



SDG-4 Midterm Review Pakistan

Pakistan Institute of Education
Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training
Government of Pakistan
2024

SDG-4 Midterm Review Pakistan



2024

In Collaboration With
All Federating Units of Pakistan, Pakistan Institute of Education,
UNESCO Pakistan Office, and Taaleem Foundation

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Dr. Muhammad Shahid Soroya

Director General

Pakistan Institute of Education

Mr. Safeer Ullah,

Director MIS,

Pakistan Institute of Education

Mr. Muhammad Bilal Kakli,

Deputy Director (Digital Systems),

Pakistan Institute of Education

Mr. Zubair Farooq Piracha,

Deputy Director (ICT MIS),

Pakistan Institute of Education

Mr. Muhammad Adeel Zia,

Data Management Officer,

Pakistan Institute of Education

Mr. Imran Javed,

Assistant System Administrator,

Pakistan Institute of Education

Mr. Nasir Amin,

Lead Consultant,

Taaleem Foundation

Dr. Muhammad Saleem,

Consultant

Taaleem Foundation

Ms. Sadia Hussain

Consultant

Taaleem Foundation

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Acknowledgments

Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) on behalf of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFE&PT) would like to sincerely thank all the key entities and stakeholders, consultants, Provincial and Area education departments, UNESCO, and all important individuals who have greatly contributed to the development of the Pakistan SDG-4 Mid Term Review (MTR) Report which aims to assess the status of the implementation of the SDG-4 targets in Pakistan, the challenges and propose solutions for the way forward. PIE would also like to acknowledge the valuable efforts of the National EMIS Wing and NAW Wing at PIE, Academic Wing, MoFE&PT and Provincial/Area EMIS cells for actively supporting the consultations and completion of this report. Furthermore, PIE expresses appreciation for the previous work and reports developed by various entities and experts on the SDG-4 subject and especially the work that has been reviewed and referred to in this report.

Interim MTR report of SDG-4 was completed in August 2023 with technical assistance from development partners including JICA, UNESCO Pakistan Office and the World Bank. Dr. Zaigham Janjua, Director PIE and Mr. Arshad Saeed Consultant from JICA needs special appreciation for completing this assignment.



Dr. Muhammad Shahid Soroya
Director General
Pakistan Institute of Education
Ministry of Federal Education & Professional
Training, Government of Pakistan

Foreword

Pakistan committed to measure progress against SDG-4 thematic indicators at the mid-way point of the SDG tenure, with the support of UNESCO. The primary objective of the MTR is to assess progress against SDG-4 thematic indicators, understand the challenges hindering the achievement of SDG-4 targets, and propose actionable plans to expedite progress toward achieving the SDG-4 targets by 2030.

The SDG-4 MTR process involved extensive consultation with key stakeholders from nationwide including all federating units. These consultations aimed to understand the specific geographical and administrative limitations posing challenges to SDG-4 progress and to discuss and formulate forward-thinking solutions to overcome these limitations, ensuring accelerated progress towards achieving the SDG-4 targets. These discussions are duly reflected in this report.

Adhering to UNESCO standard guidelines for reporting, the SDG-4 MTR report not only reflects the current state of affairs but also outlines required future improvements in data collection and reporting capacities within Pakistan concerning SDG-4. MoFE&PT, through its apex entity PIE, recommends establishing an SDG-4 Cell at PIE to maintain continuous connections with all federating units, ensuring on-going tracking and reporting on SDG-4 development in Pakistan.

The SDG-4 MTR is considered a timely initiative, providing clear direction for Pakistan concerning current strengths and limitations in achieving SDG-4 targets by 2030. Following the completion of the SDG-4 MTR, PIE will lead in organizing provincial consultations and discussions to closely collaborate with all stakeholders to address the gaps and challenges highlighted in the report, implement recommendations, and effectively accelerate progress towards achieving SDG-4 in Pakistan.



Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADP	Annual Development Plan
AEPAM	Academy of Educational Planning and Management
APR	Annual Progress Review
ASC	Annual School Census
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
BECS	Basic Education Community Schools
BoS	Bureaus of Statistics
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease
DAE	Diploma of Associate Engineer
DARE	Data and Research in Education
DG	Director General
DSF	Data Standardization Framework
E&SE	Elementary and Secondary Education Department
EMA	Education Management Authority
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESP	Education Sector Plan
EVS	Education Voucher Scheme
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GPI	Gender Parity Index
GB	Gilgit Baltistan
HCI	Human Capital Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HEC	Higher Education Commission
ICT	Islamabad Capital Territory
IPEMC	Inter-provincial Education Ministers Conference
KII	Key Informant Interview
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LaNA	Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
Land NFBED	Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Department
LFS	Labor Force Survey
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MoFE&PT	Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training
MPDSI	Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives
MTR	Mid Term Review
NACP	National AIDS Control Program

Acronyms and Abbreviations

NAVTTTC	National Vocational and Technical Training Commission
NCC	National Curriculum Council
NCP	National Curriculum of Pakistan
NFBE	Non-formal Basic Education
NFC	National Finance Commission Award
NFE	Non-formal Education
NCHD	National Commission for Human Development
NEMIS	National Education Management Information System
NIPS	National Institute of Population Studies
NVQF	National Vocational Qualification Framework
OOSC	Out of School Children
P&D	Planning and Development
PBS	Pakistan Bureau of Statistics
PESP	Punjab Education Sector Project
PIE	Pakistan Institute of Education
PITE	Provincial Institute for Teacher Education
PMIU	Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit
PSLM	Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement Survey
QAED	Quaid Academy for Educational Development
RTSM	Real Time School Monitoring
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SpED	Special Education
TA	Technical Assistance
TEVTA	Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

The contemporary world has entered a new technological era marked by social, political, and economic interdependence. The increasing complexity of our global landscape, characterized by crises such as climate change, food security, pandemics, natural and man-made disasters, and conflicts, necessitates an education system that equips young individuals not only with foundational knowledge but also its practical application in complex scenarios.

The experience of school closures and learning losses during the COVID-19 pandemic, compounded by the September 2022 devastating floods in Pakistan, emphasize the urgent need for improvements in our education systems. It is imperative to re-imagine education service provisions and their management to ensure the relevance of Pakistan's education and empower its young people to compete and thrive. Key measures are required to meet constitutional and international commitments, particularly those outlined in SDG-4.

Any future policy, plans and strategies in education must consider Pakistan's current demographic, socio-economic landscape, and future political dynamics. Analyzing the annual population growth rate of 2.55% between 2017 and 2023, as per the Bureau of Statistics, with focus on age, gender and geographic distribution is crucial for informed decision making for educational interventions. Ensuring equitable opportunities for the 49% female population and addressing the needs of the 14.06% of the children aged 0-4 entering schools are critical considerations.

Strategic shifts are needed on multiple fronts, from increasing access to enhancing the quality of learning gains. Addressing the issue of 26.2 million (PES 2021-22) out-of-school children (OOSC) requires effective strategies for enrollment, retention, and community engagement. The key consideration following the 18th Constitutional Amendment in Pakistan will continue to be greater provincial ownership and responsibility in executing education sector plans aligned with the national education policy.

Effective planning and execution of commitments, including SDG-4 targets, necessitate an analysis of new job trends, both nationally and internationally, and an understanding of global and national issues. Creating inclusive platforms for those in schools and those still out of school is crucial. To ensure productivity, we must equip individuals with skills relevant to major economic activities within Pakistan and global growth trends. Critical assessment of certification and testing processes is also essential, given that exams and assessments drive education service delivery. The ongoing education policy development process in Pakistan re-imagines the kind of schools needed, requisite resources, and governance and management mechanisms to implement education successfully.

The vision for a new, innovative educational approach requires shedding outdated programming methods. Achieving educational goals, including SDG-4 demands precise planning, increased education spending, and active monitoring and reporting. Improved management and coordination across all levels is essential to enhance sector performance, with community involvement playing a pivotal role in driving progress and results in the education sector.

Key findings of the SDG-4 MTR study

The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of SDG-4 provides a comprehensive analysis of Pakistan's progress toward achieving inclusive and equitable quality education. It highlights significant advancements, identifies key challenges, and outlines actionable recommendations to ensure the country stays on track for the 2030 targets. Below is a more cohesive and structured presentation of the findings for better comprehension:

Progress and Achievements

1. Expanded Data Coverage

- The report analyzes data for 31 thematic indicators out of the total 46, marking substantial progress from the 6-8 indicators covered in the interim report of August 2023.
- UIS technical guidelines and methodologies were rigorously followed, ensuring the reliability of the findings.

2. Benchmarking Progress

- Eleven benchmark indicators and 25 benchmark values for 2025 and 2030 have been established, providing clear and measurable targets for monitoring progress.

3. Disaggregated and Inclusive Data Reporting

- Data is presented with disaggregation by gender, rural-urban location, and provincial/region, meeting the inclusivity requirements of Indicator 4.5.1 and enabling targeted interventions.

4. Integration of Diverse Data Sources

- The report integrates data from administrative records (PIE NEMIS), national surveys (PSLM and LFS), constitutional and parliamentary acts, and international databases (UIS SDG dashboards).

Population and Demographic Insights

5. Population Growth

- Based on the 2023 census, Pakistan's population is estimated at 241.5 million, with an annual growth rate of 2.55% between 2017 and 2023. This figure excludes GB and AJK.

6. Rural Dominance

- A significant portion (61.2%) of the population resides in rural areas, emphasizing the need for tailored educational interventions in these regions.

7. Gender Distribution

- The sex ratio of 104.9 males per 100 females indicates a slightly higher male population (106.3 million males vs. 101.3 million females).

8. Out-of-School Children (OOSC)

- The OOSC rate stands at 39%, with a higher proportion of females (42.8%) compared to males (35.5%). This translates to 26.2 million children being out of school, a persistent and critical challenge for the education system.

9. Overage Enrollments

- Over 50% of primary school enrollments fall into the overage category (5-9 years), reflecting inefficiencies in school entry and retention systems.

10. Under representation of Persons with Disabilities

- Only 0.44% of persons with disabilities are reported in the education system, indicating significant gaps in inclusion and access.

Key findings of the SDG-4 MTR study

Challenges Identified

11. Persistent Inequities

- Gender, geographic, and socio-economic disparities continue to hinder equitable access and outcomes at all levels of education.

12. Weak Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs

- Existing ECE, ECCE, and ECED programs require restructuring to align with global best practices in terms of age brackets, program duration, and resource allocation.

13. Assessment Data Gaps

- Data for literacy and numeracy assessments for grades 2 and 3 are limited and not fully aligned with SDG-4 indicators, impacting the monitoring of early learning outcomes.

14. Inconsistent Reporting by PBS

- While PBS collects key education indicators, its reporting is not fully aligned with SDG-4 metadata. A faster transition to alignment is essential.

15. Limited Data on Education Financing

- Despite the availability of financial data, there is no centralized mechanism for consolidating and reporting education financing across federal and provincial levels.

16. Weak Reporting on Sustainable Development Education (Target 4.7)

- Reporting on education for sustainable development and global citizenship (Target 4.7) is limited. While partial data was provided for Indicator 4.7.1, efforts to report on the remaining indicators remain insufficient.

Recommendations to Stay on Track for 2030 Targets

17. Revisiting and Strengthening Benchmarks

- MoFEPT, in coordination with provincial governments, should periodically revise the 2025 and 2030 benchmarks to ensure alignment with demographic and economic changes.

18. Enhanced Monitoring Frameworks

- Institutionalize robust monitoring mechanisms, such as the Inter-Provincial Education Ministers Conference (IPEMC), to track progress and foster collaboration among provinces.

19. Improving Data Systems and Reporting

- Develop a centralized Education Management Information System (EMIS) for real-time tracking of SDG-4 indicators, ensuring data disaggregation by gender, geography, and socio-economic status.
- Establish a dedicated SDG-4 dashboard for progress tracking and enhanced transparency.

20. Capacity Building for Stakeholders

- Train technical personnel at national and provincial levels on data production, analysis, and reporting aligned with SDG-4.
- Strengthen teacher training programs to improve pedagogical practices and integrate modern teaching methods.

21. Targeting OOSC and Disparities

- Launch targeted enrollment campaigns focused on marginalized groups, including girls, rural populations, and persons with disabilities.
- Provide flexible learning pathways, such as accelerated learning programs and non-formal education, to re-engage OOSC.

22. Restructuring Early Childhood Education (ECE)

- Align ECE programs with international best practices, ensuring age-appropriate curricula, adequate teacher training, and sufficient infrastructure.

23. Increased Investment in Education

- Raise public spending on education to at least 4-6% of GDP, prioritizing underfunded areas and expanding access to quality education.
- Align financial reporting mechanisms with SDG-4 to ensure transparency and effective resource allocation.

24. Engaging Communities and Partnerships

- Involve parents, local leaders, and community organizations in education initiatives to improve enrollment, retention, and accountability.
- Leverage public-private partnerships to expand education infrastructure and reach underserved areas.

25. Aligning Assessments with Global Standards

- Standardize national and provincial assessments to align with SDG-4 frameworks, particularly for literacy and numeracy in early grades.

Methodology of Indicators Derivation and Report Writing

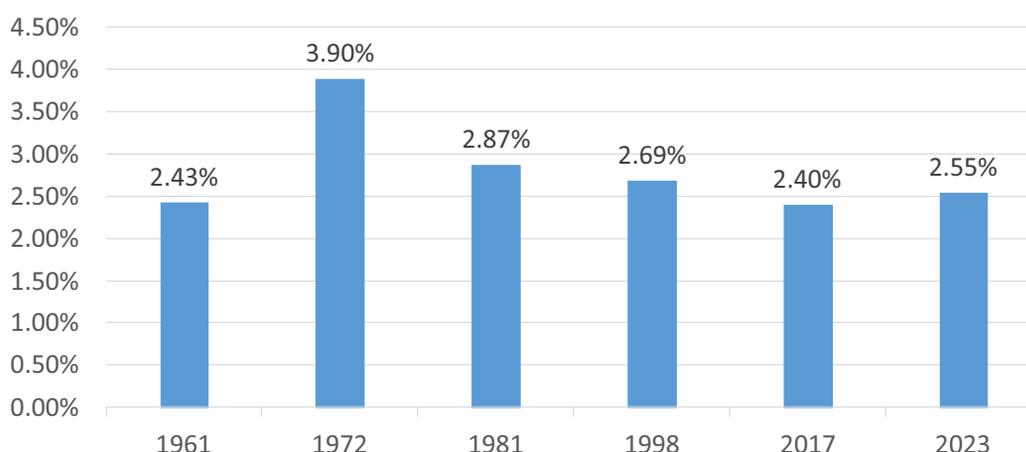
- 1.** The Pakistan Mid Term Review (MTR) report on SDG-4 progress has been prepared following the UNESCO Guidelines for the preparation of MTRs in Asia and the Pacific.
- 2.** The core research team was placed at the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) where the NEMIS team of the PIE collaboratively worked on the MTR process throughout the two months duration starting 23rd October and ending on 25th December 2023.
- 3.** An initial desk review of relevant SDG-4 related frameworks at national and provincial/regional levels was carried out. The team submitted an inception report with questionnaire/tool to UNESCO Islamabad on 3 November 2023, for their feedback.
- 4.** In collaboration with NEMIS team at PIE, a two-day agenda for the provincial, regional, and national level consultative workshops and in-depth interviews were prepared as per the guidelines provided in the UNESCO guideline document, and based on the already conducted desk review.
- 5.** Before the conduct of each consultative workshop, a detailed review of SDG-4 related policies and plans were carried out to ensure productive feedback during the consultative workshops.
- 6.** A total of seven (07) Consultative workshops were conducted in federal/provincial/regional capitals, with approximately 25 participants representing 15 stakeholder entities of SDG-4 in each session. Subsequently, the research team visited the offices of key stakeholders for in-depth discussions on various variables related to SDG-4. List of workshop participants with their designations and department are attached in the annexure.
- 7.** Over the two-month duration, the computation and derivation of thematic indicators of SDG-4 continued, involving collaboration with the PIE team and consultation with other data-gathering agencies such as PBS, provincial EMIS, federal and provincial SDG units etc.
- 8.** The final MTR document consists of values of each thematic indicator for which reliable and authentic data was available from multiple official sources. The report uses the methodology given at the Technical Working Group (TCG) on the indicators for SDG-4. This was followed by a trend analysis of each thematic indicator with analysis of disaggregated data on gender, rural-urban and regional variations. Input from the desk review and consultative workshops were then incorporated to explain policy and implementation level actions on all 10 SDG-4 targets.

The Socio-Economic Context of Pakistan

Population dynamics-high population growth with a youth bulge

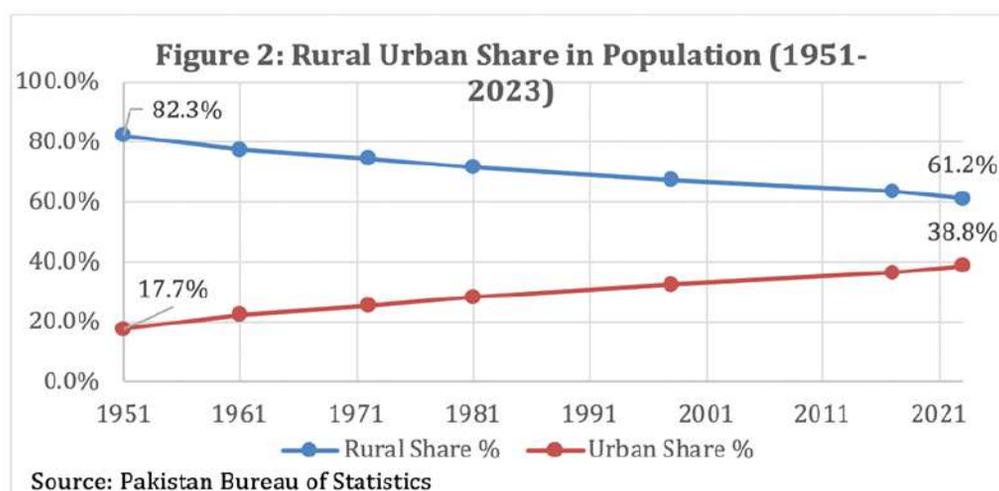
Pakistan is world's fifth most populous country with a total population of 241.5 million² as per the 2023 census. The annual average growth rate between the 2023 and 2017 censuses is 2.55%, surpassing the 2.4% growth rate observed between the 2017 and 1998 censuses. Notably, Pakistan's population growth rate is the highest among the SAARC countries, placing significant pressure on service delivery and infrastructure requirements³. Figure 1 illustrates the annual average growth rate of Pakistan's population since 1961.

Figure 1: Annual Average Growth Rate of Pakistan's Population (1961-2023)



Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

The majority of Pakistan's population, accounting for 61.2% in 2023 continues to reside in rural areas. However, the country is witnessing a shift from rural to urban centers. This shift is attributed to the growing trend of urbanization, driven by factors such as migration from rural areas to urban centers due to limited employment opportunities and absence of essential services in rural areas. Figure 2 illustrates the evolving pattern of population migration from rural to urban areas over the decades.



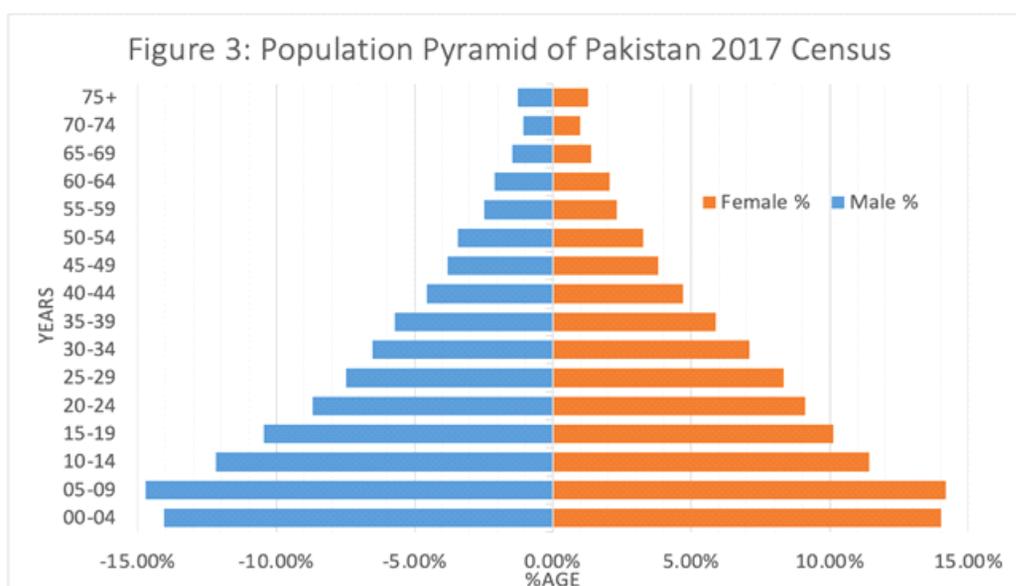
Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

²The total does not include the population of autonomous regions of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (4.3 million projected 2021) and Gilgit Baltistan (1.49 million 2017 census).

³<https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/vision2025/Pakistan-Vision-2025.pdf>

Since the detailed data sets of the 2023 census are not yet available for public reporting, this report references the census data from 2017. The demographic data from the 2017 census provides insights into the gender distribution in Pakistan. The recorded male population is 106,318,220, and the female population is 101,344,632, resulting in a sex ratio of 104.9, indicating that there are 104.9 males for every 100 females in the country. Urban areas show a slightly higher ratio at 107.2, while rural areas have a slightly lower ratio at 103.6⁴. For the first time in 2017, Pakistan's census enumerated the transgender population, reported at 21,774 individuals in 2017, constituting 0.01% of the total population. Additionally, the country recorded a total of 913,667 persons with disabilities, making up 0.44%⁵ of the total population. Notably, 69.89% of all recorded persons with disabilities reside in rural areas, while 30.11% are in urban areas⁶.

The age and sex demographics in Pakistan depict a predominantly young population, emphasizing a youth bulge. A significant 40.31% of the population is under 15 years of age, indicating elevated fertility levels. The youth population, aged 15-24 years, constitutes 19.19%, contributing to a total of about 59.51% of the population below the age of 25 years, totaling 124 million people⁷. This demographic structure reflects a youthful society in need of quality education and better employment opportunities (Figure 3)⁸. The population pyramid illustrates this youth-centric structure, characterized by a broad base and a narrower middle and top. The thin peak at the top suggests relatively lower proportions in the working and older age groups. The slight narrowing of the base (00-04 years) of the population pyramid in Pakistan suggests a relative slowing down of births (fertility), signaling the initiation of a potential demographic transition.



Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

⁴National Census Report, 2017, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Government of Pakistan

⁵This reflects the percentage of reported persons with disability as listed by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, National Census Report 2017.

⁶Ibid

⁷Ibid

⁸The X-Axis on the graph represents in blue 100% of the male population and in orange color 100% of the female population. Reflecting 100% distribution of data by age groups.

Slow Economic Growth, Consistently High Twin Deficits

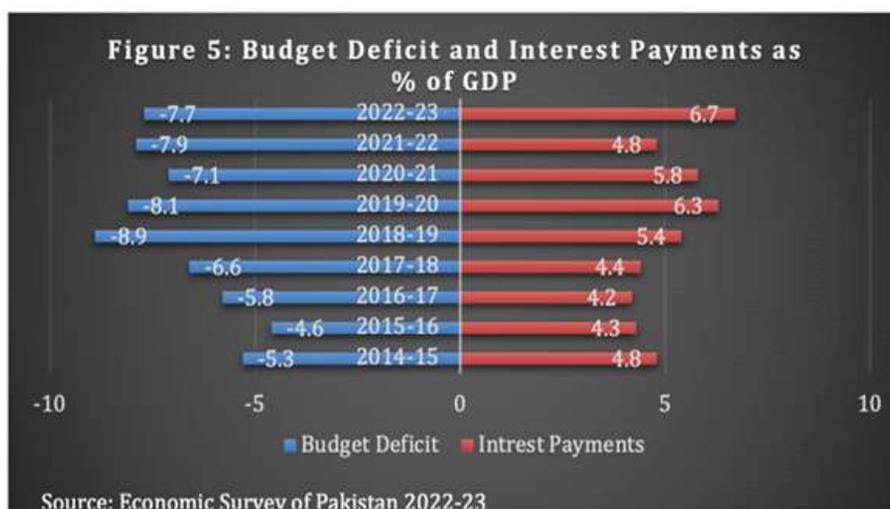
Pakistan's economic growth over the last two decades has remained relatively low, with the domestic economy struggling to generate sufficient activity to support, educate or provide employment opportunities for the pre-dominantly young population. In the past 15 years, Pakistan's real GDP growth rate has averaged just over 3 percent annually (Figure 4). The economic challenges intensified due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019-20 when the GDP growth rate turned negative. Similarly, the devastating floods in 2022 also resulted in a negative GDP growth rate, causing significant destruction in the provinces of Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, affecting livelihoods, agriculture, and infrastructure.



The overall slower growth of the domestic economy has resulted in a persistent twin deficit problem plunging Pakistan's economy. The country faces challenges in financing both its current and development expenditures, and it lacks the capacity to generate an export surplus to offset trade deficits. The annual average fiscal deficit in Pakistan has remained notably high at 6.9 percent of GDP since the fiscal year 2014-15. This consistent fiscal deficit is attributed to the limited broadening of Pakistan's tax base, with an annual average tax-to-GDP ratio of only 9.4 percent⁹ from fiscal year 2007-08 to 2021-22. In contrast, comparable countries in the region maintain a tax-to-GDP ratio between 15% to 20%. To bridge this substantial fiscal gap, the government resorts to raising domestic debt which has reached an unsustainable level (73.9 percent of GDP as of June 2022)¹⁰. A significant portion of tax revenues is directed towards servicing this mounting debt.

⁹Economic and Social Indicators, Ministry of Finance, Government of Pakistan
https://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_23/key_Indicators.pdf

¹⁰Pakistan Public Debt, Economic Survey of Pakistan, Government of Pakistan
https://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_23/09_Public_Debt.pdf



On the external account, a portion of the trade deficit is mitigated by substantial workers' remittances, primarily stemming from Pakistan's labor exports to the Gulf and other advanced countries. However, the gap between exports and imports persists and is being addressed through borrowing from entities such as the IMF, friendly Gulf countries and some rescheduling of foreign loans.

According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-2023, the fiscal year presented unprecedented challenges, including devastating floods and political uncertainty. The Russia-Ukraine war further exacerbated global economic conditions, resulting in a commodity super-cycle and a slowdown in global economic growth from 6.2 percent in 2021 to 2.8 percent in 2023. Inconsistent policy implementation, unsustainable fiscal deficit, the exponential rise in public debt, economic uncertainties, and mounting circular debt have been the main challenges in the economic growth of Pakistan.

Despite these challenges, government is trying to improve economic indicators including fiscal indicators. Despite significant surge in debt servicing in the ongoing fiscal year of 2023-24¹¹, the fiscal deficit is being contained at 2.3 % of GDP in the first 6 months of the fiscal year.

The repercussions of the federal government's insufficient tax collection are felt by the provinces, given that the majority of provincial revenues stem from federal transfers under the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award. Over the fiscal years 2008-09 to 2022-23, these federal transfers accounted for nearly 80 percent of the total provincial resource base. For the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, this dependency on federal transfers is even more pronounced, reaching almost 95% of their total provincial resource base.

After the 18th constitutional amendment act passed in 2010, education service delivery has been fully devolved to provinces. However, significant challenges such as infrastructure gaps and a shortage of teachers, hinder the effective delivery of education services at the provincial level. Despite the increased share of provincial resources in federal tax collections—from 45% to 57.5% following the 7th NFC Award in 2010 and the approval of the 18th Constitutional Amendment—provincial governments continue to face obstacles. To address the needs of education service delivery, provincial governments have increasingly sought financial assistance from international development partners through grants and loans.

¹¹Source Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-2023

Pakistan's Poverty: rural-urban and provincial disparities

The UNDP Global Human Development Report 2022 shows Pakistan's Human Development Index (HDI) rank experiencing no positive change and remaining fixed at 161st place globally in 2021, 2020 and 2019. The UNDP Pakistan National Human Development Report on Inequality 2020 highlighted Pakistan allocates a lower share of its GDP on education, health services, and social protection programmes compared to its neighboring countries impacting its HDI rankings. One-third of human development achievements in Pakistan are lost due to inequality¹². Pakistan's Human Development Index (HDI) score of 0.544 categorizes it within the low human development category, indicating a relatively modest average achievement in human development. While there has been progress over time, as evidenced by the increase in HDI from 0.493 in 1990 to 0.544 in 2021, the country is still on a journey to attain high levels of human development¹³.

Despite substantial reductions in poverty over the decades, a significant portion of the population remains below the income poverty line. In 2001-02, the incidence of income poverty was 66.5 percent, decreasing to 21.5% in 2018-19. Research shows that eradicating income poverty is crucial for achieving universal education and enhancing livelihood opportunities. Table 1 presents income poverty for the periods 2015-16 and 2018-19, showing significant disparities across provinces and rural-urban regions. Balochistan has the highest poverty rate at 40.7%, while Punjab has the lowest at 16.3% in 2018-19. Urban poverty stood at 10.7%, contrasting with rural poverty at 27.6% during the same period.

Federal government interventions like the cash transfer programme of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) have played a vital role in reducing poverty in Pakistan since its introduction in 2008.

Province	2015-16			2018-19		
	All	Urban	Rural	All	Urban	Rural
Punjab	20.8	9.9	26.2	16.3	8.8	20.6
Sindh	32.2	15.4	49.1	24.6	10.4	40.0
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	18.1	10.0	19.9	27.0	16.8	29.0
Balochistan	42.2	26.4	48.2	40.7	24.7	46.7
Pakistan	24.3	12.5	30.7	21.5	10.7	27.6

Source: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics

¹² UNDP global Human Development Report 2022. <https://www.undp.org/pakistan/publications/choosing-development#:~:text=The%20UNDP%20global%20Human%20Development,in%202021%2C%202020%20and%202019.>

¹³ Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-23. https://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_23/Economic_Survey_2022_23.pdf

Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates

The economically active population in 2020-21 is reported to be 71.76 million people according to Pakistan's Labor Force Survey for the same period¹⁴, indicating an increase from 68.75 million in 2018-19. However, substantial disparities exist across gender, rural-urban areas and geographical locations concerning labor force participation in Pakistan. The labor force participation in rural areas is almost 10 percent higher than in urban areas driven by increased demand for unskilled labor in agriculture and allied activities. Notably, the labor force participation rate for females is significantly lower than that for males. Table 2 highlights the trends in labor participation rates for males, females, rural-urban areas, and provinces over three time periods.

	2014-15	2018-19	2020-21
Pakistan	45.22%	44.79%	44.90%
Rural	49.01%	48.71%	48.56%
Urban	38.66%	38.58%	38.79%
Male	67.78%	67.69%	67.86%
Female	22.02%	21.48%	21.35%
Provinces			
Punjab	48.46%	47.42%	47.38%
Sindh	42.96%	43.25%	43.83%
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	36.34%	38.52%	39.51%
Balochistan	43.89%	40.80%	40.39%

Source: Various Issues of Pakistan Labor Force Survey

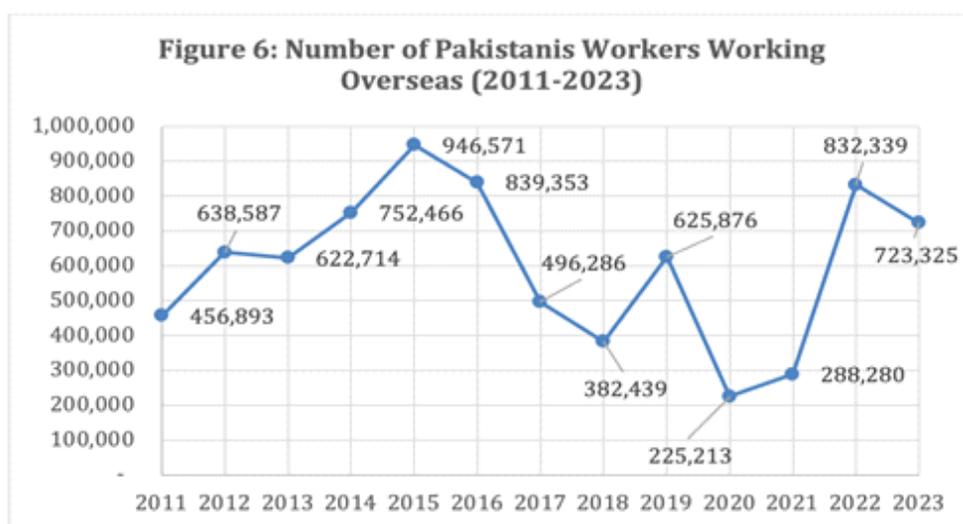
Table 3 provides unemployment rates for 2014-15, 2018-19 and 2020-21 categorized by gender, rural-urban location, and provinces. The data indicates that in KP and Punjab, the unemployment rates are higher compared to the national average. Similarly, unemployment rates in urban centers are higher compared to rural areas. Additionally, unemployment rates are higher for females as compared to males. It is important to note that the employed population also includes those who are underemployed and not earning enough to be classified as having decent jobs.

	2014-15	2018-19	2020-21
Pakistan	5.94%	6.89%	6.29%
Rural	5.01%	6.36%	5.79%
Urban	7.98%	7.85%	7.34%
Male	4.98%	5.87%	5.48%
Female	8.97%	10.01%	8.93%
Provinces			
Punjab	6.29%	7.40%	6.76%
Sindh	4.66%	4.00%	3.86%
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	7.71%	10.27%	8.83%
Balochistan	3.92%	4.62%	4.33%

Source: Various Issues of Pakistan Labor Force Survey

¹⁴ Pakistan Labor Force Survey, 2020-21.
https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/labor_force/publications/lfs2020_21/LFS_2020-21_Report.pdf

Due to unemployment and underemployment, a significant number of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers seek employment abroad, predominantly in Gulf countries and other developed regions like Europe and North America, as evidenced by the administrative data from the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BEOE)¹⁵. Figure 6 illustrates the trend data of Pakistani workers working abroad from 2011 to 2023. Since 2015, 5.4 million Pakistanis have sought employment abroad, highlighting the challenges in finding decent jobs domestically. The majority of these workers are employed as unskilled and semi-skilled laborers in Gulf countries while skilled professionals such as doctors and engineers work in Europe and North America.



Environmental challenges

Pakistan's high vulnerability to climate change is a risk multiplier, compounding its human and economic development challenges. Pakistan ranks among the top 10 countries worldwide most affected by climate change¹⁶. Extreme weather events have been increasing in frequency and intensity, impacting ecosystems, people, settlements, and infrastructure. The ND-Gain Index has ranked Pakistan as the 39th most vulnerable country and the 27th least ready country in the world to address the impacts of climate change. Pakistan has witnessed extreme weather like floods in 2022 and 2010, smog with Lahore as the most polluted city in the world, ground water depletion, and weather pattern changes affecting crop seasons. Progress on SDGs can only be achieved through adaptation to climate change by building resilient infrastructure and livelihoods which can mitigate the damaging effects of climate change.

The 2022 high-intensity floods significantly impacted the lives and livelihoods of millions of people across the country, causing damage to key infrastructure, homes, basic services, and hindering overall economic development. In the first quarter of FY2023, the floods submerged a large part of agricultural land, disrupting domestic supply chains. Estimated flood-related damages, GDP loss, and rehabilitation expenditures are Rs. 3.2 trillion (US\$ 14.9 billion), Rs. 3.3 trillion (US\$ 15.2 billion), and Rs. 3.5 trillion (US\$16.3 billion), respectively, according to the economic survey of Pakistan for the year 2022-23¹⁷. Prolonged interruptions in irrigation services and blockages in the drainage network has further extend agriculture losses. On 28 November 2023, the National Accounts Committee revised GDP

¹⁵ <https://beoe.gov.pk/>

¹⁶ 'Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, And Reconstruction Framework, Pakistan', Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (MPD&SI), Islamabad, December 2022.

¹⁷ https://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_23/Highlights.pdf

growth estimates for 2023 to -0.17 percent from the previous provisional figure of 0.29 percent, reflecting the severe impact of both COVID-19 and the 2022 floods on economic activity.

As per estimates of Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (MPD&SI)¹⁸, the floods disrupted essential education services across all 94 calamity-hit districts, impacting 17,205 public education institutions, 94,478 educators and 2.6 million enrolled students, including one million girls. Flood-related education disruptions compounded learning losses, building on the challenges already posed by prolonged disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. These disruptions may have exacerbated learning disparities, particularly affecting students of lower socio-economic status with limited access to the internet. A slow recovery, or absence of one, may lead to permanent losses, increasing the risk of children dropping out of school and being exposed to child labor, early marriage and various forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse. The estimated damage to the education sector, as per Federal Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiative, is USD 559 million, with recovery costs at USD 918 million.

Provincial/Regional Context & Recognizing Specific Provincial Constraints

Balochistan

Geographical Challenges: Sparse population density and vast, remote areas make it challenging to establish and maintain educational infrastructure.

Ethnic Diversity: Addressing the diverse linguistic and ethnic groups to ensure inclusivity in education.

Nomadic Communities: Catering to the educational needs of nomadic communities that may have irregular settlement patterns.

Resource Constraints: Both a lack of qualified human resources and economic constraints affect the quality of education provision in the province.

Punjab

Population Density: Dealing with high population density requires adequate infrastructure and resources to accommodate the educational needs of a large number of students.

Urban-Rural Disparities: Bridging the gap between urban and rural areas in terms of educational facilities and opportunities.

Largest share of out of school children: Punjab has the largest number of out-of-school children, primarily due to its status as the most populous province in the country. Despite federal government allocations, the available resources are insufficient to address the educational needs of these children who currently lack access to formal education.

¹⁸ <https://www.undp.org/pakistan/publications/pakistan-floods-2022-resilient-recovery-rehabilitation-and-reconstruction-framework-4rf>

Sindh

Urbanization: Managing the impact of rapid urbanization on educational infrastructure and ensuring access in urban areas.

Flood-Prone Areas: Addressing the challenges posed by floods in certain regions, impacting the continuity of education.

Socio-economic conditions: Rural Sindh grapples with entrenched socio-economic constraints that continue to impede the provision of quality education and, in certain areas, hinder access to education for children, particularly girls.

Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Mountainous Terrain: Overcoming geographical challenges in mountainous areas to ensure access to quality education.

Cultural Diversity: Recognizing and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds and languages.

Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT)

Urban Dynamics: Managing the unique educational needs of a highly urbanized area, including the provision of quality higher education.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)

Security Concerns: Dealing with security challenges in certain areas, affecting school attendance and infrastructure development.

Refugee Population in KP: Addressing the educational needs of Afghan refugees, particularly in border regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's newly merged districts.

Newly Merged Districts of KP: Ex-Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) / (Now) Newly Merged Districts where the school infrastructure is poor and damaged in the War of Terror since 2001.

Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The entire province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the newly merged districts faced a two-decade long War on Terror where educational infrastructure was badly damaged. Rebuilding educational infrastructure post-conflict and ensuring stability for sustainable development.

Integration Challenges of Newly Merged districts: Integrating the educational system after the merger with KP and addressing any transitional issues.

Performance on cross-cutting SDGs



Pakistan has made significant progress in reducing poverty (SDG-1) with a steady decline from 2014-2015 to 2018-2019, lifting 9.3 million people out of poverty from national poverty line¹⁹. However, as per World Bank estimates, poverty has significantly increased to 39.4 percent in Fiscal Year 2023 due to high food and energy prices, lower labor incomes, and agricultural loss caused by 2022 floods²⁰. World Bank notes that despite a temporary increase in cash transfers (BISP) and a one-time fuel subsidy, overall mitigation measures were insufficient to protect vulnerable and marginalized households.



Similarly, as per SDG Status Report 2021, progress towards zero hunger as espoused by SDG-2 has been made as undernourishment declined by 4.2% from 20.2% to 16% during 2015-2019. Also, moderate achievement was made through reduction of stunting by 7% and wasting by 4% during 2013-18 among children under five years of age.



Regarding good health and well-being under SDG-3, Pakistan has shown reasonable progress by improving in most of the basic health indicators. As per SDG Status Report 2021, the number of mothers dying during pregnancy and live births reduced by 32.6% during 2007-2019. Births attended by skilled health personnel increased by 10% in five years during 2013-18. National vaccination coverage improved by 11.5% in 5 years between 2013 and 2018.



Gender equality (SDG 5) has improved, including a twofold increase in women occupying managerial positions and a 5.3% reduction in physical violence against women²¹. However, discrimination against women persists at home, in the workplace and in the market.



Access to clean water (SDG 6) has improved significantly, reaching 94% of the country's population. The percentage of the population with access to unshared toilet and handwashing facilities is 68% and 54%, respectively, according to the PSLM 2019-20. In terms of environmental commitment, there has been a fourfold increase in renewable energy adoption, and increased reliance on clean fuel (SDG 7), with 47% using clean fuel for cooking in 2018-19, up from 41.3% in 2014-15.



On SDG-7, Pakistan's commitment to environment is shown by increase in the share of renewable energy by more than four times between 2015 to 2019. The reliance on clean fuel (cooking) increased to 47% in the period during 2018-19, from 41.3% in 2014-15 at the national level. An increase of 3% was recorded in 2019-20 with 96% of the population having access to electricity as compared to 93% in 2014-15²².

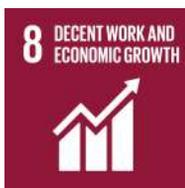
¹⁹ https://www.sdgpakistan.pk/uploads/pub/Pak_SDGs_Status_Report_2021.pdf

²⁰ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/cfd9113f24c548efdc86dba482a5e2cf-0310062023/original/Pakistan-Development-Update-October-2023.pdf>

²¹ Pakistan SDGs Status Report 2021, Federal SDGs Support Unit.

https://www.sdgpakistan.pk/uploads/pub/Pak_SDGs_Status_Report_2021.pdf

²² https://www.sdgpakistan.pk/uploads/pub/Pak_SDGs_Status_Report_2021.pdf



Pakistan faces challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG-8), with real GDP per capita experiencing a sharp decline of -3.36% in 2019-20. Nationally, around 30% of youth (15-24 years) were not engaged in education, employment, or training from 2015-19, with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recording the highest rate at 38%. While child labor has slightly reduced from 8.64% to 6.47% (2015-19), it remains a persistent concern²³.



As per Federal SDG status report 2021, income inequality (SDG-10) reduced by 2% in 2016-2019. Similarly, a slight decline of 7% in the proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing also occurred during 2014-2018 from 45% to 38% for SDG-11.



About SDG-13 on climate action, minimal contribution to greenhouse gas emissions has been made 375.03 million tons in 2016, 2.5% increase from 2015.



On SDG-16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; in terms of counting the uncounted, birth registration of children under 5 years showed an improvement by 8.2% in five years between 2013-18.



Under SDG 17, showing significant improvement in its journey towards digital transformation, the fixed internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants increased by 20% in three years during 2017-20.

Way Forward: Progress on SDG-4 - Political Stability, and Economic Recovery

Pakistan's progress on SDG-4 and other SDGs largely depends on the political stability which may usher in an economic recovery. Frequent disruption of democratic governments and discontinuity has seriously damaged the democratic response to service delivery and revitalization of economic activity in the country. Currently, a caretaker government set-up is in place whose sole responsibility is to conduct free, fair, and transparent elections as per the constitution of Pakistan. The caretaker government has announced the conduct of elections on 8th February 2024 when federal and provincial governments will be elected for 5-year terms. There is still, however, uncertainty around the elections. Any delay in elections will result in political instability which may delay the economic recovery thus impact the progress on SDG-4 and other SDGs.

²³ Ibid

Pakistan's Adaptation and Implementation of SDG-4

Evolution of Right to Education in Pakistan: Constitutional Amendments, Devolution, and Legislative Landscape Before the 2010 inclusion of Article 25-A guaranteeing the Right to Education in the 1973 constitution of Pakistan, the constitution did not recognize compulsory and free education as a right. The responsibility of the state for education provision was outlined in Article 37(b) of the Principles of Policy, which stated, "The state shall remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within the minimum possible period". Additionally, Article 37(c) of chapter II of the principles of policy stated, "the state shall make technical and professional education generally available and higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of merit". However, these Articles of the Principles of Policy are only guiding principles for the state to follow during policy formulation. The state cannot be held accountable for violations of these principles as per Article 30 of the constitution.

The historical 18th constitutional amendment of 2010 introduced Article 25-A regarding right to free and compulsory education in the constitution, specifically in its chapter I on fundamental rights. This insertion empowered the supreme courts to hold the state accountable for delivering free and compulsory education. Furthermore, Article 8 of the constitution regarding fundamental rights binds the appropriate legislature to bring laws into conformity with the rights conferred in the chapter on fundamental rights.

The text of Article 25-A of the constitution states, "The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law". While the article specifies that the state shall provide compulsory education free of cost to all children between the age of five to sixteen years, it fails to explicitly mention gender, inclusivity, and quality of education.

In addition to the insertion of article 25-A, the 18th amendment brought about various structural changes to the 1973 constitution regarding the subject matter of education. It abolished the concurrent legislative list of the constitution and devolved the subject of education to the provinces from the earlier joint responsibility of the federal and provincial governments. Following the principle of 'Finance follows Function', the federal government revised the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award through the 7th award, increasing provinces' share in the federal divisible pool taxes from 45% to 57.5%. The collection of certain taxes, including GST on Services, was also devolved to provinces, now serving as the main own-source revenue for the provinces.

Following the insertion of article 25-A and the devolution of powers to the provinces in 2010, the respective legislatures at the provincial/regional levels were expected to enact Right to Education acts as per the provincial responsibilities. However, provincial assemblies were inactive in introducing Right to Education legislation from their respective parliaments. The first Right to Education act was passed for the Islamabad Capital Territory in December 2012 as the 'Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2012'. Sindh parliament followed in March 2013 with 'The Sindh Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2013'. Balochistan parliament enacted 'The Balochistan Compulsory Education Act, 2014' in February 2014. Punjab enacted 'The Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2014' in October 2014. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the last province to enact 'The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act, 2017' in April 2017. The semi-

autonomous regions of Azad and Jammu Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) inserted article 25-A into to their own constitution and legal order, respectively, in 2018. However, these regions have no separate Right to Education acts. For a detailed critical review and gap analysis in the existing legislation regarding Right to Education at provincial and regional levels, see the policy paper published by Pakistan Coalition for Education²⁴.

National SDGs Framework, SDG Units, and the Focus on SDG-4

The insertion of Article 25-A in the constitution of Pakistan, along with the devolution of education to provinces and the introduction of Right to Education Acts in the majority of provinces closely preceded the launch of the 2015-2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) global agenda, laying the foundation for SDG adaptation in Pakistan. Pakistan was one of the first countries globally to endorse the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015²⁵. Pakistan's Parliament unanimously approved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the national development agenda on 16th February 2016. This commitment prompted the establishment of the Parliamentary SDGs Secretariat, a pivotal step in mainstreaming and localizing the SDGs²⁶ in Pakistan. A Parliamentary Taskforce on SDGs was also formed at the national level, as well as in the provincial assemblies of all the provinces.

In 2018, when the new elected government came in, approval was granted for the National SDGs Framework during a session of the highest policy forum, the National Economic Council (NEC), comprising of the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Chief Ministers of the four provinces²⁷. The proposed National Framework for SDGs has been developed through a meticulous process, including:

- i. Conducting a Data Gap Analysis Report to map SDG indicators, aiding in the establishment of baselines against national indicators.
- ii. Undertaking a national community-based survey across Pakistan to gather inputs from the public regarding their priorities for SDGs.
- iii. Employing a multi-criteria-based prioritization method considering evolving processes. This approach resulted in the identification of a set of targets and indicators as national priorities through an evidence-based model.

The national SDGs framework designates 'equitable quality education' as the main priority of SDGs in Pakistan, placing it in Category-I, which necessitates immediate policy intervention as desirable outcomes can be achieved within the short run. Additionally, it highlights other SDGs as priority areas that, while contributing to overall progress, directly impact the achievement of SDG-4. Those priority areas include:

- (i) Food security
- (ii) Improved nutrition and healthy life
- (iii) Improved drinking water and hygiene facilities
- (iv) Accelerating the rate of poverty reduction
- (v) Empowering women and girls
- (vi) Mitigating the climate impact and
- (vii) Building resilient infrastructure.

²⁴ Legislation on Right to Education in Pakistan: A Critical Review, Pakistan Coalition for Education.

<https://www.pcepak.org/publications/Critical-Analysis-Of-RTE-Legislation-In-Pakistan.pdf>

²⁵ <https://www.app.com.pk/national/pakistan-1st-country-to-accept-sdgs-as-national-development-agenda-romina/>

²⁶ https://na.gov.pk/en/pressrelease_detail.php?id=1821

²⁷ https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/report/National_SDGs_Framework_-_NEC_2018.pdf

Regarding SDG-4, the National Economic Council, through its approved National SDGs Framework of 2018, identified five (05) National Priority Targets, including 4.1, 4.5, 4.6, 4.a, 4.c , along with Indicators 4.1.1, 4.5.1, 4.6.1, 4.a.1, and 4.c.1. The National SDGs Framework delineates the required policy support for achieving these targets and indicators:

- I. Mandatory enrolment of all children.
- ii. Improvement of quality of education at all levels by establishing stringent quality assurance at all levels of education.
- iii. Review incentive structure for female enrolment at all levels.
- iv. Food voucher scheme for out of school children.
- v. Improve school infrastructure at all levels.
- vi. Introduction of technology for classroom instruction.
- vii. Establish school monitoring committees at district level with multi-stakeholder representation for more inclusive learning environment that includes children with special needs, culturally sensitive policy for girls, etc.

With the financial support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan, SDGs units were established at federal and all provincial/regional levels to coordinate efforts on achievement of all SDG targets including SDG-4 targets. However, there should have been separate SDG-4 units based in the federal and provincial ministries of education to better coordinate efforts for achieving progress on SDG-4 targets²⁸.

²⁸This was revealed to the TA team during consultative workshops held with the provincial and federal education ministries and departments.

Key actors in SDG4 implementation

At the national level, following key institutions²⁹ assume pivotal roles in advancing the objectives of SDG 4.

No.	Institution	Role/Responsibility
1	Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training	Formulates and implements federal education policies, addressing the overarching goals of SDG 4.
2	Federal Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms	Plays a role in the planning and development of educational strategies to align with SDG 4 objectives. It also hosts Federal SDG Units where it collaborates with UNDP to monitor progress on SDGs including SDG-4
3	Federal Ministry of Finance	Manages financial aspects related to education initiatives and ensures adequate budget allocations for SDG 4 implementation.
4	Federal Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety	A relatively new ministry at the federal level which runs Pakistan's largest social safety net programme with the name of Benazir Income Support Programme targeted at women members of the marginalized households. BISP also provide Waseela-e-Taleen cash transfer for education of under privileged kids and other emergency responses like to COVID-19, Floods etc.
5	Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs	Coordinates and oversees economic aspects related to education projects and programmes supporting SDG 4.
6	Ministry of Climate Change	Addresses environmental education aspects, promoting sustainability and environmental literacy.
7	Ministry of Human Rights	Ensures that educational policies uphold human rights principles, contributing to the inclusive and equitable education goals of SDG 4.
8	Ministry of National Health Services and Regulatory Authority	Collaborates on health education initiatives, integrating health and education.
9	National History and Literary Heritage Division	Preserves cultural and literary heritage, fostering a holistic educational approach.
10	Higher Education Commission	Focuses on higher education and research, contributing to the tertiary education goals of SDG 4.
11	National Education Assessment System (NEAS)	Assesses and evaluates the quality of education, ensuring that it aligns with SDG 4 standards.
12	National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTC)	Addresses vocational and technical education, supporting SDG 4's goal of providing diverse and inclusive educational opportunities.
13	National Commission for Child Welfare and Development	Works towards the welfare of children, ensuring their access to quality education.
14	National Commission on Status of Women	Focuses on gender equality in education, contributing to SDG 4 targets related to inclusive and equitable education for all.
15	National Commission for Human Development (NCHD)	Plays a crucial role in human development through education.
16	Pakistan Institute of Education formerly National Education Information System (NEMIS)	Manages and disseminates information related to education, supporting monitoring and evaluation efforts for SDG 4.
17	Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS)	Provides essential statistical data and information crucial for monitoring and evaluating progress towards SDG 4
18	National AIDS Control Programme (NACP)	Addresses health education aspects, including HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention

²⁹Briefing Paper Quality Education: SDG 4 and Role of Political Parties.
https://pildat.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/QualityEducation_SDG4andRoleofPoliticalParties.pdf?

The devolution of governance mechanisms empowered by the 18th Amendment, marked a significant shift of authority to provincial governments. This shift empowered provinces and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) to proactively formulate policies, sector plans, acts, and strategies. Sindh, Punjab, and the ICT have taken notable steps to fulfill this mandate. In the pursuit of achieving SDG-4 targets at the provincial levels in Pakistan, following departments and institution³⁰ play a key role:

No.	Institution	Role/Responsibility
1	Provincial Departments of Education/School Education	Formulate and implement education policies at the provincial level.
2	Provincial Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Departments or Directorates.	Promote literacy and non-formal basic education aligning with SDG 4 objectives.
3	Provincial Higher Education Departments, Provincial Higher Education Commissions (HECs)	Concentrate on higher education and research, contributing to SDG 4 tertiary education goals.
4	Provincial Special Education Departments	Address special education needs, ensuring inclusivity and equity in education.
5	Provincial Planning and Development Departments	Play a role in planning and developing educational strategies at the provincial level.
6	Provincial Finance Departments	Manage financial aspects related to education initiatives.
7	Provincial Technical Education and Vocational Training Authorities (TEVTAs)	Address vocational and technical education, supporting SDG 4's goal of providing diverse and inclusive educational opportunities.
8	Provincial Bureaus of Curriculum and Textbook Boards	Focus on curriculum development and textbook quality, aligning with SDG 4 objectives.
9	Provincial Institutes of Teacher Education (PITEs) or apex teacher education institutions at provincial levels (e.g., QAED in Punjab)	Contribute to teacher training and professional development, supporting the quality education objectives of SDG 4.
10	Provincial Women Development Departments	Address gender-related aspects in education, promoting inclusivity as outlined in SDG 4.
11	Provincial Education Assessment Centers (PEAC), Provincial Examination Commissions, and Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE)	Responsible for assessing and evaluating the quality of education, ensuring alignment with SDG 4 standards.
12	Provincial Health Departments	Collaborate on health education initiatives, integrating health and education components.
13	Provincial Bureaus of Statistics	Provide essential statistical data crucial for monitoring and evaluating progress towards SDG 4.

The Education Sector Plans and SDG-4

The most important documents to streamline provincial government education related priorities are the respective Education Sector Plans (ESPs) which all regional and provincial governments publish every 5 years. These plans guide the formulation of Annual Development Plans (ADPs), offering a comprehensive framework for project identification and execution. However, the priorities set in the ESP are seldom followed as political governments and their parliamentarians pursue personal interests in matters such as school construction, teacher recruitment, and the posting and transfers of teachers. There is a need to strictly adhere to the plans set in ESP if substantial progress toward achieving SDG-4 is to be realized.

³⁰ Briefing Paper Quality Education: SDG 4 and Role of Political Parties.
https://pildat.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/QualityEducation_SDG4andRoleofPoliticalParties.pdf?

Data Collection Authorities on SDG-4: Roles and Limitations

In the context of SDG-4 in Pakistan, the absence of a robust and centralized database for SDG-4 thematic indicators poses a significant challenge to comprehensive data collection. The responsibility for data collection falls on various authorities, each playing a distinct role within their mandates.

Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)

At the federal level, the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)³¹ of the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training is the main institution which collects and compiles data from all provincial and federal government departments. However, PIE lacks the requisite resources like statisticians and econometricians to compile and analyze data as per SDG-4 thematic indicator lists. For example, Pakistan Bureau of statistics (PBS) regularly collects Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement Survey (PSLMs), Household Integrated Economic Surveys (HIES) and Labor Force Survey (LFS) which is representative at provincial and even district levels. All sorts of parity indices (gender, rural-urban, provincial/district, wealth quantiles etc.) can be calculated from the micro-data sets uploaded to the PBS websites. However, due to lack of financial resources and professional expertise at PIE, the relevant parity indices cannot be calculated and thus are not reported. PIE, however, regularly compiles relevant administrative data (enrolments, teachers, missing facilities, etc.) collected from provincial and federal departments and secondary reports of PBS and other surveys. PIE compiles regular annual reports on Pakistan Education Statistics and has recently started collecting assessment data by conducting the National Achievement Test to capture learning outcomes of students across various grades in subjects such as Mathematics, English and others.

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS)

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) plays a vital role as a premier data-collecting agency operating under the Federal Ministry of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives (MPD&SI). It conducts crucial tasks such as population censuses and household surveys, including PSLM, HIES and LFS, which encompass relevant indicators for SDG-4 targets. The recently concluded 2023 population census, conducted digitally and utilizing GIS coordinates, has yielded a rich dataset. Unfortunately, detailed datasets are not yet public, and census reports are published with a noticeable lag. Addressing this data lag is essential to leverage the information collected for tracking various SDG-4 indicators, such as calculating the number of Out-of-School Children.

While PBS's collection of household surveys contains valuable datasets, PBS has shifted only slowly from MDGs to SDGs, with many SDG-4 indicator variables not being published in secondary reports. Strengthening PBS is important to facilitate a more seamless transition from MDGs monitoring to SDG monitoring. This enhancement is crucial for Pakistan to effectively track progress toward SDG-4 within the remaining timeframe of the 2030 SDGs Agenda.

³¹ <http://www.neas.gov.pk/index>

Provincial/Regional School Education Departments

Provincial and regional school education departments serve as crucial repositories of administrative data pertaining to primary and secondary schools. These departments collect Annual School Census (ACS) Reports containing comprehensive information on schools, including enrolment data, teacher availability, existing and missing facilities, and other important administrative data. Some provinces even collect rich real-time data, offering a valuable source for SDG-4 indicators and providing an evidence-based foundation to support policymaking. Moreover, select provinces have conducted surveys on out-of-school children, providing qualitative insights into the reasons behind the phenomenon.

Provincial/Regional Bureaus of Statistics

Provincial Bureaus of Statistics (BoS) play a vital role in collecting various quantitative and qualitative survey data related to education indicators, including several relevant to SDG-4. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) is one such household survey conducted by all provincial and regional governments, encompassing essential socio-economic indicators, including those aligned with SDG-4. However, a challenge arises as the survey tools differ among provinces, preventing direct comparison or amalgamation for analysis. Additionally, variations in the survey years across provinces hinder seamless data comparison. There is a need for inter-provincial coordination to compile comparable data. A federal-level initiative in the form of the Data Standardization Framework (DSF) is currently underway, with expectations that concrete steps will be taken in this regard in the year 2024 and beyond.

Other Data Collecting Organizations

UNDP serves as the focal agency for overall reporting on SDGs, with specific UN Agencies like UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, UN Women, and UNIDO focusing on data and information related to SDG 4. Nationally, government organizations including the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Planning Commission, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Higher Education Commission, National Education Information System (NEMIS) or PIE, National Education Assessment System (NEAS), NAVTTC, and Provincial Departments of School Education, Higher Education, Special Education, and Literacy and NFE Departments contribute to data collection efforts. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as ASER, also play a significant role in compiling and disseminating education-related data³².

Limitations

While these sources provide valuable insights, challenges like data fragmentation across ministries and coordination issues persist. Additionally, the reliance on parliamentary questions, standing committees, and websites underscores both the need for improved data accessibility and the diverse avenues available for political parties to seek information on the status of SDG 4 and the government's efforts in this context.

³² Briefing Paper Quality Education: SDG 4 and Role of Political Parties.
https://pildat.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/QualityEducation_SDG4andRoleofPoliticalParties.pdf?

Revision to National SDG Framework/Strategies and Indicators

A review of Pakistan's SDG 4 benchmark submissions suggests that SDG 4 is unlikely to be achieved by 2030. This mid-term review is an attempt to analyse the trend in progress to achieve SDG-4 and suggest policies to accelerate the progress on achieving SDG-4 targets. In that sense, the benchmark-setting process is the clearest indication of country commitment to the SDG 4 Agenda. The process of establishing benchmarks has to simultaneously identify common challenges to progress and various ways to address them. Moreover, the process will serve as a stark reminder to all the stakeholders at national and provincial levels of the importance of setting national education targets and properly financing them, particularly in the face of the difficulties brought upon the sector by COVID-19 and 2022 floods.

The Asia-Pacific region currently has sub-regional average benchmark values for each of the indicators for 2025 and 2030. Initially, 5 priority policy areas were identified which includes basic education, pre-primary, teachers, expenditure and equity. At total of 20 benchmark values for 7 benchmark indicators were identified. Later on, the region also identified four additional indicators which are relevant for purposes of benchmarking. This increased the total benchmark values to a total of 24.

This report sets the values for 2025 and 2030 on the basis of progress achieved since 2015-16 till 2021-22. These values for 2025 and 2030 needs to be revisited by MoFEPT in coordination with the Provincial and regional governments. A proper monitoring mechanism should be established at the Inter Provincial Education Ministers Conference (IPEMC) for effective implementation to achieve the targets set for 2025 and 2030.

No	Bench Mark		Baseline 2015-16	Current	2025	2030	Source
	Indicator	Values					
1	1.a.2/FF A	Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP	2.7%	1.7% (2021-22)	4.0%	4.0%	1. Economic Survey of Pakistan 2. Global SDG-4 Target
2		Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education)	11.2%	8.1% (2022-23)	20.0 %	20.0 %	1. Economic Survey of Pakistan 2. Global SDG-4 Target
3	4.1.1	Reading in Grade 2/3	-	-	-	-	
4		Reading at the end of Primary	-	30% (2019)	36.0 %	41.0 %	TIMSS 2019, NAT 2019
5		Reading at the end of Lower Secondary	-	34% (2019)	40.0 %	45.0 %	TIMSS 2019, NAT 2019
6		Mathematics in Grade 2/3	-	-	-	-	
7		Mathematics at the end of Primary	-	27% (2019)	33.0 %	38.0 %	TIMSS 2019, NAT 2019
8		Mathematics at the end of Lower Secondary	-	29% (2019)	35.0 %	40.0 %	TIMSS 2019, NAT 2019

No	Bench Mark		Baseline 2015-16	Current	2025	2030	Source
	Indicator	Values					
9	4.1.2	Completion rate of Primary	67.0%	67% (2019-20)	73.0 %	78.0 %	PSLM Survey 2014-15 and 2019-20
10		Completion rate of Lower Secondary	50.0%	47% (2019-20)	53.0 %	58.0 %	PSLM Survey 2014-15 and 2019-20
11		Completion rate of Upper Secondary	21.0%	23% (2019-20)	29.0 %	34.0 %	PSLM Survey 2014-15 and 2019-20
12	4.1.4	OOSC Rate of Primary	-	35.6% (2021-22)	31.0 %	26.0 %	National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE.
13		OOSC Rate of Lower Secondary	-	29.7% (2021-22)	26.0 %	21.0 %	National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
14		OOSC Rate of Upper Secondary	-	52.8% (2021-22)	46.0 %	41.0 %	National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
15	4.2.2	Participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age	28.0%	28.1% (2021-22)	32.0 %	37.0 %	1. PSLM Household Level Survey, PBS 2. National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
16	4.3.1	Participation rate of youth in formal and non-formal education and training	28.8%	29.9% (2021-22)	30.5 %	33.8 %	Labor Force Surveys, PBS
17		Participation rate of adults in formal and non-formal education and training	-	0.4% (2018-19)	0.5%	0.6%	Labor Force Surveys, PBS
18	4.3.2	Gross enrolment rate for tertiary education	8.9%	12.6% (2020-21)	16.5 %	23.2 %	UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)
19	4.3.3	Participation rate in technical vocational education program	-	1.0% (2021)	1.1%	1.2%	UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)
20	4.5.1	4.5.1 Gender gap in upper secondary completion	2.0%	2.0% (2019)	1.0%	0.0%	PSLM Survey 2014-15 and 2019-20
21	4.c.1	Pre-Primary: Teachers with minimum required qualifications	-	-	-	-	
22		Primary: Teachers with minimum required qualifications	96.3%	96.6% (2021-22)	98.1 %	100.0 %	1. Pakistan Education Statistics, 2015-16, AEPAM 2. National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
23		Lower Secondary: Teachers with minimum required qualifications	83.7%	90.3% (2021-22)	94.6 %	100.0 %	1. Pakistan Education Statistics, 2015-16, AEPAM 2. National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE

No	Bench Mark		Baseline 2015-16	Current	2025	2030	Source
	Indicator	Values					
24		Upper Secondary: Teachers with minimum required qualifications	82.5%	90.6% (2021-22)	94.8 %	100.0 %	1. Pakistan Education Statistics, 2015-16, AEPAM 2. National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
25		The per cent of students in Tertiary Education in STEM field	-	-	-	-	

Way Forward

After February 2024 elections, new provincial and federal governments will be sworn in late February or early March 2024. With the publication of Pakistan Education Statistics 2021-22 and this MTR report, it is already making headlines on Out of School Children and other education related SDG-4 Indicators. Civil society and international partner organization with a focus on education have already taken initiatives to further disseminate the findings to increase awareness regarding achieving progress on SDG-4. It is expected that the next provincial and national governments will utilize these reports towards improved ESPs that can help in achieving SDG-4 progress. Federal Government is expected to provide enabling environment through improved economic performance so that additional resources can be mobilized and channeled towards provincial governments. Concerted efforts from provincial and regional governments are needed to formulate policies regarding SDG-4 adaptations in their priorities.

National SDG-4 Assessment Based on Targets

This chapter provides a detailed assessment of each SDG-4 target as adopted by Pakistan and as considered relevant in the regional and national context of Pakistan. The analysis is based on a comprehensive desk review, encompassing acts, legislations, policies, strategies, sector plans and annual development plans. Additionally, stakeholder feedback was gathered through regional workshops conducted in November and December 2023. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with education related stakeholders were also conducted to validate the findings in desk review and stakeholders' workshops. These consultative measures were implemented to address the information gaps identified in the desk review of online sources and official websites. The consultative workshops involved key stakeholders from relevant provincial government departments including E&SE, P&D, EMIS, SDG Support Unit and other relevant stakeholders from the government and non-governmental sectors. On average, each provincial/regional workshop engaged more than 25 officials in day-long sessions, eliciting valuable insights on each SDG-4 target.

Status of the Availability of SDG-4 Thematic Indicators 2015-16 to 2021-22

Year	Available	Partially Available	Not Available	Total
2015-16	16	1	29	46
2018-19	20	1	25	46
2021-22	25	2	19	46

Target Wise Status of SDG-4 Indicators 2015-16 to 2021-22

Target	Available	Partially Available	Not Available	Total
4.1	10	-	-	10
4.2	2	1	2	5
4.3	3	-	-	3
4.4	2	-	1	3
4.5	2	1	3	6
4.6	1	-	1	2
4.7	1	-	4	5
4.a	3	-	1	4
4.b	1	-	-	1
4.c	4	-	3	7
Total*	29	2	15	46

*There are 25 indicators available for the year 2021-22, with the remaining four indicators reported from previous years.

Data sources used in calculation of values against indicators:

- Pakistan Education Statistical Reports, NEMIS, PIE
- National Assessment Reports, NAW, PIE
- EMIS National Databases, NEMIS, PIE
- National Assessment Wing (NAW) Databases, NAW, PIE
- National Curriculum Council, MOFE&PT
- National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC)
- Higher Education Commission (HEC)
- PSLM, Labor Force Reports, PBS
- Economic Survey of Pakistan, Ministry of Finance
- SDGs Reports/ Dashboard, Ministry of Planning and Development
- GEM Reports, UNESCO
- SDG-4 Dashboard, UIS

The computation of values for thematic indicators also includes data from the following categories of institutions:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 1. Provincial/ Area Education Departments | 5. Colleges |
| 2. Other Public Sector (Public Institutions run by other than Provincial/Area Education Departments) | 6. Special Education |
| 3. Private Schools | 7. Non-Formal Education |
| 4. Education Foundation (Public Private partnership) | 8. Deeni Madaris |
| | 9. Technical and Vocational |
| | 10. Universities |

Indicator FFA*: Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP

Pakistan's commitment to education, relative to its national economic wealth, is discernible through its government spending on education as a percentage of GDP. The Education 2030 Framework for Action recognizes this indicator as a key benchmark for evaluating government investment in education, with the optimal range being set between 4% to 6% of expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP.

Analyzing the trend in government expenditure as a percentage of GDP in Pakistan from 2006-07 to 2022-23 reveals insightful patterns. During the period from 2006-07 to 2010-11, Pakistan's government expenditure on education stagnated around 1.8% of GDP. Subsequently, from fiscal year 2011-12 onwards until 2018-19, there was an improvement in the ration exceeding 2%, and reaching its peak at 2.20% in 2014-15. However, in the last four years, the ratio has been below 2%.

The notable spike in 2011-12 can be attributed to the landmark 18th constitutional amendment in 2010 which not only devolved education to the provinces but also revised the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award formula, increasing the provincial share in federal resources from 45% to 57.5%. Before passing of the 18th constitutional amendment, federal resource transfers to provinces averaged around 3.7% of GDP from 2006-07 to 2009-10. Post-amendment, during 2010-11 to 2022-23, these transfers surged to 5.2% of GDP. Consequently, there was an enhancement in fiscal space for provinces, translating into increased government spending on education.

Disaggregated data of government expenditure as a percentage of GDP by level of education as available with the Federal Ministry of Finance is reported in the table on indicator* below for the period 2015-16 to 2021-22³³. The data shows almost equal government expenditure across three education levels: primary, secondary, and tertiary. However, when considering per capita expenditure for students enrolled at each education level, significant disparities emerge. Primary education receives the least public funding, while tertiary education receives the highest.

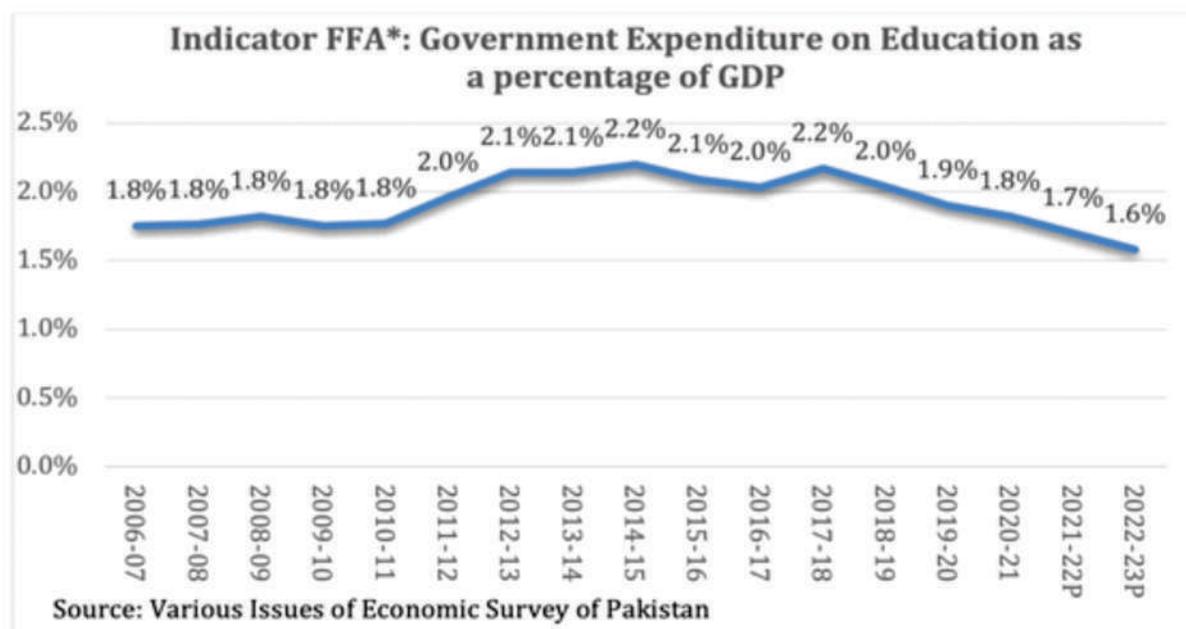
This financial distribution highlights a crucial issue in Pakistan's education system—the persistent challenge of single-teacher, single-room primary schools. This obstacle impedes the progress of primary school students into higher grades. Addressing this problem is essential for ensuring the continuity of education for children at the primary level and fostering their academic advancement.

³³The data given here at Ministry of Finance website does not specify if the expenditure on each level of education is the age cohort of each level of education or is expenditure on the school level which may have multiple level of education in a single school. High Schools are for example enrolling kids from pre-primary to the high level of education
https://www.finance.gov.pk/poverty/PRSP_Expenditure_FY_2020_21_FY_2021_22.pdf .

Indicator *: Government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP ³⁴			
Year	Value	Year	Value
2006-07	1.75%	2015-16	2.09%
2007-08	1.76%	2016-17	2.03%
2008-09	1.82%	2017-18	2.17%
2009-10	1.75%	2018-19	2.04%
2010-11	1.77%	2019-20	1.95%
2011-12	1.96%	2020-21	1.82%
2012-13	2.14%	2021-22 ^P	1.70%
2013-14	2.14%	2022-23 ^P	1.58%
2014-15	2.20%	-	-

P= Provisional

Source: Various Issues of Economic Survey of Pakistan, Ministry of Finance, Islamabad



³⁴ Federal Ministry of Finance report education financing figures in its economic surveys and Poverty Reduction strategy Paper (PRSP) documents. Major portion of the data comes from the provinces. The data on the education budget is partially incomplete as many entries are missing. The data also does not include government education financing of the semi-autonomous region of Gilgit Baltistan. Overall, we may be missing on 0.1 to 0.2 percent of education expenditure on GDP in our overall ratio.

Indicator*: Government expenditure on education as % of GDP, by level of education					
Year	Primary	Secondary	Technical and Vocational	Tertiary and Others	Total
2015-16	0.71%	0.64%	0.03%	0.71%	2.09%
2016-17	0.67%	0.59%	0.03%	0.73%	2.03%
2017-18	0.70%	0.70%	0.02%	0.75%	2.17%
2018-19	0.69%	0.69%	0.02%	0.64%	2.04%
2019-20	0.66%	0.66%	0.02%	0.61%	1.95%
2020-21	0.57%	0.62%	0.02%	0.61%	1.82%
2021-22	0.54%	0.58%	0.02%	0.56%	1.70%

Source: Economic Survey of Pakistan and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers

Indicator 1.a.2(*): Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education)

Pakistan's federation structure consists of a federal government at the center with four provincial governments (Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan) and two regional semi-autonomous governments (Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir). Primary and secondary education is devolved to provinces while higher education is a shared responsibility between provincial and federal government. Budget allocation to primary and secondary education is the main responsibility of provincial and regional governments while federal government allocates funds to primary and secondary education only in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

The Education 2030 Framework for Action has endorsed a benchmark for Indicator 1.a.2 where it encourages countries to allocate at least 15% to 20% of their public expenditure to education. Pakistan's education is a devolved subject to the provinces; data in the table on Indicator 1.a.2 shows that all provincial and regional governments are spending more than 20 percent of their budget on education. Before the 18th constitutional amendment, the province of Balochistan was spending around 15.8% of its budget on education which has improved since the introduction of 7th NFC Award in 2010 where Balochistan's share in the total federal resources increased substantially. Currently, all provinces largest budget head is spending on primary, secondary and tertiary education which shows the provincial government commitment to improvement in education related outcomes.

The federal government's allocation to education expenditure is constrained by its limited responsibility for primary and secondary education, which extends solely to the ICT.). Despite the federal government's budget being more than twice the combined budgetary expenditures of all provincial governments, its primary financial commitments are directed towards debt servicing, defense spending, development initiatives, and the operational costs of the federal government.

This financial distribution highlights a crucial issue in Pakistan's education system—the persistent challenge of single-teacher, single-room primary schools. This obstacle impedes the progress of primary school students into higher grades. Addressing this problem is

³³The data given here at Ministry of Finance website does not specify if the expenditure on each level of education is the age cohort of each level of education or is expenditure on the school level which may have multiple level of education in a single school. High Schools are for example enrolling kids from pre-primary to the high level of education
https://www.finance.gov.pk/poverty/PRSP_Expenditure_FY_2020_21_FY_2021_22.pdf .

essential for ensuring the continuity of education for children at the primary level and fostering their academic advancement.

In terms of development spending, the federal government collaborates with provincial governments by implementing special programmes and interventions aimed at improving the state of primary and secondary education in Pakistan. Noteworthy initiatives include a Rs 25 billion allocation for enrolling out-of-school children, an annual Rs 300 billion allocation benefiting over 7 million marginalized households to improve health and education outcomes, and a Rs 40 billion programme dedicated to improving socio-economic conditions in the 20 least developed districts across Pakistan.

However, the overall allocation to education in the federal government budget remains relatively low, averaging around 2% annually from 2015-16 to 2022-23. This results in the consolidated federal and provincial government allocation to the education sector averaging around 10% annually during the same period.

The resource allocation is insufficient to address the needs of a growing youth population (see chapter 1). Government schools, colleges and universities grapple with persistent challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of teachers, difficulties in free book distribution, transportation limitations, and inadequate sport facilities and other commitments promised by provincial governments under the respective Right to Free and Compulsory Education Acts.

Moreover, governance challenges within provincial education departments hinder efficient utilization of available resources. Problems such as the existence of a large number of non-functional schools and the prevalence of single-teacher, single-room primary schools persist without resolution.

Indicator 1.a.2: Proportion of total government spending on essential services (education), by level of Government									
Region	2009-10	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Pakistan	8.2%	11.2%	10.4%	11.1%	10.6%	9.3%	9.5%	8.3%	8.1%
Provinces/Regions									
Federal	2.04%	3.04%	2.48%	2.70%	2.24%	1.68%	1.73%	0.62%	1.23%
Punjab	24.6%	25.4%	22.6%	24.0%	27.1%	25.4%	26.1%	23.9%	21.2%
Sindh	21.1%	22.9%	19.5%	19.6%	21.3%	21.9%	20.9%	18.4%	21.4%
KP	28.8%	31.2%	31.2%	31.9%	32.3%	30.4%	31.5%	33.0%	29.3%
Balochistan	15.8%	21.5%	19.4%	21.1%	22.3%	19.3%	20.6%	20.4%	19.0%
AJK	-	27.0%	28.8%	20.8%	20.5%	21.0%	19.8%	21.0%	19.3%
GB	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Source: Various issues of Economic Survey of Pakistan and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) of Ministry of Finance, Islamabad									

Target 4.1: Free Primary and Secondary Education

Target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcome.

Progress on indicators for SDG-4 Target 4.1 in Pakistan since 2015

Indicator 4.1.0: Proportion of Children/Young people prepared for future, by Sex.

Indicator 4.1.0 is a combination of data from two other SDG-4 indicators, namely 4.1.1 and 4.1.2. Indicator 4.1.1 focuses on assessing the achievement of minimum proficiency in selected subjects across various education levels, while indicator 4.1.2 provides information on the completion rate for specific education levels.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) has recently published regional averages and country estimates, including data for Pakistan, for indicator 4.1.0 for the first time in the September 2022 data release. According to the UIS data report for Pakistan in the year 2019, the proportion of children and young people at the age of primary education prepared for the future in mathematics is reported at 3.99%.

Breaking down the data by gender, the UIS report indicates that the preparedness for the future in mathematics is slightly higher for boys, standing at 4.06%. In comparison, for girls, the reported value is slightly lower at 3.93%.

However, the values reported in the 'Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2019' report published in January 2020³⁵ and the estimates provided by the National Assessment Wing (NAW) of PIE under the MoFEPT appear to be on the higher side. We have derived values for indicator 4.1.0 based on the data provided by the National Assessment Wing of the PIE³⁶.

Indicator 4.1.0: Proportion of children/young people prepared for the future, by sex ³⁷					
Region/Country	End of Primary (Grade 4 English Reading)	End of Primary (Grade 4 Mathematics)	End of Lower Secondary (Grade 8 Mathematics)	End of Lower Secondary (Grade 8 Sindhi Reading)	End of Lower Secondary (Grade 8 Urdu Reading)
Pakistan (2019)	20.1%	18.1%	13.6%	22.1%	16.0%

Source: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2019 and National Assessment Wing (NAW) 2019, PIE

According to the data in indicator 4.1.0, percentage of children who have completed and attained minimum proficiency in English at the end of primary (Grade 4) was at 20.1% in 2019. The score for the same level Mathematics is 18.1% in 2019. Similarly, 13.6% of children have both completed and attained minimum proficiency in Grade 8 mathematics while the ratio stands at 16.0% for grade 4 Urdu (National Language) reading. The ratio increases to 22.1% when the reading proficiency in mother tongue/regional language was

³⁵ <http://www.neas.gov.pk/Publications>

³⁶ A brief explanation of the variations in the values reported here with those of UIS are explained in the section on Indicator 4.1.1 in the current report.

³⁷ Note: Disaggregated on gender is not available

assessed for grade 8 children. To improve the proportion of children/young people prepared for the future, federal and provincial governments have to focus on both improving the completion rate at all levels of education and improving the learning outcomes.

There is also a need to improve the quality of the National Assessment Test (NAT) which should be brought in line with the SDG-4 Indicator 4.1.1. Previously, NAT scores have been reported on a scale of 0 to 1000 with a mean of 500, instead of proficiency levels. There was a shift in reporting NAT scores to proficiency levels according to the Global Proficiency Framework for NAT 2019 results. However, challenges persist, as preliminary results of the NAT 2023 available on the PIE website³⁸ lack interpretability according to the standards set by UIS.

Indicator 4.1.1: Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (I) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) has recently published regional averages and country estimates, including data for Pakistan, for indicator 4.1.1 for the first time in the September 2022 data release. According to UIS data report for Pakistan for the year 2019, 7.51% of students at the end of primary education achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics. The gender differences, as per UIS data report, shows that the same value stands at 7.56% for boys while stands at 7.54% for the girls.

National Assessment Wing (NAW) of PIE adopted the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF) which describes the minimum proficiency levels expected globally for students in grades one to nine in reading and mathematics. This framework, developed through collaboration with 80 international stakeholders, categorizes proficiency into four levels: (i) Below Partially Meets, (ii) Partially Meets, (iii) Meets, and (iv) Exceeds Global Minimum Proficiency. These levels provide a standardized scale from low to high achievement, established in a 2018 workshop.

The table below presents values calculated by NAW for the year 2019 on indicator 4.1.1. The results indicate that approximately 30% of children at the end of primary (grade 4) achieve the minimum proficiency level in English reading, indicating a moderate grasp of fundamental reading skills in a second/foreign language. However, mathematics poses a more significant challenge, with only 27% of students at the end of primary achieving minimum proficiency, signifying a potential obstacle in comprehending mathematical concepts.

While there is a slight improvement in mathematics proficiency to 29% by Grade 8, this progress remains below the English reading performance of younger children. In contrast, students perform better in their national language, Urdu³⁹, with 34% achieving proficiency in reading at this stage. The proportion of children at the end of lower secondary level achieving minimum proficiency in the mother language, Sindhi (spoken in the province of Sindh), is 47%, significantly higher than the proportion achieving minimum proficiency in Urdu reading at end of lower secondary grade.

³⁸ <https://pie.gov.pk/TopStoryDetail>

³⁹ Urdu is the national language of Pakistan but is mother tongue of only 7 percent of population as per 2017 population census. Majority languages spoken in Pakistan are regional languages including Punjabi (38.8%), Pashto (18.2%), Sindhi (14.6%), Seraiki (12.2%), Balochi (3.0%), Hindku (2.4%), Brahvi (1.2%), Kashmiri (0.2%) and other languages (2.3%).

Indicator 4.1.1: Proportion of children and young people (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex ⁴⁰					
Region	End of Primary (Grade 4 English Reading)	End of Primary (Grade 4 Mathematics)	End of Lower Secondary (Grade 8 Mathematics)	End of Lower Secondary (Grade 8 Sindhi Reading)	End of Lower Secondary (Grade 8 Urdu Reading)
Pakistan (2019)	30.0%	27.0%	29.0%	47.0%	34.0%
Source: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2019 and National Assessment Wing (NAW) 2019, PIE					

An unpublished UNICEF study⁴¹ on Language Policy in Balochistan conducted in 2022 emphasizes the importance of leveraging children's initial language proficiency by gradually introducing second and foreign languages while using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in primary education. According to the study, the recommendation is to employ the mother tongue as the medium of instruction from ECE to grade 5. Urdu, the national language, should be introduced as a separate subject at grade 3. From grades 6 to 8, with the medium of instruction should transition to Urdu with the mother tongue retained as a separate subject. English as a foreign language should be introduced as a separate subject. Similarly, for grades 9 to 12, English should become the medium of Instruction while keeping Urdu as a compulsory subject and the mother tongue as an elective subject. Other secondary research on the medium of instruction and introduction of other languages as subjects are in line with the findings of the unpublished UNICEF study on Balochistan.

The implementation of the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP)⁴² primarily aims to achieve minimum proficiency levels in basic literacy and numeracy skills among students. As part of this initiative, the proficiency level of grade-5 students is linked to the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF) in collaboration with the American International Research (AIR), supported by the World Bank and the Punjab Examination Commission (PEC). This collaboration aims to establish and assess minimum proficiency levels in basic literacy and numeracy skills, aligning educational standards with global benchmarks. The involvement of international partners, such as AIR and the World Bank, underscores the commitment to ensuring a robust educational framework that equips students to meet international standards in essential academic competencies.

Indicator 4.1.2*: Completion Rate (Primary Education, Lower Secondary education, Upper Secondary Education)

The table on indicator 4.1.2 gives a comparative analysis of progress in completion rates from 2014-15 to 2019-20. This analysis is followed by a concise overview of key factors influencing progress across various dimensions of completion rates.

Data on completion rates at primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels is sourced from the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) survey conducted by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). The age cohorts 13 to 15 years for primary school completion, 16 to 18 years for lower secondary school completion (grade 8), and 16 to 18 years for upper secondary school completion (grade 10) were queried about their completion status on the table breaks down completion rates at primary, lower secondary and upper

⁴⁰ No recent data is available for 4.1.1. Also gender disaggregated data is not available.

⁴¹ UNICEF study on Balochistan Language Policy will be published in 2024 by UNICEF.

⁴² Formerly known as Single National Curriculum

secondary levels, with further disaggregation based on gender, rural-urban classification and provinces. Notably, completion rates tend to decrease with each progression to higher grades. Over the observed period from 2014-15 to 2019-20, primary level completion remains constant at 67%, while lower secondary completion declines from 50% to 47%. Upper secondary completion rates increased from 21% in 2014-15 to 23% in 2019-20. It should be noted that the 2019-20 data was collected in March 2020 and does not account for the impact of COVID-19.

Indicator 4.1.2: Completion Rate (Primary Education, Lower Secondary Education, Upper Secondary Education)						
Region/Gender	Primary		Lower Secondary		Upper Secondary*	
	2014-15	2019-20	2014-15	2019-20	2014-15	2019-20
Pakistan	66.8%	66.6%	49.5%	47.5%	21.5%	23.0%
Rural-Urban and Male-Female Disparity						
Rural	60.7%	61.0%	41.8%	40.5%	14.5%	16.6%
Male	67.5%	67.5%	50.4%	46.8%	16.3%	17.7%
Female	53.0%	53.6%	32.2%	33.1%	12.7%	15.5%
Urban	78.4%	77.1%	63.4%	59.2%	32.3%	33.1%
Male	78.1%	77.2%	64.6%	59.9%	26.7%	29.3%
Female	78.8%	76.9%	62.0%	58.3%	37.8%	37.2%
Gender Disparity						
Male	71.1%	70.9%	55.5%	51.8%	20.4%	22.3%
Female	62.2%	61.8%	42.9%	42.5%	22.5%	23.7%
Provincial/Regional Disparity						
Punjab	69.0%	72.4%	52.4%	53.0%	20.7%	24.2%
Male	70.2%	74.0%	56.9%	55.1%	18.3%	19.9%
Female	67.8%	70.8%	47.9%	50.8%	22.9%	28.5%
KP	69.6%	67.0%	50.5%	47.2%	19.8%	21.8%
Male	81.8%	79.1%	65.9%	58.7%	25.2%	27.9%
Female	54.0%	52.9%	32.1%	33.6%	14.6%	15.7%
Sindh	61.9%	56.1%	45.4%	38.5%	25.9%	23.3%
Male	66.7%	60.1%	49.2%	42.7%	23.9%	25.4%
Female	56.6%	51.1%	40.5%	33.0%	28.0%	21.1%
Balochistan	58.2%	48.1%	33.3%	30.0%	11.0%	13.1%
Male	65.8%	55.4%	44.2%	37.5%	13.4%	15.6%
Female	46.4%	37.8%	16.4%	18.2%	8.0%	9.8%
* Includes Grade 9 and 10 only						
Source: PSLM Survey 2014-15 and 2019-20						

Significant urban-rural disparities exist in completion rates across all schooling levels, with urban completion rates surpassing those in rural areas. This discrepancy is largely attributed to high prevalence of poverty and limited access in rural areas (refer to chapter 1). In rural localities, both boys and girls contribute to household income through child labor in agriculture and other non-formal sectors. On the supply side, school infrastructure in rural areas is scattered and the distance to schools is significantly greater than in urban areas. Provincial disparities in completion rates are also substantial, with Punjab performing better while Balochistan's performance is the weakest among all provinces. One contributing factor is the flawed criterion for distribution of resources among provinces, which was solely based on population until the introduction of multiple criteria in 2010 through the 7th NFC Award.

The revised 7th NFC Award considers, in addition to population, factors such as poverty, inverse population density and resource contribution. This inclusive approach has notably benefited provinces, including Balochistan, by facilitating greater resource transfers. While the impact of increased fund availability is anticipated, it is expected to become more evident in the coming years. Another distinct challenge in Balochistan is the issue of access due to its dispersed population spread across a large geographical area.

Gender disparities in completion rates favor boys at the primary and lower secondary levels but girls surpass boys at the upper secondary level. This discrepancy is influenced by the relatively fewer schools for girls at the primary and middle levels, compounded by cultural barriers that restrict girls' movement, hindering their ability to complete their education. However, a significant intervention in the form of girls' stipend programmes introduced by all provinces, has played a crucial role in enhancing completion rates among school going girls in Pakistan, with positive spillover effects on boys' completion rates⁴³.

In **Punjab**, a stipend scheme was first launched in 2003 and then again in 2013, providing Rs. 600 per quarter to each girl of secondary school age⁴⁴. Girls who received the stipends were more likely to stay in school, stay enrolled through middle school, and transition into high school. The programme also reduced the prevalence of child marriages and early pregnancies. Girls who benefited from the programme postponed marriage until they were approximately 1.5 years older than their non-beneficiary peers⁴⁵. Currently 550,000 students are beneficiaries of the girls' stipend programme with an annual budget ranging from Rs 5.5 billion to Rs 6.0 billion⁴⁶. This initiative stands as a significant driver for improving educational outcomes, particularly for girls, and underscores the importance of targeted interventions in addressing gender disparities in education.

Additionally in Punjab, the Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014, specifically Article 3 of Chapter II, guarantees the right to free and compulsory education from class one to ten, encompassing non-formal and vocational education. Initiatives implemented since 2015, such as school upgradation, Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models, and special camps, are actively working towards enhancing completion rates across different education levels. The stipend programme was introduced in **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa** in 2006. On 23 November 2023, the KP caretaker government extended the stipend programme for secondary school girls up to 2025 for the girl students at schools in the merged districts. The cabinet approved the extension of the monthly stipend programme for girl students from classes VI to XII⁴⁷. In KP, the provision of free textbooks was also introduced. However, financial challenges affected this initiative, underscoring the necessity of addressing resource constraints to effectively meet the targets for completion rate.

In 2020, the **Balochistan** Government also formulated an ambitious Rs 1.2 billion stipend programme for girl students to boost the female literacy rate. However, the programme could not be launched due to financial resource constraints. Under the proposed programme, the Balochistan government-initiated payment of Rs. 500 to every girl at the middle level, Rs. 800 in secondary school and Rs. 1,000 at the intermediate level⁴⁸.

⁴³ <https://thesis.eur.nl/pub/46778/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.sparcpk.org/images/Pubs-Thumb/DAI%20English%20School%20Stipend%20Report.pdf>

⁴⁵ <http://millionssaved.cgdev.org/case-studies/punjab-female-school-stipend-program>

⁴⁶ <https://www.pesrp.edu.pk/girls-stipend-program/>

⁴⁷ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/1131912-kp-govt-extends-stipend-programme-for-school-girls>

⁴⁸ <https://www.quettavoice.com/2020/10/02/stipend-for-girls-students-in-balochistan-to-boost-female-literacy/#:~:text=Under%20the%20proposed%20program%2C%20the,1000%20at%20the%20intermediate%20level.>

Baluchistan has also strategically focused on continuous professional development for teachers and rationalization of teaching staff since 2015, aiming to improve completion rates in primary and secondary education. The ongoing implementation of the Balochistan Education Sector Plan (2020-25) provides further support in making progress towards SDG targets.

The Reform Support Unit of the **Sindh** School Education and Literacy Department, recently announced to distribute annual stipends for girl students enrolled in Government secondary schools. The stipend amount for eligible girl students of sixth, ninth, and tenth classes of all government middle schools and secondary schools across Sindh is Rs 3,500. Disbursement of these stipends was initiated on 24 July 2023.⁴⁹

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Government is actively addressing completion rates in primary and secondary education by focusing on improving and providing missing facilities and infrastructure.

Indicator 4.1.3: Gross intake ratio to the last grade (primary education, lower secondary education)

The National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) has, for the first-time, calculated values for indicator 4.1.3 from its EMIS database for the year 2021-22.⁵⁰ This indicator serves as a proxy measure for primary or lower secondary completion, assessing the impact of policies and programmes on access and completion at the primary and lower secondary levels.

The data for the year 2021-22 shows that, at the primary level, the overall gross intake ratio for Pakistan is reported as 65%, with males showing a slightly higher ratio at 69%, and females lagging behind at 61%. Regional disparities are evident, with Punjab leading in primary gross intake at 74%, followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) at 68%, Sindh at 55%, and Balochistan at 35%.

Moving on to lower secondary education, the overall gross intake ratio for Pakistan is 47%, reflecting a decline from the primary level. Once again, males have a higher ratio (49%) compared to females (45%), emphasizing the persistence of gender disparities in access to education beyond the primary level. Provincial variations persist, with Punjab having the highest gross intake ratio at 54%, followed by KP at 50%, Sindh at 35%, and Balochistan at 20%.

4.1.3: Gross Intake Ratio to the Last Grade (Primary, Lower Secondary), 2021-22		
Region/Gender	Primary	Lower Secondary
Pakistan	65%	47%
Gender Disparity		
Male	69%	49%
Female	61%	45%
Provincial/Regional Disparity		
Punjab	74%	54%
KP	68%	50%
Sindh	55%	35%
Balochistan	35%	20%
Source : National EMIS Data base 2021 -22, PIE		

⁴⁹ <https://www.eduvisioin.edu.pk/scholarships/sindh-govt-announces-3500-stipend-for-girls-in-schools-scholar-611#:~:text=The%20stipend%20will%20be%20given,started%20from%2024th%20July%202023.>

⁵⁰ The data on this and all other SDG-4 indicators involving population as denominator are based on the projection of 2017 census conducted by Pakistan Institute of Population Census (NIPS). There are some factual errors in the projections conducted by NIPS as the age cohorts in the base year of 2017 does not match with the age cohort numbers in the published PBS reports.

Indicator 4.1.4: Out-of-school rate (1 year before primary, primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)

The out-of-school rate paints a concerning picture as, with 39% of children and young people nationwide not enrolled in any level of education as of 2021, spanning from primary to upper secondary levels. A noticeable gender disparity exists as girls confront a higher out-of-school rate at 42.8%, compared to 35.5% for boys. This gender gap persists consistently across all educational levels, except for lower secondary, where boys exhibit a slightly higher rate of being out of school.

Regional variations show that Balochistan province emerges with the highest out-of-school rate, reaching 65.3%. This is particularly evident at the primary level, where the rate is 61.7%. The gender gap in out-of-school rate for Balochistan is significant with 54.4% for males and 69.8% for females. Lower secondary and upper secondary education in Balochistan witness out-of-school rates of 64.0% and 72.5%, respectively. This discrepancy is attributed to socio-economic challenges, security concerns, and limited access to educational facilities in the region due to challenging terrain and a dispersed population.

Sindh follows closely with an out-of-school rate of 46.9%. At the primary level, 43.0% of children are reportedly out of school, with a noticeable gender gap. In lower secondary and upper secondary levels in Sindh, the rates are 38.2% and 60.2%, respectively.

Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa present relatively lower out-of-school rates at 35.1% and 30%, respectively. However, despite the overall lower out-of-school rates in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a gender-based disparity persists, revealing a challenging situation for girls with a rate of 33.1%, significantly higher than the observed 14.3% for boys in the same region. ICT exhibits the most promising situation with a mere 13.4% out-of-school rate. The data for GB and AJK could not be reported due to unavailability of population projection numbers.

The out-of-school rates presented here should be used with caution as the population projections provided by the National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS) use 2017 single year age numbers, which does not coincide with the numbers reported by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Indicator 4.1.4: Out-of-school rate and numbers (1 year before primary, primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education), 2021/22								
Region/Gender	Primary		Lower Secondary		Upper Secondary		Total	
	Numbers	Rate	Numbers	Rate	Numbers	Rate	Numbers	Rate
Pakistan	10,774,890	35.6%	4,935,484	29.7%	10,496,146	51.8%	26,206,520	39.0%
Male	4,972,949	31.9%	2,106,672	24.3%	5,299,452	49.7%	12,379,073	35.5%
Female	5,801,941	39.5%	2,828,812	35.4%	5,196,694	54.1%	13,827,447	42.8%
Provincial/Region								
Punjab	4,831,549	32.6%	1,880,982	22.7%	5,018,826	48.7%	11,731,357	35.1%
Male	2,463,893	32.5%	930,867	21.7%	2,739,570	50.9%	6,134,330	35.5%
Female	2,367,656	32.7%	950,115	23.7%	2,279,256	46.2%	5,597,027	34.6%
Sindh	3,201,358	43.0%	1,539,670	38.2%	2,890,832	60.2%	7,631,860	46.9%
Male	1,427,172	37.2%	602,396	28.6%	1,423,973	55.7%	3,453,541	40.7%
Female	1,774,186	49.2%	937,274	48.8%	1,466,859	65.2%	4,178,319	53.7%
KP	1,284,333	23.4%	746,973	25.0%	1,600,288	44.3%	3,631,594	30.0%
Male	404,251	14.3%	201,982	13.0%	641,502	33.8%	1,247,735	19.8%
Female	880,082	33.1%	544,991	38.1%	958,786	56.0%	2,383,859	41.1%
Balochistan	1,398,981	61.7%	754,860	64.0%	979,669	72.5%	3,133,510	65.3%
Male	647,897	54.4%	364,354	58.4%	490,520	68.0%	1,502,771	59.3%
Female	751,084	69.8%	390,506	70.3%	489,149	77.6%	1,630,739	72.1%
ICT	58,669	22.9%	12,999	9.0%	6,531	3.6%	78,199	13.4%
Male	29,736	22.6%	7,073	9.4%	3,887	4.1%	40,696	13.4%
Female	28,933	23.2%	5,926	8.6%	2,644	3.1%	37,503	13.4%

Source: National EMIS Database-2021/22, PIE, Islamabad

Status of the Availability of SDG-4 Thematic Indicators 2015-16 to 2021-22

Province/Region	Population	In-School	OOSC
Punjab	33,431,898	21,700,541	11,731,357
Sindh	16,270,528	8,638,668	7,631,860
KP	12,091,715	8,460,121	3,631,594
Balochistan	4,797,500	1,663,990	3,133,510
ICT	582,026	503,827	78,199
Pakistan	67,173,667	40,967,147	26,206,520

Source: National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE, Islamabad & Population Projection, NIPS, Islamabad

To address the crisis of 26.2 million out-of-school children in Pakistan, both national and provincial/regional governments are designing special strategic and policy interventions. The insertion of article 25-A regarding free and compulsory education as a fundamental right in Pakistan's constitution and subsequent enactment of Right to Education Acts by all provincial and regional governments are steps in that direction. Special interventions have been introduced by all levels of government with huge financial commitments to address the out-of-school children crisis.

At the federal/national level, the government has taken significant steps to address the crisis of Out-of-School children. The establishment of the National Fund with a substantial allocation of Rs 25 billion in the fiscal year 2023-24 represents a dedicated effort to address the issue. Another noteworthy initiative targets the 20 least developed districts, allocating a total budget of Rs 40 billion to enhance social sector service delivery, particularly in health and education.

Furthermore, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has been expanded to cover more than 7 million marginalized households, contributing to poverty reduction. The programme introduces a special component of Waseela-e-Taleem initiative to support the education of children in underprivileged households. In 2016, a national initiative for SDGs was introduced with a budget of 1 trillion, allocated to parliamentarians to drive progress on various SDGs including SDG-4. To further enhance social sector service delivery, the government introduced the Social Sector Accelerator (SSA) for Health, Nutrition, Education, Youth, and Gender (HNEYG) National Priority Initiatives in January 2023. This accelerator aims to bolster the delivery of social services, with a particular focus on ensuring quality education. At the provincial/regional level, various initiatives to tackle the out of school children issue were launched since 2015.

In Punjab, the Punjab Education Foundation's Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) launched in 2006 was further strengthened and aims to enroll out-of-school children in low-cost private schools. Approximately 0.5 million children aged 5-16 benefit from this initiative. The rationale behind EVS is to address the government's inability to build schools in low-population areas, leading to a partnership with private schools. Punjab school education department also introduced the double-shift schools to operate government schools in the evening. In a concerted effort to address the gender gap in school availability, all provincial and regional governments introduced the policy of gender-free primary schools, allowing girls to be enrolled at boys' schools at the primary level.

The **Sindh** government established an emergency center to facilitate the enrollment of school-age children, supplemented by the formation of committees at various administrative levels. Significant enrollment drives and workshops have been conducted across the districts and talukas to reduce the number of out-of-school children.

KP's initiatives to reduce the number of out-of-school children include a household survey to identify reasons for non-enrollment. Poverty and child work, child age issues, lack of nearby schools, and cultural barriers were identified as key reasons. Programmes like Alternate Learning Pathways, Double Shift Schools, and partnerships with the private sector are implemented to reduce the number of children that are out of school.

Balochistan's strategies include an annual enrollment campaign, providing free stationery and textbooks during campaigns, and establishing Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALPs) to bring out-of-school children into the system.

GB conducted surveys, established homebased schools, and introduced stipend programmes to address the out-of-school children crisis. Initiatives such as the Education Endowment Fund, community feeder schools, and meal provisions in primary schools contribute to reducing out-of-school rates.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir addresses out-of-school children through a comprehensive programme funded by the Islamic Development Bank and Qatar Foundation. The initiative includes free textbooks, stationery provision, and the construction of new primary school buildings. AJK Government also issued official notifications from time to time to achieve progress on key SDG-4 targets and its indicators. In February 2022, it issued a notification which covered key aspects related to access and reduction in out of school children in AJK.

A collective target of reducing 50% of OOSC has been set to be achieved over the next five years. Each provincial and regional government consistently presents 5-year education sector plans aimed at enhancing access and improving the quality of education through increased budgets and community involvement. Education is the single largest sector in provincial/regional total budgets showing the commitment of the provincial/regional governments. However, the extensive requirements for infrastructure improvement and the provision of quality teachers pose significant challenges. The existing resource commitments are deemed inadequate, and there are instances of misutilization and underspending at various levels.

Indicator 4.1.5: Percentage of children over-age for grade (primary education, lower secondary education)

The PIE has, for the first time, calculated values for this indicator based on the 2021-22 EMIS database. The findings reveal a significant percentage of children in Pakistan who are over-age for their respective grades. In primary education, 63.60% of children fall into this category, while the percentage is higher at 64.70% in lower secondary education. Gender disparities are evident, with 66.20% of boys and 60.40% of girls in primary education being over-age, and in lower secondary education, the gap widens, with 68.40% of boys and 60.20% of girls falling into this category. Over-aged status can be attributed to late school entry or repeating one or more previous grades.

The data also shows that there is a significant provincial/regional disparity in the percentage of children over-age for grade. Balochistan has the highest percentage, with 72% of children in primary education and 77% in lower secondary education over-age for their grade. Punjab reports the lowest percentage, with 58% in primary education and 59% in lower secondary education. While the data for 2014-15 is not currently available, it can be calculated from the EMIS database maintained by PIE.

Indicator 4.1.5: Percentage of children over-age for grade (primary education, lower secondary education)				
Region/Gender	Primary		Lower Secondary	
	2014-15	2021-22	2014-15	2021-22
Pakistan		63.6%		64.7%
Male		66.2%		68.4%
Female		60.4%		60.2%
Provincial/Regional Disparity				
Punjab		58%		59%
KP		72%		77%
Sindh		69%		69%
Balochistan		71%		81%

Source: National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE

All provincial and regional governments are actively addressing the issue of over-age children by conducting annual enrolment drives, with a focus on maximizing enrollment at the entry level of primary schools. For example, in 2023, the Punjab Education Department launched a special enrolment campaign aiming at achieving 100 percent enrolment⁵¹. Similarly, the KP education department initiated an enrolment campaign to enroll all out-of-school children⁵². To offset the negative effect of COVID-19 on fresh enrolment, the Balochistan education department announced a special 5-year plan (2023-27) to enroll children⁵³. The Sindh Government also consistently runs enrolment drives to bring out-of-school children into schools.

⁵¹ <https://punjab.gov.pk/node/5460>

⁵² <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/978645-school-enrolment-campaign-launched-in-khyber-pakhtunkhwa>

⁵³ <http://www.emis.gob.pk/Uploads/Notification%20of%205%20Year%20School%20Enrolment%20Plan%202023-27%20for%20School%20Education%20Department.pdf>

The available data can be further disaggregated to the district and sub-district (tehsil) levels in all four provinces, leveraging the population numbers and school enrollment data for single years of age maintained by the EMIS wing of the PIE. The data for the autonomous regions of Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu Kashmir is not reported here due to unavailability of projected population numbers from the PIE. This information can be readily provided if the PIE is provided with the projected population numbers by the National Institute of Pakistan Studies (NIPS). Moreover, although the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) has recently concluded the 2023 digital census, detailed tables will only be available in June 2024. The values can be updated for the year 2023 once the detailed census tables are made available.

Indicator 4.1.6: Administration of a nationally representative learning assessment (a) in Grade 2 or 3; (b) at the end of primary education; and (c) at the end of lower secondary education

The Assessment Wing of the PIE is mandated with conducting national assessments of learning of school children. In the academic years 2016-17, 2018-19, and 2022-23, the wing conducted nationally representative learning assessment tests at the end of primary education (Grade 4) and at the end of lower secondary education (Grade 8). The assessment conducted includes the subjects of Mathematics, English, Urdu and Sindhi. No assessment tests were conducted for Grade 2/3 levels during this period. The assessments used the Global Proficiency Framework contracted with the American Institute for Research (AIR) under the Data and Research in Education (DARE) project⁵⁴. It is important to note that the past assessment results framework was not fully aligned with SDG-4. However, for the assessments conducted in 2023 results, the results will be aligned with the SDG-4 assessment-related indicators. These aligned results are expected to be reported in March 2024.

Indicator 4.1.6: Administration of a nationally representative learning assessment (a) in Grade 2 or 3; (b) at the end of primary education; and (c) at the end of lower secondary education									
Region/Gender	Grade 2/3			End of Primary			End of Lower Secondary		
	2016-17	2018-19	2022-23	2016-17	2018-19	2022-23	2016-17	2018-19	2022-23
Pakistan	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: National Assessment Wing (NAW), PIE

Provincial governments also conduct various assessments representative of their provincial education sectors. In **Punjab**, the Education Sector Plan places a strategic focus on reforming standards, curriculum, textbooks, and learning materials, emphasizing the revamping of examination systems and assessments. Various assessments, including School Based Assessment (SBA), Large Scale Assessment (LSA), and Formative Assessment, have been implemented across various grades. Training programmes addressing inclusive learning techniques and best practices, along with comprehensive screening and needs assessments in districts like Jhelum and Multan, contribute significantly to achieving learning outcomes.

Sindh's Provincial Education Assessment Centre (PEAC) regularly conducts Provincial Assessment Tests and recently assessed students in class 5 and class 8. Additionally, scheduled Literacy and Numeracy Assessment tests, complemented by teacher training programmes, underscore the commitment to enhancing educational standards. In **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**, a concerted effort on improving learning outcomes is evident through teacher training initiatives and regular assessments in areas that need attention.

⁵⁴ <https://pie.gov.pk/Detail/N2I3NTI1MmYtMDIINy00NDI1LTk3M2YtNWU5ZGU0NjA2OGVh>

Balochistan, recognizing the importance of assessments, established the Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission (BAEC) in 2018, conducting large-scale assessments at Grades II and VI. Efforts under the Pakistan Reading Project (PRP) and the establishment of minimum reading standards further contribute enhancing learning outcomes. In **Gilgit Baltistan**, an assessment framework has been drafted and SLO-based assessments have been implemented. **Azad Jammu and Kashmir** has also initiated assessments for different grades to ensure the delivery of quality education.

Indicator 4.1.7: Number of years of (a) free and (b) compulsory primary and secondary education guaranteed in legal frameworks.

At the national level in Pakistan, the constitution under article 25-A guarantees both free and compulsory education as a fundamental right, reflecting a constitutional commitment to all children between the ages of 5 and 16 years. However, Article 25-A only specifies the age bracket while it does not specify the class or number of years for free and compulsory education. In Pakistan, the age of 16 years means that the child reaches class 12. This commitment is mirrored at the provincial and regional levels through acts of provincial/regional parliaments, which reinforce the provision of free and compulsory education to all children between the age of 5 and 16 years. While the provincial, regional and Islamabad Capital Territory acts does guarantees free and compulsory education for all children between age 5 to 16, it also mentions the number of years of schooling. Most of the acts specifies that free and compulsory education for all children is guaranteed for up to class 10 only. During our consultation with stakeholders at the provinces and regions, stakeholders informed us that all governments charges tuition fee for grade 11 and 12 in the government colleges while it does not charge the same tuition fee in government higher secondary schools. We were also informed that though government does not charge tuition fee from children in grade 9 and 10 but it does take examination enrolment fee in the provincial boards of examination.

Indicator 4.1.7: Number of years of (a) free and (b) compulsory primary and secondary education guaranteed in legal frameworks						
Region/Gender	Free Education			Compulsory Education		
	2015	2019	2023	2015	2019	2023
Pakistan	12	12	12	12	12	12
Provinces and Regions						
Punjab	12	12	12	12	12	12
Sindh	12	12	12	12	12	12
KP	0	12	12	0	12	12
Balochistan	12	12	12	12	12	12
GB	0	0	12	0	0	12
AJK	0	12	12	0	12	12
ICT	12	12	12	12	12	12
Source: Federal, Provincial and Regional Parliament Acts/Constitutions						
Note: All federal, provincial, and regional governments have passed RTE Acts mentioning all children age between 5 to 16 years						

As detailed in the preceding sections, in 2010 at the **national level**, Pakistan's parliament passed the historic 18th constitutional amendment to the constitution of Pakistan with a political consensus among all mainstream political parties. According to article 25-A, "the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years". Subsequently all provincial and regional parliaments passed acts on right to free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in the spirit of the constitutional amendment.

The first right to education act was passed for the **Islamabad Capital Territory** in December 2012 as 'Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2012'⁵⁵. Article 2 of the act delineates the definition of a child with special education needs, male or female, between the ages five and sixteen. It also defines a disadvantaged child as one belonging to a socially and economically disadvantaged group. Other articles within the act ensure the delivery of free education without any charges, the provision of free transport, special provisions for education, the allocation of sufficient financial resources and the identification of government responsibilities in guaranteeing free and compulsory education. Furthermore, the act places a responsibility on private schools to admit disadvantaged children, constituting 10% of the class strength, with the provision of free education.

The **Sindh** Right of Children to free and Compulsory Education Act 2013 not only defines free education in terms of exemption from charges in public schools but also encompasses essential educational materials such as textbooks, stationery, schoolbags, and uniforms. Notably, the Act extends its reach to private schools, obligating them to provide education to 10% of their student intake without any charges⁵⁶.

Balochistan was the second province to enact 'The Balochistan Compulsory Education Act 2014', in February 2014⁵⁷. It prescribes free and compulsory education to all children from class 1 to class 10 between the ages 5 to 16. The act specifically mentions that government shall not charge any fee for tuition directly or indirectly while also providing free textbooks, stationary, one meal at school and transport facilities. The act also prescribes the formation of Parent School Management Committee to exercise powers enshrined in the act.

Punjab enacted 'The Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2014' in October 2014⁵⁸. Article 3 of Chapter II of the Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014 contains the details about the nature of Right to Education⁵⁹. It states "every child shall have a right to free and compulsory education from class one to ten, non-formal education, vocational education, or a combination of all or any of the two as notified by the Government considering the needs, capability and age of the child so as to ensure completion of education or specified education in a school in the neighborhood or the school allocated for the child". In sub article 3 it states that "For purposes of subsection (1), a child or parent shall not be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses for completing the education in a school mentioned in sub-clause (i) of clause (k) of section 2". Finally, it states in sub article 3 that 'The Government shall, in the prescribed manner, provide or cause to be provided suitable education to a child suffering from disability or a special child'.

⁵⁵ <https://portal.mohr.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Civil-Political-and-Economic-Rights-Federal-The-Right-to-Free-and-Compulsory-Education-Act-2012.pdf>

⁵⁶ School Education Sector Plan And Roadmap for Sindh (2019 – 2024)

⁵⁷ <http://emis.gob.pk/Uploads/ACT%20ON%20FREE%20AND%20COMPULSORY%20EDUCATION.pdf>

⁵⁸ <http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/2580.html>

⁵⁹ <http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/2580.html>

Article 3 of the **Punjab** Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014 is comprehensive, encompassing various types of education including formal, informal, vocational, and special education, for all children aged 5 to 16 years. In terms of providing free education, it binds the government to cover any fees, charges or expenses on behalf of the child or parent to ensure the completion of education. Notably, the government is mandated to offer suitable education to a child with a disability or special needs. Article 4 further binds the government to provide quality education and to monitor progress on the commitments outlined in the act.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the last province to enact 'The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act, 2017' in April 2017. The act commits "to provide free compulsory primary and secondary education in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" in the spirit of Article 25-A of Pakistan's constitution. The KP free and compulsory education act emphasizes that parents are responsible for ensuring a child's attendance at school until they complete secondary education, except in the case of a reasonable excuse⁶⁰. The act further obliges the government to constitute a School Attendance Authority with representation from Parents Teachers Council (PTC), to ensure the enrolment of every child in school. The act establishes a Taleem Fund dedicated to the welfare of students. The act empowers the government to formulate rules for the seamless implementation of the act.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also introduced the Right to Public Services Act in 2014 which binds the government to ensure the timely delivery of public services to the people of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In accordance with the act, a public service commission was set up where citizens of the province can submit their grievances to the commission regarding any service delivery including the delivery of free and compulsory primary and secondary education.

The **Azad Jammu and Kashmir** (AJK) parliament passed the 13th constitutional amendment act on 2 June 2018⁶¹, which included the Right to Education as enshrined in Article 25-A of the constitution. It states that "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law." While the AJK government inserted article 23 on the Right to Education in its constitution, it did not pass a separate detailed implementation modality for Article 23. In contrast to AJK, other provincial assemblies enacted separate Right to Education Acts with detailed implementation mechanism and subsequent changes in the Rules of Business (RoBs) of the government. There is a need for the AJK government to enact a comprehensive legislation to ensure the effective implementation of Article 23.

Subsequent to the insertion of "Right to Education" article in AJK Interim Constitution, the government of AJK initiated work on framing the Education Policy for AJK. Discussions with key stakeholders from AJK revealed that the policy will be soon notified by the cabinet. Though the AJK Education Policy 2023-40 is perfectly aligned with SDG-4 targets, the policy document lacks the institutional mechanism and implementation details including the formulation of rules of business, thus limiting its effectiveness. It should be noted that other provincial and regional governments in Pakistan usually prepare Education Sector Plans (ESPs) instead of Education Sector Policy.

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https://kpcode.kp.gov.pk/uploads/2017_12_THE_KHYBER_PAKHTUNKHWA_FREE_COMPULSORY_PRIMARY_AND_SECONDARY_EDUCATION_ACT_2017.pdf

⁶¹ 13th Amendment Act to the Interim Constitution of AJ&K, June 2018 <http://www.law.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/volume-XIV.pdf>

The semi-autonomous regions of **Gilgit Baltistan** (GB) inserted article 25-A in their own constitution in 2018. Subsequently, the GB parliament enacted The Gilgit Baltistan Compulsory Education Act 2020 in June 2020. The act provides for compulsory and free education to all children aged 5 to 12 years living in the province of Gilgit Baltistan. The act defines "Free Education" as education for which the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan shall not receive any direct fee, and the financial burden of education shall not be on the parents. Moreover, the Government shall provide free books and stationery to each student.

Upon detailed review, there are some gaps in the act which include the fact that free and compulsory education is only provided up to 10th grade and does not include the 11th and 12th grade. Furthermore, the definition of 'child' in the act is limited to the age category and does not include children with disabilities. There is no section addressing education for disadvantaged groups. The act lack a definition for the 'cost' of 'free education' which may include infrastructure facilities at school, stationary, travel and other recurrent cost for a student attending school. Additionally, there is no mention of Early Child Education, technical/vocational education, and the quality of education and teachers.

In alignment with global educational aspirations, all these initiatives contribute to the implementation and adaptation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4), emphasizing the importance of quality education for all, fostering inclusive and lifelong learning opportunities.

Acts, Policies, Strategies, Plans and Initiatives to improve access and completion, reduce the number of out-of-school children and improve learning outcomes at the primary and secondary level.

Primary and secondary education is a provincial subject in Pakistan but Federal government does provide guidelines to the sector through various strategic and policy documents. To improve the learning outcomes across Pakistan, the Federal government designed the National Curriculum Framework in 2017⁶². The framework, formulated in consultation with provinces, provides comprehensive guidelines for the development of subject curriculum, instructional delivery systems, assessment and testing systems, and the professional development of teachers. The aim is to provide stakeholders with guidelines that promote an inclusive, integrated, holistic, and comprehensive approach to curriculum development in Pakistan.

Federal government has also introduced programme interventions to improve access, and quality of primary and secondary education across Pakistan with a focus on underdeveloped and disadvantaged areas and groups. These programmes include the special initiative of performance-based challenge fund to the tune of Rs 25 billion to target out-of-school children and promote early childhood education across the country⁶³. Similarly, a Rs 40 billion project was introduced to target the 20 least developed districts where, among other issues, access to quality primary and secondary education hinders economic growth. Federal government is also facilitating the provincial governments in approaching donor agencies for human capital improvement projects through the Economic Affairs Division. Indirect interventions to alleviate poverty and achieve growth in the country have been introduced and strengthened since 2015 to address demand side barriers to primary and secondary education. The

⁶² <https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/report/NCF.pdf>

⁶³ <https://www.app.com.pk/national/planning-minister-launches-rs-25-bln-fund-to-address-out-of-school-children-issue/>

substantial annual commitment of over Rs 300 billion to Pakistan's largest cash transfer programme, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), underscores the federal government's commitment to assisting underprivileged households across Pakistan, particularly during periods of low economic growth and high inflation rates.

At the provincial and regional levels, the education sector receives the largest share of current and development budget from the overall budget (See indicator 1.a.2).

Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Unlike federal government and other provinces, AJK government has no comprehensive development strategy in place to steer the overall development of the region. The P&D Department has outlined a development strategy on its webpage⁶⁴, with education prioritized at the forefront. It envisages improvement in accessing quality education in the whole of AJK. This vision is further integrated into the regular Annual Development Plan (ADP), where the strategic objectives of each sector are highlighted before delving into the specifics of project interventions. This distinctive approach in AJK's ADP serves as a model that other provinces may consider adopting.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir's draft education policy is perfectly aligned with the SDG-4 targets and indicators but the policy lacks a comprehensive situation analysis of the education sector in AJK. Participants of the workshop in Muzaffarabad reported that AJK previously followed the National Education Policy of 2009. Following the 13th constitutional amendment and the subsequent initiation of work on AJK's own Education Policy, efforts were made to fill this gap. However, more than 4 years have passed and the new AJK Education Policy has not yet been officially notified by the Government. Some of the policy goals and objectives mentioned in the Education Policy align with the AJK government's agenda and are in various stages of implementation.

The AJK Government has undertaken various initiatives in recent years, as highlighted by stakeholders in workshops. These steps, detailed below, complement the findings of the desk review and address certain information gaps identified during the review process.

- i. All development projects have been prepared in line with achieving SDG 4.1 target especially to improve access and completion rate and reduce out-of-school rate.
- ii. The development and recurrent budget have been increased as per the resource availability of AJK Government to improve access and quality of education.
- iii. Equitable education opportunities have been maintained at a ratio of 51:49 (Boys: Girls) since 2019 as per AJK's EMIS dataset to achieve gender parity.
- iv. Quality of education has been improved by 11% according to the National Assessment Test conducted by PIE during 2019 and 2023.
- v. To streamline and monitor private educational institutes, the Private Educational Institutes Regulatory Authority (PEIRA) started the registration of private schools and has so far registered more than 1,100 private educational institutes.
- vi. To improve the learning outcomes of primary and secondary school students, the Government of AJK adopted the National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) 2022-23, intending to adopt an SLO based syllabus. It is important to note that, following the

⁶⁴ <https://pndAJ&K.gov.pk/resourcecentre.php?page=Development%20Strategy>

18th constitutional amendment, provinces/regions have the autonomy to devise their own school curriculum, and they are not obligated to adopt the NCP proposed by the federal government. However, challenges in developing local curricula tailored to regional needs led to the adoption of the NCP. Given Pakistan's diverse linguistic landscape, provincial/regional governments should ideally formulate their curriculum to align with local realities. With 80% of the AJK population speaking Hindku/Pahari, introducing the mother tongue as a teaching language, especially at the primary level, could potentially enhance learning outcomes.

vii. To improve teachers' attendance, biometric systems have been installed in government middle and secondary schools.

viii. AJK Government is providing missing facilities (electricity, water, boundary walls, toilets, stationery, free textbooks) and missing infrastructure (extra room, furniture etc.) to improve completion at primary and secondary education. Every year, government allocates a big sum of resources in Annual Development Plans (ADPs) for this purpose. Additionally, new schools are being constructed on a regular basis as the demand for the new school increases due to population growth.

AJK government has pursued some innovative interventions to improve access and quality at primary and secondary level. To address the issue of out-of-school children, AJK Government launched a 22 million USD programme⁶⁵ with 15 million USD financial assistance from the Islamic Development Bank and Qatar Foundation, to enroll 60,000 out-of-school children into primary school with the provision of free textbooks and stationery. The project also envisages to construct more than 80 primary school buildings in areas without primary schools. Participants in the workshop shared that AJK has launched another project aimed at decreasing out-of-school children in the districts of Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, and Bagh, funded by the World bank.

The NCHD is currently implementing a project providing Community Feeder Schools (CFS) and re-opening those schools which were affected by earthquakes or floods in Pakistan, including in AJK. NCHD has established a total of 6,581 Community Feeder Schools across Pakistan including 89 Community Feeder Schools in AJK⁶⁶. The schools are being established by NCHD as "Own a School – Contribute to a Literate Pakistan" with the support of provincial/regional education departments and funding support of donors/community. The main objective of these Feeder Schools is to enroll Out-of-School children. As per the latest updates, the Community Feeder Schools (CFS) are closed in AJK due to lack of funds.

In his 2023-24 Budget Speech, the Finance Minister of AJK committed to increase the literacy rate in AJK from the current 76.8% to 85% over the next 5 years. The same was also notified by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in February 2022. The notification further adds that the education department will take initiatives in this regard which will be supported by the P&D and Finance Department in terms of resource allocations. As per the Budget Speech of AJK Finance Minister, free books were distributed among 94,000 primary school going girls and boys in around 1,214 government primary schools. Participants of the consultative workshop also confirmed the free education policy in AJK up to primary level while a nominal fee is charged for secondary level up to the 10th grade in all government run schools to improve access and completion rate.

⁶⁵ <https://www.app.com.pk/domestic/AJ&K-govt-launches-22-million-usd-project-to-enroll-out-of-school-children/>

⁶⁶ <http://nchd.org.pk/ws/downloads/OWN%20A%20SCHOOL-Contribute%20LITERATE%20PAKISTAN.pdf>

Punjab

The Punjab Legislative Assembly, in addition to enacting the Right to Education Act in 2014, has also passed various other acts to facilitate the provision of free and compulsory education to all children aged 5 to 16 years. The passage of these acts from the Punjab Legislative Assembly creates an enabling environment for the implementation of the Right to Education act. Some of these acts include:

- i. The Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Bill 2014 (Bill No. 26 of 2014)
- ii. The Punjab Social Protection Authority Bill 2015 (Bill No. 8 of 2015)
- iii. The Punjab Special Protection Unit Bill 2015 (Bill No. 42 of 2015)
- iv. The Punjab Protection Of Women Against Violence Bill 2015 (Bill No. 31 of 2015)
- v. The Punjab Commission On The Status Of Women (Amendment) Bill 2015 (Bill No. 30 of 2015)
- vi. The Punjab Prohibition of Child Labor at Brick Kilns Bill 2016 (Bill No. 9 of 2016)
- vii. The Punjab Education Foundation (Amendment) Bill 2015 (Bill No. 4 of 2016)
- viii. The Punjab Private Educational Institutions (Promotion and Regulation) (Amendment) Bill 2017 (Bill No. 08 of 2017)
- ix. The Punjab Education Initiatives Management Authority Bill 2017 (Bill No. 24 of 2017)
- x. The Punjab Environment Protection (Amendment) Bill 2017 (Bill No. 27 of 2017)
- xi. The Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children (Amendment) Bill 2017 (Bill No. 17 of 2017)
- xii. The Punjab Education Standards Development Authority Bill 2017 (Bill No. 18 of 2017)
- xiii. The Punjab Right to Public Services Bill 2018 (Bill No. 29 of 2018)
- xiv. The Punjab Skills Development Authority Bill 2018 (Bill No. 31 of 2018)
- xv. The Punjab Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (Amendment) Bill 2018 (Bill No. 32 of 2018)
- xvi. The Punjab Board of Technical Education (Amendment) Bill 2018 (Bill No. 33 of 2018)
- xvii. The Punjab Bonded Labor System (Abolition) (Amendment) Bill 2018 (Bill No. 19 of 2018)
- xviii. The Punjab Public Private Partnership Bill 2019 (Bill No. 30 of 2019)
- xix. The Punjab Local Government Bill 2019 (Bill No. 10 of 2019)
- xx. The Punjab Higher Education Commission Bill 2014 (Bill No. 27 of 2014)

The Punjab Growth Strategy 2018⁶⁷, approved in 2015, focuses on accelerating economic growth and improving social outcomes in the medium term of 2018-23. On education, the strategy document focuses on (i) education to enhance human capital, (ii) a strategy for skill improvement and (iii) a strategy for controlling population. The strategy document recognizes the marginalized status of education access indicators, regional disparities in education outcomes and suboptimal learning outcomes. The growth strategy outlines key sectors as education policy strategy which include (i) increasing demand for primary education (ii) harnessing the strengths of the private sector for education (iii) improving the quality for primary and lower secondary education (iv) decentralization alongside provincial government push, and (v) facilitating the transition to secondary education. The Punjab Growth Strategy 2018 introduces a Skills Strategy which proposes three strands of interventions to address three types of challenges in the markets for skilled labor and skills training. These include (i) Expanding the supply of demand-relevant, high quality skills training opportunities, (ii) Improving access to skills training opportunities and (iii) strengthening linkages of trainings with jobs and markets.

⁶⁷ https://pnd.punjab.gov.pk/system/files/Punjab_Growth_Strategy_2018_0.pdf

In 2023, a new Growth Strategy for the years 2023-2028⁶⁸ was approved with human capital formation as a key pillar of the strategy. The strategy aims in the medium term to (i) reform education to harness Punjab's human capital, (ii) convert Punjab province to a knowledge economy and digital dividend and (iii) skilling the Punjab's labor force. The education component of the growth strategy prioritizes increasing development budget for the education sector, improving quality of teachers through trainings, improving school infrastructure using PPP, reducing the Out of School Children by improving return on education, improving school education management, expanding partnership with the private sector, introducing scholarships, and addressing the issue of girls' mobility challenges.

Provincial governments in Pakistan prepare education sector plans for five years to steer the education sector in their provinces. Since 2015, Punjab government has presented two education sector plans namely Punjab School Education Sector Plan (2013-17) and Punjab Education Sector Plan (2019/20 – 2023/24). Both the education sector plans in Punjab recognize the weak socio-economic environment causing both demand and supply side bottlenecks for the provision of free and compulsory education to all girls and boys. The increasing rate of population growth, geographical and gender disparity, poverty, and lack of public funds with the government put the education service delivery under stress.

The strategy framework adopted during the 2013-17 plan period focuses on improving access, equity, quality, and standards, along with better management of the education sector in the province. Special emphasis was given towards disaster risk reduction and inclusivity of education by keeping focus on underdeveloped rural areas and girls' education. On the quality side of the education service delivery in the province, the ESP prioritizes to reform standards, curriculum, textbooks and learning materials, examination assessments and school environment. The plan also envisages reforming Early Childhood Education and revising the school language policy through evidence-based research. To increase enrolment, the ESP outlined strategies to increase the relevance of education in the job market, provide free education through scholarships, and involve local community and private sector.

The Punjab Education Sector Plan for the period 2019/20 – 2023/24 is the second plan since 2015, establishing three overarching goals to guide long-term priorities in education in Punjab. These goals are (i) Ensure free and compulsory, universal, equitable and inclusive education for all children; at all educational levels including NFE, TVET and lifelong learning; with particular attention to children with special needs, marginalized groups and out of school children; creating safe, protective, and enabling learning environments. (ii) Ensure quality teaching and improved learning for all, and (iii) Promote effective leadership, management, governance and education service delivery, and availability of enhanced resources and their efficient use at all levels.

In addition to regular programme interventions focused on the construction of new schools, the Government of Punjab launched new initiatives especially with the collaboration of private sector to improve access and quality of primary and secondary education in the province. Based on our desk review of the Punjab Annual Development Programme, the following programmes have been initiated to improve access and quality of primary and secondary education.

⁶⁸ https://pnd.punjab.gov.pk/system/files/PGS_2023%2019-21-145.pdf

- i. Imparting education through private participation Punjab Education Foundation
- ii. Imparting education through outsourcing of public schools (Punjab Education Initiative Management Authority)
- iii. Daanish Schools and Centers of Excellence Authority
- iv. Mehfooz Darsgha (reconstruction of dilapidated school buildings)
- v. Construction of additional classrooms, smart class rooms, provision of missing facilities
- vi. Up-gradation of schools (elementary, high, and higher)
- vii. Kutub- Beeni to promote book reading culture through CLC (50)
- viii. Initiatives for special education
- ix. Introduction of 2nd shift schools to increase enrolment.
- x. Display of Banners and Posters for School Enrolment Drive.
- xi. Detail of Human Resource Management System HRMIS.
- xii. School Information System (SIS) for Public.
- xiii. Hotline (042-111-11-20-20).
- xiv. Real Time Monitoring Information (Public).
- xv. Action Taken on Monitoring Observations.

In our workshop conducted in Lahore with key education sector stakeholders from Government and non-government organizations, we received the following feedback on initiatives taken since 2015 for improving access, completion, reduction in OOSC, increase in investment, are:

- i. Schools' upgradation and new school construction.
- ii. PPP model has been promoted since 2015 under which 1400 new schools and 800,000 enrollments under PPP model in Punjab Education Foundation.
- iii. 4,276 schools have been handed over to PEIMA authority through PPP model to address school access issues in the disadvantaged area of Punjab especially south Punjab.
- iv. Afternoon School Programme (7,000 schools) has been introduced and started classes in 2nd shift to save funds by not constructing new school buildings.
- v. 2,050 camps in 1,215 schools were established which registered 81,000 enrollments out of which 22,600 were OOSC in districts of Jhelum and Multan.
- vi. National Curriculum of Pakistan has been implemented to achieve minimum proficiency levels in basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- vii. Linking of proficiency level of grade-5 with Global Proficiency Framework (GPF) in collaboration with American International Research (AIR) with support of World Bank (PEC) (minimum proficiency levels in basic literacy and numeracy skills).
- viii. Development of online student registration system in 2015 as an additional effort to improve access.
- ix. Provided 400 new toilets in female schools and 1,000 new classrooms will be constructed under ASPIRE project of the World Bank.
- x. Construction of 2,033 Additional Classroom in PIEMA Licensee schools in 13 districts under P-SCRIP project.
- xi. Rehabilitation and Revitalization of Science, IT Labs in 1,037 schools of 17 districts under P-SCRIP project.
- xii. Rehabilitation and Revitalization of Libraries in 400 schools of 10 districts under P-SCRIP project.
- xiii. Infrastructure Development and Rehabilitation of 110 Model Schools in 11 districts under P-SCRIP project.
- xiv. STEM Learning Program under P-SCRIP and ASPIRE.

Some of the innovative programmes initiated in Punjab during 2016 to 2023 include the following:

- i. An innovative Education Voucher Scheme has achieved enrollment (533,818) under Punjab Education Foundation
- ii. PPP with PEF has shown positive results in Punjab, and currently these programmes report almost 7,500 partner schools and 2.7 million student beneficiaries in 2023.
- iii. Under voucher scheme, 500 schools were established in slum areas since 2015 through Punjab Education Foundation to improve access for the poorest of the poor.
- iv. 500 new schools were established where no school exists in 1 KM radius through Punjab Education Foundation.
- v. Online trainings conducted for teachers (100,000) in Punjab Education Foundation schools.
- vi. Continuity of Girl Stipend Programme across Punjab to improve girls' enrolment.
- vii. Setting up 7,000 ECE classrooms that meet a minimum of 10 quality standards criteria as per ECE Policy 2017.
- viii. Development of an online training platform for ECE staff as an additional effort to improve quality.
- ix. Classroom Observation and Innovative Teacher Support Package (ITSP) developed and rolled out in all the 36 districts of Punjab to improve learning outcomes.
- x. ITSP app have more than 140,000 downloads on the Google Play Store and more than 160,000 unique logins to the ITSP app/website have been observed.
- xi. Continuity of Non-Salary Budget (NSB) Disbursement to Schools for O&M expenditures of schools.
- xii. Development of Integrated Education Dashboard for decision making (EMIS).
- xiii. Provision of approx. 4500 ECE kits, Provision of 3300 tablets for AEOs (increase investment, additional effort).

A new project launched by Punjab government with international donors with the name of TALEEM project (2022-2026) includes the following initiatives to improve access to primary education and the learning outcomes at early grades:

- i. Procurement and distribution of tablets (32,383) to primary schools
- ii. Development of Learning Management System, android application, and online portal for PSTs
- iii. Content development for Basic teaching and learning including foundational literacy and numeracy for all Primary Schools
- iv. Training of 3,200 AEOs, and classroom observations and mentoring of PSTs on basic teaching and learning.
- v. Training of 70% of 201,103 PSTs (Female: 119,715; Male: 81,388) on basic teaching and learning module (module completed in Y1)
- vi. Development of Higher order teaching and learning skills for all Primary Schools.
- vii. Training of AEOs on higher order teaching and learning skills, and continued classroom observations and mentoring of PSTs
- viii. Development of programme design including, assessment tools, teaching strategies and learning materials.
- ix. Training of AEOs as MTs and training of 1,954 teachers.
- x. Community outreach and awareness
- xi. Operationalization of 1,954 learning camps
- xii. Enrollment of 78,160 children in learning camps

- xiii. Identification of (at least) 1527 schools for strengthening of WASH facilities
- xiv. APF (assessment policy framework) was approved by cabinet. Revamping examination system with other assessments including SBA, LSA and formative assessment.
- xv. School Based Assessment (SBA) has been conducted from Grade 1-8 in all government schools across 36 districts. i) Large Scale Assessment is fully implemented in Grade 5 with assessment in English, Urdu, Mathematics, and Science ii) Formative Assessment Strategy Developed; also, the training toolkit for all provincial, district and school stakeholders is developed.
- xvi. QAT test was revamped in 2015 to access quality education in PEF schools.

To improve equity and inclusive education, Government of Punjab initiated the following interventions during 2016 to 2023:

- i. Comprehensive inclusive education approaches framework developed.
- ii. Training programme on inclusive learning techniques and best practices for inclusive classroom teaching, learning and assessments developed.
- iii. Comprehensive screening and needs assessment conducted in the mainstream schools of Jhelum and Multan districts. Phase-I
- iv. Comprehensive screening and needs assessment conducted in the mainstream schools of Jhelum and Multan districts. Phase-II
- v. 5,188 (Female: 2,907, Male: 2,281) teachers trained on inclusive classroom teaching, learning and assessments.
- vi. 1,053 (Girls: 611, Boys: 442) public schools provided accessible infrastructure (disabled-friendly).
- vii. Children identified with mild disabilities to be provided assistive devices.

To improve efficiency and governance in education planning and decision making, Punjab government initiated the following interventions:

- i. Data Centre established at PMIU.
- ii. EMIS Dashboard Development.
- iii. Databases of Secondary Education Department (SED), Special Education Department (SpED) and L&NFBED (Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Department) integrated in the IMIS Database.
- iv. Real-Time Integration with information systems of SED, SpED and L&NFBED.

To improve access and learning at the Middle Level, Punjab government initiated the following programmes:

- i. Efficiency: Operationalization of 1500 middle schools (instead of 800) under ASP in 14 Programme districts (Equity: 3.36% reduction in OOSC i.e., enrollment of 33,264 Students (Girls 18,480, Boys 14,784)).
- ii. Development of training modules and training of 3,864 registered teachers at ASP middle schools.

Besides the above initiatives, Government of Punjab undertook the following innovative programmes in the province in which the Education Voucher Scheme is prominent in terms of its reach:

- i. **Punjab Education Initiatives Management Authority:** The Punjab Education Initiatives Management Authority (PEIMA) established in 2018 aims to design, implement, and manage reformatory and dynamic initiatives in the education sector in respect of the educational institutions, including Public School Support Programme, for achieving the objectives of PEIMA Act 2018.
- ii. **Education Voucher Scheme (EVS):** Launched by Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) in 2006, approximately 0.5 million children are registered and getting quality education in more than 1,592 EVS partner schools. The age group of EVS beneficiary is 5-16 years. PEF provide per student fee to low-cost private schools for enrolling students in their schools. The rationale for the scheme is that the government cannot bear the cost of constructing schools in areas with low or scattered population thus partnering with the private schools to enroll school-going age out-of-school children in their schools.
- iii. **New School Programme:** New School Programme was launched as a pilot project in 2007 to engage private sector entrepreneurs in order to set up new schools in remote, distant and under-served areas of the province. NSP targets to establish schools in areas where there is access gap as government or private schools are unavailable or very few in number.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

In addition to the insertion of Article 25-A, the 25th constitutional amendment act was introduced in 2018, merging the eight federally administered tribal districts into the the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, thereby expanding the province's geographical area. This significant change has far-reaching effects on the delivery of quality education in the province as subsequent resources were not transferred to the province for service delivery, and the 'finance follows functions' principle of public finance was not adhered to. Although the provincial government is bound to provide free and compulsory education to school-age children in the merged districts, the province did not receive the merged district share in the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award. This situation has serious consequences for service delivery, including education services, as the province's own source of revenue remains around 6% to 8% of its total revenues.

In addition to the above acts, other parliamentary acts were also passed which affect free and compulsory education either directly or indirectly. These include the following:

- i. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Teachers (Appointment of Regularization of Services) Act,2022
- ii. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Universal Health Coverage Act,2022
- iii. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act,2022
- iv. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act,2022
- v. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Science, Technology, and Innovation Endowment Fund Act,2022
- vi. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Home Based Workers (welfare and Protection) Act,2021
- vii. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence Against Women (Prevention and Protection) Act,2021

- viii. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa School bags (Limitation of weight) Act,2020
- xi. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Promotion, Protection and Enforcement of Human Rights (Amendment) Act,2019
- x. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Monitoring Authority Act,2019
- xi. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Youth Welfare Endowment Fund Act,2019
- xii. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Youth Development Commission Act,2019
- xiii. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Employees Foundation Act,2018
- xiv. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare (Amendment) Act, 2018
- xv. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Private Schools Regulatory Authority Act, 2017.
- xvi. Promotion of Regional Languages Authority Act, 2012.
- xvii. Supervision of Curricula, Text Board and Maintenance of Standards of Education Act, 2011

The KP province currently does not have a distinct education policy; however, all-encompassing development strategies and policies since 2010 have consistently prioritized education service delivery. Various governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have devised development strategies to enhance overall socio-economic growth in the province. A comprehensive development strategy was implemented during 2010-17, focusing on improving infrastructure and the social sector through enhanced economic management, despite challenging security conditions in the province.

Upon assuming power in 2013, the new political government in KP formulated an integrated development strategy for the period 2014 to 2018. This strategy was designed to implement a reform agenda that prioritized pro-poor and pro-people initiatives aimed at enhancing service delivery. In 2019, the province transitioned to a new medium-term strategy of Sustainable Development for the period 2019-2023. The objective of this strategy is to transform Khyber Pakhtunkhwa into a secure, economically vibrant and a prosperous society by focusing on socio-economic and human development, fostering equal opportunities, and promoting good governance.

All these development strategies incorporated education as a key priority sector for the overall economic advancement of the province. The 18th amendment to the constitution of Pakistan resulted in the complete devolution of various subjects, including education to the provinces. To align with the increased responsibilities of provincial governments, federal government established a new National Finance Commission (NFC) award, raising the provincial share from 45% to 57.5% as federal transfers. Moreover, the 7th NFC award introduced multiple indicators for the horizontal distribution of resources among provinces, moving away from population-only criteria. This shift aimed to reduce poverty in the underdeveloped provinces, with KP receiving a special allocation of 1 percent extra from the NFC award to compensate for the infrastructure damage caused by terrorist incidents.

Following the merger of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in May 2018, the KP government devised an accelerated development strategy with the name of the Tribal Decade Strategy 2020-30. The aim was to uplift the disadvantaged districts of the merged areas, bringing them on par with the rest of the province and Pakistan. The federal government also committed to transfer Rs 1 trillion for the development of the newly merged districts over the next 10 years.

Provincial governments in Pakistan, including KP government formulate Education Sector Plans every five years (ESPs) to steer the education sector in the provinces. Since 2015, KP government introduced two ESPs in the province:

1. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Elementary and Secondary Education Sector Plan (2015-2020)
2. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Sector Plan 2020/21-2024/25.

The KP ESP for the medium term of 2015-2020 placed a greater emphasis on increasing enrollment rates and reducing dropout rates, while the KP ESP 2020/21-2024/25 places a greater emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning outcomes. Additionally, the KP ESP 2020/21-2024/25 includes a new programme to promote the use of technology in education. The ESP 2015-20 identified five barriers⁶⁹ to education reforms in KP that have slowed progress over the last decade of reform work:

- weaknesses in data and information management.
- weaknesses in budgeting and financial management.
- limited capacity to deliver across the department.
- politicization of employees, and
- the geography and social fabric of the province.

Out of the five barriers to education reforms identified in the ESP 2015-20, the first three relate to capacity and capability issues in E&SED. The new ESP 2020-25 takes as its reference point the work of the previous ESP and recognizes that a strategic investment in capacity development is at the heart of the reforms envisaged by the vision of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Blueprint.

Besides the regular education sector plans, KP government also produced a 5-year strategic document called "Education Blueprint" for the period 2018-23. The document presents the government's reform priorities over the next five years and sets a blueprint for channeling the education department's efforts and available resources. At the same time, it provides an evaluation framework that may be used to periodically review and manage performance and at the end of the five-year term to understand the overall impact of reform. The focus of the Education Blueprint includes (i) Reforming Primary Education (ii) Closing the gap in Secondary Education (iii) Partnering with the Private Sector (iv) Improving Education Management in the Districts (v) Engaging the Community (vi) Special Reforms for the newly merged districts (vii) Selected Special Initiatives.

According to the participants and Key Informant Interviews conducted with various stakeholders in Peshawar, the KP government has introduced a number of reforms and initiatives, particularly since 2008 when elected democratic governments returned to Pakistan after 9 years of military dictatorship. However, the weak implementation mechanism of these reforms resulted in limited progress. Some of the steps taken by the KP Government over the past years as mentioned by stakeholders in the workshops/KIIs and desk review are given below:

- i. To comply with the Free and Compulsory Education act of 2017, the KP government is providing free textbooks to all students till grade 12. However, due to the financial crunch in the province, the initiative is often being halted due to non-payment of dues to the private publishers. Recently, private publishers refused to print textbooks for public sector schools until the payment of Rs 4 billion dues by the provincial textbook board⁷⁰.

⁶⁹ Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Sector Plan 2020/21 – 2024/25

⁷⁰ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1784578>

- ii. To encourage female enrolment, completion, and retention rate, KP government provides stipends to all girls till grade 12. As per KP government official website, the initiative increased girls' enrolment by 2 percent⁷¹.
- iii. For the upgradation/establishment of the schools, the ratio of 70: 30 has been approved for girls and boys respectively in order to minimize the gap between the schools specified for girls and boys.
- iv. To improve existing school infrastructure, a programme is in place to provide conditional grant to the schools lacking in 5 basic missing facilities i.e., electricity, water supply boundary walls, group latrines and additional classrooms.
- v. The National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP) has been implemented (Phase wise) until Grade VIII and the same will be implemented until Grade XII by June 2024.
- vi. SLO based examination has been initiated throughout the province for Grade IX by all the BISEs and the same will be extended to grade X and to other subsequent grades. The objective is to achieve the learning outcomes of children enrolled in schools. SLO based Examination have been introduced since 2022-23.
- vii. For the provision of quality education, all primary school teachers are being provided with Continuous Professional Development trainings and 9-months mandatory induction training programme for the newly recruited teachers across the province.
- viii. Literacy and Numeracy Drive initiative, Capacity Development Program (CDP), Information Technology Trainings, Alternation Learning Path Center initiative. Teacher Incentive Programme, District performance scorecard.
- ix. Assessment of different grades started to ensure quality education.
- x. Teachers' competency surveys are being conducted so that gaps can be identified and immediate remedial actions can be designed to improve teachers' quality.
- xi. An innovative programme of Tameer-e-School programme was initiated by KP government in 2015 which could not provide the desired results. The idea was to raise funds in donations from rich Pakistanis to finance provision of missing facilities (toilet, boundary wall, room, furniture etc.) in government schools. The donations made through the initiative were less than the cost incurred on the advertisement of the scheme⁷².

An innovative scheme of additional rooms construction was introduced in government schools. Initiatives taken to reduce the number of Out-of-School Children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa:

- i. The KP Government conducted an out-of-school children household survey in 2017 across KP to identify reasons for children's non-enrolment in order to initiate relevant plans to address the issue. According to the results, the biggest reason is poverty and child work (30%) followed by child is overage/underage (28%), no school nearby (14%), education does not have value (13%), culture does not allow (8%). This helped the KP government to introduce programme interventions to address the out-of-school issue.
- ii. Alternate learning pathways project for out of school children in targeted districts started.

⁷¹ https://ese.kp.gov.pk/page/stipendforgirlstudents/page_type/citizen

⁷² <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/21808-kp-govt-gets-rs26m-for-rs33m-publicity>

- ii. A Double Shift Schools Programme was introduced for overcrowded/upgraded models to facilitate those students who lack the opportunity to receive education in the morning shift or do not have access to middle, high and higher secondary schools within the specified range of the education department.
- iii. Government initiated a programme to increase the number of six-room primary schools aiming to address the issue of single and two-room schools. Currently, over 50% primary schools are either single-room or double-room.
- iv. Community Schools initiative was undertaken to involve the local community in the provision of education delivery.
- v. The government is also mobilizing partnerships with private sector to accommodate more children in private schools with the financial support of the KP government.
- vi. Basic Education Community Schools (BECS), National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) schools, Girls Community Schools, Alternative Learning Pathways (ALPs), Double Shift Schools⁷³ (DSS) are established to bring out-of-school students in the schools.

Sindh

The Sindh Education and Literacy Department consistently formulates 5-year Education Sector Plans (ESPs). Since 2015, two such plans were implemented. The transition from the earlier Sindh Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2014-2018 to the School Education Sector Plan and Roadmap for Sindh (2019 – 2024) reflects a commitment to addressing key gaps and enhancing the education landscape of Sindh. One notable deficiency of the SESP 2014-2018 was the insufficient attention to early childhood education, a gap rectified in the new plan. The updated strategy focuses on expanding access to quality early childhood education by increasing the number of centers, providing training for educators, and developing a new curriculum for this critical stage. Another area of improvement is the emphasis on teacher training, where the new plan prioritizes both pre-service and in-service training, along with the development of new training programmes.

Additionally, the SESP 2014-2018 fell short in recognizing the potential of technology in education, a perspective now rectified in the new plan, which outlines a strategy for integrating technology into the teaching and learning process. Lastly, the new plan addresses the oversight of monitoring and evaluation by incorporating a robust framework to track progress and ensure the effectiveness of education interventions. The identified gaps and subsequent improvements in the new plan, such as prioritizing early childhood education, enhancing teacher training, recognizing the role of technology, and strengthening monitoring and evaluation, directly contribute to SDG4's objectives.

Key input from the stakeholders' workshop in Karachi highlighted the following initiatives to improve access and quality of primary and secondary education:

- i. Free and compulsory education to enroll all school-age children in schools.
- ii. Upgradation and opening up of all closed schools, and construction of new schools in Sindh to improve access.
- iii. The introduction of Sindh Teaching Interns Programme (STIP) to reduce shortage of teachers in government schools.
- iv. The appointment of teachers through third party to induct teachers on merit and minimize the involvement of corruption.

⁷³ <https://kpes.gov.pk/dss-schools/>

- v. Effective trainings for the newly inducted teachers.
- vi. To reduce the number of Out-of-School Children in the province, Sindh government established an emergency center by provincial schools education department for enrolling school-age children. All level of governments were involved including provincial, district, tehsil, and taluka. Committees were formed at the level of regional, district and taluka level which were notified by secretary school education department. Major enrollment drives and workshops have been conducted at union council taluka and district level.
- vii. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes initiated in 14 districts across the province for professional development of new teachers.
- viii. Similarly, Provincial Education Assessment Centre (PEACe) Sindh was established in 2002 to support the national assessments activities conducted by National Education Assessment System (NEAS). It regularly conducts Provincial Assessment Tests to assist and inform stakeholders about the overall education system. It recently has conducted assessment tests for class 5 and class 8.

Balochistan

Besides enactment of the Right to Education in 2014, Balochistan Government approved the following acts and policies during 2015-23.

- i. Developed Balochistan Education Sector Plan (2020-25)
- ii. Introduced Balochistan Comprehensive Teacher Education Plan (2019-24)
- iii. Job Descriptions (JDs) have been framed and notified for all categories of teachers, supporting staff, as well as managerial staff.
- iv. Balochistan Compulsory Education Act, 2014.
- v. Balochistan Compulsory Teaching of Mother Tongues as an additional subject at the Primary Level Act, 2014.
- vi. Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission Act, 2018.
- vii. The Balochistan Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education Act, 2019
- viii. The Balochistan Private Educational Institutions Registration, Regulation and Promotion Act, 2022.
- ix. The Balochistan Education Foundation (Amendment) Act, 2022
- x. The Balochistan Supervision of Curriculum, Textbooks and Learning Act, 2023.
- xi. Balochistan Education Sector Plan 2020-2025
- xii. 5-Year School Enrolment Plan 2023-27 for School Education Department, Government of Balochistan
- xiii. Private schools' regulation authority act 2022
- xiv. Madrasa education act (currently with federal Government)
- xv. Establishment of various education governance and administration related institutions to streamline education in the province such as District Education Group (DEG), District Education Authority (DEA), Local Education Council (LEC), and Parent Teacher School Management Committees (PTSMC)
- xvi. Child protection Act 2016.

The Balochistan government has an unapproved growth strategy document titled "Balochistan Comprehensive Development Strategy 2019-2024" which covers all growth and

social sectors, including the education sector. However, the main emphasis in the province concerning the education sector are the five-year provincial Education Sector Plans. The first ever plan was presented for the period of 2013-18 while the second plan is for the period of 2020-2025. The Education Sector Plan for the period 2020-25 is built on the successes and failures of the previous education sector plan. The primary objective is to address the learning crisis and enhance access-related indicators for primary and secondary education.

Within school education, the Balochistan Education Sector Plan (BESP) prioritizes learning, and access and participation as the two most important areas of policy focus. Furthermore, BESP 2020-25 identifies an improved governance and management framework and better research and data as critical enablers for ensuring an efficient and effective education system.

The Plan also considers four additional aspects of education delivery that are of crosscutting nature and have, therefore, been dealt with throughout the BESP. These include standards, capacity, gender inclusiveness and partnerships with actors outside the government. In technical and vocational education, the delivery of better and updated training programmes that respond to the needs of the job market have been targeted as the key outcome. The aspects of quality, relevance, and access in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) have been detailed accordingly. The Sector Analysis separately reviewed child welfare, outside and within the school, and found it to be an extremely neglected area. The Plan centers its approach around the child in all its aspects – learning, access and participation and governance, with particular emphasis on the girl-child.

The Government of Balochistan took the following initiatives during 2013 to 2023 to improve access and quality of primary and secondary education in the province.

- i. Access to primary and secondary education has been increased / improved through establishment of new primary schools in population settlements without schooling facilities, as well as upgraded primary, middle, and high schools to the next level.
- ii. Teachers were appointed on merit in 2015 and 2019 through independent testing services to ensure the availability of quality teachers in schools.
- iii. Appointment of teachers for secondary schools through Balochistan Public Service Commission (BPSC).
- iv. Provided missing facilities to schools critical for ensuring conducive learning environments in schools.
- v. Established / functionalized Parent-Teacher School Management Committees (PTSMCs) at the School level.
- vi. Established / Functionalized / notified Local Education Council (LECs) at the Cluster level.
- vii. Provided Cluster Budget to Cluster Schools for procurement of essential items for the schools.
- viii. Established / Notified District Education Authorities (DEAs) and District Education Group (DEGs) to improve educational situations at the District level.
- ix. Established / notified Quality Management Committee (QMC) to ensure the implementation of Balochistan Education Sector Plan (BESP: 2020-25).
- x. Established 725 Gender Free Primary Schools with support of Global Partnership for Education (2016-18) and upgraded 25 Primary Schools to Middle level and 10 Government Middle Schools to High Level to improve access to education for all, specially girls.

- xi. Provided small grants to Schools under School Development Plan (SDP) with support of European Union (EU) and Global Partnership for Education (GPE).
- xii. Established Accelerated Learning Programs (ALPs) at the primary and middle level to provide another opportunity to missed-out and out of school children.
- xiii. Provided missing facilities in Schools in lagging districts of Balochistan through ASPIRE Project sponsored by the World Bank.
- xiv. Establishment of New Schools the catchment areas not focused earlier.
- xv. School Upgradation, Provision of missing facilities.
- xvi. Establishment of Bodies such District Education Authority and District Education Group to improve education at district level.
- xvii. Decentralization of some administrative and financial matters to districts and clusters.
- xviii. Establishment of new EMIS to identify relevant data and capacity building programmes for teachers and education managers.
- xix. In coordination with MFE&PT, reforms in curriculum and textbooks.
- xx. Teachers' promotion and upgradation (pending for the last 25 years) Appointment of teachers through NTS, CTSP, and Public Service Commission.
- xxi. Establishment of ALP centers and annual enrolment campaigns for fresh students.
- xxii. Real time school monitoring system (RTSM) and Introduction of biometric attendance.

To improve the completion rate, Government of Balochistan initiated the following initiatives during 2015-2023 in the province.

- i. Provided missing facilities in schools across Balochistan.
- ii. Provided stipend to needy students under Waseela-e-Taaleem Programme of BISP
- iii. Providing stipend to students from needy communities through development partners studying in ALP centers.
- iv. Introduced Continuous Professional Development Program for Teachers through public sector development Programme in 12 Districts of Balochistan.
- v. Introduced Continuous Professional Development Programme for teachers with support of development partners (UNICEF under BES-II-EU, BSLIP-GPE).
- vi. Balochistan Education Sector Plan (2020-25) is under implementation for improvement of educational situation in Balochistan.
- vii. Rationalization of teaching staff is under process across Balochistan for efficient utilization of human resources.
- viii. Initiated recruitment of teachers through public sector university to overcome the staffing issues in schools across Balochistan.
- ix. Strengthening PTSMCs, LECs and other forums to improve educational situation for children in schools with the support of community.
- x. Enrolment Campaign is run on yearly basis across Balochistan to ensure maximum enrolment of children in schools.
- xi. Reducing the gap between primary and middle schools to ensure access to education at the middle.
- xii. Health screening has been conducted in focused districts to reduce dropout and improvement participation rates at all levels.

- xiii. Awareness sessions have been conducted on Menstrual Health and Hygiene Management (MHM) in girls' schools in focused districts of Balochistan.
- xiv. WASH facilities have been provided through a PSDP programme.
- xv. Non-formal and Alternative/Accelerated Learning Pathways
- xvi. Teacher preparation
- xvii. Enrolment campaigns
- xviii. BISP support
- xix. Improved infrastructure
- xx. Enhancement of the role of LEC and PTSMC
- xxi. Upgradation of schools, especially for girls
- xxii. Establishment of model schools at all districts
- xxiii. Construction of toilets in girls' schools at middle and secondary levels
- xxiv. Awareness and provision of MHM kits and facilities
- xxv. RTSM
- xxvi. Various types of scholarships

Government of Balochistan took the following plans, programmes to reduce the number of out-of-school children in Balochistan.

- i. Every year, the School Education Department, Government of Balochistan, with support of Development / Implementing Partners runs Enrolment Campaign across Balochistan to bring maximum number of out of school children into the system.
- ii. Every year, the department sets a target for the Enrolment Campaign to be brought to the system. The target is regularly reviewed, and the new enrolment is entered into EMIS.
- iii. The School Education Department, Government of Balochistan, developed a 5 – Year Enrolment Plan for Balochistan.
- iv. The children who are enrolled in Schools during the Enrolment Campaign are provided free stationery and textbooks.
- v. The School Education Department has established ALP at the primary and middle level to provide another opportunity for dropout, missed out, and out of school children who are overaged in focused districts of Balochistan.
- vi. The School Education Department in close collaboration with Social Welfare Department establishes non-formal schools in population settlements, where there are no formal schools.
- vii. The Government also establishes new Primary Schools in population settlements without schools and also upgrades potential Schools to next level to improve access beyond primary education.
- viii. Awareness and enrolment campaigns encouraged communities.
- ix. ALP and non-formal provided platform flexible to the routine of a chunk of students.
- x. Financial support such as BISP and others, and provision of free uniforms, learning material, also encourage students to stay.
- xi. The enhanced role of PTCCMC has proved fruitful.
- xii. Child protection Act 2016. Through this act corporal punishment has been banned. This act is it is hope drop-out will be reduced.
- xiii. Induction of female teachers
- xiv. Ensuring teacher and student attendance and participation in teaching learning through RTSM

To address the learning crisis at the primary and secondary level, the following plans and programmes were implemented in the Balochistan during 2015-2023.

- i. The Government of Balochistan established Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission (BAEC) in 2018 under the Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission Act, 2018.
- ii. BAEC conducts standardized examination for Grade VIII and subsequently shares the feedback report with all the key stakeholders.
- iii. BAEC also conducts certification examinations for students of ALP centers to certify their learning, as well as to facilitate their mainstreaming in public schools.
- iv. BAEC conducted a large-scale assessment at Grades II and VI levels for the first time in the history of Balochistan. The feedback so generated are shared with all the relevant key stakeholders.
- v. BAEC also coordinates and cooperate with PIE for conduction of National Achievement Test (NAT) at Grades IV and VIII levels.
- vi. BAEC also extended support to PIE in the conduction of TIMSS 2019.
- vii. BAEC is also extending support to IEA / PIE for conduct of LaNA 2023.
- viii. The Government of Balochistan has approved a programme for professional development of teachers on a regular basis under the Continuous Professional Development Programme for Teachers.
- ix. All the teachers serving in the School Education Department are undergoing continuous professional development programmes executed either through PSDP or development partners' support.
- x. Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE) also conducts standardized examinations for Grades IX-XII based on SLOs.
- xi. New textbooks have been approved / printed based on the National Curriculum of Pakistan at the Primary Level.
- xii. The Government of Balochistan with support of USAID improved learning outcomes of young learners of Grades I and II across Balochistan under Pakistan Reading Project (PRP: 2013-19). Under PRP, the teachers were oriented to EGRA tools as part of formative assessment to regular assess the learning outcomes of children whether they were on track or off-track. Minimum reading standards were also established, which are now being used by other development partners as part of their intervention in schools for improvement of learning outcomes of children,
- xiii. Service rules of school and Bureau of Curriculum cadre.
- xiv. Coordination with federal ministry of education in curriculum reform since 2017 to present. Through this initiative, curricula of ECE, primary, middle, and secondary have been revised and aligned with latest developments and targets of SDG-4.
- xv. Capacity building of teachers according to the curriculum change.
- xvi. Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission act 2018.
- xvii. Balochistan Board of Intermediate and secondary education policy shift from grade point to CGPA.

Gilgit Baltistan

In addition to passing the Right to Education Act in 2020, Gilgit Baltistan took the following steps to improve progress on SDG 4 target 4.1.

- i. Approved GB Compulsory Education Act 2020 (Draft rules have been submitted for approval)
- ii. Approved Private School Act 2020
- iii. Approved The Gilgit Baltistan Persons with Disabilities Act. 2019
- iv. GB Education Strategy 2015-30 (1st meeting for development role of business on 1st Dec 2023)
- v. Adopted National Curriculum of Pakistan (NCP)
- vi. Drafted minimum standard for establishment of Primary Middle, High and Higher Secondary School and submitted for approval / partially implemented.
- vii. Drafted assessment framework
- viii. Approved school policy manual
- ix. Drafted SMC policy
- x. Inception of Madrasa Schools by NCHD
- xi. Enrollment drive for enhanced enrollment.
- xii. Establishment of Model Schools
- xiii. To improve access, completion rate and reduce the number of out-of-school children, the GB government took the following actions during 2015 to 2023:
- xiv. Conducted survey by UNICEF for OOSC 2015-16
- xv. Conducted survey by MICS 2016-17
- xvi. Conduct survey by Edu Department GB 2019-20
- xvii. Established 125 Home Schools in Diamer District
- xviii. Stipend programme for female students in Diamer, Shigar, Ghanche and Tehsil Roundu
- xix. Education Endowment fund
- xx. 69 schools have been established through ALIGHT Pakistan 3500 enrollment.
- xxi. 58 new community feeder schools and enrolled 2800 OOSC
- xxii. Provide meal in 85 primary schools to reduce malnutrition.
- xxiii. BISP beneficiaries' children are being enrolled in nearest schools.
- xxiv. To improve the learning outcomes of primary and secondary school students, the following policies, plans, and programmes have been initiated since 2015 in Gilgit Baltistan.
- xxv. Initiated Stem, LMS, Maker Space, SMART schools, Blended Learning Hubs,
- xxvi. Financial literacy programme for 3000 plus teachers will be trained and more than 100000 students will be benefitted.
- xxvii. SLO Based assessment.
- xxviii. Winter / Summer camps.
- xxix. Teachers' trainings.
- xxx. Conducted TOT for teachers on the NCP.
- xxxi. TOT for ICT Integration.
- xxxii. Free Wheels for female students for travelling.
- xxxiii. Initiated result target setting system both qualitative and quantitative.

Gaps and Challenges in improving progress on SDG 4.1 with challenges regarding Data Availability

During our consultation workshops in provincial and regional capitals, the following gaps and challenges were identified which are hindering progress on Target 4.1.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir

- i. AJK exhibits several notable gaps, as revealed through document reviews and stakeholders' consultative workshops: On the legislative side, the major gap in AJK is the lack of institutionalization of article 23 regarding the Right to Education. The AJK assembly should pass a legislative act to implement article 23.
- ii. Despite the approval of the AJK Education Policy by two cabinets, the policy is not yet notified by the government.
- iii. There should be a 5-year Education Sector Plan in the province which should be implemented through Annual Development Plans with a rigorous Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework. AJK has no sector plan for the education sector over the past two decades.
- iv. Political instability and political interference in the education sector.
- v. The AJK Budget, as other provincial budgets, mainly depends on transfers from the Federal Government. Federal transfers are often erratic and depend on the overall economic conditions of the country. Over the last 7 years, Pakistan's average annual real GDP growth rate hovered around 3.64% which is not sufficient enough to generate fiscal space for the federal government. These transfers are not sufficient to finance development in AJK as most of the budget is spent on recurrent expenditures.
- vi. The geography and difficult terrain of AJK does not allow to reach each and every village thus causing serious access issues especially in the rural areas.
- vii. Primary schools especially in rural areas are mostly neglected.
- viii. Student-Teacher ratio at primary level is high.
- ix. No transport facilities are available for teachers and students. This especially affects girls' access to schools.
- x. Lack of adequate budget, lack of policy implementation, weak examination system, weak physical facilities, lack of teacher quality, lack of implementation of education policies, directionless education, low enrollment, high scale dropouts, political influence in posting-transfer of teachers.
- xi. The Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (GoAJK) allocates a substantial portion of its budget to education, yet improvements are needed. Despite a high literacy rate, challenges persist in pre-primary education, disproportionate age ranges for classes, and a lack of emphasis on early childhood development. Issues of inclusiveness and access to education, encompassing school infrastructure and syllabi quality, also need attention⁷⁴.

⁷⁴ Voluntary National Review Report 2019, AJ&K

The following data gaps were identified in AJK through desk review and workshop consultations:

- i. AJK does not have up-to-date data on religious institutions and the number of enrolled students is missing from the data.
- ii. AJK has recently started registration of private educational institutes but much work is still remaining.
- iii. AJK has good quantitative data on education-related variables; however, the qualitative aspect of data is missing and needs extra efforts from the government.
- iv. AJK population data sets are not publicly available thus making calculation of many indicators difficult. The 2017 and 2023 census data for AJK should be made publicly available.
- v. Child Registration at birth should be ensured so that Out-of-School children can be traced and their enrolment in schools can be ensured.
- vi. Lack of interest, inadequacy of resources on data digitization which limits the evidence-based programme interventions.
- vii. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) regularly conduct PSLM (Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement Survey) and HIES (Household Integrated Economic Survey) surveys. The data can be very easily disaggregated in terms of male/female, urban/rural, province/region, quantile, district to track the progress of all indicators but currently the analysis is missing.

Punjab

Punjab being the largest and most populated province of Pakistan has the following gaps and challenges:

- i. The total sanctioned posts for teachers in government schools of Punjab is 450,538, of which 25% are vacant as of November 2023⁷⁵. The gap is wider for Subject Specialists, Senior Subject Specialists (69% vacant posts) and Headmasters/Principles (53.5% vacant posts). Shortage of teachers is seriously affecting access and quality of education. The challenge for the government of Punjab is lack of finances to recruit more teachers.
- ii. The increasing population growth is a challenge for the education department in terms of provision of schools, teachers and free textbooks and other school infrastructure and missing facilities.
- iii. The budget constraints due to weak economy and limited transfer of resources from the federal government under NFC.
- iv. Multiple departments working in the E&SE sector that are working in silos and lack of coordination is hampering progress on the Target 4.1.
- v. Huge salary and pension budget on account of teachers and other support staff.

The following data gaps were identified in Punjab through desk review and workshop consultations:

- i. Punjab E&SE department has enough quantitative data but very little qualitative data. The qualitative data needs to be improved so that policy choices can be reorganized on new lines.
- ii. Impact evaluation studies of the completed and on-going programmes is missing which can guide the lessons learned from the previous programmes.

⁷⁵ School Information System, School Education Department, Government of Punjab <https://sis.punjab.gov.pk/dashboard#>

- iii. Reluctance in using data in policy choices among the top policy makers.
- iv. Many departments collect data on important aspects of education in Punjab but there is no systemic integration of all these data sets which may enable more evidence-based policy choices.
- v. Availability of data for many SDG-4 related indicators at the provincial level is limited.
- vi. Population census and PSLM data sets are conducted and published with a lag period. This is limiting the analysis on old data sets.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

In KP, the following gaps and challenges can be identified:

- i. The population growth rate in KP was higher between 1998 and 2017 census, reaching 2.89%, compared to the national average of 2.40%. This has placed a tremendous pressure on the government's budget to improve access and quality for the increasing population of children aged 5 to 16. Each year, additional schools, classrooms, furniture, free textbooks, and other access-related facilities must be provided by the government. Moreover, existing schools require regular operation and maintenance budgets for the upkeep of school infrastructure. This poses a challenge due to the limited resources available to the KP government in real terms.
- ii. The KP budget, as other provincial budgets, mainly depends on transfers from the Federal Government. Federal Transfers are often erratic and depend on the overall economic conditions of the country. Over the last 7 years, Pakistan's average annual real GDP growth rate hovered around 3.64% which is not sufficient to generate fiscal space for the federal government. These transfers are not sufficient to finance development in KP as most of the budget is spent on recurrent expenditures.
- iii. The geography and difficult terrain of KP does not allow to reach each and every village thus causing serious access issues especially in the rural areas.
- iv. An additional burden of provisions of quality education to the newly merged districts is another challenge as federal government has not yet transferred adequate resources to the province despite commitments.
- v. Primary schools especially in rural areas are mostly neglected. A majority of primary schools in KP are single-teacher, single-room schools.
- vi. No transport facilities are available for teachers and students. This especially affects girls' access to schools.
- vii. Lack of adequate budget, lack of policy implementation, defective examination system, weak physical facilities, lack of teacher quality, lack of implementation of education policies, directionless education, low enrollment, high scale dropouts, political influence in posting-transfer of teachers.

The following data gaps were identified in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through desk review and workshop consultations:

- i. Data integration is needed to fully comprehend the Out-of-School situation. Currently, there are gaps in private sector data, and information from other public sector schools is incomplete. The data on out-of-school children lacks reliability and detail, and there is no robust system in place for tracking student dropouts.

- ii. In addition to quantitative data, there is a need to collect qualitative data to complement the calculation of various SDG-4 related indicators for the province.
- iii. Ensure the availability and public accessibility of demographic data, especially the disaggregated information provided by the PBS from the 2023 census. Geo-special data can aid provincial governments in developing evidence-based interventions, including strategic decisions on school locations based on identified needs.
- iv. Data Literacy and utilization is needed at the decision-making level.
- v. Child Registration at birth should be ensured so that out-of-school children can be traced and their enrolment in schools can be ensured.
- vi. Lack of interest, inadequacy of resources on data digitization which limits the evidence-based programme interventions.
- vii. PBS regularly conducts PSLM and HIES surveys. The data can be very easily disaggregated in terms of male/female, urban/rural, province/region, quantile, district to track the progress of all indicators but currently the analysis is missing.

Sindh

In Sindh, the following gaps and challenges can be identified:

- i. Resource constraints in the Sindh provincial government
- ii. Overall poverty especially in rural Sindh is a hindrance to children's enrolment.
- iii. Missing facilities at schools especially for girls
- iv. Climate change with the frequent occurrence of floods in Sindh province
- v. Law and order situation in some areas.
- vi. Political instability and low economic growth

The following data gaps were identified in Sindh through desk review and workshop consultations:

- i. In Sindh, school education have not integrated system for collecting the data of schools. The Provincial Education and Literacy Department of Sindh has a cardinal role to play in the overall planning and administration of Annual School Census each year. Province is the overall strategist and data custodian of the Census and user of the data generated through it.
- ii. There is a lack of coordination between various departments of Sindh Education Department to conduct timeline compilation of education statistics in the province. Overall, the ownership of conducting ASC lies with the Secretary for Education and Literacy. Overall objectives and guidelines regarding ASC are communicated to districts through an event chaired by Secretary. Reform Support Unit (RSU) of the Education and Literacy Department is the entity that conducts the Annual School Census. The Chief Programme Manager of Reform Support Unit is the top-level authority that oversees the ASC and provide authorization to the Sindh Education Management Information (SEMIS Unit) on budgets and ensures proper funding for delivering on key milestones of the ASC. SEMIS Unit is the core implementing arm of RSU for implementing ASC. Since last couple of years an Integrated Data warehouse for essential education data has been set up for the EMIS, HRMIS and Monitoring for evidence-based decision making with district and school score card.

- iii. Despite ministries and institutions being tasked with providing data on SDG indicators, their roles are hindered by the absence of a result-based management culture. The preference for short-term plans, delayed communication of data, and weak demand for precise information contribute to suboptimal planning processes. The lack of clarity in defining roles, responsibilities, and resource allocation further complicates the assignment of tasks to relevant entities.
- iv. DARE project is an intervention to uplift, expand and synchronize data collection as well as reporting at horizontal level of the province and vertically at the federal level to link with SDG-4 reporting of specific targets. With the intervention of DARE project, future reporting on SDG-4 targets and indicators will be improved.
- v. The RSU Website activity publishes the ASC database, profiles, and bulletin on the RSU website for online access to the school census information.

Challenges faced by EMIS, Sindh in SDG-4 data are below:

- i. Lack of understating of indicators and relevant Training of data collectors
- ii. Most of the survey instruments and institutional data lack indicator coverage at the district level.
- iii. IT infrastructure inadequate to compile the result of targets and indicators.
- iv. Lack of data analysis.

Balochistan

Based on the desk review and consultative workshop conducted in Quetta, the following major gaps and challenges in achieving progress on target 4.1 in Balochistan are identified:

- i. Lack of coordination amongst the line departments (stakeholders). Education is provided by the School Education Department, Colleges and High Education Department, Social Welfare Department, Labor and Manpower Department, Industries Department, Private Schools, Madaris, Schools, which are run by Armed Forces.
- ii. Lack of coordination of School Education Department with Finance and P and D Departments
- iii. All organizations functioning in Balochistan either under the School Education Department or under the other line departments have no functional management information system (MIS) except the one which is operating under School Education Department (EMIS).
- iv. Non-availability of holistic data about children is a major challenge.
- v. The ongoing efforts to integrate various management information systems through the DARE Project is a positive step. However, the establishment of stand-alone management information systems for key organizations is crucial to ensure effective integration.
- vi. Finance and P&D Department need to allocate financial resources as per the requirements of the Balochistan Education Sector Plan (2020-25) and SDG-4.

Besides the above challenges, Balochistan is faced with peculiar challenges including sparse population and difficult mountainous terrain, pandemic and devastating floods, economic and political crisis and instability, longest and active insurgency since 2006, policy and

implementation gap, lack of contextualized curriculum and textbooks, budgetary restraints, teacher capacity gaps, lack of coordination amongst the stakeholders, external influences - such as political interference in teachers posting-transfers, data integration issues, no access to data for policy actors and wider public, and decisions, planning, and legislation are not evidence-based. The non-implementation of education sector plans poses a significant obstacle to making progress towards achieving Target 4.1.

The following data gaps were identified in Balochistan through desk review and workshop consultations:

- i. The absence of authentic and credible data on out-of-school children (OOSC), including information about their identity, geographical location, and reasons for being out of school, hampers effective understanding and addressing of the issue.
- ii. Not every organization has its own stand-alone management information system (MIS) essential for data integration while reporting against SDG-4 indicators.
- iii. Lack of horizontal data integration
- iv. Capacity issue of the data collectors
- v. Lack of access to data for planning
- vi. Lack of EMIS at all stakeholders (organs) of SEC
- vii. ICT based trainings.
- viii. Data authentication and validation by third party

Gilgit Baltistan

The following list provide all major gaps and challenges in implementing target 4.1 in Gilgit Baltistan:

- i. Financial constraints
- ii. Review and approval of drafts of Policy and Acts.
- iii. Lack of follow up mechanism.
- iv. Cultural, economic, and social constraints
- v. Child labor
- vi. No facility of education for seasonal migrants
- vii. Non accessible building for inclusive children
- viii. Political influence
- ix. Informed policies
- x. Creation of posts against the completed development projects (Schools)

Target 4.2: By 2030, Ensure Readiness for Primary Education.

Target 4.2: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

Progress on indicators for SDG-4 Target 4.2 in Pakistan since 2015

Indicator 4.2.1: Proportion of children aged 24-59 months who are developmentally on track in health, learning and psychosocial well-being, by sex.

Data related to indicator 4.2.1 is not available for Pakistan.

The regular National household surveys in Pakistan such as PSLM and LFS do not collect information on this indicator at the national level. However, at the provincial and regional level, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) by UNICEF and provincial governments do collect information on indicator 4.2.1. The problem with MICS is that the survey is irregular, conducted only after 5 years and is collected in different provinces/regions for different years and that the data cannot be combined for the national level. In order to report values on indicator 4.2.1, there is a need to conduct regular MICS surveys at regular intervals at the same time in all provinces/regions. The questionnaire tool should be aligned with Indicator 4.2.1 so that the data can be reported on the indicator in future.

Indicator 4.2.2: Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex

The data on indicator 4.2.2 is calculated from two data sources for different years. For the year 2014-15 and 2019-20, Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement (PSLM) survey was used while for the year 2021-22, the administrative data compiled by the PIE is being used with the population census data of 2017. The indicator measures children's exposure to organized learning activities one year before the official starting age in primary school which is 5 years in Pakistan.

The overall participation rate has fluctuated over the years, standing at 28.0% in 2014-15, dropping to 18.7% in 2019-20, and showing a recovery to 28.1% in 2021-22. As described earlier, the data sources for the drop and then rise are different so the rates may not be strictly comparable across years.

Examining the rural-urban disparities, the rural participation rate decreased from 22.4% in 2014-15 to 15.1% in 2019-20, with data for 2021-22 yet to be reported. In urban areas, the participation rate was 39.6% in 2014-15, declining to 26.5% in 2019-20. The data shows significant rural-urban disparities with children in the rural areas substantially at a disadvantage. Any policy or programme to improve participation rate in organized learning at an earlier age should be focusing on rural areas.

Analyzing gender disparities, the participation rate for males decreased from 28.9% in 2014-15 to 18.8% in 2019-20, with a subsequent increase to 29.4% in 2021-22. Female participation rates also followed a similar pattern, declining from 27.0% in 2014-15 to 18.7% in 2019-20 and showing a modest recovery to 26.8% in 2021-22.

Breaking down the data by provinces, Punjab exhibited a participation rate of 40.7% in 2014-15, declining to 29.0% in 2019-20 and maintaining a relatively stable rate of 28.0% in 2021-22. In Sindh, participation rate was 15.6% in 2014-15, declining to 10.4% in 2019-20 and 24.0% in 2021-22. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) experienced a notable improvement, with the participation rate increasing from 13.0% in 2014-15 to 34.0% in 2021-22 and Balochistan's participation rate remained low but increased from 5.3% in 2014-15 to 10.0% in 2021-22. The survey calculation method based on the PSLM data set and data derived from the administrative data collected by PIE shows huge disparity in the participation rates between 2019-20 and 2021-22. There is a need for close collaboration between PIE and PBS to find the reasons behind this disparity in the reported figures of indicator 4.2.2.

Indicator 4.2.2: Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age), by sex			
Region/Gender	2014-15*	2019-20*	2021-22**
Pakistan	28.0%	18.7%	28.1%
Rural-Urban and Male-Female Disparity			
Rural	22.4%	15.1%	-
Male	22.8%	14.9%	-
Female	22.0%	15.3%	-
Urban	39.6%	26.5%	-
Male	42.4%	27.2%	-
Female	36.9%	25.8%	-
Gender Disparity			
Male	28.9%	18.8%	29.4%
Female	27.0%	18.7%	26.8%
Provinces			
Punjab	40.7%	29.0%	28.0%
Male	42.0%	29.1%	28.4%
Female	39.3%	29.0%	27.5%
Sindh	15.6%	10.4%	24.0%
Male	15.9%	10.5%	38.3%
Female	15.3%	10.3%	28.8%
KP	13.0%	7.2%	34.0%
Male	13.0%	8.0%	23.1%
Female	12.9%	6.3%	24.3%
Balochistan	5.3%	2.9%	10.0%
Male	5.6%	3.4%	9.1%
Female	4.9%	2.2%	11.1%

* Source: PSLM Household Level Survey, PBS
** Source: National EMIS 2021 -22, PIE

Indicator 4.2.3: Percentage of children under 5 years experiencing positive and stimulating home learning environments

Data for indicator 4.2.3 is not available for Pakistan.

The regular national household surveys in Pakistan such as PSLM and LFS does not collect information on this indicator at the national level. However, at the provincial and regional levels, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) by UNICEF and provincial governments do collect information on indicator 4.2.3. The problem with MICS is that the survey is irregular, conducted only after 5 years and is collected in different provinces/regions for different years and that the data cannot be combined for the national level. In order to report values on indicator 4.2.3, there is a need to conduct regular MICS surveys at regular intervals at the same time in all provinces/regions. The questionnaire tool should be aligned with Indicator 4.2.3 so that the data can be reported on the indicator in future.

Indicator 4.2.4: Net early childhood education enrolment rate in (a) pre-primary education and (b) early childhood educational development

The National EMIS wing of PIE has for the first time calculated values for the indicator 4.2.4 based on the administrative data collected from the provinces and population projections provided by NIPS Islamabad based on the 2017 census. As mentioned earlier, there are issues with NIPS projections based on 2017 census but the reported values for the indicator are given below.

The data shows that Net Early Childhood Education (ECE) Enrollment Rate in pre-primary education is reported as 19.4%. The rural-urban ratio and male-female issue too can be calculated from the database maintained in PIE in the future. The provincial values are, however, given in the table and show huge disparities across the four provinces, with Sindh and Punjab performing better than Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. In Punjab, the net early childhood education enrollment rate in pre-primary education stands at 20.0%, while Sindh reports a slightly higher rate at 22.0% for the year 2021-22. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the value stands at 15.0%, and Balochistan has the lowest rate among the provinces at 6.0%. The data for autonomous regions of AJK and GB could not be reported due to unavailability of the projected population numbers at PIE.

Data on the Early Childhood Educational Development (ECED) is not reported by the provincial and regional government to the PIE. There is a need for provincial and regional education departments to collect ECED data from all schools (public, other public, private, etc.) and report the same to the PIE for calculation of ECED numbers in indicator 4.2.4.

Only partial data is available on ECE. However, it cannot be used for the computation of 4.2.4 (b).

Indicator 4.2.4: Net early childhood education enrolment rate in (a) pre -primary education and (b) early childhood educational development		
Region	2021-22	
	Pre-Primary	ECED
Pakistan	19.4%	-
Provinces		
Punjab	20.0%	
Sindh	22.0%	
KP	15.0%	
Balochistan	6.0%	
Source : National EMIS 2021-22, PIE		

Indicator 4.2.5: Number of years of (a) free and (b) compulsory pre-primary education guaranteed in legal frameworks.

As mentioned in the discussion under indicator 4.1.7, insertion of Article 25-A in the federal constitution in 2010 changed the legal landscape regarding right to education in Pakistan. However, Article 25-A only guaranteed free and compulsory education for all children in the age bracket of 5 years and 16 years thus leaving out the early grades before primary

education. There is a need to amend article 25-A to include free and compulsory pre-primary education. The majority of the provincial governments followed Article 25-A when designing their Right to Education Acts thus leaving out the pre-primary education from the legislation. However, Punjab and Sindh parliaments did include free pre-primary education in their respective acts but there is no guarantee of compulsory education in their respective acts. The Right to Education Act for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) passed in 2012 also guarantees free pre-primary education but similar to Punjab and Sindh, does not ensure compulsory pre-primary education. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, AJK and GB Right to Education acts neither include free nor compulsory pre-primary education in the respective acts. It is important to note that all federal, provincial, and regional governments have enacted Right to Education (RTE) Acts, explicitly mentioning the age group of children between 5 to 16 years.

Indicator 4.2.5: Number of years of (a) free and (b) compulsory preprimary education guaranteed in legal frameworks						
Region/Gender	Free Education			Compulsory Education		
	2015	2019	2023	2015	2019	2023
Pakistan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Provinces and Regions						
Punjab	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sindh	0	0	0	0	0	0
KP	0	0	0	0	0	0
Balochistan	0	0	0	0	0	0
GB	0	0	0	0	0	0
AJK	0	0	0	0	0	0
ICT	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Federal, Provincial and Regional Parliament Acts/Constitutions

Though there is absence/little focus on the ECE in Article 25-A and Right to Education Acts of provincial and regional governments; federal, provincial, and regional governments do give importance to ECE in different policy and strategic documents and have designed various interventions to improve pre-primary access and quality of education.

In line with the National Education Policy 2009, AJK government initiated an Early Childhood Education (ECE) programme with UNICEF's support, enrolling children aged three and above in 152 selected schools. Despite successful implementation, financial aid from UNICEF ceased in 2012. Consequently, the AJK government faced challenges in sustaining the ECE programme, leading to its integration into regular public schools⁷⁶.

There is currently no specific legislation in place to support the implementation of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). Despite the absence of specific legislation, the Annual Development Programme for 2023-24 of Azad Jammu and Kashmir demonstrates a commitment to advancing ECCE. In June 2023, the programme reported the establishment of 845 ECE rooms at the primary level and an additional 300 ECE rooms at the Middle School level⁷⁷.

The Right to Education Act 2017 passed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly does not include Early Childhood Education (ECE). With the assistance of UNICEF, KP's ECE policy is under process and is at the draft stage due to political instability and discontinuity of the previous regime. However, the KP government is pursuing different ECE measures in the province

⁷⁶ Early Childhood Education In Pakistan, Academy of Educational Planning and Management Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Islamabad, 2017. <http://library.aepam.edu.pk/Books/Early%20childhood%20education%20in%20Pakistan%202017.pdf>

⁷⁷ Annual Development Programme 2023-24, Planning and Development Department, Azad Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir

2015 to improve ECE facilities in government schools. Despite the absence of specific legislation and policy, the Annual Development Programme of KP government demonstrates a commitment to advancing ECE. The current and previous Education Sector Plans does include investment priorities for ECE in the province. ECE budgets are, however, part of primary schooling budget, which results in the inability to effectively track or plan for ECE spending.

The **Punjab** Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014 does recognize the importance of Early Childhood Education as an important foundation for the child. Article 10 of the Right to Education act states:

"The Government or the local authority may establish a kindergarten school or childcare center in a local area or consolidate or merge such schools or centers for providing free pre-school education and early childhood care for the children above the age of three years until they join a school for education."

The act thus binds the government or local authority to take care of a child between the age of 3 to 5 years in terms of free provision of Early Child Education. As elsewhere in Pakistan, the traditional 'Kachi class' is the prevalent pre-primary Early Child Education (ECE) in Punjab which fails to match the parameters of the ECE concept as envisioned in SDG-4 target 4.2.

Like in Punjab, **Sindh** province's Right to Education Act incorporates provision of free pre-school education and early childhood care for the children about the age of 3 years and above. Article 9 of chapter III of the Act states the following:

"Government may make necessary arrangements for providing free pre-school education and early childhood care for the children above the age of three years until they join the school for education."

The above clause does bind the government of Sindh to provide free ECE but does not incorporate the compulsory part of the education for the ECE.

The **Balochistan** Right to Education Act passed in 2014 also does not include free and/or compulsory pre-primary education but the provincial government has incorporated ECE in Education Sector Plans and does include limited resource allocation for the ECE in the annual public sector development programmes. In 2015, the provincial government did prepare an ECE policy framework to improve ECE access in the province. Measures include establishment of 1,800 ECE centers, inclusion of ECE in Balochistan's Education Sector Plans, teacher capacity building programmes, development of ECE curriculum in coordination with federal education ministry, provision of ECE kits in few selected schools and provision of WASH facilities in the ECE enrolled schools. With the financial and technical assistance of UNICEF, PITE, Mercy Corp and UNESCO some limited ECE teachers' professional development programmes were also introduced to improve the quality of teachers for the ECE classes.

In **Gilgit Baltistan**, the Right to Education Act passed in 2020 does not specifically mention ECE or pre-primary education but the government of GB has introduced some interventions and a policy framework to improve access and quality of ECE provisions in the semi-autonomous province. A draft policy framework for ECE has been prepared and submitted to the competent forum for approval.

Policies, Strategies, Plans and Initiatives to improve access and quality of early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education.

The following section list all the initiatives and actions taken since 2015 to improve access and quality of ECE in the provinces and regions of Pakistan.

AJK

According to key stakeholders in the Consultative Workshop, the following policies and programmes have been introduced to achieve progress on SDG-4 target 4.2.

- I. AJK Education Policy has now incorporated ECE in its policy goals.
- ii. E&SE department has introduced projects interventions to improve ECE.
- iii. Establishment of 846 ECE rooms in higher secondary schools
- iv. Establishment of 300 ECE Rooms in Middle School
- v. Teacher Training was given to ensure proper quality early childhood education across AJK, and follow up to these trainings is being ensured. .
- vi. Provisions added for health and psychological well-being in both Education and Health Policies.

Punjab

The Punjab Education Sector Plan (2013-18) has a special section on the ECE with strategic objective to establish quality early childhood programmes in all primary schools in Punjab as instructed in the Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014⁷⁸. Key strategies identified to achieve ECE strategic objective is (i) Institutionalize pre-primary ECE through development and notification of a policy. (ii) Create awareness and train education managers, head teachers and teachers in ECE. (iii) Prepare plan and implement expansion of pre-primary ECE programmes to 5,000 primary schools.

As per the recommendation in the ESP (2013-18), the Punjab school department approved the ECE policy in 2017. The policy emphasizes the socio-emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children aged three to five, aiming for a successful transition to primary school. The policy, guided by principles like the best interest of the child, holistic and play-based learning, engagement, inclusivity, practicality, evidence-based approaches, and forward-looking strategies, outlines a vision for all children in that age group to achieve their full potential, providing an implementation strategy involving various institutions and key activities such as program coordination, classroom establishment, teacher training, provision of teaching materials, monitoring, and community engagement.

The PESP 2020-25 also has a special focus on the ECE in Punjab. QAED has established nearly 12,500 ECE classrooms in Punjab by 2018. ECE classrooms differ from the traditional Katchi class in three ways: (i) they have child-friendly, theme-based, decorated classrooms with different activity corners; (ii) they involve play-based learning through the use of fun and interactive teaching-learning materials provided in an ECE kit; and (iii) they are managed by an ECE teacher who has received a four-day ECE training along with a part-time caregiver who has also received ECE training and supports the teacher in ECE activities.

⁷⁸ [https://schools.punjab.gov.pk/system/files/Punjab%20Education%20Sector%20Plan%20\(2019-20%20to%202023-24\).pdf](https://schools.punjab.gov.pk/system/files/Punjab%20Education%20Sector%20Plan%20(2019-20%20to%202023-24).pdf)

Stakeholders in the consultative workshop at Lahore identified the following interventions carried out in Punjab to improve ECE:

- i. Establishment of ECCE in 457 schools under PEF
- ii. 3400 ECCE rooms established with the cost of Rs. 5,738 million under PHCIP (2020 to 2025) project in 11 southern districts
- iii. 7000+ ECCE rooms were established and provision of 4500 ECE kits under PESP-III project.
- iv. Recently 1500 ECCE more rooms established by QAED in November 2023 (1000 with support of UNICEF and 500 in progress (FACE/ICE signed)
- v. currently there are 20,000+ schools with ECCE rooms and above 400k+ enrollment in ECE grade in Punjab.
- vi. Online training platform provided under PESP-III (2021) with 18 modules to ECCE teachers and staff.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

The commitment to Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is prominently emphasized in the Education Sector Plan (ESP) for the years 2020-2025. In line with this commitment, a strategic initiative has been outlined to convert an existing 13,000 classrooms in primary schools into modern ECE centers⁷⁹.

Early Child Education in KP's ADP

KP's ADP underscores a sustained commitment to Early Childhood Education (ECE), aligning with SDG 4.2. The ADP's initiatives include the establishment of ECE facilities, dedicated play areas, and the enhancement of ECE rooms, demonstrating a commitment to providing a conducive and enriching environment for early learners. The ADPs for KP from 2019-23 show a focus on ECE in primary schools. The allocations indicate a gradual increase, with notable expansion in 2021-22 and 2022-23, particularly in foreign funding. While this demonstrates commitment to SDG4, there is a need for sustained local investment to ensure long-term sustainability.

ADP	Interventions	Allocation in Million (PKR)	
		Local	Foreign
ADP 2022-23	Provision of 1000 ECE Facilities in Primary Schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (SBSE)	0.001	1000.0
ADP 2021-22	Provision of 2000 ECE Facilities and Development of 2000 Play areas in Primary Schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (SBSE)	10	1050.4
ADP 2020-21	Capacitating of ECE Rooms in Government Primary Schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (SBSE)	0.001	350.0
ADP 2019-20	Capacitating of ECE Rooms in Government Primary Schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (SBSE)	0.001	350.0

⁷⁹

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1781070#:~:text=Aligned%20with%20the%20Khyber%20Pakhtunkhwa,converted%20into%20modern%20ECE%20centres.>

According to key stakeholders in the Consultative Workshop, the following plans and projects have been introduced in KP to achieve progress on SDG-4 target 4.2.

- i. 2015-18: 7400 ECE teachers and headteachers have been trained to impart training in 3,240 government schools.
- ii. An amount of Rs. 22,500 was provided to each school to provide facilities for ECE.
- iii. 2019: Through UNICEF intervention, more than 1000 teachers trained on ECCE to impart teaching to kids in ECE classrooms
- iv. 1,000 ECCE model classrooms were established in 5 districts of KP (200 rooms per district), (100 male/female each)
- v. 2021-22: 2,733 model ECCE classrooms were established across KP.
- vi. 2023-24: 1,000 ECCE teachers in 4 districts of KP will be trained along with establishment of 500 ECCE rooms.
- vii. In the draft ECCE policy there has been a proper mention of the mechanism for monitoring learning in the ECE classrooms, however, the framework is not in practice as of now.

Sindh

In 2015, a significant step towards providing free and high-quality pre-school services in the province of Sindh was the formulation of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy, with a specific focus on children aged 4-5 years⁸⁰. This initiative marked the first phase, involving the launch of Early Childhood Education (ECE) classes in Sindh. Looking ahead to 2030, there is a strategic vision to expand early childhood initiatives to encompass the 0-3 and 6-8 age groups. This expansion aligns with the broader objectives of meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and adhering to international standards in early childhood care, development, and education.

Balochistan

The focus on ECE in Balochistan is very thin both in terms of Acts and policies though the government has taken isolated initiatives to improve pre-primary and ECE education in the province including the following:

- i. establishment of 1800 ECE centers
- ii. Reflection of ECE in Balochistan Sector Plan
- iii. Teacher capacity building
- iv. ECE policy development proposal
- v. ECE policy framework 2015
- vi. ECE Curriculum developed in coordination with Federal education ministry.
- vii. WASH facilities.
- viii. Safe drinking water
- ix. RTSM is responsible for monitoring and assessment.
- x. Balochistan Education Sector Plan focuses ECE.

Gilgit Baltistan

- i. Draft framework for ECE and submitted for approval.
- ii. Establishment of 197 ECD centers in different primary schools
- iii. Training of ECE teachers
- iv. No monitoring process emplaced.

⁸⁰ Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy Sindh, 2015. <https://www.pafec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/ECCE-Policy-Final.pdf>

Challenges and Gaps in improving access and quality of early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Currently, there is no dedicated legislation in place to support the implementation of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), highlighting a need for a comprehensive legal framework to guide and regulate ECCE initiatives. Similarly, the government of AJK faced enormous fiscal challenge to improve school infrastructure for ECE enabled rooms.

Stakeholders' Feedback on Gaps and Challenges:

- i. Absence of ECE rooms in around 4,900 schools out of 6,000
- ii. Absence of Qualified Teachers
- iii. Absence of Caretakers in schools
- iv. Access constraints for ECE children
- v. Financial constraints to convert more rooms into ECE rooms.

Punjab

Stakeholders in Punjab reported the following gaps and challenges:

- i. Lack of school capacity [not possible to allocate a specific classroom and teacher]
- ii. Access and Enrolment: According to the SED, almost 7.4 million children fall within the ECE age bracket (3–5 years) in the Punjab but only 34.4 percent of these children attend preschool (MICS 2018). However, actual enrollment in preschool may be higher than estimates since about 43 percent of students in preschool are above the age of 5.
- iii. ECE enrollment across the various districts of Punjab is also non-homogenous, the central region depicting a much higher rate than the southern or northern regions. The central divisions of Punjab constitute about half the enrolment in pre-primary or Katchi.
- iv. Urban-rural differentials also exist – the percentage of ECE-age children attending an organized ECE programme in urban areas is higher than in rural areas.
- v. Low Parental Engagement: Head teachers and teachers at schools with ECE classrooms identify lack of parental interest and engagement as a significant impediment to children's learning. For disadvantaged households, ECE or Katchi classes merely serve as a free daycare where parents pick up and drop children at their own convenience, without conforming to official school timings. As a result, teachers in ECE classes have to repeat activities and lesson plans several times before children are able to learn the expected outcomes.
- vi. Service delivery: The teacher recruitment policy in public schools is not Katchi-specific, so they are likely to lack a dedicated teacher or a dedicated classroom for the Katchi class.

- vii. Teachers traditionally rotate between all classes of primary on a yearly basis with little or no training for ECE, because in-service training only focuses on Grades 3-5.
- viii. Teachers are also not required to comply with standards.
- ix. Institutional challenges: In the absence of an implementation strategy linked to the ECE policy, financial commitment to ECE cannot be guaranteed nor sustained.
- x. Shortage of classrooms, shortage of teachers, no specific funding for ECCE, lack of resources.
- xi. Mostly ECCE interventions run through projects (World Bank, UNICEF)
- xii. Separate infrastructure, teachers, and proper regular funding mechanism for ECCE are needed.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Currently, there is no dedicated legislation in place to support the implementation of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, highlighting a need for a comprehensive legal framework to guide and regulate ECCE initiatives. There is a need to bring amendments to the Right to Education Act of KP to include ECCE as well. Similarly, the KP government needs to approve the draft ECCE policy which may enable investment in a structured manner to achieve progress on SDG-4 Target 4.2.

The biggest challenge, however, is the provision of finances in the cash-scarce province of KP. Funds are needed to convert existing classrooms into ECCE classrooms and to hire and train teachers for ECCE classrooms. There is no separate cadre for ECCE teachers and a separate cadre may require funds for financing. To establish a single model classroom in a government school in KP will require Rs 367,000 as per stakeholders from the education department of KP.

Balochistan

Stakeholders in Balochistan reported the following gaps and challenges:

- i. Non-availability of specialized ECE teachers
- ii. Budgetary constraints.
- iii. Infrastructure issues
- iv. No clear policy of ECE concept and the traditional approaches of Kachi and Paki
- v. Curriculum issues related to age and requirements.
- vi. Lack of monitoring for this specialized concept

Gilgit Baltistan

Stakeholders in GB reported the following gaps and challenges:

- i. Approval of ECCE framework
- ii. Financial issues
- iii. Human resource as ECCE teachers and facilitator
- iv. Capacity building opportunities
- v. ECCE resources
- vi. Space for ECCE classes in the schools especially primary schools

Data Gaps on ECE Indicators

- i. ECE specific Age-Bracket along with locality census is not available No data on ECCE quality, Teach ECCE tool (28 indicators) that should be adapted to gauge quality of ECCE.
- ii. ECE Enrolment for Private sector is not utilized.
- iii. No standards are holistic assessment methods exists for ECCE
- iv. No separate ECCE cadre
- v. ECCE kit replacement issues
- vi. Very little budget for operation and manganocene of ECCE class rooms
- vii. No refresher trainings
- viii. PEC is working on formative assessment.

Target 4.3: Equal Access to Affordable TVET and Higher Education

Target 4.3: *By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education, including university.*

Progress on Various Indicators of SDG-4 Target 4.3 in Pakistan since 2015

4.3.1 Participation rate of youth (15-24) in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) collects data on indicator 4.3.1 through its Labor Force Surveys (LFS), with reporting on this indicator commencing in the 2020-21 survey.

At the national level, the participation rate of youth in both formal and non-formal education has exhibited a modest growth, rising from 28.8% in 2014-15 to 29.9% in 2020-21. In contrast, the adult participation rate remains low, standing at 0.4% for the year 2020-21.

Rural-urban disparity is significantly tilted in favor of urban areas and the disparity is increasing over time. In 2014-15, the youth participation rate in formal and non-formal education in rural areas was 25.6% while the same in urban areas stood at 34.1%. In 2020-21, the rural-urban disparity further widens as the participation rate of youth in formal and non-formal education jumps to 40.1% in urban areas while it is only 24.0% in rural areas. This is the result of improved access to universities and technical colleges in urban centers where both government and private sector has expanded its reach. Large scale rural to urban migration for work and education is also witnessed during the time period.

The data on gender disparities is available only for the year 2020-21 which shows that male participation rate is significantly higher than the female participation rate. Further disaggregation shows that the gender gap in the participation rate exists only in the rural areas as there are no gender differences in participation in formal and non-formal education and training in the urban centers. The adult demographics follow a similar trend, with male participation rate at 0.6% and female participation rate at 0.3%. Provincial disparities are evident, with Punjab having the highest youth participation rate at 32.2%, followed by KP at 31.1%, Sindh at 24.4%, and Balochistan at 24.5% for the year 2020-21.

Indicator 4.3.1: Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and nonformal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex				
Region/Gender	2014-15	2018-19	2020-21	
	Youth (15-24 Years)	Youth (15-24 Years)	Youth (15-24 years)	Adult (25 and above)
Pakistan	28.8%	29.5%	29.9%	0.40%
Rural-Urban and Male-Female Disparity				
Rural	25.6%	27.4%	24.0%	0.3%
<i>Male</i>			29.3%	0.4%
<i>Female</i>			18.5%	0.2%
Urban	34.1%	32.7%	40.1%	0.7%
<i>Male</i>			40.0%	0.8%
<i>Female</i>			40.2%	0.6%
Gender Disparity				
<i>Male</i>			33.3%	0.6%
<i>Female</i>			26.3%	0.3%
Provincial/Regional Disparity				
Punjab	31.0%	33.1%	32.2%	0.4%
Sindh	23.9%	19.5%	24.4%	0.4%
KP	31.7%	36.7%	31.1%	0.4%
Balochistan	20.7%	16.5%	24.5%	0.5%

Source: Labor Force Surveys, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

Indicator 4.3.2: Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education, by sex

At the national level, the Gross Enrolment Ratio for tertiary education has shown fluctuations over the years. In 2015, it stood at 8.61%, slightly declining to 8.48% in 2016. However, there was an increase in 2017, reaching 8.80%, followed by a dip to 8.39% in 2018. Notably, there was a significant surge in 2019, with the GER soaring to 11.35%. The data for 2020 is not available, but in 2021, the GER further increased to 12.60%. In each year, males consistently have a higher GER compared to females. In 2021, the GER for males is 12.98%, surpassing the female GER of 12.20%.

Indicator 4.3.2: Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education by sex							
Region/Gender	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Pakistan	8.61%	8.48%	8.80%	8.39%	11.35%	-	12.60%
Male	9.12%	9.05%	9.45%	9.04%	11.59%	-	12.98%
Female	8.06%	7.87%	8.11%	7.71%	11.10%	-	12.20%

Source: UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (<http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/>)

Indicator 4.3.3: Participation rate in technical-vocational programmes (15- to 24-year-olds), by sex

In Pakistan, the Technical and Vocational Institutions at the federal and provincial/regional levels are entrusted with imparting and management of technical and vocational programme. However, we could not find any reporting on indicator 4.3.3 from these institutions despite our repeated contacts. We therefore, took the values of this indicator from the UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard.

The data given below shows that overall participation rate in technical and vocational

programs in the age group (15-24 years) is 1 percent while gender differences show huge disparities between male and female. The data is not available at the disaggregated levels of provinces/regions or rural/urban.

Indicator 4.3.3: Participation rate in technical-vocational programmes (15- to 24-year-olds) by sex	
Region/Gender	2021
Pakistan	1.00%
Male	1.29%
Female	0.69%

Source: UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (<http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/>)

In Punjab, legislative measures such as the Punjab Skills Development Authority Act 2019 and amendments to the Apprenticeship Act 2021 were introduced. Initiatives since 2015 include the "Hunar Mand Naujwan" programme, the establishment of technology universities, PPP models for enhanced enrollment, and quality improvement through CBTA. The Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) and skill summer camps contribute to addressing education challenges. At the federal level, the Ba-Ikhtiyar Naujwan programme was inaugurated to provide internships for technical and vocational trainings.

Sindh has implemented several strategies to enhance tertiary education access and quality. The introduction of BS programmes in colleges, transportation facilities for girls, SECCAP for centralized admissions, digital libraries, and partnerships technical boards showcase efforts to align with SDG-4 Target 4.3. Additionally, scholarships with a budget of Rs. 840 million have been provided for further support.

In **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)**, the establishment of KP Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority in 2015 and subsequent legislative acts have shaped an effective institutional framework for skill training. Over 106 technical institutes are managed, offering various courses. The introduction of Bachelor of Science programmes, scholarships, and laptop schemes demonstrate a commitment to accessible and quality higher education.

Balochistan's progress since 2015 encompasses the establishment of new technical institutes, introduction of BS programmes, technology-oriented admission policies, and the establishment of a Technical and Vocational University at Gwadar. Short courses, skill development initiatives, and various educational acts highlight a comprehensive approach to improving education access and quality.

In **Gilgit-Baltistan (GB)**, the passing of the Gilgit-Baltistan Technical and Vocational Education Act in 2018 signifies efforts to enhance technical education in the region.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has adopted national-level policies and strategies for technical education, reflected in the AJK Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority's initiatives. Cross-sectoral linkages with the private sector and various government departments reinforce a comprehensive approach to technical education and vocational training.

Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes to achieve Progress on Various Indicators of Target 4.3 in Pakistan since 2015

At the federal level, a TVET policy exists for all Pakistan with the name of "Skills for Growth and Development: A Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy for Pakistan".

Azad Jammu and Kashmir

AJK Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (AJK TEVTA) has adopted the National TVET Policy and National Skills Strategy of 2013⁸¹. This adoption reflects the commitment to aligning vocational education and training initiatives in AJK with national-level policies and strategies. Furthermore, AJK TEVTA has established cross-sectoral linkages with the private sector, as well as various government departments such as social welfare, industry, planning and development, and finance. These linkages enhance collaboration and coordination, fostering a comprehensive approach to technical education and vocational training in the region. Technical education is integrated into 500 schools with about 2,000 technical teachers. The Directorate oversees recruitment, transfers, and promotions, evaluates staff performance, and supervises teacher training institutes. For sustainability, it's now part of the regular budget, guiding policy and ensuring the quality of technical education initiatives⁸².

Stakeholders' Feedback:

- i. TEVTA has adopted NVQF for quality technical and vocational education.
- ii. Biometric System has been installed in 180 colleges of AJK to ensure attendance of teachers.
- iii. Provision of 52 busses for college students to improve access in far flung areas of the difficult terrain of AJK.
- iv. Provision of Missing facilities in colleges of AJK
- v. Provision of Labs and computers in colleges
- vi. Establishment of HEMIS System in colleges for data collection, monitoring and policy planning and improvement in education sector.
- vii. Matric (SSC) Tech has been started with the help of NAVTTC.

Punjab

The Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014 does recognize vocational Education as an important instrument for skills development in the province. Article 2m defines vocational education as: Vocational education includes the training of skills to prepare trainees for jobs and careers at various levels from trade to a craft. The act includes vocational education as a right for children and mandates the Punjab government to provide vocational education to all children free of cost.

Punjab Legislative Assembly also passed the Punjab Skills Development Authority Act 2019 to promote and regulate the technical education and vocational training sector in the Punjab

⁸¹ Sustainable Development Goal 4 Gap Analysis Document, 2017

⁸² Elementary and Secondary Education department AJ&K. <https://ese.gok.pk/pages/Directorate-Of-Technical-Education>

and for ancillary matters⁸³. A related act namely Apprenticeship Act 2021 was also amended which is a revised version of the 1960 act⁸⁴.

Stakeholders' feedback on programmes initiated to improve progress on Target 4.3 in Punjab are given below:

- i. "Hunar Mand Nojwan" program (1 year) evening classes and online classes were introduced.
- ii. Establishment of 3 technology universities (Lahore, Rasool, DG Khan)
- iii. PPP with private and development sector to enhance enrollment of girls.
- iv. A 5% quota is reserved for persons with disabilities, and a 3% quota is allocated for minorities in enrollment and other recruitment processes.
- v. Quality: Punjab TEVTA utilizes the CBTA (Competency-Based Training Methodology in TVET) to elevate the quality of TVET delivery, and infrastructure enhancements, including laboratory improvements, have been undertaken accordingly.
- vi. Accelerated learning program (ALP) middle-tech introduced in Punjab to address OOSC crises.
- vii. Joint venture of HED and TEVTA; through "skill summer camps" this year – 1,500 children of major districts of Punjab were given an opportunity to learn basic level courses including mobile repairing etc.
- viii. At the federal level, Ba-Ikhtiyar Naujwan program was recently inaugurated where 60,000 BS/Master students of various technical and vocational trainings will be given internships in various trades and skills.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa established Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) through a legislative Act 2015 (Amended in 2017) as an autonomous organization governed by its own laws and by-laws besides certain other general or special laws. The act ensures an effective institutional framework for ensuring delivery of market-based skills training, quality of contents, relevance, demand responsiveness, industry-linkages, and certification. As an autonomous organization, the first enactment is the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority Act, 2015 (KP Act No. XII of 2015 amended in 2017) passed in March 2015. Similarly, KP TEVTA Rules were framed by the Provincial Government in 2016 which were revised in 2017 for effective implementation of the Act. In exercise of the powers conferred by section 21 of the Act *ibid*, KP TEVTA had also framed its regulations, eight in number, in December 2015 (Revised-2020)⁸⁵.

The 18th constitutional amendment passed in 2010 abolished the concurrent list to the constitution of Pakistan and brought higher education to the joint mandate of provincial and federal governments. The main objectives of KP TEVTA are to provide relevant skills for industrial and economic development, improving access, equality, and employability with quality technical and vocational education to the youth of the province. KP TEVTA has more than 106 technical and vocational institutes across the province with 2,390 staff and with enrolment of 39,190 students in various technical and vocational trades. KP TEVTA is managed through a board of directors comprising of 17 members headed by the Chief

⁸³ <http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/2728.html>

⁸⁴ <http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/2796.html>

⁸⁵ KP TEVTA Annual Progress Report 2020-21 <https://kptepta.gov.pk/kptepta/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/7.-APR-2020-21-Final-Version-16-11-2021.pdf>

Minister of the province. The board is mandated to take all the policy decisions regarding the sector. KP TEVTA has established committees on macro level which include strategic planning committee, human resource committee, procurement committee and finance committee.

KP-TEVTA made a paradigm shift in 2015 from conventional training to Competency Based Training (CBT) which has revamped the vocational education landscape in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Aside from modifying the existing curricula and developing new curricula for newly introduced trades, the CBT concept also makes it mandatory for the faculty to be CBT compliant. Similarly, KP-TEVTA moved towards collaboration with the private sector through Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. KP-TEVTA has signed more than 85 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with private sector organizations for their support in trainings, student placements and other relevant fields. More recently, KP-TEVTA has signed an MoU with the Planning Commission of Pakistan for placement of internees under Prime Minister Ba-Ikhtiar Naujawan Internship Program through which 60,000 young graduates will be provided internships across Pakistan⁸⁶.

The ICT section of KP-TEVTA adopted a proactive approach towards digitization of the systems and to increase efficiency. The more recent noticeable improvements and developments includes the following:

- i. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system
- ii. Alumni portal for record keeping of passed outs.
- iii. KP-TEVTA Job portal app for increasing employment and placement of Passed outs.
- iv. AI based attendance system at Head Office
- v. Biometric installation in 78 institutes
- vi. CCTV installation with live feedback to Head Office in 52 institutes
- vii. Digital mapping of all KP-TEVTA Institutes.
- viii. Website development of all KP-TEVTA Institutes and Head Office
- ix. M&E reporting system

The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reorganized the education department in 2001 into two separate departments of Elementary & Secondary Education Department and Higher Education, Archives and Libraries Department. Higher Education, Archives and Libraries Department main functions include policy formulation regarding higher education, improvement of quality/standard of higher education, regulation of private sector higher institutions and other administration and management related aspects of higher education.

During 2018 to 2022, the department has completed many development projects in both the settled and merged districts of the province. New universities, colleges and commerce colleges were established in the province to reduce the burden on existing colleges and universities. Almost every district (excluding the merged districts) has now at least one university⁸⁷. Reconstruction, refurbishment and additional room constructions in colleges and universities were completed to improve the existing infrastructure of higher education in the province.

⁸⁶ <https://bnip.gov.pk/about>

⁸⁷ For a complete list <https://hed.gkp.pk/content/achievements>

Currently, there are thirty (30) universities in the province in the public sector all of which are offering co-education to both boys and girls. There are three (03) women-only universities as well to facilitate women enrolment in higher education institutions⁸⁸. The Government of KP also introduced Bachelor of Science four-year programs thus enabling the poorer students to complete their higher education degree at a lower cost than the university. Many initiatives of merit-based and need-based scholarships were introduced to encourage merit and low-income class to receive higher education. Laptop schemes were implemented through funding from both federal and provincial governments to deserving students.

Sindh

The Sindh Government took the following initiatives to improve TVET and Higher Education in the province:

- i. Free education at intermediate level since 2017
- ii. Started transport facilitation for female students in rural areas.
- iii. For quality education, Uniform Academic Plan was introduced.
- iv. Digitalization to ensure the attendance of teachers.
- v. Single uniform introduced to ensure the equality in all colleges.
- vi. Online and door step admission process has been introduced so that every student can take the admission.
- vii. In total there are 367 colleges functional in Sindh.
- viii. College Education Department introduced the BS programs in colleges and conducted different awareness raising sessions among students in 2021 as per directives of the High Court of Sindh.
- ix. For access, college department started transportation to facilitate female students. So far 15 colleges are under this initiative.
- x. SECCAP (Sindh Electronic Centralized Admission Policy) was implemented since 2021 to facilitate admission access across Sindh.
- xi. 45 digital libraries were introduced.
- xii. For access, College Education Department collaborated with M/s EdKasa to ensure the preparation for students in all subjects.
- xiii. The College Department also signed an MoU with technical board to equip students with digital marketing certificates.
- xiv. Scholarships were provided to boys and girls with a total budget of Rs. 840 million.
- xv. Provided Rs. 600 million furniture along with science lab equipment in all colleges in Sindh
- xvi. Establishment of four Colleges for training new inductees at regional level in province.

⁸⁸ For a complete list of universities in KP <https://hed.gkp.pk/content/universties>

Balochistan

Balochistan government took the following initiatives since 2015 to improve tertiary, and technical and vocational education in the province:

- i. Established 5 new technical institutes in various Districts of Balochistan.
- ii. Introduced BS Programmes (4 Years) in Government Postgraduate Colleges across Balochistan to replace the traditional BA/ BSc Programmes.
- iii. Introduced technology-oriented admission policy in Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE); and also introduced e-marking and online registration.
- iv. Introduced BS (4 Year) Program in Quetta at Poly-Technic Institute.
- v. Introduced Admission Policy (2022) for higher education.
- vi. Established Technical and Vocational University at Gwadar with the support of Pakistan Army.
- vii. Introduced short courses in Vocational Colleges with the support of NAVTTC.
- viii. Different courses were introduced through Google scholarships.
- ix. Skill development courses are introduced in DG skill programmes.
- x. Nomination of high scoring students for scholarships to study in other provinces of Pakistan with the support of higher education at Intermediate and Undergraduate level.
- xi. Introduced the Balochistan University Act, 2022.
- xii. Establishment of 5 new BRC institutes.
- xiii. Established 7 new cadet colleges in different districts of Balochistan.
- xiv. Established 2 Women Cadet Colleges at Quetta and Turbat
- xv. Developed Hostel Policy for students and teachers.
- xvi. Introduced new degree programmes / course at the graduate level.
- xvii. Providing scholarship to students through Balochistan Education Endowment Fund (BEEF)
- xviii. Developed a transport policy.
- xix. Providing transport to students and teachers

Gilgit Baltistan

Gilgit Baltistan took the following actions in introducing acts and policies to improve TVET and higher education sector since 2015:

- i. Act regarding Gilgit-Baltistan Technical and Vocational Education has been passed by GB Assembly in 2018.
- ii. Establishment of technical and vocational Centers in all districts of GB to provide quality training.

- iii. Introduction of Competency Based training program to ensure quality training as per market demand
- iv. Establishment of Endowment funds to run trainings in remote areas of GB.
- v. Up-gradation and establishment of new Labs to enhance the capacity of trainings programs by introducing special labs for females.
- vi. Establishment of Career counseling and Job placement centers.
- vii. Introduction of Special training programs in evening for working class and those who do not meet the age criteria.
- viii. Recognizing the growing importance of vocational and technical education, efforts have been made to advocate for sufficient budget allocation by the GB government and other partner organizations.
- ix. Introduced STEAM, Computer and Entrepreneurship Education by establishing 200 IT labs in public sector schools across GB.
- x. Established Software technical parks and incubation centers in 05 districts of GB. Private sector also plays a pivotal role in introducing and expanding the digital skill program as well as opportunities across GB.

Gaps & Challenges to achieve Progress on various indicators of Target 4.3 in Pakistan since 2015

Azad Jammu & Kashmir

According to the workshop participants, the total budget for the Education sector in AJK is Rs. 32.352 billion during 2023-24 of which the budget for TEVTA is less than 2%. Efforts have been directed towards improving teachers' training, implementing competency-based training initiatives, providing transportation facilities to public sector colleges, and enhancing budget allocations. However, despite these efforts there are still gaps which need to be addressed to accelerate progress on target 4.3.

- i. Missing facilities issues
- ii. Accessibility problems, harsh weather, difficult terrain
- iii. No ICT based training.
- iv. No SLO based learning.
- v. Less focus on the technical and vocational education of women .
- vi. High student teacher ratio

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

- i. The biggest challenge to higher education in the province is the shortage of funds to finance salary budget of the universities in KP. The provincial budget is too stretched out in many sectors and the university fee cannot be increased as it will adversely affect students with a disadvantaged economic background. University teachers often come to streets and protest against late payment of salaries. KP government has not devised any policy yet to address this growing challenge.
- ii. Another challenge is the unattractive salary package for the faculty which causes highly qualified faculty to leave to private sector universities and private sector. There is a need to link universities with the industry and private sector to conduct market research.

Punjab

- i. Deficient equipment and limited infrastructure to provide adequate labs and practical facilities.
- ii. Various TVET providers have their data hubs/ bases which need to be integrated centrally under one umbrella, such as PSDA.

Strategies to address the gaps in Punjab:

- I. Donor coordination underway to address the issue/ gap of deficient machinery/ equipment, lab/ practical.
- ii. Donor coordination on digital content

Gilgit Baltistan

- i. Lack of HR. More staff is needed to enhance capacity to work in all areas.
- ii. Lack of Awareness in Society about the importance of TVET.
- iii. Lack of support from higher Authorities to promote TVET in the region.
- iv. Required financial support.

Target 4.4 Substantially increase Youth and Adults with relevant skills.

Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship.

Target 4.4 Progress Review

Indicator 4.4.1: Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill

The upward trend in ICT skills from 2018-19 to 2019-20 indicates a positive trajectory in digital literacy in Pakistan. While the overall figures show improvement, regional disparities suggest a need for targeted interventions to ensure equitable development of ICT skills. These insights are crucial for formulating policies and initiatives aimed at enhancing digital literacy across the country.

Indicator 4.4.1: Proportion of youth and adults with information and communications technology (ICT) skills, by type of skill ⁸⁹								
Region	Presentation	Downloading	Entertainment	Social Media	Email	Programming	Spread Sheet	File Transfer
2018-19								
Pakistan	17.8%	31.5%	59.1%	43.2%	46.8%	17.5%	26.0%	32.3%
Punjab	17.8%	31.8%	63.3%	42.9%	45.8%	17.6%	-	30.1%
Sindh	18.8%	29.7%	52.7%	46.9%	48.4%	16.7%	-	35.6%
KP	15.7%	32.5%	51.6%	39.9%	47.6%	17.9%	-	36.8%
Balochistan	20.4%	36.4%	38.8%	27.3%	54.0%	18.4%	-	34.9%
AJK	6.2%	-	58.5%	35.6%	21.8%	8.6%	12.0%	13.2%
GB	16.0%	-	64.0%	53.0%	22.0%	27.0%	23.0%	16.0%
2019-20								
Pakistan	21.0%	33.0%	59.0%	45.0%	48.0%	20.0%	27.0%	35.0%

Source: PSLM Survey 2018 -19, 2019-20 and SDG Status Report 2021

Punjab, in response to the demands of the evolving e-commerce landscape, introduced ICT-based courses during the COVID-19 pandemic, aiming to equip both youth and adults with essential skills. The province also embarked on internships for a substantial number of graduates nationwide and established linkages with international certification programmes. Furthermore, initiatives are in place to accredit TVET institutes and upgrade industrial infrastructure to meet global industry standards.

In **Sindh**, various measures have been implemented to enhance ICT skills and digital literacy. The introduction of a Digital Marketing Certification in 30 colleges during a pilot phase and the provision of free A-1 Plans from Microsoft to teachers and students signify the commitment to technology-driven education. Additionally, the establishment of dedicated IT degree colleges and Computer Science Groups in numerous institutions further emphasizes the emphasis on ICT education.

Balochistan has initiated multiple acts, policies, and programmes since 2015 to boost the number of individuals possessing ICT skills. These include teacher training, establishment of ICT labs in high schools, and online marketing skills training by Google. Policies facilitating online teaching during pandemics have also been introduced. Efforts to increase investment in skills development, particularly in the form of vocational training and internship programmes, underscore the commitment to fostering relevant skills for the labor market.

⁸⁹ Only official source available to report on this indicator was from Pakistan Bureau of Statics – PSLM 2018-19 & 2019-20 and Planning Commission SDG Status Report 2021

In Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), substantial progress has been made in advancing towards SDG-4 Target 4.4. Approximately 25% of schools are now equipped with technological devices, creating a conducive learning environment. Free vocational and technical training, establishment of smart IT labs, and initiatives like the SVP Takamol Center for employment opportunities contribute to the region's positive trajectory. The introduction of STEAM, Computer, and Entrepreneurship Education in public sector schools further demonstrates the commitment to holistic education aligned with market demands.

Indicator 4.4.2: Percentage of youth/adults who have achieved at least a minimum level of proficiency in digital literacy skills.

Data for this indicator is not available as no national level data collecting authorities collect the data on it.

Indicator 4.4.3: Youth/adult educational attainment rates by age group and level of education

The data for the indicator 4.4.3 has been divided into two sets of tables, one for youth between the ages of 15-24 and the second one for the adults above 25-year age bracket.

The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) collect this data through its regular Labour Force Surveys (LFS) for all the four provinces. The data shows that percentage of youth in the age group (15-24) with education attainment by level of education has either reduced or stagnated or only marginally improved. At all levels of education there is a huge disparity in the rural-urban regions with rural areas substantially performing below the urban areas. Similarly, disaggregated data by gender shows that female education attainment at all levels is significantly lower than males. The regional disparities among the provinces are also significantly with Punjab performing better while Balochistan performance is poor. For the age group (25+ years) there are slight improvement in percentage of education attainment by all level of education from 2014-15 to 2020-21.

Year	2014-15	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21
Youth: Age group (15-24 year) -Primary school qualification				
All Pakistan	70.6%	70.3%	71.8%	68.4%
Rural/Urban				
Rural	62.8%	62.6%	64.4%	59.9%
Urban	83.7%	82.4%	83.5%	83.0%
Gender				
Male	78.0%	76.7%	79.1%	75.6%
Female	63.0%	63.7%	64.1%	60.8%
Province				
Punjab	72.8%	74.2%	76.3%	74.0%
KP	66.4%	66.2%	65.1%	65.3%
Sindh	69.3%	65.6%	66.8%	60.8%
Balochistan	63.5%	60.2%	62.3%	53.1%
Youth: Age group (15-24 year) -Lower Secondary				
All Pakistan	54.4%	54.7%	56.8%	53.5%
Rural/Urban				
Rural	45.3%	45.3%	47.9%	44.2%
Urban	69.7%	69.4%	71.1%	69.5%
Gender				
Male	60.6%	60.2%	63.0%	59.2%
Female	48.1%	49.0%	50.3%	47.4%
Province				
Punjab	55.8%	57.8%	60.5%	58.2%
KP	50.6%	50.8%	51.5%	52.5%
Sindh	54.0%	51.7%	52.3%	46.4%
Balochistan	50.8%	44.8%	50.9%	38.5%

Year	2014-15	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21
Youth: Age group (15-24 year) - Upper Secondary				
All Pakistan	14.2%	15.1%	14.6%	14.4%
Rural/Urban				
Rural	9.5%	10.0%	10.2%	10.6%
Urban	22.1%	23.0%	21.6%	21.0%
Gender				
Male	14.6%	14.9%	14.5%	13.8%
Female	13.7%	15.3%	14.6%	15.0%
Province				
Punjab	14.0%	15.4%	15.3%	16.0%
KP	13.1%	13.4%	14.0%	14.3%
Sindh	16.0%	16.7%	14.4%	12.4%
Balochistan	9.9%	8.4%	9.2%	7.5%
Youth: Age group (15-24 year) -Tertiary				
All Pakistan	4.3%	4.7%	4.4%	4.4%
Rural/Urban				
Rural	2.8%	2.8%	2.9%	3.2%
Urban	7.0%	7.7%	6.7%	6.4%
Gender				
Male	3.9%	4.0%	3.6%	3.3%
Female	4.8%	5.5%	5.2%	5.4%
Province				
Punjab	4.9%	5.4%	5.1%	5.4%
KP	4.3%	4.2%	3.9%	4.1%
Sindh	3.5%	4.1%	3.2%	2.6%
Balochistan	2.5%	2.4%	2.5%	2.1%
Source: Various issues of Labor Force Survey, PBS, Islamabad				

Indicator 4.4.3: Percentage of adult educational attainment by level of education (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary)				
Year	2014-15	2017-18	2018-19	2020-21
Adult: Age group (25+ year)-Primary				
All Pakistan	47.5%	48.0%	49.5%	50.4%
Rural/Urban				
Rural	36.3%	62.6%	38.1%	39.7%
Urban	66.4%	82.4%	66.9%	67.4%
Gender				
Male	60.7%	60.2%	62.5%	62.9%
Female	34.3%	36.1%	37.0%	38.1%
Province				
Punjab	48.7%	50.1%	52.5%	53.6%
KP	37.1%	38.2%	37.7%	40.8%
Sindh	53.2%	51.0%	52.8%	52.2%
Balochistan	33.1%	33.9%	33.9%	36.9%
Adult: Age group (25+ year)-Lower Secondary				
All Pakistan	34.9%	35.4%	37.2%	38.0%
Rural/Urban				
Rural	23.9%	45.3%	25.4%	27.3%
Urban	53.6%	69.4%	55.1%	55.1%
Gender				
Male	45.3%	45.3%	47.8%	48.4%
Female	24.4%	25.8%	27.0%	27.8%
Province				
Punjab	35.4%	36.5%	39.0%	40.1%
KP	27.2%	28.1%	29.2%	31.5%
Sindh	40.0%	38.9%	40.4%	39.9%
Balochistan	24.4%	24.1%	25.9%	27.3%
Adult: Age group (25+ year)-Upper Secondary				
All Pakistan	13.4%	14.0%	15.1%	14.6%
Rural/Urban				
Rural	7.2%	10.0%	8.0%	8.5%
Urban	24.1%	23.0%	25.9%	24.3%
Gender				
Male	17.0%	17.3%	18.7%	17.9%
Female	10.0%	10.8%	11.7%	11.4%
Province				
Punjab	12.3%	12.6%	14.1%	14.6%
KP	10.4%	11.4%	12.1%	12.8%
Sindh	18.8%	20.1%	20.7%	17.1%
Balochistan	9.3%	8.4%	10.7%	10.0%
Adult: Age group (25+ year)-Tertiary				
All Pakistan	8.0%	8.4%	8.9%	8.6%
Rural/Urban				
Rural	4.1%	2.8%	4.4%	4.7%
Urban	14.8%	7.7%	15.8%	14.8%
Gender				
Male	10.1%	10.5%	11.1%	10.2%
Female	6.0%	6.3%	6.8%	7.1%
Province				
Punjab	7.4%	7.7%	8.7%	8.9%
KP	6.5%	7.2%	7.5%	7.7%
Sindh	10.8%	11.5%	11.2%	9.2%
Balochistan	5.5%	4.7%	5.6%	5.6%

Source: Various issues of Labor Force Survey, PBS, Islamabad

Policies, Strategies, Plans and Programmes to achieve Progress on Various Indicators of Target 4.4 in Pakistan since 2015

The Eighteenth Amendment Act to the constitution of Pakistan in 2010 has enabled provincial governments to establish new universities and post graduate colleges. Since 2010, the number of post-graduate colleges and universities has increased tremendously. This has enabled a large number of youth from all the provinces and regions to obtain university degrees. However, Pakistan's economic performance is very poor and the increased number of educated youth is not absorbed by the domestic economy⁹⁰.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

The precarious law and order situation and increasing violence and terrorism in KP has been one of the many reasons for a weak performing economy in the province. Consequently, a large group of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers has migrated, to other provinces as well as to countries in the Gulf and developed countries. The situation further exacerbates when the data accounts for the Newly Merged Districts.

The overall population share of the province including that of merged districts is around 17% as per the 2023 census but the share of overseas employment is more than 30% on average since 2015.

Number of Workers Registered for Employment Abroad			
Year	Total	KP	as % of total
2015	946,571	266,791	28.2%
2016	839,353	246,557	29.4%
2017	496,286	134,949	27.2%
2018	382,439	113,797	29.8%
2019	625,876	213,597	34.1%
2020	225,213	77,412	34.4%
2021	288,280	92,522	32.1%
2022	832,339	267,436	32.1%
2023	723,325	206,746	28.6%

Source: Bureau of Immigration & Overseas Employment, Government of Pakistan⁹¹

The above data on overseas employment from KP are supported by the Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) conducted in 2018-19. As per the survey, 11.32% of household income in KP is derived from foreign remittances, exceeding the national average of 4.96%. Additionally, domestic remittances from other provinces contribute 7.48% to KP household income compared to the national average of 3.62%.

The significant challenge confronting KP is the limited availability of quality job opportunities for the local workforce.

⁹⁰ <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/institutional-document/33464/files/poverty.pdf>

⁹¹ <https://beoe.gov.pk/reports-and-statistics>

Punjab

The Punjab Government undertook the following initiatives to improve work opportunities in the province by appointing job place office in their job placement wing, have started on-campus recruitment drives; national and international companies are invited for this purpose. In addition, job fairs are regularly organized and more programs are set up for recruiters to interact with potential university graduates. GoP has also set-up training program in partnership with various private sector organizations on understanding basics of entrepreneurship; providing interest free seed loan, microfinance and etc. Approximately 100,000 internships opportunities were generated across the country for university and TVET graduates. During COVID-19, IT based e-commerce courses were introduced to equip youth/adults on ICT skills.

Government of Punjab has also taken initiatives to coordinating and linkages with international certification/ equivalency programmes, accreditation of TVET institutes including private TVET providers – TVETA needs support to strengthen institutional capacity to improve regulatory functions / accreditation and upgrading industrial infrastructure and equipment/ machinery – global industry has reached to 4.0 industry standards while Pakistan struggling to upgrade the industry standards.

Sindh

Sindh Government took the following initiatives to improve youth skills and decent work in the province: Digital Marketing Certification in 30 colleges in Sindh (in pilot phase) in other words ICT skills, Sindh Youth Training Resourcing Arrangement Programs (SYTARA) introduced in all colleges in Sindh (career counselling sessions), Provision of free A-1 Plan from Microsoft to all the teachers and students.

At the college and university levels, the Sindh College Games were introduced in all colleges with a dedicated allocation of Rs 100 million for the competition. Additionally, the Sindh Talent Hunt Program was initiated, involving science projects, arts and crafts, paintings, singing and recitations competition at various levels (College level, District Level, Regional Level and then Provincial). Furthermore, the College Education Department has established four colleges in Sindh, exclusively offering IT degrees and certifications.

Balochistan

The GoB has made several strides in enhancing the digital and vocational skills among the youth by setting up vocational training centers in public technical schools, polytechnic colleges for girls and boys, vocational skills centers at Elementary colleges, and computer labs in educational institutions including high schools. IT teachers in educational institutions were also inducted, and technical training for officials and teachers was initiated.

In collaboration with UNICEF, new vocational centers were established especially for girls, have introduced in collaboration with TVET trainings in Alternative Learning Path (ALP) centers for adolescent girls. The GoB has also developed a TVET policy 2015, and Baluchistan Youth policy 2015. These measures were introduced to improve TEVT facilities for the girls.

Gilgit Baltistan

In GB, around 25% of schools have been equipped with technological devices, which created a conducive learning environment in schools. Currently 300 males and females are getting free of cost vocational and technical trainings across GB under the Directorate of Technical Education and Skill Development (DTESD).

The Trade Testing board GB has been established to provide certificates to TVET graduates on time. Two smart high tech IT labs have been established in Gilgit and Skardu to provide quality and high-tech IT courses to the youth as per international and national market demands. The first ever SVP takamol center was established in GB to provide the graduates of TVET sector an easy way to get employment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The key gaps identified during our consultative workshops with key stakeholders in GB identified lack of resources and non-availability of teachers and infrastructure.

Target 4.5: Eliminate all Discrimination in Education

Target 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and children in vulnerable situations.

Progress Review of SDG-4 Target 4.5

Indicator 4.5.1: Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile, and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict affected, as data become available) for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated.

Gender Gap in Upper Secondary Completion Rate

Indicator SDG 4.5.1 seeks to measure equity in educational outcomes, and gender equality is critical to the SDG agenda. The purpose of the gender gap indicator is to provide an easy to interpret measure of gender inequity in completing upper secondary education. The percentage point difference in completion rates provides a very clear understanding of the difference between females and males.

Gender Gap in Upper Secondary Completion Rate		
Region/Gender	Upper Secondary*	
	2014-15	2019-20
Pakistan	2.0%	2.0%
Rural/Urban		
Rural	-3.0%	-3.0%
Urban	11.0%	8.0%
Provincial/Regional Disparity		
Punjab	4.6%	8.6%
KP	-10.6%	-12.3%
Sindh	4.1%	-4.3%
Balochistan	-5.4%	-5.8%

* Includes Grade 9 and 10 only

Source: PSLM Survey 2014-15 and 2019-20

Gender gap has been worked out based on UNESCO SDG MTR guidelines⁹².

⁹² "gender gap" = difference between female and male in upper secondary completion rate. A difference of zero indicates no gender gap in completion rate. Positive value indicates completion rate among female are higher than male. Negative values indicates completion rate among female is lower than male.

Gender Parity Index – Out of School Children

At national level, the overall gender Parity Index for OOSC is 0.83, indicating a slight gender disparity with a preference for males in terms of access to education. At the provincial level, Punjab demonstrates a Parity Index of 1.03, signaling nearly equal access for both genders. In Sindh, the Parity Index is 0.76, pointing to a moderate gender disparity. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), there is a more significant gender gap with a Parity Index of 0.48, indicating lower educational access for females. Balochistan's Parity Index is 0.82, reflecting a slight gender disparity.

The ICT region stands out with Parity Index above 1 for lower secondary (1.1) and upper secondary (1.31), suggesting a higher proportion of females enrolled in these educational levels compared to males. The overall Parity Index for ICT is 1, indicating a balanced gender representation in the total out-of-school children rate.

Indicator 4.5.1: Gender Parity Indices - OOSC Rate (1 year before primary, primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)				
Region/Gender	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Total
	2021-22	2021-22	2021-22	2021-22
Pakistan	0.81	0.69	0.92	0.83
Provincial/Region				
Punjab	0.99	0.91	1.10	1.03
Sindh	0.76	0.59	0.86	0.76
KP	0.43	0.34	0.60	0.48
Balochistan	0.78	0.83	0.88	0.82
ICT	0.97	1.10	1.31	1.00

Source: National EMIS Database, 2021-22, PIE

Punjab has implemented various initiatives, including the Benazir Income Support Programme to bridge the parity gap. The Education Sector Plan in Punjab also emphasizes its commitment to gender equality, with special programmes focusing on southern Punjab. These efforts encompass the establishment of ECCE rooms, stipend programmes for girls, and other measures targeting marginalized areas. The ongoing Annual School Census in Punjab collects data on marginalized groups, including children with disabilities, reflecting a commitment to inclusive education. Despite these positive steps, challenges persist, requiring continuous efforts to bridge gaps in infrastructure and ensure equal access.

Sindh has actively contributed to gender parity by upgrading girls' schools and providing essential facilities like sports and computer labs to both boys and girls schools. The Girls Stipend Programme operates in all schools, with a specific focus on increasing enrollment from marginalized households. Plans within the Education Sector Plan address vulnerable populations, emphasizing informal education systems and scholarship facilities. The province collects monthly data on students, enabling regular monitoring and evaluation. Despite progress, challenges related to limited resources, cultural barriers, and political instability remain, necessitating a continuous focus on infrastructure development and overcoming socio-economic obstacles.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the passage of the Education Act 2017 is a significant step towards ensuring free and compulsory education. Despite challenges, the province's Education Sector

Plan for 2020-25 prioritizes gender equity, particularly in the Newly Merged Districts. Interventions such as stipends for girls, school construction, and empowering Parent Teacher Councils demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity and access to education.

Balochistan has taken substantial measures to eliminate gender disparities in education. The declaration of all government primary schools as gender-free, prioritization of girls' schools for upgrading, and improvements in WASH facilities contribute to reducing gender gaps in access to education at all levels. Balochistan's focus on inclusive policies, backed by legislative measures aims to enhance educational opportunities for all, particularly girls.

In **AJK**, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) stands at 0.97, indicating balanced enrollment across education levels. Positive trends, especially at the primary level, reflect efforts to ensure gender equity. Legal mechanisms, such as the AJK Commission on the Status of Women Act 2014, underscore the commitment to eliminating discrimination. Stakeholders' feedback highlights diverse initiatives, including the establishment of technical centers, and a women's university. Challenges persist, particularly in weak implementation, requiring additional efforts to strengthen legal protections and further enhance gender equality in education.

In **GB**, progress towards SDG 4.5 is demonstrated through strategic interventions since 2015. Allocation of ADP funds favoring girls' education, free transportation for female students, and special grants for specific districts are notable initiatives. Monitoring gender disparities at all educational levels through a special education board reflects a commitment to data-driven policymaking.

Using the province of Punjab as an example representing approximately 50% of the school-going children in Pakistan, a detailed analysis on gender parity for all the provinces and regions is possible with the requisite information.

Enrolment in Punjab by Categories of Institutions 2021-22				
Gender	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Total
Education Department				
Male	50.4%	49.0%	50.1%	50.0%
Female	49.6%	51.0%	49.9%	50.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Other Public				
Male	55.1%	54.0%	47.7%	52.6%
Female	44.9%	46.0%	52.3%	47.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Private				
Male	53.2%	51.6%	53.5%	52.9%
Female	46.8%	48.4%	46.5%	47.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Colleges				
Male	-	-	42.8%	42.8%
Female	-	-	57.2%	57.2%
Total	-	-	100%	100%
Non-Formal				
Male	44.6%	14.4%	-	44.4%
Female	55.4%	85.6%	-	55.6%
Total	100%	100%	-	100%

Enrolment in Punjab by Categories of Institutions 2021-22				
Gender	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Total
Punjab Education Foundation				
Male	53.8%	50.0%	42.7%	51.8%
Female	46.2%	50.0%	57.3%	48.2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Deeni Madaris				
Male	59.2%	44.9%	45.6%	54.3%
Female	40.8%	55.1%	54.4%	45.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Total				
Male	52.0%	49.6%	49.4%	51.0%
Female	48.0%	50.4%	50.6%	49.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: National EMIS database 2021-22, PIE

Valid data for indicators **4.5.2, 4.5.3, 4.5.4** and **4.5.5** is extremely scant or non-existent that no formal reporting can be made at this point in time. It is expected with the improved annual schools census exercise, data on early grades enrollment will be available in future. As for existing funding mechanism, expenditure per student and the data on aid for education; more time and specific mechanism will be required to record and the collect.

Indicator 4.5.6: Expenditure on education by source of funding (public, private, international) as a percentage of GDP

Indicator 4.5.6: Expenditure on education by source of funding (public, private, international) as a percentage of GDP					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1. Government Expenditure	2.19%	2.45%	2.25%	-	1.84%
2. Private Expenditure	-	-	-	-	3.30%
3. International Expenditure	0.24%	0.22%	0.12%	-	0.14%
Total	2.43%	2.67%	2.37%	-	5.28%

Source: UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (<http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/>)

For analysis of 4.5.6 following table breakdown the expenditure on education as a percentage to total household expenditure. The data shows government expenditures over the years are on the decline as well international assistance. With these declining Government and International expenditures, the pressure on out-of-pocket expenditures of households on children education increases. This disproportionately impact the poorest segment of households where the poorest quintile spend only 0.90% of their income on child education as compared to 6.40% of household income of the riches quintile. The impact is more significant in rural areas as compared to urban areas.

Expenditure of Education as percentage of total household expenditure		
	2015-16	2018-19
Pakistan All	3.51%	3.98%
Income Quintile 1 (Poorest)	1.09%	0.90%
Income Quintile 2	1.60%	1.45%
Income Quintile 3	2.04%	2.25%
Income Quintile 4	2.91%	3.35%
Income Quintile 5 (Richest)	5.41%	6.40%

Expenditure of Education as percentage of total household expenditure		
	2015-16	2018-19
Pakistan Rural	2.20%	2.56%
Income Quantile 1 (Poorest)	0.99%	0.81%
Income Quantile 2	1.35%	1.25%
Income Quantile 3	1.61%	1.91%
Income Quantile 4	2.33%	2.61%
Income Quantile 5 (Richest)	3.76%	5.13%
Pakistan Urban	5.01%	5.50%
Income Quantile 1 (Poorest)	1.64%	1.41%
Income Quantile 2	2.41%	2.11%
Income Quantile 3	2.94%	2.93%
Income Quantile 4	3.70%	4.20%
Income Quantile 5 (Richest)	6.23%	6.95%

Source: TABLE 15 from Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2015-16 and 2018-19

Acts, Policies and Plans to improve progress on Target 4.5

All Acts, Policies and Plans draw overall guidance from the Constitution of Pakistan and the international commitments that the country has agreed to.

The Azad Government of the State of **Jammu and Kashmir** has undertaken various initiatives to advance progress on Target 4.5, including the formulation of an Education Policy and the approval of the the Child Protection Act in 2016. All development projects align with SDGs 4, including the performance-based budget formulation. In 2016 the AJK cabinet approved the Women Development Strategic Plan 2016 and re-notified the women parliamentarian policy. In 2023 drafts legislation for AJK Social Protection Act, and Child Protection (Amendment) Act 2016 along with the AJK Child Protection Policy have been developed and are pending cabinet approval. 12.5% seats for women participation in local bodies election has been approved, 40 technical centers have been established for women, first ever women police station has been established in Poonch, Women university established at Bagh, and Pink Bus Service for working women in Muzaffarabad.

The **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa** assembly passed free and compulsory education act in 2017 which commit "to provide free compulsory primary and secondary education in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" in the spirit of Article 25-A of Pakistan's constitution.

The act further obligates the government to constitute a School Attendance Authority with representation from Parents Teachers Council (PTC) to ensure every child is in school. The act establishes a Taleem Fund which will be spent on the welfare of students. The act empowers the government to make rules in order to smoothly implement the act.

The Education Department's operational strategies are guided by the Education Sector Plan 2020-25, the KP Education Sector Blueprint 2018-23, the Tribal Decade Strategy 2020-30 for the newly merged districts of KP and Accelerated Implementation Program (AIP) for the development of newly merged districts.

The Education Sector Analysis (ESA) carried out for the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2020-25 identifies that the lack of gender parity in enrolment is evident at all levels of the education

⁹³

https://kpcode.kp.gov.pk/uploads/2017_12_THE_KHYBER_PAKHTUNKHWA_FREE_COMPULSORY_PRIMARY_AND_SECONDARY_EDUCATION_ACT_2017.pdf

system from ECE, primary through to higher secondary. The situation is particularly stark in the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) (based on data from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Annual School Census of 2018-19). Of the 2.1 million OOSC in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (aged 5- 16), 66% of them are girls (this increases to 70% when the narrower age group 10-16 is examined).

As per the ESP 2020-25, the reasons for the lack of gender parity include child marriage, discriminatory gender norms, child labor, poverty, and supply side issues of non-availability of school facilities.

To achieve geographical equity, it put a special emphasis on 'interventions in the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) to achieve structural parity and to address the fundamental issues associated with poor access, enrolment, retention and equity for both girls and boys.

The KP government has also empowered the Parent Teacher Councils (PTCs) and the local community for better participation and management of schools. ECP identifies the need for enhancing the participation of communities, PTCs, and public engagement on the performance of schools, quality of education and support for emergency preparedness.

The KP parliament passed the Education Monitoring Authority (EMA) Act in 2019 which now collects regular data on the status of marginalized students which includes refugees, orphans, and students with disabilities. A special project was designed to bring these children into school. EMA also provides data to the E&SE department on the gender disparities in education at the lowest level of Union Council which the government tries to fill the gap through supply side interventions.

EMA monitors gender disparities and other parity indices, including female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile, and others, such as disability status, refugee children, and conflict-affected areas of the merged districts, disadvantaged areas at all educational levels. The education indicators and data systems in KP is disaggregated to reflect these disparities so that policy interventions can be designed to target specific areas.

The Government of **Balochistan** has developed a gender responsive Balochistan Education Sector Plan (2020-25), in with it declared all Government Primary Schools as Gender Free (mixed Schools / Co-education) to facilitate access to education for all, especially for girls. The School Education Department prioritized girls' schools to be upgraded with functional WASH facilities to reduce the gender gaps in access to education at all levels.

Drawing from the Article 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan which ensures the equality of citizens, Balochistan enacted the Compulsory Education Act, 2014 followed by the sector analysis and the development of the second Balochistan Education Sector Plan (2020-25). Similarly, Service Rules were developed in 2020 for female and male employees of the School Education Department.

The Government of Balochistan, School Education Department with the support of Mo FE&PT and the World Bank has initiated a programme under the ASPIRE Project to improve access to education for children from lagging districts including most vulnerable children. In addition, Education Cannot Wait is supporting SED, GoB in reaching out to the most vulnerable

communities. Similarly, UNICEF and JICA revitalized the non-formal education sector through the development of the Non-Formal Education Policy, curriculum, textbooks, and other supporting materials. The developed materials are being used for children who are out of school through the Alternate Learning Pathway program centers. There are still some strides to be made on developing gender responsive budgeting and planning and allocation of resources based on equity.

The Government of **Punjab** has established stipend programs for girls in sixteen districts, has identified schools to develop disability-friendly infrastructure (ramps, hearing aids, washrooms etc.) under the Punjab Education Foundation, more than 7000 ECCE rooms were established under the PESP-III project along with measures taken to establish WASH (Toilets + Drinkable Water) facilities at ECCE rooms in eleven districts. Nine Transgender schools have been established at divisional level in Punjab under the ASPIRE project (2021 to 2026). Punjab has also invested heavily in infrastructure, teacher training with latest aids and in collaboration with Sightsavers, have collected data on students with disability in the ongoing Annual School Census.

Since 2015 the **Government of Sindh** has invested heavily in the upgradation of girls' schools from primary to middle, middle to secondary, and secondary to higher secondary school along with stipend programs for girls and has ensured development of sports, computer labs and other basic need for both girls and boys. Special focus is on the informal education system, scholarship facilities and provisions of informal schools.

To enhance girls' enrollment, the Sindh Government has implemented a stipend program with a particular emphasis on economically disadvantaged households. Additionally, the Sindh Education Department is committed to collecting information on every student on a monthly basis as part of its Education Sector Plan.

Despite these measure, there are challenges that the Sindh Government is addressing and these include: cultural barriers, non-appointment of female teachers, limited transportation facility for girls in secondary schools, law and order situation, and political instability.

In **Gilgit Baltistan** among the several recent developments, under the Education Department's annual development plan, 60% of the budget is being allocated for girls' education with incentives to provide textbooks, meals, transportation to female students, and a draft ECCE framework has been developed. The GoGB has also established three Special Education schools, as well as homebased schools for girls in the Diامر District. The GoGB has also approved the TVET Act of 2018 and has established the GB TVET Board. In addition, the GoGB has also approved the GB Disability Act 2019 and is in the process of ratifying the Child Protection Policy draft which is pending cabinet approval.

The persistent financial constraints, absence of a well-defined learning pathway for OOSC, and insufficient teacher training in working with children with disabilities pose ongoing challenges in the education sector.

Target 4.6: Universal Youth Literacy and Numeracy

Target 4.6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

Progress Review of SDG-4 Target 4.6

Indicator 4.6.1: Proportion of population in a given age group achieving at least a fixed level of proficiency in functional (a) literacy and (b) numeracy skills, by sex

Data is not available for this indicator.

Indicator 4.6.2: Youth/adult literacy rate

At national level, In the youth category (15-24 years), the literacy rate remained constant at 72% from 2018-19 to 2020-21. Conversely, in the adult category (15 and above), there was a notable increase from 57% in 2014-15 to 60% in 2020-21, indicating a positive trend in adult literacy.

Breaking down the data by provinces, Punjab consistently demonstrated higher literacy rates, with a youth literacy rate of 78-79% and an adult literacy rate of 61-63%. Despite making progress, Sindh still trails behind Punjab in terms of literacy rates. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) displayed moderate literacy rates, with a noticeable gender gap. Balochistan reported lower literacy rates compared to other provinces, highlighting the need for targeted educational interventions in the region.

Indicator 4.6.2: Youth/adult literacy rate								
Region/ Gender	Youth (15-24)				Adult (15 and Above)			
	2014-15	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2014-15	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Pakistan	-	72%	72%	72%	57%	56%	57%	60%
Rural-Urban and Male-Female Disparity								
Rural	-	64%	65%	64%	46%	47%	48%	50%
Male	-	75%	75%	75%	60%	62%	62%	65%
Female	-	54%	54%	53%	33%	33%	34%	36%
Urban	-	83%	84%	86%	74%	72%	72%	75%
Male	-	86%	85%	88%	81%	79%	79%	82%
Female	-	80%	82%	83%	66%	64%	65%	68%
Gender								
Male	-	79%	79%	80%	68%	69%	68%	72%
Female	-	64%	65%	64%	45%	45%	46%	48%
Provincial/Regional Disparity								
Punjab	-	79%	78%	77%	60%	61%	61%	63%
Male	-	82%	81%	81%	69%	70%	70%	72%
Female	-	75%	75%	73%	51%	53%	53%	55%
Sindh	-	64%	65%	65%	58%	55%	57%	59%
Male	-	73%	72%	74%	70%	68%	68%	71%
Female	-	55%	57%	56%	46%	42%	45%	47%
KP	-	69%	67%	68%	47%	49%	49%	52%
Male	-	88%	85%	85%	66%	71%	68%	72%
Female	-	50%	49%	50%	29%	30%	30%	33%
Balochistan	-	47%	57%	61%	38%	37%	44%	51%
Male	-	60%	69%	75%	56%	52%	59%	67%
Female	-	32%	40%	44%	18%	21%	26%	32%

Source: PSLM Survey 2014-15, 2018-19 and 2019-20, PBS & Labour Force Survey (LFS), 2020-21, PBS

Target 4.7: Acquire Skills and Knowledge to Develop and Promote Sustainable Lifestyles

Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

Progress Review of SDG-4 Target 4.7

Indicator 4.7.1: Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment.

Culture diversity and tolerance, human rights, peace and non-violence, climate change, environment sustainability, human survival and well-being and sustainable consumption are covered in national and sub-national laws, legislation and legal framework on education.

Indicator 4.7.1: Extent to which (i) global citizenship education and (ii) education for sustainable development are mainstreamed in (a) national education policies, (b) curricula, (c) teacher education and (d) student assessment							
A. National Education Policies		B. Curricula		C. Teachers Education		D. Student Assessment	
Component	Score	Component	Score	Component	Score	Component	Score
A2	0.88	B2	1.00	C2*	-	D2*	-
A4	0.75	B4	0.50	C3	0.88	D3*	-
A5	0.80	E1	1.00	C4	0.25	E1*	-
E1*	-	-	-	C5	0.75	-	-
	-	-	-	E1	1.00	-	-
Total	0.81		0.83		0.72	-	-

*Not calculated if more than half of responses excluding not applicable are unknown or blank.
Source: National Curriculum Council (NCC), MOFE&PT

The above table has been prepared based on the technical guidelines provided by UIS SDG-4 metadata technical guidelines. E1 as defined in the technical document, has not been incorporated in either A, B, C or D. the student assessment part is completely missing for A2, A5, and E1.

The indicator 4.7.1 measures the extent to which countries mainstream Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in their education systems. This is an indicator of characteristics of different aspects of education systems: education policies, curricula, teacher training and student assessment as reported by government officials.

Each component of the indicator is assessed on a scale of zero to one. The closer to one the value, the better mainstreamed are ESD and GCED in that component. By presenting results separately for each component, governments will be able to identify in which areas more efforts may be needed.

This indicator acknowledges that evidence on how the policy guidance and implementation in policy, curricula, teacher training and student assessment actually work and what impact they may have, progress might be interpreted in relation to the comparative/ipsative priority and emphasis assigned to these areas over time, i.e. if and how existence, frequency, priority and scope of implementation change from one data collection to the next.

(a) Laws and policies

A2 = 0.88 (Indicate GCED and ESD themes are covered in national or sub-national laws, legislation or legal frameworks on education)

A4 = 0.75 (Indicate GCED and ESD themes are covered in national or sub-national education policies, frameworks or strategic objectives)

A5 = 0.80 (National or sub-national education policies, frameworks or strategic objectives on education provide a mandate to integrate GCED and ESD.)

E1 = Nil (Indicate to what extent GCED and ESD are mainstreamed¹ in education laws)

(b) Curricula

B2 = 1.00 (Indicate which GCED and ESD themes are taught as part of the curriculum)

B4 = 0.50 (Indicate the approaches used to teach GCED and ESD in primary and secondary education)

E1 = 1.00 (Indicate to what extent GCED and ESD are mainstreamed in curricula)

(c) Teacher Education

C2 = Nil (Indicate whether teachers, trainers and educators are trained to teach GCED and ESD during initial or pre-service training and/or through continuing professional development)

C3 = 0.88 (Indicate on which GCED and ESD themes pre-service or in-service training is available for teachers, trainers and educators)

C4 = 0.25 (Indicate whether teachers, trainers and educators are trained to teach the dimensions of learning in GCED and ESD)

C5 = 0.75 (Indicate whether teachers, trainers and educators are trained to use approaches to teach GCED and ESD in primary and secondary education)

E1 = 1.00 (Indicate to what extent GCED and ESD are mainstreamed³ in teacher education)

(d) Student assessment

D2 = Nil (Indicate whether the GCED and ESD themes below are generally included in student assessments or examinations)

D3 = Nil (Indicate which of the dimensions of learning in GCED and ESD below are generally included in student assessments or examinations)

E1 = Nil (Indicate to what extent GCED and education for ESD are mainstreamed⁴ in student assessment)

Data for indicators **4.7.2, 4.7.3, 4.7.4** and **4.7.5** is not available for reporting. The data on indicator 4.7.2 needs to be collected through school-based survey which is currently not being carried out by any government or non-government department/agency. Federal ministry of health can initiate this exercise to collect data on this indicator. For indicator 4.7.3 and 4.7.5, Federal Ministry of Climate Change may initiate to review school curricula in consultation with National Curriculum Council to find green policy intentions and its mainstreaming in curriculum documents. For 4.7.4, either MICS or PSLM surveys has to include questions regarding global citizenship and sustainability.

However, consultative workshops, stakeholders highlighted the importance of gender-based and culturally relevant planning for school education. The feedback outlined efforts such as teacher training, financial exploration through international donors, and the integration of monitoring and data collection mechanisms. Improvements in the New National Curriculum of Pakistan with emphasis on gender equality, human rights, sustainable development, and global citizenship education was appreciated. In addition, initiatives such as health screenings, awareness sessions on menstrual health, and the provision of WASH facilities were acknowledged as important for students to understand.

It was shared that such topics should be discussed at all tiers and not only with students, but teachers and administrators and planners to institutionalize positive and health predispositions.

Target 4.a: Build and Upgrade Inclusive and Safe Schools

Target 4.a: Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability, and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive, and effective learning environments for all.

Progress Review of SDG-4 Target 4.a

Indicator 4.a.1: Proportion of schools offering basic services, by type of service.

The proportion of schools offering sanitation facilities is 79% in 2021-22 as compared to 72% in 2015-16. In primary schools, the current figure is 76% while it was 68% in 2015-16. There is also an increase in sanitation facilities in lower and upper secondary schools. A similar upward trend in the provision of drinking water facilities is observed in primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels.

Indicator 4.a.1: Proportion of schools offering basic services, by type of service												
Region	Primary			Lower Secondary			Upper Secondary			Total		
	2015-16	2018-19	2021-22	2015-16	2018-19	2021-22	2015-16	2018-19	2021-22	2015-16	2018-19	2021-22
Sanitation												
Pakistan	68%	73%	76%	86%	90%	90%	94%	96%	97%	72%	77%	79%
Punjab	99%	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%	99%
Sindh	51%	58%	57%	70%	78%	75%	98%	96%	93%	54%	60%	60%
KP	77%	84%	93%	83%	91%	97%	92%	96%	99%	79%	86%	94%
Balochistan	14%	39%	33%	50%	71%	69%	69%	88%	89%	22%	47%	41%
AJK	34%	36%	42%	59%	63%	66%	60%	68%	77%	42%	45%	51%
GB	38%	49%	72%	68%	84%	90%	81%	94%	97%	51%	66%	80%
ICT	95%	100%	100%	98%	100%	100%	98%	100%	100%	97%	100%	100%
Drinking Water												
Pakistan	67%	64%	74%	82%	81%	84%	93%	92%	94%	71%	69%	78%
Punjab	100%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%
Sindh	47%	44%	61%	60%	60%	72%	94%	86%	93%	50%	47%	63%
KP	66%	78%	89%	71%	85%	90%	86%	95%	96%	68%	81%	90%
Balochistan	54%	15%	23%	55%	30%	40%	73%	66%	71%	56%	21%	29%
AJK	26%	26%	31%	51%	51%	52%	68%	72%	72%	37%	37%	41%
GB	38%	53%	63%	70%	76%	74%	85%	91%	87%	53%	66%	68%
ICT	93%	100%	100%	92%	100%	100%	96%	100%	100%	94%	100%	100%
Access to Internet for Pedagogical Purposes												
Pakistan	-	-	5%	-	-	11%	-	-	59%	-	-	-
Punjab	-	-	11%	-	-	21%	-	-	80%	-	-	-
Sindh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
KP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38%	-	-	-
Balochistan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20%	-	-	-
AJK	-	-	4%	-	-	2%	-	-	4%	-	-	-
GB	-	-	0%	-	-	3%	-	-	27%	-	-	-
Primary to Upper Secondary										100.0%		

Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16 & 2018-19, NEMIS, AEPAM & National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE

Indicator 4.a.2: Percentage of students experiencing bullying in the last 12 months in a) primary, and b) lower secondary education.

Data on this indicator is limited, and only the UIS dashboard on SDG-4 provides the figure of 79.9% of students at primary schools experiencing bullying in the 12 months for the year 2018-19. These figures are derived from the TIMSS Grade 4 results.

Indicator 4.a.2: Percentage of students experiencing bullying in the last 12 months in (a primary, and b lower secondary education)	
Pakistan	2018-19
Primary	78.98%
Lower Secondary	-
Source: UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)	
Note: Based on TIMSS 2019 Grade 4	

Indicator 4.a.3: Number of attacks on students, personnel, and institutions

The UIS Dashboard on SDG-4 provides figures on the number of attacks on students, personnel, and institutions for the years 2015-16, 2018-19 and 2021-22. This data is represented in the table below.

Indicator 4.a.3: Number of attacks on students, personnel, and institutions			
Pakistan	2015-16	2018-19	2020-21
Number of Attacks	48	19	26
Source: UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)			
Note: Based on TIMSS 2019 Grade 4			

Indicator 4.a.4 - Proportion of school attending children receiving school meals.

Data on this indicator is not available.

Target 4.b: Number of Scholarships for developing countries

Target 4.b: By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.

Progress Review of SDG-4 Target 4.b

Indicator 4.b.1: Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study.

According to the UIS SDG-4 Dashboard, the volume of official development assistance flows for scholarship increased from 17.46M USD in 2014 to 24.63M USD in 2021. This information is not available with the Federal Education Ministry nor with the provincial education departments.

Indicator 4.b.1: Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study	
Year	Amount in USD Million
2014	17.46
2015	16.73
2016	14.19
2017	15.49
2018	18.32
2019	25.56
2020	24.12
2021	24.63
Source: UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)	

There are several foreign scholarships available for Pakistani students. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan offers government scholarships for graduate-level studies in countries such as the US, UK, Australia, Germany, and France. The Asia Foundation Development Fellows programme is a learning programme for Asian students to enhance their leadership skills and international exposure by studying in Asia and the US. The Punjab Educational Endowment Fund (PEEF) offers PhD foreign scholarships for Pakistani students to study at any of the top 50 universities in the QS World University Rankings®, covering tuition fees, room and board, airfare, and health insurance. Other scholarships available for Pakistani students include the Fulbright Degree Programme, the Chevening Scholarship, the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), and the Commonwealth Scholarship.

Target 4.c: By 2030 Increased Qualified Teachers

Target 4.c: *By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries, and Small Island Developing States.*

Progress Review of SDG-4 Target 4.c

Indicator 4.c.1: Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level

In Pakistan, teachers are required to possess a minimum pre-service qualification to embark on their teaching careers. State Teachers Training Institutions provide in-service training to further enhance their skills. This concerted effort has yielded positive results, with a notable increase in the professional qualification percentage, reaching 93.1% in the academic year 2021-22. The upward trend in professional qualifications has been observed across all levels, including Primary, Lower Secondary, and Upper Secondary, since 2015-16.

To ensure the quality of teacher education, an accreditation system has been implemented in Pakistan to accredit teacher education programs. Furthermore, initiatives are underway to establish a comprehensive registration, licensing, and certification process for teachers. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan has declared the accreditation of teacher education programmes as mandatory. This directive applies to all institutions that offer graduate-level teacher education programs. To comply with this requirement, institutions must secure accreditation for their programs. The National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) has accredited around 450 programmes of more than 180 public and private sector teacher education institutions, which include colleges and universities, offering teacher education all over Pakistan.

There is no formal teacher cadre at pre-primary in public schools, hence no data is specifically available for pre-primary teachers.

Indicator 4.c.1: Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level			
Region/Level of Education	2015-16	2018-19	2021-22
Pakistan			
By Level			
Pre-Primary	-	-	-
Primary	96.3%	92.6%	96.6%
Lower Secondary	83.7%	83.5%	90.3%
Upper Secondary	82.5%	85.4%	90.6%
Primary to Upper Secondary	88.9%	88.2%	93.1%
Punjab			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	100.0%	85.7%	96.2%
Lower Secondary	82.3%	81.6%	89.8%
Upper Secondary	82.2%	83.5%	90.2%
Primary to Upper Secondary	88.1%	83.9%	92.2%

Indicator 4.c.1: Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level			
Sindh			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	89.2%	95.6%	91.9%
Lower Secondary	72.3%	81.4%	84.0%
Upper Secondary	79.2%	86.9%	87.7%
Primary to Upper Secondary	84.6%	91.5%	89.8%
KP			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	99.8%	100.0%	100.0%
Lower Secondary	98.9%	99.6%	99.1%
Upper Secondary	89.6%	93.3%	95.0%
Primary to Upper Secondary	96.6%	97.5%	98.0%
Balochistan			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary			100.0%
Lower Secondary			80.1%
Upper Secondary			83.9%
Primary to Upper Secondary			88.3%
AJK			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	93.6%	95.2%	
Lower Secondary	79.4%	82.1%	
Upper Secondary	74.8%	76.7%	
Primary to Upper Secondary	81.7%	83.5%	
GB			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	94.2%	97.3%	94.9%
Lower Secondary	90.6%	90.3%	94.8%
Upper Secondary	79.0%	85.8%	90.7%
Primary to Upper Secondary	87.5%	90.0%	93.2%
ICT			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary			100.0%
Lower Secondary			100.0%
Upper Secondary			100.0%
Primary to Upper Secondary			100.0%

Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16 & 2018-19, NEMIS, AEPAM & National EMIS Database 2021/22, PIE

Indicator 4.c.2: Pupil-trained teacher ratio by education level

The overall pupil-trained teacher ratio has experienced a slight decrease from 38 in 2015-16 to 37 in 2021-22. This shift, however, varies across different educational levels. While the ratio has slightly increased for primary education, it has decreased for both lower secondary and upper secondary education.

In the specific case of the Sindh province, there has been a notable increase in the overall pupil-trained teacher ratio, rising from 31 in 2015-16 to 45 in 2021-22. To better understand the reasons for this increase, a more in-depth analysis is warranted.

Indicator 4.c.3: Percentage of teachers qualified according to national standards by education level and type of institution			
Region/Level of Education	2015 -16	2018 -19	2021 -22
Pakistan			
By Level			
Pre-Primary	-	-	-
Primary	99.9%	99.9%	99.8%
Lower Secondary	90.1%	93.4%	95.2%
Upper Secondary	86.9%	90.9%	93.6%
Primary to Upper Secondary	93.2%	95.3%	96.5%
Punjab			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	99.9%	100.0%	100.0%
Lower Secondary	88.5%	92.9%	95.2%
Upper Secondary	84.8%	90.6%	93.6%
Primary to Upper Secondary	90.7%	94.6%	96.1%
Sindh			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	99.9%	100.0%	99.9%
Lower Secondary	96.8%	97.5%	98.8%
Upper Secondary	91.7%	94.4%	95.4%
Primary to Upper Secondary	97.0%	97.9%	98.4%
KP			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	99.9%	100.0%	99.9%
Lower Secondary	93.5%	96.9%	98.1%
Upper Secondary	91.8%	96.0%	97.4%
Primary to Upper Secondary	96.7%	98.3%	98.7%
Balochistan			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary			100.0%
Lower Secondary			90.8%
Upper Secondary			85.7%
Primary to Upper Secondary			91.4%
AJK			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	98.1%	98.1%	96.6%
Lower Secondary	84.5%	88.2%	87.0%
Upper Secondary	75.9%	79.1%	82.6%
Primary to Upper Secondary	84.9%	87.0%	90.0%
GB			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Lower Secondary	94.9%	96.1%	96.8%
Upper Secondary	83.4%	71.9%	91.7%
Primary to Upper Secondary	92.3%	85.8%	95.9%
ICT			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary			100.0%
Lower Secondary			95.8%
Upper Secondary			97.5%
Primary to Upper Secondary			98.2%

Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16 & 2018-19, NEMIS, AEPAM & National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE

Indicator 4.c.4: Pupil-qualified teacher ratio by education level

Indicator 4.c.4 is constant at national level from 2015-16 to 2021-22. This pattern is the same in all the provinces with the exception of Sindh. In Sindh the ratio for primary increased from 29 to 43 and the overall ratio from 27 to 41. The same upward trend for Sindh is evident in Indicator 4.c.2 and 4.c.4, which requires more in-depth analysis.

Indicator 4.c.4: Pupil-qualified teacher ratio by education level			
Region/Level of Education	2015-16	2018-19	2021-22
Pakistan			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	38	38	39
Lower Secondary	28	27	26
Upper Secondary	34	32	32
Primary to Upper Secondary	35	34	34
Punjab			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	37	36	39
Lower Secondary	31	30	31
Upper Secondary	37	38	37
Primary to Upper Secondary	35	35	36
Sindh			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	29	38	43
Lower Secondary	20	27	33
Upper Secondary	26	32	39
Primary to Upper Secondary	27	35	41
KP			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	47	46	42
Lower Secondary	14	15	14
Upper Secondary	26	22	24
Primary to Upper Secondary	37	31	32
Balochistan			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary			29
Lower Secondary			21
Upper Secondary			25
Primary to Upper Secondary			25
AJK			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	24	22	14
Lower Secondary	21	19	20
Upper Secondary	18	16	23
Primary to Upper Secondary	21	19	18
GB			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary	27	28	25
Lower Secondary	22	24	24
Upper Secondary	22	27	23
Primary to Upper Secondary	24	26	24
ICT			
By Level			
Pre-Primary			
Primary			29
Lower Secondary			35
Upper Secondary			37
Primary to Upper Secondary			34

Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16 & 2018-19, NEMIS, AEPAM & National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE

Data for indicator 4.c.5, 4.c.6, and 4.c.7 is not available for reporting. Data on Indicator 4.c.5 is not readily available though it can be calculated in consultation with provincial and federal government finance and education departments. This can be ideally tasked to Federal Finance Ministry to coordinate with provincial finance and education departments. Data on 4.c.6 can be calculated by the provincial education department as currently the data is not readily available. This data is very important to be reported as anecdotal evidence suggest that young graduate use education department job as springboard to prepared for other competition government jobs which has move power and authority. Similarly, data on indicator 4.c.7 too can be calculated in consultation with provincial and regional education departments.

Impact of Disasters on SDG-4

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the progress of SDG-4

At the height of the pandemic, close to 2 billion children worldwide were out of school. For the majority of these children, traditional face-to-face teaching and learning ceased, as the pandemic necessitated a shift to remote education. However, the ability to implement distance learning varied significantly across countries and regions, resulting in substantial learning setbacks. Additionally, the economic hardships caused by COVID-19 led to many children dropping out of school altogether. When considering the combined impact of these factors, the pandemic resulted in a significant reduction in the global average learning-adjusted years of schooling, decreasing from 7.8 to 7.3 years⁹⁴.

Pakistan is no exception, school closures to limit the spread of COVID-19 directly impacted an estimated 40 million school-going learners from pre-primary to higher-secondary levels, in a context where school enrolment, completion and quality of learning are already low, especially for girls.

- Key findings from studies assessing the impact of COVID-19 and floods on education in Pakistan reveal significant disruptions and challenges: 46 million Pakistani children were affected by lockdowns.
- Schools were fully closed for 37 weeks, partially closed for 27 weeks.
- The long-term impact of learning loss is significant. To illustrate, children affected by 4 months of school closures after the 2005 earthquake showed a 15-18% reduction in earnings for the rest of their lives.
- Teachers were not trained or prepared to use remote learning / education technologies (UNICEF 2021)⁹⁵.
- Malala Funds in their study on impact of COVID-19 survey⁹⁶ found that poverty influences students' prospects of returning to school - Girls from more marginalized communities and/or poorer households tended to be the least optimistic about returning to school.
- A survey conducted by UNICEF on learning continuity⁹⁷ in 2021, with parents reporting on how their children used different means to continue their learning, these included:
 - 19% used printed packs and textbooks.
 - 17% used TV programs.
 - 11% used mobile phones.
- The impact of the 2022 floods on education in Pakistan has been severe:
 - Recent estimates suggest that over 34,000 public education institutions were damaged or destroyed (Source: UN Education Sector Working Group).
 - At least 2.6 million students in the country have been affected by the floods.
- Research by the World Bank suggests that as many as 1 million children may drop out and not return to school as a result of the flood damage to education⁹⁸.

94 <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/329961592483383689/pdf/Simulating-the-Potential-Impacts-of-COVID-19-School-Closures-on-Schooling-and-Learning-Outcomes-A-Set-of-Global-Estimates.pdf>

95 <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/documents/pakistan-case-study>

96 <https://malala.org/newsroom/girls-education-and-covid-19-in-pakistan>

97 <https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/media/3761/file/Pakistan%20Brief%20on%20learning%20continuity%20amidst%20COVID19.pdf>

98 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/38403>

Both the non-formal education sector and the TVET sector were also heavily impacted. TVET enrolments dropped by 35% impacting the employability in the post COVID-19 and flood scenario⁹⁹.

To cope with the learning loss, Federal and Provincial governments in Pakistan had moved quickly to start airing curricular content for K-12 via television channels. This was the correct and timely strategy, given televisions are much more widely owned than radios. According to DHS 2019, 63% of the sampled households had a TV compared with 6% who owned a radio. However, these averages hide stark inequalities. For example, in Punjab, children in households in the poorest homes (only 17% of whom have TVs in their homes) were much less likely to be able to benefit from this policy initiative than children in the richest households (95% of whom have access to television)¹⁰⁰. The numbers for Sindh are similar - 96% of households in the top quartile have televisions, 20% in the bottom quartile have televisions.

Accessing these opportunities and initiatives becomes more complex and unequal if priced technologies such as cable channels or internet and smartphones are used. Less than 1% of the poorest households sampled for Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) 2017 owned a computer, and while 82% of them owned a cell phone, only 4% had access to the internet¹⁰¹.

District officials in Punjab shared that internet and cable infrastructure was common and reliable in urban areas. Children further away from cities are much less likely to have access to instructional content sent through smart phones and aired on cable channels.

The gendered experience of exclusion from access to technology and the increased burden of care on girls is a key dimension of inequality during this disruption. A recent blog published at the UKFIET website about access to digital learning demonstrates that girls are much less likely to have regular access to any form of technology¹⁰².

Inequalities in access worsen for girls in rural areas and those in the poorest households, revealing the extent of gender inequality central to the education problems in Pakistan. The increased burden of care in the households during the pandemic is likely to have hit girls the hardest, making it much more likely that they are effectively excluded from accessing COVID-19 response measures around education¹⁰³.

Impact of Floods 2022 on the progress of SDG-4

Pakistan's high vulnerability to climate change is a risk multiplier, compounding its human and economic development challenges. Pakistan ranks among the top 10 countries worldwide most affected by climate change. Extreme weather events have been increasing in frequency and intensity, impacting ecosystems, people, settlements, and infrastructure. The ND-Gain Index has ranked Pakistan as the 39th most vulnerable country and the 27th least ready country in the world to address the impacts of climate change¹⁰⁴. Progress on SDGs can only be achieved through adaptation to climate change by building resilient infrastructure and livelihoods which can mitigate the damaging effects of climate change.

⁹⁹ https://unevoc.unesco.org/pub/best_practices_in_tvete_policies_coping_with_covid-19_crisis.pdf

¹⁰⁰ *ibid*

¹⁰¹ *ibid*

¹⁰² <https://www.ukfiet.org/2020/access-to-digital-learning-during-covid-19-closures-compounding-educational-inequality/>

¹⁰³ *ibid*

¹⁰⁴ 'Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, And Reconstruction Framework, Pakistan', Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (MPD&SI), Islamabad, December 2022.

Damage Assessment of Education Sector Post Disaster Needs Assessment Report Pakistan Flood (2022)

Floods and heavy rains have severely damaged at least 18,950 public schools, 68 colleges, special education centers/schools/institutes, 69 technical and vocational education and training (TVET) 70 universities in 94 calamity-hit districts¹⁰⁵. The damaged institutions constitute 23 percent of the total institutions in the calamity hit districts. Damage is classified as partially damaged if less than 40 percent of the asset is damaged, the structure is still sound, and the repair cost would be less than 40 percent of the total value of the asset. Damage is classified as completely destroyed if more than 40 percent of the asset has been damaged or if the replacement cost of the damages would be more than 40 percent of the total value of the asset.

Significantly, the scope of the educational institutions assessed is limited to public ones, since data on private educational institutions could not be collected before the PDNA was finalized. Most affected institutions are primary schools (80 percent). In addition, more than 7,062 schools that were not damaged have served as relief sites to provide shelter to displaced populations. Damage to educational institutions has affected some 94,478 teachers and 2,624,013 enrolled students (1,032,950 girls). The largest number of institutions affected are in Sindh (12,706), followed by Balochistan (2,850). The educational institutions are most heavily damaged in Sindh, followed by Balochistan, KP, Punjab, and the Special Regions¹⁰⁶.

Since the floods occurred during the ongoing academic year, there were service and productivity losses in contact hours, which may have an impact on the school calendar and require adjustments to the teaching and learning process. All 18,950 educational institutions affected experienced school closures of differing durations. Some partially damaged schools were able to resume or use some of their classrooms (employing a shift system) after dewatering, cleaning, and repairing and replacing teaching and learning materials and furniture. Schools with extensive damage had started to identify and establish alternative or temporary learning locations in the community, including the use of temporary learning centers (TLCs) in non-affected and cleaned-up partially damaged schools, and in organized and spontaneous relief sites of displaced communities, to ensure education continuity and mitigate learning losses¹⁰⁷.

As per Planning Commission of Pakistan assessment, the total damage to educational institutions in the 94 calamity-hit districts is PKR 120 billion (US\$559 million) and total loss at PKR 47 billion (US\$219 million). Sindh has the highest amount of damage and loss¹⁰⁸. A comprehensive study conducted by World Bank, *Floods in Pakistan: Human Development at Risk*, November 2022 clearly indicates that the impact of the floods could force families to reduce investments in the education of their children as families struggle with low prospects of earning a living in the short term, limited access to schools and other public services (e.g., health and transportation), and an already high cost of education. Moreover, a significant number of children may not return to school in the aftermath of the floods. Over half (52 percent) of parents, interviewed said their children would be extremely likely to attend school after the floods, and together with questions about whether their children were "somewhat likely" and "very likely" to attend school, the survey showed that 83 percent of households were at least somewhat likely to send their children back to school.

¹⁰⁵ <https://reliefweb.int/report/pakistan/no-back-school-thousands-children-nearly-19000-schools-damaged-destroyed-floods-pakistan>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.unicef.org/media/127526/file/UNICEF%20Pakistan%20Floods%20Flash%20Appeal.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ *ibid*

¹⁰⁸ *Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, And Reconstruction Framework, Pakistan*, Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (MPD&SI), Islamabad, December 2022.

When families were asked about school attendance of children if schools were to open tomorrow, a similar percentage (around 90 percent) expressed interest. These responses imply that at a minimum between 10 and 20 percent of parents are not likely to send their children back to school. The impact of the floods will likely make it even more difficult for children to attend school and receive quality education. Before the floods, there were between 18.7 and 20.7 million children out of school (PAMS 2021, Government of Pakistan 2019), and 75 percent of 10-year-olds in Pakistan were not able to read an age-appropriate text between 18.7 and 20.7 million (World Bank 2019). With the recent floods, according to new simulations, learning poverty could increase to 79 percent (Saavedra and Sherburne-Benz 2022)¹⁰⁹.

109 <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099523112072218789/pdf/IDU09bc63666052fe041af08d8d0cbd7862b0c65.pdf>

Way Forward

The Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) notified in December 2021 by merging two organizations namely the Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM) and the National Education Assessment System (NEAS). NEMIS is the premier data reporting agency at federal level for quantitative data and NEAS is the learning assessment data organization. The notified entity is envisioned to serve as Center of Excellence for quantitative and qualitative education data, research, and policy analysis.

PIE acts as a technical body for Pakistan to produce education data/ statistics for better and coherent monitoring of national education initiatives alongside international commitments. PIE develops and disseminates common and nationally agreed norms, standards, and methodologies in line with international standards and norms for improved quality. PIE provides technical advice and state of the art knowledge to the provincial EMIS bodies to ensure that quality and relevant EMIS data is produced in a timely manner. PIE may also work towards developing sustained individual, organizational and institutional capacity of the provincial EMIS departments on production, analysis, use and dissemination of education data.

Manifold efforts and resources will be required to realize the envisioned functions and mandate of PIE. The institutional development of PIE involves deployment of competent human resource for data systems, frequent capacity building programmes to enhance the technical knowledge and skills of the personnel, dedicated financial resources to carry out data-related activities, increased data literacy of data producers and consumers, functioning coordination mechanisms with other data producing agencies. The PIE may work towards strengthening and expansion of traditional administrative data systems based on Data Standardization framework (DSF) developed under DARE project of World Bank. This will ensure the data production, reporting, dissemination, integration, and standardization in a coherent manner.

PIE emerges as the ideal coordinator for SDG-4 indicators, primarily due to its pioneering work in developing a robust Data Standardization Framework (DSF). Through collaborative efforts with stakeholders nationwide, PIE has formulated a standardized list of 71 indicators for SDG-4, demonstrating a commitment to harmonizing data definitions and formats. This DSF, guided by international and local reporting requirements, positions PIE as a leader in transforming diverse education-related data into a consistent, understandable format. PIE's DSF addresses critical challenges of data portability and interoperability. This framework not only ensures efficient use of education data but also provides operational benefits, enhancing the value of data through seamless integration with other sources. PIE's proactive role in data standardization positions it uniquely to coordinate and monitor SDG 4 indicators, fostering effective decision-making and contributing significantly to the advancement of education in Pakistan.

The Policy and Research Wing at the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) functions as a dynamic think tank, positioning the institute as the ideal central unit for advancing SDG-4 targets. Serving as the intellectual backbone, PIE's research-driven expertise equips it with unparalleled insights into educational challenges, making it a reliable source for evidence-based decision-making. The think tank's mandate for policy formulation and problem-solving

transforms it into a solution hub, capable of proposing effective strategies aligned with SDG 4 objectives. Establishing the SDG-4 Unit within PIE ensures the institute becomes a central hub for providing well-researched and strategic advice, leveraging its capacity for informed decision-making. With its unique position, PIE becomes a driving force in advocating for quality education, shaping policies grounded in practical, research-backed recommendations that go beyond symbolism, contributing significantly to the national and international efforts to achieve SDG-4.

Several interventions are proposed that directly contribute towards institutional development of PIE in the short-term and medium-term. These interventions will provide a solid foundation for data systems providing timely and holistic information of education system. These interventions include:

i. Dedicated SDG-4 Cell in PIE and Provincial/ Area Education Department

The SDGs cells established in Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives at federal level and in Planning and Development Departments at provincial level are responsible for data reporting of [Global Indicators related to 17 SDGs](#). Dedicated staff has been deputed in the cells to carry-out SDGs reporting, monitoring, prioritization, and coordination at various administrative levels. These cells in collaboration with other stakeholders has constituted numerous taskforces, committees, councils, groups, and forums to sensitize, deliberate, implement and steer the progress towards achieving SDGs. Up till now, these cells have contributed significantly at various levels.

Building upon this national momentum, it is opportunity for the PIE to contribute significantly to SDG implementation, particularly SDG 4 - Quality Education. [The establishment of an SDG 4 Cell within PIE aligns seamlessly with the federal and provincial efforts, ensuring that the education sector is at the forefront of sustainable development initiatives](#). The Cell is not just a strategic move but a necessity, given PIE's exceptional capabilities and resources.

The SDG-4 talks about provision of quality education and lifelong learning to all, hence, making education ministries and departments the epicenter of all activities and interventions. Education departments in provinces/areas are facing challenges in terms of data completeness, data quality, standardization of education data, reporting and monitoring of SDG-4 indicators. Education departments lack dedicated SDG-4 Cell which results in ad-hoc arrangements for reporting of SDG4 thematic indicators. Presently, a single officer is nominated as focal person for SDG4.

Capacity building programmes on data requirements, reporting and monitoring of SDG-4 thematic indicators framework shall be organized through the Cell. The SDG-4 team will be well-versed with meta-data of SDG-4 indicators, data utilization from multiple sources of data, data interpretation, and computation of indicators. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) being the custodian of SDG-4 data can provide valuable guidelines.

By creating an SDG 4 Cell, PIE aims to complement the existing national structure, enhancing the educational component of SDG implementation. This unit will act as a specialized hub within PIE, focusing on research, innovation, and evidence-driven strategies to advance the goals outlined in SDG 4. The initiative not only aligns with the broader national strategy but also positions PIE as a key player in shaping the educational landscape towards sustainable development.

ii. EMIS Strategy

Provincial/Area EMISs in Pakistan are working under administrative control of respective school education departments. Unfortunately, EMISs lacks any policy, vision, or a strategy document that can guide the evolution, strengthen and future way forward of EMISs in the context of SDG-4. The draft policy papers and education data standards developed by some of the provinces is a good step in this regard however these documents are generalized and requires further improvements. **Therefore, there is a dire need to develop provincial EMIS action plans or strategy documents aligned with SDG-4 and also covered all aspects of EMIS to help education authorities in strengthening the education data regime.** There is need for focused interventions in EMIS lifecycle instead of temporary and ad-hoc initiatives leading towards production of bulk of indicators requiring administrative data. The strategy document can provide guidelines to additional areas of EMIS lifecycle including but not limited to extended data coverage, data integration, comparability, standardization, security, quality, dissemination, and reporting.

iii. Uplifting EMISs

Most of the provincial/area EMISs lacks human resources to carry out data activities resulting in delays of data availability. The available human resources also lack statistical capacity for indicator development, data analysis and reporting. The EMISs units do not have dedicated financial resources to carry out data related activities rather these units utilize funds from centralized pool of school education department. **There is a need to allocate dedicated human, financial and technical resources for EMIS Units to carry out data related activities in a better way to avoid data fragmentation and improve data generation, analysis, reporting, capacity building, etc.** There is a need to synergize the efforts to revamp and modernize the EMISs for improved education service delivery.

iv. Improved Coordination through IPEMC Forum

Inter-Provincial Education Ministers Conference (IPEMC), comprising Federal and Provincial Education Ministers, is the highest forum to discuss vital topics pertaining to education sector across the country. **IPEMC forum can be utilized to sensitize the top management regarding SDG-4 and monitoring its progress throughout the country.** Achievements towards SDG-4 can be made a regular agenda item to be discussed in IPEMC. The buy-in of top management can accelerate progress towards achieving SDG-4 as well as provide guidelines for focused interventions and improved coordination for implementation of initiatives.

v. Revamping Statistical Reports

National and Provincial/Area EMISs are producing statistical reports on education sector since decades. The reports typically contain data regarding institutions, enrollment, teachers, and availability of physical facilities; however, it lacks information about other important sub-sectors of education including learning assessments, education financing, progress towards SDG-4, etc. Likewise, the report provides disaggregated information based on sex and location but disaggregation by disability, age, and wealth are not available in the report. The district education profile is also released annually showing district level information about public institutions, enrolment, teaching staff, and physical facilities.

Pakistan Education Atlas is another report released by NEMIS from time-to-time presenting district and tehsil level education indicators through GIS based maps. The Atlas document portrays the same information of Pakistan Education Statistics but disaggregated at District and Tehsil levels. The Atlas document may be revamped due to availability of district population based on the census 2017. Thus, some of the population related indicators (OOSC Rate, GER, NERT, GIR etc.) may be included the future Atlas report.

None of the EMIS Units, at Federal or Provincial/Area level, has released a dedicated report on monitoring and measuring progress towards achieving SDG-4 thematic indicators at respective levels. Some of the reasons can be lack of understanding and knowledge of SDG-4 thematic indicators framework, non-availability of data, lack of statistical capacities and adherence to international methodologies, etc. Thus, there is an immediate need of national level annual publication starting with NEMIS 2021-22 database titled "Monitoring of SDG-4 in Pakistan".

vi. Accelerated National Action Plan for SDG-4

In the past Pakistan is among those countries who lagged behind in achieving various EFA and MDGs targets. Pakistan is also a signatory of SDG agenda; therefore, it has to achieve the SDG-4 targets by 2030. [In order to achieve this gigantic task, an accelerated national plan of action may be developed to progress towards achieving Education 2030 agenda.](#) The plan of action may be developed with consensus of provincial/area stakeholders. The plan of action may clearly chalk out baseline indicators and targets to be achieved on annual basis till 2030. Annual monitoring of the action plan may be carried out by IPEMC forum at the highest level.

vii. Review/Alignment of Sectoral Policies/Plans with SDG-4

Provincial Education Departments have developed education sector plans, policies, roadmaps, and strategies and envisaged various interventions to improve quality of education. These documents have been developed from time to time, therefore, synchronization is required with international pledges, national priorities, and provincial commitments. [These policies/plans normally span over five years duration therefore certain projections and roadmap will be required to ascertain the possible achievement of education 2030 agenda.](#) The review of sectoral plans will also consider the review of education data systems for effective reporting mechanism for SDG-4. These policies/plans are under implementation therefore the review process may also guide the development of subsequent sectoral plans.

The review of sectoral policies/plans should be conducted in various dimensions. Firstly, the review should assess the inclusion of all areas/targets of SDG-4 in policies/plans. Secondly, the missing areas must be included in the subsequent revision/plans. Thirdly, the projections should be made to achieve the targets envisaged in education 2030 agenda. Lastly, the efforts must be applied to implement the plans in letter and spirit. The sectoral policies/plans should also be disseminated at district and local levels to sensitize the grass-root level administrative structure.

viii. Online Dashboard for SDG-4 and others policy relevant data indicators

Both, national and provincial, levels lack a standardized format/platform for data reporting relating to SDG-4. Planners, policy makers, researchers and development partners face serious challenges of data availability on SDG-4 indicators disaggregated at various levels for policy and plans formulation. Provincial/Regional Education Departments and allied organizations collect data regularly however it is normally utilized for administrative purposes only. This data is normally published online but education indicators are not computed/available online.

Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives have a centralized dashboard for reporting and online availability of data on global indicators of SDGs as well as on national targets. Online access will be provided to Provincial P&D Departments for data entry. The dashboard has the flexibility to be connected to already operational data systems.

Keeping in view this success story, an online dashboard for education system in general and for SDG-4 indicators in particular should be developed and operational. All the federal and provincial stakeholders should be provided access to the dashboard. Existing operational data systems can be linked with the dashboard for data feeding. This SDG-4 dashboard can further be linked with dashboard operational in Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives.

ix. Alignment of Data Collection tools with SDG-4 data requirements

Education sector spans over multiple departments and directorates working in silos. Each entity has its own data collection tool, frequency, database design, software system, interpretation, and computation of variables/indicators. These incompatibilities among various data systems leads to data inconsistencies and hampers data quality, integration, and standardization.

Provincial EMISs have the largest volume of education data spanning over various decades. Therefore, the data collection tool used for Annual School Census should be aligned with data needs of SDG-4 indicators. The first and foremost task is to review the ASC questionnaire. In the first step, the questions/variables will be revised which have new methodology/interpretation. In the second step, new questions will be inserted in the questionnaires to have additional data. Lastly, a mechanism will be developed on collection of remaining indicators. Since there are indicators related to other sub-sectors of education e.g. learning assessment, technical education, non-formal education, special education, education finance, therefore, data collection and reporting system of all these departments and directorates needs revision and alignment with SDG-4.

x. Capacity Building of Technical Personnel of Provincial Stakeholders on SDG-4 Thematic indicators framework

Some of the provinces/regions have limited capacity for data processing and computation of education key indicators because at the indicator production stage, calculation methods may vary between provinces/regions, causing problems with comparability. International organizations may also use different approaches to education indicator calculation so that the results in their respective databases are not always comparable. More generally, limited

comparability of data from different sources poses problems for interpretation. Most education planning units are staffed with education professionals who lack requisite statistical skills and qualifications. On the other hand, statisticians and planners are able to calculate a whole array of education indicators may have limited capacity for developing stories behind the data. A deficient statistical culture remains an important drawback to statistical development where technicians frequently resort to simple counting rather than interpreting data.

To achieve this, capacity building workshops in Provinces/Regions should be conducted to enhance local institutional capacity to improve data collection, analysis, and reporting for the development of policy. The capacity building workshops will contribute to the localization of SDG 4-Education 2030 Agenda including related targets and indicators. The workshops also aim to raise the understanding on SDG-4 global and thematic indicators and their methodologies and strengthen national education statistical system to generate and produce required indicators at national and international level. The workshops will bring together major stakeholders in education to discuss key strategies for data collection at national level. Key attendees of the workshop will include the EMIS Personnel, Education Managers, Government Departments dealing with data related to other sub-sectors of education, the Finance Department, etc.

xi. Sensitization/ Awareness of Education Managers on SDG-4 Data production and utilization

Planning is the most important and basic function of management therefore the managers should be well-equipped with the knowledge of planning. The use of well-established principles, frameworks, methodologies, tools, and techniques are a pre-requisite for successful plan development. Equally important is availability and use of accurate, reliable, and timely data to aid the planning process. Detailed and concrete implementation plans, supported by well thought-out monitoring, supervision and evaluation mechanisms are required for successful plan implementation.

For the development of plans for implementation of SDG-4 and calculation of indicators reflected in SDG-4 at provincial/regional level, the education managers, and technical staff of EMISs must have sound knowledge of SDG-4.

Capacity building workshops should be conducted at provincial level to disseminate Education 2030 widely at National/Provincial/District levels in Pakistan's context. The training sessions should include guidelines on the processes and milestones for planning, implementing, and monitoring SDG-4 based on capacity assessments, and support the alignment of national plans with SDG-4 targets. It should also advocate data producers and users, including governments (Federal and Provincial) and suggest ways to address existing and emerging issues in data regime and for the enhanced use of data in policy making and Planning. The aim of these workshops should be to strengthen capacities of data producers at national/provincial/district levels for better data management, reporting and data utilization with particular focus on addressing the monitoring needs of the Education 2030 Agenda and to orient the participants on the SDG4 monitoring and its indicators.

Annexure I: List of Secondary Data-Initial List

1. Acts of Parliaments (Federal, provincial, regional) regarding Education, SDG-4, and overall SDGs
2. Federal, Provincial and Regional Rules of Business concerning Education, SDG-4
3. Provincial/regional and federal development strategies, poverty reduction strategies and other strategies affecting SDG-4 progress and achievements.
4. Vision documents of federal, provincial, and regional documents
5. Education Sector Policies, Strategies and plans of federal, provincial, and regional governments.
6. Medium and long-term development plans including 5-year plans.
7. Public Sector Development Plans of Federal Government
8. Annual Development Plans of Federal, Provincial and Regional Governments
9. Federal, Provincial, and regional government budgets including both current and development budget with special reference to the allocations to the Education Sector and SDG-4 achievement.
10. National SDGs framework by National Economic Council (NEC)
11. Provincial and regional SDGs framework
12. SDGs Data Status Report
13. Data Standardization Framework
14. SDG-4 gap analysis reports for provinces/regions
15. Policy Briefs on SDG-4 of all provinces/regions
16. Annual Reports and other policy reports published by SDG Support Units at federal, provincial, and regional level.
17. UNESCO documents on SDG-4, its targets and indicators, Midterm Report Guidelines on SDG-4
18. NEMIS and Provincial EMIS reports on SDG-4 data during 2015-2021
19. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) PSLM Surveys and reports on SDG-4 targets and indicators
20. Pakistan Census data 1998, 2017 and 2023
21. Provincial Bureau of Statistics (BoS) reports and data on SDG-4 targets and indicators
22. Out of School Children surveys by provincial and regional governments
23. Alif Ailaan Reports on Education Statistics for various years.
24. SDG-4 Data in Pakistan: Gaps, Challenges and Way Forward
25. UNESCO guidelines, reports, and presentation on SDG4 Midterm Reviews
26. UIS SDG-4 Meta Data Technical Guidelines
27. SDG-4 MTR Interim Report
28. Review of Pakistan's National and Provincial Education Policy Regimes to Strengthen Education to Out of Schools Children, ARC, 2020
29. NEMIS Mid-Term Strategy Paper, 2018-25, AEPAM

Annexure II:
Stakeholders Responsibilities by SDG-4
targets and indicators

SDG 4 target	SDG 4 indicator	Name and hyperlink of the relevant policy, strategy, other regulation	Key references	Responsible stakeholder	Type of responsibility	Key Achievement	Challenges	Data sources
*	EFA	https://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapter_22/Highlights.pdf		Ministry of Finance			4% of GDP	Economic Survey of Pakistan 2022-23 and 2021-22
-	1.a.2	www.finance.gov.pk http://www.finance.gov.pk/poverty/PRSP-II.pdf		Ministry of Finance				Various issues of Economic Survey of Pakistan and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)
4.1	4.1.0	UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)		NAW, PIE			Based on TIMSS 2019 Grade 4 Maths Results	National Assessment Wing (NAW), PIE
	4.1.1	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)		NAW, PIE				Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2019 and National Assessment Wing (NAW) 2019, PIE
	4.1.2	PSLM Publications Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (pbs.gov.pk)		PBS				PSLM Survey 2014-15 and 2019-20
	4.1.3	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)		NEMIS, PIE				National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
	4.1.4	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)		NEMIS, PIE				National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
	4.1.5	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)		NEMIS, PIE				National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
	4.1.6	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)		NAW, PIE				National Assessment Wing (NAW), PIE

SDG 4 target	SDG 4 indicator	Name and hyperlink of the relevant policy, strategy, other regulation	Key references	Responsible stakeholder	Type of responsibility	Key Achievement	Challenges	Data sources
	4.1.7	https://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1333523681_951.pdf		Federal and Provincial governments		All federal, provincial, and regional governments have passed RTE Acts mentioning all children age between 5 to 16 years		Federal, Provincial and Regional Parliament Acts/Constitutions
4.2	4.2.1	Data not Available						
	4.2.2	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) 2. PSLM Publications Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (pbs.gov.pk)		1. PBS 2. NEMIS, PIE				1. PSLM Household Level Survey, PBS 2. National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
	4.2.3	Data not Available						
	4.2.4	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)		NEMIS, PIE				National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
	4.2.5	https://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1333523681_951.pdf		Federal and Provincial governments		All federal, provincial, and regional governments have passed RTE Acts mentioning all children age between 5 to 16 years		Federal, Provincial and Regional Parliament Acts/Constitutions
4.3	4.3.1	Labor Force Publications Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (pbs.gov.pk)		PBS				Labor Force Surveys, PBS
	4.3.2	SDG 4 Dashboard – Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 (unesco.org)		Higher Education Commission (HEC)				UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)
	4.3.3	SDG 4 Dashboard – Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 (unesco.org)		National Vocational and Technical				UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)

SDG 4 target	SDG 4 indicator	Name and hyperlink of the relevant policy, strategy, other regulation	Key references	Responsible stakeholder	Type of responsibility	Key Achievement	Challenges	Data sources
				Training Commission				
4.4	4.4.1	PSLM Publications Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (pbs.gov.pk) https://www.sdgpakistan.pk/web/news/get_news/19		PBS and SDGs Support Unit, P&D				PSLM Survey 2018-19, 2019-20 and SDG Status Report 2021
	4.4.2	Data not Available						
	4.4.3	Labor Force Publications Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (pbs.gov.pk)		PBS				Various issues of Labor Force Survey, PBS, Islamabad
4.5	4.5.1	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)		NEMIS, PIE				National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
	4.5.2	SDG 4 Dashboard – Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 (unesco.org)		NAW, PIE				UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)
	4.5.3	Data not Available						
	4.5.4	Data not Available						
	4.5.5	Data not Available						
	4.5.6	SDG 4 Dashboard – Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 (unesco.org)		Ministry of Finance				UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)
4.6	4.6.1	Data not Available						
	4.6.2	PSLM Publications Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (pbs.gov.pk)		PBS				PSLM Survey 2014-15, 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21
	4.6.3	Data not Available						
4.7	4.7.1	Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (mofept.gov.pk)		National Curriculum Council (NCC)				Different documents of curriculum

SDG 4 target	SDG 4 indicator	Name and hyperlink of the relevant policy, strategy, other regulation	Key references	Responsible stakeholder	Type of responsibility	Key Achievement	Challenges	Data sources
	4.7.2	Data not Available						
	4.7.3	Data not Available						
	4.7.4	Data not Available						
	4.7.5	Data not Available						
4.a	4.a.1	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)		NEMIS, PIE				1. Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16 and 2018-19 2. National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
	4.a.2	SDG 4 Dashboard – Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 (unesco.org)		Ministry of Human Right		Based on TIMSS 2019 Grade 4		UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)
	4.a.3	SDG 4 Dashboard – Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 (unesco.org)		Ministry of Human Right		Based on TIMSS 2019 Grade 4		UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)
4.b	4.b.1	SDG 4 Dashboard – Technical Cooperation Group on the Indicators for SDG 4 (unesco.org)		Higher Education Commission (HEC)				UIS SDG-4 Country Dashboard (http://sdg4-data.uis.unesco.org/)
4.c	4.c.1	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)		NEMIS, PIE				1. Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16 and 2018-19 2. National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
	4.7.2	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)		NEMIS, PIE				1. Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16 and 2018-19 2. National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE

SDG 4 target	SDG 4 indicator	Name and hyperlink of the relevant policy, strategy, other regulation	Key references	Responsible stakeholder	Type of responsibility	Key Achievement	Challenges	Data sources
	4.c.3	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)		NEMIS, PIE				1. Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16 and 2018-19 2. National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
	4.7.4	Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)		NEMIS, PIE				1. Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16 and 2018-19 2. National EMIS Database 2021-22, PIE
	4.7.5	Data not Available						
	4.7.4	Data not Available						
	4.7.5	Data not Available						



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