

## SUMMARY POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIAL STRATEGY

Country:	Pakistan	Project Title:	Sindh Secondary Education Improvement Project
Lending/Financing Modality:	Project	Department/Division:	Central West Asia Department Social Sector Division

### I. POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY

Poverty targeting: general intervention

#### A. Links to the National Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth Strategy and Country Partnership Strategy

The Sindh Secondary Education Improvement Project is consistent with the Government of Pakistan's PRSP-II, Vision 2030, and the Framework for Economic Growth—the key strategic documents guiding pro-poor infrastructure development in Pakistan. The PRSP-II identifies nine pillars for poverty reduction, including (i) protecting the poor and vulnerable, (ii) making industry internationally competitive, (iv) human development for the 21st century, and (v) governance for a just and fair system. Vision 2030 and the Framework for Economic Growth also underscore the importance of investing in human capital to achieve economic goals. The project will directly contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 4, 5, and 8.<sup>1</sup> The National Education Policy, 2009 recognizes education as a vital investment for human and economic development. The Sindh Education Sector Plan, 2014–2018 focuses on reducing inequity in access to education—particularly for girls—and improving the quality of education, consistent with the Government of Sindh's broader socioeconomic development strategy. A new SESP, 2019–2023 is being prepared. The project is closely aligned with the objectives of the SESP, 2014–2018. It is also in line with the Midterm Review of Strategy 2020's target of increasing education's share of lending to 6%–10%. The project supports three of Strategy 2030's key operational priority areas: addressing remaining poverty and reducing inequalities, accelerating progress in gender equality, and strengthening governance and institutional capacity. It also supports strengthening inclusive growth—a key objective of ADB's country partnership strategy for Pakistan, 2015–2019 and the development priorities identified in ADB's country operations business plan for Pakistan, 2019–2021. Use of PPPs is consistent with Strategy 2030's emphasis on catalyzing investments through such arrangements.

#### B. Results from the Poverty and Social Analysis during PPTA or Due Diligence

1. Key poverty and social issues. According to Pakistan's Multidimensional Poverty Index, 2015, the greatest contribution to poverty stems from educational deprivation (42.8%), followed by living standards (31.5%), and healthcare facilities (25.7%).<sup>2</sup> After Balochistan, Sindh has the lowest education indicators among the country's four provinces. In Sindh, since school year (SY) 2008/09, GERs at the primary and middle school levels have declined, while increasing at the high school level. High dropout rates occur after the primary school level—31% of grade 5 public school students drop out before middle school. Lack of access to secondary schools—particularly for girls and those in rural areas—is one of the key constraints in increasing enrollments. Only 10% of the public schools in Sindh are secondary schools. Most importantly, because of low performance and poor quality of education at public schools, parents prefer to send their children to private schools, and those who may not be able to afford private education engage their children in unskilled and semiskilled work such as in garages, factories, agriculture, and other low-paid or unpaid labor. Classified *general intervention*, the project will indirectly contribute to development and poverty reduction as improvements to access and quality will mainly benefit the poor and those on low incomes.

2. Beneficiaries. The project will directly benefit students, and particularly girls, through increased access to secondary schooling in the 10 project districts from the construction of about 160 secondary school blocks. These beneficiaries may be either (i) students in primary schools who continue to secondary education, or (ii) or students who have completed primary school but have dropped out and who return to complete their secondary schooling. Secondary school students studying English, sciences, and mathematics in existing SELD and SEF secondary schools will benefit from the improved quality of teaching due to the teacher training and mentoring program that will be implemented under the project. Students who sit for Sindh public examinations will benefit from a more modern, efficient, and transparent examination system. Teachers in newly constructed secondary school blocks will benefit from an improved working and professional environment due to the new facilities and the use of private sector EMOs to operate the schools. Selected teachers in English, sciences, and mathematics in existing SELD and SEF secondary schools, staff in the provincial institute of teacher education, and staff in selected teacher training institutes will benefit from the project's innovative teacher training and mentoring program. BISE staff and examination assessors will benefit from the new optical marking system and the capacity building provided under the project.

3. Impact channels. The project will help build human capital through increased access to, and improved quality of, secondary education. Improvements in the quantity and quality of education can raise economic growth and reduce

<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Development Goals. About the Sustainable Development Goals.

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Development Programme. 2014. *Multi-Dimensional Poverty in Pakistan*. Islamabad.

poverty.<sup>3</sup> These improvements promote the development of the secondary education sector, which has a limited network, poor quality and receives relatively little development partner assistance. Schools will operate under an innovative PPP arrangement that will improve the quality of education and will do so without cost implications for parents, which is critical for the poor and vulnerable. The project will improve teachers' pedagogical skills and content knowledge in English, sciences, and mathematics. Support for the secondary education examination system, including capacity building and optical mark recognition technology will contribute to fairer and better-quality examinations. These channels will significantly contribute to increasing access and improving the quality of public secondary education benefiting students and parents from poor and low-income households.

4. Other social and poverty issues. Besides a low-performing public education sector, other social and poverty issues in Sindh include unemployment, poor quality of mother and child health care facilities, gender disparities, inadequate social protection policies, a high inflation rate, lack of access to safe drinking water, and unreliable access to electricity. The country's largest social safety net program, the Benazir Income Support Programme, is supported by ADB, the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, and the World Bank. Other poverty reduction programs include Zakat, Bait-ul-Maal, rural support programs, microfinance programs, and youth skills training programs initiated by the Government of Pakistan.

5. Design features. The project incorporates many pro-poor design features including the following: (i) secondary school blocks will be constructed in districts with high multidimensional poverty index scores and low female literacy rates, (ii) private sector management of public schools under the EMO program will provide poor families with access to higher quality education at no cost to them, (iii) key performance indicators of EMOs will include measures to ensure participation of parents and communities from all segments of the population, and (iv) civil works during the construction of the secondary school blocks will provide employment opportunities for local labor.

## II. PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERING THE POOR

1. Participatory approaches and project activities. During the project preparation and design, government departments, CSOs, district administration officers, teachers, and parents were consulted to ensure that their concerns and recommendations are addressed in the project design. Separate consultations for resettlement and safeguards were also held with local communities. This will be continued during the implementation phase of the project while engaging all relevant stakeholders including poor and vulnerable households. Parent-teacher committees and other community forums will ensure that the concerns of all segments of the population, including poor and vulnerable groups, are addressed.

2. Civil society organizations. CSOs are already involved in the education sector in Sindh. Under the EMO program, the government contracts them to operate public schools as a means of improving schools' management, teaching quality, accountability, and outcomes. CSOs and other organizations involved in the EMO program were consulted during project preparation and will be part of the consultation process throughout the project life cycle.

3. The following forms of CSO participation are envisaged during project implementation, rated as high (H), medium (M), low (L) or not applicable (NA):

Information gathering and sharing  Consultation  Collaboration  Partnership

4. Participation plan. Sustained engagement of key groups including parents, teachers, providers and local communities, will be continued as part of project and GAP implementation. A communications plan, including participation with interested groups, will be prepared and implemented.  Yes  No.

## III. GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Gender mainstreaming category: gender equity theme

**A. Key issues.** Compared to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces, Sindh indicators related to education and literacy levels are low, with significant gender disparities at all levels of education. The net enrollment rate for girls at the lower secondary level was 25% in 2015—9 percentage points below that for boys, while the gap in literacy rate for girls and boys aged 15–24 was 17 percentage points. Lack of secondary schools for girls, particularly in rural areas, a lack of female teachers, parents' preference for educating the male child, domestic and care work at home, and early girl-child marriages are key constraints for girls impeding their access to education.

**B. Key actions.** The project outcome will directly contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment while narrowing gender disparities in secondary education. Key gender design features include (i) construction of secondary school blocks in districts with low female literacy rates, (ii) focus of construction on girls' or mixed schools; (iii) gender-responsive school design and construction, such as separate toilets, and boundary walls; (iv) preference for female teachers for girls' and mixed schools; (v) parent and community sensitization campaigns about the value of girls' education and disadvantages of gender-discriminatory practices, including early girl-child marriages, to reduce barriers to school enrollment for girls in project districts; (vi) equitable female participation in training programs; and (vii) monitoring and evaluation of gender targets and results.

<sup>3</sup> E. Hanushek and L. Wößmann. 2010. Education and Economic Growth. *International Encyclopedia of Education*. Vol. 2. Oxford: Elsevier.

