ROAD TO COP28

CLIMATE MOBILITY THROUGH THE LENS OF EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

Partners:

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PREFACE

As an impact and social development specialist, the profound effects of climate change on communities and individuals not only resonate with me but also drive my commitment to addressing this global challenge. This report, to which I am honored to contribute a preface, delves deeply into these issues, particularly highlighting Pakistan's struggles and resilience in the face of environmental upheaval.

In Pakistan, the stark reality of climate change is no longer an abstract concept but a lived experience, as evidenced by recent extreme weather events. These incidents are a call to action, emphasizing the need for resilience building, increased awareness, innovative funding mechanisms, and a transformative shift in our habits and mindsets. It's crucial that we prepare future generations for the challenges ahead, instilling in them the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate an increasingly unpredictable world.

However, our response to the climate crisis must go beyond just preparation; it calls for a fundamental reevaluation of our approach to entrenched societal issues like gender inequality and social inequity, both of which are significantly exacerbated by the effects of climate change. For instance, in areas like rural Sindh, where floods displace thousands, the resulting climate mobility disrupts education, particularly for girls, leading to a ripple effect on the entire community. The loss of homes and the ensuing struggles, compounded by a lack of education and awareness, are not merely challenges for the individuals directly impacted. These are symptoms of broader systemic issues that urgently require our collective attention and action.

This report brings to light the urgent need for collaborative action. We must identify alternative strategies and work together to leave a livable world for our children. The time for change is now – to rethink, reimagine, and reshape our approach to climate change, ensuring that our responses are equitable, inclusive, and sustainable. Only through collective effort and a renewed mindset can we mitigate the fury of climate change and pave the way for a resilient future.

Shaista Ayesha
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Part I: Pakistan's Climate Agenda

If you thought climate change had no impact on the rapidly rising global temperatures, now it is undeniable. This July marked the hottest month in human history, unveiling this grim reality. Pakistan, at the heart of this upheaval, endured a scorching heatwave last year most notably as Jacobabad District recorded an unprecedented 123.8°F (51°C) claiming the title of the world's hottest city (The Nation, 2022). Beyond searing heat, Pakistan grapples with a myriad of climatic nightmares - recurrent deluges, earthquakes, wildfires, and devastating landslides.

In August 2022, Pakistan bore witness to its worst flood disaster in history. Torrential monsoon rains submerged over a third of the country, affecting 33 million people (Islamic Relief, 2023). Astonishingly, Pakistan, a minimal contributor to global carbon emissions, now ranks eighth among the world's most climate-vulnerable nations (GCRI, 2021). They have lost nearly 10,000 lives, witnessed the devastation of 30,000 schools, 2,000 health facilities, and 4,300 water systems, with economic losses surpassing 3.8 billion USD (Islamic Relief, 2023 and UN, 2023). Pakistan is a glaring example of climate carnage, and this is just the prologue—unless swift and united action is taken.

The dire impacts of climate change in Pakistan are twofold: devastating natural disasters and scorching heat.

Floods claim lives, demolish property, submerge infrastructure, and cripple livelihoods. Meanwhile, extreme heat disrupts agriculture, exacerbates water scarcity, food insecurity, disease vulnerability, and indirectly impacts birth rates. Recently, a novel prediction model designed by CarbonPlan in collaboration with Washington Post analysed how people in 15,000+ cities globally will face the extreme heat using a wet-bulb globe temperature metric and discovered that:

Pakistan will experience some of the most intense heat on the planet

With cities like Jacobabad [187 heat days] and Hyderabad [184 heat days] projected to have several months of extreme heatwaves where even people in the shade could face health risks.

People in Pakistan will be exposed to extreme heat for at least a month

Projections say that 190 million people in Pakistan will be exposed to extreme heat for at least a month, even if they can find shade.

People living in Pakistan will have to endure dangerous heat for longer periods

With over 40 million people expected to experience wet-bulb globe temperatures of 89.6oF [32oC] and above for more than half of the year unless they can find shade. [Washington Post and CarbonPlan, 2023].

These findings highlight the health risks of living in Pakistan in the coming years if climate adaptive and resilient systems are not in place. These brutal consequences are also disproportionately shouldered by impoverished rural communities, especially women, girls, and children. To date, 8 million people (half of them children) lack access to safe water, 3.5 million children are out of school, and 1.5 million require life-saving nutrition assistance (UNICEF, 2023).

Since 2022, Pakistan has delivered several humanitarian assistances aimed at rehabilitating and rebuilding resilience for one-third of the country. In July this year, Pakistan marked a significant milestone by introducing its 1st inaugural climate change strategy, the National Adaptation Plan to be implemented from 2023 to 2030 Pakistan's National Adaptation Plan also prioritises key components including the agriculture-water nexus, urban resilience, and human capital (NAP, 2023). Still, resources fall short of the pressing needs.

Pakistan's Caretaker Finance Minister, Shamshad Akhtar, emphasized that combatting climate-related challenges would demand an investment of around $340 billion (Pro Pakistani, 2023). As COP28 approaches, the Ministry of Climate and the Ministry of Finance aims to forge partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms to fortify Pakistan's adaptability, responsiveness, and resilience in the climate change battle.

Spotlight- Balochistan

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan covering almost half of the country; however, it remains the least developed, and sadly, the most vulnerable to climate change. Balochistan Youth Action Committee (BYAC)-a youth volunteer network- are committed to ensuring sustainable change by empowering local communities to become first responders in climate inflicted emergency. BYAC are equipping young people with the skills, knowledge, and resources to help bridge the skills gap and ensure continued education for children across the province during an emergency. Over the last three years, BYAC along with their sister organization Global Shapers Karachi have successfully trained more than 260 youth leaders, assisted over 400,000 individuals in over 70 villages in Balochistan- through Covid-19 and the Pakistan floods.

Part II: Contextualizing Climate Mobility and Education

Climate mobility, often referred to as climate migration, involves the movement of people due to climate change impacts such as extreme weather events, rising sea-levels, and environmental degradation. It represents a range of movements from temporary displacement to permanent relocation, driven by the need to adapt to changing environmental conditions (Wernbacher et al., 2022). In the context of Pakistan, climate mobility is primarily internal, with individuals and families relocating from rural to urban areas or to less disaster-prone regions within the country due to climate-induced disasters (Runde, Raphel, & Yusuf, 2023).

Globally, climate change disrupts 40 million children's education every year (World Economic Forum, 2023). Pakistan has the second largest number of out of school children which has been exacerbated by the flooding of August 2022 damaging at least 20,000 schools in Pakistan and halting the education of more than 3 million children in most parts of Sindh, Baluchistan, and South Punjab (UNICEF, 2022).

These climatic events have often been the motivators for people in Pakistan to move temporarily from rural settings, like parts of Baluchistan, to urban areas like Karachi, in search of better weather conditions and safety. This movement often disrupts education for several reasons including parents' inability to provide schooling resources or children not being taught at appropriate levels, given the variations in curriculum from one province to another. Such disparities pose significant challenges in ensuring educational continuity and quality for migrating learners (FGD, 2023).

Similarly, in regions like South Punjab, natural disasters force communities to relocate temporarily to less prone areas, resulting in children losing several months of education. The absence of mechanisms like accelerated learning programs further hinders children from catching up with lost learning opportunities, leading to prolonged educational gaps and setbacks in their academic progress (FGD, 2023).

Due to climatic events, people in Pakistan often move temporarily from rural settings, like parts of Baluchistan, to urban areas such as Karachi, primarily due to extreme weather conditions. This migration disrupts education as children are not taught at appropriate levels, given the variations in curriculum from one province to another. Such disparities pose significant challenges in ensuring educational continuity and quality for migrating students (FGD, 2023).

In Balochistan, for instance, less than 2% of girls attend school (Focus Group Discussion, 2023), and women and girls have very low understanding and knowledge of climate change educational programs (Memon & Amjad, 2020). This lack of awareness is attributed to low literacy rates, gender disparity, and cultural barriers emphasizing the disproportionate challenges women and girls face even within the most vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Furthermore, the practice of using schools and other public infrastructure as temporary shelters during disasters significantly disrupts children's education. This practice not only deprives students of their right to learn but also prolongs the period of academic inactivity, contributing to widening the educational divide between different regions of the country (FGD, 2023).

The Government of Pakistan has taken concrete steps to tackling climate change and has thus developed the Climate Action plan 2021 (also called the Nationally Determined Contributions), which focuses on recovery, resilience, rehabilitation, and adaptation; however, it has a limited focus on climate mobility, particularly in the context of education. The plan mentions climate mobility only in passing, highlighting a gap in developing a comprehensive strategy to address the educational disruptions caused by climate-induced displacement (FGD, 2023).

Finally, one significant challenge in addressing climate-induced mobility in Pakistan is the lack of comprehensive data and inadequate policy coherence, especially at the provincial and central government levels (FGD, 2023)

"This report is an important step towards bringing diverse stakeholders for the sake of climate justice, mitigation, and adaptation. The conversations we had would touch upon the lives of some of the most isolated and vulnerable communities hit by climate change and I am happy to see that such voices are being represented in this report and subsequently at the COP28."

-Sikander Bizenjo, BYAC

CASE STUDY

Spotlight- Kingri, South Punjab

In 2022, severe climate-induced monsoon rains hit South Punjab, taking the lives of 151 people and displacing over 340,000 people. It was considered the largest climate inflicted disaster in the history of Pakistan. Furthermore, according to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) of South Punjab, education provisions in the region became a “nice to have”, with over 69 schools closing due to water damage and a total of 4,000 children out of school. xWave was launched as a redress to the growing gap in children’s education and non-existence of governmental intervention.

xWave transcends educational instruction and technical skills, believing that true empowerment comes from a holistic learning experience and strives to be catalysts for transformative change in underprivileged communities. This program is rooted in the belief that education is a powerful tool for social upliftment and aims to achieve this by bridging the gap between potential and opportunity for youths in Kingri-South Punjab.

The core effort of xWave lies in equipping young minds in South Punjab with digital skills that are relevant and crucial in today's technology-driven world. Comprehensive training in front-end web development, UI/UX design, and video editing are provided to align with the global demand in the job market, ensuring that students are not just educated but are employable now and for the future workplace. Efforts have seen tangible success with many students, once struggling with limited prospects in their flood-stricken communities, now earning sustainable incomes, breaking the cycle of poverty for their families. These success stories are not just individual triumphs; they represent a collective victory for their communities and a hopeful precedent for future generations.

xWave believes in the power of education not just in changing lives but in transforming communities. There is continuous commitment to illuminate paths of opportunity for those who dare to dream, despite their challenging circumstances.

Part III: Reimagining, Reinforcing, Recommending

The phenomenon of climate mobility in Pakistan presents a complex challenge, particularly in the realm of education. The government's current policies, while acknowledging the broader impacts of climate change, fall short in addressing the specific educational needs of displaced children. There is a pressing need for targeted educational policies and programs that cater to the unique challenges faced by migrating students. As Pakistan continues to grapple with the effects of climate change, prioritizing education in its climate action plans is not just necessary but imperative for the future of its young generation.

Street Child's experience working with climate migrant communities across the globe over the last five years, coupled with its recent consultations in Pakistan presents a clear opportunity for purposeful reflection, powerful learnings and clear recommendations:

- **Building on the 'Single National Curriculum' (SNC) 2021,** all existing tiers of education in Pakistan can be mainstreamed into a uniformed curriculum, whereby every district, village, town and city, benefits from the same national curricula. This in turn ensures persons from all socioeconomic strata are catered for, including climate migrants, who are consistently moving locations, as per the climate conditions.

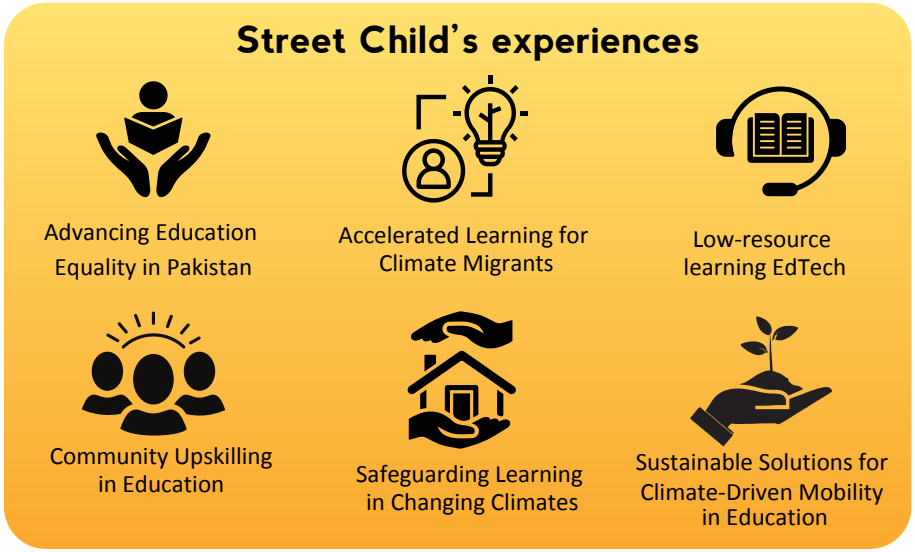
- To address learning loss in marginalised climate migrant communities – the **introduction of accelerated learning approaches** and programmes to bridge the growing gap for children between the ages of 6-13 could prove to be crucial. A recent Harvard University study demonstrated how accelerated learning can counter learning loss and help ensure children are "not left behind".

- Access and development of remote low-resource learning **EdTech solutions** to provide continued education for children at potential risk of drop out following climate migration with girls being the most at risk due to becoming victims of early child marriage. Street Child's tried and tested methodology of 'Last Mile Learning' in Bangladesh utilises solar powered MP3 players, equipped with audible curricula in Literacy and Numeracy for self-learning and assessment. This approach is essential to enhance continued education aligned with National Curricula.

- **Upskilling community volunteers to help bridge the short-term gap in education** will allow communities to become more resilient and self-sufficient during monsoon seasons, cutting out travel time to local schools. Mountainous communities, who have ongoing accessibility issues, will benefit greatly from this tailored community learning approach. After all, it takes a community to raise a child.

- **Promoting the development of resilient educational infrastructure (**as per the given context) that can withstand the impacts of climate change (in particular, monsoon rain). This will ensure schools can be utilised throughout the year, positively impacting the region, and ensuring children are safe, in school and learning.

- **Agriculture** is central to the climate mobility and semi-migration of people in Pakistan. **With the correct training, resources, investment, and access to networks, families would not need to move,** instead they will leverage changing climates to improve production and yield- in turn transitioning out of subsistence farming into commercialised agribusiness. This would ensure children can continue schooling and provide the family with secure livelihoods.



By considering and implementing these recommendations, Pakistan can significantly address the educational challenges prompted by climate change, contribute to building climate adaptive and resilient communities, and ultimately promote a sustainable future for the next generation of Pakistani children.

"This report demonstrates the urgent need for education programmes to be responsive to the needs of climate change-affected children, especially those whose education is disrupted by climate-related displacement. There are many excellent efforts to address this across the country at Federal and local levels, and there must be a coordinated effort in order to create a tangible impact, including taking these recommendations forward."

-Ashan Abeywardena
Regional Representative, Asia, Street Child

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STREET
CHILD

GLOBAL
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