



Pakistan Alliance for Girls Education



PAKISTAN ALLIANCE  
FOR GIRLS EDUCATION

GIRLS EDUCATION ACTION  
FRAMEWORK

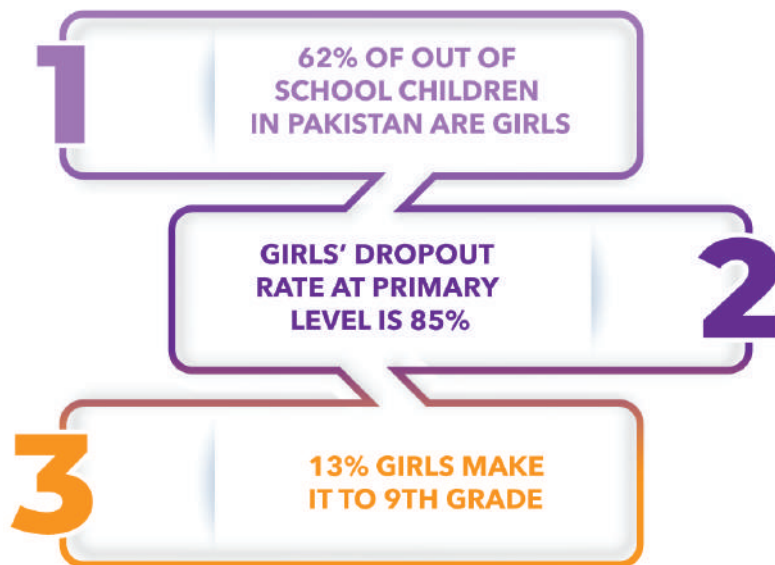
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# Girls Education in Pakistan:

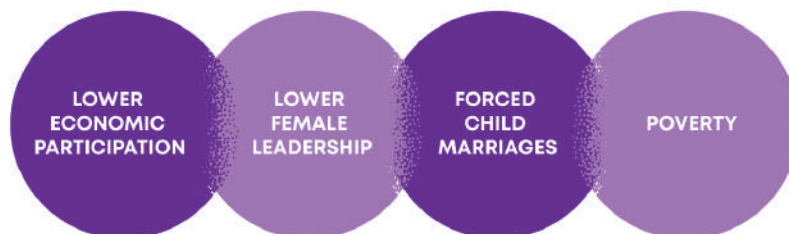
PAGE is the proponent of a single-point agenda that every girl of the country must have sustained access to quality education and leadership opportunities. Educating girls is the best investment towards future growth, peace, and prosperity as it improves lives and transforms communities and societies. Girls' education is one of the fundamental human rights set forth by multiple UN declarations and conventions. While communities in the urban areas are gender sensitive to some extent, there is a visible chasm between boys' and girls' rights.

In Pakistan, the landscape of girl's education presents a grim picture. Nearly 62% of out of school children in Pakistan are girls. A higher dropout rate of 85% of girls is observed at Primary school level.



Whereas, only 13% of the girls make it to 9th grade. These statistics are also underpinned with lower economic participation, lower female leadership, forced and early age marriages as well as domestic violence. Another main cause of educational exclusion for girls is poverty. Poorer girls are more likely to get married at the early age of 13.

## REASONS FOR THE DROP-OUT



PAGE advocates the importance of education to protect childhood and empower girls to healthy development by intervening in child marriage, early pregnancy, and other harmful practices across Pakistan. If all girls in Pakistan acquire primary education at least, there is a strong likelihood that it would lead to a 70% reduction in child marriages. Girls with lesser years at school are at potential risk for poor health, violence, and ferocity. Investing in girls' education has a lasting impact on local communities as well as regional, national and global economies.



Countries that prioritize gender equality in education reap enormous benefits that support public health, sustainability, economic and social development, and long-term peace and stability. examples include:

- Women who have completed at least their primary school earn 14% to 19% more than women who have no education. Women who have completed their secondary school might anticipate earning almost twice as much as those who have not.



- Globally women’s lifetime income could rise by \$15 trillion to \$30 trillion if every girl had access to 12 years of free, secure, and high-quality education.



- A child who has a mother who can read has a 50% increased chance of living through the age of five, a 50% increased chance of receiving immunizations, and a 20% increased chance of attending school.





- 43% of the decline in child malnutrition between 1970 and 1995 was attributed to improvements in female education.
- The risk of child marriage and pregnancy before the age of 18 is reduced by an average of 6 percent for girls who complete secondary education.
- The country's resilience to climate disasters is expected to rise by 3.2 points for each additional year that a girl attends school<sup>1</sup>

One cannot argue that the benefit of education may be less for any one gender. Evidence shows that education reaps similar benefit for individuals regardless of gender and promote national development. Educating girls and boys produces same increases in their income and expands life opportunities and choices for both. However, educating girls provides many additional socio-economic gains that benefit societies. Despite such enormous benefits of girl's education, in Pakistan, one out of every five girls cannot get education due to poverty.

Over the years, Pakistan has focused on access to education for Out of School children– with little focus on gender parity, that is, closing the enrollment gap between girls and boys. No attention has been paid to retention and achievement or the quality of education. Providing a quality, relevant education leads to improved engagement, enrollment and retention, but also ensures that boys and girls are able to fully realize the benefits of education. In addition, little has been done to understand the cultural dynamics and barriers for girls in Pakistan and development of relevant initiatives that focus on implementing holistic initiatives that understands the on ground mindset that hinders the empowerment of girls in its true spirit. The primary focus on girls' access to education may overlook boys' educational needs. This approach also fails to address the norms and behaviors that promotes inequality.

## **GIRLS' EDUCATION ACTION FRAMEWORK:**

A Girls' Education Action Framework has been designed as an essential guiding document for all organizations across Pakistan to address the inequality described above. A tool for education practitioners, the framework helps ensure that education programs meet the needs of all learners especially girls. Using an approach that takes into account the relations and interaction between males and females (also known as gender dynamics), the Framework addresses five dimensions of equality in education. These are: equal opportunity to access (engagement), equal opportunity to learn (quality), maximizing educational outcomes (achievement), Quality of outcomes and additional support. Sections on each of the five dimensions include proposed activities that can be implemented as part of an overall strategy to achieve gender equality in education.

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<sup>1</sup>Global Partnership for Education & UN Girls Education Initiative (2019) Gender Responsive Education Sector Planning: A Pathway to Gender Equality in Education



## THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION:

There are five main aspects of gender equality outlined in the framework

1. Equal opportunity to access - Engagement
2. Equal opportunity to learn - Quality
3. Maximizing educational outcomes - Achievement
4. Quality of outcomes - Progression
5. Additional Support and Interventions well-being

Below are brief descriptions of each aspect, accompanied by examples of actions that can be implemented to contribute to achieving equality.

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS – ENGAGEMENT:

Equal opportunity to access means that girls and boys are given same opportunities to gain admission to formal, non-formal, or alternative approaches to basic education. Actual attendance, rather than enrollment, is a better indicator of whether access has been achieved.

### PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

- Establish schools in close proximity to students' homes.
- Form school committees in which teachers monitor girls' participation at school and intervene as and when necessary.
- Engage parents and raise awareness of their rights and responsibilities in education and of the importance of education for both boys and girls.
- Engage entire communities on creating understanding of impact of education for all especially girls
- Engage out-of-school children especially girls through door to door awareness campaign and establish non formal centers, include literacy and numeracy skill building and livelihoods training.
- Build capacity of the communities in monitoring access and quality through parent-teacher committees and school management committees, ensuring that women are part of their management.
- Train the committees to mobilize resources especially through engagement of religious leaders and other influencers in the communities to increase spending on additional activities such as sports and school meals.

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN – QUALITY:

Equal opportunity to learn means that girls and boys receive the same treatment and attention from teachers and are provided equal opportunities to learn. In Pakistan,



teachers may not expose the girls to future opportunities as they will for boys due to the mindset that the girls will not enter into a profession. Therefore, girls and boys must be taught the same curricula, although it may be taught differently to cater the different learning styles of students. Equal opportunity to learn also means that all students should be exposed to teaching methods and materials that are free of stereotypes and gender discrimination. In addition, it means that boys and girls should have the freedom to learn, explore, and develop skills in all academic and extracurricular offerings.

## PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

- Train curriculum developers, textbook writers, head teachers, and teachers in gender responsive education prior to developing new curriculum and books.
- Train teachers in inclusive teaching practices to help them integrate students who have been marginalized or excluded due to poverty, disability, ethnicity, language, or gender discrimination.
- Increase school safety and decrease violence by maintaining safe and secure school environment.  
Protecting girls on their way to and from school by engaging communities and creating community safeguarding committees
- Create policies and provide incentives that encourage girls' participation in technical education
- Train teachers to introduce girls and their parents to career options available in wide range of sectors including upcoming global sectors instead of promoting conventional job types based on gender stereotypes (e.g., girls into fashion designing and boys into science and technology).
- Provide accelerated learning programs to help students especially girls who have never been to school due to lack of access, poverty or culture. Train teachers and communities to progress these children into mainstream formal education system.

## MAXIMISING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES - ACHIEVEMENT:

Maximizing educational outcomes means that girls and boys regardless of their gender enjoy equal opportunities to achieve outcomes based on their individual aspirations, talents and efforts. To ensure fair chances for achievement, the length of education / schooling, should not differ based on a person's gender. Results from classroom tests, examinations, and assessments can influence students' confidence levels and their perceptions of their abilities and what is expected of them. They can also impact what is taught in the classroom and how content is delivered. Where tests or examinations are used to determine promotion into future grades, or other types of educational opportunities, the extent to which there may be bias in these methods is an important consideration when trying to ensure equality of access and equality of outcomes.



## PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

- Train teachers to understand how their perceptions of girls' students may influence how they assess their progress, mark examinations, and provide feedback.
- Include an assortment of question types (prose, diagrams, charts, pictures, tables, etc.) when developing test, examination, or assessment questions to respond to the diversity in students' learning styles.
- Use various question types (multiple choice, essay, short answer, etc.) and assess each item to ensure that students with different learning styles have equal opportunities to succeed.
- Review existing tests, examinations, and assessments to determine whether the examples and language used are free of gender bias and stereotypes. Remove any gender-discriminatory content and ensure that examples reflect a balance in girls' and boys' experiences.

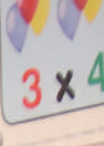
## QUALITY OF OUTCOMES – PROGRESSION:

To achieve high quality outcomes, it is imperative that students have access to good quality resources. Young people especially girls are not provided with access to good quality resources to support their learning. These resources could include, access to libraries or online educational materials.

To ensure that students can fully benefit from socio economic opportunities it is important that access is provided within the school setting. Hence, enhancing their knowledge and exposure to global information. Providing access to additional resources, can really improve their access to career and income opportunities in the future and will reduce parity at all level.

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS – WELL-BEING:

A holistic approach to programs and learning can really change the landscape of future opportunities available to young people especially girls, and the ones facing multiple challenges such as disability. A holistic approach means that other components of support are integrated in education and learning. The proposed interventions here are based on social, cultural and economic issues that creates the barriers to development of young people. Including these interventions can really help young people especially girls thrive in future.



## PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

- Engage young people especially girls by providing additional activities that focus on self-discovery, emotional support, health and well-being. in addition to basic non formal education curriculum.
- Train teachers to identify students who may be victims of abuse and violence. Foster a supportive behavior so they understand handling of children correctly and provide additional support.
- Training of Head Teachers and teacher on Safeguarding framework for educational facilities – both formal and non-formal.
- Provide additional play based activities to encourage young people especially girls to talk about challenges at home such as early age / forced marriages.
- encourage sports in schools especially for girls
- Provide incentives such as school meals for children at risk of malnutrition to encourage attendance while simultaneously addressing the importance of education with parents and cultivate more positive attitudes in teachers.
- Stop corporal punishment and enforce teacher codes of conduct.
- Undertake annual teacher and classroom observations to monitor teachers' engagement with students to ensure equitable student treatment.
- Conduct social mobilization campaigns aimed at increasing women's and girls' status and value in society
- Provide leadership training for teachers especially female teachers

## EDUCATION FROM A GENDER LENSE:

The five dimensions to promote gender equality are interlinked and connected. It is important that learning is designed, delivered and monitored based on the five dimensions. A program developed and delivered under the framework will help achieve better engagement, learning and progression outcome and can address the mindset that hinders the empowerment of girls and those facing disabilities or poverty. Evidence shows that by just access to education to girls will not automatically translate into social, economic and political participation. The framework can address the inequalities that exist not only in the schools but also outside the schools, in the communities.

The five aspects of gender equality in education evidence that gender parity is not the only milestone against which success should be measured. Educators must understand how stereotypes limit the choices and opportunities and ignores their needs and challenges. This understanding will help educators create learning opportunities and environment that will enable all children especially girls to flourish and reach their full potential. Interventions can be more effective for girls if it integrates a comprehensive approach to their needs and challenges. Getting girls into school is crucial but ensuring that they stay in school, learn, and achieve requires understanding and effort. Quality, retention, and achievement are important components of the Girls' Education Action Framework designed to ensure that girls maximize their full potential.



It is important to develop tools to support educational practitioners, outreach staff and managers in designing, implementing and evaluating programs that address equal access and quality from a gender perspective.

In addition to this Action Framework, further interventions are required to achieve equality after girls enter a career.

## CONCLUSION :

It is more important than ever to mobilize communities for gender transformative education to advance social justice and gender equality. This framework illustrates the multi-dimensional approach required for gender equality particularly for advancing girls' educational outcomes.

The elimination of gender disparities in education is a gradual and complex journey and needs to start with breaking down barriers, dismantle harmful norms, challenge power relations & systems of oppression and build up norms that are based on equality, respect and inclusion.

PAGE emphasizes the value of funding girls' education in order to ensure that future generations of women will be empowered. For this, Governments, communities, schools, donors and other partners must start by committing to change; committing to positively transform the lives of all children particularly girls. To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for girls, there is a strong need to stand united on an all-encompassing approach. It is crucial to invest in interventions that are girl – centered and prioritize both quality and retention in addition to ensuring access to education for girls.

The Gender Equality Framework suggests adopting a broader perspective that encourages ongoing transformation of gender dynamics, which holds greater promise for making real and lasting progress toward gender equality and universal access to education.