



Community-supported models for girls' education in diverse contexts in Pakistan

Key issues for policy and practice

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Contents

Overview	1
Diverse realities of girls' education in Pakistan and the challenges of education service delivery	2
The case for localized, flexible, and responsive education services as a solution for girls' education	2
Establishing complementary frameworks for girls' education: Key issues and recommendations for policymakers	6
Develop inclusive sustainability frameworks	6
Expand definition of access for girls	9
Expand definition of quality	11
Ensure contextually relevant support for girls and their families	12
Transformational processes of engagement for girls' education delivery: Key implications and suggestions for the nongovernmental sector.	14
Create strategic coalitions.	15
Negotiate a wider network to enlist support	16
Establish quality service delivery	17
Commit to fundamental principles of community engagement	18
Sustainability	19
Conclusion: Three pillars for promoting girls' education through localized and flexible service models	21
References	23
Appendices.	25
Appendix 1: Methodology	25
Appendix 2: Overview of the three schooling models and their contexts	26

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OVERVIEW

This paper presents the case for promoting girls' education in the challenging contexts of remoteness, social conservatism, fragility, and severe financial hardship by providing localized services delivered through community-supported initiatives, contextualized approaches, and flexible strategies. This argument draws from the latest literature on community-supported education, barriers to girls' education, and the role of non-governmental actors, as well as the author's research on three community-supported schooling models in three different contexts in Pakistan: 1) in a state of fragility; 2) in a socially conservative area experiencing social resistance to girls' education; and 3) in an urban slum area. This policy paper highlights lessons learned for both policymakers and implementers of girls' education services, especially in establishing responsive,

relevant, and flexible girls' education initiatives in challenging contexts in Pakistan.

These lessons have been organized into three sections. The first provides a brief overview of the diverse realities of girls' education in Pakistan and the challenges of education service delivery in these contexts. The second section speaks specifically to policymakers in Pakistan, presenting a set of recommendations for establishing complementary frameworks for promoting girls' education. The third section is particularly relevant for education service providers in the nongovernmental sector. It recommends a process framework suitable for establishing flexible and responsive education service models, and discusses the implications for replicating and scaling these models. The paper concludes with overarching lessons in the form of three pillars for promoting girls' education in Pakistan through localized and flexible service models.

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DIVERSE REALITIES OF GIRLS' EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN AND THE CHALLENGES OF EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY

Pakistan is a country with diverse realities for girls' education—realities that often get overlooked by national policy discourse or in-country representations by the international community. Inequities in inputs and outputs exist at multiple levels in the Pakistani education system, persisting across socio-economic strata, geographic location, and gender. In fact, the skew in the gender parity index commonly exists within each of these subgroups, making gender a disadvantage for girls at double or even triple levels (Lloyd et al. 2007).

The World Economic Forum ranks Pakistan the least gender equitable in the Asia-Pacific region; disparity in education is a reflection of the country's low gender equity. From the estimated 31 million out-of-school girls of primary school age around the world, more than 4.5 million live in Pakistan. For every 10 boys in a class, there are only eight girls (UNESCO 2013). However, the situation in Pakistan is vastly different for various populations of girls living in different geographic, social, cultural, and economic situations. A number of studies (Aslam 2007, Lall 2009, Qureshi 2007) have highlighted the alarming situation of girls' education in rural and tribal regions of the country. For example, the poorest girls in Baluchistan are 65 percent as likely to never attend school as compared to only 10 percent of the richest girls in Punjab (Malik and Rose 2015).

The challenges for education service delivery for girls in Pakistan involve both demand- and sup-

ply-side issues in the education system. On the demand side, the major stumbling blocks for girls' education are the financial situations of families, cultural biases, traditions, and concerns for safety, with any possible combination of these adding to the gravity of the situation for girls. On the supply side, the major barriers are problems with the availability of schools within an independently commutable distance, the availability and quality of female teachers, and essential facilities including toilets and especially boundary walls.

Despite numerous challenges for girls' education, there is evidence (Callum et al. 2012) of an increasing demand for girls' education in Pakistan, with the ratio of female to male primary enrollment in Pakistan rising from 52 percent in 1991 to 88 percent in 2013 (World Bank 2015). In geographically remote, underserved, and conflict-prone areas this demand is usually met by non-state providers (Bano 2010) with home-based and community-based schooling models established by the not-for-profit sector becoming important delivery mechanisms of educational services for girls. Indeed, promoting girls' education in the contexts of remoteness, conservatism, political fragility, and severe financial hardship is possible in Pakistan through the strategic development of localized educational services delivered through community-supported initiatives, contextualized approaches, and flexible strategies.

The case for localized, flexible, and responsive education services as a solution for girls' education

A review of literature on girls' education as well as research findings from an in-depth field study of three community-supported models of localized approaches to girls' education in Pakistan make a strong case for establishing and sustaining not-

for-profit education services for severely disadvantaged populations through institutional partnerships among the public, private, and civil society sectors.

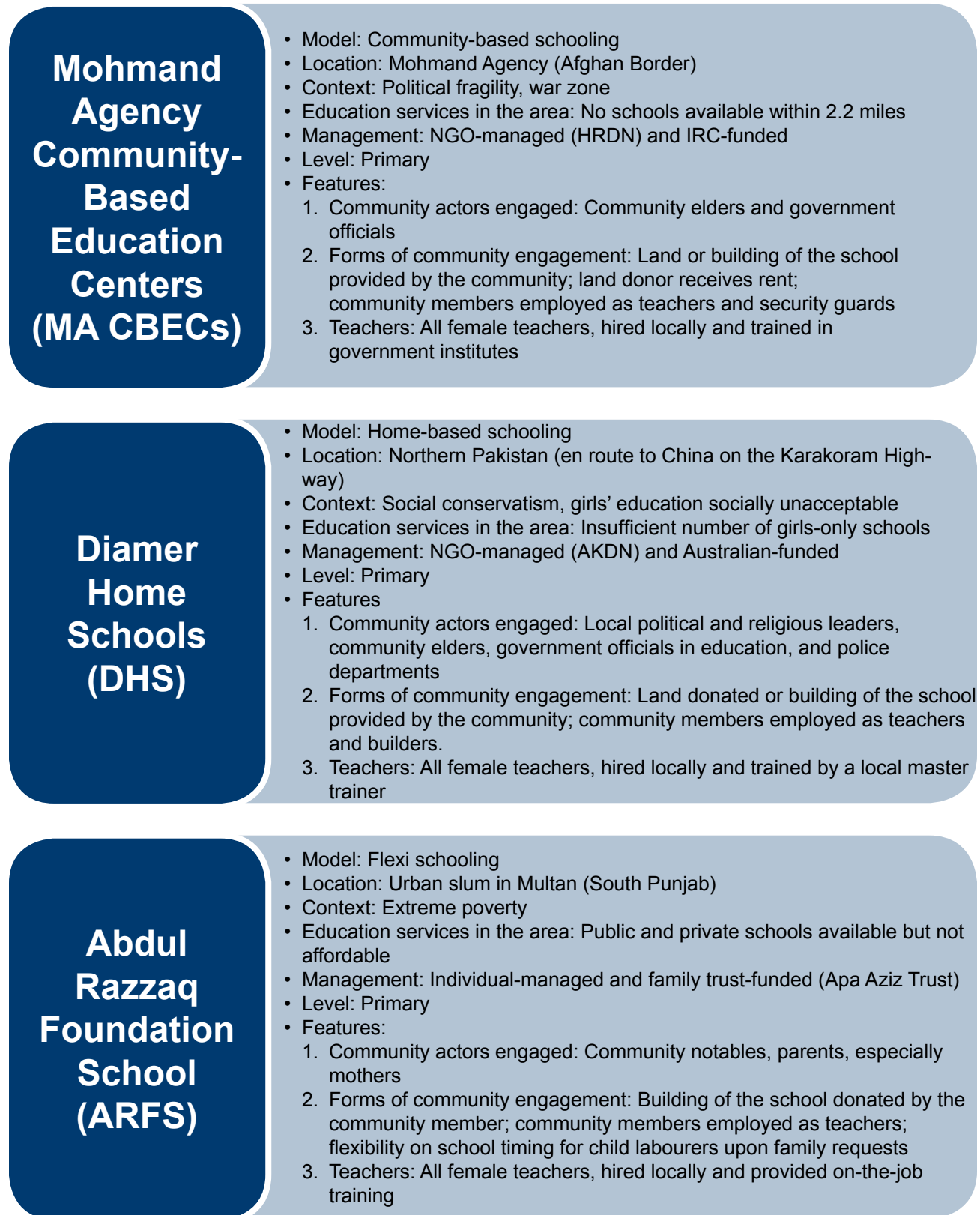
Evidence from the literature

There are a number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and individuals across the world providing contextualized solutions for educating underserved and inaccessible communities, where girls are most disadvantaged. These services are complementary and not an alternative to state services (Rose 2009). The practice of non-state provision of education services is quite prevalent in developing countries due to the inaccessibility or low quality of state provision (Rose 2010). According to Dahal and Nguyen (2014), one-third of students in Pakistan attend private schools. While most of these students are serviced by the for-profit private sector, a comparatively small but impactful space is taken by the nonprofit sector. Within this nonprofit sector, organizations and individuals providing mainstream education options are reaching out to the most deprived and most excluded populations. To be successful, this stream of education service delivery needs to be highlighted, supported, and strengthened as a significant solution for girls' education, especially in terrains, communities, and groups in Pakistan that are inaccessible to the government, other funders, and private or nongovernment providers of educational services. These service delivery models are better suited for girls because of the school's geographic and cultural proximity, resulting in social acceptance of the service providers; the provider's accountability to the community, adding to the trustworthiness of schools felt among parents (Dahal and Nguyen 2014); and the school's practice of flexibility and creativity in using school inputs to meet local needs (DeStefano and Moore 2010).

Evidence from three cases studies in Pakistan

Three cases of socially acceptable and administratively flexible educational services in three diverse geographic, cultural, and social contexts in Pakistan provide insights into how localized approaches can improve girls' access to education. These models meet the access and learning needs of children, especially girls, in the challenging contexts of 1) a state of fragility (Mohmand Agency Community-Based Education Centers, MA CBECs), 2) a socially conservative area experiencing social resistance to girls' education (Diamer Home Schools, DHS), and 3) an urban slum (Abdul Razzaq Foundation School, ARFS) (see Figure 1 for an overview of the models and Appendix 2 for a deeper description of each case). These models provide an educational option for girls who were out of school for different reasons such as distance, socially inappropriate arrangements (e.g., male teachers for girls), extreme poverty, and a lack of trust in the relevance and quality of the public education system. These initiatives—planned, designed, and established in close coordination with the local community—have encouraged families to send their girls to school in extreme situations of conflict, social resistance, and financial constraints. The enrollment of students, especially girls, has increased by 75 percent in the MA CBECs, 51 percent in DHS, and 70 percent in ARFS from 2013 to 2015. While this success highlights the significance of community support for making education services socially acceptable and feasible, the context-specific nature of the processes of establishing these services deserves greater attention, especially for implications for scaling up and sustaining these models.

FIGURE 1. OVERVIEW OF THE THREE SCHOOLING MODELS



Despite their success, community-based educational initiatives are dispersed in pockets throughout Pakistan and remain limited in outreach. Sustaining and scaling up these flexible and innovative models to ensure learning pathways are available in all contexts is a major challenge for a number of reasons, among which a lack of policy and system support and community involvement are crucial missing links. In comparison to state structures, the strength of community-supported nongovernmental provision lies in their small scale, local rootedness, and scope for originality (Blum 2009). The dilemma is that the adaptability and flexibility of these models is essential for accommodating the needs of communities, yet at the same time these aspects make these models hard to fit into existing government structures.

Interviews with parents and administrators, as well as a review of project documents and school records (see Appendix 1 for more details on the research methodology), reveal a range of recommendations for public education policymakers and nongovernmental education providers in Pakistan. For example, the public sector's support is crucial for sustaining small-scale, flexible, and responsive education services. The structure of existing models of public-private partnerships in Pakistan's education sector excludes innovative, not-for-profit initiatives. Therefore, a complemen-

tary framework and funding stream that accommodates innovative, not-for-profit initiatives is needed.

For the nongovernment sector, the evidence has identified a process framework suitable for establishing these complementary models of service delivery: 1) make strategic coalitions; 2) expand connections and negotiate a wider network of support; and 3) establish quality service delivery with a vision for long-term sustainability constant in all processes and practices. Across all three stages, the key to success lies in ensuring respect for the local culture, care for families' and individual situations, inclusion of local preferences and priorities, and effective partnership building with the key stakeholders.

Both the literature and the three case studies provide a strong indication that girls' education in conservative and traditional communities and in challenging, fragile, remote, and financially deprived contexts can be delivered through schools that meet the specific contextual and cultural needs of families and girls. The lessons learned are presented below, organized specifically into those recommendations that have special relevance for the policy and practice of educational development for girls in Pakistan.

ESTABLISHING COMPLEMENTARY FRAMEWORKS FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION: KEY ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS

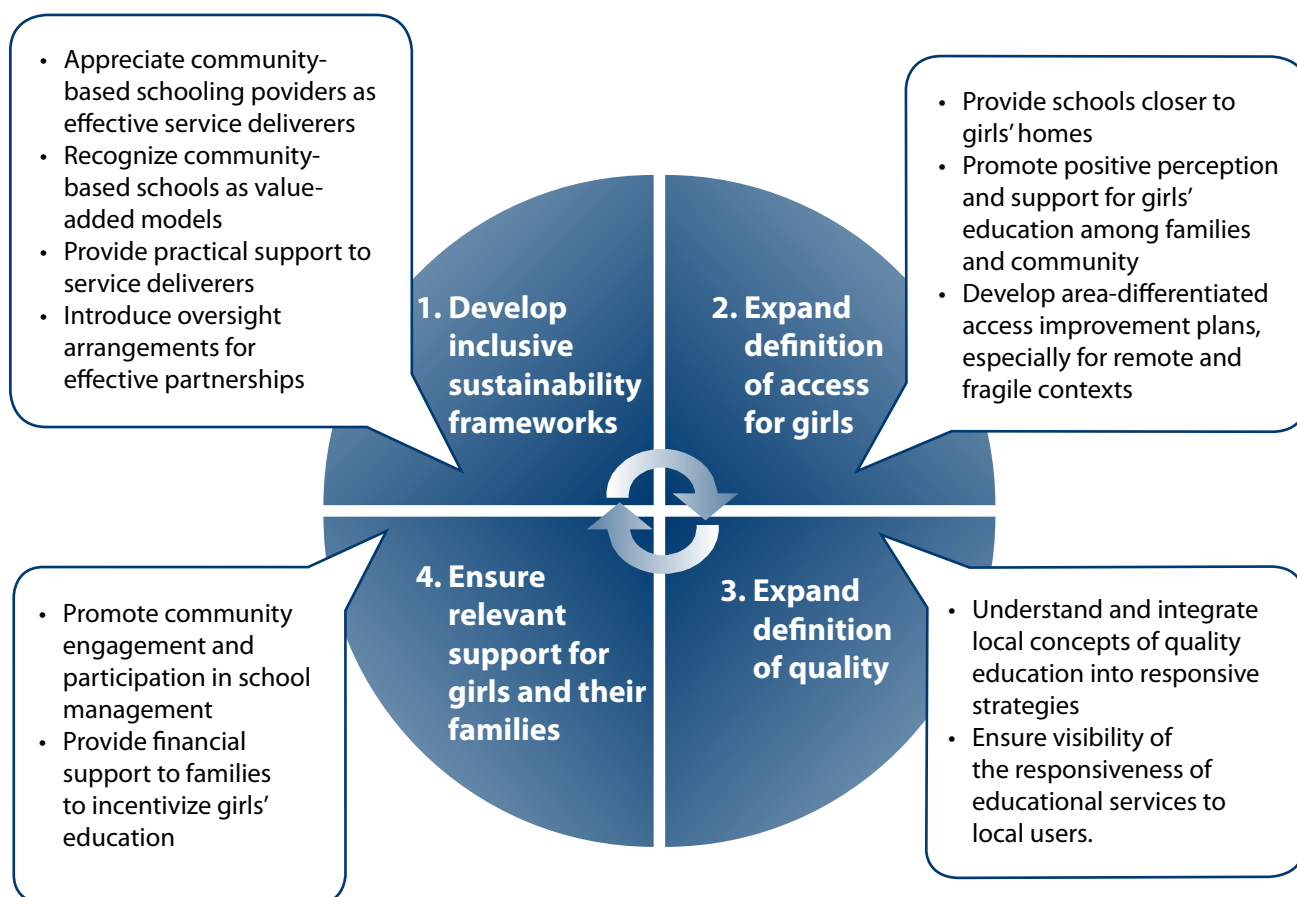
When providing education in socially conservative, fragile, remote, or financially impoverished contexts, the policymaker must consider four key policy issues: 1) develop inclusive frameworks for sustainability; 2) expand the definition of access for girls; 3) expand the definition of quality for a more responsive education; and 4) ensure contextually relevant support for girls and their families. In planning, analyzing, and devising these policy considerations, government should use a girl-friendly lens of localization,

adaptability, and flexibility of education service. The policy implications and recommendations, discussed below, are critical for ensuring effective delivery of girls' education in Pakistan's diverse geographies.

Develop inclusive sustainability frameworks

There is an urgent need for Pakistan's national education strategy and education policy framework to officially recognize and provide institutionalized support for the long-term sustainability of localized, not-for-profit, and community-supported educational services for marginalized communities in Pakistan. These services should be included through an expansion of the existing public private partnership (PPP) frameworks.

FIGURE 2. FOUR KEY POLICY ISSUES AND STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING GIRLS' EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN



When developing an inclusive sustainability framework, the government must consider three basic standards: 1) appreciation of not-for-profit and community-supported educational services as complementary models and delivery mechanisms of girls' education; 2) recognition and realization of the strengths of these models; and 3) provision of practical support for these alternative service providers in the form of facilitation in registration of their services, suitable PPP frameworks, and effective partnerships management.

1. **Appreciation:** The government of Pakistan should appreciate that girls' education, especially in conservative and traditional communities, can be effectively delivered through contextualized, flexible, and responsive education services (Bano 2010, Education for Change 2013). The success of these models has been observed in conservative contexts in Afghanistan (Burde and Linden 2013), for socially and economically marginalized rural contexts in India (Blum 2009), in Bangladesh through the BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) model, and in Colombia through Escuela Nueva (DeStefano et al. 2007). Not only do these examples provide evidence that these models offer possibilities for girls with a variety of access barriers, but they also demonstrate that when governments appreciate the potential of these models as solutions for girls' education, there is more social acceptance of these services, greater encouragement for existing and new providers, and more legitimate grounds for including them in the girls' education policy space. This appreciation is necessary to sustain momentum for these models' replication.
2. **Recognition and realization:** As nongovernmental providers of education, these schools

aid the government in its constitutional obligation to provide free education to all—especially in contexts where government schools either do not exist or are not socially accepted. First, in light of financial and technical constraints to the public sector education, these models can support the government in meeting its access and equity obligations. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, these small-scale models offer comparative strengths to the public system (Blum 2009). For example, these models add value by offering a “more flexible environment that allows providers to creatively mix inputs and processes so that schools can better cater to the needs of underserved communities” (DeStefano and Moore 2010, 525). In fact, the evidence from Pakistan identifies the school environment, teacher behavior, and parental involvement (Habib 2013), along with good management and leadership, meaningful participation of parents, and democratic power relations among administrators, teachers, and parents (Khan et al. 2005) as key differentiating factors for nongovernmental providers. The three case studies for this research also provide further evidence of these schools' better and safer environment for girls, more respectful recognition of family, higher parental engagement, and more trust in school management—which particularly aid schoolgirls in extremely marginalized communities.

3. **Practical support:** Government should provide practical support for these service providers in the form of facilitation in registration of their services, inclusion in provincial PPP frameworks through complementary frameworks and financing streams, establishment of new frameworks for geographies outside

existing provincial mandates, and effective partnership management.

In order to access organizations and individuals for financial support and grant credible certification of learning for their students, private sector schools must be registered with government departments. In terms of registration, documents and interviews with managers from case study schools point to the difficulties in meeting the criteria for registration, which currently require cumbersome and extensive paperwork and certifications from different government departments. Government can help by launching a differentiated procedure for registration of those schools working under specifically challenging situations that are distinct from other for-profit private establishments working in more settled contexts.

The literature supports collaboration between the public and private education sectors, and collaboration between governments and non-state providers of basic public services is an increasing trend among international agencies and national governments (Batley and Rose 2010). These institutional partnerships can improve service delivery for non-state actors and create pressure on the government to improve its own services (Rose 2010). These engagements also encourage civil society to “engage in broader policy advocacy through insider influence” (Batley and Rose 2010, 579). Interview data and document analysis of the three schooling models also illustrates that these models need specific technical, material, and financial support for sustaining their services. In fact, in contexts where finding qualified

teachers, customizing buildings, providing amenities, and enrolling enough students are extremely difficult, there is a strong need for adjusting existing or creating new PPP models for conflict-ravaged and fragile areas, remote mountainous regions, and neighborhoods in extreme poverty. In fact, PPP models have been established in only four provinces, necessitating the expansion of these models to other areas.

In addition, existing PPP models are based on very rigid inclusion criterion, requiring school buildings and other structural and managerial arrangements beyond the scope of flexible community-based models. Similarly, alternative models of schooling have difficulty fulfilling requirements on the number of enrolled students, the number of rooms, the qualifications of teachers, and standardized test scores in English and math that do not take into account the vastly different urban and rural contexts. Government should thus provide technical support and additional financing streams to small-scale, community-supported schools by introducing complementary frameworks within existing PPP models. By introducing certification standards based on the quality of outputs and outcomes—which also consider the unique barriers of these schools—and less on inputs, the government can enable these schools to more effectively serve local students.

Similarly, while the state’s role in monitoring and devising mechanisms of accountability for quality assurance, transparency, and social cohesion is vital, this role often translates into making the PPP frameworks rigid and constrictive. For an effective oversight management mechanism for these

frameworks, the government should promote effective partnerships by including non-state actors in policy discussions through a “transparent, regularized, and democratic process” (Mundy et al. 2010, 484), and by developing public private partnerships in national planning for leveraging the services of non-state actors for access and equity.

Expand definition of access for girls

The government of Pakistan should consider three broader views of access (listed below) and conduct a qualitative situation analysis of girls’ access to education in order to identify girl-specific access improvement strategies. Because of the different barriers boys and girls face in going to school, the current definition of “access to education”—presently measured by enrollment numbers—does not accurately capture the factors, barriers, and contextual nuances behind these numbers. If the government were to amend this definition of access to encompass more qualitative obstacles such as the distance and commute to school, gender of the teachers, quality of teaching, financial incentives, safety of the environment in and around the school, and wider engagement of influential people of different community groups in girls’ enrollment campaigns, identifying policies to promote girls’ education would be much easier.

In fact, as the case studies note, barriers to girls’ access to education are different in each of their unique contexts. For example, although close proximity to school, the absence of fees, availability of female teachers, and good quality of education were reported across all contexts as the main drivers for increased girls’ enrollments, urban households reported that safety of girls and trust in school management are crucial in making the decision to enroll girls in school, while the

involvement of elders and religious education was essential for tribal area families.

At the moment, to improve girls’ access to education the government of Pakistan should consider three broader views of access: provide schools closer to girls’ homes; promote positive perceptions of and support for girls’ education among families and the community; and develop area-differentiated access improvement plans, especially for remote and fragile areas.

1. **Provide schools closer to girls’ homes:** As noted above, the location and distance of school is a major obstacle for girls’ education. Evidence suggests that providing schools closer to homes can support girl’s education: In Afghanistan, village schools have been associated with a 52 percentage point boost in girls’ enrollment (Burde and Linden 2013). In Egypt, new schools built in the 1980s boosted rural girls’ enrollment by 60 percent (Rugh 2000). Similarly, evidence from Pakistan confirms the need of closely located schools to home for supporting girls’ education (Chabot 2009, Jamal 2015, Callum et al. 2012, Buzdar and Ali 2011).
2. **Improve perceptions of and support for girls’ education among families and community:** Enlisting support for girls’ education through changing traditional attitudes and social norms toward women needs careful handling. Khan (2007, 75) recommends that new propositions need to be grounded in the local culture and “take local customs into account” for better acceptability. Keeping this in mind, there are three main strategies for promoting the perception of and support for girls’ education: increase community support by

introducing advocacy campaigns for girls' education; increase family awareness about the value and advantages of female education; and provide professional development opportunities for female teachers (Chabot 2009). Along with making schools more accessible for girls, Jamal (2015, 273) recommends involving men in overcoming these barriers, for example, "making allies of powerful community leaders, especially religious and political leaders, and by utilizing existing institutions, such as the mosque, Jirga (council of elders), and the men's guest house." Callum et al. (2012, 6) recommend working on improving "attitude towards female mobility," because girls' mobility is "critical to shaping girls' schooling outcomes and to addressing the gender gap." Overall, perceptions and attitudes toward female mobility are very significant forces of influence on girls' access to educational services; therefore, these should be considered and targeted through culturally sensitive strategies focusing on change in general attitudes.

- 3. Create area-differentiated access improvement plans through effective partnerships, especially for remote and fragile areas:** The nuances of girls' access to education in remote and conflict-affected areas necessitate careful handling of security issues and cultural sensitivities. Innovative partnerships among education providers in public and private sectors can bring real benefit in providing educational services to all children, including girls. Private sector (as well as NGO) actors have a competitive advantage in "geographic, cultural, and social proximity to local students and communities, easier access to the local

labor market, and more workable accountability mechanisms" (Dahal and Nguyen 2014, 26). When working for disadvantaged groups, these actors tend to take into account both the diversity and context-specific educational access needs of the groups concerned due to the small-scale nature of their operations and the flexibility built into their structures and processes in comparison to the government systems (Akyeapong 2009).

Schools for girls in conflict-ridden areas have especially unique requirements that have somewhat been addressed by non-governmental models. For example, in the successful case study for Diامر Home School (DHS), girls can safely go to the home of a trusted community member to learn, safe from the threat of an attack (see Appendix 2). In the context of conflict and fragility, Mohmand Agency Community-Based Education Centers (MA CBECs) promote girls' education through an emphasis on security: These centers are located in community-owned premises, protected by a community member recruited as security guard for the school, and have all female trained teachers.

Thus, the evidence of success from these cases indicates that the state can build effective partnerships with the not-for-profit, nongovernmental sector, and use their services advantageously in the situation of crisis and conflict. Even within fragile contexts, however, schools face different challenges depending on the type of conflict. For example, Chris (2010) recommends enhanced regulation; capacity building of community for effective accountability of educational services

for better quality; and candid analysis of conflict in order to achieve benefits from these partnerships. The evidence supporting Chris's position emerged from the Mohmand Agency CBECs model, where the state has been a partner of choice and a source of strength for the NGO in an environment of instability and insecurity. While discussing engagement strategies with non-state actors in fragile contexts where the general sentiment is anti-state, on the other hand, Batley and McLoughlin (2010) argue for a cautious approach toward regulations, policy interventions, and establishing contractual agreements. They assert the need for protecting non-state service delivery and using an incremental approach for involving the state in cautious efforts of state building.

Expand definition of quality

The government should consider an expanded view of education quality by including the colloquial views of parents and community members along with the technical dimensions of quality education service delivery. Like with access, an expanded definition of quality is essential for ensuring educational services are relevant and responsive to the needs of service users in highly diverse social, economic, and cultural contexts. It is vital that the informal elements of quality, defined locally, should be integrated alongside traditional concepts of quality that are defined more technically (e.g., a comprehensive curriculum, trained teachers, a conducive and safe learning environment, and quality learning materials).

Negotiating between the technical standards of quality education and contextual views on quality that are more relevant for the service users is a balancing act. For example, in the context of the three case studies, the hallmark of success was

the responsiveness of services to parents' perception of quality (which constitutes the informal elements of quality): ensuring regularity in teaching and following the government's scheme of studies and assessment system in MA CBECs; providing uniforms, textbooks, health and hygiene kits, and religious lessons in DHS; and viewing mothers as partners in the education of their children through respectful inclusion and supportive strategies, free learning materials, and flexibility in school schedules in ARFS. All these features responded to parents' needs and their concept of what constituted good, quality learning for their children.

This proposition necessitates that policymakers consider two key issues: understand the informal concepts of quality in education held by local communities when devising responsive strategies, and make visible the responsiveness of educational services to community demands while maintaining technical standards of quality services.

1. **Understand local concepts of quality in education:** Meeting user expectations is a crucial dimension of quality for any service including education (Shank et al. 1996), so service providers, especially in the public sector, should seek out and identify strategies for responding to the perceptions of the community about what constitutes quality in education for them. Importantly, quality should not be thought of in absolute terms or set in isolation, rather it is "relative to the user of the term and the circumstances in which it is invoked" (Harvey and Green 1993, 10). In other words, differing perspectives of education quality across different stakeholders reflect different points of reference in educational provision. For state providers of education who

are accountable to government standards, education quality may be defined technically by the comprehensiveness of the curriculum, the level of training of teachers, or the availability of learning materials, and then measured by students' test scores. The provision of quality in this sense can be limited by cost and regularity of service delivery, especially for users with social, financial, or political instability. For these stakeholders in contexts of instability, fragility, or poverty, education quality may be defined by users' more immediate educational needs. For example, parents in one tribal area of Pakistan held positive attitudes toward their daughters' education, but their decision on whether to send their daughters to school was influenced by the "severe scarcity of human and physical infrastructure for girls' education" (Buzdar and Ali 2011, 16). For these parents, quality was understood in terms of the regular attendance of school personnel and the existence of a school building. In other contexts, parents' and community perceptions of quality may be defined differently.

2. **Make the responsiveness of services visible to users:** The responsive provision of services is crucial for addressing the context-specific, complex, and multifaceted perceptions about the quality of education in that timely, visible responses gain community trust and acceptance of the education services for all their children, including girls.

Ensure contextually relevant support for girls and their families

The government has to ensure support for girls and families in terms of social, financial, and political

incentives for girls to go to school. Evidence from the literature and the case studies in Pakistan identifies two key dimensions of the issue of community and parental empowerment: promoting community engagement and participation in school management, and providing access to finances for families that help incentivize girls' education. Both of these dimensions are especially important for building political stability, social cohesion, and financial resilience among communities facing political, social, and financial security challenges in their lives.

1. **Promote community engagement and participation in school management:** In the contexts of fragility, social conservatism, and extreme financial constraints some subtle and action-oriented advocacy strategies are useful for building and sustaining the motivation for education among families and communities. Community engagement in school management can be a very effective approach here and should be promoted by developing local leadership and social cohesion (Nkansa et al. 2006). But for parental and community participation to be effective in improving school quality, especially for girls, parents and the community must be empowered with the authority and capacity to meaningfully participate and affect change through participation in decisionmaking (Beasley and Huillery 2014). For example, the education service models in both Mohmand Agency and Diamer were successful in initiating and establishing services in insecure and resistant environments when communities and parents were made true stakeholders in the education of their children in the form of land donations for the schools, decisions on school location, and recruitment of teachers and security staff

from the community. Similarly, in ARFS, the inclusion of mothers in decisionmaking on school scheduling, uniforms, and the academic, physical, and social development of their children created a strong support base for the school. However, this process of supporting and empowering the community does not happen overnight. Rather, it is a gradual process of building capacity in the community as well as creating and expanding the space for meaningful contribution.

- 2. Provide financial support and incentivize girls' education:** If government could provide economic opportunities for families and financial and material incentives for girls' education (especially those in contexts of low political, social, and financial resources), access to girls' education could also improve. For example, in all three case studies, service providers as well as parents identified fi-

nancial challenges as a major reason for the low participation of children and especially that of girls in education. Improvements in families' financial situations and providing money or material incentives for girls in schools can encourage and facilitate parental decisions to send girls to school (Shafiq 2010, Sperling et al. 2016).

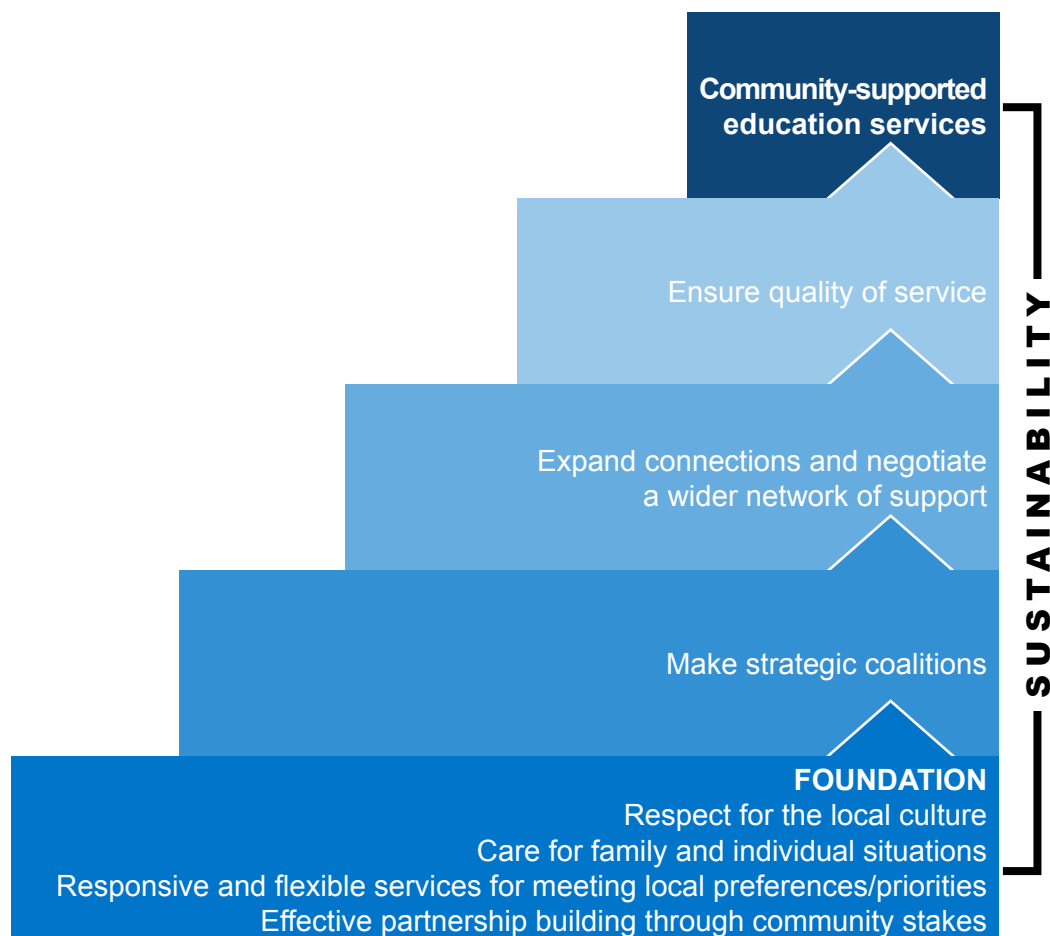
For developing complementary frameworks for working with the nongovernmental sector education providers, the government should consider and incorporate the above four strategies, specifically by developing inclusive sustainability frameworks, expanding definitions of access and quality, and providing relevant support for purposeful community engagement in educational service delivery. The following section discusses in more detail what the nongovernmental sector can do to improve girls' education service delivery.

TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESSES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR GIRLS' EDUCATION DELIVERY: KEY IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NONGOVERNMENTAL SECTOR

Developing a comprehensive service delivery model of community-supported education is challenging because the social, cultural, and economic milieu is not homogenous across Pakistan. However, analysis across the three case studies, supported by the wider literature on girls' education in comparable contexts, suggests a

process framework for nongovernmental organizations to establish responsive, flexible, and locally relevant community-supported education. This process framework recognizes and accommodates context-specific priorities for service delivery, rather than glossing over the diverse features and characteristics of communities and households. Specifically, the framework's three phases of creating strategic coalitions, negotiating a wider network to enlist support, and establishing quality service delivery should be implemented with a constant consideration of issues of sustainability and in a general environment of respect, care, responsiveness, and partnership building, as illustrated in Figure 3:

FIGURE 3. A PROCESS FRAMEWORK INFORMING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL



Create strategic coalitions

The first critical step for nongovernmental actors engaged in delivering girls' education is to build coalitions with gatekeepers and influential stakeholders—often government officials, political leaders, religious leaders, and notables in the area. These partnerships create the access, legitimacy, and support needed to introduce the service in the area. In conflict-affected, socially conservative, and financially disenfranchised contexts characterized by political and family power structures that are traditional, patriarchal, and centralized, these coalitions have all the greater significance for introducing girls' education services. Specifically, coalitions ensure the necessary permissions, acceptance, and security for the initiative are obtained or achieved.

For the service providers in the three cases studies, coalitions were useful for:

1. Gaining an understanding of the context.
2. Providing information about the purpose of the intervention.
3. Recognizing issues and barriers for education especially for girls.
4. Identifying characteristics and features required by the community for educational provision to be relevant, feasible, and socially acceptable.

This process not only helped the community understand the purpose and objectives of the interventions, but also helped create a local group of supporters and advocates for girls' education.

Coalition-building overall creates significant benefits for different schooling models, but those

different contexts require different approaches to coalition building. For example, the process of formation, the degree of public visibility, and the composition of coalitions contacted for support were different for each of the three case study schools in terms of being formal or informal, open or discreet, or composed of male or female community groups. These differences across contexts are important to understand in order to create purposeful and effective coalitions.

Formal coalition-making processes: Before introducing the educational services, providers in two case studies approached potential partners or facilitators for support. This step of creating partnerships and alliances was formalized and publically ceremonialized, depending upon the requirements and needs of the situation. In the case of Diامر Home Schools and Mohmand Agency CBECs, organizations approached government departments and established a formal partnership through signed MOUs. This strategy provided the most critical security cover for operations in volatile and risk-prone areas. This partnership was also important for getting access to technical and leadership support available with the establishment, including access to local leadership, approval for operations in sensitive locations, and support for mainstreaming the intervention into the public system.

In the urban context of the ARFS, where a relatively stable law-and-order situation did not pose security challenges to school operations and delivery logistics, formal coalitions with government actors were not necessary. In addition, the presence of other public schools in the neighborhood rendered partnership with government irrelevant because government had no local-level mechanisms for partnerships in well-served urban areas.

Informal coalition-making processes: While the need for formal partnerships with government actors was context dependent, informal alliances with local community notables were made in each case study. Indeed, support from influential community members was essential for success in terms of creating a favorable environment for launching the intervention and for attracting students, especially girls, to the schools. How non-governmental providers gained the community's support, however, depended on the situation. For instance, building coalitions with the community was done more openly in the case of the MA CBEC, where the NGO offering community-based education services formed education reform committees with representation from FATA (federally administered tribal areas) secretariat, the education department, political agent's office, and community elders. Through regular meetings of these committees, stakeholders were engaged in developing the criteria for the selection of sites for educational facilities, enrollment campaigns (especially for girls), and decisions on the monitoring and accountability of the services. In the context of the DHS and ARFS models, the process was more discreet; for example, in Diامر, the history of terrorist attacks on schools determined the choice of a more cautious approach to coalition-building, while for ARFS a very modest approach started with a few children in one close neighborhood.

Context-specific variations: Another differentiation necessitating different approaches is in the composition of the "community." In MA CBEC the "community" was all men, including elders, notables, leaders, and officials. In Diامر, it was again men, especially religious leaders. In the urban area, it was all women. This choice of who to approach was reflective of the decisionmakers

and gate keepers in conservative and traditional contexts as well as in more open urban centers of Pakistan.

Yet, coalition making with the community is not always as straightforward as the examples above may suggest. In the case of ARFS, people were initially apprehensive about and reluctant to send their children to the school because of their experience with very low-quality education provision in the area's free public and low-cost private schools. Mothers were the early converts to the school, as indicated in the data, and helped persuade fathers and other family members to send their children, especially girls, to school. In the contexts of the MA CBEC and DHS, where social conservatism and traditional attitudes toward girls' education were rampant, approaching people about the idea of educating their children and especially girls was difficult. Persistent contact and communication was the common strategy used by all organizations. They also used a very open participative approach where community notables were encouraged to share their opinions, views, issues, and problems about sending their children, including girls, to schools. For example, in Diامر, religious leaders were specially invited to participate in local community engagement sessions. Where raising the issue of girls' education was sensitive, conversations centered on education and its benefits for children and were then directed toward the problems faced by boys and girls in accessing education.

Negotiate a wider network to enlist support

After approaching influential stakeholders, the service providers of the three case study schools expanded the circle of their connections with

wider community groups. It was necessary to connect with parents and household members at this point to gain a closer understanding of family circumstances and their specific needs for a more responsive service. It was also important for the families to get relevant information about the purpose, design, and facilities of the educational services. This expanded circle of support proved very useful as some members of households who were won over initially proved a great asset for engaging and convincing more family members and neighbors. These core members, called “ambassadors” by the administrators of the DHS and ARFS, facilitated further contact with other households. They became partners in mobilization activity for girls’ enrollment, which enhanced local trust in the purpose and inclusive ownership of the intervention. Identification, creation, involvement, and utilization of these initial supporters proved to be a key strategy in all three cases.

Establish quality service delivery

The final step in the process framework for community-supported education focuses on ensuring the quality and relevance of educational services and establishing an image among the community of offering quality and relevant services. As noted above, meeting these community expectations is an essential dimension of providing quality educational service (Shank et al. 1996) and is part of an expanded, comprehensive conceptualization of quality that takes into consideration colloquial understandings of “quality” (Harvey and Green 1993). At this stage of the process, data from the three cases indicated diverging understandings of what constitutes quality and relevance between service providers and parents, a divergence influenced by the schooling context.

On the one hand, the providers held a more conventional understanding of what constitutes educational quality: good teachers, quality teacher training, a conducive learning environment and satisfactory learning outcomes, adequate school facilities like classrooms, toilets, and furniture, and relevant teaching and learning materials. On the other hand, mothers, speaking on behalf of their families, considered a different set of distinguishing indicators:

- For Mohmand Agency families, the sheer availability of schools and regularity of teaching and learning activities are the main hallmarks of educational quality. This reflects the need for availability and regularity in the context of fragility.
- For families of DHS children, the closeness to home, provision of female teachers, and attention to students are the main areas of quality concerns.
- For the ARFS families, the affordability of school, observable improvements in the behavior of children, a secure environment for girls, and respect and care extended by the principal and teachers are the most important features of quality.

In terms of educational relevance, the three providers succeeded in keeping the services relevant for the needs of families in all three environments—thereby acquiring endorsements from families—by activating parent associations and school management committees to resolve issues concerning their children’s education. For example, communities in MA CBEC areas are very religious, so reference to religion was used quite frequently during community mobilization for girls’ education and later reflected in the service design as well. The

messages that responded well to communities' priorities were that with education girls will: understand and perform their religious obligations better; provide basic health care for families especially as they can qualify for training as skilled birth attendants; and replace male teachers in girls' schools. In promoting these messages, providers kept parents involved and motivated to participate in school activities, as well as to continue sending their daughters to school.

Commit to fundamental principles of community engagement

Analysis of interview data and school project documents reveal a few fundamental principles guiding the three phases of coalition building, network expansion, and quality service delivery. These principles were respect, care, responsiveness, and partnership building through the creation of community stakes in the initiative:

- Genuine respect for the local culture: Local norms, like limiting direct interaction with women and ensuring arrangements for gender segregation, were respected in the community mobilization phase. This approach paid dividends by establishing trust in the intervention and subsequently raising girls' enrollment. It was important that the intervention was not perceived as a threat to local traditions in order to target the core issue of girls' access to education.
- Interest in and care for the specific situations of communities and families: An authentic interest in understanding the specific financial and familial circumstances of the average household, and a subsequent consideration for these in service design, is critical for establishing community-supported education.

Reflected in the strategies of all three models, actions taken to reduce the cost of education for families in need, including the provision of uniforms, learning materials, and stationery items, not only were a direct relief to parents but also demonstrated that the service providers cared about community needs. In addition, understanding and caring about family work patterns was also a key aspect to enlisting community support, especially in the cases of the ARFS and DHS, where individual student schedules and school timings were aligned with families' workforce participation needs.

- Responsive and flexible services for accommodating local priorities: Responding to community priorities helped create a more favorable environment for launching girls' education interventions. Specifically, the inclusion of community groups early on during the initiation stage helped to make services relevant, acceptable, and feasible. For example, inclusion of community groups in decisionmaking about the location of schools in the MA CBEC and DHS models boosted a sense of common ownership of the initiatives. In the case of ARFS, participation of mothers in school assemblies and in making decisions on school hours, uniform color, and after-school storage for books and stationery items enhanced families' involvement in the initiative and ultimately in the education of their children. Lessons on Quranic recitation were also included on the desire of families across the three models.
- Creation of community stakes in the initiatives: Engaging the local community in ways that created a financial stake in the

schools also helped increase a sense of collective ownership of the initiative while also resolving human resource issues, infrastructure shortages, and security concerns. For example, the space for schools was provided by the community in all three models. In addition, community members were employed in all schools as general teachers, as specialized teachers of the Quran, or as other staff like security guards, depending on the school context. They also provided help in constructing and cleaning school facilities, and, in the case of Mohmand Agency, collected the rent for the building.

Sustainability

The process of initiating and establishing flexible and responsive services needs to be framed within a persistent consideration for the sustainability of coalitions, partnerships, community support and ownership, and quality of services. The issue of sustainability has implications for the service design phase, as well strategizing for continued financial support. Gaining the trust of and acceptance by the community helped the three providers in the author's study establish community-supported schools and provide uninterrupted educational services for girls for two or more years in their very distinct contexts. Student enrollment, especially by girls, has increased significantly in the last two years (75 percent in MA CBEC, 51 percent in DHS, and 70 percent in ARFS). Despite this great achievement, the challenge of sustainability looms, especially in terms of financing. The future of these complementary service providers—and the future of girls' education in these diverse settings in Pakistan—depend on the integration of these services into the long-term educational vision and educational budget for Pakistan.

Although these models are defined by their community support, communal resources cannot be the long-term financing model. In contexts of political fragility, social conservatism, or poverty, pooling scarce community resources is not a feasible solution. The providers are aware of these limitations, especially in the context of MA CBEC and DHS where schools relied on donor funding. But with the ebb and flow of project cycles, such uncertainty about funding threatens the schools' abilities to plan their operations. For ARFS, sustaining the current level of operations is possible but the increasing demand for enrollment and higher-level classes cannot be sustained. The school urgently needs more space, which cannot be rented or purchased in an urban location with the current financial circumstances of the school or the community.

The solution to sustainability is to effectively pool support from the community, government, and service providers. The government should develop a more flexible public-private partnership model that expands the scope and geographical localities for institutional partnership. For instance, as mentioned earlier, non-universal geographic coverage of existing PPP frameworks and contextually irrelevant eligibility criteria inevitably excludes innovative small-scale education initiatives, including many community-supported schools. Solutions to these challenges of exclusions have been discussed earlier in the section for policymakers.

In addition, sustaining community trust and support should be integrated into the service design in order to ensure that processes of community engagement and the space created for girls' education by non-state providers are maintained in the long term. These strategies will look different depending on the context. For example, in the politically fragile context of MA CBEC and in the

socially conservative communities of DHS, organizing regular sessions with local elders, religious leaders, and other influential people in the area is necessary for sustaining the momentum of community mobilization. Parents and children facing challenges of conflict, social dissonance, and poverty can be kept motivated through rewards and scholarships for girls. In the context of political fragility and social insecurity some additional strategies, such as arranging extra-curricular activities and events in schools, can help maintain community engagement with the educational service. Similarly, establishing skills development centers to help parents create self-employment opportunities ensures schools meet larger community needs. These strategies in turn help maintain community-wide support and social acceptability for girls' education. In the more socially conservative context of northern Pakistan where DHS operates, sustaining community engagement entails providing missing facilities in schools, special community mobilization campaigns for girls' enrollment, hiring female teachers, and opening more girls' schools closer to their homes. In the urban slum where ARFS operates, distributing vouchers for working children to meet the economic opportunity costs of going to school or providing employment opportunities through the school for women in the area could help maintain girls' enrollment rates. These strategies involve underwriting the real and opportunity costs that influence whether parents send their daughters to school. Expanding the model of adaptable services to more girls from urban areas, including the provision of higher levels of schooling, is also key to sustaining community motivation for girls' education.

Due to the context-specific nature of community-supported education, replicability and scalability of these innovative models for girls' education remains a challenge. Yet this research has emphasized the need for flexibility in designing the educational service system and developing it incrementally in response to community needs and contextual demands. Research indicates that replicability should be conceptualized at two levels: 1) the product, in this case complementary, community-supported service delivery system of education; and 2) the process of creating these systems, or the model "that works in parts, in varying situations" and evolves in the field (Bhat et al. 1999, 14). Therefore, a model for girls' education for Pakistan's diverse contexts cannot be prescriptive; rather, the process of creating the service delivery system should determine its features. When NGOs decide to replicate or scale up flexible, localized education service models for girls' education, it is essential they begin with clarity of purpose and identify a clear target group to be served. This clarity is necessary for the identification of locations, communities, and key stakeholders for the educational services. In this way, the process framework derived from the present analysis of community-supported models for girls' education in Pakistan can be used to help identify and form strategic coalitions, enlist wider community support, and ensure the quality of services. If these phases are followed on the principles of respect, care, responsiveness, and partnership building, then the service delivery system can be made especially favorable for improving girls' education.

CONCLUSION: THREE PILLARS FOR PROMOTING GIRLS' EDUCATION THROUGH LOCALIZED AND FLEXIBLE SERVICE MODELS

In summary, government, as well as service providers in nongovernmental organizations trying to enhance girls' education in complex, violent, and resistant environments should focus on three pillars for the promotion of girls' education through localized and flexible education models. These are: recognize and appreciate these models, establish innovative and inclusive partnerships, and ensure the sustainability of these models.

1. Recognition and appreciation:

- **The government** should recognize and appreciate the contribution of small-scale, localized, and flexible models of education delivery that meet the needs of a marginalized and invisible population of learners, who in many cases are girls, in Pakistan. This should be pursued by integrating these models into the national education policy.
- **The nongovernmental organizations** should pilot relevant, responsive, and feasible education service delivery models for girls who are inaccessible to existing public and private services. The organizations providing these services should share their successes and lessons learned with the community of policy and practice of girls' education to create visibility for these models.

2. Establish innovative and inclusive partnership frameworks:

- **The government** should develop and adapt frameworks for inclusive partnerships with the non-profit sector for providing required technical, material, and financial support.
- **The nongovernmental organizations** should work closely with local government departments during the design and implementation of flexible service delivery models. They should also ensure extensive engagement and participation by communities to bridge government services with the aspiration, expectations, and preferences of local communities.

3. Ensure sustainability:

- **The government** should introduce facilitative mechanisms for the registration of these services and establish a resource hub for linking public funding, private philanthropists, and corporate- and small-scale donors with these service providers. The government should also introduce financial support packages for incentivizing girls' education in marginalized communities.
- **The nongovernmental organizations** should demonstrate their intentions for sustainability throughout the initiation and establishment of service models. Community engagement is the key dimension of these service models for girls' education;

therefore, the service design should include a mechanism for continued and purposeful community participation. Service providers should organize themselves as

a platform for knowledge and a network for resource sharing to leverage and sustain their influence in long-term policy.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY

The research followed an interpretive research paradigm and employed a case study methodology. This methodology suited the purpose and focus of this exploration of relevant educational services for promoting girls education as a “phenomenon in its real-life context” (Cohen et al. 2007, 254). Methods of data collection were triangulated for the creation of a fuller research picture (Morrison 2007, 31). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three project managers and structured interviews with five to seven parents of girl children from the schools included in this research. The overarching theme guiding both sets of interviews was the identification of specific issues for girls’ education in diverse geographies and cultural contexts of Pakistan. This involved exploring demand-side issues of educational services for girls, aspects of adaptability and flexibility of services in response to context-specific needs, interpretation of minimum standards of quality for teaching and learning, and challenges for the sustainability of these initiatives.

Document review was also used to support findings from interviews. Documents included project proposal documents, archives of working papers, students’ records, issue papers particularly related to changes in project design, implementation documents, and concept notes. The review of these documents was focused on the deliberations for project design, implementation processes, adaptations in the design or approach of project interventions, community needs, and specific challenges and successes of these programs.

A review of the literature also supplemented the analysis of data, development of argument, and identification of policy recommendations. Literature topics reviewed included the theoretical perspectives pertaining to access and quality issues for girls’ education; models for public-private partnerships for community-based education; models of community-based interventions and advocacy; sustainability of not-for-profit education models; non-governmental provisions in challenging contexts; and the current education scenario of Pakistan.

APPENDIX 2: OVERVIEW OF THE THREE SCHOOLING MODELS AND THEIR CONTEXTS

Schooling Model 1. Community-based education in Mohmand Agency—a politically fragile context

Mohmand Agency (MA) is situated in FATA (federally administered tribal area) in the north of Peshawar

at the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. The area is among the least-developed parts of FATA and falls in the war zone at the frontline in Pakistan’s war against extremist militancy. The military operation in the FATA area was initiated in April 2009, which resulted in a huge displacement of residents. Approximately 2.4 million people were compelled to leave their homes for safer places. According to the FATA Disaster Management Authority and UN-HCR, during July and August 2009, about 35,000

TABLE 1. EDUCATIONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW OF THE THREE SCHOOLING MODELS

Category	Mohmand Agency Community-Based Education Centers (MA CBECs)	Diامر Home Schools (DHS)	Abdul Razzaq Foundation School (ARFS)
Public school in the area?	no	yes	yes
Were children in school before the intervention?	no	no	yes
Reasons for not attending school prior to the intervention	No school available	Financial limitations, low quality, distance to school; for girls specifically: male teachers, co-education schools	N/A
Reasons for sending children to intervention school	Proximity to home, female teachers, girls-only school, no cost quality education, inclusion of religious education	Proximity to home, female teachers, dedication of teachers, no cost education	Proximity to home, trust in school principal, care and respect of students by teachers and principal, no cost quality education, security offered for girls
Educational profile of children ≤16 in families associated with the intervention school	Majority out of school	Majority out of school	Majority in school
Occupation of out-of-school children	Cattle rearing and grazing	No particular activity	Girls: household chores, sibling care; Boys: apprentices in informal sector
Average number of children in a family	6-7	7	5
Average monthly household income	Rs 9000	Rs 4500-5000	Rs 2500-3000
Occupation of fathers	Farmer	Farmer, laborer	Vendor, laborer
Occupation of mothers	Household work, child rearing	Household work, child rearing	Low-paid household help

families of Mohmand Agency were displaced. The sub-districts (called Tehsils: Safi, Baizai, Pindiali, and Ambar) were the worst-affected areas due to the concentration of militants' presence.

In 2010-2011, the armed forces of Pakistan declared the Mohmand Agency area clear and the displaced families were allowed to move back to their homes. These families returned to their native areas where infrastructure was damaged, and public services were badly disrupted. Rehabilitation of educational services was a huge challenge, with school buildings destroyed or damaged, and teachers dispersed. Another challenge was the competing and more urgent priorities of rebuilding homes, roads, and livelihoods. The fragile security situation and high-risk index limited the necessary level of support from the international donors and nongovernmental sector. Some local NGOs, however, initiated educational activities in close coordination with the government and military establishment soon after the military operation.

In the Mohmand Agency area, farming is the main source of livelihood for this area. Men are engaged in the field or paid labor in reconstruction work, while women stay at home for household work. The average family income of participant households is \$85-90 per month, and the majority of the under-16 children in these families of six to seven children are out of school, helping families in cattle rearing and grazing.

The community-based education initiative

Human Resource Development Network (HRDN) started its relief work in education in Mohmand Agency in early 2012 and carried out a detailed assessment of damaged schools and out of

school children in five Tehsils (Ambar, Khawaizai, Baizai, Pindiali, and Haleemzai). On the basis of this assessment, in partnership with donors (UNDP, UNICEF, IRC), HRDN started the Children Education Program in February 2013. The program's central objective was to increase access to quality primary education as a means of promoting peace and development in the conflict-affected tribal areas of Pakistan. HRDN, with financial assistance from the International Rescue Committee, designed and implemented the context-relevant and conflict-sensitive Community-Based Education (CBE) model. In this model, Community-Based Education Centers (CBECs) were created to deliver primary education as a basic right of children of the Mohmand Agency.

Attitudes toward girls' education: Initially, because of the non-availability of schooling options in Mohmand Agency, convincing parents to send their children, including girls, to CBECs was a challenge. Distance to school and the gender of teachers tended to be the main reasons parents were reluctant to enroll their girls. In addition, cultural restrictions on condemning contact with female members of households by outsiders contributed to problems in enlisting women's views and support for girls' education. While some people in Mohmand Agency opposed girls' education on the notion that it is against "pashtoon" traditions, research suggests that opposition was grounded on limited awareness of the benefits of education. One-third of households in the present study responded positively after girls were given the opportunity to attend school, and another third reacted initially in opposition but later came to accept girls' attendance of schools. Although the remaining one-third of households continued to resist girls' education, all mothers supported girls' education as girls' right.

The model: The CBE model was based on a participative approach that involves coordination with government departments and local communities. “Taleemi Islahi Jirga,” or TIJ (education reform committees) were formed with representation from FATA education department, political agent’s office, and community elders. Through regular meetings of these committees, community members were engaged in developing mandatory criteria for the selection of sites for educational facilities. The main aspects of the selection criteria were:

1. No primary school in the area within a radius of five kilometers.
2. Thirty to 40 children in the age group of 5 to 11 years.
3. Community willingness to provide a space (at least one room) without cost.
4. Availability of literate male or female with at least a high school education.
5. Agreement between the community and the education department on the location of the school.

After identification of suitable locations, local communities provided space for housing the school. In some places it was a built room or a section of a house, and in some other places it was plain land on which a room was constructed with in-kind support of the local community. Through this process, 20 CBECs were established in two Tehsils (Pindiali and Prang Ghar) of Mohmand Agency with the target of at least 1200 students’ enrollment in CBECs within three years. HRDN provided floor mats, educational materials, books, and a stock of reading materials in each CBEC. HRDN also ensured provision of running water and toilet facilities in CBECs.

Twenty teachers were hired from the community and with the close coordination of the FATA education department. The criterion for teacher selection was set in accordance with the government standards. The purpose of this synergy was standardization of teacher services for a government regularization process in the future. Most of these teachers were educated but not qualified as teachers; therefore, they were provided one teacher training course from government institutes.

Community participation: Extensive community mobilization and a participatory approach in designing the services helped the program motivate parents to enroll their children in the schools. The program organized the community mobilization through TIJs, which consisted of all male members. It’s pertinent to note here that due to the prevailing security situation the program was not in a position to hire female social mobilizers. Therefore, TIJs were used as a platform for dialogue with the community on sending their children to the CBECs and also probing their reservations on sending girls. These committees were the platform for an indirect approach to women, and later female teachers were involved in the process of reaching out to women in the community. Recruitment of female teachers and community mobilization for a period of six months were the strategies for initiating girls’ enrollment. These measures established the trust of the community and they started sending their girls; current enrollment of girls in the 20 CBECs is more than 60 percent of total enrollment.

Community members were further involved in school management committees for their role in ensuring the regularity of teaching and learning activities and the security of the centers’ activities and resources. One person from the household, which had donated the room or land, was hired

on paid salary as a security guard for the school. These arrangements built a community stake in the system; the community then owned the centers and provided essential security, monitored an effective utilization of teaching time and learning resources, and supported increasing enrollments.

A regular liaison between the community members on the management committees and department of education promoted joint ownership and responsibility toward ensuring education for children who had experienced traumatic conflict along with the effects of displacement and the loss of property, normalcy, and academic year(s). Currently, in the second year of the project, there are 1,200 enrolled children in 20 schools with gradually increasing enrollments.

Responsive services: Before the initiation of the program, HRDN conducted a detailed assessment of community needs and designed the program in accordance with the prevailing conditions and requirements by communities in the area. The program design followed the timing, exams schedule, and syllabus of the government for later mainstreaming of these centers into the public system. In the service delivery design, HRDN hired female teachers and provided books and educational kits, including school bags and stationery, for children and drinking water and toilet facilities in the centers.

Challenges for sustaining the initiative: Financial sustainability has emerged as a major long-term challenge for the CBECs, particularly after the end of the donor's financial commitment in 2016. Among the strategies currently identified by school officials, those that promise to bridge the

financial gap, at least for a limited time, include initiation of a fundraising strategy, especially among individual philanthropists and the private sector, and an "adopt a child" program, where the stories of individual families and children are documented and published through social media to attract financial sponsors. Although the active involvement and strengthening of TIJ in the financial management of these centers is necessary, the government also plays a significant role in sustaining the MA CBECs initiative specifically through technical assistance, teacher training, and provision of textbooks, as well as official recognition of CBECs to help graduates of the centers enroll in government schools/colleges.

Financial sustainability is not the only factor in ensuring these schools last; continuing community support is also important. Suggestions for sustaining community motivation for girls' education in the area included:

- Constant engagement with community elders and religious leaders and parents.
- Rewards and scholarships for high-performing children and their parents.
- Creation of employment opportunities through micro-finance and entrepreneurial activities in the area for the financial stability of the families.
- Co-curricular activities and competitions in schools.
- Inclusion of religious education in the scheme of studies.

Schooling Model 2. Home-based schools in Diamer—a remote and socially conservative context

The district of Diamer in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) is situated in the north of Pakistan on Karakoram Highway. Neighboring the FATA on one end and the rest of Gilgit-Baltistan (six districts: Gilgit, Ghiz-er, Hunza/Nagar, Skardu, Ganche, Astore) on the other, it acts as the land passage between Pakistan and the rest of the GB region on the Chinese border. Poverty, a lack of infrastructure, including health and education facilities, growing extremism, and a recent spate of sectarian terrorist attacks in the area have precipitated Diamer's image as a conflict-prone and security-risk region. Diamer is a unique district with more than 27 long valleys, and some of these valleys are not yet connected by road. As a result, most people in these valleys still travel long distances on foot to meet their day-to-day exigencies. These geographical conditions confront children, particularly girls, with the issue of reaching schools safely; hence, parents are reluctant to allow their daughters to attend school.

This set of geographic and social challenges has resulted in far lower education indicators in the region for the district in terms of access, especially that of girls, and the quality of education overall. In 2011, several girls' schools in the district were attacked by terrorist elements with an anti-female education agenda, which shook the confidence and motivation of development partners to contribute to the cause of education in Diamer. Although females constitute 50 percent of Pakistan's population, in Diamer, a traditionally conservative district, there are less than 8 percent girls-only schools (11 out of 148 schools). Since girls in this region typically do not go to co-ed schools, this limitation prevents these girls from accessing education. Notably, in Diamer, people differentiate between religious and

secular education. In the case of secular education, most parents prefer to send their sons rather than their daughters, as the general perception is that a secular education distracts from the faith.

The public schools demonstrate an acute shortage of basic facilities like classrooms, furniture, teaching and learning materials, and trained teachers resulting in student absenteeism. Due to a lack of community involvement in the education services, school management committees are dysfunctional. Private educational services are also limited because of the uncertain law-and-order situation in the area. Men are occupied in paid work in farms and as daily wage laborers, while women stay at home for household work. The average family income of participating households is around \$50 per month. Most of the under-16 children in these families, which have on average seven children, are out of school and remain unoccupied for lack of employment opportunities in the area. In addition, most families have a nomadic lifestyle and move around seasonally open pastures, preventing the schooling of their children.

The home schools initiative

The education project EDIP (Education Development and Improvement Program 2010-2015), funded by the Australian Government and managed by the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), began its operations in GB in July 2010. The aim of the project was to enhance access, equity, and quality of education in GB by working on three core areas: teacher capacity building, infrastructure development, and government policy. The major terrorist incidents in Diamer coincided with the commencement and early implementation of the EDIP in the six other districts of GB, hence Diamer was not included at that time.

However, some efforts were made for a limited inclusion of Diamer in the project through some teacher trainings, community awareness raising sessions, and exposure visits for community members couched within the cultural values and norms of the local communities. The groups that benefitted from these initiatives, especially trained teachers, became insider educational ambassadors and paved the way for the later extension of the project to Diamer.

The opportunity: An opportunity presented itself in late 2012. The police department in Gilgit Baltistan selected seven women constables from Diamer. These women declined to report at the police recruitment training center in Gilgit for their 6-month recruitment training because of the “purdah” (veil) issue and offered their resignations. The police chief then allowed these constables to organize and run girls’ schools from their homes instead of joining the police service. Hence, seven police-managed girls’ schools emerged in Diamer where girls’ education was still seen by many as a social taboo. Senior management in AKDN started discussion with the senior management of the government and the police department regarding the possibility of providing physical and training support to (newly established) home schools managed by the police in Diamer. This resulted in the signing of a tripartite memorandum of understanding among the Department of Education Gilgit-Baltistan, Police Department Gilgit-Baltistan, and AKDN. The objective of this partnership was to support the seven police-run home-based girls’ schools and select government schools in Diamer.

The key highlights of this model are:

- A thorough understanding of the local, cultural, and contextual dynamics and respect for local cultural sensitivities.

- Working through partnerships with recognized institutions like the local education department and police department.
- Developing partnerships and collaboration with school committees, teachers, and parents.
- Avoiding conflict with local culture.
- Providing material support for enhancing goodwill and acceptance among the communities.

Attitudes toward girls’ education: In Diamer, parents do not send their children, especially girls, to public schools due to a low-quality education, co-education, and male teachers. The local culture and traditions are highly conservative with gender segregation a strong norm: It is simply unthinkable for a male teacher to teach girls. Since there are not enough educated girls to become teachers, parents prefer for their daughters to remain at home rather than attend a school with male teacher. Data has indicated that directly preaching for girls’ education was a sensitive issue in the area. The terrain, connectivity, and accessibility were other main challenges along with the general disinterest in girls’ education due to no economic return for the family after the girl get married off. However, mothers supported girls’ education for social reasons like improving society and eradicating ignorance.

Community participation: The two AKDN agencies (Aga Khan Foundation Pakistan and Aga Khan University-Institute of Educational Development Professional Development Center North) that were part of the DHS initiative started extensive discussions with district officials, community representatives, and local influential leaders to explain the nature of the project and to secure their support. This strategy proved helpful when facing

the general reluctance to girls' enrollment. These agencies designed the program delivery model with a successful incentive of the supplying of textbooks, note books, health and hygiene kits, and uniforms for girls. They also included other inputs for schools including library books, furniture for schools, and construction of new classrooms and toilet blocks in the target schools where required.

Gradually the AKDN initiated field-based community mobilization and the establishment of school management committees (SMCs). Later, the center-based sessions with SMC members and exposure visits to schools in educationally advanced communities created the desire for educational development in community members. As part of the program design, teacher capacity-building activities were also launched. This comprehensive solution was appreciated by the communities, and they started sending their children, including girls, to the schools. Now there is an upward trend in enrollment for both boys and girls.

Responsive services: To accommodate the local context in Diامر, AKDN provided school-based and need-based teacher trainings for female teachers through a local female master trainer, who spoke their language and belonged to their religious sect. To meet the needs of families, some schools were designed to open in the afternoon so that girls could attend after helping their parents in domestic chores in the morning. Moreover, schools were encouraged to start the day with recitation and translation of a few verses from the Holy Quran so that communities could relax in comfort that Quranic/religious education was also part of the studies.

Challenges for sustaining the initiative: The data has identified a lack of financial resources for providing learning materials, periodical professional and technical support to the teachers, and the need for

further community mobilization as the main challenges for the continuity of this initiative. The ownership of these schools and expansion to accommodate increasing demand are also associated challenges.

The administrator of the program has shared that the AKDN provider can continue providing professional development for teachers and can support the government in developing monitoring mechanisms for quality assurance. He has stated that community members should play a role through constant and consistent engagement and involvement with the schools by providing the required support and through participation in management committees. The community can also demand proper care and funding for these schools from their political representatives.

The data indicates that government can play a significant role in sustaining the DHS specifically through adopting these schools into the government system and providing resources, teacher trainings, and quality monitoring for these schools. Political as well as bureaucratic leadership in government can build upon the space created through this model by opening more girl-friendly schools in all valleys of Diامر and initiating concerted campaigns for encouraging communities to enroll more out-of-school children, especially girls.

Suggestions for sustaining community motivation for girls' education in the area include:

- Gradual establishment of girls' schools in more conservative areas.
- Provision of basic facilities, especially water, toilets, and boundary walls in girls' schools.
- Appointment of female teachers for educating girls in single-sex schools.
- Development of PPP models for encouraging private providers in the area.

Schooling Model 3. Abdul Razzaq Foundation School in Multan—a context of utter poverty

This school, the Abdul Razzaq Foundation School (ARFS), was established by the philanthropic donation of dedicated time and effort by an individual and the financial support of a family trust, to which the author contributes financially. The founding principal of this school started a very modest initiative with the purpose of educating out-of-school street children. The quality of service and commitment of the founder established a good reputation for the school, and it gradually expanded into a more established educational center.

The school is located in a densely populated locality of Multan city with sections of socially and economically challenged households concentrated in slum areas. One such slum falls in the catchment area of ARFS, where, in a typical household, adults are engaged in meagerly paid jobs or are self-employed in very low income-generating activities. Most women work as household help and have no job or wage security for their long working hours. Men are usually jobless or, at best, daily wage laborers or vendors. Most of the parents are illiterate, and some fathers are drug addicts, which further damages familial relations and the financial situation of these households.

Living conditions in these households are dismal and unhygienic, with overcrowded living spaces and minimal water and sanitation facilities. The overall environment of severe financial constraints, illiteracy, low nutrition and hygiene, low health indicators, and little comfort or leisure time has an impact on all residents, especially children. Adults lack financial resources, time, and commitment to ensure education for children, who then remain on

the streets for the first seven to eight years of their lives and then get into paid work as child laborers.

In all participating households in this study mothers worked in low-paying jobs, and fathers brought in a negligible income. The average family income is \$30/month, which puts families under immense financial pressure. In these households, the majority of under-16 children in the family, of typically four to five children, are in school. Those children who are out of school have gender-differentiated occupations. Girls stay at home, do household chores, and take care of siblings while boys work as apprentices with informal sector jobs like mechanics or tailors. These choices impact their future occupations where boys will be economically better off by joining a skilled labor force, and girls will remain unskilled and fit for household work at their own homes or for low-paid household help jobs like their mothers.

Education services, both private and public, are available in the area but the affordable services are low in quality. Low-cost private schools have barely qualified teachers and public sector schools lack a focus on student learning. Private schools of good quality charge high fees (around \$9.50 a month), which is not affordable. The ARF School was opened in October 2013 with the goal to reach out to street children, especially girls, and provide them basic education of good quality.

Attitudes toward girls' education: In this urban slum area, parents generally enroll their children in schools but pull them out due to the low quality of education, lack of interest and motivation for education, and financial pressure to join work. In this urban location there is no resistance to the concept of girls' education, but the safety and security of girls is a huge concern for parents due to "eve teasing"

(harassment of girls and women on the streets). People also pull girls out of school at the ages of 12-14 for the added reason of concern for their security. These out-of-school girls provide sibling care and do household work when mothers go out for paid work. When ARFS was opened, initially people were apprehensive and reluctant to send their daughters to the school, but there was no negative reaction. Mothers there support girls' education for very practical reasons, such as for better lives with no compulsion to work at low-paid household help jobs.

The initiative

The ARFS founder started her initiative with extensive engagement with parents to convince them to send their children to the school. The initial lack of response from families, due to general disinterest in education and distrust in low-performing public schools, was a big challenge. Then she succeeded in enlisting the support of a well-respected community member, who elicited marginal support from some families, and a few children started coming to her home for education. She provided books, uniforms, and writing materials for children along with care and a regular schedule for age-appropriate educational activities.

Gradually, the acceptance of her initiative increased, and more children started enrolling. With the increasing number of children she needed space, more teachers, and more learning materials and resources, which were provided by her small-scale family-run trust fund.¹ Within a year she started receiving requests for admission from children shifting from nearby public schools. Though her initial aim for ARFS was to enroll street

children, she also accepted transfer students who were on the brink of dropping out of school.

According to school records for academic year 2015-2016, there were 105 students within the age range of 4-14 years. Some of the children (about 10 people) come from single-parent families, headed by the mother in almost all cases. About 20 percent of children attended school until 11 a.m. and then went to work, as their families could not afford the opportunity costs of education for these children.

The ARFS is a no-fee school, but parents were encouraged to provide school uniforms and writing materials for their children. In cases of severe difficulty, the school provided these essentials as well. There was growing pressure on the school to admit more students, which was hard to sustain financially in general and especially due to space limitations of the school.

The positive response and now growing interest for enrollment in the area for children with peculiarly low socio-economic status reflects the demand for a quality and relevant education option provided through a flexible and contextualized service delivery model.

The model: A few highlights underlying the success of this initiative include:

- Personal contact and interaction with underprivileged parents, which gave parents reason to trust the authenticity of the effort.
- The provision of no-cost education—although this was balanced by children and families encouraged to make some contri-

¹ The building for the school was donated by the author's father, so the school has been named after him. The family trust fund receives contributions from the author's family.

bution toward educational expenses, such as buying notebooks and pencils.

- In cases of severe financial difficulty, parents were not obliged to provide anything, removing pressure on parents and defensive reactions.
- Higher quality of education compared to other options available to this group of parents.
- Accommodation of the needs of children and flexibility on formal discipline, as demonstrated by school management who were ready to listen to the circumstances of individual families and to respond with advice and support.
- Encouraging parents to visit the school and to be partners in the education of their children.
- Frequent contact between school management and parents to discuss and update them on the educational achievements and difficulties of their children, among other things, and to be made part of the solution in case any behavioral, psychological, health, or educational problems needed handling.

Community participation: The founding principal of ARFS adopted the strategy of constant engagement with the women of the area, initially with the help of a notable male member of the community. After some families had begun sending their children, quality and care became the main force fostering community support. After some time mothers were so happy and satisfied that they became advocates (called “ambassadors” by the principal) for the school. It was mothers who played a significant role in sending their children, especially girls, to schools. Sometimes

fathers resisted sending girls, but mothers stood firm after they had established trust in the school, its services, and its general environment. Gradually, more teachers were recruited with a clear ethos of respecting the circumstances of students and their families and adapting school services in accordance with these. Full attention to each family situation, the accommodation of needs, flexibility on scheduling, and free services and uniforms were the most prominent factors for gaining mothers’ trust. For girls’ enrollment, specifically, a secure environment was critical for mothers.

Responsive services: Data has confirmed that every family had a detailed discussion with the school management on expectations and needs of the parents and also expectations of the school from them. The three things that were frequently requested by parents were more flexibility in school scheduling, the provision of free books and learning materials, and safe keeping of learning materials at the school. School hours were made flexible for some students to accommodate their work routine. There was a recurring demand for free books, notebooks, and learning materials as some families could not afford to buy anything. Since children were living in hugely crowded houses with younger siblings, it was a challenge for parents to keep books and other learning materials at home. Therefore, those parents often request keeping books at the school.

Challenges for sustaining the initiative: The principal shared that the family trust fund can sustain and improve upon the present level of services if more space is made available. The community cannot make any financial contribution but they can ensure the regularity of their children at school and government can help in this regard.

The principal and school records noted that the regional government has public-private partnership models that provide education vouchers for student placement in low-fee private schools in low-income areas. ARFS does not qualify for this support as the eligibility criteria requires schools to have a certain number of students at the post-primary level and that six to seven rooms are available in the school. Government can help by introducing a complementary PPP model for primary, small-scale, and no-fee schools. The principal also suggested that government should initiate a portal for linking this initiative with organizations that provide technical or financial support, like teacher training, teaching and learning materials, books, and funds.

The issues and challenges for continuing this initiative require immediate as well as long-term solutions. The most urgent issue is horizontal expansion in terms of adding more classrooms and

teachers for an increasing number of students. Currently, three classes sit in one room, and the school has barred new enrollment in order to take in siblings of current students. More long-term needs are for vertical expansion through upgradation to senior-level classes. There was persistent demand by mothers for this school upgradation because they would not send their adult girls to a far-off lower secondary school due to financial and security reasons. Suggestions for sustaining community motivation for girls' education in the area included:

- Linking no-fee-charging schools in a networking portal.
- Providing a safe environment for girls in and around schools.
- Upgrading and expanding the no-fee-charging schools to offer high school level.

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