

Research Consortium on  
Education and Peacebuilding

# Education and Social Cohesion in Pakistan

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**Summary Report**



University of Sussex  
Centre for International Education



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

# The Research Consortium on Education and Peacebuilding

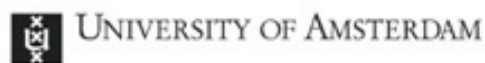
Between July 2014 and December 2015 the Research Consortium on Education and Peacebuilding, a partnership between UNICEF and the University of Amsterdam, the University of Sussex, Ulster University and in-country partners, will address one of the UNICEF Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA) key objectives, 'contributing to the generation and use of evidence and knowledge in policies and programming related to education, conflict and peacebuilding'.

Consortium teams carried out research in four countries over the course of the project: Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa, and Uganda. Each team will produce a specific country report which, alongside thematic Literature Reviews, will form the basis for three synthesis reports addressing the following specific thematic areas:

- the integration of education into peacebuilding processes at global and country levels;
- the role of teachers in peacebuilding;
- the role of formal and non-formal peacebuilding education programmes focusing on youth.

In addition, throughout the research project and as a cross cutting theme in all three areas, the research project aims to understand the dynamics and impact of various forms of direct and indirect violence in relation to education systems and educational actors in situations of conflict. Each thematic focus will also include a gender analysis.

The research seeks to generate evidence that can inform policy and practice aimed at the global and national peacebuilding community, and the global and national education and international development communities.



The authors are responsible for the choice and presentation of views contained within this report and for opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNICEF and do not commit the organisation.

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Cover Photograph: Malika Usman, five years old, a newly enrolled girl, attends her class in Government Girls High School Killa Kanci, Quetta City, Balochistan Province, Pakistan

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# Introduction

## Purpose of the Study

“This is a summary of a country report on education and social cohesion in Pakistan and is a research output from the Research Consortium on Education and Peacebuilding, a co-funded partnership between UNICEF, the University of Amsterdam, University of Sussex and Ulster University and a range of national research partners in participating countries.”

There has been a growing interest in the potential of education systems to contribute to social cohesion in conflict-affected contexts, and a willingness on the part of the United National Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) to support a greater role for education in peacebuilding operations. This is in part a recognition that structural inequality in the distribution of education opportunities has been a key cause and symptom of conflict and that a conflict sensitive and quality education has the potential to redress inequalities, promote positive attitudes towards peace and reconciliation, restore trust and consolidate state legitimacy. The tremendous potential of education to foster and accelerate societal transformation, from the grassroots to state level, is widely recognised. Yet the majority of education and peacebuilding interventions, particularly in conflict-affected contexts, are still framed in terms of service delivery and developmental assistance rather than forming an integral part of peacebuilding policies and processes at local and national level.

The UNICEF Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy (PBEA) programme has pioneered efforts to strengthen policies and practices in education for peacebuilding in 14 countries affected by conflict. This has included significant investment in building the evidence base related to the role of education in peacebuilding in various contexts and regions around the world. This is a summary of a country report on education and social cohesion in Pakistan and is a research output from the Research Consortium on Education and Peacebuilding. Research for the report was conducted by the University of Sussex in collaboration with the Aga Khan University-Institute of Educational Development, Pakistan. The study examined three interrelated research areas (RA):

RA 1 Policy	How is social cohesion integrated into the education sector at macro and micro policy levels?
RA 2 Teachers	What is the role of teachers in the social cohesion process of the country?
RA 3 Youth	How do formal and non-formal social cohesion education programmes address the agency of youth?

This summary was prepared after two-week long validation discussions with a range of stakeholders in Pakistan—national and provincial policy-makers, the development community and international donors, civil society organisations, teachers, teacher educators and youth. Feedback and data generated from these discussions have informed this summary as well as the full report, which will be used as a basis for three synthesis reports produced by the PBEA Research Consortium:

- Report 1: The Integration of Education and Peacebuilding (Ulster University)
- Report 2: The Role of Teachers in Peacebuilding (University of Sussex)
- Report 3: The Role of Formal and Non Formal Peacebuilding Education Programmes Focusing on Youth (University of Amsterdam)

Each report will synthesise findings from 4 country case studies: Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa and Uganda.

## Theoretical Framework

“This study draws on a theoretical and analytical framework developed by consortium members, which includes the dimensions of redistribution, recognition, representation and reconciliation.”

This study draws on a theoretical and analytical framework developed by consortium members, which includes the dimensions of redistribution, recognition, representation and reconciliation (Novelli, Lopez Cardozo and Smith, 2015). This combines Nancy Fraser’s (1995, 2005) work on social justice with the peacebuilding and reconciliation work of Johan Galtung (1976) and John-Paul Lederach (1995, 1997). This framework recognises the multiple dimensions of inequality and injustice that often underpin contemporary conflicts and the need to address the legacies of these conflicts in and through education. The framework focuses the examination of inequalities within the education system on the interconnected dimensions of the “4Rs”:

- **Redistribution** concerns equity and non-discrimination in education access, resources and outcomes for different groups in society, particularly marginalised and disadvantaged groups;
- **Recognition** concerns respect for, and affirmation of, diversity and identities in education structures, processes and content, in terms of gender, language, politics, religion, ethnicity, culture and ability;
- **Representation** concerns participation, at all levels of the education system, in governance and decision-making related to the allocation, use and distribution of human and material resources;
- **Reconciliation** involves dealing with past events, injustices, and material and psychosocial effects of conflict, as well as developing relationships of trust.

In our application of the 4Rs as an analytical tool within RA1, RA2 and RA3, we highlight their interconnections and the ways they affect peacebuilding processes. Moreover, each section is informed by an analysis of cross-cutting social cohesion challenges related to violence and gender.

## Research Design and Methods

With a particular focus on evaluating policies, programmes and interventions, the study uses Pawson’s (2006) realist approach. Realist evaluation is concerned with understanding why an intervention does (or does not) work as a way of drawing lessons that will contribute to improving future interventions. It recognises that programmes do not work ‘generically’ but operate in particular ways in particular places, giving rise to both intended and unintended outcomes. We analyse both kinds of outcomes through the lens of 4Rs.

This summary report is based on fieldwork conducted in Pakistan between March and August 2015. The research sites included: urban and rural areas in Sindh province, including Karachi and Nawabshah and a small town in interior Sindh (name withheld for ethical reasons); Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)

“This research mainly used a qualitative approach, drawing on a range of data sources including one-to-one discussions with diverse education and social cohesion stakeholders in Pakistan; a paper-based questionnaire (for teachers and student-teachers); lesson observations (in teacher education institutions); visual methods (with youth); focus group discussions (with youth, teachers and student-teachers); and analysis of existing statistical datasets and policy documents.”

Province; and the capital city, Islamabad. Sindh province is the primary research site, with RA2 focusing on urban and interior Sindh and RA3 focusing on Karachi. RA1 is explored in all research sites. Sindh was selected because significant inequalities exist on the basis of uneven socio-economic development between rural and urban areas (UNICEF, 2015, unpublished). Ethnicity and language are also social cohesion issues. There is a large Sindhi-speaking community in rural Sindh. Karachi with its large population has a wide range and mix of social classes, ethnicities, languages and religions. Importantly, key conflict-drivers – ethnic, political and sectarian violence – feature in Karachi, while both Karachi and interior Sindh exhibit structural violence (UNICEF, 2015, unpublished).

Peshawar was selected because it is the capital city of KP, the province most affected by the ‘War on Terror’, conflict and militancy. Islamabad was included because of the presence of the international development community and federal level policy-makers.

This research mainly used a qualitative approach, drawing on a range of data sources including one-to-one discussions with diverse education and social cohesion stakeholders in Pakistan; a paper-based questionnaire for teachers and student-teachers; lesson observations in teacher education institutions; visual methods with youth; focus group discussions with youth, teachers and student-teachers; and analysis of existing statistical datasets and policy documents. This enabled the inclusion of multiple and comparative perspectives. In total, 266 student teachers and in-service teachers, 75 policy-makers, 40 facilitators/teachers/principals and 62 youth participated in the study. Interviews were conducted in Urdu, Sindhi, Pashto and English, contingent upon research participants’ comfort.



“The discussions and data generated in these workshops have been utilised in revising the full country report and this summary report.”

This research has benefitted from a collaborative approach with in-country research partners, Aga Khan University-Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) and UNICEF Pakistan, as well as consultations with a Critical Reference Group of stakeholders including policy-makers, academics, and civil society organisations. The research was carried out with strong support from the relevant government departments in Islamabad, KP and Sindh. Two RAs –Teachers and Youth—focused entirely on Sindh, and included the active engagement of the Government of Sindh’s Education and Literacy Department. Nevertheless, there are some limitations to the scope and perhaps the generalisability of the findings:

- Conflict drivers and dynamics in Pakistan vary from province to province. Therefore, the findings have particular relevance for the sites and provinces that were researched.
- The relatively short time of data collection limited the scope of our ethnographic approach to researching case studies of teacher education institutions and micro-studies of youth interventions.

The vast majority of interview data and the discussions generated during stakeholder workshops were audio-recorded with the consent of participants and fully transcribed. Where languages other than English were used, audio-recordings were translated into English. Researchers analysed qualitative data through the coding of interview transcripts and notes, drawing partly on NVivo. Reflections emerging from the data were discussed in the consortium meeting at Ulster University, which included a representative of UNICEF Headquarters, in June-July 2015, enabling a refinement of the themes and sub-themes. Initial findings were discussed with, and validated by, a range of stakeholders in a series of validation events in November 2015, in which over 100 stakeholders participated. These validation workshops consisted of:

- a workshop with provincial (Sindh) education policy-makers and practitioners, the development community, civil society organisations, teacher educators, researchers and academics from higher education institutions and representatives from UNICEF Islamabad, Sindh and Balochistan at AKU-IED, Karachi on 2nd November 2015;
- a workshop with Sindh-based policy-makers working on youth issues, the international development community, youth workers and civil society organisations focusing on youth at AKU-IED on 3rd November 2015;
- a workshop with district level policy-makers, practitioners and teacher educators at the Provincial Institute for Teacher Education Sindh in Nawabshah on 5th November 2015;
- a community engagement event with youth in Karachi on 7th November 2015;
- a national validation workshop with federal and KP policy-makers, international development community, youth workers, civil society organisations, UNICEF Islamabad and KP in Islamabad on 11th November 2015.

Photograph, opposite page:  
Girls walk across a wooden suspension bridge in the village of Bhogar Mang in Mansehra District in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

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## Education and Social Cohesion within Development Plans

“Education remains a significant element in Pakistan’s development frameworks, but public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP is the lowest in Pakistan compared to other South Asian countries.”

Education remains a significant element in Pakistan’s development frameworks and is regarded as instrumental to the country’s economic and social development. The two most recent Macro National Development Frameworks analysed in this study viewed education as a means to enhance human capital and economic productivity for the nation (Government of Pakistan, 2005; MoPD&R, 2014). Both frameworks acknowledge social inequities in education and see them as a hindrance in the transformation towards a socially just society. The more recent development framework, ‘Pakistan Vision 2025– One Nation One Vision’, lays special emphasis on social cohesion and social justice, and highlights the negative impact of some conflict drivers (MoPD&R, 2014). However, the positive contribution that education can make in mitigating such conflict drivers in the long-term remains implicit rather than explicit.

## Financing for Education

Pakistan has the lowest public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP compared to other South Asian countries (UNESCO, 2015a). Over the last few years, there has been a small but steady increase in Pakistan’s education expenditure, increasing from 2.59% of GDP in 2013-14 to 2.68% in 2015-16 (Alif Ailaan, 2015). Nationally, as a percentage of total expenditure, actual educational expenditure has remained low, between 7.7% and 8.1%, while it is comparatively larger at the provincial level, with KP and Punjab showing progressive increases since 2009/10 (MET&SHE, 2013). The bulk of provincial education budgets are spent on recurrent costs, particularly salaries, although all provinces had increased allocations for educational development programmes in the fiscal year 2014-15 (MoF, 2015). Spending on education tends to be biased in favour of educating boys (UNESCO, 2013). On the positive side, since 2010, the year education was devolved to provinces, all provinces have at least doubled their allocation to education (Naviwala, 2016). However, concerns remain regarding misspending and under-utilisation of the budget (ibid).

“Pakistan made concerted efforts to meet the Education for All (EFA) targets but inequalities at all levels of education still pervade Pakistan’s education system”

## Education Inequalities

To situate the analysis of issues and policies of social cohesion in education in context, a summary of educational inequalities is presented first.

Pakistan made concerted efforts to meet the Education for All (EFA) targets. These initiatives included the development of a National Plan of Action for EFA and Provincial and District EFA Plans, the abolition of school fees, the provision of free textbooks to students and scholarships to adolescent girls in disadvantaged districts. More recently, through the insertion of Article 25-A in the Constitution, free and compulsory access of children (5-16 years old) to education has been declared as a constitutional right.



“Access to and participation in education are the minimal conditions for redistributive equity in education. Pakistan has the second highest incidence of children who are excluded from education.”

Despite progress made in expanding access, Pakistan has failed to achieve universal primary education and gender parity in primary and secondary education, and youth literacy. Inequalities at all levels of education still pervade Pakistan’s education system. In particular, the three parallel systems of education -public, private and religious, although the latter sector is very small - as well as the language of instruction, have ‘perpetuated inequalities and economic stratification’ and are implicated in social divisions within society (MET&SHE, 2014: 4). An examination of education access, progression, learning outcomes, educational attainment, literacy rates, school and human resources revealed glaring inequalities on the basis of wealth, rural-urban location, gender and provincial differences. With the exception of survival rates, for which data is only available for public sector schools, the rest of the indicators cover both public and private sectors.

**Access:** Access to and participation in education are the minimal conditions for redistributive equity in education. Pakistan has the second highest incidence of children who are excluded from education. In 2014-15, at primary level, 6.1 million children were not attending school and over 24 million (24,023,569), or forty-seven per cent (47.2%) of children and adolescents between 5-16 years were denied the right to education (NEMIS-AEPAM, 2016). More girls (52%) were out of school compared to boys (43%) (ibid). While the above source has not disaggregated the data for out of school learners by household income and urban vs. rural location, Alif Ailaan (2014) estimates that in 2012-13, children from the poorest households/bottom quintile (57.1%) were more likely to be out of school compared to those from the richest households/top quintile (10%). A greater proportion of out of school children lived in rural areas (57%) compared to urban locations (43%), while regional disparities highlighted that roughly two out of every three children in Balochistan and FATA did not receive education (ibid).

“Those in the poorest households received just 1.88 years of education, compared to 10.5 years of schooling by individuals from the richest households.”

**Participation:** According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, in 2013, the gross enrollment rate (GER) in primary education was 92.1% and the net enrolment rate (NER) was 71.9%. Disparities based on household wealth existed in NER, with NER for children in the poorest households as low as 37.9% at primary and 11.6% at secondary level. Likewise, NER at both primary and secondary levels were higher in urban areas compared to rural areas and among boys compared to girls. Provincial differences indicated that primary NER was the highest in KP (81%) and lowest in Balochistan (51%) (MET&SHE, 2013).

**Attainment:** In 2012, the mean years of schooling in the country as a whole was 6.3 years (World Inequality Database on Education). However, those in the poorest households received just 1.88 years of education, compared to 10.5 years of schooling for individuals from the richest households. Additionally, urban dwellers received 3.21 years more education compared to rural residents. Gender disparities also existed, with males receiving 1.7 more years of schooling than females. In terms of regional differences, mean years of schooling were as low as 4.24 years in Balochistan and as high as 10.79 years in Islamabad (ibid).

“In 2012, the national transition rate was 83% from primary to lower secondary and 75% from lower secondary to upper secondary.”

**Survival:** Only 2 in 3 children enrolled in primary stay in education up to grade 5 (MET&SHE, 2014). The Ministry of Education, Trainings and Standards in Higher Education links survival rates to demographics, school infrastructure, the availability of trained and qualified teachers and the law and order situation, though it does not offer any empirical evidence of such associations (MET&SHE, 2014). Nevertheless, provinces and areas faring well on these factors have better survival rates. For example, the highest (82%) survival rate was in ICT which has better equipped schools and trained teachers. Likewise, KP had the highest survival rates among the provinces, which MET&SHE (2014) associated with positive efforts by the Government of KP and financial assistance by donors. Similarly, militancy and counter-insurgency operations in FATA, an area which already had the lowest education indicators in the country, had a negative impact on education survival rates, which are the lowest across Pakistan.

**Dropout:** Nationally, one in three children enrolled in grade 1 either dropped out, transferred to a private school or repeated at least one year during the primary cycle. In interpreting survival rates, it is important to note that survival data is available only for government schools, while dropout rates also include those children who have transferred from a government to a private school. The biggest proportion of students dropped out at the end of primary (19.8%), with boys and girls having similar dropout rates, though girls are less likely to make the transition to middle school, particularly in rural areas (PBS, 2015). Balochistan had the highest dropout rates in comparison to other provinces.

**Transition:** In 2012, the national transition rate was 83% from primary to lower secondary and 75% from lower secondary to upper secondary (World Inequality Database on Education). At both levels, a greater proportion of children from poor households and from rural areas exited the system. Gender inequality in transition were greater at lower secondary, with more girls exiting the education system.

“In 2014, learning levels were the lowest for the poorest and the highest for the richest, with learning levels improving along the wealth index (ITA, 2015).”

**Learning Outcomes:** ASER data for 2014 indicated that learning levels were the lowest for the poorest and the highest for the richest, with learning levels improving along the wealth index (ITA, 2015). Likewise, disparities existed on the basis of location, with rural children scoring low compared to children in urban areas. Gender disparities in favour of boys existed in learning levels in all subjects but these are much smaller in children from richest households and much wider among children from the poorest households (ibid). School type also interacted with gender as girls and boys from the same wealth background, when enrolled in the same school type perform similarly, with the exception that poorer rural girls match their male counterparts in government schools ‘but do worse in private schools’ (Alcott and Rose, 2015: 356).

**School Resources:** School facilities also differed by school type and location. While a greater proportion of private schools had toilets in 2014, drinking water, playground and boundary walls compared to government schools, basic facilities were more available in urban compared to rural areas across the private-public divide. In both rural and urban locations, a very high proportion of schools in both sectors lacked a playground (ITA, 2015). The availability of toilets and a school

boundary wall is particularly crucial to the retention of girls in secondary schools. However, across Pakistan, around 10% of girls' schools lacked a toilet and 6.5% lacked a boundary wall at secondary level (NEMIS- AEPAM, 2015).

“Private school teachers have higher academic and professional qualifications compared to government school teachers, but public sector schools show a greater adherence to minimum academic and professional qualifications compared to private schools (ITA, 2015).”

**Literacy Rates:** Although literacy rates improved from 63.1% in 2001-02 to 71.6% in 2012-13, provincial inequalities in youth literacy rates still existed (MET&SHE, 2014). In 2012-13, Punjab (74.5%) had the highest youth literacy rates, followed by Sindh (69.9%), KP (67.2%) and Balochistan (55.9%). Across the provinces/areas gender gaps in favour of males existed in youth literacy rates but these were particularly stark in Balochistan and KP (ibid).

**Human Resources:** Overall, teachers in private schools have higher academic (e.g. an undergraduate degree), as well as professional qualifications (e.g. BA in education or equivalent qualification) compared to those in government schools (ITA, 2015). On the positive side, public sector schools show a greater adherence to minimum academic and professional qualifications compared to private schools. For example, almost all have a secondary school certificate and only 3.3% teachers are unqualified. By contrast, 23.2% of teachers in private schools do not have any professional qualification. Teachers in urban schools have higher qualifications, both academically and with respect to teacher training (ITA, 2015). Teacher qualification is widely seen as an important variable in quality education. For example, within the Sustainable Development Goal for education, target 4.c relates to increasing the supply of qualified teachers. However, in Pakistan, some studies have found no relationship between teacher training and students' learning outcomes (e.g. Aslam and Kingdon, 2011). While this finding does not imply that teacher training is unimportant, it does raise the significance of the quality of training and its relevance to school contexts.

“While redistribution in access to quality education and outcomes of education is a necessary condition for socially cohesive societies, the content of education and the pedagogy used in its delivery are also crucially important to social cohesion.”

Given the existing evidence that education inequality makes the likelihood of violent conflict much more likely, the preceding data and discussion should be a cause for concern. For example, an analysis of 120 countries over 30 years reported that conflict was more likely when education inequality was higher, even after controlling for other confounding variables associated with conflict (FHI 360 Education Policy and Data Center, 2015). Furthermore, the latest Global Education Monitoring Report argues that when 'large numbers of young people are denied access to a good quality education, the resulting poverty, unemployment and hopelessness can act as recruiting agents for armed militia' (UNESCO, 2016a: 103). This does not preclude that educated people do not participate in conflict or that more education is always the solution. While redistribution in access to quality education and outcomes of education is a necessary condition for socially cohesive societies, the content of education and the pedagogy used in its delivery are also crucially important to social cohesion (UNESCO, 2016a).



Young girls participate in a drawing competition during a school enrollment campaign in Killa Kanci, Quetta City, Balochistan Province. ©UNICEF/Zaidi

# Research Area 1: Policy

## Research Area 1: Policy

“RA1 examined how issues of social cohesion and inequalities are addressed in key education policies and programmes that were already in use or introduced since 2000, as well as the intended and unintended outcomes of these policies.”

RA1 examined how issues of social cohesion and inequalities are addressed in key education policies and programmes that were already in use or introduced since 2000, as well as the intended and unintended outcomes of these policies. This cut off was decided in consultation with the Critical Reference Group because a range of large-scale education reforms in the country began after that point. The findings draw on 37 policy interviews, secondary data and relevant published literature. The primary empirical data included interviews with 18 research participants representing 10 international development partners; policy-makers from federal government (N=3), KP (N=13) and Sindh (N=2); and a civil society organisation from Punjab (N=1).

This part of the report assesses how policies and reforms within the education sector have either hindered or fostered processes of implicit and explicit social cohesion and societal transformation.

### Macro Education Reforms

This study analysed policies, programmes and reforms that were either in use or implemented since 2000, namely:

- National Education Policy (NEP) 1998-2010
- NEP 2009
- Education Sector Reforms (ESR) (2001-2006)
- Provincial Education Sector Plans (ESPs)
- National Curriculum 2006
- Decentralisation of the Education Sector

In the last one and a half decades, the two major education policies in use or produced in Pakistan are the NEP 1998-2010 and the NEP 2009.

“NEP 1998-2010 considered educating and training citizens as true practicing Muslims the primary aim of education.”

#### National Education Policy (NEP) 1998-2010

The NEP 1998-2010 proposed increased enrolment in public sector schools and higher budgetary allocations to education. It advocated for the removal of urban-rural and gender imbalances; improving the quality of education at all levels, particularly through curriculum reform; improving education facilities; encouraging private sector participation; and enabling effective community involvement. The policy also proposed the expansion of non-formal education to complement the formal system and to address the issue of out-of-school children (MET&SHE, 2013). With respect to social cohesion, the policy aimed ‘to transform the Pakistani Nation into an integrated, cohesive entity that can compete and stand up to the challenges of 21st Century’ (MoE, 1998: 6). However, the policy mainly acknowledged the role of education in fostering a Muslim identity, with limited recognition of other identities present in Pakistani society. The policy, thus, considered educating and training citizens as true practicing Muslims the primary aim of education. ‘Unforeseen and abrupt political changes’ that resulted in the democratically elected government ousted by the military regime in 1999, also hindered the effective implementation of this policy (MET&SHE, 2014: 7).

“NEP 2009 acknowledged the significance of multiple identities and the need for cultural recognition, whilst maintaining Islamic and religious teachings in the curriculum.”

## National Education Policy (NEP) 2009

The NEP 2009 saw inclusive education as paramount to achieving social cohesion, eliminating social exclusion and promoting social mobility. It also acknowledged the dangers of sustaining inequities, such as ethnic strife, sectarianism and extremism to nation-building and social conflict. The policy placed emphasis on access, improving the quality of education and the promotion of child-friendly education. Like the earlier policy, NEP 2009 was underpinned by the objective of developing a ‘sense of unity and nationhood’ (MoE 2009a: 17) and the commitment to anchor ‘educational interventions’ in ‘the core values of religion and faith’ (MoE 2009a: 9). Similarly, NEP 2009 again stressed the importance of ‘Islamic ideology’ in education, and embedding ‘Islamic and religious teachings in the curriculum’ (MoE 2009a: 32). However, unlike the NEP 1998-2010, it also acknowledged the significance of multiple identities and the need for cultural recognition, whilst maintaining Islamic and religious teachings in the curriculum. Thus, the NEP 2009 opened up the discourse on ethnic and regional identities, though without explicitly endorsing multiple religious identities. In addition, it proposed widening the scope of curricular provision to include emerging topics such as: life skills based education, environmental education, human rights education, school safety and disaster risk management, and peace education. Although, the NEP 2009 ‘envisaged strategic actions and clear targets’, ultimately ‘no mechanism could be instituted to follow up its implementation’ (MET&SHE, 2014: 8). Furthermore, due to the devolution of school education to the provincial level in 2010, the ‘statutory platform for coordination arrangement at institutional level among the provinces for primary and secondary education disappeared, or was weakened’ (ibid).

“The ESRs targets had the potential to contribute to strengthening social cohesion and human capital - particularly through targets relating to widening educational access and the reduction of gender inequality- though they did not explicitly address social justice or deal with issues of recognition or reconciliation.”

## Education Sector Reforms (ESRs) 2001-2006

ESRs were introduced to streamline and accelerate the EFA agenda. It was fully integrated into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) to use education as a lever for economic growth. Development partners were involved in setting up and monitoring ESRs targets. The ESRs targets had the potential to contribute to strengthening social cohesion and human capital - particularly through targets relating to widening educational access and the reduction of gender inequality - though they did not explicitly address social justice or deal with issues of recognition or reconciliation. Moreover, the recommendations of ESR were only ‘partially implemented’, with ‘political instability’ cited as one of the challenges constraining the realisation of ESR targets (Bhatti et al., 2010: ix)

## Provincial Education Sector Plans (ESPs)

All four provinces have formulated their ESPs following the 18th Amendment to the Constitution in 2010, namely: KP (2011-15, 2015-20), Sindh (2014-18), Balochistan (2013-18), and Punjab (2013-17). Each provincial ESP has approached social cohesion to varying degrees:

- **The Sindh ESP (SESP)** includes social cohesion as a cross-cutting theme. It engages with the challenges of the parallel systems of education alongside issues of language of instruction. The SESP outlines specific objectives, strategies, targets and activities relating to social cohesion. For example, it stresses the need for curriculum and textbooks, with targets and deadlines towards that goal. It has also proposed a greater role for school management committees to strengthen social cohesion through greater representation of community members in decision-making in education.
- **The Balochistan ESP (BESP)** acknowledges ethnic, economic, and gender-based inequalities in the province. Noting that specific communities have been affected by violence, it recognises the links between intolerant attitudes and violence. Social cohesion has been mainstreamed in the BESP through Child Friendly Schools (CFS) and 'inclusive education', executed through capacity building activities for: textbook writers and teacher trainers; youth, children and communities through scouting and girl guiding; and education officers to undertake literacy and Alternative Learning Pathway (ALP) programmes.
- **The Punjab ESP (PESP)** devotes little space to social cohesion, although it makes reference to peace and tolerance. However, it does not spell out how these values would be put into practice or achieved.
- **The KP ESP (KPESP)** acknowledges the negative impact that militancy and counter-insurgency operations have had on the education department's ability to offer access to quality education in the affected districts of the province. However, the document gives limited space to the integration of social cohesion.

The greater integration of social cohesion and conflict analysis in the ESPs of Sindh and Balochistan are, to a large extent, the result of efforts by UNICEF's Social Cohesion and Resilience programming in Pakistan. These two ESPs 'were developed through an intensive period of reflection, analysis, dialogue and planning involving multiple key stakeholders', with the aim of securing 'government recognition of the root causes of social conflict and its linkages with education' (Ekaju and Siddique, 2014: 119).

In summary, the policies analysed thus far have showed a commitment towards removing disparities in education and as such place an emphasis on redistribution when viewed through the lens of the 4Rs framework. In addition, both National Education Policies reviewed considered the promotion of national unity and nation-building as a key aim of national education. However, they differed in their approach to achieving this objective. While the NEP 1998-2010 placed a greater emphasis on religion as a key unifying marker of the nation, the NEP 2009 adopted a somewhat more inclusive approach to unity that respected internal differences, while still upholding the anchoring of educational interventions within core Islamic values. Furthermore, more recent policies, particularly the NEP 2009, and the Sindh ESP and Balochistan ESP, have viewed existing inequities in the provision of education as detrimental to the cohesion of society and identified a greater connection between an unjust education system and the deterioration of social cohesion.

"Both National Education Policies reviewed considered the promotion of national unity and nation-building as a key aim of national education. However, they differed in their approach to achieving this objective."

“The 2006 curriculum was seen by the majority of research participants—curriculum and textbook personnel, teacher educators, international development agencies and civil society organisations—as a vast improvement in terms of inclusive values and attitudes towards unity and difference.”

## National Curriculum 2006

The 2006 national curriculum was a major reform that tackled the issue of quality by moving away from a content-driven curriculum to competency-based curriculum. An additional focus was the representation of citizens’ identities and citizenship. The 2006 curriculum was seen by the majority of research participants—curriculum and textbook personnel, teacher educators, international development agencies and civil society organisations—as a vast improvement in terms of inclusive values and attitudes towards unity and difference. Nevertheless, in the context of the ‘War on Terror’, the engagement of international actors and the fact that the reform was financially supported by USAID, meant that the curriculum revision was seen by many Pakistanis – and particularly those from the religious parties – as ‘westernisation from above’ (Lall, 2009: 191).

International actors explained that Pakistan had traditionally kept international donors out of curriculum development until the reforms undertaken in 2006. They were also of the view that any reference to the curriculum becomes politicised and a hot topic of public and media debate, a view also endorsed by curriculum and textbooks personnel. Given the contentions surrounding the curriculum, some international actors were of the opinion that social cohesion in and through education might better be promoted by focusing on teacher education. The research participants who were engaged in the process of these reforms –curriculum and textbook personnel, civil society organisations and the international development community—were of the opinion that the politicisation of the reform blurred the boundaries between education for securitisation and education for democratic citizenship, thereby alienating a range of stakeholders including curriculum and textbook personnel and teachers. This has limited the scope of the reform and hindered its implementation. An in-depth analysis of recent policymaking in Pakistan, including curriculum revision, aptly concluded that global pressures and reliance on donor funding lead to negotiated policy outcomes, for example, the incorporation of ‘modern discourse’, but without necessarily affecting practice (Ali, 2016).

“At the time of fieldwork, not all books had been revised according to the guidelines of the 2006 Curriculum.”

On the positive side, the national curriculum has been approved by all provinces after education was devolved to the provinces in 2010 (see next section for a discussion of devolution). However, it is important to note that at the time of fieldwork, not all books had been revised according to the guidelines of the 2006 Curriculum. ‘Resistance within institutions responsible for curriculum reform and textbook production’; ‘low political priority given to textbook revision’; and ‘a lack of public support’ are all cited as reasons for the poor implementation of the revised curriculum (Blumberg, 2015, cited in UNESCO, 2015a: 178). The analysis of the curriculum and textbooks in selected subjects is presented in RA 2.

## Decentralisation of the Education Sector

Since 2001, Pakistan has undergone two phases of devolution reforms in education, which have occurred within the wider political decentralisation reforms:



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- the Local Government Systems (2001-2008), introduced by Pervez Musharraf to seek legitimacy for his government, transferred powers from the Federal to the district level, bypassing the provincial level.
- the second phase of devolution began with the 18th Amendment of the Constitution being passed by the National Parliament in 2010, which sought to strengthen parliamentary democracy and devolved power from the federal to the provincial level.

**Local Governments (LGs)** The 2001 decentralisation process was driven by efficiency, good governance and accountability. The devolution delegated the responsibility of education service provision from four federating provinces, Balochistan, Sindh, Punjab and KP, to LGs comprising over 100 districts and 6000 union councils by handing over planning, budgeting and development functions related to education. A core objective of devolution was to improve education service delivery by increasing accountability of decision makers through the devolved structure of governance. The impact of LGs has been mixed and varied:

- With respect to **redistribution**, the reviewed evidence indicated that access to education widened, equality of education in enrolment and completion increased and gender inequality reduced at the national and provincial level. However, the magnitude of gains made was unequal across the provinces. For example, Newman (2012) reported 18.9 % and 13.2% increases in the equality of school completion at primary and secondary levels respectively, across Pakistan between 1999-98 and 2007-08. While increases in the equality of school enrolment were observed across all provinces, these were much higher in Punjab (19.3% increase at primary level; 16.0% at secondary level) and KP (23.8% at primary; 13.9% at secondary). Far smaller increases in the equality of school enrolment were seen in Balochistan (8.3% at primary; 5.3% at secondary). Likewise, across Pakistan, increases in the equality of primary school completion (9.3%) and secondary school completion (6.9%) were observed over the same period. Again, increases in the equality of school completion varied across the provinces, with the magnitude of increase so small in Balochistan that it was found to be statistically not significant. By comparison, the strides made by Punjab and KP were above the national figures. Encouragingly, the significance of gender in explaining inequality declined between 1998/99 and 2007/08 (Newman, 2012). However, while in Punjab and Sindh, the relative weight of gender in explaining inequality lowered greatly, in Balochistan and KP gender remained an important factor in accounting for inequality of opportunity.
- Evidence on the gaps between high performing and low performing districts with respect to school provision could not be identified from the existing literature.
- Quality, as measured by student achievement, remained low with inequitable distribution across the public and private schools, in favour of the latter.

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“The 2010 devolution empowered the provinces to make their own education policies including curriculum development, based on national frameworks.”

- School management committees (SMCs) that had been established prior to LGS reforms but revitalized and strengthened after devolution, succeeded in widening **participation** in school governance to marginalised members of the community and women, although the degree of inclusiveness and level of participation remained questionable (Khan, 2007).
- Evidence also suggested some impact of SMCs in improving teachers’ attendance (Ghuman and Lloyd, 2010).
- Inadvertently, the devolution politicised the education sector (GoKP, 2010), with political interference particularly evident in teacher deployment and posting, thereby undermining the potential for building trust in schools (Komatsu, 2009).
- The limited evidence existing for educational budgets indicated that budgetary processes and allocations were neither transparent nor equitable (UNESCO, 2013).

**The 18th Amendment** came in to force in April 2010. Its primary objective was the restoration of parliamentary democracy. It also devolved power from the federation to the provinces, increased the share of provincial resources, fundamentally altered many of the privileges of the centre and introduced a more equitable mechanism for the distribution of finances among provinces. In addition, it empowered the provinces to make their own education policies including curriculum development, based on national frameworks. Furthermore, Article 25A of the Constitution was enacted as part of the 18th Amendment which requires the State to provide free and compulsory education to children between the ages 5-6 years. Therefore, the devolution opened up opportunities in education for all 4Rs. Emerging evidence suggested a greater commitment in the provinces towards redistributing access and reducing inequities, greater provincial participation in policy formulation and increase in the allocation of educational budgets. Research participants’ views diverged on the devolved power of provinces with respect to curriculum development. A large number of policy-makers, curriculum personnel and international actors considered this an opportunity in terms of recognition, representation and reconciliation, with provinces empowered to recognise their cultural and religious diversity; participate in decision-making with respect to curriculum and language of instruction; and select historical content in the curriculum in ways that could potentially enhance reconciliation.

“The 2010 devolution opened up opportunities in education for all 4Rs. Emerging evidence suggested a greater commitment in the provinces towards redistributing access and reducing inequities, greater provincial participation in policy formulation and increase in the allocation of educational budgets.”

On the other hand, several interviewees – provincial curriculum and textbook personnel, civil-society organisations, teacher educators, and international development actors—also expressed concerns regarding the maintenance of national unity, identity and the representation of common cultural values in curriculum and textbooks. This is because all provinces are entitled to engage in curriculum revision and development, while the National Bureau of Curriculum and Textbooks, the constitutionally authorised body to develop the curriculum and screen and approve textbooks, was dissolved post-18th Amendment and the Federal Ministry of Education was massively shrunk. Another concern raised was the maintenance of minimum educational standards across all provinces in the absence of any national level body to oversee this. Mechanisms for addressing both concerns have been established through the constitution of the Provincial Education Ministers’ Conference and the National Curriculum Council, which aim to promote coordination among the provinces and build consensus on policy formulation and curriculum development respectively.



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## Parallel Education Strands

In addition to the state, private schools and the madrassah sector also provide education.

### Private Schools

Private schools are extremely diverse in terms of fee structures, textbooks and learning materials, though the majority of low-fee paying schools use the same textbooks that are in government schools. Likewise, the quality of provision and language of instruction varies, although the vast majority use English as the main medium (I-SAPS, 2010).

Private institutions get 36% of the share of enrolment at primary, 39% at middle and 41% at secondary level (NEMIS-AEPAM, 2015). Since the 1990s, the private sector has been encouraged to invest in education on the grounds that the state alone cannot offer educational services to all. Additionally, since ESR 2001-2006, Public Private Partnerships have been adopted to expand access to education for disadvantaged children through the channelling of educational funds to low-cost private schooling. A range of other factors, apart from a favourable policy context, explain the high demand for private schools. The low quality of government schooling with the associated low returns to investment in education has been fuelling a growing dissatisfaction with public schooling provision (Andrabi et al., 2008; Fennell and Malik, 2012). The English medium of instruction and the pragmatic advantages of English language competence in the job market and in higher education, compel parents, even the poorer ones, to choose the private sector over government schools (Harlech-Jones et al., 2005).

*“A range of other factors, apart from a favourable policy context, explain the high demand for private schools.”*

“There is now a staggering evidence that suggests that learning outcomes across the public-private divide remain inequitable in favour of the private sector in all key subjects, though in absolute terms they are alarmingly poor.”

In addition, Ahmed and Sheikh (2014) report that the proximity of the school, particularly at primary level, and teacher presence, are also significant factors impacting on parental decisions to enroll children in private schools.

There is now a staggering evidence that suggests that learning outcomes across the public-private divide remain inequitable in favour of the private sector in all key subjects (Andrabi et al., 2002, 2007; Amjad and MacLeod, 2014), though in absolute terms they are ‘still alarmingly poor’ (Alcott and Rose, 2015: 355). Though private school students do outperform government school students, even after controlling for the confounding variables at individual, household and school levels, the magnitude of their superiority falls down considerably when these intervening variables are taken into account (Amjad and MacLeod, 2014).

A more detailed analysis of assessment data indicate that at the higher fee levels, the only difference in favour of the private school students was being better at reading a sentence in English (51% more likely to succeed in this task) (Amjad and MacLeod, 2014). By contrast, this same group of private students was 68% less likely than the government school students to succeed at the Urdu (Sindhi) task. Additionally, in rural Pakistan, rich children in government schools learnt more than poor children in private schools, with a gap of 8 percentage points in favour of the former group (Alcott and Rose, 2015). Furthermore, ITA (2015) also reported a greater use of private tuition among richer households and students enrolled in private schools.

Moreover, Andrabi et al. (2007) reported great variance in school performance across the public and private schools, including the presence of well-performing public schools as well as poor performing private schools. Additionally, they reported that schools generating higher revenues and profits also had higher quality of learning.

The expansion of private schools, and the variability in the quality of private schools, increases disparities based on wealth as enrollment in private schools increases as we move along household income. For example, in 2014, enrolment in private schools among the poorest households was 19%, rising to 27% for poorer households, 35% for richer households, and 53% for the richest households (ITA, 2015). Furthermore, rural private schools are located within villages with improved infrastructure, a sizeable number of school-age residents, and a good supply of available graduates, especially female graduates, with at least a secondary education. The combination of these factors indicate that private schools are less accessible to children from very remote and less developed villages, supporting the broader critique that these schools target the better off poor, rather than the most marginalised (Andrabi et al., 2008).

“Low’ and ‘High’ standards of education between the private and public sectors, and within the private sector itself, thwart equal opportunity within and beyond the realm of education for disadvantaged segments of society.”

A range of stakeholders interviewed voiced the view that the private sector is creating a two-tier society, intensifying social stratification, as well as contributing to producing students with disparate worldviews. ‘Low’ and ‘High’ standards of education between the private and public sectors, and within the private sector itself, thwart equal opportunity within and beyond the realm of education for disadvantaged segments of society.

“Most madaris are associated with one of five wafaq (educational boards), each with a particular interpretation of Islam.”

## The Madrassah or Religious Sector

In addition to the private sector, a small provider of education is the madrassah sector which attracts 5% of the educational market share, catering to around 1.836 million students, enrolled in 13,405 Deeni Madaris (religious schools) (NEMIS- AEPAM, 2015). Andrabi et al. (2005) reported less than one percent of enrolment in the sector, thus indicating growth in the share of the religious sector. However, these numbers do not reflect the true size of the madrassah sector, as a huge number of madaris are not registered. The majority of the madaris are in the private sector (97%), with only a small minority (3%) in the public sector, indicating that the majority are independent community initiatives, organised by the ulema (clerics) and the local community (Akhtar, 2012). Most madaris that do register are associated with one of five wafaq (educational boards), each with a particular interpretation of Islam. Madrassah focus particularly on religious education, though most also teach subjects such as Urdu, English, mathematics and general science.

Madaris are believed to cater predominantly to poor and disadvantaged learners. Andrabi et al. (2005) reported association between low-income households and madrassah enrolment as well as less-educated household heads and madrassah enrolment, but the strength of these associations was found to be weak. Furthermore, their findings offered a complicated relationship between household attributes and madrassah enrolment as for households with at least one child enrolled in a madrassah, 75 percent sent their second (and/or third) child to a public or private school or both.

Furthermore, the entry of females into the madrassah usually begins at age sixteen or above, after having completed secondary schooling or a higher-level academic qualification in the public or private sector (Bano, 2010). Moreover, madrassah graduates are increasingly pursuing higher education in secular institutions to improve their employment prospects (Aijazi and Angeles, 2014). Thus, there is a flow of students from one strand of education to another.

Madrassah education often comes under attack for using an outdated curriculum, the use of pedagogies that discourage critical thinking, and for failing to prepare its graduates for the demands of contemporary life or sustainable livelihoods. While the latter two criticisms are also associated with public sector schools, key issues relate to the alleged role of some madaris in sectarian conflict in Pakistan and the perceived relationship between madaris and militancy.

The above concerns notwithstanding, positive outcomes of madrassah education have also been reported. For example, Aijazi and Angeles’ (2014) qualitative study of male madaris in ICT found that students in the madrassah sector were deeply aware of social injustices in society and felt that commitment to eradicating these inequities was integral to Islamic education and ethos. Similarly, Akhtar (2012) reported on the social benefits for madrassah graduates, specifically, women whose social status and agency was enhanced in the community because of their religious education. Likewise, Bano (2010) reported that the majority of her female research participants in madaris believed the experience gave them a sense of purpose in life and better prepared them for the demands of life.

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“While the madrassah sector has gathered much attention, the sector is small and as such greater efforts need to concentrate on improving public schools and paying further attention to private schools.”

Since 2001 a range of policies have been developed to bring this sector under some level of state control but without much success due to strong resistance from the Ittehad-e-Tanzimat Madaris-e-Diniya Pakistan, an umbrella organisation for the five wafaq/boards. Madrassah reforms included the establishment of the Pakistan Madrassah Education Board (PMEB) and the Madrassah Registration Ordinance, which required all madaris to register with the PMEB. Furthermore, The NEP 2009 maintained the focus on curriculum reforms in madaris: ‘The students of Madrassahs shall be brought at par with the students of formal public secondary schools through the introduction of formal subjects’ (MoE, 2009a: 26) to ‘enable the children graduating from Deeni Madaris to have more employment options’ (ibid: 28). Since 2010, efforts have focused on bringing the madrassah under the Ministry of Education rather than the Ministry of Religion and Inter-Faith Harmony. The ‘National Internal Security Policy’, formulated by the Ministry of Interior in the aftermath of the terrorist attack on the Army Public School Peshawar in December 2014 (Mol, 2014) required the incorporation of madaris in the mainstream educational framework by supporting their administration, financial audit and curriculum accreditation.

While the madrassah sector has gathered much attention, the sector is small and as such greater efforts need to concentrate on improving public schools and paying further attention to private schools. At the same time, the existence of three different strands of education, with little state control over both the private and the madrassah sectors, is a challenge for social cohesion.

In summary, despite a lack of sufficient evidence to conclusively link the existence of the three strands to social disharmony, it would be reasonable to conclude that without effective oversight and regulation by relevant authorities these may cause social disharmony, divisions and inequities.

“The imposition of one language as a language of instruction in linguistically plural societies, ‘while sometimes a necessity, has been a frequent source of grievance linked to wider issues of social and cultural inequality’ (UNESCO, 2016a: 104).”

## Language of Instruction

Decisions regarding languages used in school, particularly the language of instruction, are complex and contentious. The imposition of one language as a language of instruction in linguistically plural societies, ‘while sometimes a necessity, has been a frequent source of grievance linked to wider issues of social and cultural inequality’ (UNESCO, 2016a: 104). By contrast, properly implemented ‘inclusive and equity-based language education policies’ can significantly promote ‘social cohesion and building trust between governments and minority communities, as well as improving the lives of children’ (UNICEF, 2016a: v). Appropriate language policies are central to achieving the new global education goal which prioritises equity and lifelong learning for all.

There exists substantial international evidence, indicating learning outcomes are adversely affected when home and school languages differ and positively impacted when home language is used as a language of instruction (UNESCO, 2016b). The Global Education Policy Report, therefore, calls upon governments to recognise the importance of teaching children in their home languages (UNESCO, 2016b). Furthermore, it recommends training teachers to teach in

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more than one language and the recruitment and deployment of teachers in ways that reflect the linguistic diversity of communities that schools cater to. Likewise, the provision of textbooks and learning materials in a language that children understand is recommended for inclusive education. Given the complexities of language policies in education, UNICEF (2016a: 2) recommends the use of both bottom-up and top-down processes for decision-making on language, with the aim of achieving ‘deeper understanding of language problems and an agreed course of action or consensus on the aims and content of national and local language policy’.

The foregoing discussion indicates that the role of language(s) in contributing to the formation of a cohesive national identity is significant. However, this role has to be understood within the complex reality of differing and necessary roles of the mother tongue, alongside national language and a global lingua franca such as English. In education this translates into selecting appropriate language(s) of instruction at different levels of education provision and not just a matter of selecting one language across all stages of education provision.

In Pakistan, the language of instruction in the public sector schools is mainly Urdu, which is also the lingua franca and the national language, but is spoken at home by only 8% of the population. In Sindh, there is the option of using the Sindhi language as a medium of instruction, however in most private schools the medium of instruction is English. English is also a compulsory subject in both public and private schools.

“The majority of policy-makers in KP and international actors interviewed believed that under the prevailing conditions in public schools, the policy shift towards English as a medium of instruction would be poorly implemented and fail to realise its intended outcome.”

In two provinces, KP and Punjab, a policy shift in the language of instruction in state schools appeared to be strengthening the role of English. This shift was ostensibly driven by the intention to redistribute access to English, which is widely perceived as the language of power in Pakistan. However, the majority of policy-makers in KP and international actors interviewed believed that under the prevailing conditions in public schools, this policy would be poorly implemented and fail to realise its intended outcome. Inadvertently, it could heighten inequalities in learning. Furthermore, they believed this policy would stifle cultural recognition and deny the realisation of linguistic rights. It is also important to note that with the exception of rural Sindh, where children are instructed in Sindhi, which is also the language most widely used outside the classroom, instruction in the rest of the country is either in Urdu or English. The access of the majority of children to these languages, particularly those in rural areas and from low socio-economic backgrounds is rather limited. Existing international (UNESCO 2016b) and national (Halai and Muzaffar, 2016; Rashid et al, 2013) research on the outcomes of language policies appeared to support stakeholders’ perceptions.

## Gender Equity

“The ‘Pakistan Vision 2025’ noted that women’s ‘access to opportunities, resources and benefits is unequal’ and aimed to take affirmative action to redress this, though without spelling out the strategies to be adopted or the resources allocated to achieve this goal (MoPD&R, 2014: 38).”

Gender equality is integral to social cohesion and addressing underlying key drivers of conflict (UNICEF, 2016b). Furthermore, greater levels of gender inequality are linked to intra- and inter-state conflict (UNICEF 2016b: 2). Education has a key role in supporting both gender equality and gender transformation. Gender transformative strategies include a consideration of gender norms, roles and relations for women and men and the ways these affect access to resources and power. Additionally such strategies seek to foster progressive changes in gender power relations.

Before discussing gender equality in and through education in Pakistan, it is helpful to situate gender relations in the overall socio-political context of the country. Although the Constitution of Pakistan grants equal rights to men and women, with the exception that a woman is barred from becoming the head of state, in practice, profound gender inequalities exist with respect to human development and access to services, economic opportunities, and political participation and decision-making. These disadvantages disproportionately affect poor women, particularly in rural areas where the culture is often tribal, feudal and conservative, preventing rural women from fully benefitting from poverty reduction strategies (Mumtaz, 2007). There exists a policy deficit in gender relations, with several reform commissions calling upon Pakistan to be more gender inclusive in its policies and public sector organisational structures (Chauhan, 2014). The ‘Pakistan Vision 2025’ noted that women’s ‘access to opportunities, resources and benefits is unequal’ and aimed to take affirmative action to redress this, though without spelling out the strategies to be adopted or the resources allocated to achieve this goal (MoPD&R, 2014: 38).

“Redistributive gender equity would require equity and non-discrimination in education access, resources, and outcomes for women and men. However, gender parity in primary and secondary education and in youth literacy remains elusive.”



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With respect to the 4Rs framework, redistributive gender equity would require equity and non-discrimination in education access, resources, and outcomes for women and men. However, gender parity in primary and secondary education and in youth literacy remains elusive:



Table 1: Gender parity in education and youth literacy

Indicator	Pakistan	Punjab	Sindh	KP	Balochistan
Primary Education (Age 5-9 years)	0.88	0.95	0.81	0.74	0.65
Secondary education (Age 14-15 years)	0.84	0.95	0.84	0.62	0.45
Youth literacy (Age 15 years and above)	0.80	0.87	0.77	0.60	0.51

Source: MoF (2015), page 173

As discussed earlier, in general boys outperform girls in all subjects across the public and private schools (ITA, 2015). Empirical evidence from household surveys suggests a pro-male bias in parental decision to enrol and how much to spend on children's education, with these disparities much bigger in Balochistan, KP and FATA, and in rural areas (Aslam and Kingdon, 2008). Due to the fact that in Pakistan sons are responsible for the welfare of parents in old-age, the rates of return for daughters' education are low. In addition, the family's 'respectability' is at stake in sending daughters to schools, particularly after puberty and in rural communities, because gender norms in Pakistan require that females observe codes of respect and modest behaviour (Purewal and Hashmi, 2014).

To increase demand for adolescent girls' education, Punjab and KP use a conditional cash transfer programme targeting girls in marginalised districts. An impact evaluation of the programme after four years of implementation in Punjab indicated that female enrolment rates had increased from 11% to 32% for all cohorts, while girls in stipend districts were more likely to progress through and complete middle school (Independent Evaluation Group, 2011). Evaluation of the programme in KP found rather small impacts, with the programme increasing female education only by a modest 0.03% (Ahmed and Zeeshan, 2014).

While socio-cultural and economic barriers impact negatively on girls' access to education, the White Paper on Education (Aly, 2007: 29) acknowledged that the 'supply of quality girls schooling is falling short' of existing demand. Despite the fact that girls' schooling has been a policy priority since the early 1990s in order to achieve Universal Primary Education, UNESCO (2010) reported that boys' schools still outnumber girls' schools at the provincial level, and across urban and rural locations.

**Recognitive gender equity** would require respect for and affirmation of inclusive gender identities in education content. Given the significance of curriculum and textbooks in shaping learners' identities and values, Pakistan's 2001–2015 EFA action plan focused on improving gender parity and equality by emphasising the elimination of gender bias in the curriculum and textbooks (Mirza, 2004). However, after more than a decade since then, the GMR 2015 noted that gender bias in textbooks 'remains pervasive' in Pakistan (UNESCO, 2015a: 178).

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“At all levels of compulsory education, however, there are far more male teachers than female (PBS, 2014). The regions with a lower proportion of female teachers—FATA (28%), Balochistan (37%) and KP (42%)—are also the ones with wide gender gaps in educational participation rates (NEMIS-AEPAM, 2015).”

There has been considerable research on the gendered messages within Pakistani textbooks. For example, Saigol (2000: 142) found civic textbooks in Punjab to be reinforcing ‘familial hierarchies that place women in a subordinate position in relation to men’. In the same vein, the findings of a UNESCO study which analysed the national curriculum and 194 textbooks in a range of subjects showed that the curriculum texts depicted a strong gender bias favouring males in Urdu, English and Pakistan Studies (Mirza, 2004). Furthermore, Durrani’s (2008) study of Urdu, English and Social Studies curriculum texts revealed that the textbooks portrayed Pakistani women in restricted and homogenised ways, while men were depicted as defenders of the territorial and ideological boundaries of the nation. A more recent study by Ullah and Skelton (2011) revealed gender biases in 24 textbooks (Urdu, English and Social Studies) indicating that over a decade of efforts by the Ministry of Education and international organisations to eliminate all forms of gender inequality in education have had less than the expected impact.

**Representative gender equity** in education would require that both female and male education leaders and teachers have equity in education decision-making. A particular challenge is gender equity in the teaching workforce, as the availability of female teachers appeared to correlate positively with girls’ enrolment both at primary and secondary level (Ahmed and Zeeshan, 2014). At all levels of compulsory education, however, there are far more male teachers than female (PBS, 2014). The regions with a lower proportion of female teachers—FATA (28%), Balochistan (37%) and KP (42%)—are also the ones with wide gender gaps in educational participation rates (NEMIS-AEPAM, 2015).

**Reconciliation** with respect to gender relations would involve developing equitable relationships between women and men in and through education. In addition to gender transformative curriculum texts, teachers have a key role in enabling students to construct identities that are empowering. However, their potential as change agents cannot be simply assumed. Halai (2011:44) argued that because of gender-segregated schooling in Pakistan, teachers tend to ‘think that there are no gender issues once ... learners are in the classroom’. Likewise, while both male and female teachers offered critical insights on the gendered messages in the curriculum texts that Durrani (2008) analysed, they did not problematise them in their teaching. Professional development opportunities that can expand teachers’ capacity for gender-awareness and reflective practice are highly desirable. However, Halai (2011: 49) also warned that in ‘the context of the highly gender segregated and traditional setting of Pakistan’, professional development initiatives aiming to enhance teachers’ awareness of gender is much more challenging and such initiatives are not likely to be very successful unless teachers’ capabilities to question social and cultural hierarchies are enhanced.

“In addition to gender transformative curriculum texts, teachers have a key role in enabling students to construct identities that are empowering.”

## Education of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

“Around 80% of the school age Afghan refugee population was out of school (Jenner, 2015). Literacy rates were extremely low, with only a third of this group being able to read and write, and just around 7.6% of women and girl refugees being literate (ibid).”

With an estimated 1.5 million registered Afghan refugees being hosted in Pakistan (UNHCR, 2015), the country is host to second largest refugee population in the world (Jenner, 2015). Pakistan has been hosting Afghan refugees since 1980s. Pakistan is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention but refugees are entitled to free education in state schools. The education of Afghan refugees is located in a challenging national environment, constrained and dwindling international funding and over-stretched efforts, since Pakistan’s crisis of its own IDPs began in 2007. Around 80% of the school age Afghan refugee population was out of school (Jenner, 2015). Literacy rates were extremely low, with only a third of this group being able to read and write, and just around 7.6% of women and girl refugees being literate (ibid).

Pakistan has a significant internally displaced population due to long-standing civil-military conflict, counter-insurgency operations, drone-attacks by the US and its allies, devastating earthquakes, and successive widespread flooding. The majority of protracted IDPs are concentrated in KP and FATA, which together host 1.56 million displaced people (IDMC, 2015). The presence of such huge numbers of IDPs has overstretched education services in host communities and impacted on school infrastructure, particularly as schools have been used as shelter for the IDPs. The latter has also resulted in reduction of the number of days children attend schools in host districts. The national and provincial authorities were making notable efforts to meet the immediate needs of the IDPs, such as enrolling IDPs in host schools without documents and offering them material assistance, despite the huge scale of the issue and limited international funding.

“The national and provincial authorities were making notable efforts to meet the immediate needs of the IDPs, such as enrolling IDPs in host schools without documents and offering them material assistance, despite the huge scale of the issue and limited international funding.”

## Violence and Education

Pakistan has experienced a high number of targeted attacks against educational institutions. Out of 3,400 attacks on education spread over 110 countries, between 1970 and 2013, around a fifth (N=724) took place in Pakistan (START, 2014). GCPEA (2014) reported an even higher incidence, with 838 militant attacks reported just between 2009 and 2012, the highest number in any country during this period.

In 2009 the Taliban militants, who were in control of the Swat Valley in KP, conducted a violent campaign against female education, banning girls’ schooling outright and forcing 900 schools to close or stop enrolment for female pupils (GCPEA, 2014). As a result, some 120,000 girls and 8,000 female teachers stopped attending school. Even when the military took back control from the Taliban, schoolgirls and female teachers were too scared to go to school for nearly a year. On 9 October 2012, Malala Yousafzai and two other girls were shot on their school bus (GCPEA, 2014).

“Teachers have been caught up in ongoing violence emanating from the multiple conflict drivers in Pakistan.”

The 2014 attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar that killed 141 people, including 132 children, is considered to be the worst attack on civilians that the country has ever seen and resulted in school closures and policies aimed to increase school security. Government measures were taken during 2015 to address education under risk/attack. For instance, a national plan of action was drafted with security measures for protecting schools, and a consensus developed on registering madaris and auditing their curriculum. Instability continued in 2016, when several gunmen opened fire at Bacha Khan University (BKU) in Charsadda, KP, killing 22 people and injuring another 22 persons.

As a result of multiple attacks on military and civilian targets in 2013 and 2014, and fledgling peace talks with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, the army launched a large scale operation in June 2014 against militants in the North Waziristan Agency of FATA. The operation caused mass displacement of about one million people, with more than half of them being children and women.

Still, the attack in Peshawar and the general prevalence of insecurity and violence pressured the government to widen the space for a national dialogue on how to address attacks on education, such as through the prioritisation of standard operating procedures for disaster risk management and school safety.

Teachers have been caught up in ongoing violence emanating from the multiple conflict drivers in Pakistan. In KP, militants have killed both government and private school teachers. In Balochistan, the Baloch nationalists have killed Punjabi teachers who are seen as symbols of the state (GCPEA, 2014). School teachers, including female teachers, in KP are given training in firearms as an additional measure to protect children and schools (Dawn, 10th April 2015), though it is not possible to estimate how many teachers have received this training. Furthermore, following the attack on BKU, the KP Home Ministry was reported to be issuing a free gun license to teachers on showing a letter of authority from their institutions (Shahid, 2016).

“Acceptance of corporal punishment as a means of disciplining children is widespread both in schools and in the family domain and parents of victims and school administrators often condone incidents of corporal punishment (SPARC, 2013).”

## Corporal Punishment and Gender-based Violence

The National Child Policy adopted in 2006 recognises the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment. In addition, a federal ministerial directive and ministerial directives in all provinces have instructed teachers not to use corporal punishment. However, corporal punishment is not prohibited in legislation (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2015). In 2013, the National Assembly passed a bill on the prohibition of corporal punishment but it lapsed because the Senate did not pass it within the required time (SPARC, 2014). Pakistan has yet to enforce the strict eradication of corporal punishment in schools.

Acceptance of corporal punishment as a means of disciplining children is widespread both in schools and in the family domain and parents of victims and school administrators often condone incidents of corporal punishment (SPARC, 2013). The high drop out in Pakistan is at least partly linked to physical punishment in schools. SPARC (2010; cited in Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2015) reports an estimated 35,000 students drop out of secondary school every year due to corporal punishment.

Empirical research on sexual abuse in general, and in and around schools specifically, is limited in Pakistan. Data on gender-based violence predominantly comes from human rights reports. Although SPARC (2014) reported high levels of child sexual abuse in Pakistan, only few studies exist on sexual violence within schools, or perpetrated by teachers, because of the taboo nature of the topic. The United Nations (1999) reported that boys were more vulnerable to sexual abuse by male teachers because of gender-segregated schools.

## Research Area 1: Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

- The promotion of national unity as a means to foster social cohesion enjoys a strong emphasis in education policies, especially in the inculcation of values and attitudes through the national curriculum. However, the concept of social cohesion was largely constructed through assimilationist policies leaving limited space for affirming internal diversity. Further evidence of such an approach is offered through the analysis of curriculum 2009 in RA2. Balancing assimilationist approaches with respect, inclusion, and acceptance of social, religious, and cultural diversity can better support social cohesion.
- The 2006 national curriculum aimed to promote education quality by shifting from a content-driven to a competency-based curriculum. However, the politicisation of the curriculum in the context of the 'War on Terror' diluted the scope of the reform and may be linked to a slow and uneven implementation process across the provinces. A strong political will and ongoing consultative processes to reinforce buy-in of national stakeholders would support the implementation of the National Curriculum 2006.
- After the 2001 devolution, access widened and inequalities reduced nationally and across the provinces by 2008. However, reduction in gender gaps was much smaller in Balochistan and KP, where gender still remains an important determinant of opportunities. There was also some evidence that school management committees widened participation in school governance to marginalised members of the community. Although unintended, the devolution enhanced the politicisation of education. The 2010 devolution of education was largely seen as enhancing redistribution, recognition, participation and reconciliation. Emerging evidence suggested a greater commitment in the provinces towards redistributing access and reducing inequalities, greater provincial participation in policy formulation and increases in the allocation of educational budgets. The Inter-Provincial Education Ministers' Committee and the National Curriculum Council have been established to ensure harmonisation of education systems across the provinces and the representation of core cultural and civic values in the curriculum and textbooks respectively. Monitoring the impact of devolution/governance policies at both provincial and district level along the 4Rs framework of redistribution, recognition, representation and reconciliation would better support social cohesion.

- The three parallel education strands—public, private and madrassah—have appeared to contribute to inequitable opportunities with respect to learning and labour market outcomes and the inculcation of disparate worldviews and values. This contributes to a lack of opportunity for social mobility, social stratification and a weakening of social cohesion. A concerted political will to harmonise these sectors through education policy was not evident. A rigorous examination of the role of these three sectors in supporting social divisions and hierarchies, along with greater state oversight of governance, curriculum, teachers and teacher education of the three sectors would support policy making from a social cohesion perspective. Developing a more refined categorisation of institutions within each sector would help support tailored policy strategies.
- In KP and Punjab, there was a visible policy shift to redistribute access to English, which is a language of power nationally and globally, by teaching mathematics and science in English in public schools. However, the majority of stakeholders interviewed believed that under the prevailing conditions in schools this policy would not work. Although unintended, it would heighten inequalities in learning. A lack of recognition of linguistic diversity in language policy in practice was also cited as a concern. In particular, the dominant position of Urdu and a neglect of the role of ethnic languages in education were widely believed to be causing redistributive and recognitive inequities. From a perspective of equity and social justice it would be better if English is taught well as a subject by teachers adequately trained to teach it as a foreign language rather than imposing it as a medium of instruction from Grade-1 onwards. The use of mother tongue as a language of instruction would lead to better learning outcomes, particularly for marginalised students whose exposure to Urdu and English outside the school is limited. This would also protect learners' linguistic and cultural rights.
- Despite decades of support from UNHCR and NGOs for education provision for Afghan refugee children, these efforts have fallen short of what is needed. The educational prospects of this group of children and young people remain low and their access to education needs greater attention. Redistributing access to education for refugees, including Afghan refugees, would require the mobilisation of funding at national and international levels. Positive attitudes towards the integration of Afghan refugees in public schools can be promoted through the use of advocacy. Policy directives on the prohibition of discrimination against refugees would help reduce discrimination against refugees in education.
- The ongoing conflict and militancy, along with large-scale natural disasters, have resulted in a huge number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly in KP province. In addition, a significant number of IDPs exist in Balochistan because of conflict and in Sindh because of natural disasters. This has seriously affected educational access and infrastructure, and overstretched educational resources in host communities. Mobilising and allocating funds in ESPs to rebuild or repair the schools that have been affected by conflict or natural disasters would support access to education for both internally displaced children and those in host communities.



Government school teachers attend a four day training workshop on inclusive education for teachers in a government school in Quetta City, Balochistan Province. ©UNICEF/Zaidi

# Research Area 2: Teachers and Social Cohesion in Pakistan

## Teachers and Social Cohesion in Pakistan

“This study provides insights into: how teacher preparation and continuing education supported teachers in their role as peacebuilders; how teachers interpreted the implicit and explicit narratives of peace and social cohesion in curriculum and texts; teachers’ agency in interrogating the dominant narratives and taking a position in relation to education for peace and harmony; and how teachers mitigate gender, language-based and religious inequities, in and through education.”

RA 2 examined how teachers in Pakistan were supporting education for social cohesion. Through in-depth case studies of major teacher education programmes in the public sector in Pakistan, and analysis of teacher education curricula, school curricula and textbooks in selected subjects, this study provides insights into: how teacher preparation and continuing education have supported teachers in their role as peacebuilders; how teachers have interpreted the implicit and explicit narratives of peace and social cohesion in curricula and texts; teachers’ agency in interrogating dominant narratives and taking a position in relation to education for social harmony; and how teachers mitigate gender, language-based and religious inequities, in and through education.

Fieldwork for RA2 was carried out in Sindh only. Therefore, the findings may not be generalisable to the rest of the country. However the issues raised are widely applicable to Pakistan. The teacher education institutions covered included: a premier public sector teacher education institution in a large city which provides pre-service and in-service education to teachers from all the districts in Sindh; a Government College of Education in a small town in interior Sindh which serves as a catchment area for student teachers from rural and semi-urban areas in Sindh; and a Government Elementary College of Education in a congested area in Karachi severely impacted by violence due to presence of gangs and mafia. In addition, a teacher education institution in a private university was also covered. A small number of research participants— members of the School Management Committee (SMC) — were also included from Metroville, where a large number of workers from other parts of Pakistan (for example, Gilgit-Baltistan and Hazara) and some Afghan immigrants were settled.

Research methods included a review of education policies (focusing on teachers and teacher education), curriculum documents, syllabi and materials of relevance and interest to the issue of teachers’ role in social cohesion. Interviews and focus group discussions were carried out with key stakeholders including policy-makers, bureaucrats and decision makers in the Education and Literacy Department of the Government of Sindh, representatives of NGOs, principals and heads of departments in teacher education institutions, lecturers in teacher education institutions, practising teachers, student-teachers, parents and members of the community. While the interviews and focus group discussions provided depth of insight and perspective, breadth of perspectives was sought through a survey completed by 266 student-teachers and in-service teachers.

“Over the last two decades there has been significant investment in teacher education reform in the country.”

### Teacher Reforms

School education in Pakistan has always been regarded as a matter of priority in regulatory and policy frameworks in the country. Basic education provided in public sector schools in Pakistan has been plagued by issues of poor quality especially in terms of the classroom processes of teaching and learning, and the quality of students learning. Teacher quality is widely recognised as the most important input to improve the quality of basic education. Over the last two decades there has been significant investment in teacher education reform in the country. The main focus of



“The revised curriculum of education envisaged that approaches such as critical thinking and reflective practice would ‘facilitate the process of multiculturalism and pluralism in our education system to bring about social transformation in the society’ (HEC, 2010: 15).”

these reforms was to improve the overall education quality through enhancing teacher preparation and continuing professional development (CPD) and improved governance of teachers (MoE, 2009a). However, in the post 9/11 context of the US-led war on terror, education reform was also undertaken in recognition of the strategic role of education in building an inclusive society with respect for diversity. Much of the reform since 2001 was driven by the funding support and technical advice from international donors and development agencies notably the USAID sponsored ‘Pre-Step programme’ (<http://idd.edc.org/projects/usaid-teacher-education-project>). Other donors and agencies engaged in teacher reforms included UNESCO, ADB, CIDA, DfID, UNICEF and the World Bank (UNESCO & ITA, 2013).

Three key initiatives in teacher education with national reach in terms of scale and scope in Pakistan were:

- A gradual abolishment of the one-year programmes (e.g., Certificate of Teaching; one-year B.Ed.) and introduction of a two-year Associate Degree (ADE) for Elementary and Secondary Teachers leading to a four-year B.Ed. (Hon) and a concomitant enhancement in the entry qualification and increase in salary (HEC, 2010);
- Establishment of a National Council for Teacher Education (NACTE) that developed policies, procedures and a system for accrediting teacher education programmes and institutions, leading to the ‘Standards for Accreditation of Teacher Education Programmes’ (MoE 2009b);
- National Professional Standards for Teachers to guide the development of pre-service and in-service programmes of teacher education were developed and agreed upon (MoE 2009c).

## Teachers, Curriculum of Education and Social Cohesion

“However, teacher educators and teachers in this study saw ‘assimilation’ as the main approach to social cohesion.”

The curriculum of education was revised and schemes of study were developed for the newly introduced ADE and four-year B.Ed. (Hons.) programmes. The revised curriculum positioned the teachers as reflective practitioners who engage in critical thinking and analysis to develop their practice. The curriculum also envisaged that approaches such as critical thinking and reflective practice would ‘facilitate the process of multiculturalism and pluralism in our education system to bring about social transformation in the society’ (HEC, 2010: 15). In the traditional education system of Pakistan where teachers are seen as ‘experts who dispense knowledge’ this repositioning of the teachers’ role and concomitant expectations was tantamount to a paradigm shift.

Indeed empirical findings showed dissonance in the views about the teachers’ role and approaches to social cohesion held on the one hand by teachers and teacher educators, and underpinned in the official narrative on the other hand. For example, teacher educators and teachers in this study saw ‘assimilation’ as the main approach to social cohesion. In explaining their role in supporting a socially

“The curricular reform in initial teacher education held promise of improvement in the quality of basic education. However, for such a promise to be realised, the dissonance would need to be resolved between teachers’ perspectives on the ground and the official narratives about the role of teachers.”

cohesive society, teachers predominantly looked to religious or Islamic values to address issues of social divisions and diversity. Moreover, a significant pattern in the empirical findings was that teachers view their role largely in terms of delivering the academic curriculum, not necessarily dealing with issues of social cohesion. For example, teachers expressed: ‘As a teacher I would try to focus fully on my subject, which I will teach to my students with full command’ and ‘This is not the responsibility of educational institutions. It is the duty of other institutions. We are only bound to our curriculum; no more responsibility be imposed on us’.

These perceptions stood in stark contrast with the nuanced understandings that teachers and teacher educators shared regarding key conflict drivers in Pakistan. They noted religion, especially sectarianism, as a key driver of conflict followed by ethnic/linguistic differences, poverty, a lack of justice and gender: ‘the biggest issue is that there is discrimination on the basis of sect, religion, ethnicity, rich and poor in the country [--] Hatred is being spread on the basis of religion even though our beloved Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) has declared all Muslims are brothers [sic] to each other’ (Male teacher).

The curricular reform in initial teacher education held promise of improvement in the quality of basic education. However, for such a promise to be realised, the dissonance would need to be resolved between teachers’ perspectives on the ground and the official narratives about the role of teachers.

## Teacher Recruitment and Deployment

“Policy and procedures in teacher recruitment were significantly improved. However, there appeared a general emphasis on meritocracy in teacher recruitment even when it meant that measures for inclusion took a back seat.”

Political interference in teacher recruitment and deployment has been widespread in Pakistan. Politicians have used teacher recruitment as political patronage because teachers in government schools serve as election-officers at the time of national and local elections (Bari et al., 2013; SAHE, 2014). As a consequence, lack of transparency in decision making has led to recruitment of teachers who are inadequately prepared, academically and professionally. To address these issues several policy actions were proposed in NEP 2009 and the policy and procedures in teacher recruitment across all provinces were significantly reformed, including the introduction of statutory clauses for special quotas for religious minorities and persons with special needs, together with age relaxation for women (MoE, 2009a). In Sindh, where this study was carried out, a Merit-Based and Needs-Based teacher recruitment system was introduced. This included the setting up of district recruitment committees to identify local needs and drive the recruitment process in consultation with the provincial authorities in the Education and Literacy Department of the Government of Sindh (ELD-GoS). For transparency, a representative of the World Bank (a partner in reform) also observes the process. Besides other criteria, applicants have to pass a test administered by an external company, the National Testing System (NTS). The results of the test are publicly displayed as a merit list and shared with the district recruitment committees for onwards processing (GoS, 2012).

The research participants, including senior officials in the ELD-GoS, welcomed this reform and agreed that third party assessment in determining teacher merit would enhance quality and wean out political patronage. While these reforms were an important step towards improving the quality of teachers recruited, questions emerged about the extent to which marginalised groups would be included. For example, a participant in the study referred to statutory clauses about special quotas and held: 'The main thing is that the teacher recruitment is done on merit, whoever comes will come on merit; we have stopped using quota.' This statement is reflective of the general emphasis on meritocracy in teacher recruitment even when it meant that measures for inclusion took a back seat.

## Teachers, the Curriculum and Textbooks

As discussed in RA1, the National Curriculum was revised in 2006. The revision was led by the Curriculum Wing of the Federal Ministry of Education, in consultation with the four Provincial Bureaus of Curriculum and a range of stakeholders. The National Curriculum 2006 (NC 2006) adopted a standards and benchmark approach with a focus on competencies, representing a shift from the content-based approach used in the Curriculum 2000.



A teacher conducts life skills based education session in a UNICEF supported child protection centre in Pind Khokhar, Lahore, the capital of Punjab Province.  
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“The current study found that while the English Curriculum (Grade IX and X) underpinned multicultural aims, the Pakistan Studies Curriculum (Grade IX and X) assumed all citizens to be Muslim who were to be trained, disciplined and governed in a homogenous way.”

The NC 2006 was a significant strategy with the potential to promote a shared national identity inclusive of different cultural, ethnic and religious groups. The NC 2006 was expected to ‘closely reflect important social issues, provide more room for developing the capacity for self-directed learning, the spirit of inquiry, critical thinking, problem-solving and team-work’ (MoE, 2009a: 45).

Furthermore, it was to promote ‘cultural and religious sensitivities in the country and modern emerging trends to make the whole education purposeful and to create a just civil society that respects diversity of views, beliefs and faiths’ (MoE, 2009a: 32). Despite these multicultural and inclusive aims, the curriculum was to be reformed while ‘keeping in view the Islamic teachings and ideology of Pakistan’ and ‘infusing Islamic and religious teaching’ (ibid). ICG (2014) noted an over-emphasis on ‘national cohesion at the expense of regional diversity’ in the curriculum and a lack of inclusion of provincial histories, regional languages and cultures. The current study found that while the English Curriculum (Grade IX and X) underpinned multicultural aims, the Pakistan Studies Curriculum (Grade IX and X) assumed all citizens to be Muslim who were to be trained, disciplined and governed in a homogenous way. The analysis of textbooks used in government schools, produced by Sindh Textbook Board Jamshoro, and in private schools produced by private publishers indicated that the multicultural aims of the English Curriculum had not been translated into textbooks in ways envisaged. The analysed textbooks in use in private schools did not offer contextually or culturally relevant materials, while the textbooks used in government schools could be more inclusive of Pakistan’s diversity.

NEP 2009 recommended the introduction of a ‘well regulated system of competitive publishing of textbooks and learning materials’ (MoE 2009a: 46). Historically, provincial textbook boards were responsible for textbook development and production (SAHE, 2014). However, the New Education Policy & Plan of Action 2007 and 2009, in an effort to improve the quality of textbooks, restricted their role to ‘competent facilitating, regulating and monitoring authorities’ (MoE 2007: 1). Additionally, private sector publishers were encouraged to develop textbooks.

“Interviews with curriculum and textbook personnel revealed that the stringent review processes were, in some instances, ideologically driven and worked against the expectation of the inclusion of marginalised groups.”

The liberalised process of textbook development could have promoted competition and production of better quality textbooks, potentially leading to the production of books that are not biased or exclusive in terms of representation of the different identity groups in society. Despite market competition in textbook production and a shrinking role of provincial textbook boards, all textbooks prescribed in public sector schools are taken through a stringent review process to ensure adherence to the NC 2006 and guidelines provided to authors. For example, the Bureau of Curriculum Sindh notes as one of its functions:

‘Review of Textbooks produced by other agencies such as textbook boards. Directing any person or agency to delete, improve or withdraw any portion or whole of the curriculum, textbooks and reference material prescribed for any class being repugnant to the Islamic Teaching and ideology of Pakistan’ ([http://bcews.gos.pk/BoC\\_Other\\_Pages/history.html](http://bcews.gos.pk/BoC_Other_Pages/history.html)).

Interviews with curriculum and textbook personnel revealed that the stringent review processes were, in some instances, ideologically driven and worked against the expectation of the inclusion of marginalised groups.

“Teachers’ participation in CPD was adhoc and not necessarily aligned with individual and institutional needs.”

## Teachers and Continuing Professional Development

Continuing professional development (CPD) is usually organized at the district levels through arrangements made with the provincial headquarters but apex institutions such as the Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE) in Sindh also offered CPD programmes. However teachers’ participation in CPD was ad hoc and not necessarily aligned with individual and institutional needs. For example, interviews with research participants and discussions with stakeholders in the ‘Stakeholder engagement workshops’ revealed that opportunities for professional development were not distributed evenly but repeatedly made available to a selected few. In Sindh, CPD for teachers was usually offered through funding and technical support from international donors and implemented in partnership with the ELD-GoS. Interviews with those engaged in the provision of CPD and a review of CPD materials from selected projects showed that CPD projects offered capacity development on issues significant to social cohesion such as reducing violence, conflict resolution and resilience. For example, in 2013 UNICEF conducted a Social Cohesion and Resilience (SCR) Analysis, which cited discriminatory content as a key conflict driver and priority area for intervention. As a follow-up UNICEF supported a three-part series of capacity building workshops at provincial level to encourage broader reflection on SCR issues amongst education stakeholders and to building their capacity to develop conflict-sensitive educational materials to promote SCR. (UNICEF, 2013 <http://www.unicef.org/pakistan/>). As noted by a senior member of the UNICEF, ‘themes of Social Cohesion and Resilience themes were integrated in regular teacher training manuals and teacher trainers were trained [--] In Sindh, with the support of the Education and Literacy Department, 400 primary school teachers from 16 districts were subsequently trained on the developed modules along with 100 provincial and district government officers’.

“There was very little focus on accountability in terms of the quality of teachers’ practice and their role in creating an inclusive and child friendly learning environment.”

## Teacher Accountability and Social Cohesion

Accountability and monitoring of schools and teachers were mainly at district level. Typically, there were two main approaches to ensure teacher accountability: supervision and monitoring visits by the office of the DEO, and community engagement through the school management committee (SMC). Accountability of teachers and schools in the public education system of Pakistan is largely reported in the literature in terms of teacher attendance rates and student achievement rates (SAHE, 2014). For greater accountability, provincial governments have put improved monitoring systems through their respective Education Management Information Systems (EMIS). However, this study found that there was very little focus on accountability in terms of the quality of teachers’ practice and their role in creating an inclusive and child friendly learning environment.

One reason is poor teacher supervision, as a ‘typical supervisor in a Union Council can be tasked to monitor between 40 and 80 schools spread across a 10-20 km radius’ (GoS, 2014: 32). Clearly, the overburdened system could not provide adequate monitoring and support to all schools especially those that were in remote rural settings. Beyond capacity there was also the tendency to approach

“In the interest of a system of schooling that is a positive force in social cohesion, the issue of governance and accountability of the private sector would need to be resolved.”

monitoring and accountability as ‘policing and punishment’ and not as ‘support for development’. A consequence was that there was very little if any support related to the processes of teaching, learning and teacher professional development.

The experience of the SMC has had limited success because of a range of reasons, including meddling by locally influential persons, lack of capacity and training of the SMC and little understanding of the role and purpose of the SMC by various stakeholders (MoE, 2009a). There were positive examples in the private sector –especially from well-resourced school systems—on the role of school management committees and teachers in addressing issues of violence, corporal punishment and contextually relevant gender sensitive strategies in schools. Given that the school studied was located in a very poor, ethnically mixed locality with a history of violence, these issues were relevant to the school community.

Issues of teacher accountability also extend to private schools. Regulatory bodies such as the Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA) in Islamabad had mixed results because of tension between PEIRA and the government (Humayun et al., 2013). Hence, in the interest of a system of schooling that is a positive force in social cohesion, the issue of governance and accountability of the private sector would need to be resolved.

## Research Area 2: Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

- A weak system of teacher education was a continuing challenge to the quality of public school education in Pakistan. Several reform initiatives were taken including a thorough revision of the curriculum. The revised curriculum positioned teachers as 'reflective practitioners'. It also aimed for a system of education that could promote social transformation through respect for diversity, pluralism and multiculturalism. However, the reform of teacher education was strongly influenced by donors and international development agencies. There was a disjuncture in the philosophy of education as envisaged in the curriculum and the worldview of the education stakeholders on the ground. For example, teachers and teacher educators in this study saw 'assimilation' and not necessarily diversity as the main approach to social cohesion with a concomitant education practice. Reforms in initial teacher education did not explicitly focus on the role of education in addressing legacies and drivers of conflict in society.
- There is a wide disparity in the quality of basic school education within the public sector and especially between the public and the private sector, raising concerns about equity (see also RA 1). Introduction of National Professional Standards for Teachers and Standards for Accreditation of Teacher Education Programmes could potentially achieve distributive justice by ensuring that teachers in all schools in the country meet minimum standards of quality. However, effective implementation of minimum standards would require the recognition and representation of marginalised and excluded groups, which in turn, would challenge deep-rooted assumptions (e.g. gender roles in society) and question hierarchies within society and culture (e.g. status of minorities as citizens of the country).
- Prescribed textbooks are a major, and in most cases the only, resource material that teachers in public schools use for delivering the curriculum. To ensure development of good quality textbooks, free of errors, inclusive of different identity groups, and that do not willfully distort historical facts, the process of textbook development was liberalised. The liberalised process of textbook development could have potentially promoted competition and led to better quality textbooks that were not biased or exclusive in terms of representation of different identity groups in society. However, stringent review processes -ostensibly for adherence to the NC 2006 - were, in some instances, ideologically driven and coercive. It is strongly recommended that the textbook review process is undertaken by experts in the field and be inclusive of Pakistan's diversity.

- Teacher recruitment in the country was fraught with issues of interference from vested and powerful interests and lack of transparency in decision making, often resulting in recruitment of teachers who did not meet the minimum criteria. Policy and procedures in teacher recruitment have been significantly reformed so that recruitment processes are merit-based and largely transparent. These are positive measures and will go a long way in reducing political interference in teacher appointments. However, the emphasis on merit seen mainly in terms of teachers' performance in third-party administered tests, raised questions about the extent to which recruitment ensured the inclusion of marginalised groups (e.g. women and religious minorities). The narrow focus on merit and performance in tests would need to be balanced with inclusion of the marginalised groups in the community.
- The teacher educators, trainee-teachers and school teachers had a sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the issues that lead to exacerbating divisions, conflict and violence. For example, they showed awareness that religion, especially sectarianism, ethnicity, poverty, a lack of justice and gender inequity were the social factors that lead to violence and social divisions. In spite of this awareness, teacher educators mostly saw these issues as peripheral to the core curriculum and lacked a coherent pedagogic practice to respond to issues of social inequities meaningfully. Capacity development of teacher educators would be essential for a strategic and systemic role of teacher education in addressing issues of peace, mitigating inequalities and related drivers of conflict. Such a role would recognise these groups in the pedagogic process, provide them voice and status, and enable participation in the dynamics of education.
- In Sindh, CPD for teachers was largely provided through funding and technical support from international donors and implemented in partnership with the ELD-GoS or other local partners. Selected CPD projects analysed (e.g. SCR training sponsored by UNICEF) incorporated modules looking at social cohesion, resilience, child protection, gender equity and elimination of corporal punishment. During these CDP projects, teachers were supported to implement these concepts at the classroom level. However, the experience of these initiatives suggest that for long term impact and sustainability of ideas such as social cohesion, they need to be woven into the fabric of the syllabus and teaching plans at the grassroots level.
- The education infrastructure in Sindh was large and under-resourced so that there was little systemic accountability of teachers as the relevant education officers could not visit all schools regularly. Introduction of school management committee in primary schools led to mixed results because of a perceived or real lack of capacity of the SMC to play a role in ensuring teacher accountability. There were positive examples of the role of school management committees in working with schools and teachers to ensure good practice such as eliminating violence and corporal punishment in schools, especially in the private sector and well-resourced school systems. Public private partnerships in this regard could enable the public sector to draw on the expertise and experience of the private sector.





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# Research Area 3: Youth

## Research Area 3: Youth

“This part of the report explores if and how youth-related educational initiatives are working, for whom they are working, and with what effects?”

With two-thirds of the country’s population aged under 29, youth are central to Pakistan’s future (Government of Pakistan, 2014). This part of the report explores if and how youth-related educational initiatives are working, for whom they are working, and with what effects? The study unpacked youth policies, including their priorities, implementation, and outcomes and the role of global actors in shaping these. The study also centred on how youth think and feel with regards to peace, education, inequities, violence, gender, and development processes, along with the ethnic and religious ‘other’. The analysis is offered at two levels:

- National and Sindh youth policy landscape, and the social, economic and political context of youth;
- Micro case studies of four youth initiatives.

The four case studies were selected in discussions with UNICEF Pakistan, members of the Critical Reference Groups, and the University of Amsterdam who led RA 3 within the Research Consortium. Each case study relates to one of the 4Rs - redistribution, recognition, reconciliation or representation - and explores the social, political, and/or economic agency of youth.

Fieldwork for RA 3 was carried out in Karachi only, therefore, the findings may not be generalisable to other parts of the country. In Karachi, research sites and participants were purposely selected to obtain deeper insights into the role of education in enhancing youth agency for social cohesion. Participants belonged to a spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds, and ethno- linguistic (Pakhtun, Sindhi, Punjabi, Mohajir, Baloch and Hindko-speaking) and religious (Sunni, Shia, Hindu, and Christian) groups. Altogether 62 (32 female and 30 male) youth, 21 teachers/facilitators and 26 stakeholders representing a range of civil society, academia, and government departments or disciplines—media, labour, sports, minorities, vocational, economy, gender, and human rights—participated in the study.

“The National Youth Policy 2008 conceptualised all youth as Muslim and aimed to steer the development of youth in line with ‘Islamic values’ (MYA, 2008: 4).”

### Policy Responses to Youth Agency

Although efforts to produce a youth policy started since the 1990s, it was only in 2008 that Pakistan produced its first ever National Youth Policy (NYP) after large-scale consultations. However, it was dissolved after devolution in 2010 when ‘youth’ became a provincial subject. While some aspects of the NYP 2008 might be seen as implicitly enhancing youth agency for social cohesion, it failed to explicitly link education to social cohesion. There appeared a greater emphasis on economic agency than socio-political agency of youth. National integration was narrowed down to interregional harmony and rural-urban exchanges. The NYP 2008 conceptualised all youth as Muslim and aimed to steer the development of youth in line with ‘Islamic values’ (MYA, 2008: 4).

Sindh produced its youth policy draft with the support of the United Nations Population Fund and Bargad, a youth-led and youth-focused civil society organisation in Pakistan. Although the Sindh Youth Policy (SYP) was drafted in 2012, it is yet to be ratified. The SYP clearly shows the influence of international donors’

“The Sindh Youth Policy recommends standardising the quality of education in public, private, and madrassah education, as a measure to ‘contribute to equal opportunities for social mobility of youth coming from poor or other vulnerable background’ (SYAD, 2012: 42).”

and non-governmental organisations’ language and thinking and integrates social cohesion in education. The SYP considers the creation of ‘equitable opportunities’ necessary for enabling youth to enhance their potential in a peaceful manner (SYAD, 2012: 3). The document considers the local dynamics of inequities and conflicts affecting youth in Sindh and across the nation, and offers measures to address these conflict drivers. The SYP upholds youth as ‘active agents of change’ (SYAD, 2012: 32) and as leaders of society, in contrast to the NYP (2008), which considered youth to be ‘vulnerable’. An important element of social cohesion – representation - was embedded in the policy-making process as it invited input from 844 youth representatives. Although the SYP recommends affirmative action for vulnerable groups - a 10% quota for girls and a mere 2% quota for minorities (non-Muslims), differently-abled, and other vulnerable youth groups in the job market - it fails to address the historical marginalisation experienced by diverse sub-groups of youth.

The SYP recommends standardising the quality of education in public, private, and madrassah education, as a measure to ‘contribute to equal opportunities for social mobility of youth coming from poor or other vulnerable background’ (SYAD, 2012: 42). Furthermore, it recommends discouraging ‘hate-speech and stereotyping of communities in the public/private and madrassah schooling’, introducing peace education in the school curricula, promoting inter-faith and intra-faith harmony, and encouraging intercultural learning (SYAD, 2012: 41). Though it stresses harnessing youth capacity to participate in the democratic political system, the emphasis appears to be tilted towards enhancing socio-economic empowerment rather than the political engagement of youth.

“There appears to be a lack of a coordinated inter-sectoral approach to youth policy and programming as well as a lack of commitment in terms of budgetary allocation.”

There appears to be a lack of a coordinated inter-sectoral approach to youth policy and programming as well as a lack of commitment in terms of budgetary allocation. A range of organisations are engaged in youth programming, including Bargad, Yes Pakistan, Y-PEER, JAAG Pakistan, Shirkat Gah, the Search for Common Ground, UNFPA, Volunteer Overseas, UN Volunteers Programme, ILO, UNICEF, World Population Fund Pakistan, UNDP, USAID, DfID and the British Council, among others. Although a range of formal and non-formal youth programmes are being undertaken, a mapping of the youth programming does not appear to be readily available. In addition, a strong reliance on international and national NGOs and civil society organisations in youth programming and interventions was apparent. Research participants highlighted the equitable distribution of youth programmes across the province as a major concern. Respondents from the government and civil society organisations believed that in practice the most marginalised youth were the least catered to.

## Perceptions of Youth Violence and its Links to Education

The engagement of youth in violence, including terrorism, has been a major concern both nationally and internationally. Within the literature, three broad

“Some research participants considered all youth, even educated middle-class youth, to be marginalised because of a lack of economic opportunities and spaces for political participation, as well as constraints on decision-making within families.”

positions can be identified with respect to youth violence. First, education is seen as responsible for fuelling extremism (Hoodbhoy and Nayyar, 1985; Nayyar and Salim, 2003; Winthrop and Graff, 2010). Second, socio-economic deprivation is seen as linked to engagement in violence. Third, the political-ideological environment is viewed as a source of youth radicalisation (Moeed, 2015). The second argument is reflected in the recommendations of the ‘National Internal Security Policy’, formulated by the Ministry of Interior (MoI Pakistan, 2014), which recommends a youth engagement strategy (YES) for imparting technical and vocational education, job creation and loans to ensure livelihood opportunities. The participants from government and civil society organisations interviewed provided two broad reasons for the perceived youth involvement in violence. One group of stakeholders believed youth ‘marginalisation’, ‘exclusion’, ‘alienation’, or ‘disengagement’ from mainstream society encouraged radicalisation amongst the youth. The disengagement was seen as a result of socio-economic inequities, disappointment with the state, a lack of representation in decision-making and inequitable access to public services.

However, some participants considered all youth, even educated middle-class youth, to be marginalised because of a lack of economic opportunities and spaces for political participation, as well as constraints on decision-making within families. Another group of interviewees believed that radicalisation was promoted through formal and informal hate teaching in state schools, madrassah, and in the neighbourhood.

## Micro Case Studies

The four youth initiatives studied included:

- Pakistan Studies Curriculum
- UNICEF’s Sports for Social Cohesion and Resilience (SCR-SI)
- Youth Parliament
- Social Entrepreneurship

“Pakistan Studies curriculum demands that learners maintain the integration of the nation through the ‘ideology of Pakistan’ which is rooted in Islam and religious difference from Hinduism.”

### Pakistan Studies Curriculum

Pakistan Studies is a formal education intervention which was introduced after the break-up of East and West Pakistan into Bangladesh and Pakistan in 1971 and primarily devoted to promoting national integration. The subject is compulsory and counts towards the final marks for all young people between the ages of 14 and 17 in their IX and X grades, in both public and private schools.

The foremost goal of the Pakistan Studies curriculum is to ‘inculcate a sense of gratitude to Almighty Allah’ among students for bestowing upon them ‘an independent and sovereign state’ (MoE, 2006: 1). In addition, it demands that learners maintain the integration of the nation through the ‘ideology of Pakistan’ which is rooted in Islam and religious difference from Hinduism. Pakistan Studies textbooks used in government schools and two textbooks in use in private schools were also analysed. The textbooks used in government school acknowledged the significance of ideology to good citizenship in these terms: ‘It [ideology] is a

“Pakistan Studies textbooks used in both government and private schools constructed a gendered national imaginary where men ‘lead’ and women work ‘within the four walls.’”

motivating force for deeds and actions. People may willingly sacrifice anything for a certain cause under the influence of an ideology’ (STBJ - Classes IX & X: 5-6). The textbook in use in private school claims: ‘The creation of Pakistan is based on Islamic ideology which means that Pakistan is to be a symbol of Islamic culture and way of life. It also means that Pakistan is to be a great citadel of Islam, it is to provide leadership and guidance to the entire Islamic world’ (Rabbani, 2005: 9). In addition, textbooks used in both government and private schools constructed a gendered national imaginary where men ‘lead’ and women work ‘within the four walls’. These discourses normalised the existing power differentials between men and women in Pakistan:

‘Male member has acquired a unique status in Pakistani culture. He is the head of the family. He is the dominant member. But a woman is also considered an important part of the family who governs and manages all family affairs within the four walls. Household keeping and upbringing of children is entrusted to her’ (STBJ Classes IX –X: 134).

‘The women are not prohibited from working but at the same time are supposed to observe strictly the rules of morality and not mix up freely with the men-folk’ (Rabbani, 2005: 204).

In addition to analysing curriculum texts in Pakistan Studies, the implementation of the subject was studied in three schools, catering to communities from different socio-economic backgrounds. School A was a government school for boys, which catered to the local Sindhi Sunni community in a conflict-affected and socio-economically underprivileged urban slum of Karachi. The language of instruction (LoI) in the school was Sindhi. The school was highly resource-constrained, with only two teachers, who taught all the subjects from grades one to nine to around 139 students. School B was a government school for girls and catered to a lower income Baloch Sunni community in the peaceful, rural outskirts of Karachi. The LoI was Urdu. The local Baloch community had pooled in resources to run the school. Both School A and B followed the state examination board. School C was a private school for girls, catering to the Shi’a Muslim community from a Mohajir background, and was located in a socio-economically middle class and upper middle class area. The community had pooled their resources to run the school. The LoI was English. The school followed a private examination board.

“It was apparent that the teaching and learning of Pakistan Studies produced different effects in the three schools studied.”

Altogether, six Sindhi boys and eight Baloch girls from a Sunni Muslim background, and six Shi’a Mohajir girls, participated in the study. In addition, three Pakistan Studies teachers and three head-teachers were interviewed. Furthermore, three members of Curriculum Bureau, one academic and two textbook writers of Pakistan Studies/Social Studies were also interviewed.

It was apparent that the teaching and learning of Pakistan Studies produced different effects in the three schools studied. In School C where students were able to engage in activity-based learning and were exposed to alternative narratives of history in a relatively peaceful environment, they developed a fairly open and critical understanding of history. Their teacher had attended several workshops offered by non-governmental organisations on participatory teaching:

“Pakistan Studies curriculum texts have become a site of intense contestation between groups who want to preserve the existing representations of Pakistani identities and those who want to shift them so that identities of all Pakistani groups are affirmed and respected.”

‘Don’t try to over exaggerate history. Ok. Keep it neutral. You don’t have to fight you know. Give people their own opinions. Let them have their own debates. Those who are writing need to write history in a fair way [...] History is something that is a very sensitive subject. And you know it affects everything a person thinks, what he [sic] says, what he [sic] does.’ (A student from School C)

In School A, where learners were deprived of such pedagogic opportunities and were exposed to communal tensions in a context of socio-economic disparities, students learnt from Pakistan Studies in ways that could potentially contribute to conflict:

‘Pakistan is based on the “Two-Nation Theory”, meaning these (Hindus and Christians) are different from us....We cannot live together.’ (Student 1, School A)

‘In Pakistan, there are lots of Hindus, mostly shops belong to Hindus [...] Muslims realise that they can’t live with Hindus. Due to the efforts of Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, we have this country today.’ (Student 2, School A).

Pakistan Studies textbooks enhanced these learners’ prejudices by providing state-sanctioned legitimacy for religious discrimination in an already volatile area. It deepened the vulnerability of these youth and the local communities. Parents and teachers in School A also appeared to have played a role in informing the boys’ perspectives:

Student 1: Our religion is far better than other religions.

Interviewer: Who taught you this?

Student 4: Our teachers and parents.

Discussions with research participants with responsibilities for curriculum and textbooks indicated that Pakistan Studies curriculum texts have become a site of intense contestation between groups who want to preserve the existing representations of Pakistani identities and those who want to shift them so that identities of all Pakistani groups are affirmed and respected:

We said we wanted to remove hate material against Hindu, India and not generalise the whole community. We wanted to remove gender fixation...Rather than just military heroes, we wanted to add heroes from civilian side (a member of Curriculum Bureau).

“The UNICEF Sports for Social Cohesion and Resilience intervention brought marginalised youth from socially segregated communities, divided along ethno-political lines, together through sports. It aspired to outcomes that would mitigate the effects of conflict and violence at a micro-level.”

### UNICEF Sports for Social Cohesion and Resilience (SCR-SI)

This intervention was part of UNICEF Pakistan’s broader initiative, ‘Engaging children, youth and communities for the promotion of Social Cohesion and Resilience (SCR)’, launched in 2013. Between January and December 2014, UNICEF’s implementing partners organised several sports events in vulnerable and conflict-affected areas of Pakistan. The intervention brought marginalised youth from socially segregated communities, divided along ethno-political lines, together through sports. It held that social cohesion must be built from the bottom up, so that young people from different backgrounds, through sports, are given the space to interact and discover their similarities so that they can build trust, self-confidence and respect for others. It aspired to outcomes that would mitigate the effects of conflict and violence at a micro-level.

“It appeared that sport enhanced youth agency to develop one-to-one relationships with young people from different ethnic backgrounds despite the issue of inter-group trust. However, the root causes of violence (poverty, inequities in public services, institutional injustice) that young people experienced were hard to mitigate.”

The impact of SCR-SI on youth agency for peacebuilding was studied from the perspective of both the facilitators and the young people. Field sites included two vulnerable and conflict-affected communities in Karachi. Community A was a remote, poor fishing village on the rural outskirts of Karachi. Six out-of-school Baloch females, ranging in age from 14 to 17 years, participated in the study. Few of them had any functional fluency in reading or writing in the Urdu language. Community B was an urban slum that was notorious for drugs, kidnapping and violence in Karachi. A total of 15 males, aged between 14 and 21 years, participated. Of these, seven spoke Pashto at home, five spoke Urdu but their families were ethnically Pakhtun, and three youths spoke Hindko at home but they also spoke Pashto fluently. All of them worked part-time, and all except one were continuing their education. Four facilitators, one male and three females, who belonged to different ethnic groups, including Sindhi, Baloch, Mohajir, and Punjabi were interviewed. The choice of ethnically diverse facilitators reflected the social cohesion agenda of the intervention.

This was one of a handful of interventions in Karachi that reached out to marginalised young people, particularly girls. The analysis of the case-study indicated that many of the youth perceived that sport had built their tolerance and care for their teammates. It appeared that sport also enhanced their agency to develop one-to-one relationships with young people from different ethnic backgrounds despite the issue of inter-group trust. The intervention succeeded especially where the community members took ownership. However, the root causes of violence (poverty, inequities in public services, institutional injustice) that young people experienced were hard to mitigate. In addition, the intervention did not attempt to address the economic priorities of the young people. Furthermore, because of the constraints on girls’ mobility it was difficult to physically bring girls from different backgrounds together in one location or in outdoor spaces.

## Youth Parliament

The Youth Parliament (YP) focuses on the representation of youth in the country’s political processes. It was founded by educated and privileged youth in 2005 in Sindh province to provide youth between the ages of 15 and 35 an opportunity to engage in democratic practices. The long-term outcome that YP seeks to achieve is developing future leaders with the attitude, skills, and knowledge necessary for bringing about peace in Pakistan. The YP also seeks to increase accountability between politicians, duty bearers and youth.

In addition to the founder of the YP, interviewees included the Election Cabinet and nine youth Parliamentarians in the YP’s head office. Of the nine youth, four were Punjabi, four Mohajir (of them two were female) and one was Sindhi. Most of them had studied in private schools and lived in relatively socio-economically privileged areas of Karachi. Their parents were reasonably well-educated and well-established bureaucrats, doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and heads of NGOs.

The YP exemplified that, in Pakistan, youth are neither apolitical nor passive. It appeared to be a useful social cohesion intervention. The YP mainly appealed to the university-educated, urban, socio-economically privileged, and technologically

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connected youth. It thus marginalised some youth constituencies by empowering only elites to take up political spaces, thereby reproducing inequities. Given the larger context in which youth from different socio-economic backgrounds lived largely isolated from one another, it appeared that youth programmes, including the YP, inadvertently lacked broader integration needed for meaningful inclusive social cohesion.

### The Social Entrepreneurship Programme

The Social Entrepreneurship Programme (SEP) focused on the economic empowerment of female youth between 18 to 21 years old. The Youth Engagement (YES) Network’s SEP runs in 1200 technical institutions and 40 universities across Pakistan and is integrated into the curriculum of over 172 vocational and educational institutions (YESN, 2015). SEP was set up to respond to the economic marginalisation of young women.

The case study was conducted in Karachi’s women-only polytechnic, which catered to predominantly Shi’a Mohajirs belonging to lower socio-economic backgrounds. A group of ten 19-20 year-old females leading two nationally acclaimed projects, along with three facilitators and the founders of the YES Network, participated in the study.

The analysis of the case study found that young women not only gained skills but were given a support system whereby they could practice their skills, earn money, and contribute to their community. The intervention had the potential to position females as socially and economically productive members of society. Positive outcomes included economic opportunities and a sense of well-being, dignity, self-esteem, and personal development. Major barriers that young women faced included cultural, class and safety issues. A lack of trust and support from families and local communities was cited as a major constraint. Women from a lower socio-economic class found it difficult to bridge social class differences while working as interns in offices in more privileged settings. It appeared that security concerns influenced the selection of projects by the participants. Due to increasingly difficult law and order situations, women were encouraged to take up indoor projects so that they did not have to commute. When social entrepreneurship was embedded into the formal education system, it garnered greater parental support and women felt empowered to face the challenges they encountered.

“The Social Entrepreneurship Programme focused on the economic empowerment of female youth between 18 to 21 years old. The analysis of the case study found that young women not only gained skills but were given a support system whereby they could practice their skills, earn money, and contribute to their community.”

### Understandings of Peace among Youth

‘Peace’ was defined by youth participants in multi-faceted ways, intersecting with gender, class, ethnicity and age. In broad terms, peace meant not only an absence of physical violence and terrorism, that is negative peace, but also encompassed all dimensions of the 4Rs framework. Most of the youth participants linked direct violence to a lack of equality and justice. Some of their concepts of peace could be seen as being associated with **redistribution**, such as ‘rich helping the poor’. Some participants saw peace as **recognition**, such as ‘no class discrimination’, justice for women, protection of human rights and child rights, respect for minorities, and



respect for youth. Young respondents also associated peace with **representation**, as they wanted to be trusted and listened to. A majority of them felt that good governance was necessary for peace, such as politicians working together in harmony, honest public institutions, and pro-poor and pro-people governance of the state. For the vast majority, peace was **reconciliation**, meaning inter-group harmony, irrespective of caste, ethnicity, religion, class, or political affiliation. Youths' perceptions of peace intersected with social class, gender and religion. In poorer areas, some young people emphasised access to resources, public services, education, and employment. In urban slums, youth highlighted freedom from drugs, guns, gangs and kidnapping, and justice from the police. In relatively affluent areas, some young people spoke about terrorism, democratic participation, and campus politics. The spectre of violence hung over young males and females. The fear of an absence of negative peace appeared to influence girls' mobility and their career and educational choices.



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## Gender Analysis and Gender-based Violence

“Pakistan has legislated a range of laws to offer women protection from violence. Nonetheless, the Pakistani Women’s Human Rights Organization (<http://www.pakistaniwomen.org>) reported an increase in violence against women, including domestic violence, forced marriage, early marriage, rape, mutilation, honour killing, vigilante justice, and acid attacks.”

The Global Gender Gap Report 2016 placed Pakistan at 143 of 144 countries, followed only by Yemen, in terms of how well females fared compared to males (World Economic Forum, 2016). Pakistan performs relatively better on political empowerment of women (90/144) because of its affirmative action to improve the political representation of women in the national, provincial and district governments. Pakistan, along with Syria, held the last two positions in economic empowerment, 135th in educational empowerment, and 124th in health and survival. Female youth not only lag behind in education but across Pakistan have higher unemployment rates than males, with large gaps in earnings across all occupations (Aslam and Kingdon, 2012).

Pakistan has legislated a range of laws to offer women protection from violence. For example, In October 2016, Pakistan’s parliament unanimously passed legislation against “honour killing” - mandating life imprisonment for convicted murderers even if forgiven by the victim’s relatives. In December 2011, the parliament passed the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Act and the Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act; and the Domestic Violence Bill was made a law in 2012. Nonetheless, the Pakistani Women’s Human Rights Organization (<http://www.pakistaniwomen.org>) reported an increase in violence against women, including domestic violence, forced marriage, early marriage, rape, mutilation, honour killing, vigilante justice, and acid attacks.

### Research Area 3: Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

- The macro level youth-policy in Sindh indicated that the SYP is inclusive of the diverse youth constituencies and frames youth as socially, economically and politically engaged citizens. However, it remains unratified, lacks a budgetary commitment and the affirmative action it recommends for girls and vulnerable groups is rather small. There also appeared a lack of inter-sectoral coordination and the easy availability of data pertinent to the mapping of youth programming. Furthermore, resource allocation for youth policy and programming was seen as insufficient by study participants and the distribution of youth programmes seen as unevenly distributed.
- Signing off the SYP and allocating due resources for its implementation is important for promoting youth agency. Improved coordination among different sectors (e.g. youth ministry, gender, sports, education, health, labour, school, vocational education, tertiary and higher education) in youth programmes would enhance synergies among the sectors and eliminate unnecessary overlaps. An examination of current policies, programmes, and resource allocation from a social cohesion perspective would better support youth agency, as would ensuring an equitable distribution of youth programmes across rural and urban locations and different youth constituencies, particularly among marginalised youth.

- While the role of education in social cohesion was seen vital, the policy-makers, government officials and civil society actors interviewed believed that training was neither preparing youth for a productive role in society, nor preparing them well for the labour market. In addition, a number of interviewed people believed that formal and informal hate teaching in government schools, madaris and local neighborhoods was a source of youth radicalisation. Young people in this study widely saw education as contributing to inequities, particularly, through inequitable access to quality education based on household income. On the positive side, the SYP recommends standardising quality of education in public, private, and madrassah education and recommends discouraging hate-speech and stereotyping of communities in educational institutions. The translation of these laudable recommendations into specific action plans and their implementation would strengthen the role of education in the promotion of social cohesion.
- Youth participants perceived peace as both an absence of violence and about addressing structural issues - inequities and discrimination along class, gender, ethnic and religious lines, and a lack of space for young people's voices and engagement—that could lead to social injustice, exclusion and disharmony in society. The youth participants demonstrated a spirit of volunteerism and were engaged in youth work and community development. They also expressed a strong sense of affection for Pakistan. Thus, they displayed remarkable resources for social cohesion, which could be further enhanced by giving them the spaces to exercise their economic, social and political agency.
- The four micro case studies indicated that overall, interventions were most effective when youth actively led them rather than merely being engaged as beneficiaries, or when local community members took ownership of programmes, particularly in divided communities. Impacts were also greater when interventions were introduced as part of formal curricula and recognised youth achievements and contributions as social entrepreneurs. Interventions were more successful at the personal level in terms of well-being and attitudinal changes but had limited impact in helping youth mitigate the drivers of conflict entrenched at structural and institutional levels. Some interventions also reproduced social hierarchies (e.g. YP) and promoted attitudes and understandings of the self and the 'other' in ways that can foster conflict (e.g. the teaching and learning of Pakistan Studies).
- Greater participation of youth in the planning, implementation and monitoring of youth programmes would enhance youth agency and produce greater impacts. Building opportunities for inter-group exchanges—inter-ethnic, inter-religious, cross-class, and cross rural-urban exchanges—as part of the curricula would enhance the social agency of youth. Streamlining diversity, pluralism, and non-discrimination in curricula would also support youth agency for social cohesion. Recognising the role of community in youth development would enhance the impact of programmes and ensure greater participation of youth.



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# Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

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“Explicit engagement with issues of social cohesion, that is a focus on contextually relevant issues of injustice and inequalities and ways of dealing with them through policies and programmes, would better support teachers’ and youths’ agency for promoting social cohesion and might contribute to more transformatory outcomes.”

“The contextually grounded knowledge created through the CPD programmes and supported through donor funding is a positive example. This knowledge could be better sustained by integrating it into pre-service teacher education.”

1. Over the past fifteen years, Pakistan has been through a series of policy formulations and reforms in education and teacher education, in close cooperation with the international development community. These show a commitment towards removing disparities in education and emphasise redistribution within the 4Rs framework—expanding access for marginalised groups, particularly girls. The Sindh ESP and to an extent the Balochistan ESP and the CPD programmes funded by donors are using a more explicit approach to integrating social cohesion in education. Likewise, the Sindh Youth Policy adopts an explicit approach to social cohesion by focusing on the redistribution of education, the fostering of recognition and reconciliation within education, and stressing the role of education in promoting the political representation of youth.
  - While the focus on redistributing access is understandable given the stark redistributive inequalities in education that are presented in the introduction of this report, it does not fully encompass other dimensions of inequality, as outlined in the 4Rs framework, that are also central to address in building a socially cohesive society. Issues of recognition, that is respect for and affirmation of internal linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity within school and teacher education curricula remained largely implicit or in some school subjects ignored or actively discouraged. Likewise, a direct engagement with national and provincial issues of injustice, redistribution, recognition and representation within education and teacher policies appeared to be largely missing. The implicit focus on social cohesion in the teacher education curriculum was reflected in teacher educators’ pedagogic practices. Contextual issues of social cohesion or injustice were largely seen by teacher educators as at the margins of the curriculum or outside of their remit and therefore to be brushed aside. Even when such issues were seen as significant, a lack of systematic pedagogic strategies to deal with contentious social issues appeared lacking.
  - Explicit engagement with issues of social cohesion, that is a focus on contextually relevant issues of injustice and inequalities and ways of dealing with them through policies and programmes, would better support teachers’ and youths’ agency for promoting social cohesion and might contribute to more transformatory outcomes. Mainstreaming issues of social cohesion, with an emphasis on recognition, representation and reconciliation, in the school curriculum and textbooks would help to ensure that the curriculum and textbooks are not biased and do not promote a singular identification of the self and the ‘other’. A corresponding explicit focus on social cohesion in the teacher education curriculum would also support teachers in using textbooks in ways that are inclusive and promote social cohesion.
  - The contextually grounded knowledge created through the CPD programmes and supported through donor funding is a positive example. This knowledge could be better sustained by integrating it into pre-service teacher education.
  - An explicit focus on social cohesion would require supporting teacher educators and facilitators of training through policy, resources and professional development opportunities.

“The sensitivity surrounding the politics of the curriculum is acknowledged but a greater political will is needed to translate the NC 2006 into textbooks as in most cases the textbook is the only resource that teachers and students use.”

2. The NC 2006 was seen to have incorporated improvements from both technical and social cohesion perspectives. However, the multicultural approach within the curriculum is not consistent across subject areas, with some subject areas adopting an assimilationist approach to internal diversity that marginalises or excludes particular groups of citizens. Furthermore, translating the curriculum into textbooks has been uneven across the provinces and rather slow. While there may be a range of reasons that delayed the implementation of NC 2006, such as a lack of capacity, resources or reconfiguration of institutions in the wake of 18th amendment, one reason identified in the literature and by research participants was the lack of strong political will to enact the NC 2006 in the face of internal resistance from a range of groups. In the devolved educational landscape, all provinces have endorsed the NC 2006 but have resolved to modify and contextualise it.

- It is recommended that an assimilationist approach be balanced with respect, inclusion, and acceptance of social, religious, and cultural diversity. While some assimilation may be necessary for generating a sense of national unity, it is not sufficient as a strategy for social cohesion.
- The sensitivity surrounding the politics of the curriculum is acknowledged but a greater political will is needed to translate the NC 2006 into textbooks as in most cases the textbook is the only resource that teachers and students use.

3. Overall, the biggest divide between groups appeared to be income inequality, with the three education sectors contributing to inequities, social divisions and conflict. The parallel education strands—state, private and madrassah—were seen as producing social divisions, stratification and disparate worldviews. Although successive national education policies have acknowledged the potentially divisive role that the three different education providers might have on the social fabric of society and the perpetuation of socio-economic inequities, the resolve to bring the three systems under a unifying governance umbrella appeared lukewarm.

“Increasing consistency across school systems in terms of curriculum, textbooks and infrastructure would be helpful in reducing disparities in education and socio-economic outcomes for students.”

- Increasing consistency across school systems in terms of curriculum, textbooks and infrastructure would be helpful in reducing disparities in education and socio-economic outcomes for students. Additionally, the development and effective implementation of regulatory mechanisms regarding the preparation and governance of teachers in the three sectors would support consistency in education quality. Finally, given the internal variation within each sector, the collection of education data should use refined categorisation of institutions within each sector for tailored policy strategies.
4. The language of instruction was also seen as producing inequities, social divisions, and stratification. In particular, inequitable access to quality education in English as the language of instruction was seen as contributing to educational and labour market inequities. However, the policy shift to use English as the language of instruction in public schools was seen as unlikely to achieve its intended effect of redistributing access to this nationally and globally powerful language.

“The use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction promotes education achievement and equality, as well as cultural recognition. Urdu as a national language is important for national unity. From a social justice perspective it would be better if English is taught well as a subject by teachers adequately trained to teach it as a foreign language.”

- The choice of languages used in education and their relative statuses are crucially linked to social cohesion. This choice has to be made within the complex reality of the differing and necessary roles of the mother tongue, national language and a global lingua franca such as English, selecting appropriate language(s) of instruction at different levels of education. Language policy can be conflict sensitive if stakeholders are engaged in decision-making. The use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction promotes education achievement and equality, as well as cultural recognition. Urdu as a national language is important for national unity. However, the dominant position of Urdu coupled with a neglect of ethnic languages in education would contribute to redistributive and recognitive inequities. English is essential for equitable educational and labour market outcomes. Yet the use of English as a medium of instruction in state schools under prevailing conditions would be counter-productive. From a social justice perspective it would be better if English is taught well as a subject by teachers adequately trained to teach it as a foreign language.
  - The effective implementation of a multilingual language policy would require the recruitment of linguistically diverse teachers into teacher education and schools, offering CPD to in-service teachers to teach in more than one language and the development of textbooks and learning materials in the selected languages.
  - The inclusion of domains beyond education is a vital part of language policy and planning. When a comprehensive approach is used to address social, economic and educational questions linked to language, the needs and interests of different linguistic groups can be addressed. Thus, language policy would become a means of fostering social cohesion.
5. Gender remains a marker of exclusion, with inequalities disadvantaging girls in relation to redistribution, recognition and representation. Girls have unequal access to education inputs, resources, including female teachers and outcomes. Gender also intersected with other forms of inequalities, producing extreme marginalisation of poor girls living in rural areas, particularly in Balochistan, FATA and KP. These provinces/areas have the lowest proportion of female teachers. Finally, gender inequalities encompassed issues of recognition. Curriculum and textbooks represented women as lesser citizens and placed emphasis on gendered norms and stereotypical gender identities.
- These intersecting and multiple gender inequalities would require a multi-pronged approach at the level of school and community. Redistribution of resources in terms of schools, infrastructure and budgetary allocation, with a particular focus on gender and rural locations, would be critical for redistributive justice. Ensuring minimum standards in CCT programmes for females in terms of amount and conditions of cash would be helpful, as would a consideration of rurality, remoteness and distance from the nearest school in determining the amount of cash. This would ensure the CCT programme is attractive enough to be taken up and the conditions are strong enough to keep girls in school. Ensuring a focus on gender equity in public-private partnerships would also support redistributive equity.

“Gender inequalities disadvantaged girls in relation to redistribution, recognition and representation and curriculum texts represented women as lesser citizens. These multiple gender inequalities would require a multi-pronged approach at the level of school and community.”

“There appeared to be a lack of visible strategies and research to identify and address issues of violence, their prevalence, forms and impacts on pupils and teachers, in and around schools. In some cases, the content and structure of education were potential drivers of violence and gender-based violence.”

- Recognitive justice would be promoted by the production of a gender-sensitive and gender-transformative school curriculum, textbooks and learning materials, alongside a similar gender focus within the teacher education curriculum. Furthermore, building teachers’ and teacher educators’ capacities in the use of gender-transformative and conflict-sensitive pedagogies that engage with the implications of dominant masculinities and narrow femininities on gender and wider social relations would support gender transformation.
  - The representation of an adequately qualified female teaching workforce would strengthen representative justice and have a positive impact on the redistribution of education for female learners.
  - Nevertheless, it is not necessarily possible to induce the transformation of entrenched gender norms through classroom and curriculum inputs alone. Shifting discriminatory social and cultural practices through civil society and community mobilisation (UNESCO, 2015b) and community reference groups that discuss gender norms might be more effective.
6. The use of corporal punishment, which is an expression of authority within age hierarchies, involves the application of norms regarding ‘good’ pupil behaviour. Corporal punishment itself is a gendered practice, as male and female teachers and male and female students experience and relate to it differently (Humphreys, 2008). It also normalises violent masculinities. Despite its proven ineffectiveness, corporal punishment continues to be used in schools. There appeared to be a lack of visible strategies and research to identify and address issues of violence, their prevalence, forms and impacts on pupils and teachers, in and around schools. In some cases, the content and structure of education were potential drivers of violence and gender-based violence.
- National legislation on the prohibition of corporal punishment would give children legal protection from violence. Implementation of the Ministerial directives on the prohibition of corporal punishment in school can be improved by clarifying procedures for dealing with issues of misconduct and devolving responsibility for handling cases of misconduct at union or district level for faster accountability.
  - Developing a rigorous knowledge base and monitoring and reporting system on the prevalence and gendered impact of violence on children and youth in educational spaces would provide the basis for developing strategies to tackle violence in schools, and other educational and public spaces.
  - Greater emphasis on non-violent strategies for classroom management in pre-service education would strengthen teachers’ professional development. Good examples of CPD modules on this issue were identified in this study. These can be incorporated into teacher education curriculum for greater reach. Likewise, redistributing access to these CPD modules would ensure that all teachers benefit from them.



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# The Research Consortium on Education and Peacebuilding

## Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam

The AISSR Programme Group Governance and Inclusive Development (<http://aissr.uva.nl/programmegroups/item/governance-and-inclusive-development.html>) consists of an interdisciplinary team of researchers focusing on issues relating to global and local issues of governance and development. The Research Cluster Governance of Education, Development and Social Justice focuses on multilevel politics of education and development, with a specific focus on processes of peacebuilding in relation to socio-economic, political and cultural (in)justices. The research group since 2006 has maintained a particular research focus on education, conflict and peacebuilding, as part of its co-funded 'IS Academie' research project with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## Centre for International Education, University of Sussex

The Centre for International Education (CIE) ([www.sussex.ac.uk/education/cie](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/education/cie)) was founded in 1989 on the premise that education is a basic human right that lies at the heart of development processes aimed at social justice, equity, social and civic participation, improved wellbeing, health, economic growth and poverty reduction. It is recognised as one of the premiere research centres working on education and international development in Europe. The Centre has also secured a prestigious UK ESRC/DFID grant to carry out research on the Role of Teachers in Peacebuilding in Conflict Affected Contexts, which aligns directly with the research strategy of the PBEA programme and will form part of the broader research partnership.

## UNESCO Centre at Ulster University

Established in 2002 the UNESCO Centre ([www.unescocentre.ulster.ac.uk](http://www.unescocentre.ulster.ac.uk)) at Ulster University provides specialist expertise in education, conflict and international development. It builds on a strong track record of research and policy analysis related to education and conflict in Northern Ireland. Over the past ten years the UNESCO Centre has increasingly used this expertise in international development contexts, working with DFID, GiZ, Norad, Save the Children, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, providing research on education and social cohesion, the role of education in reconciliation and analysis of aid to education in fragile and conflict affected situations.

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