



USAID
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U.S. Assistance to Pakistan Education

Pakistan's future economic prospects are integrally linked to improvements in the nation's basic and higher education systems. Pakistan is ranked 118th of 129 countries by the United Nations in basic education, on par with many nations in Sub-Saharan Africa. Of the 21 million primary school age children in Pakistan, only 68 percent are enrolled in school, making Pakistan's 6.7 million out of school youth the second highest worldwide. Pakistan is one of the few countries in which the number of illiterate adults is increasing, now numbering 50 million (75 percent of whom are women). Less than eight percent of Pakistanis attend university. Pakistan's susceptibility to natural disasters and violent conflict negatively impact its education system, contributing to many of the poor indicators in the sector. Improving the quality of education is key to Pakistan's long-term prosperity and stability.



In accordance with the Government of Pakistan's 2009 National Education Policy, the Eighteenth Amendment to Pakistan's Constitution devolved education management to the provinces. To ensure effective and unified donor positions, the National Education Development Partners Group, comprising multi-lateral and bilateral donors chaired by USAID and co-chaired by DFID, work in partnership with the Government of Pakistan to improve the access to and quality of education at the provincial and national levels. These steps will be especially important for the marginalized populations and school-aged girls. Pakistan has announced plans to double its education budget from 1.8 percent of GDP to nearly 4 percent of GDP in the near future.



USAID's Engagement

The goal for USAID in the Education sector is to strengthen the quality of basic and higher education over the next five years in an effort to promote prosperity and economic growth, leading to the improvement in the quality of life for all Pakistanis.

Impact

The accomplishments achieved in basic and higher education over the last 5 years include:

- Built or renovated more than 895 schools serving over 250,000 students
- Trained 7,000 new teachers who received Associates or Bachelor's Degrees in education under programs recently established with USAID assistance
- Trained over 1,300 university and college faculty in new teaching methods, and provided more than 1,595 scholarships to aspiring Pakistani teachers, 70 percent going to women



- Awarded 1,807 scholarships to talented but low income and otherwise disadvantaged students to attend local universities
- Awarded 1,238 scholarships since 2005 through the largest Fulbright Program in the world

Basic Education

The quality of education in classrooms can be increased by developing programs to work with Pakistani students to improve their reading skills. The Pakistan Reading Project (PRP) aims to do this with 4 million children in Pakistan by supporting the professional development of 94,000 teachers in 38,000 schools. PRP works closely with all provincial and area governments to improve the quality of primary education, including teacher education, education policy reform, and community engagement to ultimately re-establish a national culture of reading in Pakistan. The project will also increase the number of books available in schools and communities by establishing and equipping libraries.

The Sindh Basic Education Program will benefit 1.2 million children and improve the reading ability of 750,000 students. Another portion of the plan is to construct 120 schools (1,400 classrooms) for improved access to education, especially for girls. Finally, the program strives to keep kids in school by improving child nutrition and increasing community involvement for over 400 schools.

Higher Education

Several activities sponsored by USAID provide scholarships and facilitate scientific research under its higher education portfolio. Three thousand scholarships (50 percent to women) will be awarded to talented and low income students for the pursuit of degrees from 31 partner universities in Pakistan through the Pakistan-U.S. Merit and Needs Based Scholarship Program. USAID Pakistan also funds the largest Fulbright Scholarship Program in the world allowing talented Pakistani students to study in the U.S. and receive degrees from several prestigious universities. Finally, plans are being developed to establish Centers for Advanced Studies (CAS) at targeted Pakistani universities to foster research in food security/agriculture, water and energy.