



Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 29-Jun-2020 | Report No: PIDA29481

**BASIC INFORMATION****A. Basic Project Data**

Country Pakistan	Project ID P174223	Project Name COVID19 Response, Recovery and Resilience in Education Project (COVID19 RRREP)	Parent Project ID (if any)
Region SOUTH ASIA	Estimated Appraisal Date 22-Jun-2020	Estimated Board Date 13-Jul-2020	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) Government of Pakistan	Implementing Agency Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to strengthen federal and provincial capacity in the education sector to: (i) respond to and recover from the COVID-19 crisis in the short term; and (ii) lay the foundations for resilience to face future crises, with a focus on disadvantaged areas and vulnerable populations.

Components

Response
Recovery
Resilience, M&E

The processing of this project is applying the policy requirements exceptions for situations of urgent need of assistance or capacity constraints that are outlined in OP 10.00, paragraph 12.

Yes

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)**SUMMARY**

Total Project Cost	19.85
Total Financing	19.85
of which IBRD/IDA	0.00
Financing Gap	0.00



DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	19.85
Education for All - Fast Track Initiative	19.85

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Moderate

Decision

The review did authorize the team to appraise and negotiate



Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context



Country Context

- 1. Pakistan is at a crossroads as it deals with the corona virus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.** Periodic macroeconomic crises and a low human capital (HC) basis have constrained the country's growth prospects. Over the last two decades, economic growth in Pakistan has averaged at 4.4 percent a year, below the South Asian annual average of 6.3 percent¹. Low investment in human capital, slow progress of structural reforms, low private investment, and slow export growth due to an overvalued currency, among others, have hindered growth prospects². The country was making good progress in stabilizing its economy and implementing much needed structural reforms. However, the COVID-19 pandemic will have significant negative impacts on the economy. The closure of businesses and disruption to the supply chains are significantly affecting the services and manufacturing sectors, which account for nearly 80 percent of total gross domestic product (GDP). In FY20, GDP growth is expected to remain within the range of negative 2.6 percent to negative 3.3 percent. For FY21, GDP growth is projected to remain within the range of negative 0.4 percent to negative 4.0 percent.
- 2. There was a consistent and significant decline in poverty in Pakistan over the 14 years from 2001 to 2015, during which the poverty headcount measured using the national poverty line fell from 64.3 percent to 24.3 percent³.** These gains are likely to be reversed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated containment measures. The challenges of poverty reduction can be further affected by climate change and disaster risk-related vulnerabilities⁴. The economic contraction is expected to contribute to a sizeable increase in poverty, reversing the trend of sustained poverty reduction observed over the 14 years. Urban workers employed in the informal sector and daily wage workers employed in the formal sector will bear the brunt of the slowdown. In rural areas, expected decline in off-farm employment opportunities is also likely to increase vulnerability to shocks of households relying on agriculture. It is important that the government prioritizes investments to ensure poverty reduction and human capital losses are quickly offset to bounce back strongly.
- 3. Human capital accumulation is low and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic puts at risk some of the gains made in recent years.** According to the World Bank Human Capital Index (HCI), if no improvements in health and education service delivery take place, a Pakistani child born today is expected to be only 40 percent as productive as s/he could be by age 18. With a large share of births taking place outside health facilities (33.8 percent), and low immunization rates (65.6 percent) children are deprived of a strong start to life. High rates of malnutrition and low learning outcomes contribute to the country's low HCI: 37.6 percent of Pakistani children under age five are stunted; and learning poverty is very high with 75 percent of Pakistani children not being able to read and understand a short age-appropriate text by age 10.
- 4. Pakistan has adopted a holistic approach to human capital accumulation and protecting human capital is at the core of the country's response plan to address the COVID-19 pandemic.** The Government of Pakistan (GoP) embarked on a set of reforms and interventions, including: (a) the launch of a national poverty alleviation program: 'Ehsaas'; (b) expansion of quality primary health care (PHC) for improved health, nutrition and population outcomes through a 'life cycle' approach; (c) a focus on learning in primary education to decrease learning poverty by half in a decade; and (d) revision of legislation for women's empowerment and increased participation in the labor force. In order to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, Pakistan has strengthened health service delivery and used safety nets to protect the vulnerable. Ehsaas has been one of the main instruments to mitigate the COVID-19 impact through its cash assistance package. The World Bank is supporting the GoP in this agenda through preparing the Pandemic Response Effectiveness in Pakistan (PREP) project and repurposing eight ongoing projects to quickly mobilize funding for urgently needed response and mitigation measures. The second phase of the COVID-19 response will focus on interventions to mitigate socio-economic impacts and support for the medium-term reform



¹ World Bank estimate

² World Bank. 2019. *Pakistan at 100: Shaping the Future*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31335> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO

³ World Bank. 2018. *From Poverty to Equity - Pakistan at 100*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

⁴ Climate change is expected to exacerbate extreme weather events in Pakistan, thereby increasing the vulnerability of people, assets and infrastructure to climate induced disasters. Balochistan is highly vulnerable to major natural disasters and has suffered significantly from various crises, including drought in 2000-02, and Cyclone Yemyin in 2007.



agenda so that Pakistan can rebound stronger as the COVID-19 crisis subsides. Earlier this year, the Punjab Human Capital project was approved by the World Bank and a similar project is under preparation in Balochistan.



Sectoral and Institutional context

5. **Education service delivery in Pakistan is the responsibility of provincial governments, post the 18th Constitutional Amendment.** The federal government has an overarching national responsibility to ensure all citizens have reasonably comparable access to basic educational services. However, coordination among provinces and the federal level could be improved to achieve national level objectives and respond to challenges at the national level.
6. **Even before the pandemic, the education system in Pakistan faced substantial challenges in access, quality, and management; these are likely to be further exacerbated by the pandemic, which has already negatively impacted more than 50 million students.** Before the COVID-19 crisis, 30.1 percent (PSLM 2019) of school-age children were out of school in Pakistan (or approximately 19.1 Million children) with stark disparities in gender. The learning poverty was high; 75 percent of 10-year-olds cannot read and comprehend an age-appropriate text. In addition, the education system is inefficient with significant repetition and dropout rates. In March, the Government of Pakistan (GoP) announced a nationwide lockdown including closure of all schools across the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This applies to all public and private schools, colleges, universities, vocational institutions and religious institutes and the closures will be treated as summer vacation. Furthermore, the government cancelled all examinations, and students will be promoted to the next level based on their previous grades and assessments.
7. **The disruption of education services during the COVID-19 pandemic will disproportionately affect disadvantaged and hard-to-reach children, including girls and young women.** It is expected that the pandemic will reduce both education demand and supply in at least three ways: (i) negative shocks to household incomes that will make children in those households less likely to attend school once they reopen; (ii) negative effects on household perceptions and attitudes towards sending children to school due to fears of contagion; and, (iii) negative impacts to the supply of education due to the permanent closure of low-fee private schools due to the crisis. The depth and scope of these effects will depend on the length of the pandemic, its potential seasonal characteristics, education authorities' resolve, and the financial and technical capacity to mitigate their effects. Moreover, education inequity is likely to increase due to unequal access to technology-based remote learning.
8. **The immediate response to the pandemic has been dynamic with an aim to protect gains in access to education and learning (via distance learning).** The government also views this as an opportunity to mainstream distance education for out-of-school children and incentivize provinces to focus on equity by providing more funding to lagging districts all around the country and increasing (or protecting) access and student learning. At the national level, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT) is broadcasting pedagogical content and awareness campaigns via TV through the Pakistan Television Network's new channel called "TeleSchool," which broadcasts classes for grades 1 to 12. The government will broadcast lessons based on Student Learning Outcomes aligned with the curriculum using content donated by private providers. 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. Coordination among all these entities and initiatives is nascent and presents a lot of potential for further development. Contingency plans for future emergencies are necessary and should incorporate equity considerations to ensure the most vulnerable have access to education services.
9. **Beyond this initial response, the Government is preparing a package of support to the education sector to mitigate education losses, prepare for the return of children to school, and increase the resilience of the education system to shocks, including strengthening coordination between federal and provincial authorities.**



The COVID19 Response, Recovery and Resilience in Education Project (COVID19 RRREP) is part of a broader World Bank program of sectoral response to COVID-19, which also includes the results-based financing instrument (PforR) ‘Emergency Actions to Strengthen Performance for Inclusive and Responsive Education’ Project (ASPIRE, P173399), which is being processed in parallel. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) financed COVID19 RRREP project focuses on the immediate support for response and recovery while establishing foundations for medium-term investments. COVID19 RRREP is embedded within the ASPIRE program, which sets a pathway for response and recovery by bridging short-term needs with medium-and-longer-term needs for restoration of education services. The program will function as a platform for better education planning for emergencies, and improved coordination and alignment between federal and provincial governments with a focus on the most disadvantaged geographical areas. Development partners may also leverage this program to join with technical and financial contributions.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

Development Objective(s) (From PAD)

The Project Development Objective (PDO) is to strengthen federal and provincial capacity in the education sector to: (i) respond to and recover from the COVID-19 crisis in the short term; and (ii) lay the foundations for resilience to face future crises, with a focus on disadvantaged areas and vulnerable populations.

Key Results

- a. Response. Number of children in disadvantaged districts supported with distance learning (disaggregated by gender).
- b. Recovery. Number of children provided access to programs and sensitization campaigns aimed at minimizing the negative impacts of school closures, with a focus on girls (disaggregated by gender).
- c. Resilience. Strengthened federal and provincial coordination for immediate sector response.



D. Project Description

- 10. **The COVID19 Response, Recovery, and Resilience in Education Project (COVID19 RRREP) will support the short- and medium-term response and recovery needs of the COVID-19 pandemic, while establishing the technical and institutional capacity to build back a stronger and more resilient education system.** Its focus is on disadvantaged populations in lagging areas across all provinces, and its implementation timeframe is 16 months; activities are therefore simple, focused and deemed of highest priority in order to restore supply and demand of education services. The project includes three main components: (1) Response to the urgent crisis; (2) Recovery once schools reopen; and (3) Resilience of the education system to respond to future crises. The design draws from provincial and federal response plans as well as international experiences on how to cope with school closures.
- 11. **Component 1: Response.** This component will focus on emergency response activities to ensure education continuity. The component will consist of the following sub-components: (i) Ensuring learning continuity; (ii) Protecting students’ and teachers’ health, safety, and wellbeing; and (iii) Building the Distance Learning Competency Standards and Assessment Framework.
- 12. **Component 2: Recovery.** This component would improve the government’s capacity and implementation for effective recovery of education services. This will build on sensitization activities under subcomponent 1.2 and be achieved by securing student and teacher health safety in schools and by improving the capacity of educators to safely deliver education to their students. This component has two sub-components: (i) Promoting safe schools, and (ii) Supporting teachers in preparation for the recovery.
- 13. **Component 3: Resilience, Monitoring and Evaluation.** This component will finance activities to increase the resilience of the education system to respond to and recover from future shocks, including potential new waves of COVID-19, and natural and man-made disasters. This component will improve the capacity of provincial and federal governments to design effective strategies and implementation plans to face education disruptions, and will also invest in improved monitoring and evaluation capacity with a focus on improving equitable access to education for girls and students in disadvantaged areas, and identification of effective distance learning strategies that can lead to improved education outcomes. Moreover, this component will also finance the operating costs of the unit that will implement the Project. This component has two sub-components: (i) Strengthening planning for system disruption; and (ii) monitoring and evaluation.

Legal Operational Policies	
	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Areas OP 7.60	No

Summary of Assessment of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts



E. Implementation

Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

14. **To ensure timely implementation given the project's short duration, the project would be coordinated by the MoFEPT in close collaboration with provincial departments of education.** While the provinces will be responsible for on ground implementation of activities based on provincial needs, the MoFEPT, with implementation support from the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), will have the overall fiduciary and safeguards responsibility and will be in charge for reporting to the World Bank on implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The MoFEPT-NCHD will undertake the financial management, procurement, safeguards and monitoring and evaluation functions of this project in accordance with OP/BP 10.00 and the World Bank Guidance for FM in WB IPF, dated February 28, 2017. A Project Management Unit (PMU) will also be created under MoFEPT to support project implementation.

15. **In order to support the MoFEPT-NCHD and the PMU in fulfilling their responsibilities and to increase coordination and the quality, timeliness, and relevance of activities to the provinces, the project will have a Technical Steering Committee (TSC).** It will consist of: (i) a representative of each of the provincial education departments, (ii) a representative of the MoFEPT, and (iii) a representative of the NCHD and the PMU. In addition, each provincial department of education will nominate a focal point that will liaise with MoFEPT-NCHD and the PMU. The technical specifications of the activities that each province will carry out will be decided by the province in alignment with the three components above and will be proposed to MoFEPT via terms of reference. Provincial education departments will be responsible for the delivery of activities to beneficiaries, including distribution of learning materials, re-enrollment drives in provinces, among others, and monitoring and evaluation. Activities with national reach will be led by the MoFEPT-NCHD with inputs from provincial departments of education and health, as needed.

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APPROVAL

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