

Improving education by starting early



Study after study have shown that the first five years of a child's life can impact, even determine, their future success. Together with communities in Afghanistan as well as Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza, World Vision is working to help families and governments maximise this window of learning opportunity.

WHY EDUCATION



More than **200 million** children worldwide will not develop to reach their full capacity. As a result, their countries will experience an estimated **20 per cent** loss in adult productivity. ((UNICEF Why Early Childhood Development, 2013)



The Rand study found that Early Childhood Development interventions generate between **\$1.80 and \$17.07** return on investment for every dollar spent on programming.



There is an almost total absence of preschool educational opportunities for Afghan children. **Less than 5 per cent of households** have learning materials at home. (World Vision Afghanistan strategy FY 15-17)



Less than **1 per cent** of children between 3 and 6 attend some form of early childhood education programme in Afghanistan. (UNICEF, 2014)



Only **38.1 per cent** of children in Palestine were enrolled in Kindergarten during the 2010-2011 school year: (Annual Report, 2011-2012, Ministry of Education, Directorate General of Planning, Palestinian Authority)



Early childhood development programs provide environmental influences, which gradually interact with the developing abilities and disposition of young children to help develop social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and creative aspects of their personalities. Mahboba, 6, participates in one of the Early Childhood Development programmes made possible by World Vision's work in Afghanistan. She hopes to be a teacher in the future. Photo by Narges Ghafary, World Vision.

WHAT WE DO

World Vision is working to increase the number of children who have access to early childhood development activities.

IN AFGHANISTAN:

- **School-readiness programme.** The programme, implemented in the two western provinces of Afghanistan aims to enhance the skills and nurture the holistic development of children between the ages of 5 and 6. Families are also educated as mothers attend parenting sessions while their children participate in stimulating activities.
- **Advocacy.** In Ghor province, World Vision has provided advocacy training for representatives from district and city departments of labour, education, women's affairs, public health representatives, primary school principals and teachers.

IN JERUSALEM, WEST BANK AND GAZA:

- **Improving educational environments.** World Vision is partnering with schools and communities to make kindergartens child-friendly environments and equipping them with resources that allow children to learn through play.
- **Building capacity.** Through various trainings, we are increasing the skills of kindergarten teachers.
- **Raising awareness.** Through various platforms, World Vision is raising awareness of local communities, parents and kindergarten teachers about the important role that early childhood development plays in the development of children. These aim to increase the engagement of parents and communities in the education of their children.

Children enjoy writing and drawing pictures at a kindergarten supported by World Vision. Photo by World Vision staff.



AFGHANISTAN: MAKING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT A PRIORITY AND A REALITY

Few children in Afghanistan have educational toys or participate in stimulating activities at home before they enter kindergarten at age 7.

Because experts agree that the first few years of life are a key time for learning, World Vision in Afghanistan has worked with communities to establish kindergartens for children between the ages of 4 and 6.

The kindergarten sessions significantly contributed to improving the development of preschool children in targeted areas such as: better school results, increased coordination and improved social skills. Staff also found children to be more self-confident when compared to children who did not attend kindergarten sessions.

These sessions also provide a valuable opportunity for their mothers to socialize as well as receive additional training and information as well on topics such as the importance of vaccination and why they should give birth in a health centre instead of the home.

JERUSALEM, WEST BANK AND GAZA: INCREASING THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO RECEIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

In 2011, only 38.1 per cent of children in Palestine were enrolled in kindergarten.

Because World Vision acknowledges the importance of education and stimulation for young children, the organisation has partnered with local communities and the government to establish or retrofit 80 kindergartens and train 238 kindergarten teachers in the areas where we work, improving the educational environment of roughly 8,000 children each year and increasing their chances for future success because of their access to education today.

In addition to providing structures and encouraging parents to bring their children to the learning centres, World Vision has also conducted extensive awareness-raising activities to raise the amount of interest and lower the hurdles for children to allow their children to participate in such programmes.

Since World Vision began its efforts thousands of children have been able to attend early childhood development programmes. As a result, children are better prepared for school proving that investing in education today is a long term investment in a country's future for tomorrow.



Students of one of the early childhood education centres play a game together. Photo by Narges Ghafary, World Vision.

For many children, their time at the centre is their favourite part of the day.

"I don't have toys at home," says Roya, a 5-year-old girl. "I come here with mom and play with toys," she adds, joyful.

World Vision Middle East, Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia Regional Office

e-mail: contact_MEERO@wvi.org

62 Perikleous Street, 2021, Strovolos, Nicosia Cyprus

Office: +357-22-870277 Fax: +357-22-870204

World Vision MEERO  [WVMEERO](https://twitter.com/WVMEERO)  [youtube.com/wvmeero](https://www.youtube.com/wvmeero)
wvi.org/meero