

Parliamentary Engagement For National Strategy on Education Emergency



Message from

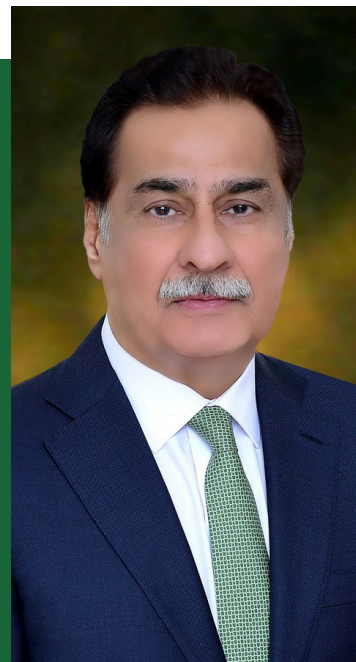
Honorable Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan

Hon. Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

The future of our nation lies in the hands of our children. If we fail to educate them, we risk not only their futures but the stability and prosperity of Pakistan itself. The National Assembly is proud to support the work of the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (PCCR), which has taken a significant step toward addressing the out-of-school children crisis.

This report is a testament to the power of collective will and cross-provincial dialogue. It acknowledges the constitutional guarantee of education and provides a pragmatic roadmap to fulfill that promise, especially under the National Education Emergency announced in 2024.

As Speaker of the National Assembly, I reaffirm our commitment to prioritizing children's education in all legislative and policy frameworks. I urge all federal and provincial institutions to treat this report not as a conclusion, but as a beginning—a call to action for every policymaker, every educator, and every citizen.



Message from

Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training

Hon. Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui

The declaration of a National Education Emergency is not just a policy measure—it is a moral imperative. The crisis of out-of-school children is among the gravest challenges Pakistan faces today. It is a crisis that demands both courage and cooperation from every corner of our nation.

This report by the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (PCCR) is a timely and essential contribution to our collective response. It outlines both the depth of the problem and the promise of potential solutions. The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training is committed to ensuring that these insights are translated into tangible progress.

We welcome the emphasis on local realities, interprovincial coordination, and strategic flexibility. Together, let us build an education system where no child is left behind and every child has the opportunity to succeed.

Preface by

**Convenor, Parliamentary Caucus
on Child Rights (PCCR),
National Assembly of Pakistan
Hon. Dr. Nikhat Shakeel Khan**

In a country where over 26 million children remain out of school, silence is no longer an option. This report represents not just the work of a Caucus, but a collective national conscience that refuses to accept exclusion as the norm. The Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (PCCR) was formed out of a shared belief that every child in Pakistan deserves an equal chance at life, starting with access to education.

Through extensive consultations across all four provinces, we have heard directly from those closest to the issue—families, teachers, communities, and local governments. Their insights form the backbone of this report. It is their lived reality that must guide our response.

We offer this report as a framework for urgent action, grounded in empathy, evidence, and experience. I extend my deepest appreciation to all provincial stakeholders, civil society partners, and our fellow parliamentarians who stood with us in this journey. I sincerely hope this report serves as a catalyst for meaningful change and intergovernmental collaboration.





Message from **Secretary General, National Assembly Secretariat** **Syed Tahir Hussain**

This report is the outcome of tireless collaboration and courageous conversations across Pakistan. It is a reflection of the hard truths we must confront—inequality, poverty, and exclusion—and the resilience of communities that continue to dream of a better future for their children.

As General Secretary of the Caucus, I have witnessed the dedication of our members in ensuring that the voices of marginalized families are heard and represented in our national discourse. The findings and strategic framework offered here are grounded in those voices and provide actionable pathways for change.

I extend my gratitude to all those who participated in the consultations, especially our provincial counterparts, education officials, and community leaders. May this report guide us toward a more just and inclusive educational system.

Message from

Special Secretary (SI), National Assembly Secretariat **Syed Shamoon Hashmi**

In a country where over 26 million children remain out of school, silence is no longer an option. This report represents not just the work of a Caucus, but a collective national conscience that refuses to accept exclusion as the norm. The Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (PCCR) was formed out of a shared belief that every child in Pakistan deserves an equal chance at life, starting with access to education.

Through extensive consultations across all four provinces, we have heard directly from those closest to the issue—families, teachers, communities, and local governments. Their insights form the backbone of this report. It is their lived reality that must guide our response.

We offer this report as a framework for urgent action, grounded in empathy, evidence, and experience. I extend my deepest appreciation to all provincial stakeholders, civil society partners, and our fellow parliamentarians who stood with us in this journey. I sincerely hope this report serves as a catalyst for meaningful change and intergovernmental collaboration.

Let us commit—together—to bringing every child into the classroom, where they belong.



A photograph of the National Assembly Building in Islamabad, Pakistan, featuring a large sign with the Urdu name 'قومی اسمبلی' (Qumi Asmabli) above the entrance. The building is a modern, multi-story structure with a glass facade, surrounded by greenery and a clear sky.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS ON CHILD RIGHTS

A Vision for Out-of-School Children

The National Assembly's Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (NA-PCCR) has taken a clear and focused approach in supporting the implementation of the National Education Emergency. The Caucus recognises that the issue of Out-of-School Children (OOSC) is complex. It is not caused by a single factor and cannot be solved by one type of solution. The barriers to attend school are shaped by poverty, gender, geography, language, disability, social norms, and the availability of schools and teachers. These challenges often look different from one community to another, even within the same province. This is why the Caucus has adopted a decentralised, inclusive, and locally informed strategy. The vision guiding this work is simple but ambitious: to ensure that every child in Pakistan is enrolled in an education system that meets their needs, whether through formal schooling or a suitable alternate learning pathway. To reach this goal, the Caucus is working to build a strategy that is rooted in the realities of each province and district.

The approach is focused on identifying and supporting districts with a high proportion of out-of-school children. These districts will receive support to develop and implement customised local plans. These plans will be based on the conditions, barriers, and opportunities specific to those areas. Through this method, the Caucus hopes to demonstrate how targeted investments and partnerships can reduce exclusion and support children in returning to education. The strategic vision also reflects the belief that parliamentarians have an important role beyond legislation. As elected representatives, members of the Caucus are using their positions to listen to communities, highlight neglected issues, and bring forward the voices of those who are often not heard in policy spaces. Through their engagement, the legislators aim to strengthen the connection between federal leadership and the everyday experiences of families, teachers, and children.

This strategy also aims to integrate the existing strategies, learning and experiences through consultations held with federal, provincial stakeholders and informed by the knowledge of local education officials, community members, and civil society partners. The process reflects a spirit of collaboration. It drives away from the concept of a single model but about co-creating responses that can be adapted, scaled, and improved over time. By working through this grounded, bottom up and cooperative approach, the Parliamentary Caucus hopes to make a meaningful contribution to the national effort to end educational exclusion, representing a constant commitment to ensure that no child is left behind..

PROJECT TEAM



**Mujtaba
Zaidi**
Anthro Insight



**Syed Hazik
Bukhari**
National
Assembly of
Pakistan



Iffat Pervaz
National
Assembly of
Pakistan

Table of Contents

Background.....	5
Introduction.....	6
Section I: Strategic Vision of the NA-PCCR on OOSC.....	8
Strategic Vision of the NA-PCCR on OOSC.....	9
Chronology of Engagements.....	10
Section II:.....	13
Classification of Barriers for OOSC.....	13
Classification of Barriers for OOSC.....	14
The Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE).....	14
E. Economic Barriers.....	15
E1. Poverty / Economic Hardship.....	16
E2. Child Labor.....	16
E3. Malnutrition / Health Issues.....	17
S: Social & Cultural Barriers.....	17
S1. Gender Disparity / Cultural Norms.....	17
S2. Early Marriages.....	18
S3. Trust Deficit / Skepticism of Education.....	18
S4. Low Perceived Economic Value of Education.....	19
S5. Weak School - Community Linkages.....	19
S6. Safety Risk Perceptions.....	19
S7. Children with Disability Education.....	19
A. Access and Environmental Barriers.....	20
A1. Distance to School.....	20
A2. Shortage of Schools (Especially Secondary):.....	20
A3. Transportation Issues:.....	21
A4. Disability Inclusion Challenges:.....	21
A5. Seasonal Migration / Climate Impact.....	22
A6. Displacement and Conflict.....	22
I. Institutional Barriers.....	23
I1. Poor School Infrastructure.....	23
I2. Teacher Shortage (Especially Female Teachers):.....	23
I3. Agility in Schooling Policies (Timing, Re-entry):.....	23

I7. Disability and Lack of Inclusive Education:	24
I4. Psychosocial Support and Mental Health in Schools:.....	24
I5. Digital Divide / Lack of Technology Access:.....	25
I6. Data for Targeting OOSC:	25
I7. Budget Constraints / Funding Gaps:.....	25
I8. Political Interference in Teacher Postings:.....	26
I9. Ineffective Implementation of Policies:.....	26
I10. Lack of Monitoring / Grievance Mechanisms:	26
I11: Overage Students.....	27
Current Intervention to Address OOSC Barriers.....	28
Economic Barriers (Economic).....	28
E1. Alleviating Poverty-Linked School Exclusion	28
E2. Addressing Child Labor.....	28
E3. Tackling Malnutrition and Health Constraints	28
Social and Cultural Barriers.....	29
S1. Addressing Gender Disparity and Cultural Norms	29
S2. Preventing Early Marriages.....	29
S3. Supporting Children with Disabilities.....	29
S4. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.....	30
S5. Addressing Parental Beliefs / Lack of Awareness.....	30
S6. Reducing Trust Deficit / Skepticism of School System	30
S7. Enhancing Perceived Economic Value of Education.....	30
S8. Strengthening Community Engagement and Parent Mobilization	31
S9. Improving Safety Perceptions for Girls	31
A. Access and Environmental Barriers.....	32
A1. Distance to School.....	32
A2. Shortage of Schools (Especially Secondary).....	32
A3. Lack of Transportation.....	32
A5. Seasonal Migration / Climate Impact.....	32
A6. Displacement and Conflict.....	33
Institutional Barriers.....	34
I1. Poor School Infrastructure	34
I2. Teacher Shortage (Especially Female Teachers)	34

I3. Agility in Schooling Policies (Timing, Re-entry)	34
I5. Digital Divide / Lack of Technology Access.....	34
I6. No Real-Time Data for Targeting OOSC Communities.....	35
I7. Budget Constraints	35
I8. Political Interference in Teacher Recruitment and Postings	35
I9. Ineffective Implementation of Policies	35
I10. Lack of Monitoring / Grievance Mechanisms.....	35
I11: Overage Students	36
Section III: Barrier Specific Strategies and Interventions (Proposed).....	37
Intervention Strategies (Barrier wise)	38
E: Economic Barriers	38
R1: Indirect Costs of Schooling.....	38
R2: Dependency on Child Labour	39
R3: Malnourishment and Health Barriers.....	40
P: Perception Barriers.....	41
P1: Lack of Trust in the Schooling System	42
P2: Education Perceived as Economically Useless	43
P3: Cultural and Gender Norms Discouraging Girls Education.....	43
P4: Safety Concerns for Student Commute.....	44
S: Social and Cultural Barriers.....	45
S1: Disability Barriers	45
S2: Early Marriage.....	46
E: Environmental Barriers.....	46
E1: Seasonal Migration and Climate Impact.....	47
E2: Conflict and Instability Barriers	48
I: Institutional Barriers	49
I1: Distance to School	49
Barrier I2: Incomplete School Infrastructure	53
Barrier I3: Primary to Secondary Transition	54
Proposed Strategic Framework	57
Vision:.....	59
Mission Statement:.....	59
Core Strategic Objectives	59

Values.....	60
Understanding Barriers for OOSC.....	61
OOSC Strategic Framework.....	61
Component I: Development of NEE Fund	62
Component II: Development of Localized OOSC Forums	66
Component III: UC level Barrier Assessment	70
Component IV: Localized Goal Setting.....	73
Component V: Barrier-Responsive Intervention Models.....	76
Component VI: Implementation of Intervention Models.....	79
Component VII: Adaptive Management Systems	82
Component VIII: Communication and Engagement Strategy.....	85
Component IX: Sustainability and Exit Strategy	88

Background

Education is a fundamental right guaranteed by the constitution of Pakistan to every child. Yet, millions of children remain out of school. According to recent estimates, more than 26 million children across the country are not attending any formal or alternate educational institution. This number reflects not only a national crisis but also deep-rooted inequalities that continue to shape the futures of many children.

In recognition of this challenge, the Prime Minister declared a National Education Emergency in 2024. This declaration has brought much-needed attention to the scale of the problem and has created space for urgent and coordinated action at all levels of government. Particularly the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training is actively engaged on its implementation. In the post devolution context, there is a strong need to work on the issue with inter provincial coordination and ownership.

The National Assembly's Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (NA-PCCR) stepped forward to support this national commitment. The Caucus brings together members of parliament who are united in their concern for children's rights, and committed to ensuring that education is accessible, inclusive, and meaningful for every child.

This report outlines the journey taken by the Caucus so far in responding to the issue of Out-of-School Children (OOSC). It provides a record of engagements, reflections from the ground, and the direction being shaped for future efforts. The insights presented here come from a series of dialogues held with provincial governments, district education departments, teachers, civil society organizations, parents, and community representatives. These conversations offered valuable perspectives on the barriers to education and the solutions that communities are already testing. Throughout this engagement, the Caucus has been guided by the belief that national goals can only be achieved when they are grounded in local realities. Each province, and indeed each district, presents unique challenges that require tailored responses. The work done so far has helped identify priority areas where progress is both possible and urgent.

This initiative is not only about policies. It is about listening to those who are closest to the problem and creating practical pathways for inclusion. The Parliamentary Caucus is working to connect federal leadership with provincial strategies and local experience. Together, this approach can help Pakistan move closer to its goal of bringing every child into education.

Introduction

As discussed earlier, the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (NA-PCCR), through its consultations in Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Punjab, engaged a wide range of local voices to better understand the realities behind Pakistan's high Out-of-School Children (OOSC) figures. These field-level dialogues included education officials, schoolteachers, elected local representatives, civil society members, parents, and community leaders. Across all locations, the consultations brought to light a shared concern that families and communities deeply value education, but face structural, social, and economic barriers that often make enrolment and regular attendance difficult. Participants consistently emphasized the need for locally appropriate solutions rather than a one-size-fits-all response. This section discusses in details, the key insights from these consultations about such barriers which restrict school attendance of the children are presented below, grouped by theme. The findings of the NA-PCCR consultations have been segmented in **four** sections.

- a. **Section I:** The first section focuses on the diagnosis element of the strategy. It concentrates upon recognizing ground situation for OOSC as reported by the participants of these consultations. The section represents key areas of exclusion and barriers for children to attend the formal or informal education systems. These barriers are recognized as the root cause of exclusion and how they are or create barriers.
- b. **Section II:** The second section discusses the currently treatment or interventions being carried out by provincial and district stakeholders. The section also bring to light the targeting practice, the scale and commensurability of these interventions and initiatives in comparison to the challenge presented by the barriers they aim to address.
- c. **Section III:** The third section discusses the revised treatment plan in the form of the overarching framework for enhancing the efficiency of the current interventions while aligning with the future strategies. The section mainly focuses on how strategies should be contextualized, selected, implemented, reported and recognized for their impact in local context. This also set the foundation of broad governance mechanism with federal, provincial and local ownership to challenge the local barriers keeping children out of school.
- d. **Section IV:** The fourth section provides a menu of symptom and root cause focused strategies so the necessary local governance model may adapt and deliver the key strategies. While these proposed strategies bring forward some broad outlining possible approaches drawing on the best practices across the globe, while matching with local feedback. These strategies aim to only provide

a guiding framework on contextualizing the barriers and adapting solutions while contextualizing to local realities. These strategies aim to strengthen the local actors to have a set of intervention choices. While all strategies may not be relevant to all areas the local forums would be able to chose from these or build their own strategies following the same model.

SECTION I: STRATEGIC VISION OF THE NA-PCCR ON OOSC



Strategic Vision of the NA-PCCR on OOSC

The National Assembly's Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (NA-PCCR) has taken a clear and focused approach in supporting the implementation of the National Education Emergency. The Caucus recognises that the issue of Out-of-School Children (OOSC) is complex. It is not caused by a single factor and cannot be solved by one type of solution. The barriers to attend school are shaped by poverty, gender, geography, language, disability, social norms, and the availability of schools and teachers. These challenges often look different from one community to another, even within the same province. This is why the Caucus has adopted a decentralised, inclusive, and locally informed strategy. The vision guiding this work is simple but ambitious: to ensure that every child in Pakistan is enrolled in an education system that meets their needs, whether through formal schooling or a suitable alternate learning pathway. To reach this goal, the Caucus is working to build a strategy that is rooted in the realities of each province and district.

The approach is focused on identifying and supporting districts with a high proportion of out-of-school children. These districts will receive support to develop and implement customised local plans. These plans will be based on the conditions, barriers, and opportunities specific to those areas. Through this method, the Caucus hopes to demonstrate how targeted investments and partnerships can reduce exclusion and support children in returning to education. The strategic vision also reflects the belief that parliamentarians have an important role beyond legislation. As elected representatives, members of the Caucus are using their positions to listen to communities, highlight neglected issues, and bring forward the voices of those who are often not heard in policy spaces. Through their engagement, the legislators aim to strengthen the connection between federal leadership and the everyday experiences of families, teachers, and children.

This strategy also aims to integrate the existing strategies, learning and experiences through consultations held with federal, provincial stakeholders and informed by the knowledge of local education officials, community members, and civil society partners. The process reflects a spirit of collaboration. It drives away from the concept of a single model but about co-creating responses that can be adapted, scaled, and improved over time. By working through this grounded, bottom up and cooperative approach, the Parliamentary Caucus hopes to make a meaningful contribution to the national effort to end educational exclusion, representing a constant commitment to ensure that no child is left behind.

Chronology of Engagements

Since the announcement of the National Education Emergency, the National Assembly's Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights (NA-PCCR) has taken a focused and collaborative approach to address the urgent challenge of Out-of-School Children (OOSC). From the beginning, the Caucus recognised that addressing this issue would require not only strong political will, but also rigorous evidence, local engagement, and the support of technical partners.

To guide its efforts, the Caucus partnered with Anthro Insights, a research and advisory organisation with experience in inclusive education, governance, and community-led interventions. This partnership brought valuable expertise to the process, allowing parliamentarians to work with a clearer understanding of the problem, grounded in field realities and national data.

The following timeline outlines the major milestones in the journey so far, alongside the activities that are shaping the way forward.

1 Desk Review and Strategy Scoping (September – October 2024)

The collaboration with Anthro Insights began with a desk-based review of the OOSC landscape in Pakistan. This included an analysis of national data sets, policy documents, provincial education sector plans, and past programme evaluations. The review helped map the classification of OOSC, explore barriers by region and demographic profile, and identify institutional gaps. It also highlighted the need for a decentralised response model that could be tailored to the specific context of high-burden districts. This research became the foundation for the emerging strategy and continues to inform each engagement.

2 Internal Orientation and Strategy Sessions (October 2024)

Informed by the desk review, the Caucus organised internal learning sessions for its members. These included briefings on the scale of the OOSC crisis, the drivers of exclusion, and the role of alternate learning pathways. The presentation was made by Hon. Secretary Education informing the members of NA-PCCR and provincial legislators about the span and breath of the OOSC challenge, current approach and the interventions planned and being delivered on the issue.

3 **National Symposium on Out-of-School Children (November 2024)**

Building on this early groundwork, the Caucus convened a National Symposium to bring together parliamentarians, education departments, CSOs, and development partners. The event marked a shift from recognition to action. It introduced the idea of a district-level pilot model, presented early findings from the desk review, and showcased the potential role of the Caucus in bridging national resolve with local action. Anthro Insights served as the technical facilitator of the symposium and supported the design of consultation frameworks.

4 **Field Consultations in High-Burden Districts (December 2024 – April 2025)**

To ground the strategy in real-world insight, the NA-PCCR—with Anthro Insights as the technical lead—carried out district consultations across three provinces. These consultations allowed parliamentarians to engage directly with teachers, local officials, community leaders, and parents. Consultations held to date include:

Tharparkar (Sindh) – Explored issues related to poverty, seasonal migration, gender norms, and access to female teachers.

Peshawar and Haripur (KP) – Focused on child labour, dropout dynamics, infrastructure gaps, and challenges in recruitment of qualified teachers.

Quetta and surrounding areas (Balochistan) – Addressed distance to schools, lack of female secondary education, tribal and linguistic dynamics, and school consolidation needs.

Lahore and Multan (Punjab) – Focused on urban and child labour dynamics of out of school children.

Each consultation followed a structured approach developed jointly by the Caucus and Anthro Insights.

5 **Development of the Pilot District Strategy (Ongoing)**

Insights from the consultations, supported by the desk review and analysis, are now being presented into a pilot district strategy. The strategy will focus on selecting two high-priority district in each province and supporting it with tailored interventions that address specific local barriers. These plans will integrate alternate learning pathways (ALPs), community-based models, and policy-level solutions.

Lessons Learnt Workshop (May 2025)

These proposed strategies will be presented in the lessons learn event which will bring together all stakeholders who have taken part in consultations and otherwise shaping this strategy. This report represents the draft strategy version which incorporate further feedback from the relevant stakeholders to foster future collaboration on the subject. Anthro Insights continues to provide technical support in shaping the framework and defining indicators for monitoring progress. All the inputs and recommendations received on the draft will be compiled in the final draft report and will be presented to the Hon. Speaker of National Assembly for further discussion. Subject to the approval of the house the strategy will be shared with relevant departments as the recommendations of the house on Out of School Children. This document may serve as the foundation for future parliamentary discussions at National and Provincial Assemblies regarding budgetary allocations, legislative and policy agenda, as well as for parliamentary oversight.

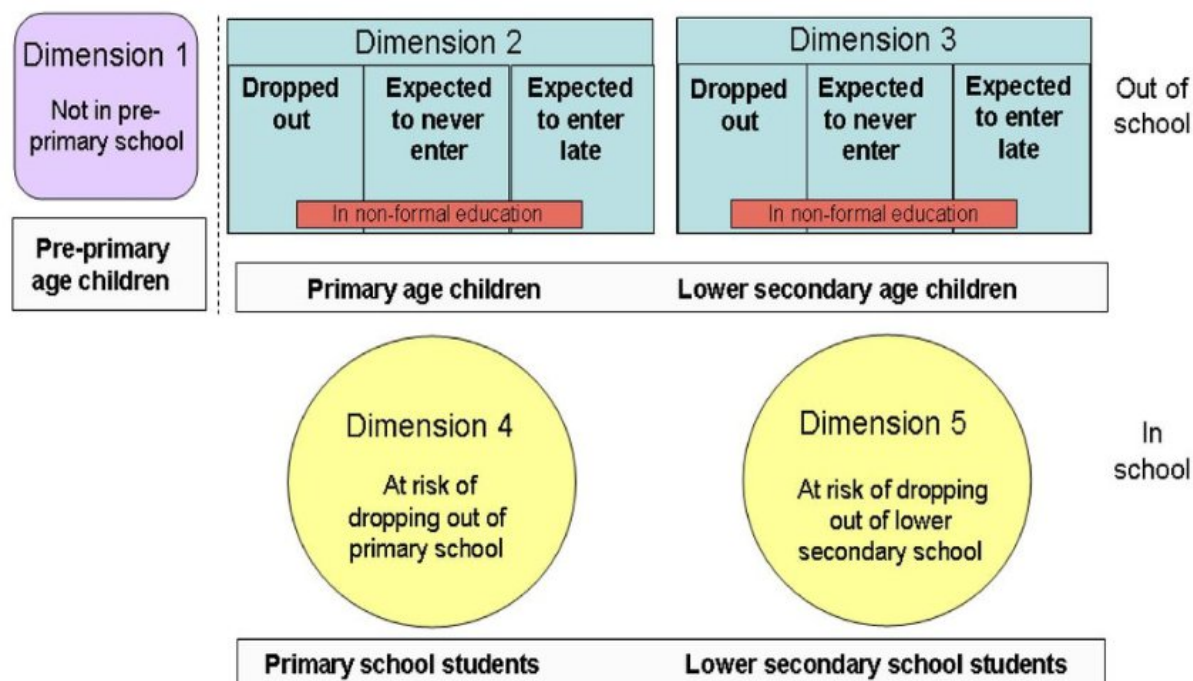
SECTION II: CLASSIFICATION OF BARRIERS FOR OOSC



Classification of Barriers for OOSC

Effective educational planning for Out-of-School Children (OOSC) requires a clear understanding of the factors that contribute to their exclusion from formal education. In alignment with global best practices, the OOSC Strategic Framework by NA PCCR adopts the Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE) framework, developed by UNESCO and UNICEF under the Global Initiative on Out-of-School Children (OOSCI) to report on the barriers reported during the NA PCCR consultations. This framework categorizes children based on age, enrolment status, and risk of dropping out, providing a structured approach to identify, assess, and address the multifaceted barriers that keep children out of school.

The Five Dimensions of Exclusion (5DE)¹:







- Dimension 1:** Children of pre-primary age who are not enrolled in early childhood education. These children, often from low-income families, remote communities, and marginalized groups, face significant barriers to early learning opportunities.
- Dimension 2:** Children of primary school age who are not enrolled in primary education. This includes children in both urban and rural settings who lack access to schooling due to distance, family economic pressure, or sociocultural constraints.

¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) & United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2015). Global Out-of-School Children Initiative Operational Manual. Montreal: UIS. Retrieved from https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/global-out-of-school-initiative-operational-manual-2015-en_0.pdf

3. **Dimension 3:** Children of lower secondary school age who are not enrolled in lower secondary education. Adolescents in this category are frequently pushed into the workforce, especially in rural areas, or are kept out of school due to early marriage or cultural expectations.
4. **Dimension 4:** Children who are enrolled in primary education but are at risk of dropping out. Factors contributing to this risk include poor learning environments, lack of trained teachers, and financial constraints that disrupt continuous attendance.
5. **Dimension 5:** Children who are enrolled in lower secondary education but are at risk of dropping out. This group often faces institutional barriers, such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of inclusive policies for disabled students, and inadequate infrastructure.

Barrier Typologies in the 5DE Framework

The Five Dimensions of Exclusion framework identifies four primary typologies of barriers that systematically prevent children from accessing or completing their education. The barriers identified by the participants were broadly structured with regards to framework while adapting to local context.

-  **Economic Barriers:**
-  **Social and cultural Barriers:**
-  **Geographical and Environmental Barriers:**
-  **Institutional Barriers:**

Each category reflects the lived experiences, structural challenges, and contextual nuances discussed by education stakeholders, community representatives, and local officials. This classification not only helps distinguish the nature and source of different barriers, but also guides the identification of targeted interventions and policy responses aligned with specific community needs. In the following sections, we will explore each barrier typology in detail, illustrating the specific challenges faced and the localized strategies designed to overcome them.

E. Economic Barriers

Barriers that arise due to financial hardship or household-level economic pressures that compete with or prevent school participation.

E1. Poverty / Economic Hardship

Across nearly all consultation sites, poverty was identified as one of the most persistent barriers to school enrolment and retention. In areas like Tharparkar and Quetta, participants described how economic survival often takes precedence over educational aspirations. Families struggling to afford daily meals, transport, or medical care frequently deprioritize schooling, which is seen as a long-term and uncertain investment. Even when public schools are normally free, allied costs such as uniforms, supplies, or examination fees deter the poorest households. The economic trade-off of sending a child to school versus engaging them in income-generating activities remains a critical tension.

"Most families want to send their children to school, but they just can't afford to. Survival comes first."

Participant, Haripur Consultation

E2. Child Labor

Closely linked to poverty, child labor was cited in Tharparkar, Haripur, and Peshawar as a common reason children, particularly boys, are absent from school. In agricultural districts, children are often needed to assist with livestock, seasonal crop harvesting, or daily wage labor. Girls may also work in homes, often supporting domestic tasks or caring for younger siblings, which restricts their school attendance. Participants in Haripur emphasized that for many families, children are considered part of the workforce from an early age, and removing them from this role requires not only economic support but also cultural change.

"We're not choosing between school and no school—we're choosing between school and not eating."

Participant, Haripur consultation

E3. Malnutrition / Health Issues

In Haripur and Lahore, participants pointed to malnutrition and frequent illness as silent but significant barriers. Children who are undernourished often lack the stamina and concentration needed for classroom learning. Teachers noted that many students

"When a child hasn't eaten, how do you expect them to learn anything?" —

Participant, Quetta consultation

come to school without having eaten and struggle to stay engaged, particularly during long school days. Some drop out due to repeated absenteeism caused by health issues. Without access to nutrition programs or school-

based health services, these children face compounded disadvantages.

S: Social & Cultural Barriers

In many communities across Pakistan, decisions about whether a child goes to school or stays in school are shaped more by perceptions of the parents which are based upon social and cultural influence rather than policies. These perceptions are not just fleeting opinions; they are deeply rooted in lived realities, family traditions, past experiences with the education system and known examples. Whether it's skepticism about school safety, doubts about its value, or cultural beliefs about gender roles, these unseen barriers often carry just as much weight as the more visible, infrastructural ones. Consultations held in Tharparkar, Haripur, Peshawar, Lahore, and Quetta consistently surfaced concerns around how parents and communities view the purpose, safety, and benefit of education, especially for girls. These perception barriers are more applicable to those OOSC who have never been to school. Understanding and reshaping these perceptions is key for long-term and sustainable change towards more equitable education participation.

These barriers are discussed below in more detail.

S1. Gender Disparity / Cultural Norms

Participants across Tharparkar, Quetta, and Peshawar repeatedly emphasized the role

"Girls are needed at home, and families worry too much about their safety and reputation." —

Participant, Tharparkar consultation

of entrenched gender norms in limiting girls' education. In many conservative communities, schooling for girls is viewed as unnecessary beyond the primary level, and concerns around modesty,

family honor, or marriageability often dictate early school exit. Some families believe that investing in a girl's education brings fewer returns, especially when girls are expected to become homemakers. These views are not limited to rural regions; similar

concerns were echoed in peri-urban areas as well. Deep-rooted cultural expectations continue to shape educational decisions in ways that reinforce exclusion.

S2. Early Marriages

Early marriage remains one of the most direct and irreversible barriers to education for girls. In areas like Tharparkar and parts of Balochistan, participants highlighted that economic hardship, safety concerns, dowry pressures, and social traditions lead families to marry off daughters as early as age 13 or 14. Once married, girls are rarely allowed to continue education, even if schools are available. The practice is often seen

"Once a girl is married, her education ends—no matter how much she wanted to continue."

Civil Society Representative,
Haripur Consultation

as a protective measure to secure a girl's future and reduce the financial burden on the family. Changing this mindset requires both legislative enforcement and community-level awareness.

S3. Trust Deficit / Skepticism of Education

The consultations in Quetta and Tharparkar revealed a powerful sense of disillusionment with the formal public system. Participants described schools that had been promised but never opened, or school buildings standing empty due to teacher absenteeism. In such contexts, skepticism is not irrational, it is based on lived experience. When education infrastructure exists in name only, it erodes faith in the broader promise of education. This type of perception barriers is also

"Even where schools exist, families don't send children because the teachers are never there."

Civil Society Representative,
Tharparkar Consultation

applicable to both with more significance to never been to school OOSC as those who have been to school the perception changes over time and better experience, but after experiencing such incident it may still apply to students for dropouts.

S4. Low Perceived Economic Value of Education

In areas like Haripur and Peshawar, participants consistently raised doubts about whether education could lead to real employment or income. In communities facing daily economic hardship, long-term educational investment can feel like a luxury. This is particularly true when curricula are not linked to job markets or local trades. Without tangible examples of education leading to better livelihoods, families understandably prioritize short-term survival over long-term learning. IN Peshawar a few examples were discussed where by integrating local crafts in curriculum or school extra-curricular activities the enrolments increased.

“Even those (children) who go to school end up in the same occupations or job markets as those who don't.”

Participant, Haripur consultation

S5. Weak School - Community Linkages

In multiple consultations, including those in Haripur and Lahore, participants emphasized the absence of strong school-community linkages. It was widely observed that schools rarely involved parents in decision-making or outreach, leading to feelings of detachment and mistrust. This lack of inclusion contributes to low enrolment and poor retention. When parents are not given a role or voice in the school environment, they are less likely to support or prioritize their children's education.

S6. Safety Risk Perceptions

In Tharparkar, Haripur and Peshawar, participants highlighted that physical safety was a key concern preventing girls from attending school. These fears were often linked to the absence of safe transportation, boundary walls, separate toilets, or female teachers. For adolescent girls, issues of modesty, privacy, and honor are deeply intertwined with access. In conservative regions, even the perception of risk is enough to end a girl's education early. Without addressing these concerns through policy and infrastructure, gender disparities in enrolment will persist.

S7. Children with Disability Education

Regarding the parent's perception about the education for children with disabilities, three major aspects were discussed. Firstly the fear of discrimination or bullying from peers can create psychological stress and comparison for children with disabilities, which discourages the parents to send CWD to regular schools. Secondly parents are not sure that such children can be catered well in the schools or schools are adequately equipped to facilitate learning of such children. A number of participants across all provinces agreed with the same. Thirdly perceived need for education as parents are not sure how education will help these children in their life ahead. Together these aspects lead to parents not sending their children to school.

A. Access and Environmental Barriers

In the UNESCO framework these barriers are termed as geographic and environmental barriers however since they deal with access aspects the title has been adapted. These influence the access environment and are one of the most significant challenges contributing to the large number of Out-of-School Children (OOSC), both for those who have never been enrolled and those who drop out prematurely. These barriers often include geographical remoteness, lack of school infrastructure, and unavailability of safe and accessible transportation. The category is linked to geographic, climatic, or security-related factors that disrupt access environment to or continuity of education.

A1. Distance to School

In consultations from Haripur, Tharparkar, and Quetta, participants consistently pointed out the significant travel distances many children must undertake to reach school. In remote areas, especially with difficult terrain, students, particularly girls, face major safety and logistical hurdles. The issue is worsened by poor road conditions and the absence of any public or school managed transport. Families reported reluctance to send children on hour-long walks each day, especially in regions where wildlife, harassment, or severe weather are real risks. This lack of proximity makes daily attendance difficult and dropout rates higher. While discussing why schools are made far from population, the participants reported the land donated for schools is usually cheap and people only donate land which is not useful, hard to access or of not of certain quality which makes the construction cost high as well. Such practices should be discouraged and school land donations should only be accepted with certain criteria including accessibility for students.

"The school is too far. It's not that we don't care—it's that our children can't reach it every day."

Participant, Haripur consultation

A2. Shortage of Schools (Especially Secondary):

Participants in Quetta and Haripur highlighted a severe gap in the number of secondary schools. While primary schools exist in many communities, students have few options to continue education beyond Grade 5. This bottleneck leads to a steep drop in enrolment, especially among girls. In Balochistan, it was noted that many middle / high schools serve several villages, making access difficult and daily attendance unreliable. Without proportional investment in post-primary education, gains made at the lower levels are quickly lost.

"We lose students not because they drop out, but because there's nowhere else to go after primary." —

Participant, Quetta consultation

A3. Transportation Issues:

Lack of school transport was flagged in Tharparkar and Haripur as a logistical hurdle,

"If we had even one van, twenty more girls would be in school tomorrow." —

Local leader, Tharparkar consultation

especially for girls and children with disabilities. Participants explained that even when schools exist, reaching them safely is a barrier in itself. In rural areas, small carry-vans or community-managed transport systems were

proposed as potential solutions. Without these, children are left to walk long distances, often alone, which creates additional risks.

A4. Disability Inclusion Challenges:

In Haripur and Lahore, educators and community leaders raised concern about the exclusion of children with disabilities. While institutional aspects would be covered in

"We don't have facilities or training to teach children with special needs, so they get left behind."

Teacher, Haripur consultation.

separate barrier the perception and social approach for inclusion of CWD is discussed here. This fear of social stigma, coupled with infrastructure challenges, contributes to the invisibility of children with disabilities in the

education system. Schools are often unequipped with ramps, assistive technology, or trained teachers to support inclusive learning. As a result, children with physical, intellectual, or sensory disabilities are either kept at home or drop out shortly after enrolment.

A5. Seasonal Migration / Climate Impact

In districts like Tharparkar and southern Punjab, where communities rely on subsistence agriculture and livestock, seasonal migration is a major disruptor of children's education. Participants described how families often move during dry

"In the migration season, entire villages move—who stays behind to go to school?" —

Participant, Tharparkar consultation

seasons in search of water and grazing land, causing extended interruptions in school attendance. These patterns of displacement affect both enrolment and retention, as children fall behind or lose motivation to rejoin. Additionally, changing weather

patterns and longer droughts are placing further strain on already fragile education systems. Without flexible schooling models or mobile education units, these children remain out of the formal system for months at a time.

A6. Displacement and Conflict

In consultations held in Peshawar and Quetta, participants highlighted the impact of conflict, militancy, and localized violence on school access. In some areas, families

"When there is violence or fear, education becomes the last thing people worry about."

Participant, Peshawar consultation

have been displaced multiple times, leading to fractured education pathways. Fear of violence also discourages parents from sending children, especially girls, to school. Even when schools remain physically intact,

attendance drops significantly during times of unrest. Participants noted that past conflicts have left a lingering mistrust in the safety of public spaces, including schools.

I. Institutional Barriers

Barriers rooted in policy failures, governance issues, and infrastructural gaps that limit educational access, quality, and equity.

I1. Poor School Infrastructure

Across multiple consultations, including those in Lahore and Peshawar, participants reported inadequate or crumbling school facilities. Common issues included schools lacking boundary walls, toilets, drinking water, and electricity. Such conditions deter parents from enrolling their children and make it hard for enrolled students to

"Some schools don't even have a toilet. How can we expect girls to stay in such places all day?" —

Teacher, Lahore consultation

concentrate or stay motivated. Teachers shared that poor infrastructure also impacts their morale and the consistency of teaching. The absence of basic facilities disproportionately affects girls, particularly where privacy

and sanitation are critical.

I2. Teacher Shortage (Especially Female Teachers):

Consultations in Tharparkar, Peshawar, Quetta and Haripur repeatedly flagged the shortage of teachers, particularly women, as a significant barrier. In many schools, one teacher is responsible for multiple grades, limiting the quality of instruction.

"Parents don't want to send daughters to schools without any female teachers—it's that simple." —

Education official, Haripur consultation

Participants also shared that parents are hesitant to send girls to schools with only male staff, especially in conservative areas. In Tharparkar, officials noted that even when teaching positions are advertised, few qualified female candidates apply from rural areas

and almost none can qualify to the minimum criteria. This points to a need for both recruitment reform and targeted support to build a local teaching workforce.

I3. Agility in Schooling Policies (Timing, Re-entry):

Participants in consultations raised concerns about the inflexibility of the school system, which does not accommodate the realities of seasonal labor, household responsibilities, or migratory patterns. Once a child

"If a child misses a month, they're treated like they've failed. There's no path back in." —

Participant, Lahore consultation

leaves school, even for valid reasons, re-enrolment is often difficult. Schools lack catch-up programs or bridging support, and there is little tolerance for irregular attendance. This rigidity disproportionately affects children from poor or mobile households, who may be in and out of the education system due to no fault of their own.

I7. Disability and Lack of Inclusive Education:

In Haripur and Lahore, educators and community leaders raised concern about the exclusion of children with disabilities. While institutional aspects would be covered in separate barrier the perception and social approach for inclusion of CWD is discussed here. This fear of social stigma, coupled with infrastructure challenges, contributes to the invisibility of children with disabilities in the education system partnership for OOSC.

Community reluctance was noted in certain rural and conservative communities, where disability is viewed as a social burden. Families often prioritize able-bodied children for education, while children with disabilities are seen as non-contributors to household income, reinforcing their exclusion from school. Schools are often

"We don't have facilities or training to teach children with special needs, so they get left behind."

Teacher, Haripur consultation.

unequipped with ramps, assistive technology, or trained teachers to support inclusive learning. As a result, children with physical, intellectual, or sensory disabilities are either kept at home or drop out shortly after enrolment.

Parents also fear discrimination or bullying from peers. There is growing recognition among stakeholders that inclusive education must go beyond enrolment and ensure meaningful participation.

I4. Psychosocial Support and Mental Health in Schools:

Participants in Lahore and Peshawar highlighted the absence of structured psychosocial support as an emerging barrier. Children exposed to poverty, trauma, or instability often struggle with concentration, motivation, or behavioural challenges. Without school counsellors or trained teachers, these children are often misunderstood or dismissed as problematic. Mental health concerns remain largely invisible in the education system, yet they have a direct impact on learning, retention, and overall well-being.

"Some children are dealing with things no one sees, and they need more than just lessons." —

Participant, Lahore consultation

I5. Digital Divide / Lack of Technology Access:

Consultations in Quetta and Lahore pointed to the growing relevance of digital tools

"Online learning is for the cities. In our village, even the teacher doesn't have a smartphone." —

Participant, KP / Quetta consultation

for education—and the uneven access to them. During the pandemic, many students lacked devices or connectivity, and these gaps have persisted. Teachers shared that even where tech-based platforms were introduced, lack of training limited their use. Participants warned that without

addressing this digital divide, a new layer of inequality will deepen existing gaps in learning.

I6. Data for Targeting OOSC:

Alot during all consultation's participants, including education officials in Haripur

"We're planning in the dark. No one knows exactly how many children are actually in school." —

Official, Peshawar consultation

and Peshawar, emphasized the absence of real-time data on out-of-school children. Without reliable figures on enrolment, dropout, or teacher deployment, planning becomes ineffective. This gap

prevents targeted interventions and weakens accountability across the education system. Participants called for better monitoring tools and community-verified databases to inform budgeting and outreach.

I7. Budget Constraints / Funding Gaps:

In Quetta and Peshawar, government stakeholders raised concerns about the shortfall

"We have ideas and plans, but no money to implement them." —

Provincial education department official,
Quetta consultation

in education budgets relative to growing needs. While some provinces have increased education spending, much of it goes toward salaries, leaving little for infrastructure, materials, or innovations. Participants

described ambitious plans that remain stalled due to lack of funds. These financial constraints delay reforms, prevent scaling of pilot programs, and create dependencies on donor support.

18. Political Interference in Teacher Postings:

In almost all consultations, participants pointed to political pressure in teacher recruitment and transfers as a demotivating factor. Teachers are often appointed based on patronage rather than merit or local need, leading to staffing mismatches and low morale. In some cases, qualified candidates are overlooked while favoured individuals secure postings in desirable locations. This undermines trust and reduces the incentive for performance.

"If teachers are transferred by phone calls, what message does that send to those working hard?" —

Participant, Haripur consultation

recruitment and transfers as a demotivating factor. Teachers are often appointed based on patronage rather than merit or local need, leading to staffing mismatches and low morale. In some cases, qualified candidates are overlooked while favoured

19. Ineffective Implementation of Policies:

Several stakeholders noted that while many strong education policies exist on paper, their implementation remains weak or inconsistent. In Quetta and Lahore, civil society actors observed that without clear mechanisms for oversight, policies are not enforced equitably. Often, frontline workers are not even aware of updated protocols or initiatives. The result is a growing gap between policy intentions and ground realities.

"The documents are there, but they never reach the classrooms." —

Civil society representative,
Lahore consultation

110. Lack of Monitoring / Grievance Mechanisms:

Participants in Tharparker, Quetta and Peshawar reported schools that exist only on paper, empty buildings with no staff or teaching Component. In some cases, salaries continue to be disbursed to absent teachers, indicating deeper governance issues. These "ghost schools" erode trust in the education system and waste resources that could be better used elsewhere. The result is a visible infrastructure that fails to serve its intended purpose, leaving children with no real access to learning. Participants across consultations pointed out the absence of systems to report and resolve issues within schools. Teachers, students, and parents lack easy to access formal channels to flag concerns

"There's a school in our area with no teacher for three years, yet someone is getting paid."

Community leader, Tharparker Consultation

"If you complain, no one listens. And then the problem becomes normal."

Reporter, Tharparker consultation

or demand improvements. In the absence of accountability, even simple problems like damaged infrastructure or absentee staff remain unresolved for months. Establishing feedback loops and independent monitoring bodies was suggested as a critical step.

I11: Overage Students

Almost all consultations highlighted the particular challenges faced by overage students who attempt to rejoin school after periods of disruption. These learners are often older than their classmates and feel stigmatized or embarrassed in standard classroom settings. Also, large age gaps may create safeguarding issues for younger students. Teachers also report challenges in engaging such students without dedicated academic bridging content or psychosocial support. Current school structures do not provide separate age-appropriate spaces or accelerated learning options for such students, leaving many without a viable path back into formal education.

Current Intervention to Address OOSC Barriers

Economic Barriers (Economic)

This section summarizes the key strategies adopted by education stakeholders to address economic barriers affecting school access and continuation, along with their implementation gaps and potential improvements.

E1. Alleviating Poverty-Linked School Exclusion

Conditional cash transfers, stipends, and school meal programs have been introduced in several districts, including Quetta, Haripur, and parts of Punjab. However, consultation participants highlighted that coverage remains inconsistent and often misses the most vulnerable. Distribution is also marred by delays, limited targeting precision, and lack of transparency in beneficiary selection. The scale of poverty in some areas makes one-off or short-term incentives insufficient to shift long-term behaviors. Expanding coverage of education-linked social protection schemes and introduce need-based community-level enrolment mapping to identify excluded households. Consider transitioning to digital payment systems for greater transparency and efficiency. Ensure school meals are scaled beyond pilot districts and tailored to local nutritional gaps.

E2. Addressing Child Labor

While legislation exists to discourage child labor, participants in Tharparkar and Haripur noted limited enforcement in informal sectors such as agriculture and domestic work. Education initiatives that include flexible learning hours or bridge programs for working children are either absent or in early pilot stages. The existing school schedule often clashes with household labor patterns, making it difficult for working children to re-enter or stay enrolled. It was suggested to introduce part-time or evening schooling options in districts with high child labor prevalence. Incentivize families through direct support for children transitioning from work to school. Link schools with local businesses and employers to advocate for education-friendly work policies.

E3. Tackling Malnutrition and Health Constraints

School feeding programs, such as those piloted in Quetta and Islamabad, were referenced as promising but under-scaled. In most rural areas, such programs remain absent, and schools lack any structured health screenings or nutrition support. Teachers and parents reported that children often attend school hungry or unwell, impacting attendance and learning outcomes. It was suggested to include integrate school-based nutrition and health checkups into education plans, especially in food-insecure regions. Partnerships with local health departments or NGOs could support implementation. Scale school meal programs in high-stunting districts and track impact on retention.

Social and Cultural Barriers

This section outlines current efforts and identified gaps in addressing social and cultural barriers that hinder inclusive education, along with community-sourced proposals for more responsive solutions.

S1. Addressing Gender Disparity and Cultural Norms

Programs promoting girls' education have been initiated in multiple provinces through donor and government collaboration, such as the Girls' Right to Education initiative and school-based awareness campaigns. Despite this, participants in Tharparkar, Quetta, and Peshawar noted that efforts often remain surface-level and struggle to shift deeply held cultural norms. These initiatives are typically concentrated in urban or semi-urban zones, leaving remote rural areas underserved. Moreover, short project cycles limit sustained impact. It was suggested that partner with local influencers including mothers, community elders, and religious leaders are engaged to create culturally resonant messaging around education, especially focusing on girls' education. It was also recommended to ensure interventions are designed with long-term engagement in mind and include rural districts where resistance remains strongest.

S2. Preventing Early Marriages

Policy and legal frameworks exist to prevent underage marriage, but their enforcement remains weak, especially in rural districts like Tharparkar. Consultations indicated that education departments have had limited engagement with social welfare or legal protection agencies to address early marriage as an educational barrier. Most schools do not have referral protocols for at-risk girls. Suggestions include integrate child protection mechanisms within the education sector, including training for teachers to recognize and respond to early marriage risks. Expanding community-based girls' clubs and peer mentoring programs to build agency among adolescents and focused campaigns for discouraging child marriage. In this regard, cross-sector efforts between schools, local government, community leaders and law enforcement can be useful in shaping greater outcomes.

S3. Supporting Children with Disabilities

Special education schools exist in larger urban centres, but mainstream schools are generally ill-equipped to serve children with disabilities. Consultations in Haripur and Lahore highlighted that most regular schools lack accessible infrastructure and trained inclusive education personnel. Pilot projects on inclusive education have been launched in select districts, but remain small-scale and disconnected from the mainstream system. The suggestions included developing district-level inclusion plans with budgeted resources for teacher training, assistive devices, and school accessibility upgrades. Encourage inclusive classroom practices through regular coaching and peer learning opportunities for teachers.

S4. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

Currently, there is no formal system for providing psychosocial support in public schools. Participants in Tharparkar, Lahore and Peshawar noted that teachers often feel unprepared to address trauma, anxiety, or behavioral challenges in students. Where NGOs offer such support, coverage is extremely limited and not integrated with school programming. Pilot school-based mental health initiatives were recommended by participants with trained counselors or psychology interns in high-need districts. The need for also provide teachers with basic training in psychological first aid and referral protocols, was also discussed to integrate student well-being into school performance frameworks.

S5. Addressing Parental Beliefs / Lack of Awareness

In districts like Tharparkar and Haripur, local CSOs and education departments have initiated door-to-door awareness campaigns, community meetings, and enrolment drives timed around the academic calendar. However, these initiatives often operate as one-time efforts rather than continuous engagement strategies. Participants noted that these campaigns rarely reach nomadic or deeply rural communities and lack tailored messaging for specific parental concerns, especially around girls' education. The participants recommended to implement ongoing community engagement programs through school-community liaison officers or parent mobilizers. Use local influencers, such as religious leaders or respected elders, to reinforce the value of education. Regular parent-school open days and parent-teacher forums were also recommended to build trust and improve dialogue.

S6. Reducing Trust Deficit / Skepticism of School System

While some school rehabilitation programs and teacher deployment reforms have been introduced (e.g., in Balochistan and Peshawar), these efforts have yet to rebuild public confidence. Consultation participants noted that even new schools or upgraded facilities remain underutilized if the community has lost faith in the system's reliability. There are few transparent mechanisms to report non-functioning schools or hold absentee staff accountable. It was suggested to establish public-facing dashboards or wall charts displaying teacher attendance, student enrolments, and learning outcomes at school level. Community-led monitoring groups and grievance redressal mechanisms were proposed as key trust-building tools.

S7. Enhancing Perceived Economic Value of Education

In Haripur and Peshawar, vocational skills sessions and entrepreneurship orientation sessions have been piloted in select secondary schools. However, these remain limited in reach and not well-integrated into the mainstream curriculum. Stakeholders observed that where such programs exist, they often target urban schools and exclude high-need rural areas where livelihood relevance is most critical. It was recommended to integrate skills-based learning with local livelihood needs—such as agriculture,

crafts, or IT into middle and secondary curricula. Expand these interventions to rural and peri-urban schools using public-private partnerships. Establish alumni networks to mentor and demonstrate the economic returns of education.

S8. Strengthening Community Engagement and Parent Mobilization

School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Councils exist in many provinces but were described as inactive or symbolic by participants in Haripur and Lahore. Their meetings are irregular and decisions rarely influence school operations. Parents are often unaware of their roles or rights within these structures. It was recommended to provide orientation and capacity-building sessions for SMC members, including financial management, school planning, and student tracking. Establish quotas to include mothers and marginalized community members in these forums. Link SMC performance to school funding or recognition systems.

S9. Improving Safety Perceptions for Girls

Infrastructure upgrades, including boundary walls and separate toilets for girls, have been prioritized in select school clusters under donor-funded projects in Punjab and KP. However, participants in Tharparkar and Peshawar noted uneven implementation. Many girls' schools still lack basic safety measures or female staff. Fast-track school safety audits and upgrades in high-risk districts, were recommended. Also, establishment of a minimum safety standard for all schools receiving government support. Increase recruitment and retention of female teachers, particularly in girls-only or co-ed schools. Scale mobile classroom or community schooling for girls in insecure regions.

A. Access and Environmental Barriers

This section focuses on the strategies implemented to mitigate the impact of environmental disruptions on education, their current limitations, and participant-suggested improvements.

A1. Distance to School

School construction projects have been prioritized under federal and provincial development plans, particularly in Punjab and KP. However, consultations in Tharparkar and Haripur revealed that many new schools are still located far from target populations due to land acquisition constraints or political influence in site selection. Participants noted that donated land for school construction is often accepted without considering proximity to communities, leading to underutilization. Families in sparsely populated or migratory areas face even more significant challenges due to long, unsafe walking distances. There were suggestions to align future site selection more closely with population clusters, with some calling for geo-mapping and community consultation prior to land approvals.

A2. Shortage of Schools (Especially Secondary)

While primary schools have expanded rapidly, consultations in Quetta and Haripur underscored a stark shortage of secondary-level institutions. This has resulted in high dropout rates post-Grade 5, especially for girls. Education officials acknowledged budget limitations and staffing constraints as key barriers to expansion. In some instances, students willing to continue were unable to do so due to the unavailability of a school within reach. Participants discussed the potential of upgrading existing primary schools into middle or high schools through phased investment and clustering models that allow schools to share resources and staff.

A3. Lack of Transportation

Despite recognition of distance as a barrier, few school transportation schemes exist outside major cities. In Haripur and Tharparkar, participants proposed piloting community-managed or government-supported transport services, particularly for girls and students with disabilities. In some locations, parents reported pulling their children out of school due to unsafe travel conditions. These schemes, they argued, should be linked to school enrolment targets and require joint ownership by school staff and parent councils.

A5. Seasonal Migration / Climate Impact

Education authorities in areas like Tharparkar and southern Punjab have acknowledged seasonal migration patterns, but few structured interventions currently exist to accommodate mobile populations. Participants shared that while some NGOs have experimented with informal learning centres and mobile education models, these initiatives remain isolated and unscalable without government backing. Most public

schools lack contingency plans for children who miss school due to migration, and re-enrolment procedures are rigid. In Tharparker it was discussed that due to development of water reservoirs and dams these migrations have been reduced but still in case of lower water levels there is a trend of migration. Suggestions from community included establish mobile or satellite schools with flexible schedules in migration-prone regions. Alternatively, upon return the students may be provided bridging modules to cover up the sessions lost. Migration and seasonal labour holidays and planning of curriculum while adjusting for such trends may also be considered. It was discussed that integrating school calendar adjustments in arid zones to align better with migratory seasons and local livelihood cycles may ensure more sustained engagement of students. Education department may provide necessary SOPs to school for the same.

A6. Displacement and Conflict

It was informed that in conflict-affected areas of KP and Baluchistan, temporary learning centers have been deployed during crises, but participants noted they are often under-resourced and disconnected from the formal school system. Post-displacement rehabilitation of education infrastructure is slow, and there is limited psychosocial or academic reintegration support for children returning after prolonged absence. Furthermore, many schools in these areas lack preparedness for future emergencies. The suggestions included to build an emergency education response framework that includes psychosocial support, rapid school rehabilitation, and portable student records. Expanding the use of temporary classrooms with government-NGO coordination during conflict or disaster and training teachers in conflict-sensitive education was also recommended. Ensure safe zones for children returning to school, discussed as a priority for such areas.

Institutional Barriers

This section summarizes existing efforts to address structural barriers within the education system, their current limitations, and key recommendations raised during consultations.

I1. Poor School Infrastructure

Initiatives to upgrade sanitation, drinking water, and electricity in schools are underway in many districts, supported by public funds and donor assistance. Despite these efforts, participants in Lahore and Peshawar indicated that progress is uneven, with remote or low-enrolment schools often deprioritized. Teachers reported feeling demotivated due to lack of functional classrooms and learning materials. In some cases, the absence of toilets or boundary walls was cited as a reason for girls dropping out after primary level. Some stakeholders proposed adopting minimum infrastructure standards across all schools and linking infrastructure audits with performance-based funding to incentivize maintenance.

I2. Teacher Shortage (Especially Female Teachers)

Governments have initiated merit-based recruitment drives and teacher certification reforms, but participants in Tharparkar and Haripur pointed to persistent shortages, particularly of women educators in rural areas. Difficult posting conditions, limited housing, and delayed salaries were among the deterrents mentioned. In certain districts, female candidates fail qualifying exams despite high local demand for their presence in schools. Some suggested introducing rural service incentives, local recruitment quotas for female candidates, and transportation or housing allowances to attract and retain staff.

I3. Agility in Schooling Policies (Timing, Re-entry)

The formal school system generally lacks flexibility to accommodate children who experience disruption due to work, migration, or family responsibilities. Consultations in Lahore and Haripur noted that re-enrolment procedures are burdensome and there are no structured bridging programs. Overage learners and those returning after a gap often feel unwelcome or stigmatized. Participants called for inclusive policies that allow children to re-enter school without penalty, and for development of modular, accelerated curricula suited for overage or returning learners.

I5. Digital Divide / Lack of Technology Access

While digital learning initiatives expanded during the pandemic, participants in Quetta and Lahore noted that low connectivity and lack of devices continue to exclude children in poor or remote areas. There is also a lack of structured digital literacy training for both students and teachers. Some recommended investing in shared digital learning hubs at schools, teacher training in basic ICT skills, and offline content delivery through SD cards or radio for students without access to internet or devices.

16. No Real-Time Data for Targeting OOSC Communities

Consultations in Peshawar and Haripur flagged the absence of timely and accurate education data as a major hindrance to effective planning. Although EMIS platforms exist, their reach and frequency of updates were questioned. Education officials shared that decisions were often made without recent data on student retention or teacher deployment. Stakeholders suggested involving community-based enumerators to update enrolment and dropout data, and recommended integrating data into district education planning cycles.

17. Budget Constraints

While some increase in education allocations has occurred, Quetta and Peshawar participants emphasized that budget execution remains weak. Much of the funding is absorbed by salaries, with limited room for innovation or infrastructure development. Some districts reported returned or lapsed funds due to delays in planning or approvals. Participants supported more predictable funding flows and earmarked grants for marginalized areas or low-performing schools, alongside timely disbursement. The participants also recommended special grant packages for districts with OOSC on results-based funding models and adaptive development plans to ensure the projects meet the local need.

18. Political Interference in Teacher Recruitment and Postings

Tharparker and Haripur consultations revealed that while recruitment frameworks have improved, political pressure continues to influence postings and transfers. This often results in teacher absenteeism or overstaffing in preferred urban locations. Participants advocated for independent teacher placement boards and automated transfer systems to reduce discretionary interference and promote equity in staffing.

19. Ineffective Implementation of Policies

Even where progressive education policies exist, participants in Lahore and Quetta noted a gap in local-level implementation due to poor dissemination, lack of clarity, or capacity gaps. Teachers and administrators are sometimes unaware of policy updates or their role in enforcement. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of frontline staff orientation, periodic policy refreshers, and alignment between central and district-level guidelines.

110. Lack of Monitoring / Grievance Mechanisms

Across all consultations, there was consensus that grievance redress systems in schools are either weak or absent. Teachers and community members cited long delays in resolving issues related to infrastructure, staff behavior, or learning materials. There is also little follow-up once complaints are submitted, discouraging future reporting. Participants suggested establishing school-level complaint boxes, district-level

helplines, and monitoring dashboards to track follow-up actions on reported issues. Furthermore, in many consultations it was discussed that audits and monitoring missions have helped identify non-functional schools, but enforcement remains weak. In Quetta and Peshawar, stakeholders highlighted that while some ghost schools have been removed from official lists, others continue to receive funding. Community members expressed frustration over unchecked absenteeism and suggested that visible monitoring tools such as public noticeboards or local committees could create accountability. Participants emphasized the need for third-party monitoring, stricter accountability for school administrators, and transparent public reporting of school status to reduce misuse of resources.

I11: Overage Students

Almost all consultations highlighted the particular challenges faced by overage students who attempt to rejoin school after periods of disruption. These learners are often older than their classmates and feel stigmatized or embarrassed in standard classroom settings. Also large age gaps may create safeguarding issues for younger students. Teachers also report challenges in engaging such students without dedicated academic bridging content or psychosocial support. Current school structures do not provide separate age-appropriate spaces or accelerated learning options for such students, leaving many without a viable path back into formal education. Participants noted that flexible re-entry programs, evening learning shifts, and modular curriculum design could significantly improve reintegration. Some stakeholders called for expanding non-formal education programs and aligning them with the formal system to allow transition pathways for overage learners. It was reported that in almost all provinces some types of accelerated learning programs (ALPs) have been piloted by NGOs and non-formal education departments, offering condensed curricula to help overage children's complete foundational grades quickly. However, participants expressed concerns about the limited scale, inconsistent quality, and lack of formal recognition of these pathways, which prevents successful transition into mainstream schooling or vocational streams.

SECTION III: BARRIER SPECIFIC STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS (PROPOSED)



Intervention Strategies (Barrier wise)

The following section discusses a few examples of barrier specific intervention menus which can be adapted in consultation with the input from the local forums.

E: Economic Barriers

Resource and economic barriers refer to the material realities and financial pressures that hinder families from enrolling or retaining their children in school.

“We’re not choosing between school and no school—we’re choosing between school and not eating”.

These are not merely income-related obstacles; they are entangled with household survival strategies, labor demands, and generational poverty. In almost every consultation participant emphasized poverty as a key barrier. As one community member put it starkly, “We’re not choosing between school and no school—we’re choosing between school and not eating”.

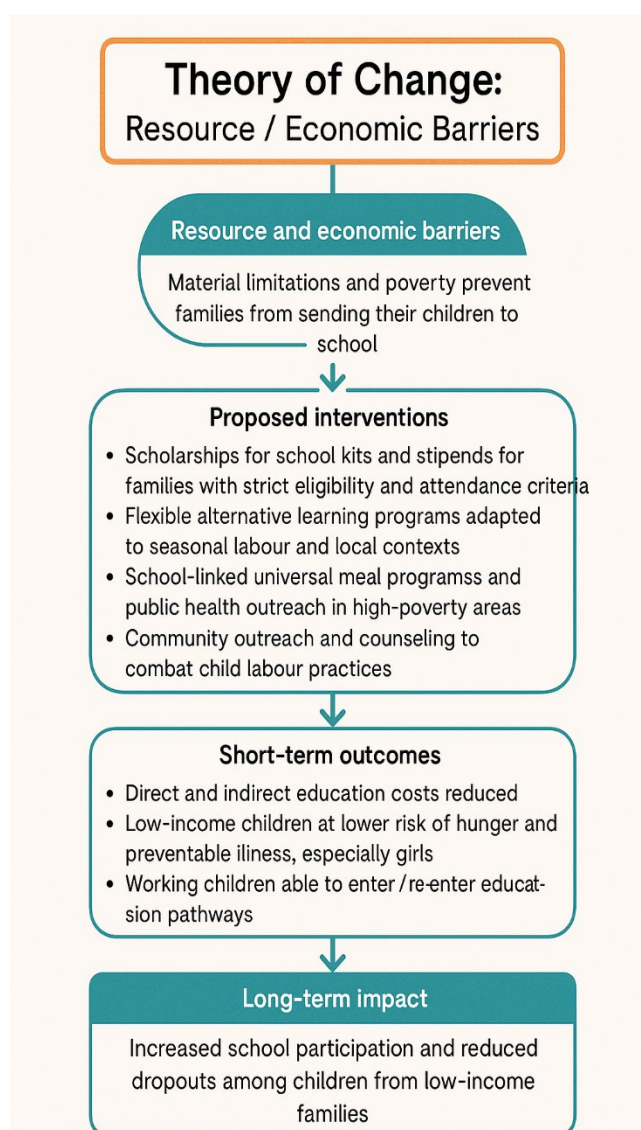
R1: Indirect Costs of Schooling

Despite formal school fees being waived, many participants identified that a high proportion of parents could not afford to send their children due to costs of uniforms, books, exam fees, and especially transport.

Proposed Interventions:

The recommendations include scholarships for provision of school kits (uniforms, books, bags) through UC Forum-verified eligibility deserving students from low-income families tied to enrolment and regular attendance. These could be in the form of complete attendance awards or linked with any other simpler and assistive outcome depending on the recipient conditions.

However, the idea of unconditional or cash contribution was criticised. So, the families may feel their children have earned a privilege. School administration in collaboration



with the UC level forum should prepare a final demand list for such children and collaborate with the district level forum to develop a proposal for the same.

R2: Dependency on Child Labour

In consultations, children were described as critical to family survival — working in fields, shops, factories, or caring for siblings while parents' work. Families often value education, but it competes with income generation. The result is either non-enrolment or chronic absenteeism.

Proposed Interventions:

1. Flexible Alternative Learning Programs (ALPs) were recommended to be aligned with the work and labour realities of the locality. Evening or weekend classes and relaxations in the timings or introduction of evening make up shifts or evening schools in the seasonal labour activities like harvesting season or post migration season will allow children to catch up after short term engagement or dropout spells.
2. School-to-skills bridging models that offer practical skills while transitioning children to mainstream education where the parents and children can feel that their continuity in school will enhance the earning potential of their children. It was also discussed to consider capacity and skill development in both local traits and expertise as well as in areas of shortage in labour in specific areas. Workshops and labs for such facilities may be incorporated in the schools and such proposals may be forwarded for consideration.
3. Counselling and awareness sessions, paired with incentives, can further support transitions from work to schools.
4. Community outreach activities including campaigns should address community perception of education not as a cost, but as a pathway out of poverty.

Theory of Change: If families facing resource constraints are provided with school-linked economic support (e.g., stipends, school meals), flexible education models, and targeted community incentives, then school participation will increase among children from low-income households. Over time, this will contribute to poverty reduction through improved educational attainment, creating a positive cycle that benefits both households and communities.

R3: Malnourishment and Health Barriers

In Peshawar, Tharparker, Lahore and Haripur, participants spoke of students who arrived hungry and disengaged, unable to focus or participate. Chronic undernutrition and untreated illness quietly push children out of classrooms, not due to lack of interest, but because their basic needs remain unmet.

Proposed Interventions:

1. Education-linked cash transfers and school stipends need to be scaled up and made more targeted, with digital disbursement mechanisms to ensure transparency.
2. Universal school meal programs may be prioritised (if not in all) in schools with areas of high poverty. Especially in food-insecure districts like Tharparkar and Quetta, where nutrition is a critical barrier to both attendance and learning outcomes. In areas with high poverty this may also be proposed as a strategy to bring more children to school.
3. Mechanism for quarterly or biannual school visits by public health officials in high-burden districts. These visits would include basic health screenings (vision, dental, skin, growth), hygiene promotion sessions (e.g., handwashing, menstrual hygiene, nutrition), vaccination updates or referrals, Individual follow-up notes for parents or guardians, with essential referral provisions.
4. Priority status in public health treatment, medicine provision, and insurance enrolment for children enrolled in school in selected pilot districts. This could include fast-track access at government hospitals for enrolled students and their parents, waiver of outpatient medication fees for school-going children, enrolment in provincial health cards or insurance schemes as a conditional incentive for school registration.
5. In collaboration with health related CSOs, practitioner forums and stakeholders collaboration, partnership and referral systems may be established for quick referrals of children especially students from the target communities as well as for periodic visits to inspire and engage children in being better health aware and participating in health-related other activities.

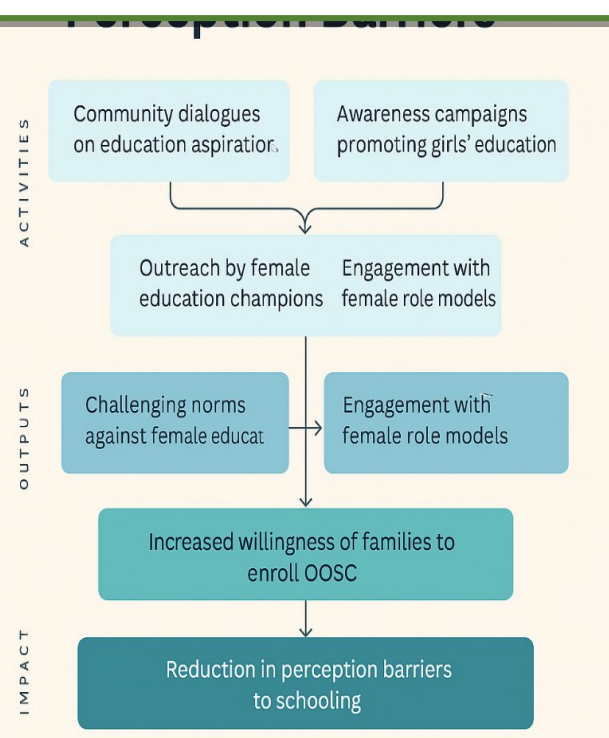
P: Perception Barriers

Perception and demand-side barriers stem from how families view the relevance, safety, or appropriateness of formal education. These are not structural obstacles like distance or poverty; rather, they are belief-based, emotional, and often shaped by intergenerational experiences with schooling or the lack thereof.

The NA-PCCR consultations across Tharparkar, Haripur, Quetta, Peshawar, and other districts revealed that many parents do not actively reject education, but they also do not see its value in the face of more pressing household priorities. For girls in particular, the fear of public exposure during long walks to school, the lack of role models, and culturally rooted gender norms compound these barriers. Similarly, in areas with strong conservative traditions, secular education is viewed with suspicion, especially when it seems misaligned with local lack of clarity on faith or moral values. Because these barriers are highly localized, they require socially sensitive, culturally grounded solutions which acknowledge these root causes and approached through participatory strategies. Throughout the consultations, a number of community participants including community elders, religious leaders, local politicians, media representatives, CSO members, district government administrations and teachers expressed willingness to participate in local information campaigns to change these perceptions and identify and respond to structural needs associated with the same.

Based upon the relevant perception barriers, local-level communication campaign may be designed which may include the following aspects. Please note that these aspects are only a few among the recommendations and should reflect broader adaptations in local context. The following TOC Guide this engagement. Based on the recommendations the participants, the following barrier specific activities may be considered.

Theory of Change: If communities are regularly engaged through locally trusted community members, and if education is offered in a manner that respects cultural norms of modesty and safety, then families will become more open to sending their children to schools. As exposure grows and community examples emerge, this acceptance will widen, allowing more local students to transition to formal schooling and remain enrolled through adolescence.



P1: Lack of Trust in the Schooling System

In areas like Quetta, Haripur and Tharparkar, participants shared some key experiences which have affected community trust. Aspects such as ghost schools, prolonged teacher absenteeism, and broken promises about school improvements have questioned community trust in schools. When claims fail in practice, families develop a rational mistrust in the system. Even where infrastructure is in place, the absence of functioning accountability mechanisms erodes long-term faith. While there have been significant improvements in many of these areas in educational services the mechanisms for communicating these advancements have been found limited and ineffective.

Proposed Interventions:

1. Community–school dialogue platforms led by UC Forums and facilitated by trusted local actors, especially covering the local dynamics. Schools can potentially host such gatherings as confidence building measures and invite parents from such communities to counter existing beliefs and perceptions.
2. Community-based monitoring boards tracking teacher presence and functionality and publicizing such reports and results was considered important. In such areas schools and relevant public gathering areas or interventions like rikshaw/ public transport campaigns and SMS campaigns were suggested to inform people about the achievements and successes of public education systems.
3. Honors and awards of local high performing local students and discussing their case studies at public forums can be arranged by local influentials. These community influentials have the voice to amplify the successes of local students and how they are making a change in local, provincial and national spheres. These may include small successes these children have achieved though engagement in education such as establishing better farming practices, getting scholarships and other such aspects which may be recognized as success locally.
4. Local competitions and awards for media stories, press club and media university departments may be arranged to produce more localised success stories and contents to inspire parents and students for better education. Such event can be arranged through allocated funding proposals as well as through local private sector sponsorships and CSR (jointly). CSOs and Media professionals may play a larger role in the same.
5. Recognition and incentive programs for high-performing local schools was also recommended by participating principles. This will promote key initiatives taken at the school and will communicate such successes in the community

loudly. Aspects such as pictures of high performing local school teachers and students may be displayed. A school, teacher and student performance assessment framework should be developed which can make recognition of achievement more meaningful and grounded in local realities.

P2: Education Perceived as Economically Useless

In Haripur and similar districts, it was discussed that the return on investment from education appears weak. Parents observe that children, even after completing 10th grade, struggle to find jobs or contribute economically. This discourages both enrolment and retention, particularly for boys expected to contribute to household income and leading to engagement in child labor.

Proposed Interventions: A local-level communication campaign may be designed which may include the following aspects. Please note that these aspects are only a few among the recommendations and should reflect broader adaptations in local context.

1. Alumni school and community visit programs taking local graduates and successful students to communities to humanize education outcomes and for the parents to relate to.
2. Another key element discussed in the feedback was regarding introduction of life skills or vocational sampler modules at the middle-school level. While this will be covered in institutional section more but here, we would only discuss the presence of such elements should be promoted in the education campaigns.
3. Career fairs with local employers and training institutes should be promoted as a part of PPP and CSR initiatives bringing employers who can interact with such community people and promote education in local context while emphasising relevance of education local skills needs, entrepreneurship, migration abroad and not only the limited local job market.

P3: Cultural and Gender Norms Discouraging Girls Education

In multiple consultations, stakeholders highlighted a widespread belief against girls leaving home especially after reaching adolescence. These cultural norms are often framed around modesty, family honor, and gender roles and acts as a powerful deterrent to parent against female education. In these communities, families worry that letting girls walk to school or attend co-educational spaces may subject them to unwanted attention or social judgment. It was discussed that in conservative communities, the act of leaving home in uniform can attract stigma. Additionally, some families question the relevance of formal education for girls, believing their primary responsibilities lie in managing the home and preparing for marriage. As noted in the Tharparkar and Quetta consultations, many girls are withdrawn from

school after Class 5, even if they were previously enrolled, as the risks to family honor are seen to increase with age.

Participant largely agreed that such barrier is not rooted in religion per se, but in social expectations around gender, and is perpetuated by both men and women across generations. It is further reinforced by the absence of female teachers, limited examples of successful female graduates, and a general lack of community dialogue around girls' long-term aspirations. The campaign activity to counter such barriers included:

1. Engagement with respected religious leaders and local influencers to speak in favour of inclusive education. It was discussed that the UC and District forums may engage with such leaders for echoing positive messages about educational outcomes and promote education. Subject to their availability there can be a number of community consultations of these leaders with wider such parents in wider audience and their engagement in target communities, where such barriers persist.

P4: Safety Concerns for Student Commute

The most cited reason for not sending girls (and in many areas for boys also) to school in rural and peri-urban areas was safety during transit. In Haripur and Tharparker, participants spoke of harassment or safeguarding risks exposure during long, unsupervised commutes, especially when schools are located far and remote locations. Even when physical violence is rare, the perception of risk is enough to stop students from attending the school, particularly during adolescence. This as per many

“If we had even one van, twenty more girls would be in school tomorrow”.

Tharparker leaders

respondents was cited as main reason for girls dropping out of school. In Tharparker, for instance, leaders shared that: “If we had even one van, twenty more girls would be in school tomorrow”. A number of participants acknowledged these

risks and suggested a number of mitigation activities including

1. A number of safe transport solutions were discussed which have been discussed under the I1 barrier as transportation for school.
2. Opening of community-based school with less travel distance have also been covered in I1 barrier discussion as a potential area for avoiding such travels.
3. Group escort models (e.g., “walking school buses”) involving older students or community volunteers were also discussed.

S: Social and Cultural Barriers

This category includes barriers that arise from identity-based discrimination, traditional norms, or systemic neglect of specific groups. Consultations across Tharparkar, Quetta, Haripur, and Peshawar revealed that these are not only historical but remain current and widespread. Children excluded under this category often remain invisible in statistics, experience compounded disadvantages, and require both structural and social solutions to re-enter learning pathways.

S1: Disability Barriers

In multiple consultations, (particularly in Haripur and Quetta), the stakeholders raised concerns about the absence of children with disabilities in schools. It was discussed that children with disability (CWD) are often kept at home due to stigma, lack of facilities, or beliefs that they are incapable of learning.

Families fear judgment or isolation if they send a visibly disabled child to school. Meanwhile, schools are barely equipped to physically and pedagogically support diverse learners. Teachers lack training in inclusive practices, and basic accommodations (like ramps, toilets, or visual aids) are absent. This leads to a self-fulfilling cycle, where children with disabilities remain invisible, reinforcing the assumption that they don't belong in regular school.

Proposed Interventions:

1. Inclusive education training for teachers and school administrators, including modules on behavioural, physical, and sensory inclusion techniques in communities where significant proportion of OOSC among CWD are identified.
2. Assistive devices and accessibility upgrades (e.g., ramps, seating, vision/hearing aids) for schools in priority districts, based on UC Forum demand lists.
3. Identification and outreach campaigns in collaboration with local health units, to map out-of-school children with disabilities and offer tailored enrolment pathways.
4. Peer education and anti-stigma programming in schools to normalize inclusion and friendly atmosphere for CWD.

S2: Early Marriage

In districts like Tharparkar and parts of South Punjab, stakeholders emphasized that girls are often withdrawn from school after puberty, particularly once they reach

middle or high school. The strong cultural expectation that older girls should prepare for marriage rather than continue education were identified as key limitation. Consultations revealed that some families believe longer schooling reduces marriage prospects or increases reputational risks. Once married, girls are rarely allowed to resume their education or find it difficult to continue education due to health, family and other concerns.

Proposed Interventions:

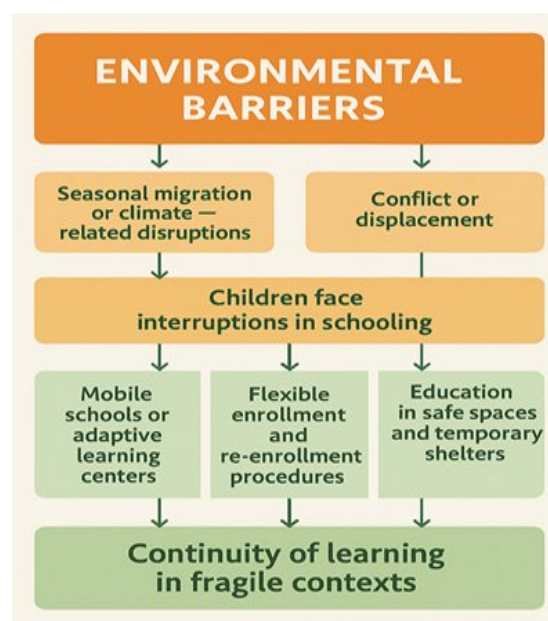
1. Community awareness campaigns through UC forum led initiatives which may include local leaders while adapting to local communication approaches and systems to highlight the harms of early marriage and benefits of girls' education.
2. Re-entry pathways for married adolescent girls, who may have left studies and want to rejoin through flexible learning centers or specially designed bridge courses with child-care support or remote modules.

E: Environmental Barriers

Environmental barriers refer to the disruptive conditions created by geography, climate, and insecurity, which limit a child's ability to regularly access school or complete their education. These include both natural factors such as droughts, floods, extreme weather, and seasonal migration, as well as conflict and insecurity that displace families or make educational institutions unsafe or non-functional. Consultations across Tharparkar, Quetta, Haripur, and Peshawar revealed that many children remain out of school because they are physically cut off from learning opportunities for reasons beyond their control.

Theory of Change: If the education system is better prepared for the local education disruption realities such as seasonal migration, climate vulnerability, and displacement through flexible calendars, mobile and transit learning options, rapid re-enrolment mechanisms, and psychosocial support. Then children -affected will be able to remain connected to education and such interruptions will no longer lead to permanent exclusion of affected children.

These disruptions are often cyclical and predictable, yet the education system continues to rely on rigid calendars, static infrastructure, and one-size-fits-all enrolment and promotion policies. This rigidity makes it difficult for affected children to return to school even after the environmental event or displacement has passed. Importantly, these barriers intersect with other forms of vulnerability, such as poverty, gender, and disability which make children from climate-affected, nomadic, or displaced communities especially prone to long-term exclusion. The lack of mobile learning solutions, adaptive calendars, and reintegration options contributes to a silent but persistent layer of out-of-school children whose needs remain unmet.



E1: Seasonal Migration and Climate Impact

In multiple consultation sessions—particularly in Tharparkar, Quetta, and Haripur—seasonal migration and environmental disruption were cited as major contributors to irregular attendance and school dropout. These patterns are not sporadic but predictable and cyclical, rooted in household dependence on seasonal labour (agriculture, livestock, construction), especially in rural and semi-arid districts.

In Tharparkar, families migrate temporarily in search of water and grazing for livestock, sometimes for weeks or months. Children, especially boys, accompany their parents and miss long stretches of school. In other regions like Haripur, school-age

"Once a child misses one harvest season of school, they are unlikely to return the next term."

children are involved in agricultural harvests. These cycles are well known but poorly planned for by the education system. As consultations noted, "Once a child misses one harvest season of school, they are unlikely to return the next term." Furthermore, climate induced events such as drought, flooding, and extreme heat also reportedly further exacerbate the issue. In flood-prone or water areas, schools are either inaccessible or closed for safety, often with no make-up strategies in place. This results in temporary dropouts becoming permanent, especially in the absence of any flexible re-entry system.

Proposed Interventions

1. District and UC level forum may provide recommendations to education department offices and provincial offices to adjust school calendars and exam schedules to accommodate known migration cycles or climate disruptions.
2. Deployment of mobile schools or transit learning units may be considered for migrant groups, especially in Tharparkar and Balochistan. These may include tents, portable resources, or teaching aides that follow seasonal movement.
3. Establish short-term, intensive learning modules may be introduced at the return to reintegrate children who missed school due to seasonal displacement or labour. These should be recognized officially and enable promotion, with specialized teachers and allocated academic plans.
4. Approved migration absence windows or buffer policies may be in place to allow children to remain enrolled and promoted if they attend catch-up modules.

E2: Conflict and Instability Barriers

In many areas of Pakistan covered by consultation, education stakeholders flagged that displacement due to conflict, violence, or localized insecurity which continues to disrupt children's access to schooling. These are not isolated incidents, but recurring patterns for some communities. In such communities children are affected by displacement which face a triple disadvantage.

- a. Loss of physical access to their original school
- b. Lack of registration or documentation in their new location
- c. Psychosocial distress and stigma that alienate them from peers and learning spaces

In many cases, schools in affected zones remain non-operational due to teacher relocation, damaged infrastructure, or fear of further violence. Children who are internally displaced (IDPs) often settle in informal areas not serviced by the education system, and without a national or provincial mechanism to track, refer, or re-enrol these children, they simply fall through the cracks. Consultation participants noted that even when displaced children do attempt to enrol elsewhere, host schools may resist, citing lack of records, space, or jurisdiction. For girls, the burden is higher—families often restrict their movement during instability, and adolescent girls are especially vulnerable to being withdrawn permanently.

Proposed Interventions

1. Develop a district-level contingency plan that includes school-level protocols for enrolling displaced children without full documentation, and guidance for reassigning teachers or classes as needed.
2. Establish low-cost, flexible learning hubs within or near temporary shelters or informal settlements, with materials aligned to the national curriculum with quick approval pathways.
3. Offer age-appropriate psychosocial support and accelerated learning packages to help displaced children catch up academically and emotionally. Collaboration with relevant CSOs and practitioner forums such as associations of physicians may be partnered for immediate action.
4. Adaptive education approaches as discussed in E1 may also apply.

I: Institutional Barriers

I1: Distance to School

Despite significant expansion in school infrastructure over recent decades, long distances to school remain a major exclusion factor contributing to OOSC. Particularly in sparsely populated, rural, and underserved areas. In consultations across Tharparkar, Quetta, and Haripur, it was repeatedly noted that children, especially girls, are unable to attend school because the nearest functional school is simply too far away. For many, this means walking 3 to 5 km, often without a paved road, shade, or secure environment. For girls, the barrier is magnified by mobility restrictions, community perceptions of safety, and the fear of harassment on public roads. Families are reluctant to let adolescent girls walk alone or rely on informal transport. Where younger children are concerned, parents hesitate to allow long solo commutes out of concern for their safety. Even where primary schools exist, the lack of nearby middle or high schools results in significant dropout after Grade 5. Most of the schools in each of the high OOSC districts were found to be single room and primary schools which have limited capacity to support education beyond primary. The number of middle, secondary and higher secondary schools remain very low as compared to the primary

Theory of Change: If physical access to school is improved through local school expansion, community transport solutions, and targeted support for children living in remote settlements—particularly girls—then families will feel more secure in sending their children to school, and dropout caused by distance will significantly decline.

schools. Participants noted that parents are “forced to choose” between their daughter’s safety and her continued education.

Proposed Interventions:

1. **Establishment of Satellite or Feeder Schools** with rapid-deployment infrastructure was considered one major aspect. To serve remote or sparsely populated communities where full-scale school construction is not immediately feasible, the strategy should support the establishment of satellite or feeder schools using modular, easy-to-install infrastructure. These units may include pre-fabricated classrooms with weatherproof panels and proper ventilation, tented or mobile container-based schools that can be deployed and set up within a few days. Basic provisions for solar energy, handwashing stations, water tanks, and girl-friendly toilets, scalability to expand from a single room to a two-room facility as enrolment increases. This approach not only addresses distance but also allows for flexible scaling based on population growth or seasonal demand. By using pre-approved structural designs and rapid procurement protocols, districts can respond to identified gaps without waiting for full infrastructure cycles.

These schools should be formally affiliated with nearby parent schools for administrative oversight, quality assurance, and teacher deployment. This model is especially suited for migrant-prone areas, emerging informal settlements, and dispersed villages in districts like Tharparkar, Rajanpur, Dera Bugti, and Kohistan, where traditional construction timelines are impractical due to terrain or climate. The UC and District level forums may facilitate such schools in the following manner.

- a. **Community-Led Site Identification and Demand Validation (UC Forum):** Before deploying any modular or satellite school, the UC OOSC Forum should coordinate household outreach to validate demand. This ensures schools are placed where the need is genuine, distances are manageable to serve maximum capacity, and families are willing to commit to send their children to school following the deployment of the school. The forum’s engagement adds community legitimacy, which improves acceptance and security.
- b. **Key Federal Institutions** with relevant expertise such as Basic Education Community Schools (DGBECS), National Education Foundation (NEF), Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE), National Institute of Excellence in Teacher Education (NIETE) and National Commission for Human

Development (NCHD) may be assigned respective roles in the target districts to collaborate and assist with relevant expertise and also support building of relevant capacities at provincial and district levels. In this regard introduction of relevant legislative and policy directives may be considered.

- c. **Oversight of Setup and Resource Allocation (District Forum):** The District OOSC Forum should maintain a shortlist of remote settlements where satellite schools may be viable. Once a request is validated at the UC level, the District Forum can escalate it to the NEEF for grant with clear justification, student profiles, and support requests, helping prioritize deployment under limited budgets. Their role also includes coordinating logistics, inspection, and teacher deployment.
 - d. **Community Participation in Safety and Maintenance (UC Forum + Local Elders):** Given the remote nature of these facilities, ensuring school safety, regular maintenance, and protection from vandalism or underuse is key. The UC Forum can designate a Community Safety Committee comprising elders, parents, and religious or community leaders, tasked with regular check-ins at the school, reporting of issues to the UC Forum, supporting teachers in outreach and retention, arranging escorts or walking companions for girls and helping identify cases of dropout or irregular attendance.
 - e. **Local Administration Support for Land, Security, and Expansion:** The Assistant Commissioner's office and Education Department representatives at the District Forum can help secure public land or vacant spaces, facilitate NOCs, and coordinate with law enforcement or village guards to ensure safety in sensitive areas. Their involvement also strengthens credibility and supports institutional ownership of these setups.
 - f. **Transparent Feedback Loops and Reporting:** The forums should maintain simple monitoring dashboards for these schools, tracking enrolments and attendance trends, teacher presence, school usage (active/inactive days), and any incidents or security concerns. This data can be shared with the District Education Office and used to make a case for upgrading temporary schools to permanent facilities once consistent demand is established.
2. **Rapid Teacher Support and Substitution Models (District + UC Coordination):** In remote schools, sudden teacher absenteeism can result in total disruption. The forums can maintain a pool of community-vetted substitute teachers or para-educators, trained in basic facilitation, who can be deployed for short

durations under district guidance. This ensures continuity while formal systems catch up.

3. Alternate Learning Pathways (ALPs), community school networks, and student voucher mechanisms are strategic ways to bridge institutional gaps, especially in remote and underserved areas. However, these models must evolve to overcome persistent challenges like dropout, poor quality, weak accountability, and lack of system integration. The following considerations in such models are recommended.
 - a. UC OOSC Forums should lead local ALP planning and outreach, identifying communities where children are unable to access formal school and proposing ALP models adapted to age, livelihood patterns, and mobility realities.
 - b. Introduce evening shifts, seasonal modules, or weekend in areas with child labor or migration, using existing community spaces (e.g., union council halls, mosques, BISP offices) may be considered where applicable.
 - c. District Forums can coordinate with education departments to ensure ALP programs follow standardized curriculum frameworks that are officially recognized for reintegration into the formal system.
 - d. Use digital learning kits or mobile tablets to improve content delivery, reduce dependency on one teacher, and make catch-up learning more engaging for older children.
 - e. Convert high-performing community schools (e.g., single-room setups in remote areas) into government-supported satellite schools through UC Forum-endorsed verification. This may be through evening programs.
 - f. Integrate these schools into district EMIS and oversight systems so they can receive teaching support, training, and supplies from the public system.
4. Transport support suggestions included the following options. However, it was discussed that such service should only be provided with clear usage control and oversight mechanism to ensure the vehicles are only used for the transportation of students. Also, it was discussed these vehicles should only be provided to schools which can ensure new enrolments subject to the provision

of transport and other such conditions in the agreement for providing transportation services so the facility reaches only the most deserving schools on priority.

- a. A PPP easy instalment vehicle (such as a Carry Van) subsidy schemes (like yellow cab scheme) for transport scheme to cater to students from 2km+ areas. While busses are suitable for urban setting such small vehicles may be more suitable for remote locations and villages and are economical and easier to maintain. Such transport may be provided to a community representative upon a bond for serving a specified number of students for pick and drop in target communities at easy instalments and in return their obligation to pay the instalment may be mitigated or relaxed to a certain amount.
- b. An alternate can be subsidized pooled vans for girls which are school owned such transport where the fuel and driver cost may be bore by the community and will be shared across the number of students served.
- c. Community-managed transport solutions, where the UC council can play an oversight role was also discussed where a private lender can have the ownership of the vehicle but the vehicle is managed for a certain time during school duration as per agreed norms and catchment area may also be considered.

Barrier I2: Incomplete School Infrastructure

In multiple consultation districts participants, education officials, and civil society representatives pointed to poor school infrastructure as a major reason for low enrolment and chronic absenteeism. This includes unsafe buildings, lack of basic amenities, overcrowded classrooms, broken toilets, inadequate water supply, and no electricity. In some cases, schools operate in dilapidated or unfinished buildings, making them physically unsafe, particularly during rain or high temperatures. The problem is particularly acute for girls, who drop out when schools lack separate, functional toilets, or safe and clean spaces to manage menstrual hygiene. Parents also hesitate to send girls to schools that look abandoned or neglected, linking poor infrastructure directly to concerns around safety, dignity, and status. Furthermore, the absence of proper boundary walls or lighting raises security risks, particularly in remote or peri-urban areas. In some schools, multiple grades share a single room or sit outdoors, limiting quality learning.

Theory of Change: If schools are accessible and physically safe, adequately equipped, and gender-responsive — and if communities are empowered to monitor and support small-scale improvements — then both enrolment and retention will improve, particularly for girls. Because when infrastructure reflects dignity and safety, families are more confident in education, and children are more motivated to stay.

Proposed Interventions

1. UC OOSC Forums, in collaboration with school councils and local engineering departments, should conduct rapid infrastructure assessments to map urgent needs such as boundary walls, latrines, roofs, and seating. Results should be presented to the district forum for prioritization and integration into development proposals.
2. District Forums may compile low-cost, high-impact infrastructure proposals for aspects like., girl-friendly toilets, boundary walls, and solar fans for submission under the National Education Emergency Fund (NEEF), with preference given to schools in high OOSC catchments.
3. Revitalize or establish maintenance sub-committees under School Management Committees (SMCs), with budget oversight supported by UC Forums. Community engagement should be encouraged by linking visible improvements (e.g., shaded seating, water filters) with local contributions or in-kind support.
4. New and renovated school infrastructure should meet minimum standards for climate resilience (e.g., flood-safe flooring, ventilation) and gender-responsive

design (e.g., privacy, disposal systems, water access), especially in hot, flood-prone, or drought-affected regions as well as disability friendly where relevant.

5. Introduce simple student / parent led school environment audits (via forms or apps) to assess basic infrastructure on a recurring basis promoting civic responsibility and giving students a voice in their learning environment.

Barrier I3: Primary to Secondary Transition

While access to primary education has expanded in many districts, a critical bottleneck exists at the middle and secondary levels. Consultation participants across

“Our daughters studied till Class 5 in the village. The nearest middle school is over 5 kilometers away. We can’t send them there every day.”

Community Member

Tharparkar, Haripur, and Quetta consistently reported that most children, especially girls drop out after Grade 5, not because they lose interest, but because there is no school to transition into.

In Tharparkar, one community member stated: “Our daughters

studied till Class 5 in the village. The nearest middle school is over 5 kilometres away. We can’t send them there every day.”

The gap in middle and high schools is most pronounced in rural, tribal, and conflict-affected areas, where infrastructure development has been slow, and school expansion has not kept pace with population growth. In other areas, secondary schools exist but are severely understaffed, lack subject-specialist teachers, or are seen as unsafe for girls due to long commutes or lack of female staff. This barrier creates a silent dropout pipeline: many children complete primary school only to find themselves with no viable continuation. Girls are disproportionately affected due to mobility restrictions, safety concerns, and early marriage pressures that become more pronounced with age.

Proposed Interventions

1. Use OOSC and transition data from primary schools to highlight students dropping out due to lack of transition to post-primary level. UC Forums may identify primary schools with high completion but no feeder middle school, and prioritize them for vertical expansion (Class 6–8 or 9–10) with additional classrooms and subject teachers. In sparsely populated areas, develop shared middle/high school campuses that serve multiple primary schools within a 3–5 km radius. Provide transportation support may be linked in target localities of high impact prioritization where needed.

2. District Forums may develop Girls' Secondary Access Packages — combining scholarships, transport support, flexible hours, and community escorts — especially in districts with steep dropouts after Grade 5 or 8.
3. Support condensed curriculum bridging programs for adolescents who missed middle or high school, enabling them to complete grades faster with tutoring, ALP modules, and recognition for re-entry.

SECTION IV: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK & GOVERNANCE



Proposed Strategic Framework

The Out-of-School Children (OOSC) Strategic Framework is designed with a transformative vision to ensure that every child in Pakistan has access to quality education, enabling them to reach their full potential and contribute to a prosperous, and inclusive society. This ambitious goal is grounded in the mission to eliminate barriers to OOSC participation through localized, community-driven solutions that are sustainable, inclusive, and data-driven. At its core, the framework is guided by the values of Inclusivity, Community Ownership, Transparency, Accountability, Sustainability, and Adaptability, ensuring that educational opportunities are accessible to all children, regardless of gender, disability, or socio-economic status.

The strategic objectives of the OOSC Framework focus on achieving tangible outcomes across Pakistan's most underserved regions. These include the attainment of 100% primary school enrolment in targeted districts within five years, 95% re-enrolment of primary school dropouts, and 90% enrolment of secondary school-age children. The strategy also aims to achieve an 80% retention rate for children at risk of dropping out, while ensuring full gender parity and disability inclusion in all targeted areas. To institutionalize these gains, OOSC forums are recommended to be integrated into local governance structures, providing sustainable, community-led education solutions.

The implementation of the OOSC Strategic Framework is structured across some nine core strategic components, each critical to achieving its overarching goals:

1. Development of National Education Emergency Fund (NEEF) – Establishes a catalytic funding mechanism to address local barriers.
2. Development of Localized OOSC Forums – Creates community-driven platforms for planning, validation, and monitoring.
3. UC Level Barrier Assessment – Conducts grassroots data collection to identify educational barriers.
4. Localized Goal Setting and Strategic Planning – Establishes SMART objectives for different OOSC categories.
5. Barrier-Responsive Intervention Models – Implements targeted action plans to address identified barriers.
6. Implementation of Intervention Models – Operationalizes community-driven strategies at the local level.
7. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptive Management – Provides real-time tracking and adaptive learning.
8. Communication and Community Engagement Strategy – Enhances awareness, advocacy, and social acceptance of education.

9. Sustainability and Exit Strategy – Ensures long-term community ownership and local governance integration.

These activities are supported by Cross-Cutting Themes that strengthen implementation: Community Engagement and Communication, Digital Integration for real-time monitoring, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for financial and technical support, and Equity and Inclusion to prioritize marginalized groups, especially girls and children with disabilities.

The expected outcomes of this strategy are transformative. By the fifth year, the framework aims to achieve 100% primary school enrolment in targeted districts, 95% re-enrolment of primary school dropouts, and 90% enrolment of secondary school-age children. It further aims to secure an 80% retention rate for at-risk children, with full gender parity and disability inclusion. Most importantly, the strategy seeks to institutionalize OOSC Forums within local governance, ensuring that educational interventions remain sustainable and community-driven long after initial funding ends.

In conclusion, the OOSC Strategic Framework represents a comprehensive, community-focused approach to eradicating barriers to education in Pakistan. Through strategic planning, localized action, and sustainable governance, the framework aims to break the cycle of exclusion and establish a resilient, inclusive education system for all children, laying the foundation for long-term social and economic development.

Vision:

Based on the essence of the Prime Minister's declaration of an education emergency, emphasizing the urgency to enroll the 26 million out-of-school children and the broader goal of transforming Pakistan into one of the most educated societies globally. The following vision statement highlights the vision for the proposed framework.

“A Pakistan where every child, regardless of background or circumstance, can access inclusive, flexible, and meaningful learning opportunities that lead to dignity and opportunity.”

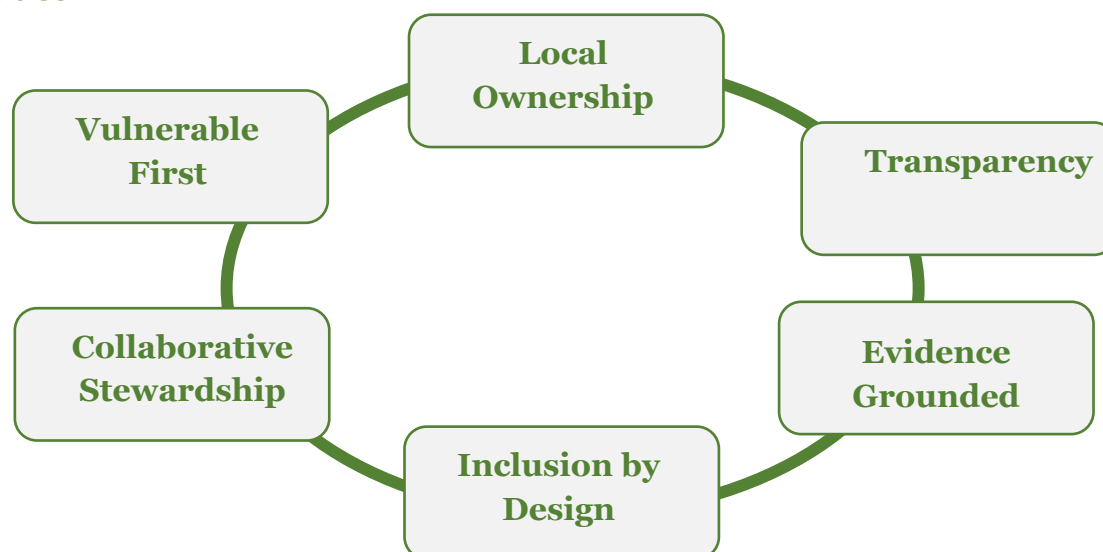
Mission Statement:

“To support the national goal of ending educational exclusion by developing and promoting locally owned, barrier-sensitive, and evidence-informed interventions that bring every out-of-school child into a supportive learning pathway, through district and tehsil-level leadership, community participation, and targeted partnerships.”

Core Strategic Objectives

1. Reduce the number of OOSC in high-burden districts through targeted, customized and inclusive education models.
2. Strengthen local ownership and accountability for education outcomes at district, tehsil and UC levels.
3. Integrate alternative and flexible learning pathways within the formal system to retain diverse learners.
4. Ensure sustained community engagement to reshape perceptions, improve trust, and encourage participation.
5. Establish cross-sectoral partnerships for delivery of holistic child-centered services (e.g., nutrition, health, protection).
6. Use real-time data and evidence to drive decision-making, track progress, and guide reforms.

Values



Value	Meaning for OOSC Strategy
Vulnerable First	Prioritize the most vulnerable and marginalized OOSC populations, including girls, migrant children, children with disabilities, and those in poverty, ensuring that support reaches those who need it most.
Local Ownership	Engage district and tehsil actors — including communities, teachers, and parliamentarians — as co-leaders in planning, delivery, and monitoring.
Inclusion by Design	Embed accessibility, safety, and relevance in all learning pathways so that no child is excluded due to gender, geography, disability, or displacement.
Transparency	Maintain clear mechanisms for data sharing, budget use, grievance redress, and progress tracking that are accessible to communities and institutions alike.
Evidence-Grounded	Design all interventions based on community-generated insights, real-time data, and localized analysis of barriers, enabling informed and adaptive solutions at district and tehsil levels.
Collaborative Stewardship	Foster active cooperation between federal ministries, provincial departments, local governments, civil society, and parents to co-create and sustain progress.

Understanding Barriers for OOSC



OOSC Strategic Framework

Component I: Development of NEE Fund

Objective and Rationale

The establishment of the National Education Emergency Fund (NEEF) is designed to address the deep-rooted and locally varied challenges that contribute to the high number of Out-of-School Children (OOSC) in Pakistan. The NEEF is conceived as a catalytic federal mechanism that provides targeted financial support to provinces, districts, and communities to pilot and scale interventions. The fund aims to be a bridge between policy commitments and ground-level action, ensuring that local barriers to education are addressed swiftly and effectively.

Scope of the Component

- **Geographical Scope:** NEEF will be implemented nationwide with an initial focus on high-OOSC burden districts identified through existing data and pragmatic consideration from the top 5 districts. At least two districts per province or region will be selected for piloting in the first year.
- **Target Populations:** The primary focus will be on marginalized groups including girls, children with disabilities, migratory communities, and children in conflict-affected areas.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

1. Provincial Co-Design and Endorsement:

All allocations will be co-developed with provincial education departments to align with existing priorities and governance mechanisms. Provincial focal points will participate in fund steering and oversight bodies.

2. District-Level Access Through Action Plans:

- Access to funds will be tied to the submission of district-level OOSC action plans.
- Action plans will be developed in consultation with UC Forums and endorsed by District OOSC Forums (discussed under Component II).
- Plans should include:
 - Verified data on OOSC by barrier typology.
 - Proposed interventions and expected reach.
 - Roles of local actors, including CSOs and schools.
 - Light-costing and implementation timelines.

3. Grant Windows and Flexibility:

- **Barrier-Responsive Grants:** Target specific barriers (e.g., stipends, bridging programs, transport solutions).
- **Systems Support Grants:** Address capacity building, monitoring, and infrastructure upgrades.
- **Community Innovation Grants:** Support ideas generated by UC-level forums or local youth/Civil Society groups.
- **Tranche-Based Disbursement:** Linked to progress milestones and verified outcomes.

4. Digital Grant Disbursement and Management System (DGDMS):

- Integrate a web-based system for grant applications, disbursement, monitoring, and reporting.
- Provincial and District OOSC Forums to have access for real-time updates.
- National dashboard for oversight by the Federal and Provincial Level Stakeholders.
- Customized reports for donors and stakeholders.
- Seamless audit trails and compliance checks through digital records.

5. Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities

- **Prime Minister's Office:** High-level endorsement and strategic alignment with national education priorities. Provide political and administrative support for emergency response coordination.
- **Federal Ministry of Education:** Strategic direction, policy coherence, monitoring of fund utilization, and oversight of provincial disbursement plans.
- **Ministry of Finance:** Ensure budgetary allocations, facilitate disbursement of federal funds, and oversee financial compliance and audit mechanisms.
- **Provincial Education Departments:** Collaborate with federal bodies for strategic alignment and endorse provincial action plans for NEEF funding.
- **Donor Agencies:** Align funding priorities with NEEF goals, participate in co-funding initiatives, and access transparent reporting through the Digital Grant Disbursement and Management System (DGDMS).
- **National Steering Committee for NEEF:** Oversee implementation, ensure inter-ministerial coordination, and resolve bottlenecks in fund allocation.
- **Provincial / District / UC OOSC Forums:** Review and provide feedback on key NEEF Mandate, SOPs, Manuals and Oversight mechanisms, to ensure the ownership of these procedure and its adherence with partners.
- **Financial Audit and Compliance Unit:** Monitor the financial integrity of disbursements, ensure transparency, and report irregularities.

- **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs):** Engage with local industries and private entities to co-finance educational infrastructure and support community-driven projects. This may also include community school systems, allocation of funds,

Governance and Oversight

- Fund governance will be anchored at the federal level with a multi-stakeholder steering committee.
- Provincial and civil society representation will be included for transparency and inclusivity.
- A public-facing dashboard will track allocations, usage, and progress in real-time.

Donor Coordination Mechanism:

A structured framework for aligning donor priorities with NEEF projects. This includes:

- Periodic review meetings with donor agencies.
- Harmonized strategies for co-funding high-impact interventions.
- Centralized reporting and transparency through the DGDMS.

Resource Mobilization and Financing

- The fund will be financed through:
 - Federal allocations under the National Education Emergency declaration.
 - Provincial contributions to support localized interventions.
 - Donor partnerships for targeted pilot programs and innovations.
- **Disbursement Process:**
 - **Tranche 1:** Upon plan approval and district forum endorsement.
 - **Tranche 2:** Upon submission of implementation updates and expenditure tracking.
 - **Tranche 3:** Based on demonstrated outcomes, adaptation, or new needs.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Real-time monitoring through community-based oversight and digital dashboards.
- Regular reporting from UC and District Forums to provincial education departments.
- Federal Ministry to provide consolidated progress reports quarterly.

Further Actions Required

- Development of **Terms of Reference (ToRs)** for fund governance at the provincial and district levels.
- Establishment of **Financial Audit Mechanisms** for transparency and accountability.

- Capacity-building sessions for **UC and District Forums** on fund utilization and monitoring.
- Design of **SOPs for Grant Applications** to standardize submission and approval processes.
- Development of a **Grant Operations Manual** to guide disbursement, utilization, and compliance.
- Launch of **Digital Grant Disbursement and Management System (DGDMS)** with capacity-building for local and district actors.

The implementation of NEEF will bridge the gap between policy and practice, ensuring that funds are not only accessible but effectively utilized to bring children back to school, targeting localized barriers that have historically hindered access to education.

Component II: Development of Localized OOSC Forums

Objective and Rationale

The establishment of localized OOSC Forums aims to create community-driven, barrier-sensitive platforms for planning, validation, and implementation of education strategies. These forums are designed to ensure that interventions for Out-of-School Children (OOSC) are tailored to local realities, culturally contextualized, and community-owned. By decentralizing decision-making, the forums empower local actors to identify barriers, propose solutions, and facilitate seamless implementation through localized action plans.

Scope of the Component

- **Geographical Scope:** Localized OOSC Forums will be established at three levels:
 - **Union Council (UC) Implementation Forums** — The grassroots level where direct community engagement and data collection take place.
 - **District OOSC Forums** — The coordinating body for district-wide planning, validation, and consolidation of local strategies.
 - **Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums** — High-level coordination across districts to ensure alignment with provincial education goals.
- **Target Populations:**
 - Marginalized groups including girls, children with disabilities, migratory populations, and children in conflict zones.
 - High-risk districts identified based on OOSC population density, socio-economic indicators, and educational infrastructure gaps.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

1. **Union Council (UC) Implementation Forums:**
 - Serve as the first point of contact for identifying and verifying OOSC.
 - Validate local barriers, prioritize interventions, and mobilize community action.
 - Organize community-based data collection to map out-of-school children by category (never enrolled, dropouts, at-risk).
 - Act as local advocates for school enrolment and community engagement initiatives.

2. District OOSC Forums:

- Coordinate with UC Forums to consolidate action plans and validate local assessments.
- Ensure alignment of district-level action plans with provincial targets and strategic goals.
- Act as the central planning and review body for NEEF applications, monitoring, and reporting.
- Endorse barrier-specific interventions and community-driven proposals.

3. Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums:

- Facilitate cross-district learning, coordination, and oversight of strategic implementation.
- Ensure that district action plans are aligned with provincial educational objectives.
- Act as the main liaison with the Federal Ministry of Education and NEEF Steering Committee.

Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

- **Union Council (UC) Implementation Forums:** Local mobilization, community engagement, and validation of OOSC data.
- **District OOSC Forums:** Consolidation of UC action plans, validation of data, and preparation of district-level funding proposals.
- **Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums:** Oversight of district plans, alignment with provincial strategies, and high-level reporting.
- **Local Community Leaders:** Facilitate local engagement and champion school enrolment.
- **Teachers and Local CSOs:** Support community mobilization, data collection, and advocacy for inclusive education.

Governance and Oversight

- Localized OOSC Forums will operate under a decentralized governance model with technical support from dedicated secretariats at the district and provincial levels.
- **District Secretariat for OOSC Management:**
 - A central coordinating body established at each district to provide technical support to District OOSC Forums.
 - Responsibilities include:
 - **Grant Management and Disbursement:** Assisting in the financial planning, budgeting, and fund disbursement in accordance with NEEF guidelines.

- **Program Planning Support:** Supporting the design of district-level action plans, ensuring alignment with NEEF priorities and strategic goals.
 - **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Implementing monitoring protocols, managing real-time dashboards, and conducting periodic assessments.
 - **Capacity Building:** Offering training for UC Forums to build understanding of fund usage, reporting, and community-based monitoring.
 - **Data Management:** Managing data collection, validation, and reporting for district-wide planning.
- **Provincial Secretariat for OOSC Coordination:**
 - Provides oversight, coordination, and policy alignment across all district secretariats.
 - Acts as the primary liaison with the Federal Ministry of Education and NEEF Steering Committee.
 - Consolidates district-level data and monitors strategic alignment with provincial education goals.
 - **Forum Secretariat Roles:**
 - Documentation of forum meetings, decisions, and implementation progress.
 - Management of financial records and fund disbursement schedules.
 - Coordination of donor reporting and audit compliance.
 - **District Education Officers (DEOs)** will still provide high-level oversight, while secretariats will execute day-to-day technical operations.

Funding support for local forums will be drawn from:

- **NEEF allocations** specific to community-driven projects.
- **Provincial budgetary support** for coordination and capacity building.
- **Donor contributions** for specific barrier-focused interventions.

Financial Tracking:

- District OOSC Forums will manage fund disbursement to UC Forums based on approved action plans.
- Financial audits and community-based monitoring will ensure transparency.

Monitoring and Reporting

- UC Forums will submit bi-monthly progress reports to District OOSC Forums.
- District OOSC Forums will consolidate reports and share with Provincial Coordination.
- Digital dashboards linked with the **Digital Grant Disbursement and Management System (DGDMS)** will provide real-time updates.

Further Actions Required

- Development of Terms of Reference (ToRs) for each forum.
- Establishment of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for planning, reporting, and coordination.
- Creation of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) frameworks for community-led verification of OOSC data.

This localized model will ensure that decision-making remains community-driven, barrier-sensitive, and aligned with broader strategic goals, allowing for adaptive learning and real-time adjustments based on ground realities.

Component III: UC level Barrier Assessment

Objective and Rationale

The UC Level Barrier Assessment aims to generate granular, community-driven data on the barriers preventing Out-of-School Children (OOSC) from accessing education. This component emphasizes a grassroots approach where local actors, particularly at the Union Council (UC) level, are empowered to identify, verify, and categorize barriers. The goal is to create a robust evidence base that informs localized intervention strategies and drives community-owned action plans.

Scope of the Component

- **Geographical Scope:** The barrier assessment will be conducted across all UCs in two elected districts from each province prioritized under the NEEF strategy, particularly focusing on high OOSC density and marginalized communities.
- **Target Populations:** Children who have never been enrolled, those who have dropped out, and those at risk of dropping out due to socio-economic, cultural, or infrastructural barriers.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

1. Community-Based Data Collection:

- UC Implementation Forums will spearhead household surveys, community consultations, and field-based data collection.
- Data will be collected across three concentric zones:
 - **Zone 1:** Within 2 km of the school—highlighting household-level and perception barriers.
 - **Zone 2:** Between 2-5 km—identifying logistical and infrastructural challenges.
 - **Zone 3:** Beyond 5 km—mapping barriers for hard-to-reach populations.

2. Data Validation and Reporting:

- Collected data will be validated by **District Secretariat for OOSC Management**, ensuring accuracy and alignment with strategic objectives.
- Validation will include community-based feedback loops, where local representatives review data findings.

3. Barrier Typology and Categorization:

- Barriers will be classified into:
 - **Perception Barriers:** Community beliefs, parental attitudes, and cultural norms.

- **Resource Barriers:** Financial constraints, lack of educational materials, child labor.
- **Social and Cultural Barriers:** Gender norms, early marriage, disability exclusion.
- **Environmental Barriers:** Distance, geographic isolation, climate impact.
- **Institutional Barriers:** School infrastructure, teacher availability, governance gaps.

4. **Digital Data Management and Analysis:**

- Data will be digitized and integrated with the **Digital Grant Disbursement and Management System (DGDMS)** for real-time monitoring.
- Heatmaps and dashboards will be developed to visualize key barriers across UC regions.

5. **Technical Support from District Secretariats:**

- Each District Secretariat will assist in:
 - Data entry and digitization.
 - Monitoring the quality and completeness of collected information.
 - Generating analytical reports for UC Forums.

4 **Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders**

- **Union Council (UC) Implementation Forums:** Primary data collection, community mobilization, and local advocacy.
- **District Secretariat for OOSC Management:** Data validation, technical support, and report generation.
- **Provincial Education Departments:** Oversee district-level analysis and ensure alignment with broader strategic goals.
- **District OOSC Forums:** Review consolidated data and endorse barrier-specific interventions.
- **Local Community Leaders and CSOs:** Support field data collection and community mobilization efforts.

5 **Governance and Oversight**

- Data collection and analysis will be supervised by the **District Secretariat** with technical oversight.
- **District OOSC Forums** will validate findings and propose district-specific intervention models.
- **Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums** will review district reports and ensure strategic alignment.

6 Resource Mobilization and Financing

- The Component will be funded through:
 - **NEEF allocations** targeted for community assessments.
 - **Provincial budgetary support** for field operations.
 - **Donor contributions** for digital tools and training sessions.
- **Financial Tracking:**
 - Expenditures will be managed by District Secretariats with financial compliance monitored through DGDMS.

7 Monitoring and Reporting

- Real-time monitoring of data collection through DGDMS.
- UC Implementation Forums will report progress bi-monthly to District Secretariats.
- Data quality and gaps will be flagged for immediate rectification.

8 Further Actions Required

- Development of Standardized Data Collection Tools for UC-level surveys.
- Capacity-building of UC Forums on digital data collection and community-led monitoring.
- Creation of Barrier Mapping Dashboards for strategic planning.
- Introduction of Digital Literacy Training for data collection teams at UC levels.

This structured and community-centric approach will ensure that localized barriers are not only identified but systematically addressed, forming the backbone for tailored interventions under the OOSC strategy.

Component IV: Localized Goal Setting

Objective and Rationale

The purpose of localized goal setting and strategic planning is to establish clear, measurable short-term and long-term objectives at the Union Council (UC) and District levels. This Component ensures that the strategic framework's goals are broken down into actionable, time-bound targets that drive the enrolment and retention of Out-of-School Children (OOSC) across all identified categories.

2 Scope of the Component

- **Geographical Scope:** All Union Councils (UCs) and Districts prioritized under the OOSC strategy.
- **Target Focus:** Specific categories of OOSC, including:
 - **Never Enrolled Children**
 - **Primary School Dropouts**
 - **Secondary School Dropouts**
 - **Children at Risk of Dropping Out**

3 Key Implementation Mechanisms

1. **Baseline Assessment and Needs Analysis:**
 - Each UC Forum, supported by District Secretariats, will conduct a baseline survey to identify current education levels, dropout rates, and local barriers.
 - Needs analysis will be segmented by:
 - Access barriers
 - Gender disparities
 - Disability inclusion
 - Infrastructure needs
 - Policy and governance gaps
2. **SMART Objectives for OOSC Enrolment and Retention:**
 - Goals are set as specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) targets for each category:

1 Children Who Have Never Been Enrolled (NBE)

i. Preschool Age Children

Short-term Objectives (1–2 Years):

- Achieve **25% enrolment** of preschool-age children in early learning programs within the first year.
- Increase enrolment to **50%** by the end of the second year through community-based Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers.

Long-term Objectives (3–5 Years):

- Achieve 80% enrolment in ECE programs by Year 3.
- Reach 100% enrolment of preschool-age children in targeted districts by Year 5.

ii. Primary School Age Children

Short-term Objectives (1–2 Years):

- Achieve **50% enrolment** of identified primary-age children in formal schools within the first year of implementation primarily from OOSC communities.
- Increase enrolment to **70%** by the end of the second year.

Long-term Objectives (3–5 Years):

- Attain **80% enrolment** of all primary-age children by Year 3.
- Achieve **100% enrolment** of primary-age children by Year 5 in targeted districts.

iii. Secondary School Age Children

Short-term Objectives (1–2 Years):

- Achieve **30% enrolment** of secondary school-age children in formal education or vocational training within the first year.
- Increase to **50%** by the end of the second year.

Long-term Objectives (3–5 Years):

- Achieve **70% enrolment** by Year 3.
- Reach **90% enrolment** by Year 5, with particular emphasis on girls and marginalized communities.

2 Children Who Dropped Out After Enrolment

i. Dropouts during Primary Education

Short-term Objectives (1–2 Years):

- Reintegrate **40% of primary school dropouts** into the education system within the first year.
- Increase this reintegration to **60%** by the end of Year 2.

Long-term Objectives (3–5 Years):

- Achieve **80% re-enrolment** of primary school dropouts by Year 3.
- Reach **95% re-enrolment** by Year 5, with community-based support for retention.

ii. Children in Lower Secondary Education at Risk of Dropping Out

Short-term Objectives (1–2 Years):

- Identify **50% of at-risk lower secondary students** and provide intervention plans within the first year.
- Increase retention by **20%** in Year 2.

Long-term Objectives (3–5 Years):

- Achieve **50% reduction in dropouts** for lower secondary by Year 3.
- Ensure **80% retention** of at-risk students by Year 5 through targeted community support and alternative learning pathways.

3 Cross-Cutting Objectives (Gender, Disability, Migration)

Short-term Objectives (1–2 Years):

- Achieve **gender parity** in primary school enrolments in targeted districts by the end of Year 2.
- Ensure **20% of children with disabilities** are enrolled in inclusive education programs within Year 1.

Long-term Objectives (3–5 Years):

- **100% gender parity** in primary and secondary education by Year 5.
- Full inclusion of **all identified children with disabilities** in local schools by Year 5.
- Establish **mobile learning units** for migratory children with **50% coverage** by Year 3 and **100%** by Year 5.
- **UC Implementation Forums:** Local identification, validation, and progress monitoring.
- **District OOSC Forums:** Aggregation of UC targets and progress validation.
- **District Secretariats:** Technical support, data validation, and reporting.
- **Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums:** Strategic oversight and alignment.

5 Governance and Oversight

- Managed by **District Secretariats** with strategic oversight from **District OOSC Forums**.
- Real-time monitoring through **Digital Grant Disbursement and Management System (DGDMS)**.

6 Resource Mobilization and Financing

- Funded through **NEEF allocations, Provincial budgets, and donor contributions**.

7 Monitoring and Reporting

- Quarterly progress reports from UC to District levels.
- Consolidated biannual reviews at Provincial Coordination Forums.
- Real-time monitoring through DGDMS.

8 Further Actions Required

- Development of **Strategic Planning Guidelines** for UC and District Forums.
- Capacity-building for community-led planning and monitoring.
- Digital alignment with **DGDMS** for tracking real-time progress.

This structured approach will ensure measurable progress towards 100% enrolment and retention of OOSC in all categories, establishing a clear path towards universal education access.

Component V: Barrier-Responsive Intervention Models

Objective and Rationale

The Barrier-Responsive Intervention Models are designed to directly address the specific barriers identified through UC Level Barrier Assessments (Component III). These models prioritize localized, evidence-based solutions that reflect the unique challenges faced by Out-of-School Children (OOSC) in diverse settings. By leveraging community insights and data-driven analysis, interventions are adapted to the socio-economic, cultural, and infrastructural realities of each region.

2 Scope of the Component

- **Geographical Scope:**
 - Targeted at high-risk districts and communities identified during UC Level Barrier Assessments.
 - Focused on areas with high OOSC density and documented barriers.
- **Target Populations:**
 - Children who are out of school due to socio-economic, cultural, geographic, or institutional barriers.
 - Emphasis on girls, children with disabilities, migratory populations, and children affected by conflict or displacement.

3 Key Implementation Mechanisms

1. **Localized Intervention Planning:**
 - UC Implementation Forums will develop barrier-specific intervention plans based on validated data.
 - Plans will be reviewed and endorsed by District OOSC Forums with technical support from the District Secretariat.
 - Interventions will be community-owned, contextually adapted, and aligned with provincial and national educational goals.
2. **Barrier-Typology Specific Strategies:**
 - **Perception Barriers:** Awareness campaigns, parental engagement, and community mobilization.
 - **Resource Barriers:** Provision of stipends, school meal programs, transport solutions, and scholarships.
 - **Social and Cultural Barriers:** Gender sensitization, disability inclusion programs, and child marriage prevention.
 - **Environmental Barriers:** Mobile schools, flexible school calendars, and learning hubs in migration-prone areas.

- **Institutional Barriers:** Infrastructure upgrades, teacher recruitment, and governance improvements.

3. **Community-Based Implementation:**

- Local CSOs, community leaders, and school management committees will participate in rolling out interventions.
- Participatory monitoring by UC Forums to ensure community feedback and adaptive adjustments.

4. **Key Federal Institutions:**

- A number of key federal institutions with relevant expertise such as Basic Education Community Schools (DGBECS), National Education Foundation (NEF), Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE), National Institute of Excellence in Teacher Education (NIETE) and National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) have the institutional memory, expertise and resources to support implementation aspects as required and prioritised in the implementation strategies. This will support the local UC based plans in better implementation and technical insights. These aspects institutions may be assigned respective roles and responsibilities in the target districts to collaborate and assist with relevant expertise and also support building of relevant capacities at provincial and district levels.

5. **Technical Support from District Secretariats:**

- District Secretariats will provide:
 - **Grant Management:** Assistance with NEEF-funded intervention disbursements.
 - **Capacity Building:** Training for UC Forums on intervention planning and execution.
 - **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Real-time tracking and compliance checks.
 - **Data Analysis:** Generating reports and insights for strategic adjustments.

4 **Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders**

- **Union Council (UC) Implementation Forums:** Local intervention planning, mobilization, and real-time monitoring.
- **District OOSC Forums:** Validation and endorsement of intervention models, coordination of district-wide initiatives.
- **District Secretariats:** Technical assistance, grant management, M&E, and capacity building.

- **Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums:** Oversight and alignment with provincial education priorities.
- **Local CSOs and Community Leaders:** Implementation support, advocacy, and community mobilization.

5 Governance and Oversight

- Managed through the **District Secretariat** with strategic oversight from **District OOSC Forums**.
- **Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums** ensure that interventions align with broader education policies.
- Real-time monitoring and adaptive learning will be facilitated through **DGDMS** dashboards.

6 Resource Mobilization and Financing

- Funding sourced from:
 - **NEEF allocations** targeted at barrier-specific interventions.
 - **Provincial budgets** to support localized planning and execution.
 - **Donor partnerships** for high-impact community projects.
- **Financial Tracking:**
 - Managed through the **Digital Grant Disbursement and Management System (DGDMS)**.
 - District Secretariats will oversee fund disbursement and compliance.

7 Monitoring and Reporting

- Real-time monitoring by UC Forums with technical support from District Secretariats.
- District OOSC Forums will consolidate reports for provincial review.
- Digital dashboards will allow for adaptive management based on field-level feedback.

8 Further Actions Required

- Development of **Barrier-Specific Intervention Manuals** for UC Forums.
- Establishment of **SOPs for Community-Based Implementation**.
- Capacity-building programs for community leaders and CSOs on project execution.
- Introduction of **Community-Led Feedback Mechanisms** for real-time adjustments.

This model emphasizes localization, community ownership, and data-driven planning to ensure that interventions are not only impactful but also sustainable and culturally resonant.

Component VI: Implementation of Intervention Models

Objective and Rationale

The purpose of the Implementation of Intervention Models is to translate the SMART objectives defined in the Localized Goal Setting and Strategic Planning (Component V) into on-ground actionable strategies. This Component focuses on operationalizing the barrier-specific interventions, ensuring that enrolment and retention targets for Out-of-School Children (OOSC) are met through localized, community-driven implementation.

Scope of the Component

- **Geographical Scope:** Targeted at all Union Councils (UCs) and Districts prioritized under the OOSC strategy.
- **Target Populations:** All identified categories of OOSC:
 - Children who have Never Been Enrolled (NBE)
 - Primary School Dropouts
 - Secondary School Dropouts
 - Children at Risk of Dropping Out

Key Implementation Mechanisms

1. **Localized Intervention Plans:**
 - UC Implementation Forums, with support from District Secretariats, will develop intervention plans that align with SMART targets.
 - Intervention plans will address specific barriers identified during UC Barrier Assessments (Comp- III) and target goals set in Component V.
2. **Barrier-Specific Strategies:**
 - **Perception Barriers:** Awareness campaigns, community dialogues, and parental engagement.
 - **Resource Barriers:** Provision of stipends, scholarships, school meal programs, and transport solutions.
 - **Social and Cultural Barriers:** Gender sensitization workshops, disability inclusion initiatives, and prevention of early marriage.
 - **Environmental Barriers:** Deployment of mobile learning units, flexible school calendars, and seasonal learning centers.
 - **Institutional Barriers:** Infrastructure upgrades, recruitment of female teachers, and improvements in governance.
3. **Community-Based Implementation:**
 - Local CSOs, community leaders, and school management committees will be engaged to support interventions.
 - Community-led monitoring to ensure transparency and local ownership.

4. **Technical Support from District Secretariats:**

- Design and rollout of community-driven intervention models.
- Real-time tracking through **Digital Grant Disbursement and Management System (DGDMS)**.
- Assist in the disbursement of NEEF funds for local interventions.
- Generate progress reports and impact assessments.

5- **Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders**

- Develop localized intervention plans and lead community mobilization.
- Validate UC intervention plans and coordinate district-wide implementation.
- Provide technical and financial support for on-ground execution.
- Oversee alignment with provincial education targets.
- Execute barrier-specific interventions and mobilize local support.

6 - **Governance and Oversight**

- Managed through the **District Secretariat** with strategic oversight from **District OOSC Forums**.
- Monitoring and reporting integrated with **DGDMS** for real-time tracking and adaptive learning.
- Biannual review sessions with Provincial Coordination Forums for performance assessment.

Resource Mobilization and Financing

- Funded through:
 - **NEEF allocations** for barrier-specific interventions.
 - **Provincial budgets** for logistical support.
 - **Donor contributions** targeted towards community-based projects.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Real-time monitoring through DGDMS to track intervention progress and fund utilization.
- Quarterly progress reports from UC Forums to District Secretariats.
- Consolidated biannual reviews at Provincial Coordination Forums.

Further Actions Required

- Development of Intervention Implementation Manuals for UC and District Forums.
- Establishment of SOPs for Community-Based Monitoring and Reporting.
- Capacity-building programs for local leaders on program implementation.
- Digital integration for transparent monitoring and reporting through DGDMS.

This Component ensures that the strategic goals set in Component V are not only met but are done so through community participation, barrier-sensitive interventions, and transparent monitoring mechanisms.

Component VII: Adaptive Management Systems

Objective and Rationale

The purpose of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptive Management (MEAM) is to ensure that all strategic activities under the OOSC framework are effectively tracked, assessed, and adjusted based on real-time data and community feedback. This Component aims to enhance accountability, improve intervention impact, and allow for data-driven decision-making at local, district, and provincial levels.

Scope of the Component

- **Geographical Scope:** All Union Councils (UCs), Districts, and Provincial Coordination Forums involved in the OOSC strategy.
- **Target Focus:** Monitoring of:
 - Enrolment and retention targets for all OOSC categories.
 - Barrier-specific interventions as outlined in Component VI.
 - Community-driven implementation and local mobilization.

Key Implementation Mechanisms

1. **Real-Time Data Collection:**
 - Utilize the Digital Grant Disbursement and Management System (DGDMS) for live data entry from UC and District Forums.
 - Real-time dashboards to track progress against SMART objectives.
2. **Community-Led Monitoring:**
 - UC Implementation Forums to conduct regular site visits, community consultations, and progress verification.
 - Local school committees and CSOs will provide community-based feedback on project implementation.
3. **Evaluation and Performance Audits:**
 - Quarterly evaluations by District Secretariats to assess project milestones.
 - Biannual impact assessments by Provincial Coordination Forums to validate district-level performance.
 - **Annual independent third-party audits** to ensure accountability and transparency.
4. **Adaptive Management:**
 - Data-driven decision-making to adjust interventions where targets are not being met.

- Flexibility for UC and District Forums to recalibrate strategies based on field data.
- Digital alerts in the DGDMS to flag underperformance or emerging barriers.

5. **Digital Reporting and Public Transparency:**

- Progress reports to be made available on public dashboards for transparency.
- Local communities to access UC-level updates through community information sessions.

Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

- **UC Implementation Forums:** Community-based monitoring, data entry, and local consultations.
- **District OOSC Forums:** Consolidate reports, validate local data, and oversee corrective measures.
- **District Secretariats:** Technical support for M&E, real-time data validation, and compliance checks.
- **Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums:** Oversight and strategic realignment based on evaluation outcomes.
- **Independent Auditors:** Conduct third-party evaluations to validate data integrity and impact.

Governance and Oversight

- Managed through District Secretariats with strategic oversight from Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums.
- Integrated with DGDMS for real-time monitoring and reporting.
- Accountability mechanisms established through public dashboards and community-based reporting.

Resource Mobilization and Financing

- Funded through:
 - **NEEF allocations** earmarked for M&E activities.
 - **Provincial budgets** to support community monitoring and reporting.
 - **Donor contributions** for independent audits and third-party evaluations.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Quarterly progress reviews at District levels.
- Biannual evaluations at Provincial Coordination Forums.
- Annual third-party assessments to validate program outcomes and highlight areas for improvement.

Further Actions Required

- Development of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Guidelines for UC and District Forums.
- Establishment of Community-Based Reporting Mechanisms for transparency.
- Integration of Digital Feedback Loops in DGDMS for real-time adjustments.
- Training of local monitoring teams for digital data collection and reporting.

This Component ensures that all strategic objectives are consistently tracked, evaluated, and refined to maximize impact and maintain accountability across all levels of implementation.

Component VIII: Communication and Engagement Strategy

1 Objective and Rationale

The Communication and Community Engagement Strategy aims to create awareness, drive community mobilization, and enhance transparency for the Out-of-School Children (OOSC) strategic initiatives. This Component includes structured internal and external communication channels to ensure all stakeholders are informed, engaged, and aligned with the strategic goals.

2 Scope of the Component

- **Geographical Scope:** All Union Councils (UCs), Districts, Provincial Coordination Forums, and national-level stakeholders.
- **Target Focus:**
 - Community awareness and mobilization.
 - Internal communication within UC, District, and Provincial levels.
 - External communication with donors, government bodies, and the public.

3 Key Implementation Mechanisms

1. Internal Communication Mechanisms:

- Monthly Coordination Meetings: UC and District Forums to conduct monthly meetings for status updates and planning.
- Digital meeting notes shared with Provincial Coordination Forums.
- Use of digital platforms (e.g., Teams, SharePoint) for document sharing, reporting, and coordination.
- Bi-monthly newsletters to all UC, District, and Provincial forums to highlight progress, challenges, and upcoming activities.

2. External Communication Mechanisms:

- **Public Awareness Campaigns:**
 - Launch community awareness drives on the importance of education, gender parity, and disability inclusion.
 - Use local radio, print media, and community events for broader outreach.
- **Digital Engagement:**
 - Develop a public-facing dashboard for real-time progress updates.
 - Regular updates on social media platforms to engage the community and diaspora.

- **Media Engagement:**
 - Collaborate with local and national media for event coverage and advocacy.
 - Organize press briefings during major milestones (e.g., district-wide enrolment drives).
-
- 3. **Community Mobilization and Engagement:**
 - **Local Advocacy Groups:**
 - Engage local influencers, religious leaders, and community elders to promote education.
 - Conduct community dialogues to address perception barriers and social norms.
 - **Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs):**
 - Strengthen PTAs at UC levels to improve school governance and community trust.
 - **School Open Days:**
 - Organize open days where parents and community members can observe school activities and interact with teachers.
- 4. **Digital Transparency and Feedback Mechanisms:**
 - **Digital Grant Disbursement and Management System (DGDMS):**
 - Public dashboard for transparency of fund disbursement and project milestones.
 - Community feedback forms integrated into the system for real-time updates.
 - **Community Helpdesks:**
 - Establish community helpdesks at UC levels for grievance redressal and information dissemination.

4 Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

- UC Implementation Forums: Conduct local awareness campaigns, school open days, and community dialogues.
- District OOSC Forums: Coordinate district-wide communication strategies and media engagement.
- District Secretariats: Manage digital transparency platforms and reporting mechanisms.
- Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums: Oversee province-wide community mobilization efforts.
- Federal Ministry of Education: National-level advocacy and international donor communication.

5 Governance and Oversight

- Managed by District Secretariats with oversight from Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums.
- Integrated with DGDMS for transparent reporting and community feedback.
- Regular progress reporting to the Federal Ministry of Education for national alignment.

6 Resource Mobilization and Financing

- Funded through:
 - NEEF allocations for community engagement and media outreach.
 - Provincial budgets for advocacy campaigns and local mobilization.
 - Donor contributions for digital engagement platforms and community helpdesks.

7 Monitoring and Reporting

- Quarterly progress reports on communication milestones and community mobilization.
- Biannual evaluations to measure community perception shifts and enrolment increases.
- Real-time feedback collected through DGDMS and community helpdesks.

8 Further Actions Required

- Development of Communication Guidelines for UC and District Forums.
- Establishment of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for media engagement and advocacy.
- Training programs for Community Mobilizers on effective outreach strategies.
- Integration of Digital Reporting Dashboards for real-time communication tracking.

This Component ensures that awareness is created, community mobilization is strengthened, and transparency is maintained through structured internal and external communication, bridging the gap between community expectations and strategic action.

Component IX: Sustainability and Exit Strategy

1 Objective and Rationale

The Sustainability and Exit Strategy aims to ensure that the initiatives launched under the OOSC Strategic Framework continue to thrive beyond the funding period. It focuses on building local capacity, fostering community ownership, and integrating education support mechanisms into local governance structures. This strategy also outlines clear exit pathways to ensure long-term educational inclusion for Out-of-School Children (OOSC).

2 Scope of the Component

- **Geographical Scope:** All Union Councils (UCs), Districts, and Provincial Coordination Forums engaged in the OOSC strategy.
- **Target Focus:**
 - Sustainable school infrastructure and community-led education initiatives.
 - Integration of OOSC forums into local governance.
 - Long-term financial and operational sustainability of key interventions.

3 Key Implementation Mechanisms

1. **Institutionalization of Local OOSC Forums:**
 - Transition UC Implementation Forums and District OOSC Forums into permanent local governance structures.
 - Integrate these forums into District Education Plans (DEPs) for continuous oversight and support.
2. **Local Revenue Generation and Cost-Sharing Models:**
 - Pilot community-driven revenue models such as school-based enterprises, micro-financing for school improvements, and local education taxes.
 - Establish Cost-Sharing Agreements with local businesses and industries to support school maintenance and scholarship programs.
3. **Community Ownership and Capacity Building:**
 - Foster community ownership by involving local leaders, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and religious leaders in school governance.
 - Implement capacity-building programs to enhance community-led school management.

4. Integration with Government and Private Sector:

- Collaborate with provincial governments for the permanent inclusion of OOSC interventions in annual education budgets.
- Establish Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to sustain infrastructure, technology integration, and vocational training pathways.

5. Adaptive Learning and Flexibility:

- Integrate Adaptive Learning Models to allow UC and District Forums to adjust strategies based on community feedback and local challenges.
- Periodic assessments to re-evaluate long-term goals and community needs.

4 Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

- UC Implementation Forums: Maintain local school governance, monitor community-based interventions, and manage local revenue generation.
- District OOSC Forums: Support institutionalization of OOSC governance within district education plans.
- District Secretariats: Facilitate technical assistance for sustainable models and capacity building.
- Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums: Oversee integration into provincial education policies and long-term planning.
- Local Community Leaders: Foster community ownership and local accountability.

5 Governance and Oversight

- Managed by District Secretariats with strategic oversight from Provincial OOSC Coordination Forums.
- Long-term monitoring integrated with DGDMS for transparency and reporting.
- Regular audits to ensure sustainable use of resources and community-led school governance.

6 Resource Mobilization and Financing

- Funded through:
 - NEEF allocations for sustainability planning and capacity building.
 - Provincial budgets for integrating OOSC interventions into local education plans.
 - Community-driven revenue models and Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs).

7 Monitoring and Reporting

- Biannual sustainability assessments to track progress in institutionalization and community ownership.

- Annual community audits to validate local revenue models and governance.
- Periodic re-evaluation of community needs to adjust strategies accordingly.

8 Further Actions Required

- Development of Sustainability and Exit Guidelines for UC and District Forums.
- Establishment of SOPs for Community Revenue Models and local education funds.
- Capacity-building programs for long-term community-led school management.
- Integration of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Guidelines for sustainable funding.

This strategy ensures that the progress made under the OOSC framework is not only preserved but enhanced through community ownership, local governance integration, and sustainable financial models, laying the foundation for a long-term reduction in out-of-school children.

Program Gallery:



Honorable Members Chairing National Symposium on Out of School Children



Group Picture of the Participants Consultative Session in Sindh



Group Picture of The Participants Consultative Session in Punjab



Members having discussion on Out of School Situation in Punjab



Members attending Out of School Provincial Consultation in Balochistan



Members Listening to the Presentation of Education Department on Out of School Situation



*Convenor Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights presenting Sheild to Hon. MNA.
Syed Ali Qasim Gillani*



Consultation in Provincial Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



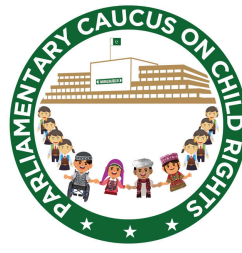
Convenor Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights Meeting with Hon.Federal Education Minister Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui to discuss the finding of Out of School Provincial Consultations



Consultation in Haripur



Meeting with Honorable Speaker National Assembly Mr. Ayaz Sadiq



"The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law."

**ARTICLE 25-A
OF THE CONSTITUTION OF PAKISTAN**

WWW.NA.GOV.PK