



Project Information Document (PID)

Concept Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 01-Dec-2019 | Report No: PIDC28065

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

Country Pakistan	Project ID P172834	Parent Project ID (if any)	Project Name Sindh Early Learning Enhancement through Classroom Transformation (P172834)
Region SOUTH ASIA	Estimated Appraisal Date Mar 02, 2020	Estimated Board Date Aug 31, 2020	Practice Area (Lead) Education
Financing Instrument Investment Project Financing	Borrower(s) ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN	Implementing Agency SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY DEPARTMENT	

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve reading and math skills of early grade primary students, and support student retention in primary schools in select districts.

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

Total Project Cost	129.99
Total Financing	129.99
of which IBRD/IDA	100.00
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS**World Bank Group Financing**

International Development Association (IDA)	100.00
IDA Credit	100.00

Non-World Bank Group Financing

Trust Funds	29.99
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Education for All - Fast Track Initiative

29.99

Environmental and Social Risk Classification

Moderate

Concept Review Decision

Track II-The review did authorize the preparation to continue

Other Decision (as needed)

B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

A. Country Context

Pakistan, the sixth most populous country in the world, is at a crossroads. The economy accelerated with GDP growth of 5.5 percent in Fiscal Year (FY) 18 but is projected to slow to 3.3 percent in FY 19/20 and, further, to 2.4 percent in FY 2020. Poverty declined from 64.3 percent in 2001 to 24.3 percent in 2015, but inequality persists—and is widening. Pakistan ranks low on the 2018 Human Capital Index—at 134 out of 157 countries. Gender disparity continues, and female labor force participation was only 26.3 percent in 2017. Natural disasters and unreliable water and power supply constrain progress.

Pakistan has had significant challenges with human capital formation. Pakistan has the world’s second highest out-of-school population (22 million), and it is estimated that 75 percent of Pakistani children in later primary ages are not proficient in reading.¹ This indicates that the Learning Poverty rate for Pakistan is 15.6 percentage points worse than the average for the South Asia region and 14.3 percentage points worse than the average for lower-middle income countries. Additionally, the needle on critical human development indicators such as stunting (38 percent in 2018²) has moved positively, but lags behind other countries in the region. Large disparities remain in development outcomes between provinces and between urban and rural areas. High gender disparities are prevalent, and Pakistan has very poor female labor force participation (FLFP), with only one in four women being active in the labor force.

Sindh is a province with a population of more than 47 million inhabitants³ with diverse economic and human development challenges. The population growth is high with an average annual growth rate of 2.40 between 1998 and 2017⁴. There are 29 districts in Sindh, but fifty-two percent of the population live in urban areas, concentrated in and around the capital city of Karachi. Endowed with coastal access, Sindh is a major center of economic activity in Pakistan and has a highly diversified economy ranging from heavy industrial and financial sectors, based in Karachi, to a substantial agricultural base along the Indus River. However, the incidence of poverty is much higher in rural areas (75.5 percent) than in urban areas (10.6 percent), and Sindh’s overall human development outcomes are negatively impacted by its severely disadvantaged rural—and often drought-stricken—population. The female literacy rate in rural Sindh is 24

¹ World Bank 2019. *Pakistan. Learning Poverty Brief*. October 2019. Washington, D.C.

² World Bank. 2019. *Pakistan at 100: Shaping the Future*. World Bank, Washington, DC.

³ Pakistan Population Census 2017 <http://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/population-census>

⁴ http://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/Population_Census_2017_Results_0.pdf



percent, compared with 70 percent in urban Sindh and 38 percent in rural areas nationwide.⁵ Both public- and private-sector service provision remain skewed towards urban areas, and the dependence of rural households on agriculture, livestock and fishing leaves them especially vulnerable to natural disasters. All of this also contributes significantly to Sindh province having a particularly low rate (12 percent) of females participating in the labor force (2017-18)⁶.

B. Sectoral and Institutional Context

The School Education and Literacy Department (SELD) of Sindh is responsible for providing education up to secondary school level (Grade 10) and has recently developed the Sindh Education Sector Plan and Roadmap (SESP&R) 2019-24 which sets its strategic direction. Provincial governments are responsible for providing free and compulsory education to all children aged 5-16 years in their respective provinces. The Government of Sindh (GoS) conducted an Education Sector Assessment (ESA, 2019) and prepared the SESP&R 2019-24 with support provided by the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). The GoS decided that the focus of the SESP&R 2019-24 will be on the school education subsector (from early childhood education and care to secondary education) based on the ESA which showed that the main binding constraints to achievement of the education portion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) rest with school education. This proposed Sindh Early Learning Enhancement through Classroom Transformation (SELECT) Project supports prioritized areas in the SESP&R 2019-24 and will be financed by the World Bank and the GPE's Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG).⁷ In addition to the recently closed World Bank project (Second Sindh Education Sector Project – SERP2), the World Bank is currently engaging in holistic dialogue on human development under the Sindh Human Capital Investment Project (SHCI).

Provision of quality education remains a key challenge for education development and progress in the Sindh Province. Students enrolled in government schools are not reaping the benefits of human capital formation through schooling since the learning environment, pedagogical practices, and school culture are not structured well for improved learning to occur. Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, rural locations, and especially girls, are at an even higher risk of dropping out. There are critical shortcomings in education quality and sector management that must be addressed if Sindh is to develop its future human capital. The key factors to the low quality of education identified include outdated teachers' pedagogical practices and an absence of a conducive learning environment, which are binding constraints for learning and retention in schools.

Almost 50 percent of children leave school by grade 5 of primary education, and another 27 percent leave the education system during the transition from primary to middle school.⁸ There are 44,296 primary schools in Sindh, of which only 32,421 primary schools are classified as "functional" (73 percent). However, 17,696 of these primary schools (40 percent) are operating as a single-teacher school. Insufficient basic facilities, such as electricity, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), are also a widespread issue across more than 34 percent of schools.⁹ As the ratio of primary schools to elementary schools or middle schools (grades 6-8) in the government system are 16 to 1 (44,296 primary schools and 2,712 middle or elementary schools) in Sindh, there is currently very limited space for students in grades 6 and onwards.¹⁰ This is likely affecting the retention rates in primary schools and transition to grade 6. The limited availability of real-time and up-to-

⁵ Pakistan Social & Living Standards Measurement Survey PSLM 2014-15

⁶ Formal Labor Force Survey 2017-2018.

⁷ Previously, SELD developed the Sindh Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2014-18 in partnership with the Local Education Group (LEG) and implemented a US\$66 million grant received from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) to support its implementation between 2015-17. The Project (SGPE 1) accomplished major reforms including improving teacher accountability with the introduction of a teacher and school monitoring system; however, despite these achievements, serious education challenges still exist today.

⁸ PSLM 2015-15 & Education Sector Analysis 2018

⁹ SEMIS 2018-19

¹⁰ SEMIS 2018-19



date data on student outcomes and progress throughout students' time at school means that teachers, school leaders, district and taluka level officers face great challenges in identifying at-risk students and they often fail to identify and provide the supports that at-risk students need to stay in school. School leaders are often overwhelmed with basic school challenges and similarly, district and taluka level officers' roles are limited to overseeing system compliance and not on providing instructional or managerial support.

C. Relationship to CPF

The proposed project is fully aligned with the World Bank Group's Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) for FY2015–FY2019, which aims to help Pakistan tackle the most difficult—but potentially transformational—areas to reach the twin goals of poverty reduction and shared prosperity. The project contributes directly to two of the four Strategic Pillars (also known as “Results Areas”, or RAs) of the CPS, RA III – Inclusion: Reaching Out to the Underserved, Neglected and Poor, and its sub-outcome 3.2 of reducing vulnerability for groups at risk by increasing girls' gross primary education enrollment; and RA IV – Service Delivery: Accelerating Improvements in Services, and its sub-outcome 4.3 of increased school enrollment and adoption of education quality assessment through increased overall gross primary enrollment and improved assessment practices and tracking of learning outcomes, and sub-outcome 4.4 of adoption of performance and transparency mechanisms in selected institutions through improved performance management systems at selected service delivery units such as schools, taluka and district education offices. The Project is also more broadly aligned with the World Bank's Human Capital Investment approach and directly addresses the global priority of reducing Learning Poverty in Sindh and Pakistan.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve the quality of teaching practices and student retention in early grade primary classrooms in selected districts.

Key Results (From PCN)

The following indicators will be monitored to measure the performance of project outcomes, in selected districts.

- Improvements in teachers' pedagogical practices
- Increased reading and mathematical competency of Grade 3 students
- Increased number of schools with improved learning environment for early primary grades
- Adoption of mechanism for reducing students' early grade dropout through student attendance monitoring system

D. Concept Description

The proposed SELECT Project offers a multipronged approach to improve the quality of teaching and learning practices in Sindh to reduce the Learning Poverty of the province. The current education system in Sindh lacks key school-level ingredients for learning: effective teaching, learning focused inputs, skilled management and governance that pulls them all together.¹¹ The project will utilize simple and flexible implementation approaches that will concentrate support to all these elements at the school- and meso-level (the personnel and systems at the taluka and district levels)—which is most directly connected to the schools and classrooms where students reside. The project will focus on a selected number of

¹¹ As stipulated in the World Development Report (WDR) 2018 conceptual framework there are four key ingredients: prepared learners, effective teaching, learning focused inputs, and skilled management and governance.



districts (provisionally, 10 out of 29 districts) to establish a system of functional schools. As such, the project offers multipronged interventions through Components 1 through 3 to support effective teaching and assessment practices, socioemotional wellbeing, learning focused inputs, improved leadership and management practices that pull all these educational elements together. Finally, project design will be informed by past practices that were successful in Sindh and by current institutional constraints that require testing different modes for implementation to identify success. The project's design will also be mindful of existing constraints and will work with the government to identify different pathways for improving current school performance while creating the space for dialogue on policy change for the future.

Component 1: Transforming teaching practices in the early grades. This component aims to reform the Sindh primary school learning culture to one that is focused on students' varied learning needs, specifically related to literacy, numeracy, and socioemotional wellbeing. This will be achieved by enhancing differentiated teaching practices in grades 1-3, incorporating socioemotional support for students and improving assessment practices.

1.1 Supporting the design of a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Policy framework: The Project will support the development of a policy framework for CPD, establish strengthened linkages between successful CPD strategies and approaches used in pre-service teacher training, and support implementation and institutionalization of the new CPD based in-service training. Addressing the challenges of in-service professional development in Sindh requires using simplified and flexible implementation modalities. The Project will test different implementation approaches to operationalizing the CPD Model, prepared by the Sindh Teacher Education Development Authority (STEDA), while recognizing that current capacity and resource constraints at the SELD and STEDA make it difficult to apply the model as is.

1.2 Implementation of CPD model for improved numeracy and literacy skills in early grades: The aim of this subcomponent is to improve literacy and numeracy skills of students in grades 1-3. Through the implementation of the CPD model, teachers in Sindh will receive training and coaching support on differentiated teaching strategies for literacy and numeracy skills; thus, allowing them to teach at each students' level. This will ease learning challenges with multi-grade classrooms and single teacher schools. In addition to the training, teachers will receive coaching support (designed into the CPD model) that will, where possible, leverage technology that is readily available to teachers. Support will also be provided in the form of teacher guides and scripted lessons plans, along with classroom materials, such as storybooks and flashcards.

1.3 Strengthen socio-emotional skills of students in early grades: To support improved student well-being and mitigate future risks related to students dropping-out, the project will draw from the growing evidence that demonstrates socio-emotional skills are associated with better academic achievement and higher school retention and graduation. The project will pilot a school-based behavioral intervention that will help students recognize that their abilities and skills can change and grow if they put in effort to challenge themselves and practice those skills (i.e., a "Growth Mindset").¹²

1.4 Support classroom and provincial assessment strategies: Purposeful tracking of student learning and integration of formative assessment strategies are tools that early grade teachers will be introduced to through the CPD training and coaching support. In addition, the project will also support the existing provincial assessment system by designing and applying a Grade 3 provincial level diagnostic assessment for literacy and numeracy. The Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Assessments (EGRA/EGMA) may be utilized, given previous experiences in Sindh with the EGRA instrument.¹³ This will also be coupled with capacity building for improved management and analysis of learning data,

¹² <http://www.minedu.gob.pe/minedulab/>

¹³ Implemented by Pakistan Reading Program and Sindh Reading Program, supported by USAID.



all with the aim of strengthening policy practices and targeted supports for improved learning outcomes in early grades.

With these approaches, the project can help build an equitable, inclusive and foundational learning environment that could reduce the effects of broader social and economic inequalities and increase children's prospects for future schooling success.

Component 2: Supporting conducive learning environments. This component aims to improve the physical learning environment in selected primary schools through two sub-schemes: (a) upgrading of large primary schools (grades 1-5) to elementary schools (grades 1-8); and (b) rehabilitation and upgrading of satellite primary schools near the schools to be upgraded under *Scheme (a)* to be academically functional with an introduction of standards for satellite schools for learning facilities and teachers' capabilities. Activities will include school rehabilitation. Specifically, this will include refurbishing of existing classrooms and adding new classrooms to existing schools, provision of furniture, and adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities which will be benchmarked and tracked through the established quality standards.¹⁴ The improved learning environment is especially important for girls' enrollment for two reasons: (i) WASH facilities are critical for girls' attendance and retention, and (ii) availability of elementary grades in the same community is important for girls for social and security reasons and it also prevents their dropout in early grades.

2.1 Description of Scheme (a): This sub-scheme aims to upgrade about 300 primary schools to elementary schools in selected districts. Upgrading to elementary schools will enable (i) increased retention rates from grades 5 to 6, (ii) increased retention rates in lower grades by demonstrating the future study opportunities, and, (iii) creating a dedicated headmaster position in upgraded schools, which will enable more effective implementation of Component 1 and 3 activities. The *Scheme (a)* schools will be selected from the list of schools that are designated as the cluster-based CPD "centers" from Component 1, which typically have sufficient base infrastructure (to rehabilitate) and already offer primary education up to grade 5. In addition to improving the learning environment, where possible, the project will utilize cost-effective carbon efficient technology such as solar panels to generate electricity in schools and will ensure the rehabilitation activities are easy to maintain at low-cost.

2.2 Description of Scheme (b): The fact that almost 72 percent of primary schools have two classrooms or less and more than 75 percent have two teachers or less raises a concern about the quality of some of the main inputs for primary education. *Scheme (b)* supports upgrading of about 600 satellite schools to be academically functional. Upon selection of cluster-based CPD center schools for Component 1, including already functioning elementary schools and to-be-upgraded elementary schools under *Scheme (a)*, a few satellite primary schools located within 2 km will be supported for upgradation provided that they are classified as 'viable' by the government.

Component 3: Improving system capacity for better leadership and management. This component aims to reframe the role of local education management (district and taluka education officers) and school leaders, from monitoring teacher compliance and enforcement of sanctions to a relationship based on provision of instructional support and school-level performance improvement as measured by better learning outcomes and increased student retention. It will also support

¹⁴ WB's Second Sindh Education Sector Project (2014-18) established the concept of Basic Quality Standard School, which meets the following 7 criteria: 1. School offers grades K-5 (complete primary schools and Kachi); 2. School has at least 6 classrooms; 3. School has at least 6 teachers who teach each grade in the primary section; 4. School has a Student Teacher Ratio between 20 and 40; 5. School has at least 3 functioning basic facilities, including electricity, drinking water, and washrooms; 6. Free and medium-relevant textbooks are delivered to students by the end of second month of academic year; 7. Schools have a minimum of 20 sets of furniture for each class that they offer. The number of schools that met the basic quality standards increased from 769 in 2013 to 1,366 in 2018 (about 3 percent of all government schools in Sindh). These standards will be continued to be applied under this Project.



improved efficiency and effectiveness in the allocation and use of resources by automating student tracking and focusing support efforts on the schools with highest needs.

The Project will include support for the following interventions:

3.1 **Establishing a technology-based student attendance monitoring system** that utilizes a unique student tracking ID and selected measures for student attendance to proactively identify students at risk of dropping out. The students' attendance patterns will be reported to the Directorate General of Monitoring and Evaluation (DG M&E) and used by the District Education Officers (DEOs) and Taluka Education Officers (TEOs) for targeted follow up visits and school monitoring. Student attendance information is also shared with school leaders (and teachers) who may utilize the check-list devised by the program (Component 1) to follow-up on students. Upon successful rollout of the student attendance monitoring system, the system could be upgraded to a fuller dropout warning system by including basic measures for classroom behavior and coursework learning, enabling identification of appropriate preventive measures to proactively address these students' unique risk factors.

3.2 **Capacity building of school leadership and local education office management** for monitoring and supporting learning outcomes, improved teaching practices and student retention efforts. School leadership training will seek to provide primary school teachers designated as head teachers with training on basic management and administration knowledge and skills, as well as training on instructional leadership and school change, thereby enabling them to take on and be responsible for changing their school's culture, being more capable to support the anticipated CPD model and monitoring overall learning progress. Student monitoring will be strengthened by introduction of a targeted approach focused on student-attendance monitoring, instead of current *ad hoc* approaches. The DG M&E will analyze the data obtained from the student attendance monitoring system and coordinate with DEOs and TEOs to conduct targeted follow up school visits to low-performing schools. Training and capacity building, as well as additional operational resources, for district and taluka-level officers will focus on increasing their capacity to implement the anticipated targeted school monitoring program and CPD model by providing necessary support to their taluka and school-level subordinates, increasing managers' knowledge and skills for strategic planning and implementing reforms under the SESP&R 2019-24, and improving their effectiveness in tracking and making efficient use of resources to improve outcomes in talukas and schools where needs are greatest.

3.3 **Project implementation support and monitoring and evaluation (M&E):** The component also supports project implementation and M&E activities. The project will provide technical assistance to support fiduciary and safeguards implementation through the Reform Support Unit (RSU). A rigorous impact evaluation of a selected new intervention would be considered.

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

Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts

The overall risk at the concept stage is rated substantial. The main risk relates to the institutional capacity of the directorates in the SELD to implement project activities. The Project considers gradually shifting from the previous models



of implementing projects through consultants hired by the RSU to the model of using the government capacities through necessary technical assistance support. The SELD is therefore expected to play a leading technical role in project implementation. However, given that they have not taken a lead technical and operational role in the past, the SELD has low implementation capacity, which may result in some initial delays as they become more accustomed to taking on a leading role. To mitigate these risks, the project will support capacity building activities within the implementing directorates and will also support interventions that will automate (in simple forms) some of the management and school support practices. These efforts, along with those from development partners, will aim to build a stronger sense of ownership within the SELD and help increase accountability.

CONTACT POINT

World Bank

Shinsaku Nomura, Manal Bakur N Quota, Shahram Paksima
Senior Economist

Borrower/Client/Recipient

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

Implementing Agencies

SCHOOL EDUCATION AND LITERACY DEPARTMENT
Ahsan Ali Mangi
Secretary
ahsanalli@gmail.com



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

The World Bank
1818 H Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20433
Telephone: (202) 473-1000
Web: <http://www.worldbank.org/projects>

APPROVAL

Task Team Leader(s):	Shinsaku Nomura, Manal Bakur N Quota, Shahram Paksima
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Approved By

Environmental and Social Standards Advisor:		
Practice Manager/Manager:		
Country Director:		