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Summary Report
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Pakistan

***Gender gap in primary education:
Northwest Frontier province***

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GENDER GAP IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: NWFP, PAKISTAN SUMMARY

The first in a series of community-based surveys in NWFP, this exercise links individual and household experience to a review of schools, and the views of opinion makers at community level in 50 representative sentinel communities. It is the follow-up in NWFP of the country-wide Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted in 1995 to obtain data for monitoring progress towards the mid-decade goals set by the Government of Pakistan in the context of the World Summit for Children.

The same clusters chosen by the Federal Bureau of Statistics for the 1995 MICS sample were revisited in May 1997. In each site, the number of households was increased to expand the sample size and other measurement processes were introduced into each cluster. Box 1 shows the information base established on primary education in NWFP province.

There are two important characteristics of this survey as a tool for planning. First, the survey aims to *look behind the indicators*. The objective is thus not to establish whether primary school drop-out is x% or y%, but to learn about the gender gap in drop-out and to look at the modifiable components of the gender gap. Second, the methodology promotes the *use of the data* in planning. The challenge is to go systematically through the known causes of the gender gap in primary education, and to identify which among these are actionable. The results from the cycle, therefore, should inform policy and programmes directed at reducing the gender gap in education.

A key concern is that the recommendations emerging from the survey be based on what is feasible in the country today. The analysis contrasts communities where a gender gap exists and where one does not exist. By holding up communities where there is no gap as positive examples, implementing recommendations to close the gap in other communities should not require a massive injection of new resources; local solutions, then, are intended to be sustainable.

To look behind the indicators of primary education, several data gathering methods were applied in the same sites; linkages between methods permitted a penetrating look at the problem. A total of 6,555 households contributed baseline data on enrolment, drop-out and associated individual household factors. A review of records and facilities of schools serving these households

Box 1

Information base on primary education in NWFP

Number of sentinel sites	50
Number of households	6555
urban areas	1733
rural areas	4822
Children aged 5-12 years	11,292
Schools reviewed	235
Teachers interviewed	410
Key informants	
Pesh Imams	50
Community leaders	50
NGO activists	50

permitted linkage of household and institutional data, in effect facilitating examination of institutional causes of drop-out. Interviews with Pesh Imams, community leaders, NGO activists, or Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), where these existed, brought their important perspectives to the discussion. In addition, all teachers of the first two grades were interviewed about their personal backgrounds; this information was then linked to enrolment and drop-out.

Preliminary results were then shared with all the communities visited and discussed in focus groups with parents of 5-12 year old children. Key informants (Pesh Imams, community leaders, NGO activists, and teachers) from the three focus districts were also consulted. All actively participated in the discussions and provided concrete solutions to the main problems contributing to the low enrolment and drop-out of girls in NWFP. Community-led solutions are presented in the section *Results*.

School **enrolment** (weighted) based on household information was 62% for boys and 41% for girls. The gender gap is prominent in rural areas (70% for boys and 45% for girls) compared with urban areas (80% for boys and 70% for girls). Considering only rural areas, the levels of girls' enrolment range fully from zero in some communities to nearly 100% in others. By the same token, the gender gap is also hugely variable, being absent in some communities and, in others, as large as 50%. Enrolment is also, as expected, greater for older children; this reflects the continuous enrolment several years after age five.

The gender gap in enrolment decreases when the mother decides on the child's education, when education is considered a priority for children, and when the parents have received some education. In this survey, the number of siblings does not seem to affect the gender gap in enrolment. Comparing all language groups in NWFP, the gap is the highest among Pushtu speaking people, considered as one of the most conservative groups.

To identify the actionable components of the gender gap, the risk of an individual child not enrolling in school or dropping-out was evaluated by formal epidemiological analysis, separating subgroups at greater risk than others:

Mother's education is a key factor. The great majority of mothers (93%) in rural areas had no education (72% in urban areas). A girl whose mother has received some education is 4.4 times more likely to be enrolled in school compared with a girl whose mother is not educated. The effect is higher for those girls living in low income households. A girl is then almost six times more likely to be enrolled in school than one whose mother has no education. If those mothers not educated at all were to receive education through adult literacy programs, the enrolment rate of their daughters could increase by 32%.

A girl in a household where the *mother has a say in education* is twice as likely to be enrolled in school compared with one in a household where the mother has no say. If it were possible to act

on this issue, the enrolment rate of those girls could increase by 14%. This effect is stronger in low income households and in those attaching importance to issues *other* than education.

In households where *education was given as the priority for children*, girls are 2.4 times more likely to be enrolled in school than girls in households where other priorities (such as health care or income) were given. If it were possible to convince those parents about the importance of education, the enrolment rate of their daughters could increase by 21%. The effect is stronger among those girls whose mothers do *not* have any education and do *not* have a say in their education.

Poverty was the commonest reason for non-enrolment by householders (17%), by most parents' focus groups, male teachers (design group), Pesh Imams (interview during the survey and design group), and community leaders. Rural girls from households with better income are twice as likely to be enrolled in primary school as those from households with lower income. If it were possible to introduce some incentives to rural households with lower income, the enrolment of those rural girls could increase by 18.5%. The effect of poverty is concentrated in households where the mother *does not* have a say in her child's education and has *not* received any education. It is reduced by half when the father *is* educated.

School facilities are another major factor contributing to the non-enrolment of girls. Out of 158 rural schools, only 44% had latrines on the day of the survey. Some 55% had a source of drinking water, 48% had electricity and 67% had a boundary wall. In rural communities where *latrines for students are available* in all or some schools, a girl is twice as likely to enrol as a girl from a community where latrines are *not* available. If it were possible to act on this issue, giving girls access to more latrines in rural schools, the enrolment rate of those rural girls could increase by 17%.

Based on the school registers, there does not seem to be a large gender gap in **drop-out**: overall, 3.5% of boys (range 2% to 6% across the 50 clusters) and 4% of girls (range 2.5% to 5.5%) were reported to have dropped-out each year between Kachi and Class 5. Aggregated over the primary school career, this amounts to 21.5% drop-out for boys and 24% for girls. At household level, the gap in drop-out appears larger, especially among rural children: rural girls are three times (twice for urban girls) more likely to drop-out than rural boys. Considering each sex separately, girls living in rural areas are 3.4 times more likely to drop-out compared with those living in urban areas; no difference was detected for boys living in rural and urban areas.

Drop-out becomes a powerful issue in some subgroups identified in this survey. For example, a girl whose parents are not *satisfied with the teacher's attendance, punctuality, behaviour and teaching* is 5.5 times more likely to drop-out than a girl whose parents are satisfied. Continuation of schooling by children could increase by 6% if the parents were to become satisfied.

A rural girl whose parents do *not meet with the teacher* is 14 times more likely to drop-out than a

rural girl whose parents do meet with the teacher. If it were possible to act on this issue, i.e., encouraging parents and teachers to meet, the proportion of rural girls staying in school could increase by 9% per class per year.

One in three urban children were not *helped with homework*, compared with almost one in two in rural areas. Among those children who are helped, 18% were helped by their fathers, closely followed by the brother (16%). Mothers were reported to help mainly in urban areas (11% in urban areas and 3% in rural areas). A girl who does not receive this support is 4.7 times more likely to drop-out than a girl who is helped. If all girls currently not receiving this help were to receive it, 3% more girls could stay in school per class per year -- an aggregate retention of 15% over five years.

A three day workshop was held with the provincial government counterparts, donors, and provincial NGOs concerned with education from the 8th until the 10th of September. Participants discussed the key findings of the survey, their implications, and strategies for programme and communication action. Out of eight possible *high impact* interventions (see Table 8 page 33), the following ones were selected for immediate action after a lengthy discussion on feasibility (cost and practical implications):

- educate mothers
- provide incentives
- convince parents about the importance of education
- build latrines
- improve satisfaction with teacher

For each *priority* intervention, participants of the workshop developed a framework for an action plan (see Annex V page 59). These matrixes were then translated into programme notes (see section *Programme notes* page 34) that form the basis of discussion with concerned counterparts before the implementation of the interventions. A sub-committee composed of government counterparts (education and other social sectors) and some NGOs members will be formed at provincial level to coordinate the follow-up of the above-mentioned activities. The same process was followed in the three focus districts where three sub-committees were constituted to play the same role at district level (see the three focus districts reports for more details).

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