Improving Educational Infrastructure in Diamir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan

Sustainable Development Goal #4 Quality Education in South Asia

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Sustainable Development Goal Overview

The UN’s Sustainable Development Goal #4 is focused on improving education worldwide by targeting equity, accessibility, and quality. While there is a declining trend in out-of-school children, there are still strides to be made worldwide. Improving education is crucial to sustainable development because it equips individuals with the capacity to address local and global issues, as well as escape poverty (United Nations, 2018). With education, nations can produce more problem-solvers that better understand the barriers to development and growth in their country, and will be able to rely less on foreign consultation. A better-quality education is also linked to less inequality and more tolerant communities.

Goal number four is not just concerned with overall enrolment rates, however. There has been a focus on increasing accessibility to marginalized groups, such as women, those with disabilities, and those in impoverished rural communities. In many countries, there has been an increase in overall education, but these groups have lagged significantly behind. Literacy rates for disabled individuals are significantly lower than that of those without disabilities, and even more so for women who are disabled (USAID, 2015).

Region Overview

South Asia’s education system has improved drastically over the past few decades, but still has many widespread trends that have inhibited children from learning. There is a shortage of funding for schools and not enough teachers being trained and hired (UNICEF, 2014; The Economist, 2018). Much of the curriculum being taught is rote and encourages very little, if at all, critical thinking (Schrock, 2018)

Pakistan has the second-highest population of children that are not enrolled in school in the world. Compared to the rest of South Asia, it lags on almost every statistic measuring the education system; government expenditure (as a percent of GDP), net secondary graduation rate, and the gross enrollment ratio are nearly half that of the South Asian average (IDEA USAID, 2018). Rural areas suffer the most, with some location offering no access to schooling. The lack of education in rural areas doesn’t just impact the economy; it has been linked to an increase in extremism as groups take advantage of the inaccessibility of schooling to offer free education that indoctrinates and radicalizes students from disadvantaged communities (Bajoria, 2009).

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) is a northern, mountainous Province of Pakistan. Only 14% of the population of Gilgit-Baltistan is urban, posing a challenge to many children accessing schools. Student enrolment varies widely across each district, with the highest being Hunza-Nagar at 98% and the lowest Diamir at 48%. Diamir faces many challenges in its education system, being overwhelmingly rural. In addition to having very low enrolment rates and untrained educators, there is also an epidemic of poorly built schoolhouses and not enough infrastructural resources to support learning (Alhasan Systems, 2015). For the quality of education to improve in Diamir, schooling must be more accessible, and teachers equipped with pedagogical training.

Needs Assessment

Because this project is mostly concerned with infrastructure that mostly impacts the youth, it is crucial that the community’s needs are heard and directly addressed by any permanent construction and programs that are established. For the infrastructural improvement, we will conduct a priority ranking needs assessment that will draw from meetings with educators and parents of school-aged children in each town that we will operate in. We will assess the infrastructure of the educational spaces and then ask these partners during our sessions what resources they think will be most impactful towards educating the pupils. Afterwards, we will conduct a ranking with various stakeholders. Once the needs and their priorities are set, we will work with the community and discuss how to best repair, maintain, and build up their schools.

We will also be conducting a priority ranking with educators specifically for pedagogical knowledge, and what skills they would like to develop as an educator. We will do so by listing their needs, rank those needs, and specify as needed. We will then observe classes and assess the educator training needs accordingly. Afterwards, our team will take both the observations and educator requests, and discern what kind of training programs will be most effective in improving the quality of education for students in Diamir province.

Goals and Objectives

Goal: Improve quality and availability of education in Diamir, Pakistan through infrastructural development and educator training.

1. Objective 1: Conduct a school-mapping to assess and identify areas where children have no access to schools by month 10.
   1. Activity 1.1: Find maps of all the towns and connect with local leaders and educators
   2. Activity 1.2: Visit each town and draw a map of populations and educational resources
   3. Activity 1.3: Map out average travel time per town.
2. Objective 2: Conduct a needs-assessment to identify barriers to education and areas where resources are needed the most by month 10.
   1. Activity 2.1: Conduct interviews with three educators from each school district
   2. Activity 2.2: Meet with thirty local leaders and talk through community educational needs
   3. Activity 2.3: Meet with seventy local families and talk about educational challenges
   4. Activity 2.4: Conduct a priority ranking in communities to understand the local perception on infrastructural, health and sanitation, and curriculum needs
3. Objective 3: Based on needs assessment, hold 15 workshops and training sessions for educators in identified towns by month 21.
   1. Activity 3.1: Rank the most common needs of educators
   2. Activity 3.2: Partner with universities and educational institutions to write workshops for educators
   3. Activity 3.3: Plan logistics for workshop time, setting, location, and schedules
   4. Activity 3.4: Hold workshops
   5. Activity 3.5: Monitor and evaluate workshop performance
   6. Activity 3.6: Write impact report
4. Objective 4: Address listed infrastructural needs (electricity, boundary walls, toilets, libraries) of existing schools by month 24.
   1. Activity 4.1: Find contractors
   2. Activity 4.2: Coordinate with local leaders and educators
   3. Activity 4.3: Building
   4. Activity 4.4: Monitoring and Assessment
   5. Activity 4.5: Impact report

Monitoring Plan

Objective 1:

* Monitor: Management of mapping operations, thoroughness of data collected, and accessibility of data.
* Indicator: acquiring data on average distance between children and the nearest accessible school, and geographical locations of educational institutions and resources.
* Impact on project: Geographical locations of future projects are dependent on data collected.

Objective 2:

* Monitor: locations and carrying out of needs assessments by staff under objective 2 and 3 project manager.
* Indicator: acquisition of data from population centers that will guide the rest of the operation.
* Impact on project: Infrastructural operations and workshops will be guided by results from this objective.

Objective 3:

* Indicator: Objective 3 manager will oversee the holding of 15 workshops for educator trainings by staff.
* Success: Workshops directly address needs decided by needs assessment in objective 2.

Objective 4:

* Monitoring: Objective 4 project manager will oversee the construction and repair operations as decided by Objective 1 needs assessment/priority ranking.
* Indicator: Availability of resources improve as listed below.
  + Improve electricity connection from 74% to 90%
  + Improve boundary walls from 68% to 100%
  + Improve toilet access from 66% to 100%
  + Improve library accessibility from 38% to 50%

Theory of Change

Quality Education

Objective 4: Infrastructure repair and construction

Objective 1: School Mapping

Objective 2: Training and Infrastructure Needs Assessments

Objective 3: Teacher Training

Logic Model

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Input | Activity | Output |
| * Funding * Translators * Educators * Books * School Supplies * Communities * Transportation * Training Locations * Meeting locations * Educator Curriculum * Workshop writing partners * Volunteers * Contractors * Electricians * Building Materials | * School mapping * Educator and community Interviews * Data analysis * Educator workshop building * Educator trainings * School building and repair * Meetings with communities | * 300 teachers trained * 100% of school resources repaired * Increase in number of school buildings built |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Short-Term Impacts | Medium-Term Impacts | Long-Term Impacts |
| * Increase in pedagogical training   + Measured by educator survey results * Increase in quantity of usable school infrastructure | * Increase in student and teacher attendance * Increase in level of education, measured by average years completed | * Increased literacy and numeracy * Increased economic capacity |

Dissemination Plan

To disseminate the results of the project, I will use various mediums to effectively communicate with different stakeholders. The three largest stakeholders for the improvement of education in Diamir are the local and national governments, the communities we will be working with, and the organizations and individuals funding our project. By using different methods, we hope to ensure the spread of useful practices and the opportunity for others to learn from and build upon our work.

For the local and national governments, we intend to include the benefits of this project in the context of economic development and the current nation-wide education reform. Our aim is to impact the way the government distributes educational funding so that students and communities benefit more from the system. We will communicate our findings directly with the local government at an official meeting during the impact report stage of our project. As for the national government, we will disseminate our results through a formal report submitted to the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. As the entire nation is currently undergoing a frenetic educational reform, we aim to include practices that we find to work well in rural contexts like Diamir, so that government agencies can learn from and build upon our work with a better understanding of how to make educational spending more impactful.

For the local communities, our aim is transparency and accessibility to information and resources delivered by our project. To accomplish this, we will communicate directly with interested members of each community that we are building and repairing infrastructural resources in at a meeting in those towns. This will happen throughout the entire project, but most heavily before month 11, when building begins. The desired outcome of our direct communication is strengthened trust with these communities, and community ownership of future educational development initiatives.

For our funders, we aim to communicate the impact that our project has on educational accessibility and economic empowerment, and the necessity of infrastructural development and pedagogical training to reach the goal of improved quality education. We will communicate with our funders through listservs and social media throughout the process, small progress reports available on our website throughout our progress, and one large report communicating out findings at the end of our project.

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