Abu Dhabi, 441 in Al Ain and 377 in Al Dhafra.

2. ECA Chapter

Successfully launched "ECA Chapters" as a platform for communicating with the public and other stakeholders about the work of ECA and sharing stories related to the development of the early childhood ecosystem.

3. Healthy Heroes

Completed the first year of the Healthy Lifestyle program with 2500+ students aged 4-8 participating in health and nutrition classes delivered in partnership with City Football School, with four Healthy Heroes winning a trip to attend a Manchester City game.

4. Expert Panel

Continued to support the work of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Expert Panel, including supervising the process for requests to collaborate with external or internal experts; managing nominations, communications, and financial and legal documentation to ensure the panel's work cycle continues with minimal disruptions; and supervising committee meetings and providing consistent updates on the expert panel's progress.



Create a robust ecosystem to promote accountability and continuous quality improvement



5. Leaders of Impact

Planned and managed the delivery of two meetings of the Leaders for Impact in Early Childhood Development (ECD), which was established with the intention of ensuring the efficient implementation of the Abu Dhabi Strategy for Early Childhood Development 2035 and the inclusion of key stakeholders in the ECD sector's decision-making process. The meetings addressed a wide range of topics, including Department of Health ECD programs, People of Determination strategies, and ECD policies, and have influenced ECD's priorities and strategy.

6. Voice of the Child

Conducted and reported on 4 quarterly sessions and engagement sessions for the Voice of the Child initiative, and hosted a closing ceremony for the latest two-year cycle of the Voice of the Child panel combined with the ECD Experts Panel.

7. Time Well Spent

Conducted the Time Well Spent initiative over four weekends in June with a newly-developed kit, reaching 11 cafes, 80 families, and 200+ children, the majority of which reported that the experience was engaging. The initiative was expanded this year through a collaboration with Dalma Mall, which included the creation of an engaging wall activation around the theme of Healthy Use of Technology that was stationed in the heart of the mall for 2 weeks.

8. ECD Fair

Concluded the first edition of the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Development Fair, which was attended by more than 17,000 visitors including groups from many schools and nurseries. The Fair featured 50 pavilions and 68 events. 25,000 early childhood development guides were shared with families, providing practical information on child development, care and protection. 10,000 discount vouchers for outside-of-school programs and activities, worth approximately AED 500,000, were distributed to children and families. The Fair was delivered with the generous support and assistance of volunteers from Emirates Foundation's Takatof program, Abu Dhabi Police, ECA Academy, and Zayed University.

9. WED 2.0 Themes

Developed and secured approval for the following three themes for the second edition of WED - Culture and Identity, Intentional Parenting, and Sustainable and Family Cities - in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

10. WED 2.0 Engagement

Engaged children aged six to eight in a series of workshops employing design thinking principles to gather insights crucial for WED. Over 55 children participated at schools in Abu Dhabi, Al Falah, and Al Dhafra, showcasing their imagination and problem-solving abilities to address present and future real-world challenges. The insights gathered from these workshops will be utilized and integrated into the BWG Innovation Lab starting in January 2024.

11. WED 2.0 Launch

Launched the second edition of WED at the Youth Hub in the Green Zone at COP28, leveraging this global gathering as a crucial moment and platform to raise awareness about early childhood issues, and emphasising the potential role that WED can play as a means to advance and implement local, regional and international commitments.

12. BVLV Visit

Supported the BVLV Study Tour that took place in Abu Dhabi between May 29 to 31, providing the visiting Jordanian Delegation with the opportunity to engage with various ECA functions, including its management and leadership team. Meetings were also facilitated with UAE Ministry of Education, DCD, and FCA, and the visit is expected to foster opportunities for collaboration between the two countries related to the early childhood development sector.

06 Make Abu Dhabi a family friendly Emirate



1. Urban Planning

- Developed 3 concept designs for urban interventions in different locations in Abu Dhabi Emirate, including advancing one tactical intervention in Al Falah that is designed and ready for implementation.
- Reviewed DMT public realm-related manuals, guidelines and policies; developed urban guidelines and policy recommendations based on strategic public data collected from 23 representative sites in the public realms of Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Dhafra; and selected 5 strategic sites following data collection and analysis to identify different typologies that can inform a further scaling process.

2. COP28

Early Childhood Development embedded into the climate conversation and integrated to COP28's formal agenda by full presence of ECA during the whole COP28, receiving visitors and high-delegations at the ECA Booth at ErthZayed and hosting 13 insightful sessions in collaboration with several ECAs global partners, with 47 leading international and local experts, focusing on the impact of climate change on children in order to more deeply integrate the importance of early childhood into the global climate conversation.



MOON

GOAL

Ensure children, parents, and caregivers have access to appropriate services to support optimal child development |||||



01

Enhance support for parents and primary caregivers

02

Strengthen the child protection system from prevention to rehabilitation

03

Nurture positive cultural identity and social cohesion

Ensure children, parents, and caregivers have access to appropriate services to support optimal child development

01 Enhance support for parents and primary caregivers



1. Parent-Friendly Label

- Launched Cycle 2 of the Parent-Friendly Label (PFL) program and attracted 75 completed applications from 23 industries resulting in 12 organizations earning the Label, including for the first time, two organizations earning PFL+. Also completed 6 check-in meetings with Cycle 1 Label earners.
- Invited 180+ organizations to apply to earn the PFL including through a high-level roadshow, and delivered 35+ one-on-one support sessions and 6 awareness webinars to potential applicants.
- Collaborated with Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratization to spread program awareness and invite private sector organizations to apply for the label. In addition, we cooperated with Chambers of Commerce and Executive Offices of each emirate including hosting a webinar with Dubai Chamber where 100+ organizations attended.
- Promoted PFL through several platforms, including Grow in Abu Dhabi Seminar, organized by the Abu Dhabi Residents Office, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council of Dubai Holding, as well as at the People Development Summit in Dubai, and further promoted the initiative through The National's Business Extra Podcast and Entrepreneur magazine.
- Launched the Future of Work digital campaign (public) and the #WorkingParentLife digital campaign for ECA employees.
- UNICEF Gulf conducted a review of the PFL criteria and provided a statement of support for the program, which has also garnered the support of Department of Community Development (DCD) and Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization (MoHRE).

2. Moonshot

- Developed a high-level definition for quality time and the child development journey, identified high-level segmentation of various groups and communities within Abu Dhabi, gathered insights into the diverse issues and underlying root causes contributing to parents spending less time with their children, identified future macro shifts impacting family time, and developed potential areas of opportunity.
- Conducted comprehensive secondary research to gain insights into parenting best practices and global parenting programs, while also identifying pain points within the parent program journey. Expert interviews were also conducted with developmental psychologists and parent program experts, and key design principles were established for the development of innovative parenting programs.

3. Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting

Delivered Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting (PDEP) to 230+ parents with 71 national-level facilitators, 53 of which were trained this year. Additionally, five qualified country trainers are in place to train more facilitators, thereby enhancing the program's sustainability.

4. Bedayat

Bedayat program was successfully delivered to 2 cohorts of parents and their children in 2023, thus making the number of participants 40 parents and 92 children in total. Bedayat platform (<https://bedayat.abudhabi/>) has also gone live, enhancing the recruitment process, and the evaluation of the cohorts conducted to date shows positive improvements for both children and parents.

5. Abu Dhabi Parenting Program

Launched the Abu Dhabi Parenting Program pilot, which is initially being delivered to 90+ mothers, and which aims to provide parents with practical information regarding the five key aspects of child development.

6. "Where To Go?" Map

Launched the "Where to Go?" map on the ECA portal showcasing early childhood offerings beyond schools and nurseries, and providing parents with a dedicated platform to identify diverse offerings and experiences to enjoy with their children. The map showcases approximately 270 offerings including camps, libraries, parks and playgrounds, afterschool programs, museums and gyms.

7. Breastfeeding support program

Analyzed survey and focus group data from more than 100 mothers and 25 healthcare professionals to derive and prioritize key challenges impeding breastfeeding practices in Abu Dhabi. Currently designing a suite of solutions that address these challenges, including adapting international benchmarks to the local context.

8. Parents' Platform

Developed the ECA Parents' Platform content map for phased development and onboarded a strategic partner to license foundational content to be published on the platform.

9. Financial Literacy Program for Children Aged 3 to 5

Co-developing a Financial Literacy Program for Children Aged 3 to 5 in collaboration with Aflatoun International, an NGO focusing on social and financial education. At the time of writing, the program is in the final stages of design and adaptation, and its pilot is planned to be launched in the second half of 2024. A pilot partner has also been identified to roll out the program in schools and nurseries.

10. Universal Developmental Surveillance and Screening

Together with three partner hospitals in Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and Al Dhafra, the ECA has launched a Universal Developmental Surveillance and Screening pilot for children aged 0-3. Between May 2023 and December 2023, case workers completed more than 3,000 developmental checklists on a custom-built technology platform. Over 400 children have been identified with potential developmental concerns and were referred for further assessment and potential early intervention to ensure the best possible start in life.

11. Communication Guidelines for Healthcare Professionals

The ECA has developed Communication Guidelines that will serve as a resource for healthcare professionals entrusted with the task of delivering difficult news to parents of young children. Intended as a roadmap for effective communication, these guidelines are informed by best practices and are drawn from the collective input of experts in the field. The guidelines are planned to be distributed to all healthcare professionals involved in the early detection, diagnosis and treatment of Children of Determination in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi in the year 2024.

12. Early Childhood Intervention Outcomes Framework

The ECA has developed an outcomes framework which includes 10 KPIs designed specifically to monitor and evaluate outcomes for the Early Childhood Intervention system in Abu Dhabi.



NOW EXPLORING

MOON

Ensure children, parents, and caregivers have access to appropriate services to support optimal child development



02 Strengthen the child protection system from prevention to rehabilitation



1. Abu Dhabi Child Protection Policy (Dama Al-Aman)

Developed the Abu Dhabi Child Protection Policy (Dama Al-Aman) in collaboration with key child protection stakeholders. Dama Al-Aman child protection policy was subsequently approved and adopted by the Abu Dhabi Government, providing an integrated framework for the protection of children in the Emirate, and outlining the roles and responsibilities of all the relevant entities in the social, education, health, and judicial/ law enforcement sector.

2. Regional GCC Child Protection Conference

Hosted the Regional GCC Child Protection Conference in partnership with UNICEF and the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood on September 6th and 7th 2023, which brought together 150+ representatives from all GCC countries to share learnings and experiences in child protection.

3. Mental Health Support

Commenced the delivery of the 2nd series of mental health webinars for practitioners in partnership with Georgetown University, developed a draft mental health guide for children to be shared with the mental health taskforce, and created an activity guide featuring 120+ classroom activities for teachers.

4. Dama Al-Aman in Schools and Nurseries

Finalized the student protection policy and maltreatment guide for educational institutions in partnership with Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK), Ministry of Education (MoE), and Emirates Schools Establishment (ESE), and completed the development of training modules tailored to school trainers, leadership staff, teachers and non-teaching staff. The course provides approximately 15 hours of training uses a blended model between e-learning and in-person training, with trainings expected to begin in late-2023/early-2024.

5. Child Center

Obtained endorsement from ADEO to launch the Child Center in Abu Dhabi in early 2024, which will be operated by the FCA with ECA support; secured a location for the Center and completed the layout design; designed the organization's structure and developed its standard operating procedures; and initiated the development of its brand and a dedicated capacity building course.

6. CPIMS and Safety Concern Portal

Completed the development of the Child Protection Information Management System in partnership with UNICEF for the case management of child maltreatment cases, and developed a dedicated Safety Concern Portal for mandated reporters to report concerns of child maltreatment consistently on a digital platform.

7. Child Protection Response in Health

Completed the Child Protection Response in Health policy, outlining the reporting measures for concerns of child maltreatment that arise in healthcare facilities, and initiated the development of a dedicated maltreatment guide for healthcare institutions

8. UNICEF Report on Abu Dhabi Child Protection System

Launched a UNICEF Case Study Review of the Child Protection System in Abu Dhabi on 20 November 2023, which is available online, and hosted a webinar to launch the study and present its main findings.

03 Nurture positive cultural identity and social cohesion



1. Establishment of the National Academy

The National Academy for Childhood Development was established by a law issued by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates. The National Academy for Childhood Development will be headquartered in Abu Dhabi and is affiliated with the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority.

2. Vocational Diploma Program

Designed a Level 5 vocational diploma program comprising 20 modules over an 18-month duration, which has received accreditation from the National Qualification Center (NQC).

3. Student Recruitment and Admission

Conducted an assessment process for approximately 4,500 applicants, including group assessments, psychometric tests, and language tests, and successfully enrolled 83 students in the program.



Thanks

We are honoured to partner with many fantastic organisations in pursuit of our goals. Warm thanks to:

