



**LEAVING
NO ONE
BEHIND:
INCLUSIVE AND
EQUITABLE EDUCATION**

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ARTICLE 25 A – AN ORPHANED LAW OR AN ACTIONABLE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO EDUCATION?

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Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi

The right to education was declared a fundamental right in 2010 with the insertion of article 25A in the Constitution of Pakistan. This upgraded previous provisions whereby the State was committed “to remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education”[37-(b)]and “provid[e] education to citizens irrespective of gender, caste, creed and race” [38-(d)]. However, these rights remain non-justiciable as they are subject to the availability of resources. Education in Pakistan has always remained a low priority, with only 3% of the GDP allocated to it. April 2020 marks a decade since this act was inserted, but it tragically remains completely neglected. Why is this so?

What are the laws passed for 25A? Why are they dormant? These are important questions for all citizens to ask.

One way to engage with a fundamental right is through a clustered approach, juxtaposing fundamental rights in a manner that a particular right, such as Article 25A, can be upgraded in its scope, strength and urgency for every citizen. It is also vital to understand the laws enacted for 25A in terms of their content and status of implementation given the devolution of education since the 18th amendment to the provinces.

THE LANGUAGE OF 25A IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND:

“ The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 5 to 16 years in such a manner as may be determined by law.”

Here “State” means the Federal Government, Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), a Provincial Government, a Provincial Assembly, and such local or other authorities in Pakistan as are by law empowered to impose any tax. This article serves as an anchor entitlement when combined with Article 25 on “equality of citizens”. A cluster approach to rights becomes a strong argument to claim core entitlements as reflected in all fundamental rights (Articles 9 to 28) in the Constitution.

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) provides

the ammunition for a strong right-to-education accountability campaign by students, teachers, CSOs and others. Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) is a national civil society organization established in 2000 and since then has been agitating for quality education.

ITA’s campaign draws its strength from understanding the legal entitlements provided by the laws passed for 25A in Pakistan. These laws were passed in ICT (2012)¹, Sindh (2013)², Balochistan (2014)³, Punjab (2014)⁴ and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (2017)⁵.



The Legislation, Provision, Gaps

In the laws for 25A, ICT, Sindh and Punjab have elaborate provisions for the evolving needs of children, and have included early childhood education (ECE) for ages 3-5⁶ and in the case of Punjab, even extended above age 16 to skills for adolescents⁷).

However, laws in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) are narrower in scope. In both acts there is limited interpretation of the evolving learning needs of the child. Balochistan places responsibility on the guardians as opposed to the state (Article 3) and has no provision for responsibility on private schools.

The challenges that arise are:

1. In KP’s case, a law made in the 1990s should not have been extended in 2017 when the scope, governance and principles of child protection have changed entirely.
2. Since the merger of FATA into KP, the act needs to be revised to take into account the enlarged and historically complex governance arrangements.
3. For both KP and Balochistan, the acts do not reflect or justice to progressive sector plans and actions in education.

ITA along with its constituencies of youth or Education Youth Ambassadors (EYAs) and teachers has been holding sessions in the provinces on gaps in the laws and lack of implementation.

Key issues identified by youth, teachers and CSOs working on gender and girls’ education

1. Lack of infrastructure
2. Lack of girls’ schools at post-primary levels
3. Political interference
4. Lack of teachers, textbooks
5. Irregular and complex systems for grants disbursements to school SMCs
6. Lack of child protection and low motivation in parents and teachers for education
7. Lack of awareness about 25A

Inaction on the part of the government

A basic requisite for implementation is to have rules of business in place and notified. In Punjab, the rules have not even been notified. Such a gross undermining of a fundamental right by the most populous province is extremely disconcerting.

Public Interest Litigations

As 25A is justiciable, there have been several public interest litigations by individuals and civil society. In some cases, the Supreme Court⁸ has taken notice of non-execution of 25A, asking provinces to take steps for implementation.

The state’s failure to implement 25A after a decade has delayed efforts to fulfil the commitments made by the government to the international community. The time has come for a serious debate on why this article has not been implemented.

¹ Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2012

² The Sindh Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2013; Sindh Free and Compulsory Education Act Rules 2016

³ The Balochistan Compulsory Education Act 2014

⁴ Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014

⁵ The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act 2017

⁶ Articles 9 ICT & Sindh, Article 10 Punjab

⁷ Article 3 Punjab

⁸ <http://jcp.gov.pk/nljcp/home/>

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE & EDUCATION: SETTING THE STAGE FOR LIFETIME GAINS

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Pakistan needs to give priority to early childhood care and education for the most marginalized in order to realize the full potential of its children as a large majority of them have been denied their basic rights, plunging them into poverty and marginalization, with a negative impact on brain development and personality^{1,2}.

According to the World Health Organization, early childhood is the most important developmental phase in a person's lifetime. The first 1,000 days of a child's life, i.e. from conception till the child's second birthday, are very critical. Nutritional deficiencies and cognitive underdevelopment during this period may lead to physical and mental impairment, low academic performance, dropping out, obtaining low-skilled employment, and intergenerational transmission of deficiencies and poverty because of poor childcare in the future. Therefore, preventing or reversing this loss in early childhood is crucial for fostering economic development and to reduce economic disparities. In the words of the famous Nobel Laureate James Heckman (2006), "successful early learning leads to successful later learning- Just as early failure creates later failures". Estimates suggest that for every \$1 spent on early child development (ECD) interventions, the return on investment can be as high as \$13 (Nurturing Care Framework, WHO 2018).

STATISTICS

- Pakistan has 73 million children aged under 14, which is 35% of the total population.³
- Over 12.5 million children are engaged in child labor.⁴
- 24% of the population lives below the national poverty line.⁵
- Under five child mortality rate is 69 (deaths per 1,000 live births) the highest in the region.⁶
- Stunting in children in Pakistan is 40%, the highest in South Asia.⁷

The human brain develops more rapidly between birth and age five, and especially in the first three years. Synaptic development in the first three years takes place at an astonishing speed; there are twice as many synapses in a child's brain compared to that of an adult. Children need an enabling environment where they are able to develop their potential fully. Quality early childhood programmes or programmes for the parents are important for holistic development. Research shows that better care in early childhood improves performance in primary school.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HOW CHILDREN LEARN

Early stimulation sets the stage for how children will learn and interact with others throughout life. A child's experiences, good or bad, influence the wiring of his brain and the connection in his nervous system. Loving interactions with caring adults strongly stimulate a child's brain, causing synapses to grow and existing connections to get stronger. Connections that are used to become permanent. If a child receives little stimulation early on, the synapses will not develop, and the brain will make fewer connections.

The brain eliminates connections that are seldom or never used, which is a normal part of brain development.

Source: University of Maine; Bulletin #4356, Children and Brain Development: What We Know About How Children Learn



According to ASER 2018 report, 63.4% of children between the ages of three and five are not enrolled in primary school, depriving them of the critical opportunity of learning at a formative stage. By not focusing on holistic development of children we are losing human resources that can play an important role in building our economy. We need to broaden our attention from children's survival to their full development by employing comprehensive, integrated approaches that engage all sectors – education, family, social protection, health and nutrition.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) plays a vital role in the accumulation of human capital and in breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Focus on ECCE can also help in achieving the targets of six SDGs that relate to early childhood care and education:

- SDG 2:** End hunger – malnutrition – stunting,
- SDG 3:** Good Health- reduce child mortality rates,
- SDG 4:** Quality education for all – including ECCE,
- SDG 5:** Gender Equality – Eradicate Early and forced marriages,
- SDG 8:** Decent Work and Employment - End child labor,
- SDG 16:** Peace & Social Justice – Eradicate child trafficking, child abuse and violence against children.

The world community has prioritized investment in ECCE to improve children's health and learning outcomes and to advance human development in societies.

In Pakistan, this is still a highly underfunded sector of education. Its effectiveness as a successful way to eliminate poverty and a pathway to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is not fully understood by policy makers.

China has made enormous progress in human development and has lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. The government there believes that a sustainable and harmonious society is possible only if every child is given a bright start.

Pakistan needs a multi-sectoral apex umbrella institution to cater to the early years age bracket. The state unfortunately does not have the capacity or resources to encourage models of public private partnerships and engage youth entrepreneurs to create school readiness centres in rural areas.

This is required so that all children have a chance to realise their full development potential and come out of the poverty trap.

¹ "[E]ducation plays a preponderant role in the development of children...educating is humanizing" De Freitas Bisolli, M. (2014), "Development of Children's Personality: The Role of Early Childhood Education", *Psicologia em Estudo* Vol. 19 no. 4.

² "[E]arly skills development begets further skills later on...and benefits from high quality childcare" Cunha, F. & Heckman, J. (2007), "The Technology of Skills Formation", NBER Working Paper Series 12040

³ Plecher, H. (2020) <https://www.statista.com/statistics/383249/age-structure-in-pakistan/>

⁴ Rodriguez, M. "Child Labor in Pakistan" Borgen Project (2017) <https://borgenproject.org/child-labor-in-pakistan/>

⁵ Asian Development Bank, Pakistan Data <https://www.adb.org/countries/pakistan/poverty>

⁶ World Bank Group (2018), <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.DYN.MORT?locations=PK&display=graph--%3E>

⁷ National Nutrition Survey 2018, UNICEF Pakistan

EDUCATION TOWARDS EMPOWERMENT

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The Constitution of Pakistan under Article 25-A guarantees the universal right to education. However, Pakistan remains among the countries with the lowest literacy rates in the world,¹ having a high school dropout rate and one of the highest number of out-of-school children in the world. According to the latest estimates, about 22.8 million children aged 5-16 are out of school—44% of population in this age group in the country.² The poor, in the absence of affordable quality education, have little choice for standard, safe and relevant education facilities for their children.

Pakistan has also adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as its own development agenda to achieve a better future for all. Yet many challenges exist. The Sustainable Development Goal 4 Gap Analysis done by UNESCO in 2018 identifies severe inequities in access and quality, with substantial disparities by gender, socio-economic status and location. On the supply side, the training and qualifications of teachers are inadequate.³ There is a growing understanding of the severity of the situation. The government has prioritised improving access to and the quality of education. According to a recent Voluntary National Review of Pakistan's Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Pakistan's focus is on improved school monitoring mechanisms, along with targeted interventions for out-of-school children. While the female literacy remains low, rising gross enrolment figures for girls' education—34.18% in 2018 (WB)⁴ compared to under 32% in 2017—give some hope that Pakistan may be on the path to eliminate gender disparities in education.⁵

Realising the need to invest more in education, the government has earmarked Rs. 83.363 billion for Education Affairs and Services in the federal budget for 2020–21, showing a slight increase to 2.5% from 2.3% in 2019–2020.⁶ This steady enhancement of public spending is encouraging, but alongside access and quality, in the rural context, strengthening civil society and



communities, improving governance, accountability, and making education inclusive and gender sensitive is equally important. Studies indicate that community mobilization for involvement of parents and creating local ownership has proved to be crucial for increasing enrolment, reducing drop out of girls, and creating a demand for education.

In the education cycle, early childhood education is an important first step an education interventions in inearly childhood have large returns.⁷ The age group for primary education covers a rapidly developing phase of child development which when appropriately influenced could open up opportunities and reduce intergenerational poverty. Thus, primary education becomes a prerequisite for child development—the growth that goes parallel to welfare of the society and future of the country. Also, studies show that higher levels of learning are associated with additional years of schooling, higher earnings, and improved well-being (WB, 2017).⁸ Hence, to maximize the chances of persistent gains, education systems will have to make early grade quality improvements as children move through the education system (WB 2018).⁹

“ Since 2005, PPAF has established community schools and adopted government schools and made them functional. Around 400 community schools or schools as social enterprise were set up to cater to out-of-school children in areas that had no schools within a radius of 2 km. PPAF provided financial and technical support to over 1,700 public schools.”

While the government has increased its funding in education, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) has catalysed the process of change by empowering communities and garnering support of public and private sector for educational improvement of underserved communities. Since 2005, PPAF has established community schools and adopted government schools and made them functional. Around 400 community schools or schools as social enterprise were set up to cater to out-of-school children in areas that had no schools within a radius of 2 km. PPAF provided financial and technical support to over 1,700 public schools. Over 300,000 children studied in these community and public schools, of which 50% are girl students and almost 50,000 students were previously out-of-school children. The support included training of local human resource as teachers, providing rent for buildings, salaries for teachers, furniture and teaching aids, learning material, and establishing and building capacities of School Management Committees.

Alongside this, PPAF enhanced capacities of over 6,000 community members including school management committees and community resource persons on educational themes, such as school as a social enterprise, right to education and demand articulation from the state and public institutions.

With specialized institutions PPAF has offered opportunities and introduced innovative communication approaches for deaf students to support 4 schools in Sindh. With Family Educational Services Foundation, PPAF produced first ever sign language booklet in Pakistan. PPAF supported Pakistan Foundation Fighting Blindness.

Employing innovative, technology driven and cost-effective solutions, PPAF has established and strengthened community and public schools and engaged local communities and specialized partners while closely coordinating with public stakeholders. PPAF experimented with delivering teacher training services

and direct teaching support remotely in district Harnai and Chitral. A girls' high school in Harnai and 4 primary schools in Chitral were transformed into digital classrooms. The teaching staff was connected with master trainers and experienced tutors in Islamabad. In Multan, Peshawar, and Lahore, PPAF helped establish computer centres within government schools for children with disabilities. As many as 8,000 visually challenged persons benefitted from this initiative under which free computer-based/IT skills trainings were provided to people with disability from underprivileged areas. Funds were also provided for expansion of Audio World Program which provided doorstep facility of recorded textbooks to visually challenged persons.

Third party assessments reflect on the success of the education initiatives. According to the Project Completion¹⁰ Report of PPAF III, the project had contributed to the completion of education of 11,183 students at the primary level, 6,261 at the middle level and 3,447 at the matric level by supporting community schools. Of these children, 55% are girls. Improved education is directly linked with the potential to earn and ultimately contribute to improved livelihoods for the families.

“ Fazal Bibi lives in a remote part of Rehri Goth and belongs to a very poor family. Her community has strict norms about girls' education and most girls get married at an early age. Despite this, Fazal Bibi completed middle school and matriculated with good marks from IRC school. She then completed Intermediate and got admitted in a nursing college where she did a two-year course and then started an internship in the same hospital for two years. Now she is serving in Aga Khan Centre in her own locality. The community benefits from her services.”

¹ 150th out of 188 countries worldwide (2019); <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/pakistan-literacy-campaign-improve-gender-parity-by-zara-kayani-2019-09?barrier=accesspaylog>; 59.13% adult literacy rate (2017); <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/pk>;

² <https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/education>

³ http://unesco.org.pk/education/documents/2018/DRAFT_PK_SDG-4_Gap_Analysis.pdf

⁴ <https://tradingeconomics.com/pakistan/school-enrollment-secondary-female-percent-net-wb-data.html>

⁵ https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/233812019_06_15_VNR_2019_Pakistan_latest_version.pdf

⁶ <https://propakistani.pk/2020/06/12/govt-increases-budget-for-education-affairs-and-services/>

⁷ The World Bank (2020) Returns to early interventions at sufficient scale are high

⁸ The World Bank (2017) The Economic Returns to Interventions that Increase Learning

⁹ The World Bank (2018) Growing or fading? The long-run impacts of educational interventions

¹⁰ Associates in Development, Islamabad, 2016

Three assessment studies¹¹ and the Mid Term Review¹² reports indicate high levels of beneficiary satisfaction, ranging from 70% to 93%, with PPAF supported health and education facilities, such as physical environment, quality of teachers, and child learning. In addition, data shows livelihood opportunities were expanded for 2,000 girls from rural poor households who completed their matriculation through PPAF supported schools as these girls got employed as teachers in the same schools while others opted for professions like nursing, midwifery, lady health visitor and engineering. More than 200 teachers both women and men, from PPAF supported schools in remote areas¹³ who were trained got inducted in the government education system after clearing the otherwise difficult National Testing Service exam. Training of community resource persons (CRPs) helped create a human resource base at the community level to be used for extending health and education services to the community.

The lessons learnt from third party assessments reflect that there is a strong demand for quality education and thus PPAF needs to invest resources in service delivery models for quality education. In pursuit of this, PPAF has experimented with various delivery models over the course of time. Two of the successes that stand out are our adopted government schools in Rehri, Sindh and technical and financial support extended to establish child-friendly community-based schools and scholarship programme for coal miners' children in Kohlu, Balochistan. This article summarizes PPAF's endeavours in providing quality education in these schools in Rehri and Kohlu and highlights how the lives of the children attending these schools changed for better.

EDUCATION FOR IMPROVED LIVELIHOODS: EVIDENCE FROM REHRI

Public schools in the Karachi Rehri fishery colony gave a deserted look. Functional, basic facilities were missing, enrolment was low, school was understaffed, and cases of corporal punishment had been reported. The colony had no secondary schools while seminaries bustled with students, indicating that either parents preferred sending their children there or they did so out of a lack of other options.

This served as the *raison d'être* for supporting education in the area. Consequently, PPAF prepared a 3-year financial plan for nine schools with low enrollment and chose Indus Resource Center (IRC) as partner for implementation.

“ A fisherman's son, **Muhammad Ikram** dreams of getting a quality education in well reputed university like IBA or LUMS. He has made the first step by successfully matriculating from Ibrahim Hyderi School, Karachi. He now earns Rs 15,000 for his family and pays for his three younger brothers' education. He told an IRC representative that he would sacrifice his own dreams so that his younger brothers can achieve theirs. ”



IRC then signed an MoU with the Government of Sindh and designed a community outreach strategy aimed at creating demand for quality education. Activities included:

- 1) Adopting schools and equipping them with school facilities, such as infrastructure improvement, furniture, new teaching staff
- 2) Capacity strengthening of newly hired staff, developing classroom displays and learning material.
- 3) Setting up a special class for out-of-school girls, enrolling them in a fast track learning course and eventually mainstream them after 3 years
- 4) Encouraging the use of technology and introducing non-conventional courses on environment, reproductive health and life skills

“ In 2007, the **Chamalang Tribal Education Committee** launched **Chamalang Education Programme Balochistan** with funds generated through taxes on coal mines in Kohlu and Loralai. Under the programme, **3,000 children of coal miners** were admitted to private schools in Kohlu, Loralai and Quetta. ”

PPAF provided technical backstopping, monitored the project and continued supporting schools through its own funds after World Bank funding culminated in 2016. As a result, between 2010 and 2020, schools metamorphosed from crumbling facilities with 200 children, to schools bustling with 2,000 children who would use laboratories, libraries and activity rooms managed by a qualified team of school-based supervisors. Now over 120 students have completed grade 10, and thus creating possibilities for a brighter future. There was also a transformation in the behavior of parents and children. Not only did the parents willingly send their daughters to school, they also considered them as assets rather than burdens. Students learnt to read and write in their mother tongue and English. Around 60 girls matriculated and entered job markets. Parents also observed positive changes in the behavior of their daughters. Students went on to become teachers, nurses, beauticians, health workers, social workers, and entrepreneurs in the tutoring niche and extended education services in the communities.

“ **Hakim Jat** resides in Baktawar Goth-Rehri Goth. His father is an illiterate fisherman. Hakim completed his middle education from GBLLS Rehri Mian and passed his SSC exam from Ali Brohi Secondary IRC School. He travelled long distances to reach the school, but his father encouraged him as he expected that his son could contribute to his business by getting an education. His father said that people used to deceive him in accounting as he had no education, but his son now supports him in his business. Hakim installed modern machinery in his father's boat which improved their income. Hakim intends to further his education. ”

PPAF Chamalang Education Programme Balochistan: Success in a Conflict-Affected Area

In 2007, the Chamalang Tribal Education Committee launched Chamalang Education Programme Balochistan with funds generated through taxes on coal mines in Kohlu and Loralai. Under the programme, 3,000 children of coal miners were admitted to private schools in Kohlu, Loralai and Quetta.

The Pakistan Army was a major contributor in this project as most of the students were enrolled in army public schools and private schools in other cities.

Due to financial constraints the community sought Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund's help in 2010. PPAF extended its support in the form of scholarships to 3,000 students from 2010 to 2017. Currently, PPAF is supporting 968 students, 292 of them, girls the fee for whom is directly paid to schools.

During a visit to Kohlu and Loralai, I was surprised and moved by the enthusiasm of students and their parents for education. Despite the restrictive cultural norms in Balochistan, parents are willing to send their children to these co-education schools.

Equally, every child is eager and motivated to continue education after grade ten and go to professional schools like University of Engineering and Technology, Taxila and Cadet College, Murree. A group of students told me that they are from distant villages but stay in a house near their school, where they cook and manage chores themselves. Many students, especially women, teach at the same school from where they graduated and now serving the community they hail from and earning livelihoods for themselves.

Scholarships supported by the armed forces and PPAF are not only making quality education accessible, but also contributing to the overall development of the private school system in Kohlu and Loralai. In 1996, Iqra Model School was established, later followed by another branch of the private school, New Iqra Public School. Both schools got initial support from CEPB. They first operated in rented buildings but now have their own purpose-built premises providing services to 1,100 students; 665 students in both schools are supported through CEPB and, of these, 372 by PPAF. Another school, City School, began in 2006 from a mud structure, with support in 2007 from the armed forces and PPAF has now transformed it into a beautiful spacious school building.

The examination results of 2019 were encouraging and validated PPAF's efforts and belief to create a robust quality education system. Fifty-five students appeared in Matric and all of them passed with over 60% marks. Four students secured above 80% and 22 received over

¹¹ Semiotics Consultants (Pvt.) Limited October 2014 Impact Assessment of Sindh Coastal Areas Development (SCAD) Program Final Report, APEX Consulting, 2015 User /

¹² Beneficiary Assessment Survey, Phase-II, APEX Consulting, 2011 User / Beneficiary Assessment Survey PPAF-III Final Report

Izhar Hunzai, Salim Jiwani, Sarwar Rana, 2012, MID Term Review of PPAF III Project

¹³ Tharpakar, Bahawalpur, Ziarat, Panjgur, Kharan, Rehri, Sanghar, Jamshoro, Khairpure, Sakhar



70% marks. It is a matter of pride that students from marginalized areas are achieving huge milestones in their lives with their hard work and the support of PPAF and other stakeholders.

Seemingly a small investment, the scholarship programme has a huge impact on children and parents and the way they think. Government and donor support is needed to scale up this programme across the country.

THE WAY FORWARD FOR EDUCATION

The interventions to improve quality of education in underserved communities of the country should be supported with continued investment. The government's agenda for education outlined four priority areas in the National Education Policy Framework 2018:

- 1) decrease the number of out-of-school children and increase school participation;
- 2) ensure a uniform education system across Pakistan;
- 3) improve quality; and
- 4) enhance access and relevance of skills training.

The single national curriculum holds the promise of being an equalizing force to address the inequalities in our education system. Experts opine that this should also be accompanied by a system of uniform education. A system that offers equal educational facilities in urban as well as rural regions and for boys as well as girls. Well trained teachers, high quality textbooks and internet access, school infrastructure will be the key variables in the equation in order for the uniform curriculum to achieve its goal of eliminating educational apartheid.¹⁴

Many students drop out after completing primary education. The transition rate from primary to secondary for Sindh, Balochistan and the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) is around 70% which is alarming because the survival rate of primary is already low (Sindh 60% Balochistan 40%, Newly Merged Districts 33%).¹⁵ Major reasons for this dropout are non-availability of secondary schools, safe environment, toilets, female teachers and transportation services. These deficiencies should be fulfilled to make students continue education after completing the primary school cycle.

Despite the government's efforts for provision of basic educational facilities, there are as many children out-of-school as there are in the schools. We already know the level of facilities in the existing rural schools. Roughly calculating we need 500,000 classrooms to accommodate the out-of-school children in schools. Considering the limited resources of the government, providing this is a herculean task. Therefore, approaches beyond the conventional brick and mortar programmes are required. Digital literacy programmes will open new avenues for the underserved communities of the country while deploying resources through skill transfers and indigenous human resource development.

The Global Education Monitoring Report 2020 focuses on inclusion in education, drawing attention to all those excluded from education, because of background or ability. This requires directing resources towards assisting special children. The needs of the differently abled children should be catered to. Part of this is collecting data on even hidden disabilities in the community and inquired in a way that does not label or stigmatize the person with disability.

Because of the scholarship programme, the passion for education is so ingrained in children that **Malaika Hafeez**, a 9th class student, wanted to join Central Superior Services and in pursuit of her dreams was willing to study at any university across the country.

After a year, Malaika in Matriculation examination has scored 964 out of 1100—securing the top position among private school students in Loralai. PPAF is humbled to support children like Malaika who belong to deprived rural areas and yet show academic excellence; for it is just the opportunity that needs to be provided to make the talent blossom. //



// Teachers are the pillars of education quality and learning is directly proportional to qualification and knowledge of the teachers and teachers' professional development. //

Studies indicate that there is a direct relationship between girls' education attainment and improvement in infrastructure (provision of furniture, toilets), trained women teachers, transportation, and community-based schools. Providing missing facilities to schools, capacity building of teaching staff, transportation particularly for girls, capacity building and sensitization of communities will improve access to and quality of education in all.

Teachers are the pillars of education quality and learning is directly proportional to qualification and knowledge of the teachers and teachers' professional development. Capacity building of government schoolteachers and local teachers should be done on continuous basis to enhance the quality of teaching as well as achieve a good standard of learning.

Building exit into entry strategy, education programmes should also develop capacities of local youth as teachers and community mobilisers. This will create human resource base within the community, employ and retain local talent within the region and hence provide a sustainable solution to the challenge of availability of trained human resource.

THE WAY FORWARD

1. Commit to providing a uniform education system adhering to quality standards
2. Scale-up digital literacy
3. Provide education for differently abled children
4. Provide merit-based scholarship in underserved areas
5. Build capacity of teachers in government schools and develop capacities of local teachers
6. Develop capacities of community resource persons as teachers and mobilisers
7. Focus on provision of furniture, toilets, trained female teachers, transportation, and community-based schools for enhancing girls' education

¹⁴ Views gathered from various articles: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1572130>; <https://www.dawn.com/news/1569679>; <https://www.dawn.com/news/1574777>

¹⁵ Pakistan Education Statistics 2017-18

SOME, NOT ALL THE ANSWERS:

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The existence of around 22 million out-of-school children (OOSC) in Pakistan has become centre stage in development dialogues. The number of children out-of-school has always been shamefully large but has come under direct focus due to Pakistan's unsatisfactory performance in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly vis-à-vis the provision of universal access to basic education.

Local Education Group (LEG) deliberations were held in 2013 for the formulation of the first ever Sindh Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2014-18. A series of discussions took place on the ways in which OOSC could be brought back to school. The Sindh government had recently promulgated the Free and Compulsory Education Act 2013 to provide education to all children between ages 5 and 16, regardless of sex and ethnicity. Since the



This does not mean that steps have not been taken. The government has tried several reforms including abolishing school fees, distributing free books, providing stipends for girl students and increasing the number of schools. Despite these efforts, there may be some invisible barriers that keep children away from the government's education delivery system.

accumulated backlog of OOSC was already large, the twin challenges were to develop a process that would facilitate the mainstreaming of OOSC while improving existing service delivery so that it could absorb new entrants of school-going age.

It may be noted that a large part of OOSC are those that

MAINSTREAMING OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN SINDH

// Local Education Group deliberations were held in 2013 for the formulation of the first ever Sindh Education Sector Plan 2014-18. A series of discussions took place on the ways in which OOSC could be brought back to school. //

dropped out from schools not only because of poverty and cultural barriers but also supply-side factors like teacher absenteeism, physical and humiliating punishments, school distances, poor quality education, and the lack of basic facilities and girl-friendly environments in mixed schools. LEG recognised that the backlog of OOSC can only be reduced if the retention of students in the formal system improves. This means that there is a need to pay attention to both in-school children and out-of-school children.

While many civil society organisations had some experience of educating OOSCs through accelerated learning pathways or non-formal education (NFE) centres, no organization was successful in mainstreaming such children on a regular basis. No clear policy to provide a second chance to OOSC existed. There was a lack of clarity on certification, equivalence, curricula, course durations, and assessments of centres. Therefore, rather than becoming entry doors to the larger system, NFE centres came to be seen as basic literacy and numeracy centres.

The Local Education Group's Working Group on NFE stressed the need for institutionalising the sub-sector of NFE. Therefore, in the first Sindh Education Sector Plan of 2014-18, one chapter was dedicated to this sub-sector. Soon after the Plan's approval, the policy formulation for NFE was initiated.

The Directorate of Literacy and Non-Formal Education became the focal point, while the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) provided technical and financial support. Consequently, a comprehensive NFE policy is now in place in Sindh. Books and learning materials covering 30 months of learning have been prepared. Master trainers have been trained and training manuals are available. 150 NFE centres have been established to provide access to high quality alternative

education to 4,500 children, including 2,500 females, in Ghotki and Khairpur districts.¹ More districts will be added each year to gradually cover the entire province.

The community response to this option has been overwhelming as non-formal schools are a blessing in the absence of formal schools. Centres are located in schools, homes or community centres. There are women teachers at centres for girls. The centres are making great strides with more community involvement in the form of Village Education Committees (VECs) that mobilise communities to send children, especially girls, to school, and extend monitoring support for continuity of activities.

As part of the non-formal education system, health and hygiene education also takes place in the classroom alongside indoor games. After the completion of each package, the Directorate conducts a thorough assessment.

NFE centres may be seen as a transitional arrangement that is cost-effective, doable, culturally appropriate and scalable. They are a good means to educate OOSC until the formal sector is ready to implement the Right to Education Act in letter and spirit.

However, NFE centres may not be seen as the panacea for all ills of education delivery. They are not an alternative to good schooling as children do not get the same resources that are available in formal schools. However, these centres have multiple long-term benefits besides providing education facilities at the doorstep. The children have broadened their parents' horizons and raised their expectations as seen in increased demand for secondary education, vocational training and other income generation skills. Those now at the completion of their course are rightfully asking, what is next? And at this moment, we do not have the answer.

¹ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1676797/1-jica-unicef-support-non-formal-education-project-sindh/>

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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The United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child defines children's rights to protection, education, health care, shelter, and good nutrition. However, diverse socio-economic and geo-political settings do not allow the majority of school going children to avail this opportunity, especially in developing countries. The case is particularly relevant to Pakistan, where 80 percent population is rural based, battling chronic poverty across generations. The issue is further compounded by unchecked population and associated social taboos leading to snowball effect challenging the national development of the entire country.

In the remote valleys of Gilgit Baltistan, community activation and participatory approaches were introduced by Aga Khan Rural Support Programme. Since then, rural societies have been proactive in every aspect of development, specifically the educational attainment of their children. The rural community, under the purview of School Management Committee, comprises village notables and opinion leaders, including parents and religiously influential people, enthusiastic to give quality education to their children. This arrangement has shown tremendous results in some of the resource poor valleys of Gilgit Baltistan.



School Management Committees are one major component of the Decagonal Approach of MIED's school improvement Model, which sees parents, teachers, students, the community, and the school environment as key factors in determining the educational attainment of a student. Keeping this in view, the role of SMC members has been vital in managing community-based project site schools.

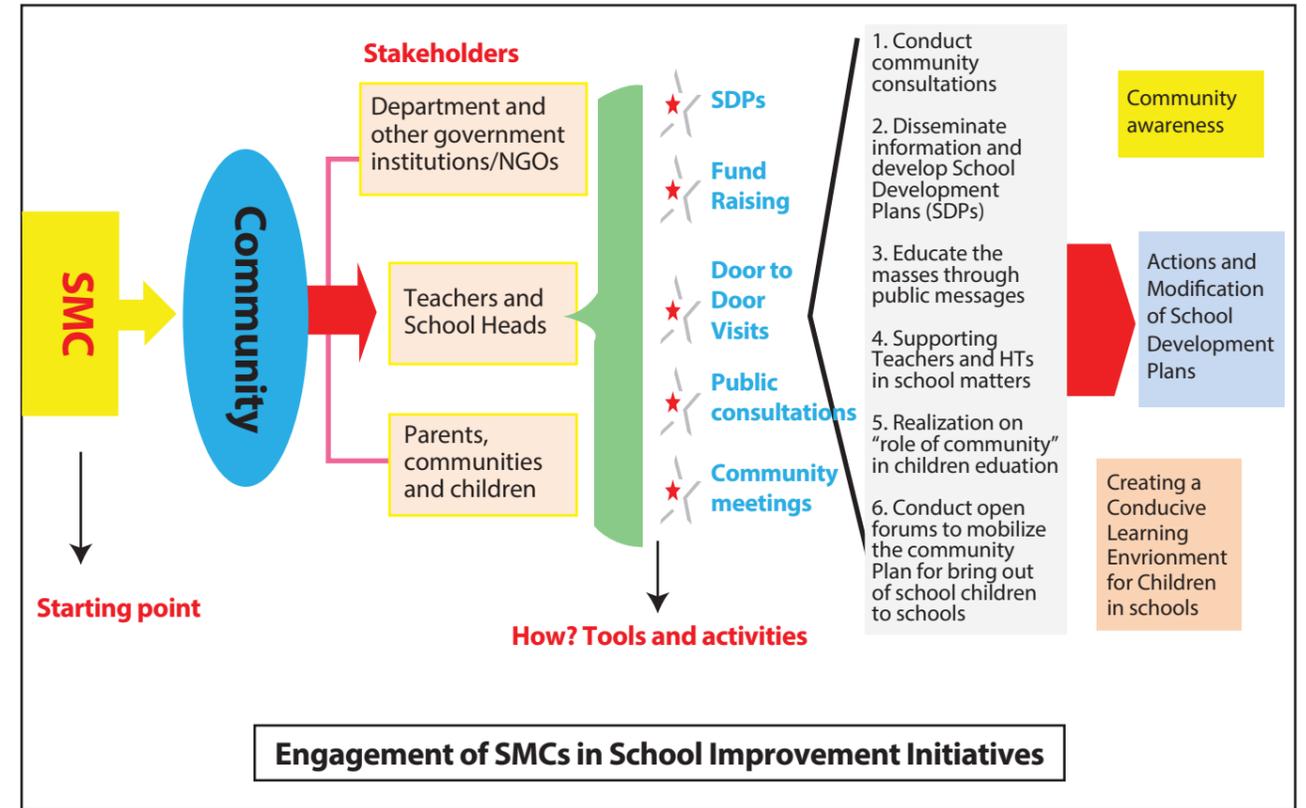
SMCs provide valuable education guidelines to school management in routine matters, such as contribution in School Development Plans (SDPs), door to door visits for bringing out of school children to schools, sharing local wisdom in solving local problems, local level fund raising and its management for the sustainability of school improvement initiatives and coordination with all stakeholders to ensure that everyone who has an impact on children's education should participate and contribute.

This way the SMCs, as representative of the entire population of the catchment area, play a bridging role between the community and schools to ensure compliance of the policies of the education department. The role of SMCs include conducting periodic meetings with school management and expediting the educational agenda to be accomplished in its true spirit. In some cases, SMCs work to ensure inclusion by enrolling the children of ultra-poor families and arranging fee remissions for deserving students with the aid of local donors and well-off people in the community.

MIED School Improvement Programme (SIP)

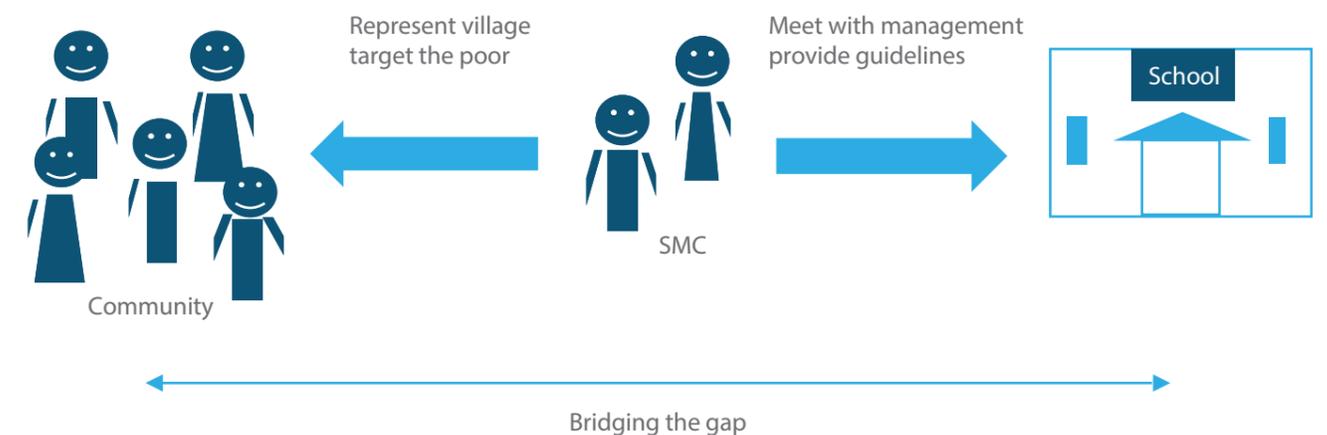
- 30% increase in overall enrolment
- Students have gone on to enroll in Aga Khan Higher Secondary Gahkuch, setting a benchmark at the district level
- Internet facilities provided at computer lab to increase access to information and learning resources

Mountain Institute for Education and Development (MIED) has been instrumental in supporting community-based schools in district Ghizer. As a result of their work, enrollment in 22 of the project site schools has reached up to 6,000. The Education Support component of the programme developed the skills of teachers and SMC members in addition to providing missing facilities like labs, washrooms, computer systems and school furniture.



SMCs provide a platform for women and youth groups to participate in governance of community-supported schools in Ghizer district. Through active participation in education support, SMCs have proven that without community support and ownership the education agenda cannot be implemented in its true nature and desirable results cannot be achieved.

Involvement of SMCs in Ghizer has demonstrated good results in the rural context. On a similar pattern, the government could engage SMCs in decision making for improved access to education. Likewise, community schools can also be made independent by managing through SMCs and enabling them to diversify sources of income and support for long term educational gains.



TeleTaleem – USING TECHNOLOGY TO BRIDGE LEARNING GAPS

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Since 2016 Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and TeleTaleem have collaborated on two interventions using Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) for improved education services in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

From November 2016 to April 2017, with support from Mari Petroleum Company Limited (MPCL) as PPAF's corporate partner, TeleTaleem trained over 26 teachers and gave online teaching support to girls in grades 6 to 8 in Girls High School in Harnai, Balochistan.

Another project of TeleTaleem covered three Girls Community Schools in Chitral and one school in Lower Dir. These schools are operated by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Elementary and Secondary Education Foundation (ESEF). The schools were provided ICT infrastructure, power backup systems and internet connectivity. Daily teaching sessions and bi-monthly trainings of teachers were conducted. Learning outcomes of students show a remarkable improvement in comparison to baseline scores.

Objectives

- Improve access to quality education for girls at the primary school level
- Improve learning outcomes of children in key subjects
- Upgrade teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills to better enable them to impart knowledge
- Introduce teachers and children to ICT enabled learning



Intervention Details

Technology and internet were used to connect primary students in community schools with high quality urban-based teachers, conducting online classes daily. Local teachers were able to observe this to upgrade their skill set. Separate training sessions were conducted once a month to connect the local teacher with experienced teacher trainers, using the same online facility. Both the teaching and training sessions were monitored remotely. In addition, access to open educational content was provided to reinforce the learning processes of teachers and students alike.

The technology supporting these services consisted of a digital classroom setup in the school, linked via internet to the trainer using a laptop. The local teacher was given a tablet for digital training content and formative assessments. Relevant eLearning applications provided the online classroom facility with digital instructional aids.

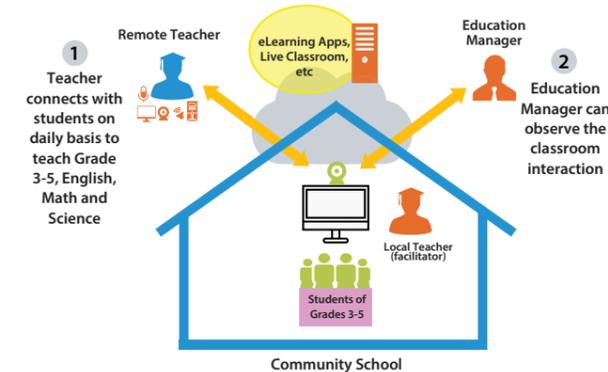


The intervention comprised two synergistic learning services impacting the learning competencies of students and teachers:

(1) Online Remote Teaching

A remote teacher directly taught primary grade students while facilitated by the local teacher. Remote teaching was conducted daily and covered English, Math and Science for Grade 4-5 students. Formative assessments were done periodically to assess and track learning.

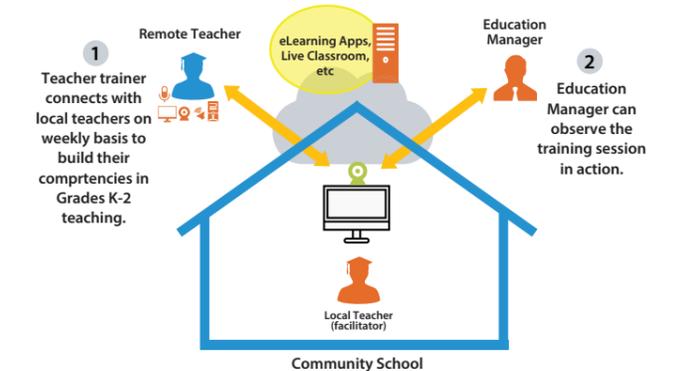
The teaching service model supported aggregating multiple schools in a single online classroom, served by a single teacher. An education manager monitored the classroom activity online, virtually roaming from one school to the next.



(2) Online Remote Training

A remote teacher trainer used the online facility to train the local teacher. Trainings targeted reading and numeracy competencies of local teachers. Sessions were conducted monthly in off-school hours. Local teachers were able to apply their skills inside the classroom and share feedback with the trainer on a monthly basis.

The training service model supported aggregating multiple local teachers in a single online training session, saving time and costs.



Outcomes

Overall, these projects achieved their targets in terms of reaching and benefiting the intended beneficiaries. The primary goals were to achieve improved learning outcomes of students and build the capacity of local teachers. Findings of the evaluation study are summarized below:

- Student attendance and engagement levels improved and there was a positive change in communication skills in spoken Urdu and English.
- Children had a strong level of satisfaction with the program activities and more than 90% responded that the project was helping improve their learning.
- Trainee teachers, parents and education officials felt that the project was relevant in terms of addressing their needs.
- Children in Grade 4 showed an average gain of 22.9% in their scores against children in non-intervention schools with a gain of 6.8%.

Students in Grade 5 show, on average, at least 25% improvement in scores in comparison to non-intervention schools where the average gain was recorded at 1.5%. Encouraged by the success of these interventions, TeleTaleem believes that similar models can be cost effectively replicated in remote schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan to learning poverty.



COVER

Activity based learning at Community School Barir, Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PAGE 5

Students at Girls Primary School, Dawood Usman Goth, Rehri, Sindh.



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SMC meeting at community managed school, Baltistan.



PAGE 2

Library at a school managed by Development in Literac, Islamabad.



PAGE 9

New Iqra Model School, Kohlu, Balochistan.



PAGE 15

Satellite based internet system for online teaching, Rambur Valley, Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PAGE 4

A grade 3 student of Shaheen Community Model School, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PAGE 11

IRC House of Learning, Din Mohammad Rind, Khairpur, Sindh.



PAGE 16

Online teaching, Rambur Valley, Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

All photographs used in Development Dialogue reflect PPAF-supported initiatives.



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