



**Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

**ACTIONS TO STRENGTHEN PERFORMANCE FOR INCLUSIVE  
AND RESPONSIVE EDUCATION (ASPIRE) PROGRAM  
(P173399)**

**Technical Assessment**

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## Technical Assessment

- 1. Strategic Relevance.** The education system of Pakistan is large and complex. Government figures show that the education system is catering to around 30 million children in 263,000 schools from primary through, high school (AEPAM 2016/17). Since 2010, with the introduction of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, responsibility for public education has been devolved to provincial governments. Private sector provision is large, accounting for 27-45 percent of overall school enrollment (depending on the province). Religious Education, especially Madrassas, cater to an estimated 11 percent of enrolment. There are four provinces in Pakistan that are largely separate worlds of education. Punjab, the largest and wealthiest province, scores the highest on education indicators. School participation in Punjab is now at 81 percent (ages 6-15), and about 52 percent of 10-year-old children can read a paragraph. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the northern province, comes in right behind Punjab, with school participation at 74 percent, and 40 percent of 10-year-olds reading. Sindh, which is the second largest province by population, has 60 percent school participation and 29 percent of 10-year-olds reading. School participation in Balochistan, which is a mountainous area with a smaller population, has been stuck at roughly 50 percent for the last two decades, with 11 percent of 10-year-olds reading.
- 2. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a multidimensional crisis that has a direct impact on the education sector.** Primarily a public health crisis necessitating lockdowns, quarantines, and physical distancing, the pandemic has shocked all sectors including education. Education facilities of all types (public and private) and levels closed across Pakistan beginning March 2020, with all exams also postponed. Some universities and private schools immediately initiated online learning. The MoFEPT started a TV channel, "Teleschool," to academically engage students sitting at home. The activities under this initiative mainly address academic engagement of children through TV, radio, and digital platforms. Efforts also include creation of new academic content for children and preliminary planning for safe reopening of educational institutions. Despite these efforts, major disruptions have been caused to the academic calendar from primary grades up through the university level, impacting about 30 million children.
- 3. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Pakistan was making modest progress on enrolment and learning outcomes. National enrolment for primary school aged children (age 6-10) rose from 59 percent in 1998 to 75 percent in 2016.** In comparison, primary school enrolment is 92 percent in India and 94 percent in Bangladesh. Gender gaps remain consistent in Pakistan at about 10 percentage points (HIES). Small gains have been made at secondary age (age 11-16), growing from 50 percent in 1998 to 62 percent in 2016. This is mainly due to low enrolment and high dropout rates among adolescent girls. In rural Pakistan, the share of 10-year-olds who can read a simple paragraph has risen modestly from about 32 percent in 2012 to about 35 percent in 2018 (ASER). Similarly, the share of 10-year olds that can solve basic division problems has increased from about 27 percent in 2012 to 37 percent in 2018 (ASER). Note that these figures are slightly higher than the official learning poverty estimate. Most likely, this is because ASER is assessed in the language of the child (while the learning poverty number is from an English language assessment).
- 4. It is estimated that school disruptions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic will reduce student learning and in the long-run could translate into reduced average yearly earnings by \$227.** Reduced average yearly earnings represent an estimated loss of 5.4 percent of annual income (\$78 billion in GDP per year). This shortfall is a result of reduced student learning in school (learning adjusted years of

schooling, LAYS) from 4.8 years to 4.4 years, assuming the crisis maintains current effect levels. The reduced in-school learning time is also estimated to decrease the share of children able to read a simple paragraph aloud in their language of instruction. In the year prior to COVID19 only 40 percent of children in a typical 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom could read a simple paragraph aloud in their language of instruction (Urdu, Sindhi or English).<sup>1</sup> During the next school year, it is estimated that only 33 percent of 4<sup>th</sup> grade children will be able to read the same basic text. This number factors in the likely availability and effectiveness of distance learning measures that are being put into place to mitigate school closures. Without mitigation measures the loss in learning is expected to be even lower.

5. **Inequality in learning levels are also expected given the lost learning time.** World Bank estimates suggest that among 4<sup>th</sup> graders from the poorest quintile, only 47 percent of children will be able to read a basic paragraph, but among the wealthiest quintile, 66 percent will be able to do so. The gap between the poorest and the wealthiest in share of 4<sup>th</sup> graders who can read will increase from 14 percentage points to 19 percentage points, even with mitigation measures.
6. **Multiple estimations from different institutions suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic may cause between 700,000 and 2 Million additional children to drop out from schools across Pakistan, on top of the estimated 19 million children who are already out of school.** Pre-pandemic, 95 percent of children (age 6-10) in the highest wealth quintile were enrolled in school, only 59 percent in the poorest quintile were enrolled. Only 44 percent of girls (age 6-10) and 60 of boys (age 6-10) living in the poorest households were enrolled in school, while for the highest quintile these figures are 95 and 96 percent, respectively. The estimated COVID-19 economic shock from reduced economic activity will likely lead families to pull their children out of school either to work (which particularly affects children in the secondary school age group), or because they can't afford the direct or indirect costs of schooling.<sup>2</sup>
7. **The income shock associated with the pandemic will negatively impact gender inequities and risks associated with girls dropping out of school.** The economic crisis will likely worsen the gender inequality in Pakistan, putting more girls out of school and forcing them to engage in economic activity, which is riskier during the pandemic than normal economic crisis. Poor countries and households are the hardest hit economically since their livelihood is directly impacted by the reduced social and economic activities due to the pandemic. In Pakistan, the income shock has shown to differentially impact girls' and boys' education and working, depending their household's economic status.<sup>3</sup> The real income loss<sup>4</sup> is likely to deteriorate the welfare of girls in the poorest household (bottom quartile in wealth index) the most, by leading them to work to cope with the economic crisis but not necessarily changing their probability of schooling because most of them are already out-of-school prior to the income shock. In the meantime, girls from the lower middle class (second quartile) is likely to experience decreasing probability of schooling. The economic shock is also likely to affect boys in the poorest household substantially but without putting them to work: the income shock lowered the probability of boys' schooling and lead them to stay idle without working. Furthermore, the schooling of child with older male sibling was more

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<sup>1</sup> Data from ASER 2012-2019.

<sup>2</sup> This estimate is based on the current economic forecasts for the Pakistan economy from WEO, combined with data on income elasticity of schooling from household surveys.

<sup>3</sup> Xiaohui Hou, Seo Yeon Hong & Kinnon Scott, 2016, The Heterogeneous Effects of a Food Price Crisis on Child School Enrolment and Labour: Evidence from Pakistan, The Journal of Development Studies.

<sup>4</sup> The reference study used geographical difference in increases of food price (real income loss) caused by global food crisis. Pakistan experienced about 120 percent increase in staple food price within 6 months at the beginning of the crisis. The study measures changes of probability of schooling, working and being idle status with respect to 100 percent increase in staple food (wheat) price between 2008 and 2010.

adversely affected by the economic shock while the child with older female sibling was less adversely affected. This shows during the economic crisis, the gender-norm and birth order interaction get intensified, favoring older boys' education with putting younger children and girls' education at risk.

8. **Girls' will also face increased burdens to take care of the sick and will be at greater risk of gender-based violence during the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic.** During Ebola-crisis in west Africa, women and girls, especially adolescent girls, have experienced increasing burdens to take care of the sick and ensure the best hygiene practice in the household, requiring them to travel far to fetch waters.<sup>5</sup> Community leaders and members perceived increase in sexual and domestic violence during the crisis. Likely in Pakistan, during the health crisis, it is expected that girls are the primary caretaker of the sick and exposing themselves with higher infection risk as well as stress and anxieties. Furthermore, increasing domestic violence has been reported world-wide since the outbreak of pandemic due to movement restrictions, loss of income, isolation, stress and anxiety.<sup>6</sup> In Pakistan, already a quarter of married women experience a lifetime domestic violence<sup>7</sup> and movement restriction will likely to expose them with even higher risk of domestic violence.
9. **The potential economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will likely reduce financial resources for social sectors further exacerbating regional equity disparities in education expenditure and, hence, education outcomes.** Even before COVID-19, Provinces were often unable to specifically target disadvantaged areas or subpopulations as their financial and human resources are focused on addressing the policy, governance, and infrastructure demands of education in the province, leaving little room for targeted initiatives for deprived areas at scale. This trend persisted despite evidence establishing a strong positive correlation between education expenditure and learning outcomes by district.<sup>8</sup> A drastic economic slowdown due to the pandemic is likely to reveal and increase disparities and put students from vulnerable populations and disadvantaged areas of the country at greater risk from not coming back to school.
10. **The government's immediate response has been dynamic, opening the pathway to improved coordination between Federal and Provincial governments.** At the national level, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT) is broadcasting pedagogical content via TV and awareness campaigns through Pakistan Television Corporation's (PTV) new channel called "TeleSchool" – *Taleem Ghar* (Education in Every House), which broadcasts classes for grades 1 to 12. The broadcasted lessons will be based on Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) aligned with the curriculum. Other mediums such as radio, newspaper, social media and mobile applications are also being considered. At the provincial level, the Government of Punjab has launched pedagogical websites with free-of-cost content and a TV channel platform for short-term courses through cable operators. All other provinces are considering distance learning but have struggled to implement the approach. The private sector has developed a sizeable supply of content for education in grades 1 to 12, as well as the potential to reach children currently out of school due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Coordination among all these entities and initiatives is strengthening and presents potential for sustainability if given the right support.

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<sup>5</sup> International Rescue Committee, Rapid assessment on gender and violence against women and girls in the Ebola outbreak in Benin, DRC March 2019

<sup>6</sup> Joint leaders' statement – Violence against children: A hidden crisis of the Covid-10 pandemic

<sup>7</sup> National Institute of Population Studies - NIPS/Pakistan and ICF. 2019. Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18. Islamabad, Pakistan, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NIPS and ICF

<sup>8</sup> World Bank. 2019. "Rethinking Decentralization" South Asia Economic Focus (October), World Bank, Washington, DC. Doi: 10.1596/978-1-4648-1515-7. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.

11. **The scope of the PforR Program consists of Results Areas that are aligned with Pillars 1, 2 and 5 within the Government's Program.** The Results Areas, which were selected as priorities by the Government, build on existing immediate COVID-19 response and recovery strategies, while positively disrupting the sector for better coordination towards equitable access and quality of education. The Program would support implementation efforts nationwide, with a focus on lagging districts. The carving out of support from the Government Program is a result of prioritization efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic and the expected effects that this support can have on improving equity in access, quality, and education management. The Results Areas are: (1) Response, Recovery, and Resilience: Enhanced targeting of COVID-19 education response; (2) Improved opportunities for learning for OOSC and at-risk students; and (3) Stronger federal-provincial coordination and management.
12. **The PDO is to support the governments' COVID-19 response to: (i) respond to school disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; (ii) recover access and improve education quality; and, (iii) enhance sector resilience through better coordination, with a focus on disadvantaged areas and vulnerable populations.**
13. **Results Area 1. Response, Recovery and Resilience: Enhanced targeting of COVID-19 education response.** This Results Area would enhance targeting of the COVID-19 education response, with a focus on disadvantaged districts. The Program would expand the initial GoP investments for distance learning in lagging areas of each province and support actions to guarantee safety in school reopening. This Results Area would prioritize immediate actions to expand both the demand and the supply for education services, in particular for girls and young women.
14. **To expand access to distance education, the Program would support a review of Student Learning Objectives to identify priority SLOs that require new content development, it will support the adaptation of education content and assessment tools, and distribution of learning materials.** The Program will enable the government to review existing SLOs against educational content to identify gaps and areas of need, while reviewing in parallel distance education student assessment measures. Where content is available, the government may undergo an adaptation process that includes adjustment to make the content relevant for girls and marginalized groups, and to include content on energy and environmental conservation. Materials will be adapted in mother-tongue languages to encourage focus on building basic literacy skills. SLOs that do not have matching distance education content will be identified in the review process and new content will be development. This Results Area will also support the distribution of learning materials, both low-and-high-tech to students in lagging districts.
15. **The Results area will also provide technical guidance for safely re-opening schools and support the design of school health and safety protocols.** Technical and implementation support will ensure safe re-opening of schools that take into account physical distancing measures, authorization for activities at the different stages of school re-opening, strategies for staggering classes and lunch times, and other such practices that will keep teachers and children safe. The health and safety protocols will also be aligned with the Codes of Conduct/policies of Provincial Education Departments that address violence against children (as supported by RRREP). Support will also be offered for the standardization of the model specifications for the sanitations and safety equipment schools need to maintain for a healthy and safe learning environment. Guidelines on how to protect the school environment and preserve the natural resources within and around the school will be included as part of the support. Finally, support for the design of the school health and safety protocols would incorporate information on the importance of maintaining clean water supplies, water conservation, recycling and harvesting from rainwater, all with the aim of promoting safe practices, such as handwashing, in schools.

16. **In order to ensure the update of these expanded services the Program includes communication campaigns that will target vulnerable groups such as girls and their family members to ensure maximum engagement.** Therefore, special focus towards reaching parents via communications tools and community mobilization are incorporated into the design within the aim of increasing girls' enrolment. Further, since lockdown conditions are linked to higher levels of gender-based violence and violence against children, the Program builds awareness messages into the communications campaigns to empower students, teachers, and parents with information and messaging on the importance of education, mental health wellbeing, and exposing children to risks.
17. **Specifically, the Program through would create the incentivize for provincial and federal governments to, among others:** (a) adapt and further develop distance learning content to make it relevant and sensitive to disadvantaged groups (e.g. girls, OOSC) and to incorporate content that will raise awareness on extreme weather, energy and environmental conservation; (b) adapt and distribute materials to students in lagging districts (digitally, phone, printed materials, or otherwise); (c) design and implement strategies to incentivize the demand for distance learning and for returning to school, including communications and enrollment campaigns; (d) carry out actions to guarantee the safe return to schools of teachers, students and administrators, including awareness training for teachers (on physical distance, hygiene practices, and water conservation), the design and implementation of safety protocols, and the provision of masks, sanitizer, and cleaning products; and (e) support student and teachers mental and emotional health. Actions will be adapted to the needs of provinces and lagging areas and will focus on implementable solutions to engage students in learning and keep schools safe.
18. **Results Area 2. Improved opportunities for learning for OOSC and at-risk students.** This Results Area aims to expand equitable access to education by engaging OOSC through both traditional and multimodal education approaches that will provide them with a pathway towards education certification. These activities will build on the existing efforts to establish and expand distance learning programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as expansion of existing public schools. The Program would focus on incentivizing the implementation of multi-modal (distance or face-to-face) learning opportunities for upper-primary- and middle-school-aged children, with a priority for expanding access to out-of-school students and girls. The focus on marginalized groups is specifically designed recognizing that the negative impacts of school closures will be higher for marginalized children who will experience more significant learning losses and psychosocial regressions due to their disrupted routines, and thus, the Program aligns its interventions with existing global knowledge and Framework on school re-opening practices.<sup>9</sup>
19. **The Results Area focuses on expanding multi-modal education services and traditional services recognizing that Pakistan must serve many children who face varied challenges to education access.** Supporting multi-modal education, whether fully distance or a blend of distant and traditional education, would open new pathways to re-integrate children who may have been disengaged, or never engaged, in formal education practices thus making the education system more inclusive of students' pace for learning. The Program will support the design of multi-modal education competencies that are aligned with the national student and teacher education competencies and will link achievement with certification. This creates a further incentive for students, and their families, to maintain their education and build the needed credentials for better labor market prospects. Thus, positively disrupting education practices.

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<sup>9</sup> 2020. UNESCO, UNICEF, WFP, World Bank. April 2020. Framework for Reopening Schools.

20. **A key aspect of the success of this Results Area is improving teacher capacity to assess student learning needs and delivery education content.** The Program will support the design of a teacher training program (virtual and face-to-face) that will focus on the key aspects of formative assessment, and distance education pedagogical strategies. Provinces with accelerated learning programs may also run training programs on this subject for a subset of teachers working within this area. All the training programs will include modules on student and teacher wellbeing, gender, and energy and environment conservation. The Results Area supports a virtual training program recognizing that traditional face-to-face trainings may not be possible to organize during the pandemic and even closely after school re-open, not to mention the significant logistical and operational planning required to roll-out an in-person training. A virtual training may also prove to be, after careful evaluation, an innovative approach that can be adopted more regularly in the education system. Provinces are also encouraged to supplement training programs with check-ins from teacher coaches and supervisors using existing channels through the school districts. This additional light-touch support can be accomplished through virtual discussions and mobile communications. The Program will also deliver teaching materials such as scripted lessons plans, teaching activities, and guidance notes to support the delivery of education content (any hardware delivered for teaching and learning purposes will need to comply with energy efficient standards). Over the course of Program implementation these practices will be monitored and assessed to monitor the quality of implementation and create a system of accountability.
21. **This Results Area will also tackle improved access to schools, particularly for girls.** Physical learning space in schools and classrooms is receiving renewed attention after recent evidence suggesting its positive effects on supporting teaching and learning practices.<sup>10</sup> The Program will expand access to education by the rehabilitation of classrooms, and where possible the expansion of schools using the existing school footprint. Construction and rehabilitation will include renewable energy considerations and will utilize energy efficient standards and resources (e.g. solar heating and lighting), along with rainwater harvesting and recycling, drainage improvement for flood control in districts prone to flooding, and finally use of weather-resistant material as appropriate. In addition, this Results Area will support upgraded WASH facilities for eligible schools. The improved learning environment with WASH facilities is especially important for girls' enrollment as WASH facilities have been demonstrated to be critical for girls' attendance and retention.<sup>11</sup> Facilities will be designed with the aim of enhancing the school environment but also to ensure that schools are able to stay compliant with the health and safety protocols needed during and after the pandemic. Thus, enhanced WASH facilities will help reduce the risk of health risks and of climate change-exacerbated infectious disease.
22. **Objectives within this Results Area will be achieved by supporting lagging areas expansion of education services, which are critical for the recovery and return phases, while making them more inclusive and differentiated towards student needs.** To achieve this the this Results Area will focus on, among others: (a) aligning distance learning guidelines with student and teacher national education standards (and ensuring that these include content on climate change adaptations such as flood response and water conservation); (b) expansion of multi-modal and traditional education services; (c) implementation communications and outreach campaigns targeting girls and OOSC; (d) enhancing teacher capacity to assess students and adapt learning content (training to cover pedagogy on distant learning; student assessment; and energy and environment conservation); (e) supporting the design and implementation

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<sup>10</sup> Positive associations between school improvement, spatial redesign, and student learning have been highlighted as students on average spend more than 7,500 hours before completing compulsory education in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.

<sup>11</sup> UNICEF, WASH in Schools, [https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/CFS\\_WASH\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/CFS_WASH_E_web.pdf)

of accelerated learning programs, including pedagogical material, distance teacher training, information and communications technology, and others; (f) improving existing public infrastructure, including the construction of new classrooms or the reconfiguration of existing spaces, connectivity, toilets, and enhanced WASH facilities (while using where possible energy-conserving approaches that are environmentally sustainable, such as solar panels, and through the school expansions designing infrastructure to include better drainage for flood control, using water-resistant materials as possible, and better water management and recycling processes).

23. **Results Area 3. Stronger federal-provincial coordination and management.** This Results Area would: (a) strengthen data systems, research, and planning to improve sector coordination and management; (b) support knowledge sharing and innovative local and global intervention design and evaluations in order to improve policymaking and planning, on distance learning, school management, teacher training and coaching, accelerated learning programs, student assessments, educational technology, and other pedagogical strategies; (c) support the digitization of government processes for improved planning and management; (d) support the country's capacity to carry out national and international student assessments and better use of data to improve classroom practice; (e) support interventions to incentivize behavioral change by teachers, students, and parents. With improved analysis and planning capabilities, and support from local, private sector and development partners, the GoP will be better positioned to respond, recover, and build back a better education system.
24. A key aspect of this support will be to improve the Federal-Provincial data management dashboards by integrating Provincial and national level datasets into an open source data platform. This is an ongoing challenge for the sector that makes it difficult to compare important measures of educational progress, e.g. gender parity in education access, given the lags in data management processes between Provinces and the Federal government. This is a particular challenge for gender disaggregated data and data on student learning outcomes. Therefore, support in the Program will include technical advice to develop protocols of data governance covering the spectrum from collection, usability, integrity and privacy of data. The Data Depot will be a joint resource for government institutions at all levels, partners, civil society and researchers. This support will further integrate provincial-level datasets (the provincial EMISs and school censuses) and national level datasets (NEAS, AEPAM) into a unified framework that will improve overall coordination and allow for better generation of reports on education in Pakistan down to district level (or to lower levels where these are available).
25. **The Results Area would also support knowledge sharing and innovative local and global intervention design and evaluations in order to improve policymaking and planning, on distance learning, school management, teacher training and coaching, accelerated learning programs, educational technology, and other pedagogical strategies.** The Program also aims to support reforms that digitize government processes for improved planning and management and that will support better allocation and execution of budget at the district and school level. For example, expanding the use of e-audit systems, e-procurement, and education data management systems, and will include linkages to larger reforms on public financial management (PFM) in coordination with other Bank operations. With improved analysis and planning capabilities, support from local partners, the private sector and development partners the GoP will be better positioned to respond, recover, and build back a better education system. The Results Area will also support the country's capacity to carry out national and international student assessments and the better use of data to improve classroom practice. Finally, the results Area will also support low-cost interventions to incentivize behavioral change by teacher, students, and parents.

26. **Technical Soundness.** Considering the significant effects the crisis will have on learning outcomes, the Program focuses on mitigative measures to prevent and protect learning loss while building back a more resilient education system. The design of the Program is based on well documented evidences supporting the effectiveness of each proposed intervention. First, many studies have repeatedly confirmed the effectiveness of distance education in the form of Interactive Radio Instruction on learning gains and enrollment increase around the world.<sup>12</sup> Several evaluation studies show effects in narrowing learning gap between urban and rural and boys and girls in Bolivia, South Africa and Thailand. In Zambia and Dominican Republic, the learnings of out-of-school children through distance interactive radio instruction were comparable to those in formal primary schools.
27. **A key feature of the Program design is the attempt to combine distance education and face-to-face approaches to reach keep education ongoing and to disrupt traditional strategies for education with the aim of bringng more students back into the system, including girls, who form the majority of OOSC.** The coverage of distance education largely depends on the ownership status of the communication and broadcasting equipment (TV, radio or other types such as mobile and computers). On average, access to TV and radio is not universal, with more limited access to rural children compared to urban. Access to mobile phone per household is extensive with 94% penetration in rural and 98% penetration in urban areas. This makes TV and radio a less accessible choice for OOSC in Pakistan as only 26 percent of OOSC in rural areas have access to a TV. Therefore, by utilizing a multi-modal education delivery that uses variations and combines TV, radio, mobile phones, and traditional schooling will make the distance education program more accessible and flexible for the needs of high-risk students (Table1).

Table1. Accessibility to communication and broadcasting equipment in a household

	Boys		Girls	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
<b>All children age 5 to 15</b>				
TV	67%	40%	67%	41%
Radio	2%	5%	3%	5%
Mobile phone	98%	94%	98%	94%
Computer (incl. laptop, tablet)	47%	24%	48%	24%
<b>OOSC age 5 to 15</b>				
TV	60%	26%	56%	25%
Radio	2%	6%	5%	7%
Mobile phone	95%	91%	95%	91%
Computer (incl. laptop, tablet)	27%	13%	27%	14%

Data: PSLM 2019

28. **The Program is also focused on restoring the supply and demand for education services by focusing on both the school physical infrastructure and teacher and student wellbeing.** A big body of literature shows school facilities (e.g., latrine, lighting, and other improved school built-environment) explain a large portion of students learning score<sup>13</sup> and the WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) around the world has

<sup>12</sup> World Bank 2005. "Improving educational quality through interactive radio instruction"

<sup>13</sup> Barrett, Davies, Zhang, and Barrett (2016) "The Holistic Impact of Classroom Spaces on Learning in Specific Subjects (kindergarten to grade 5 students in UK)", Environment and Behavior; Marchand, Nardi, Reynolds, and Pamoukov (2014). "The impact of the classroom-built environment on student perceptions and learning", Journal of Environmental Psychology, 40, 187-197; Duran-Narucki, V. (2008).

been effective in reducing student absenteeism, especially for girls.<sup>14</sup> Lastly, there is a growing evidence on the positive impact of socio-emotional skills on learning in school and their future earnings, and the effects are shown to be stronger among vulnerable populations.<sup>15</sup>

29. **The operational choices in the design of the Program benefit from recent relevant analytical work carried out in Pakistan**, including the Punjab: Expenditure and Quantity of Service Delivery Survey (EQSDS) in Primary School Sector, the Constraints to Girls Education ASA, the Punjab SABER Service Delivery Indicators Survey, the District Service Delivery Capacity Assessment Study, and the Poverty to Equity - Pakistan at 100 report, among other analytical work carried out by the Bank. These pieces offer valuable inputs and understanding about the functioning of subnational governments, the constraints to girls' education for the most disadvantaged, the equity challenges, and the behaviors of teachers, students and school principals in the school system. The design will also capture relevant lessons about federal and provincial coordination and flow of funds from the Public Financial Management and Accountability to Support Service Delivery Project in Pakistan, as well as other Programs for Results Projects in federal countries such as Argentina and Brazil—which emphasize the importance of incentives and mechanisms for coordinated work between provincial and federal governments.

30. **Expenditure framework assessment.** The expenditure framework is adequately structured. The PforR Program will support pillars 1, 2, and 5 of the Government Program through a US \$200 million Bank credit. This will cover 30 percent of the PforR Program costs, or 14 percent of the estimated total Government Program costs (US \$ 1.46 billion). The Program's functional classification of expenditures are presented in Table 3. Since the federal government, provinces and districts have adopted the same Chart of Accounts and Integrated Financial Management Information System, therefore, it is possible to track the program expenditure. Total program expenditures broken down by Results Areas across the 5 years is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Functional Classification of Program Expenditures

Functional Classification	Amount in Millions PKR					Total 5 Yrs
	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25	
A01-EMPLOYEES RELATED EXPENSES	4,110	4,521	4,973	5,471	6,018	25,093
A03-OPERATING EXPENSES	5,906	6,134	6,386	6,662	6,967	32,055
A05-GRANTS SUBSIDIES AND WRITE OFF LOANS	597	657	723	795	874	3,646
A06-TRANSFERS	4,890	5,378	5,916	6,508	7,159	29,851
A09-PHYSICAL ASSETS	429	472	519	571	628	2,619
A12-CIVIL WORKS	2,310	2,541	2,796	3,075	3,383	14,105
A13-REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE	5	5	6	6	7	30
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>18,247</b>	<b>19,710</b>	<b>21,319</b>	<b>23,089</b>	<b>25,035</b>	<b>107,399</b>

"School building condition, school attendance, and academic achievement in New York City public schools: A mediation model" Journal of Environmental Psychology, 28, 278-286

14 McMichael, Celia (2019), "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Schools in Low-Income Countries: A Review of Evidence of Impact" Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health, 16, 359; doi:10.3390/ijerph16030359

15 World Bank, 2016 "Taking Stock of Programs to Develop Socioemotional Skills, a systematic review of program evidence".

31. **The expenditure framework aims to improve sector financing by:** *effectiveness* by (i) supporting performance based financing for achievement of sector outcomes; (ii) costing of priority activities that will support access, quality and management interventions; and, (iii) supporting budget allocations to provinces and the federal government to achieve strategic outcomes; *efficiency* by (i) enhancing execution of funds at the district and school level through PFM reforms; (ii) improving planning for FM systems; and (iii) using performance-based financing; *adequacy* by (i) providing grant-matching mechanism that will provide supplementary financing for Provinces, with a focus on lagging districts; and (ii) covering operational costs and teacher salaries for achievement of priority sector outcomes; and *equity* by focusing support to lagging districts as needed given financial constraints, particularly under COVID-19 pandemic. Federal Government has experience of implementing a performance grant mechanism to provinces through a Fiscal Coordination Committee comprising of the federal and provincial finance ministers. Similarly, the ASPIRE program shall continue to benefit from the FCC in addition to the federal and provincial coordination committee to resolve bottlenecks to the fund flow from the federal to the provincial governments.

Table 3. Program Expenditure Across Program Areas

Results Area	Function	Amount in Millions (PKR)					Total 5 Yrs
		Sum of FY 2020-21	Sum of FY 2021-22	Sum of FY 2022-23	Sum of FY 2023-24	Sum of FY 2024-25	
<b>Results Area 1: Response, Recovery and Resilience: Enhanced targeting of COVID-19 education response</b>	Admin Expenditures	107	118	130	142	157	654
	Primary Education	969	976	984	992	1,002	4,923
	Professional and Vocational Education	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Secondary Education	222	244	269	295	325	1,355
<b>Results Area 2: Improved opportunities for learning for OOSC and at-risk students</b>	Admin Expenditures	6,651	7,316	8,047	8,852	9,737	40,604
	Grants	589	647	712	783	862	3,593
	Pre-primary Education	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Primary Education	3,717	3,928	4,161	4,417	4,699	20,923
	Secondary Education	4,832	5,315	5,846	6,431	7,074	29,497
<b>Results 3: Stronger federal-provincial coordination and management</b>	Admin Expenditures	1,152	1,155	1,159	1,163	1,167	5,796
	Grants	9	10	11	12	13	53
	Primary Education	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Professional and Vocational Education	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Secondary Education	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>18,247</b>	<b>19,710</b>	<b>21,319</b>	<b>23,089</b>	<b>25,035</b>	<b>107,399</b>

32. **Economic analysis.** The analysis was conducted using separate parameters for urban male, rural male, urban female and rural female. The future labor earnings are estimated based on the probability of working in each employment category (waged, self and unpaid works) for different education groups (less than primary completion, at most primary completion, and at least secondary completion). Other input parameters for the future labor earnings include the urbanization rate, survival rate of each demographic

group, and the real annual earnings growth. Finally, the education profile of young workers, age 16 to 20, changes depending on the impact scenarios mentioned above.

- Urbanization rate: The forecasted annualized urbanization rate is assumed to be equal to the annualized population urbanization rate over past 10 years, which stood at 0.9 percent.
- Discount rate: The rate at which expected economic costs and benefits are discounted to the present period is assumed to be 7 percent (social project discount rate)
- Survival probabilities: Estimates of age group-specific adult mortality rates for women and men aged 15-49 years using Pakistan Demographic and Household Survey (2006-07) data are linearly extrapolated to impute survival rates for ages 50-64.
- Unpaid family workers: The age-education level-earnings profile of unpaid workers is artificially constructed by applying a reduction factor of 75 percent to the corresponding profiles for self-employed workers.
- Real annual earnings: The forecasted annual growth rates in real annual earnings in wage and self-employment are assumed to be equal to the annualized growth in real GDP growth rate in past 10 years, which is approximately 4 percent.

33. **The Program aims to reach about 44 percent of OOSC (30 percent of urban boys, 40 percent of rural boys and urban girls, and 50 percent of rural girls) through enhanced traditional and flexible multimodal education approaches.** This means about 7.8 million OOSC will benefit from the Program: 4.33 million primary school-aged children (age 5 to 10) and 3.46 million elementary or middle school-aged children (age 11 to 15). Among these, 63 percent will be girls. The enhanced targeting of the COVID-19 education response, improvements in physical and pedagogical learning environment and stronger federal-provincial education coordination and management will benefit all currently enrolled students, with the greatest impact on girls and students in lagging districts. Prior to COVID-19, a total of 45.2 million children aged 5 to 15<sup>16</sup> were estimated to have been enrolled in schools (27.6 million primary school aged and 17.6 million elementary and middle school aged children).

Table 4. Estimated education profile of the Program cohort at age of 16-20 (share of each education level, %) – base-base scenario

		never enrolled	less than primary	at most primary	secondary
Male, Urban	Status-quo	12%	4%	30%	53%
	W/ Program	9%	1%	36%	55%
Male, Rural	Status-quo	24%	5%	32%	38%
	W/ Program	15%	1%	43%	41%
Female, Urban	Status-quo	19%	3%	23%	55%
	W/ Program	11%	0%	30%	58%
Female, Rural	Status-quo	43%	5%	25%	27%
	W/ Program	22%	1%	44%	33%

### Corporate Requirements

34. **Climate Change. The Program aims to improve overall sector resilience, and this is inclusive of challenges faced by climate change.** Climate change is expected to exacerbate extreme weather events

<sup>16</sup> 49.4 million enrolled students age of 5 to 17 (PSLM 2018-19).

in Pakistan, thereby increasing the vulnerability of people, assets and infrastructure to climate induced disasters. The majority of Pakistan's 207 million people live along the Indus River, an area prone to severe flooding in July and August. Water reservoirs capacity across the country is decreasing– which is expected to affect the nation's overall water supply. Finally, Pakistan is vulnerable to severe cyclones and storm surges due to increases in the sea and air temperature.

35. **Climate related risks adversely affect education as school's shutdown due to infrastructure damages from climate related events.** The limited knowledge of teachers and students on climate risks, energy and water conservation, and on clean water use (water pollution) means that resources may be inefficiently used, and poor water conservation practices can lead to spreading of diseases. Only 20 percent of the Pakistan's population has access to clean drinking water. The remaining 80 percent of the population depend on polluted water primarily contaminated by sewerage (fecal, total coliforms, E. coli colonies), and secondarily by fertilizer, pesticides, and industrial effluents. Poor water conservation practices are responsible for approximately 80 percent of all diseases and 30 percent of deaths in the country<sup>17</sup>. Additionally, due to their physical vulnerability, children are particularly vulnerable to extreme weather changes, flooding, and the realities of post-disaster scenarios, such as malnutrition and infectious disease. Extreme weather events can lead to long-term developmental challenges, especially for children affected during their first 1,000 days of life, when toxic stress can cause lasting damage to the brain's architecture.<sup>18</sup> Due to such events, children may also miss school due to sickness (e.g., malnutrition during drought, or increased rates of diarrheal disease after floods), injury, displacement and impact on psychological well-being. In the long run, this may reduce lifetime earnings when these children reach adulthood. As such, the adversities of climate change may impact individuals' long-term resilience. The Program aims to factor in these considerations and will promote sensitization campaigns for education and mental health wellbeing (with a focus on girls and parents of girls).
36. **The Program integrates specific actions to mitigate climate change risks and increase awareness across the sector.** Upgraded education facilities will consider climate stressors such as higher temperatures and flooding in the design, including solar panel installation to reduce the emissions and overall carbon footprint and backup generators to minimize the risk of power outages. Materials that are flood resistant and support water conservation will also be incorporated into the school designs and rehabilitation process. Further, the Program incorporates educational training and content to increase awareness and sensitize teachers and student about climate change related risks, energy conservation, water conservation (especially practices that reduce the exposure and use of water pollution which can lead to the spread of infectious diseases). The following indicators are designed into the Program to support mitigation measures:
- a. *Integration of climate change and environmental conservation in government policies, plans, or documents:*
    - i. *DLR 1, Adoption of the National School Health and Safety Protocols:* the protocols will include guidelines for safety protocols for operating and maintaining a safe school and it will also include guidelines on conserving precious resources (e.g. water), clean water access and practices, and use of energy efficient resources for operating the school. This can potentially reduce student

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<sup>17</sup> Nabi, G., Ali, M., Khan, S. et al. The crisis of water shortage and pollution in Pakistan: risk to public health, biodiversity, and ecosystem

<sup>18</sup> Center on the Developing Child – Harvard University. Toxic Stress, available at <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/>.

- absenteeism due to sickness (water borne diseases being one of the major causes), provide a conducive school environment to support student well-being and promote learning and reduce the risk of dropping out due to extreme climate and water related challenges.
- ii. DLR 3, *Revision and approval of the National Education Response and Resilience Plan by IPEMC*: The National Education Response and Resilience Plan is a document produced and made public by the MoFEPT to serve as a framework for the COVID-19 response and any other future emergencies including environmental or climate change related emergencies (e.g. floods, etc.). Pakistan has seen prolonged school closure due to natural disasters in the past that lead to learning losses without any alternate medium until schools were reconstructed. Providing education remotely (through TV, radio, mobile apps and printed learning material) can enable children to continue education at home. This can also benefit low income households that migrate seasonally to educate their children.
  - iii. DLR 4.1, *Distance learning content and assessment tools are: (a) matched with provincial and federal SLOs; and (b) sensitive to gender and marginalized groups*: ensures that a review of SLOs against distance education content is also reviewed for integration of environmental and climate change messages and content. Distance education systems can also provide continuity of education during climate emergencies, which in some areas is an annual phenomenon (e.g. flooding in Sindh and extreme cold in Balochistan) and can result in learning losses and even children dropping out. This can also reduce ad hoc closures and provide children with a systematic plan and relevant tools to be prepared and responsive.
  - iv. DLR 4.2, *Approval of national distance education strategy*, the distance education strategy will include guidelines for how education can be delivered in time of crisis including climate change events that can disrupt traditional education provision.
  - v. DLR 11, *Improvement of the collection of education data, analysis and transparency*, improvements in data collection, management, and analysis will include provision of data collected about climate change events that impact the education sector and response strategies to those climate events and their impacts on student learning. Better data collection methods with clear indicators associated with climate change factors will provide improvements in the government's ability to adapt and respond to climate change events, and in the longer-term mitigate the impacts of such events on the education sector.
- b. *Utilizing energy efficient and environment conservation resources for school construction*:
- i. DLR 7, *Up to 2,500 classrooms built/rehabilitated*: Rehabilitation and construction will be done with environmental and energy efficiency considerations (e.g. energy efficient structure, flood resistant materials, water conservation, etc.). By utilizing more climate friendly construction methods, e.g. flood resistant materials, the community will be less impacted by climate change disasters that often leave school destroyed or inaccessible due to poor construction practices. This will allow for faster recovery from climate change disasters. Moreover, energy efficient practices mean that the schools will be less dependent on unreliable and high cost energy sources.
  - ii. DLR 8, *Up to 1,000 schools attended by girls with rehabilitated WASH facilities*: Rehabilitation and will be done with environmental and energy efficiency considerations (e.g. energy efficient structure, flood resistant, water conservation, etc.). By utilizing more climate friendly construction methods, e.g. flood resistant materials, the community will be less impacted by climate change disasters that often leave school destroyed or inaccessible due to poor construction practices. This will allow for faster recovery from climate change disasters. Moreover, energy efficient practices mean that the schools will be less dependent on unreliable and high cost energy sources.

- c. *Incorporating environmental messages into education content for students and teachers:*
  - i. *DLR 9.1, Approval of the design and implementation plan of the distance learning training modules for teachers and coaches:* The training will include modules on climate change and environmental conservation. These modules will be adapted to local surroundings and issues to provide relatability and evidence for action to students. New content developed will include real examples from Pakistan on climate change challenges (e.g. flooding, cyclones) and teachers will be trained to engage students on how they can contribute to conservation practices at home (e.g. efficient water utilization, saving electricity, planting trees etc.). Training will also include strategies that will help teachers continue to support students' learning during climate events that may disrupt education services.
  - ii. *Results framework indicator, Number of tablets, solar chargers and supplementary materials received by teachers in lagging districts:* solar chargers for distributed tablets will be used by teachers. The content developed for distance education will have special thematic focuses including climate change, water conservation, and natural resources as part of social sciences curriculum. Similar topics will also be part of teacher guides to ensure a well-rounded approach towards understanding, awareness and application of climate literacy.
- d. *Incorporate climate change and environmental conversation messages into communication campaigns:*
  - i. *Results framework Indicator on Safety Protocols awareness campaigns for teachers and district officials:* Awareness campaigns will include messaging related to environmental conservation and climate change as incorporated in DLI 2.1.

37. **Gender.** The Program will address gaps in girls' equitable access to education by focusing on (i) expansion of classrooms and rehabilitation/construction of WASH facilities; (ii) targeted communication and awareness campaigns; (iii) integration of gender sensitive materials in educational content; and, (iv) standardization of indicators on girls and data collection methods to strengthen gender analysis. The Program will rehabilitate, and where needed construct, WASH facilities which are essential for retaining girls' enrolment. It will also support the expansion of schools, on existing grounds, to allow for an enhanced learning environment that can better accommodate young learners. The Program will also support demand side interventions by focusing on direct community change and awareness campaigns to address the societal norms which prevent girls from going back to schools. Additionally, the Program will focus on combating violence against children by advertising referral services for child protection and build on initiatives under RRREP to support implementation of Codes of Conduct in schools. Finally, the Program will address gaps in availability of uniform data across Pakistan by ensuring parameters for standardization of data. The indicators supporting mitigation or tracking gender issues are:

- a. *Expansion of classrooms and rehabilitation/construction of WASH facilities:*
  - i. *DLI 2, and results framework indicator, Number of students enrolled in multimodal programs in lagging areas/districts:* Across program implementation the government will be held accountable for the number of girls enrolled (at least 60 percent) of each year's target.
  - ii. *DLI 7, and results framework indicator, Number of classrooms for grade 6-8, built and/or rehabilitated in lagging areas/districts:* Expansion of classrooms in schools that predominantly service girls. The program also holds the government accountable for rehabilitation/construction of classrooms across the five years of implementation of which at least 60 percent of classrooms must service girls' enrollment.
  - iii. *DLI 8, Improved WASH facilities in schools attended by girls:* This indicator specifically targets

girls' access to improved WASH facilities, recognizing that this is one of the main deterrents to girls maintaining enrolment in schools.

- b. *Targeted communications and awareness campaigns:*
  - i. Results framework indicator, *number of children, teachers, and parents reached with sensitization campaigns for education and mental health wellbeing- of which are girls:* Across the five-year targets, at least 60 percent of those beneficiaries must be girls.
  - ii. Results framework indicator, *number of children reached with back-to-school sensitization campaigns and behavioral nudges, focusing on girls and marginalized groups:* the communication messages and behavioral nudges are aimed to reduce social biases against girl's education and encourage families and children to enroll or re-enroll in school.
  
- c. *Integration of gender sensitive materials in education content:*
  - i. DLR 4.1, *Distance learning content and assessment tools are: (a) matched with provincial and federal SLOs; and (b) sensitive to gender and marginalized groups:* All education content reviewed and designed will be sensitive to gender and marginalized groups.
  - ii. DLR 4.2, *Approval of national distance education strategy:* The Strategy will include mitigation measures that will reduce the likelihood of girls' disengagement from education.
  - iii. DLR 9.1, *Approval of the design and implementation plan of the distance learning training modules for teachers and coaches:* Training program will be gender sensitive and will include modules on how to support differentiated learning needs for both girls and boys.
  
- d. Standardization of indicators on girls and data collection methods to strengthen gender analysis:
  - i. DLR 11.1, *Implementation of a functional provincial and national open source data platform:* the open Source Data Platform is a public website that has consolidated indicators on education disaggregated by gender, province, level of education, and others. The platform will include standardized indicators, including those for girls, that will ease Provincial cross comparisons on key gender indicators.
  - ii. DLR 11.2, *Standardized data is collected, analyzed and publicly released for all provinces in the country:* this will be inclusive of gender on data that will provide one of the first accurate accounts of gender disaggregated data nationally.

## Annex. Operational Characteristics for Federal-Provincial Grant Mechanism

**Disclaimer.** The parameters outlined in this section can be adjusted as the preparation of the grant mechanisms is defined. Several of the parameters in this document will have to be agreed with the World Bank under the ASPIRE Program to guarantee that funds flow towards the NEEP. This also refers to DLR 10.1 to 10.5.

### I. Program Objective and Scope of Work

1. **Objective of the document.** This document outlines the main operational characteristics of the National Equitable Education Program (NEEP). The 15<sup>th</sup> Inter-Provincial Education Ministers' Conference (IPEMC) held on December 30, 2019, agreed with the concept a National Equitable Education Program—considering the responsibility of the state to ensure equitable and quality access to service delivery for all citizens of Pakistan. The program aims at supporting a reduction in learning poverty in deprived and neglected areas of the country in light of implementation plans of the provinces.
2. **What is NEEP?** The NEEP is a federal-to-province matching grant mechanism based on performance that has as an objective to reduce learning poverty and increase access to education in lagging areas in each province. It also supports Provinces to fight COVID-19 and promote the provincial and federal plans for the safe return to school.
3. **National level Objectives.** The program will have National Targets on several key indicators related to out-of-school and learning indicators. Provincial level targets that contribute towards achievement of those national targets will be agreed upon with provinces. Funding would be made available according to the (1) Provincial commitment to achieving those contributions; (2) availability of funding; and (3) the matching of resources from the provinces through their budget (see below).
4. **Performance indicators.** The performance indicator for provinces and national levels will be the following:
  - (i) Percentage of public schools reopened with safety protocols
  - (ii) Increased in gross enrolment rates in lagging areas/districts (p.p.)
  - (iii) Reduction in the gender parity index in access in grade 6-8
  - (iv) Reduction in the percentage of 3rd grade students who cannot read a simple text
  - (v) Number of students benefiting from new accelerate learning programs in lagging areas
  - (vi) Number of children supported through multi-modal education, in lagging districts/areas (disaggregated by gender and level of education)
5. **Scope of Work.** One of the main characteristics of the program is that it gives provinces substantial flexibility to achieve the results under the program and realign programs to bolster results on the ground.

To achieve safety and support the Provinces in the fight against COVID-19, funds can be used to, among others: (a) adapt and further develop distance learning content to make it relevant and sensitive to disadvantaged groups (e.g. girls, OOSC); (b) adapt and distribute materials to students and teachers in lagging districts (digitally, phone, printed materials, or otherwise); (c) design and implement strategies to incentivize the demand for distance learning and for returning to school, including communications and enrollment campaigns; (d) carry out actions to guarantee the safe return to schools of teachers, students and administrators, including awareness training for teachers, the design and implementation of safety protocols, and the provision of masks, sanitizer, and cleaning products; and (e) support student and teachers mental and emotional health. Actions will be adapted to the needs of provinces and lagging areas

and will focus on implementable solutions to engage students in learning and keep schools safe.

To improve opportunities for learning for OOSC and at-risk students the funds can be used, among others, to: (a) aligning distance learning guidelines with student and teacher national education standards; (b) expansion of multimodal and traditional education services; (c) implement communications and outreach campaigns targeting girls and OOSC; (d) enhanced teacher capacity to assess students and adapt learning content; (e) support the design and implementation of accelerated learning programs, including pedagogical material, distance teacher training, information and communications technology, and others; (f) improve existent public infrastructure, including the construction of new classrooms or the reconfiguration of existing spaces, connectivity, toilets, and enhanced WASH facilities (while using where possible energy-conserving approaches that are environmentally sustainable).

## II. Program Geographic Coverage

6. **Lagging district selection.** The selection of districts in each province is based on three criteria: (i) the provincial ranking of districts based on the percentage of out of school children in the district (with ranking 1 given to the district with the highest percentage of out of school children); (ii) the provincial ranking of districts on the gender parity index (with ranking 1 given to the district with the highest number of girls per boy in the OOSC population); and (iii) the provincial ranking of districts on the percentage of children who can (with ranking 1 given to the district with the lowest percentage of children who can read a paragraph in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade). These three rankings will be added up for each province and the districts with the lowest numbers in each province will be eligible for the program until the funding envelope per year is exhausted. See below under 'Allocation of annual resources per province.'
7. **Innovation District.** Each Province would have the opportunity to include one district to apply innovative education approaches with clear target and activities and would report on the implementation and results of those pilot initiatives. It is expected that innovation then transfers to lagging districts.
8. **Enrollment Data.** The data used for the selection of lagging districts/areas is the 2014-2015 Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) survey. These data are the only source of information providing comparable data on enrollment by district in Pakistan. These data also include attendance to public and private schools as well as basic demographic characteristics of children and their families. Once the results of the 2018-2019 PSLM are available at the district level (so far, they are only available at the provincial and national level), the results of the baseline will be determined. Although provincial EMIS systems have substantially improved more needs to be done in terms of harmonization of data collection across the country, frequency and quality checks needs to be carried out. The ASPIRE Program will also support these initiatives.
9. **Districts supported by other projects.** Districts that have been selected for support through another Bank Project can be swapped by other district in the list as long as the one to be included is the next one in the list. Support to this district could continue if the province determines that the activities of both Projects do not duplicate. A case needs to be made to swap districts from the list according to the principles outlined in this document.

## III. Funding Mechanism

10. **Funding.** The initial funds for the program will come from support from the Actions to Strengthen Performance for Inclusive and Responsive Education (ASPIRE) Program funded by the World Bank as an emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan. The Program amount is \$200 million dollars

for a period of 5 years, and the Grant mechanism will benefit from at least 135 Million as described in DLRs.

11. **Allocation of annual resources per province.** The total pool of funds for the program will be decided by the Federal Government. The allocation of funds will start with the first ranked district in each province according to the target for the year. Then, the second ranked district would be covered until funds are fully allocated. How much money will go to each province will be equal to the total target for each district in the province time a per-capita amount on the performance indicators of relevance.
12. **Per-capita amount.** The total funding going to a province in a year would be equal to the number of additional students in the provincial target for lagging districts multiplied by the per-capita annual amount. This amount is calculated as PKR 20,000 (equivalent to approximately US \$130). The per-capita amount is estimated to cover costs related to access to quality education.
13. **One-off grant to fight COVID-19.** For the first year of the Program and to support the efforts to combat COVID-19, the program will provide a one-time lump-sum grant to each province. The amount of the grant will be divided among the four provinces and the federal government according to the proportion of students attending public education using the most recent AEPAM data.
14. **Flow of Funds.** Resources will flow directly to account number 01 in each provincial budget once at least 20% of the funds to achieve the target in the lagging districts are committed in the provincial budget, either through the school departments activities and/or through direct funding releases to district offices.
15. **Verification.** As part of the program the federal government program will procure annually an independent verification agency to engage with Provinces and collect data on the performance indicators under the programs. The data collection will also collect direct data and carry out field visits. It will also use data from the Provincial Evaluation and Monitoring Information Systems (EMIS). Verification may also include spot checks from National Commission for Human Development (NCHD).
16. **Non-performance.** Provinces that do not achieve the targets for the year will be given an additional year to speed up implementation provided they produce a more detailed and credible plan of improvement and achieve targets. If targets for both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years are not achieved by the end of the second year, resources of the program will be redirected towards other provinces that are showing progress in achieving results.

#### **IV. Governance and Program Reporting and Coordination**

17. **Governance of NEEP and ASPIRE.** High level approval of NEEP will be done by the Inter Provincial Education Ministers Conference (IEPMC). Minister of Educations in each Province will appoint a focal point for technical discussion. The Focal Point will also make sure that the Province has a dedicated technical team to engage in discussion about planning, reporting, execution, and implementation.
18. **Program Steering Committee.** The technical body of the program will be the Program Steering Committee composed of one focal point from each province, the MoFEPT, and the Program Coordinator. This committee will have clear and explicit Term of Reference. Its main role will be to guarantee the good implementation and compliance of the activities with the program design.

19. **Requirement for provinces.** In addition to the budgetary matching requirements for lagging districts, each province must work on a plan to achieve the agreed targets in line with the allowable activities and their current education plans. Each Province will also have the responsibility of appointing a focal point supported by a technical team that can develop the implementation plans, support implementation, and report on implementation and results.
20. **Reporting.** Provincial education departments will provide timely and complete implementation reports against actions plan and own targets quarterly. This includes reporting against achievement of Provincial targets and intermediate targets to illustrate implementation progress.
21. **Federal Level Roles and Responsibilities.** Standard setting, monitoring, consolidation of: plans, reports, trainings (Development of updated modules/manuals, guidelines), review meetings, advocacy, coordination (development partners, international and interprovincial), technical support, operational research.
22. **Provincial Level Roles and Responsibilities.** Monitoring, supervision, planning, reporting, data analysis, execution, procurement, financial management, Trainings, Review meetings, Social mobilization, Advocacy, coordination, technical support, IT solutions, engagement of CSO/private sector, mobilization of districts and union councils.
23. **Learning data.** Ideally, during the first year of the program the provinces will agree on developing a simple sample-based diagnostic assessment for the districts that will be part of the program. Ideally, the NEAS assessment would be oversample in these districts to be able to use already existent process to capture learning data. However, in the absence of these data, the program will either use ASER data, or other innovative mechanisms, such as cellphone-based assessments. The focus will be on literacy and math in grades 3, 5 and 8<sup>th</sup>, with a stronger focus on early literacy with the aim of reducing learning poverty.
24. **Federal and provincial Coordination.** A key factor in the success of the NEEP Program is improved coordination between Provinces and the Federal government. The NEEP and the Program supporting it (ASPIRE) would therefore strengthen data systems, research, and planning with the aim of improving sector coordination and management. The Program would, among others, support improvements in data systems including those that will establish a broader monitoring and evaluation framework that would reconcile education data gaps/duplications, streamline reporting against national and international commitment, and support transparent data reporting on student outcomes. The Program also supports knowledge sharing and innovative local and global intervention design and evaluations in order to improve policymaking and planning, on distance learning, school management, teacher training and coaching, accelerated learning programs, educational technology, and other pedagogical strategies.
25. **Sunset Clause.** The program will be automatically terminated at the end of five years unless renewed jointly by the Federal Government and the participating province.