



NEPAL

**THE POWER OF THE PARENT-CHILD-TEACHER TRIO
FOR A BETTER HOLISTIC EDUCATION**

NEPAL

WHO WE ARE ?

Planète Enfants & Développement (PE&D) has been working since 1984 to protect, educate, and integrate the most vulnerable children. It empowers families, educators, local associations and public authorities to provide children with a protective, non-violent, stable and stimulating environment. This is in fact an essential condition for their development and well-being, which begins in early childhood, a critical period for a child's growth and development that shapes the rest of their life.

In August of 2020, the AFD (Agence Française de Développement) co-financed a multi-country program agreement entitled "Investing in Early Childhood", which notably includes projects such as the establishment of nurseries, provision of professional training, improvement of preschool conditions, creation of play areas and more. The first three year phase concluded in July 2023, allowing for deeper understanding of the main takeaways for certain activities.

IN NEPAL

PE&D, present in Nepal since 1992, has developed a methodology to enhance holistic education of children. This includes training and coaching for preschool teachers and group sessions for parents, conducted in the presence of teachers in the classrooms, to provide them with key messages and support in their parenting journey.

These activities were implemented in partnership with two local organizations: Child Nepal in Tokha and Buddhaniilkantha Municipalities, Kathmandu and PRAYAS Nepal in Gajuri Rural Municipality, Dhading.

Population: 30 million

Capital: Kathmandu

Official language: Nepalese

Life expectancy : 68 years*

Pre-school gross enrolment rate: 94%*

*World Bank

WHY ?

● INVESTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "early childhood development (from pregnancy to 8 years old) is crucial for upholding every child's right to survive and thrive [...] The period from pregnancy to the age of the 3 is the most critical as the brain develops more rapidly than at any other period. 80% of a baby's brain is formed during this age. For healthy brain development during these years, children need a safe, secure and nurturing environment, along with proper nutrition and stimulation from their parents or caregivers. It is a window of opportunity to lay the foundation for lifelong health and well being, which also has an impact on the next generation." ¹

“The first 3000 days (from conception to 7 years old) are a period when learning is most intense and effective, almost effortless

Agnès Florin

Agnès Florin, Professor Emeritus of Child Psychology and Education at Nantes University²

Agnès Florin highlights, "the importance of stimulating [the child], meeting their needs, whatever they may be, surrounding the child with love and support during the critical period [...]". "Providing the child with regular opportunities to be active, solve problems with the help of an adult if needed, and have positive interactions with their surroundings allows them to become truly independent, responsible, and aware of their actions [...] Engaging in object manipulation, play, walks, reading, music, sharing ideas and emotions, and eliciting laughter nourishes the child's brain and contributes to healthy physical and mental growth."

● INVESTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD IN NEPAL

In Nepal, many parents are unaware of the importance of early childhood education and development. They may exhibit inappropriate behaviors in terms of violence, child learning, nutrition and more.

In Dhading, in the rural municipality of Gajuri, families mostly belong to the ethnic and indigenous communities such as Tamang, Magar, Chepang or Dalit (so called untouchable groups).

Accessing education is difficult (with some students walking for several hours in mountainous terrain to reach a school). Despite the high enrolment rate in ECD classes (88% in 2018) the actual attendance rate is very low (55%). Parents³ have little or no involvement at all and schools lack sufficient quality resources. The teachers, who lack specific academic training, also lack consideration. Preschool education is not a priority for local and national authorities, according to various stakeholders. "The municipalities prefer to prioritize road construction." Furthermore in the educational sector, more resources go to secondary education.

3. convention-programme, PE&D 2020 "INVESTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT"

1. <https://www.who.int/fr/publications-detail/9789241514064>

2. <https://www.cerveauetpsycho.fr/sd/developpement-enfant/cerveau-psycho-n143-23634.php>

WHAT & WHEN ?

FOR WHO ?

Between 2021 and 2023, PE&D and its partners intervened in targeted public preschools in order to train and coach the teachers and conduct parenting sessions for the parents of enrolled children.



PE&D worked with all public preschools in three municipalities, one rural in Gajuri: Dhading, and two urban municipalities in Kathmandu: Budhanilkantha and Tokha.

These activities involved:

- 63 public preschools in the 3 municipalities
- 99 teachers and administrators persons
- 2108 parents
- 5020 children

HOW ?

TRAINING OF TEACHERS

Our two local partners called in Seto Gurans⁴, a local consultant specializing in the area of early childhood, to develop a methodology for training teachers.

On average, all of the educational teams participated in 17-day training sessions centered around the preparation of educational materials, teaching methodologies, how to manage a space, the importance of early childhood development, the holistic development of young children, psychosocial counseling, how to use local resources and more.

PE&D and the municipalities provided schools with equipment and pedagogical materials to offer the best learning environment.

POST-TRAINING COACHING

It quickly became apparent that training alone was not sufficient to improve teachers' pedagogical practices and change the facilitation techniques. PE&D and its partners then enhanced their skills through on-site coaching.

The social workers participated in 3 training days with a trainer from PE&D Nepal following an internally developed curriculum : which included the management of classroom space, daily routine, student evaluation, teachers' posture, administration, management, communication between teachers and school administrators, and more.

On average, the social workers visit the different preschools 6 times a year and have created discussion groups with the preschool teachers via Messenger and Whatsapp.

Objectives of these visits:

1. Classroom layout planning
2. Arrangement of children in the classroom
3. Teaching materials
4. Classroom activities
5. Assessment
6. Teacher management

After each observation, the social worker provides 30 minutes of discussion time with the teacher to review the observation, affirm their efforts and share suggestions, as well as to discuss a plan/goal for the teacher to obtain before the next coaching session.

Each visit is documented using an observation grid. Each category is scored from 1 to 3 based on the parameters of the coaching observation. Total scores are calculated, and the progress over the course of the visits is shared with the teacher to motivate their advancement and to enable them to articulate a plan of action for improving their class.

Investing in Early Childhood Development Project (IECD)						
ECD Classroom Observation Checklist						
School :	Location :	Date :			Observation time: I/II/ III/IV	
SN	Checklist	A	B	C	Total	Remarks
1	Size and area of the room					
2	Sunny and air circulation in the room					
3	Classroom decoration					
4	Sitting provision					
5	Playground					
6	Toilet and handwashing facility					
7	Sitting Arrangement					
8	Provision of learning areas					
9	Availability of materials in					

Investing in Early Childhood Development Project (IECD)						
ECD Classroom Observation Checklist						
School :	Location :	I (Date July 12)			II (Date 30 November)	
SN	Checklist	A	B	C	Total	Remarks
1	Size and area of the room					
2	Sunny and air circulation in the room					
3	Classroom decoration					
4	Sitting provision					
Average attendance rate of last month						
Total number of ECD children		M: 13 F: 16 T: 29				
Present number of ECD children		M: 10 F: 14 T: 24	M: 12 F: 15 T: 27	M: 11 F: 14 T: 25	M: 11 F: 15 T: 26	
Tasks /Overall remarks /Impression of S&A. Visit 1 L: date...						
Tasks carried out : give some game ideas and sing a song.						

Observation Check List - Parameters					
SN	Areas	Indicators	A (1)	B (2)	C (3)
2	Sitting Arrangement	Sitting arrangement	There is both facility carpet, cushion and chair	Children sit on carpet	Children can sit on chair / bench only
2	Provision of learning areas	Availability of educational materials	Learning areas with enough materials	Learning areas but with few materials	No learning zones, only few materials
		Composition of educational materials	Enough Educational materials	Basic educational materials	Hardly educational materials
3	Educational materials	Nature of educational materials	Balanced in teaching, learning and playing materials	Many materials but dominated with teaching learning	Not much learning materials
		Nature of educational materials	Mostly prepared by the teacher with local materials	Mix of both purchased and made by teacher	mostly purchased

4. <https://www.setoguransncds.org.np/content/who-we-are>

PARENTING SESSIONS

Along with capacity-building for teachers, parenting sessions were also offered to parents of children in the preschool classes, whom it had previously been difficult to engage with.

The teachers participated in all of the parenting sessions in order to strengthen the parent-teacher relationship and consequently the parent-school relationship.

Parents from the 63 elementary schools were invited to parenting sessions, in their respective facilities. Priority has been given to the families with the most difficulties noticed by the school (children with a lack of hygiene, lack of care, high absenteeism rates.) PE&D developed a five session curriculum in order to engage different important aspects of early childhood. **This included :**

- ① An introductory session: Program and objectives presentation, schedule, and location. Project stakeholders (representatives from the local government and parent groups) were also invited to participate in this session which took the form of a formal ceremony. At the end of the session the parents were invited to unanimously elect a representative.
- ② Early childhood development and the role of parents
- ③ Nutrition, health, and hygiene
- ④ Learning through play (Child-centered learning in the local context)
- ⑤ Positive Parenting

During the second year, we noted that the focus on the parent-school link was the strongest and most innovative point within the session as subjects like nutrition were already being addressed by other local non-profits.

Therefore in 2022, we adapted the sessions to better meet the needs and suggestions of the parents.

The new curriculum came up as following: :

1. Parent involvement in their children's school
2. Early childhood development at the heart of the family
3. Civil registration and protection of children
4. Governance and accountability in schools
5. Strengthening parental networks
6. The role of parents in school safety and environmental cleanliness

In addition to the content covered, the format of these sessions was designed to elicit lively and participatory interactions between the parents and the team : The social workers do not position themselves as "experts" or as "teachers" but as facilitators that encouraging exchanges between parents. As parents were the heart of the discussions and games, interactive activities were prioritized to facilitate exchanges and learning through shared experience.

Finally, in some schools, the children were looked after by other staff members so that the teachers could give quality time to parents received in the classrooms.

MOTIVATING FAMILIES

At each meeting, a snack was provided to parents.

● IMPACTS

IMPROVEMENT IN TEACHERS' PRACTICES AND MOTIVATION

The coaching for teachers and the parenting support sessions have reinforced the parent-teacher relationship. The pedagogical team has planned initiatives to continue strengthening this connection, including festive get-togethers and fun activities. (color festivals for ex)

"The teachers took the time to decorate their classrooms with recycled materials, using their imagination and creativity. Some of them even added rugs or carpets to make it more comfortable, and salvaged tables and chairs for the children's comfort."

MORE CHILDREN IN THE CLASSES

The improvement of teachers' educational practices along with the decoration of the classrooms with plenty of toys and games has made the preschool more attractive for the children. Little by little, they have started asking their parents by themselves to go to school every day. The activities with the parents have created trusting relationships with the teachers and have helped parents to understand the importance of school for their children.

There are more children at the school, and they attend more regularly than before. Parent-teacher encounters happen more often.

In Kathmandu, the number of children in school rose from 461 to 1,290 between the start of the project and December 2022; in Dhading, enrolment rose from 816 to 784 over the same period. Indeed, in Kathmandu, we see the number of children increasing due to various reasons: migration, people are suffering economically so children are put back into government schools instead of more expensive private schools. In Dhading, the number of children is decreasing due to migration, less children per family and road construction which means that families have more access to private schools.

On the other hand, the average attendance rate rose from 57 to 65%.⁵

The improvement in quality of services offered by the school and the strengthened link with the teaching teams have increased demand, translating into a higher rate of attendance from students.

CHANGE IN BEHAVIOR FROM PARENTS

Activities with parents have created bonds of trust with teachers and helped parents to understand the importance of school for their children; relationships between teachers and parents are more frequent.

79%
OF PARENTS
LEARNED AT
LEAST

70%⁶
OF THE
MESSAGES
SHARED

• HEALTH, CARE, AND HYGIENE

Children come to school better groomed. The parents became more aware of the importance of hygiene and care of their children.

“

“After these sessions, the parents started to take care of their children's health and hygiene. They started to send their children with clean clothes, to cut their nails, etc.”

Ms. Sushila Nepal, social worker

“Before, parents would bring junk food to school for their children. They did not attach much importance to the consumption of healthy and organic food. The children themselves only wanted to eat junk food, like instant noodles, chips, cookies, etc. After the parenting sessions, I noticed that the parents paid more and more attention to the need to give their children a healthy diet and to get rid of junk food.”

Indu Shrestha, teacher in Dhading

”

“I also learned about the importance of health and hygiene, physical exercise, nutritious foods and a balanced diet, as well as their importance to my child's overall development.”

Durga Subedi, parent

“Now, I give my children meals I prepared instead of junk food bought somewhere else.”

Ms. Sushila Nepal, social worker

“Before, I used to give my children the same food as me. Now, I plan something diversified with proteins once a week.”

Parent

5. Monitoring & Evaluation from PE&D

6. Impacts: Final evaluation of the Program Agreement 2020-2023 "Investing in Early Childhood" by Archipel & Co.

• VIOLENCE TOWARDS CHILDREN

Almost all of the people interviewed⁷ (parents, teachers) mentioned a significant change in behavior:

WITH THE CHILD

« Now, I don't hit or yell at my children »
« I don't lock my children up anymore »

IN FRONT OF THE CHILD

« I used to fight with my husband often because of financial problems. Now, I don't argue anymore in front of the children. ».

« I also learned techniques for positive reinforcement and that physical punishments aren't good for the socio-emotional development of my child ».

• PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The parenting sessions made it possible to bring the parents into the school and let them feel at ease in the space. Little by little, they became aware of the importance of children arriving at school on time and having breakfast beforehand. They are more present and accompany their children to school, taking their time to chat with the teachers. Some parents now notify the school if their child will be absent.

Social workers testify:

« Before, it was necessary to send official letters to get the parents to come to meetings. Now, they come willingly. »

“ The parents started to accompany their children to school to drop them off and pick them up and to actively participate in parent-teacher meetings.

Furthermore, the parents started to show a positive concern in their children's learning activities and to dedicate time to their children at home.”

“Before, they were not used to playing or doing different activities with their children at home. They started to concentrate on playing more with their children and adopting a positive parental attitude with their children at home.”

• STRENGTHENING THE PARENT-CHILD BOND

The parenting sessions had a positive impact on the parent-child relationship, improved communication and trust by strengthening their bonds. Thanks to the sessions, parents learned the importance of positive relationships between parents and children and became more receptive to the needs of their child.

A parent testifies: “I didn't know the importance of positive principles, positive reinforcement, and techniques for managing children's behavior.”

• PEER SUPPORT

The parenting sessions also allowed parents to meet up with each other, share their experiences and learning. They helped the parents to build ties with each other and develop a sense of peer support.

• SHARING WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY

The parents re-explained the content of the sessions by phone with interested family members, who were often facing difficulties.

A parent shares: “My sister has a hyperactive child. She saw the effectiveness of what I told her one time, and since then, she has been asking me about what I have learned every time we call each other.”



- **IMPROVEMENT IN PARENTS' SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

The parenting sessions also allowed parents to improve their knowledge and skills to support the development of their children. Because they better understand their child's needs, they build more confidence in their capabilities to overcome difficulties and to make clear choices.

This confidence leads to the development of a better parent-child relationship, for a better self-awareness, and to stress reduction.

- **MORE GAMES AND FULFILLING ACTIVITIES**

The parents, like the teachers, made recycled toys instead of buying them - especially in the rural areas (Dhading).

They also play learning games with their children (counting, colors, vegetables, etc.) and do more activities like singing or dancing.⁸



"These parenting sessions had a positive impact on me. I learned what positive education and playful learning were."

"I had no idea about responsive parenting and parent-child relationships. I didn't know the importance of positive principles, positive reinforcement, and techniques for managing children's behavior."

"Certain parents also collect local material that they bring to the school that can be used as material for early childhood development."

"As early childhood teachers, we also encourage learning through play more than giving a lot of tasks and following traditional methods of teaching. The parents themselves are aware of this and expect us to give less homework."

"After the sessions, we also noticed that the parents were doing different activities like dance, singing, telling stories, and other ways of passing time with their children."

RESULTS 2022-2023

63
SCHOOLS
STRENGTHENED

5 020
CHILDREN IMPACTED
(CUMULATIVE
ENROLLMENT)

2 108
PARENTS BENEFITTED
FROM PARENTING
SESSIONS



● WHAT LESSONS CAN WE LEARN?

1 By strengthening the quality of the preschool, improving the educational practices of the teaching teams, and involving parents in the education of their children, the rate of attendance notably increased

2 On-site coaching in the long-term is indispensable for success in improving practices. Each teacher will have received, in a year, 8 days of training and 6 days of coaching.

3 The recognition parents gave teachers feeds greater motivation among the teaching staff

● COLLATERAL EFFECTS :

- In Kathmandu, too many children were present in the classes
- A contrast with higher level classes has been observed: the first grade class is not as attractive. The students want to stay in preschool. The siblings come to preschool classes (and classrooms get even more overcrowded)

● RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Improve the upper classes to the same level as the preschool

2 Have a system of specialized preschool teachers or teachers' aids to help in the overcrowded classes

3 Hold small morning/afternoon school groups

4 Advocate to government officials for increased budgets so as to have more classes available

5 Make training for preschool teachers mandatory

6 Make school directors aware of the importance of preschool classes so that they are part of discussions during school management meetings

NOLWENN DESCHARD

EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERT

OF PLANÈTE ENFANTS & DÉVELOPPEMENT

EDITORS: MOHAN DANGAL / DAMODAR ARYAL / VERONIQUE JENN-TREYER

DESIGN: LOUIS PIETERS



WHO WE ARE ?

Planète Enfants & Développement (PE&D) has been working since 1984 to protect, educate and integrate the most vulnerable children.

IN NEPAL

PE&D, which has been present in Nepal since 1992, has created a methodology to improve the holistic education of children: training and coaching for kindergarten teachers and sessions for parents in the classroom.

FOR WHO ?

PE&D worked with all the state nursery schools in three municipalities

WHEN / WHAT ?

Between 2021 and 2023, PE&D and its partners worked in all the public nursery schools in the target municipalities, training and coaching the teachers and running parenting sessions for the parents of the children enrolled.

HOW ?

On average, all the teaching teams took part in 17 days of training. PE&D and the municipalities then provided the schools with equipment and teaching materials to improve learning conditions.

POST-TRAINING COACHING

The social workers attended a 3-day training course with the PE&D Nepal trainer, using a curriculum developed in-house:

Layout of the classroom
Routine for the day
Pupil assessment
The posture of the teacher
Administration, management, communication between teachers and the school principal, etc.

PARENTING SESSIONS

Parenting sessions were offered to parents of children in nursery classes:

Parents from **63 nursery** schools were invited to attend parenting sessions in their establishments.

PE&D developed a curriculum of five sessions to discuss various early childhood issues.

IMPACT

1

IMPROVING PRACTICES AND MOTIVATING TEACHERS

2

MORE CHILDREN IN THE CLASSROOM

3

CHANGES IN PARENTAL BEHAVIOUR

- Health, care and hygiene
- Violence against children
- Parental involvement
- Strengthening the parent-child bond
- Peer support
- Sharing with other family members
- Improved parenting skills and knowledge.
- More fulfilling games/activities

79%
OF PARENTS
HAVE
LEARNED AT
LEAST

70%
MESSAGES

LESSONS LEARNED & CONCLUSION

Improving the quality of nursery schools has increased their attendance rate.

On-site coaching over the long term is essential to the success of improving practices.

The recognition given by parents to teachers has fuelled greater motivation among the latter.

COLLATERAL EFFECTS

IN KATHMANDU, TOO MANY CHILDREN IN THE CLASSES CONTRAST WITH THE UPPER CLASSES: THE CLASS FOR THE EQUIVALENT OF CP IS NOT AS ATTRACTIVE, THE CHILDREN WANT TO STAY IN NURSERY SCHOOL. THE OLDER CHILDREN COME TO THE KINDERGARTEN CLASS (WHICH IS EVEN MORE OVERCROWDED).