



The World Bank

Getting Results: Access and Delivery of quality Education Services and System Transformation in Punjab Project (P508940)

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Project Information Document (PID)

Appraisal Stage | Date Prepared/Updated: 04-Jun-2025 | Report No: PIDIA01349



BASIC INFORMATION

A. Basic Project Data

Project Beneficiary(ies)	Region	Operation ID	Operation Name
Pakistan	SOUTH ASIA	P508940	Getting Results: Access and Delivery of quality Education Services and System Transformation in Punjab Project
Financing Instrument	Estimated Appraisal Date	Estimated Approval Date	Practice Area (Lead)
Investment Project Financing (IPF)	15-Apr-2025	08-Aug-2025	Education
Borrower(s)	Implementing Agency		
Islamic Republic of Pakistan	School Education Department		

Proposed Development Objective(s)

To improve girls’ and boys’ participation and learning outcomes at the pre-primary and primary levels, and to strengthen remedial learning support at the elementary level.

Components

- Component 1: Improved access to formal, nonformal and special education
 - Component 2: Improving learning outcomes
 - Component 3: Enhanced system capacity and data systems
 - Component 4: Behavioral change for improved education outcomes
- Technical assistance, Grant Agent costs and implementation

PROJECT FINANCING DATA (US\$, Millions)

Maximizing Finance for Development

Is this an MFD-Enabling Project (MFD-EP)?	No
Is this project Private Capital Enabling (PCE)?	No

SUMMARY

Total Operation Cost	47.85
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Total Financing	47.85
Financing Gap	0.00

DETAILS

Non-World Bank Group Financing	
Trust Funds	47.85
Global Partnership for Education Fund	47.85

Environmental And Social Risk Classification

Substantial

Decision

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B. Introduction and Context

Country Context

1. **Amid an economic crisis at the start of fiscal year (FY) 2024, Pakistan undertook decisive measures to prevent a sovereign default, including sharp fiscal consolidation, exchange rate adjustment, and monetary tightening.** An IMF-SBA arrangement helped to bridge financing gaps and restore confidence. Adjustment has been successful, with inflation now falling, the exchange rate stabilizing, and foreign exchange reserves at more comfortable levels, allowing for the easing of import controls. However, fiscal consolidation measures and tight monetary conditions continue to weigh on economic activity, with growth expected to reach only 2.7 percent in FY25. Pakistan must now sustain stabilization efforts while accelerating growth to reduce poverty from current high levels (around 25.6 percent using the national poverty line). This will require reforms to make the tax system more effective and equitable, enhance the efficiency of public spending, reduce the large role of the state in the economy, lower trade barriers, improve the business environment, and improve basic services to address human capital deficits. Reform efforts are underway in these areas but remain at early stages of implementation. The outlook is predicated on the IMF Extended Fund Facility program remaining on track, continued fiscal restraint, and continued external financing inflows. Significant downside risks arise from heavy banking sector exposure to sovereign debt, geopolitical factors, and high exposure to the impacts of climate change and other natural disasters.

Sectoral and Institutional Context

2. **Pakistan has the second highest learning poverty in the region, with nearly every 4 out of 5 children living in Learning Poverty.** One in three children are out of school, and two-thirds of those in schools cannot read a text suitable for their age by the time they turn 10.¹ When compared to other countries with similar income levels, measured by Gross National Income per capita, Pakistan shows alarmingly high rates of both learning deprivation and, particularly, schooling deprivation. This indicates systemic challenges not only in getting children into classrooms but also in ensuring that they receive a meaningful education once they are there.
3. **Punjab has a large population of out of school children (OOSC) with 26.98 percent of the total school going aged population out of school.**² The challenge is more severe among girls with 27.8 percent (4.82 million) of the total school-age (5-16) girls out of school, and in rural areas with 31.5 percent (6.86 million) school-age children not in school.³ At the primary level (age 5-9), 3.38 million children in Punjab are out of school, of which 52 percent (1.76 million) are girls and 48 percent (1.62 million) are boys.⁴ The province also faces low completion rates: over the last 10 years (from 2014 to 2024), of the students who enrolled in grade 1, only 52.48 percent graduated from grade 10.⁵ Furthermore, only 34 percent of children (ages 3-4) attend some form of preschool.
4. **Punjab's Gender Parity Index for school enrolment is currently 1.04, the highest in the country, yet overall school participation for girls remains low.** The participation rate for children aged 5-16 is 66 percent, with a notable disparity between boys (73 percent) and girls (58 percent). A total of 9.6 million children (ages 5-16) in Punjab are out of school, with girls more likely than boys to never attend school.⁶ Approximately 10 percent of girls in Punjab will never go to school, compared to 7 percent of boys.
5. **Learning recovery post COVID-19 school closures has been gradual.** National Achievement Test (NAT) 2023 results for Punjab show that 36 percent of grade 4 students tested in math and 29 percent in English could not answer basic questions correctly⁷. In grade 8, the average student score was 27 percent in math and 33.5 percent in science. A key contributor to low learning levels in Punjab is weak pedagogical practices in the classroom, with 75 percent of teachers using low quality instructional practices across ECE and primary schools.⁸
6. **Approximately 21,500 of 48,500 primary schools in Punjab offer Early Childhood Education (ECE), but about 11,000 of these centers often do not meet standards required for ECE, as prescribed in the Punjab's ECE Policy 2017**⁹. In Punjab, 74 percent of children aged 3 and 4 who attended an ECE program were rated as developmentally on track, compared to 52 percent who were not enrolled. This is well in line with global evidence.
7. **The Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education (L&NFBE) Department delivers accelerated learning opportunities to approximately 635,000 children who cannot access formal schooling.** The department's Non-Formal Education

¹ Pakistan Learning Poverty Brief. (2022).

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099812207212211713/pdf/IDU0e0c38ddc0f77b04fda0a7ad0e2f4235d517a.pdf>

² 7th Population and Housing Census, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023

³ Ibid.

⁴ Pakistan Standards of Living Measurement Survey 2019-20 and Population Census 2023

⁵ School Information System (SIS), PMIU-PESRP, 2014-24

⁶ 7th Population and Housing Census, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2023

⁷ Subject tests taken by students based on the curricula of English, Urdu, Sindhi (Sindhi was only taken in the Sindh Province and Urdu in other provinces), as well as Math for Grade 4, and Math and Science for Grade 8.

⁸ GEPD 2023, only 25 percent teachers were found to have satisfactory pedagogical skills.

⁹ Annual School Census Punjab 22-23

Institutions (NFEIs) are established in areas that do not have a public school within a five-kilometer radius or have large number of overage OOSC. Approximately 22,000 NFEIs offer primary education, with no middle-level NFEI under the L&NFBED. However, development partners have supported the establishment of middle-level NFEI centers for boys and girls.

8. **Inclusive education is an emerging priority for the GoPunjab.** The SED has introduced interventions in collaboration with the Special Education Department (SpED), such as the Punjab Inclusive Education Program (PIEP). However, attempts to enroll children with mild and moderate disabilities, including eyesight, hearing impairment and mobility challenges, into mainstream government schools, have not yet been scaled. This is partially attributable to the lack of disability friendly infrastructure in schools and partially to a lack of community and school sensitization on the importance of inclusion. The Punjab Education Sector Plan 2019-24 targeted the provision of accessible and disability friendly infrastructure across all schools by 2024, however, the Annual Status of Education Report Card for rural Punjab shows that only 48 percent of total schools have ramps¹⁰. The sector plan for 2025-29 reiterates the SED’s commitment to inclusion by proposing accessible infrastructure in all schools by 2029. The government has also committed to a 10 percent increase in the total number of SpED institutions, and a substantial increase in enrolment.
9. **The government is committed to structural reforms in education governance and management, with a particular focus on decentralization, to improve sector performance and make school financing more effective.** The commitment to devolving decision making entails empowering DEAs by providing financial and administrative support and training newly onboard CEOs to deliver their jobs effectively. To improve community engagement, the government leveraged its parent-teacher School Councils (SCs) to improve school planning and management. The government has also increased funding to the school Non-Salary Budget (NSB) provided to SCs to cover the recurrent cost of schools, conduct minor infrastructure work, and hire needed human resources to improve learning outcomes. Per school spending limit on civils works has increased from PKR 400,000 to PKR 2,500,000 annually.

C. Proposed Development Objective(s)

10. To improve girls’ and boys’ participation and learning outcomes at the pre-primary and primary levels, and to strengthen remedial learning support at the elementary level.

Key Results

11. Key results for the project are:
 - Participation rate in pre-primary education (age 4 – 5) (percentage: disaggregated by gender)
 - School participation rate (age 6 – 10) (percentage: disaggregated by gender)
 - Additional share of children above minimum proficiency for reading by Grade 4 (percentage: disaggregated by gender)

D. Project Description

12. **Getting Results: Access and Delivery of Quality Education Services through System Transformation in Punjab (GRADES-STP) project interventions will be implemented across the province, focusing on improving access and**

¹⁰ ASER Report Card – Punjab 2023



learning outcomes, and enhancing system capacity and data systems. They will build upon gains through the Third Punjab Education Sector Project (P154524) and the Punjab Human Capital Investment Project (P164785), and complement and reinforce interventions in progress through Getting Results: Access and Delivery of Quality Education Services in Punjab Project (P176594) (GRADES-P), which was approved by the World Bank Board of Executive Directors on June 14, 2024, and is now effective. These operations support the SED to improve enrolment, retention and learning outcomes. GRADES-STP Projects will expand this support beyond SED to L&NFBED and SpED through four components, described below.

13. **Component 1: Improved access to formal, nonformal and special education.** This component aims to enhance education access across Punjab, especially for OOSC, girls, early learners, and students with disabilities. Sub-component 1.1 will support the implementation of the Punjab ECE Policy 2017¹¹. The initiative will prioritize girls' schools while establishing 3,530 ECE classrooms and equipping them with ECE activity kits, age-appropriate furniture, minor repair works, and ECE teaching and learning resources. ECE teaching and learning material will be provided to 3,530 schools, along with professional development of teachers. Subcomponent 1.2 will support the L&NFBED to set up 1000 NFEIs at the middle level and will leverage community engagement to target OOSC and drop-outs beyond primary grades (age 10 and above). 60 percent of the NFEIs will be dedicated to female students. Graduates will be supported to enroll in formal schools. Subcomponent 1.3 will provide 8,000 assistive devices to SpED students, as well as accessible (disability-friendly) infrastructure to all SpED and up to 3,500 SED schools.
14. **Component 2: Improved learning outcomes.** This component will improve teacher support and teaching and learning materials (TLMs) to improve foundational learning outcomes at the pre-primary and primary levels in SED schools, SpED schools and L&NFBED centers. Subcomponent 2.1 will support development of TLMs and improvements in teacher continuous professional development (CPD). This subcomponent will support revisions to TLMs and CPD frameworks for Grade 4 and 5 SED teachers¹² and development of CPD frameworks for L&NFBED and SpED teachers. It will also support the development and digitization of training modules focusing on multigrade teaching and targeted instruction/teaching at the right level, which has already been piloted in Pakistan. Subcomponent 2.2 will bridge the gaps in mentoring and coaching practices for teachers, with particular emphasis on the effective use of the Classroom Observation Tool¹³. Subcomponent 2.3 will support the establishment of 4,000 learning camps in primary schools and 4,000 remedial camps in middle schools, with 60 percent of the camps in girls' schools, as well as provide targeted instruction support to students who require additional help to meet primary and middle grade-level competencies, especially in FLN. Sub-component 2.4 will support the establishment and operationalization of a content Hub in PECTAA to create quality teaching and learning content. The Hub is expected to reduce dependence on development partners for developing supplementary TLMs to support textbooks, lesson planning and lesson delivery.
15. **Component 3: Enhanced system capacity and data systems.** This component will support data standardization, gender-responsive decision making, financial management reform, school empowerment, and better planning, delivery, and use of assessments. Subcomponent 3.1 will support the verification of unique student identifiers in SED schools and the allocation of identifiers in SpEd and L&NFBED schools. This will allow the GoPunjab to track

¹¹ The ECE policy requires a two-year ECE program before primary school, and compliance to the following quality standards: an ECE classroom in which ECE classes are conducted daily, trained ECE teachers and caregivers, availability of TLM resources, including teachers guides, and ECE kids and monthly discussion of children's progress with parents.

¹² Grade 1-3 teachers will be supported through GRADES (P).

¹³ Catalyzing Learning in Pakistan – Punjab Brief (WB, Forthcoming) uses data from Global Education Policy Dashboard 2023 survey in Punjab and highlights that even though only 10 schools are assigned to 1 AEO, classroom observations are reported to last less than 10 minutes at a time offering no substantive feedback and coaching.



student progression, as well as identify and target dropouts. Sub-component 3.2 will support the operationalization of the non-functional Punjab Education Gender Cell (PEGC) in the SED. The PEGC will develop a Gender Policy and a complementary strategy and implementation plan to mainstream gender-focus and responsiveness in education planning, delivery, and monitoring. The PEGC will also lead gender sensitization and awareness campaigns. Subcomponent 3.3 will strengthen school-based assessments in primary and middle grades.

16. **Component 4: Behavioral change for improved education outcomes.** The component will support development and delivery of a Communications and Outreach Strategy, targeting districts with low enrolment and low gender parity. Subcomponents 4.1 through 4.4 will focus on (i) information campaigns and behavioral nudges on the benefits of at home stimulation, importance of girls' education and inclusion, child protection and gender-based violence, school readiness and ECE, and foundational learning; (ii) policy dialogues on foundational learning, inclusive education and an integrated approach between SED, SpED and L&NFBED; (iii) promoting parental engagement in foundational learning through SMS prompts; and (iv) crowdsourcing financial support to schools through alumni.
17. **Disbursement Conditions (DCs) to support financial management and decentralization in the SED:** GRADES-STP will leverage the government's commitment to decentralization and school autonomy and require GoPb to meet two disbursement conditions that are critical for district and school autonomy required to effectively deliver the PDO. The GoPb will be responsible for funding the achievement of these conditions from its own development budget and will leverage these two conditions to trigger payments of US\$4,785,000 per disbursement condition, for a total of US\$9,570,000. The payments will be made by Global Partnership for Education as the donor for this project.
18. **DC 1: More equitable allocations for school budgets (US\$4,785,000 equivalent).** Under this DC, the GoPb will be required to (i) revise the NSB formula to include a block allocation for primary and middle levels to offset their lower enrollments compared to high schools and (ii) ensure sufficient funds are provided at both levels for school maintenance and development activities.
19. **DC 2: Decentralization of administrative and financial autonomy to schools (US\$4,785,000 equivalent).** Under this DC, the GoPb will be required to empower schools with financial and administrative autonomy to make decisions to meet their own needs.
20. If DC1 is met, funds will be disbursed for use by the government to (i) establish a Research and Innovation Hub to foster government-led, continuous reform and innovation in Punjab's education sector and (i) to introduce edtech innovations for accelerated foundational learning. If DC 2 is met, funds will be disbursed to the government to evaluate and scale up its existing Afternoon School Program for middle level children who do not have access to middle schools.

Legal Operational Policies	Triggered?
Projects on International Waterways OP 7.50	No
Projects in Disputed Area OP 7.60	No
Summary of Screening of Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts	

21. The environment and social risk rating for the project is assessed as Substantial, with Substantial social risks and Moderate environmental risks. The Social risk has been raised from Moderate at concept stage. Primary environmental risks are associated with planned minor rehabilitation and construction works in schools including dust, air, and noise pollution, community health and safety and Occupational Health and Safety risks. Additionally, the project may also involve the procurement of electronic equipment, which introduces the potential for e-waste generation at the end of the equipment's lifecycle. The social risks of the project are related to potential exclusion of remote and rural communities (including ethnic and religious minorities). There is a substantial risk of sexual exploitation and abuse/sexual harassment (SEA/SH), school related-Gender Based Violence (GBV),and child abuse at the NFEIs. Despite training and behavioral change efforts, there is also a risk that there could be resistance to project activities amongst certain stakeholder groups. The project has prepared a Stakeholder Engagement Plan that details the consultation approach, Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) and other feedback mechanisms. An Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) has also been prepared. Environment and Social Management guidance for the project will be included in the project operations manual. Site specific Instruments (ESMPs/Checklists) will be developed during project implementation before the start of any procurements of civil work contracts. The project will include SEA/SH responsive mechanisms in the GRM to cover NFEIs that will be supported, and develop risk mitigation clauses, including codes of conduct, in contracts with NFEI teachers.

E. Implementation

22. **The GRADES-STP PMU will be integrated into the PMU for GRADES-P in the SED, resulting in significant cost savings and efficiencies.** As both operations focus on improving access and foundational learning outcomes, a one team approach is expected to support alignment and coordination, streamline overhead and operational costs, reduce transaction costs and times, and enable synergies and consistency in implementing arrangements. The GRADES-STP team will be led by a Project Manager and consist of a Finance Specialist, a Procurement and Contracts Specialist, Internal Audit Specialist, and a Project Coordinator. Staff will also include a Teaching and Learning Specialist, a Communications Specialist, a Remedial Learning Officer, a Research Officer and associates. The PMU will leverage the GRADES-P infrastructure team to support inclusive infrastructure upgrades in beneficiary schools and also use the services of the GRADES-P Environment and Social Safeguards Specialists. The Project Coordinator will be responsible for coordination with focal persons in the SED, SpED and the L&NFBED. Procurement will be centralized through the PMU, and for financial management, focal persons will be appointed for each department.
23. **Project oversight will be provided by a Project Steering Committee (PSC) and the Punjab Local Education Group (LEG).** The PSC, headed by the Chairman of the Punjab Planning and Development Board, will act as the advisory body for the Project. The LEG, under the leadership of the Secretary SED, will be responsible for approval of project workplans. Each component of the program will be managed by the respective implementing agency, with



departmental sub-committees from SED, L&NFBED, and SpED responsible for overseeing the timely delivery and quality of interventions.

24. **Implementation and any course correction will be informed by routine monitoring and data, using government data sources, collected quarterly and reported to the PSC semiannually.** Reporting will be through (i) collating data from relevant departments for reporting against set targets, (ii) Third Party Verifications and surveys. The PMU will produce a baseline, midline, and an endline study to measure the impact of project interventions.

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APPROVAL

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