



SDPI
Sustainable Development Policy Institute



Functional Capacity Assessment and Political Economy Review of Provincial Youth Departments

Arooj Waheed Dar | S. Akbar Zaidi | Sajid Amin Javed



Authors

Arooj Waheed Dar | S. Akbar Zaidi | Sajid Amin Javed

Acknowledgements

This report is a culmination of the efforts of many individuals and organisations. We appreciate the valuable insights offered by provincial government representatives during the consultative sessions as well as the in-depth interviews. Special thanks go to the Sindh Human Rights Commission for organising the session in Sindh, the P&D Department in Balochistan for coordinating the consultative session in Balochistan, and the Youth Affairs departments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Punjab, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) for their contributions. We are also grateful to the youth representatives from across Pakistan who openly discussed their multifaceted issues during the focus group discussions.

We are thankful to Mr. Waqas Imran for the survey data analysis provided in the report. We would also like to thank the Policy Solutions Lab at SDPI—Mr. Shahid Minhas, Mr. Umar Minhas, Ms. Amal Iqbal, Ms. Aqsa Naveed, and Ms. Zarmina Aijaz—for their essential support throughout the process.

We are also deeply grateful for the support from the UNFPA, particularly Ms. Rabia Pasha Gillani, Ms. Zahra Jabeen, Ms. Farah Ashraf, and Mr. Muqaddar Shah whose contributions were instrumental in bringing this report to fruition.

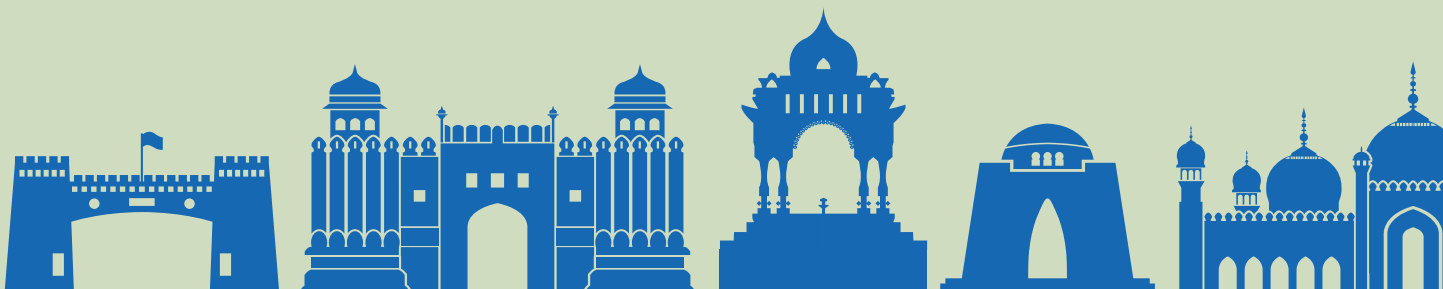
Lastly, we would like to thank UNFPA Representative in Pakistan Dr. Luay Shabaneh and Executive Director SDPI Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri for their overarching support and guidance.

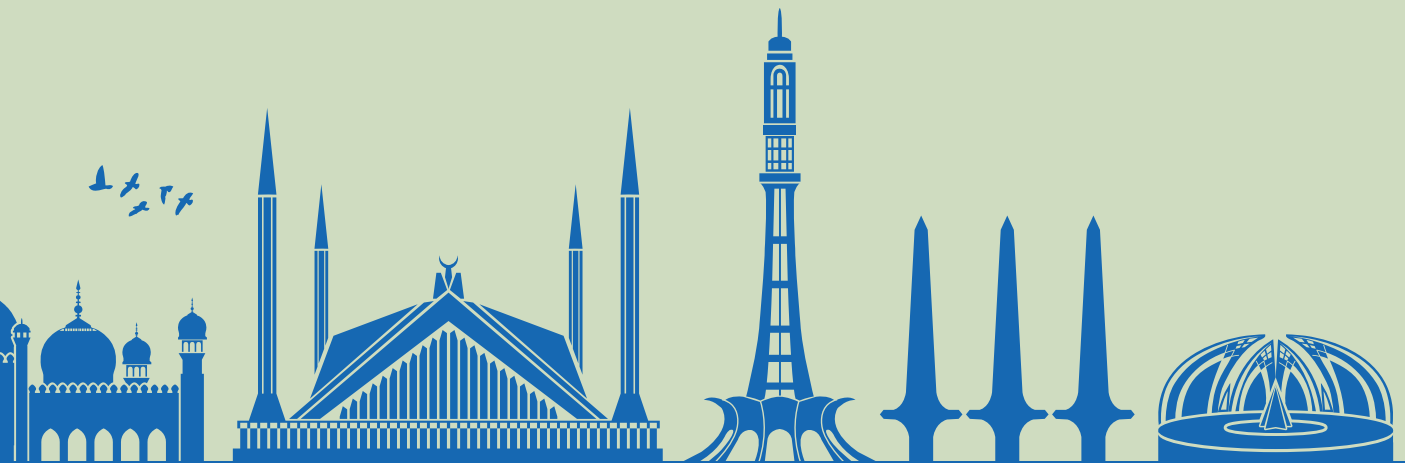
Layout & Design

Umair Hassan

Copyright© 2024

All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by graphic, electronic or mechanical including photographic, recording, taping or Information storage and retrieval system without written permission.





Foreword



Dr. Luay Shabaneh
UNFPA Representative

With their boundless potential, spirit, and passion, youth constitute the main building block in Pakistan's brighter future which belongs to those who dare to dream beyond boundaries. Interacting with young people in the provinces, one realises the problems they are faced with. The demands of young people to flee and seek a future across the country's borders reflect a profound frustration over the existing opportunities to achieve their potential due to poor-quality education, high unemployment, expanding poverty, widening income gaps, deteriorating public services, political and social neglect. It is, therefore, very pertinent, that as the demographic shift towards a younger population accelerates, a right-based political economy analysis for youth be conducted, to explore ways to improve the current status and upgrade the capacity for providing better services, more efficient engagement, and a promise that youth is a genuine pillar of Pakistan's social, economic and political discourse.

The findings of this Functional Capacity Assessment and Political Economy Review of Provincial Youth Departments conducted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), supported by UNFPA, provide a critical analysis of the trends in relation to education, health, and employment needs of young people and the reciprocal services extended to them from the state, across Pakistan. This comprehensive study delves into the operational effectiveness, challenges, and potential of these departments in meeting the aspirations and demands of our young people.

As an organization committed to advancing social justice, gender equality, and human rights, UNFPA is deeply invested in understanding how well the state is fulfilling its commitments to its youth population. The youth departments, in theory, are crucial agents of change, but in practice, their ability to address the complexities of youth development in Pakistan requires ongoing assessment and reform.

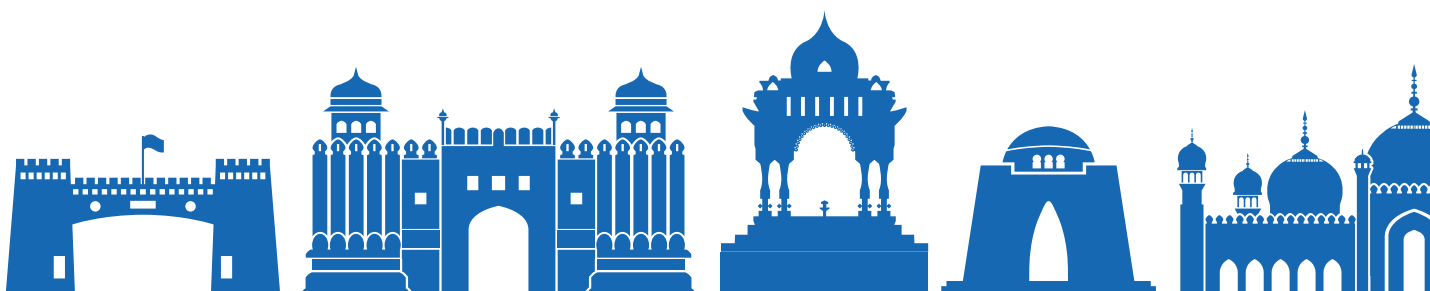
This analysis serves as a valuable tool for policymakers, development practitioners, and civil society to rethink the structures that govern youth affairs. It is our hope that the insights drawn from this report will spark meaningful dialogue and lead to stronger institutional frameworks that better cater to the needs of our youth, ensuring their active participation in the economic, social, and political life of the nation.

We extend our gratitude to SDPI for their expertise in producing this report, and we look forward to working with all stakeholders to drive forward the policy changes needed to empower Pakistan's youth for a brighter and more equitable future.

Table of Contents

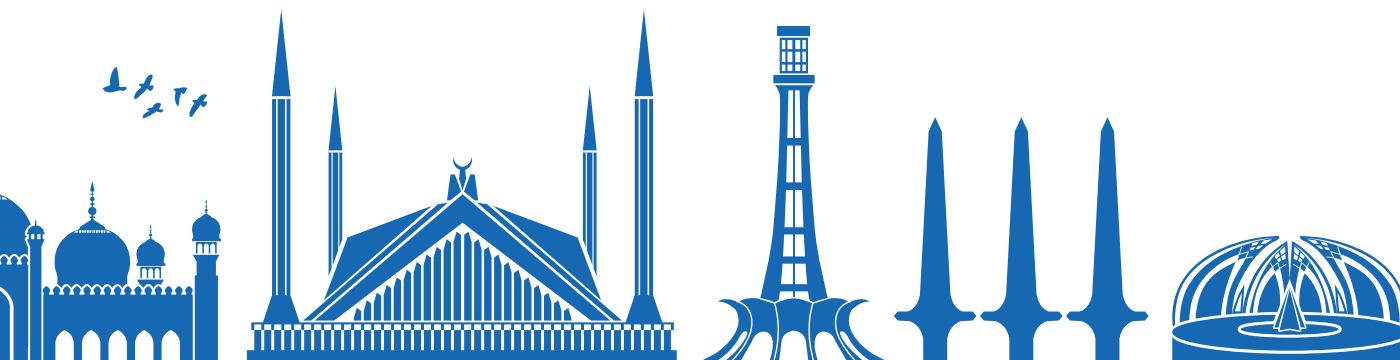
ACRONYMS	9
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	12
CHAPTER 1- SETTING THE STAGE	19
Background and Rationale	19
Scope of work	21
Methodology	21
What to expect from this report	23
CHAPTER 2- CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF THE STATE OF YOUTH IN PAKISTAN	25
Demographics	25
Gender issues	26
Underage marriages, GBV, and SRH	27
Youth (un)employment, and child labour	29
Education and skills development	33
Youth political and civic participation	37
Other psychological struggles	38
Self-help mechanisms	39

CHAPTER 3- POLICIES FOR THE YOUTH OR SIMPLY IN THE NAME OF YOUTH?	41
Functional Capacity Assessment of Provincial Youth Departments	42
Sindh	45
Balochistan	48
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	51
Punjab	55
Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)	60
Gilgit-Baltistan (GB)	64
CHAPTER 4- THE QUESTION OF WHY? CHALLENGES, BARRIERS, GAPS, AND TABOOS	70
CHAPTER 5- LOOKING BEYOND THE OBVIOUS: STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION	81
Tier 1: Enhancing Functional Capacity of Youth Departments	86
CHAPTER 6- THEORY OF CHANGE-POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION	86
Tier 2: Programme-Level Recommendations	90
Tier 3: Policy-Level Recommendations	93
Tier 4: Actor/Issue-Specific Recommendations	95
APPENDIX A: THEMATIC COMPARISON OF PROVINCIAL YOUTH POLICIES	97
APPENDIX B: FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT-QUESTIONNAIRE	112



List Of Figures

Figure 1: Population distribution, by region	26
Figure 2: Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married before age 18	27
Figure 3: Percentage of ever-married women (15-29 years) exposed to sexual, physical, or emotional abuse	28
Figure 4: Median age at first marriage among women aged 25-49	28
Figure 5: Percentage of currently married youth and births per young woman (15-29 years)	29
Figure 6: Contraception use among young men and women	29
Figure 7: Youth labour force participation rate (15-29 years)	30
Figure 8: Youth unemployment rate (15-29 years)	30
Figure 9: Age-specific unemployment rates, by province.	31
Figure 10: Child labour- labour force participation rate (5-17 years), by province.	32
Figure 11: Primary NER (grades 1-5 & age 6-10)	33
Figure 12: Secondary level NER (grades 9-10, age 14-15)	33
Figure 13: Percentage of Out-of-School Children (5-16 years)	34
Figure 14: Quality of education indicators	34
Figure 15: Effective Transition Rate (%)	34
Figure 16: Youth literacy % (15-29 years)	35
Figure 17: Number of non-formal education centres, adult literacy centres, and non-formal education centre learners.	36
Figure 18: Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET)	37
Figure 19: Percentage of youth (15-29 years) with access to cell phones, by province and by gender.	38
Figure 20: Stakeholders Map	82



List of Tables

Table 1: Youth Population as a Percentage of Total Population, Total, By Province, and By Gender	25
Table 2: Gender Composition of Youth Population, by Province	26
Table 3: Functional Capacity Assessment-Provincial Comparison	43
Table 4: Functional Capacity Assessment of Sindh Youth Department	46
Table 5: Functional Capacity Assessment of Balochistan Youth Department	49
Table 6: Functional Capacity Assessment of KP Youth Department	52
Table 7: Functional Capacity Assessment of Punjab Youth Wing	56
Table 8: Functional Capacity Assessment of AJK Sports, Youth, and Culture Department	61
Table 9: Functional Capacity Assessment of GB Youth Affairs Department	65
Table 10: Where the Problem Lies	79
Table 11: Political Economy Assessment- A Summary	83

ACRONYMS

ACRONYMS

List of Acronyms

ACR	Annual Confidential Report	KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
AD	Assistant Director	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
ADP	Annual Development Programme	NAVTTTC	National Vocational and Technical Training Commission
AI	Artificial Intelligence	NEET	Not in Employment, Education, or Training
AJK	Azad Jammu & Kashmir	NER	Net enrollment rate
BISP	Benzir Income Support Programme	NGO	Non-Government Organization
BL	Balochistan	OOSC	Out-of-school children
CM	Chief Minister	P&D	Planning and Development
CSO	Civil Service Organisation	PAC	Public Accounts Committee
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility	PAS	Pakistan Administrative Service
DC	Deputy Commissioner	PB	Punjab
DDO	Drawing and Disbursing Officer	PBS	Pakistan Bureau of Statistics
DSO	District Sports Officers	PEA	Political Economy Analysis
DSYO	District Sports and Youth Officers	PFC	Provincial Finance Commission
DYOs	District Youth Officers	PMS	Provincial Management Service
FCA	Functional Capacity Assessment	PPRA	Public Procurement Regulatory Authority
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions	R&D	Research and development
GB	Gilgit Baltistan	SBP	State Bank of Pakistan
GBV	Gender-based violence	SD	Sindh
HEC	Higher Education Commission	SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
HoD	Head of Department	SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
HR	Human Resource	SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
HRM	Human Resource Management	STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
ICT	Islamabad Capital Territory	ToRs	Terms of Reference
IT	Information Technology	YDI	Youth Development Index
JD	Job description	YRC	Youth Resource Centers
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Over the last decade or so, media and political discourse has been increasingly focused on the youth. Even academically, there has been a lot of discussion about the youth bulge and how it presents an opportunity—if harnessed properly.

As devolution and the mainstreaming of youth in political narratives gained momentum, provinces scrambled to craft youth policies. On paper, these policies ambitiously address the wide array of challenges today's young people face—covering everything from education and skills development to sexual and reproductive health, mental health, employment, entrepreneurship, sports, culture, and the environment. However, this broad scope raises concerns about the genuine commitment to addressing these issues. No single department or policy can realistically address such a diverse range of challenges, especially given the limitations imposed by the Rules of Business, which restrict department mandates.

Through a comprehensive approach that includes desk reviews, survey data analysis, in-depth interviews, consultative sessions, and focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders, the report conducts a two-fold situational analysis of provincial youth departments:

1. **Functional Capacity Assessment:** This evaluates whether youth departments are adequately equipped with the necessary tools to effectively fulfil their objectives, particularly in implementing youth policies. In this evaluation, we interviewed focal persons from youth departments—director-level or up—to assess the functional capacity of the department along seven key domains: leadership and governance, structure and system, human resource management (HRM) and staff development, financial management, sub-grants management, programme management, and monitoring & evaluation. Within each component, specific questions were designed to assess 40 sub-components (see Appendix B). The responses to these questions were used to assign a score between 1 and 4 for each sub-component in our scoring sheet, allowing a maximum score of 160.
2. **Political Economy Analysis:** This analysis explains the political environment in which youth departments operate, and how political, economic, and social factors influence policymaking and implementation

The analysis is further enriched by incorporating the voices of young people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, providing a more accurate understanding of the real issues they face. While the concerns of youth engaged in the formal sector are often acknowledged, a significant disconnect persists between policymakers and the vast non-formal youth sector in Pakistan. To bridge this gap, we have included their perspectives in the analysis as well, to present a more holistic picture.

KEY FINDINGS

- The youth policies are very broad and lack a strategic action plan and clear objectives. This impedes progress, since departments then lack clear direction and actionable goals,

resulting in fragmented efforts and reduced effectiveness.

- No KPIs have been established for staff, limiting the ability to assess their performance against set targets.
- Financial planning is hindered due to the absence of clear objectives and mid-term budget reviews.
- No province has successfully established a fully operational Youth Commission to date. KP has formed one but has yet to officially notify its members, while Sindh has made only a few appointments.
- While an organisational structure is in place, the roles and responsibilities of directors, assistant directors, and other staff members are not clearly defined.
- Youth departments are under-resourced in terms of finances, human resources, and basic infrastructure, rendering them incapable of delivering on existing youth policies.
 - The absence of technical staff is a significant issue, compounded by a lack of strategic planning to assess the required number of personnel, their distribution, and their specific roles. No trainings for human capital development are offered.
 - Financial resources are limited and the centralisation of financial management, while potentially enhancing transparency, also introduces procedural delays and obstacles.
 - The local government setup is inadequate. District youth officers are either absent or hold merely symbolic positions. They lack the necessary training or authority to effectively contribute to youth development initiatives.
 - Youth offices are only present in provincial capitals. The only exception is KP which has Jawan Marakiz (youth centres) in districts across the province. However, even these centres are not equitably equipped, resulting in regional disparities. Punjab has 20 e-libraries that are in the process of being converted into youth centres. GB has Youth Resource Centres in three (3) districts; these need to be properly equipped, especially in terms of IT.
 - Basic facilities such as vehicles, office furniture, etc. are also limited. The Balochistan Youth Department does not have a single vehicle at its disposal, despite the vastness of the province.
 - Insufficient resources create a vicious cycle of low utilisation and low future allocations.
 - There is an evident lack of incentives for staff—both monetary and non-monetary—which reduces their drive to contribute efficiently.
- There is no formal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system at the departmental level. While a few donor-funded initiatives are occasionally evaluated by the Planning and Development (P&D) department, these assessments are sporadic and lack consistency.
- High levels of political intervention at the departmental level significantly impact both the

design of programmes and policies as well as service delivery. This interference often manifests in the form of politically motivated appointments and decisions regarding which programmes to prioritise and in which districts. This then undermines the department's ability to function independently and effectively. While this issue affects all government departments, it is particularly detrimental to the social sector departments, including youth departments.

- Data limitations across all provinces significantly impede effective development planning.
- Digitisation efforts are progressing slowly and remain limited in scope, often facing resistance from key stakeholders who prioritise these initiatives lowly. This marginalisation prevents the adoption of technologies that could significantly improve operational efficiency, transparency, and overall service delivery.
- Youth departments are often overshadowed by sports departments. Although they are distinct entities in Sindh, Balochistan, KP, and GB, sports departments and sports-related programmes tend to absorb the majority of available resources. This prioritisation occurs primarily at the Secretariat level, where sports initiatives—being more tangible and easier to showcase—receive greater visibility and support. As a result, youth departments struggle to secure the backing they need. The situation is most concerning in AJK which does not even have an independent youth setup, followed by Punjab which only has a youth wing under the sports department.
- Governments, often threatened by political instability and driven by the need for electoral gains, tend to prioritise hard infrastructure projects that yield immediate impact since they are more visible and can be used as leverage for vote exchange. However, this focus comes at the expense of longer-term development goals, most notably social sector development.
- Youth departments receive insufficient funding, as rent-seeking practices severely constrain investment in social sectors, leading to significant disparities in budget allocations. Sectors such as public works and irrigation receive far more funding compared to those focused on health, education, and youth development. These imbalances are largely driven by political interests, with resources often directed towards home districts or politically advantageous areas, leading to inequity and low investment in social development.
- Frequent transfers and postings significantly disrupt the continuity of initiatives. These transfers are often driven by political motives and the lack of interest from career-oriented officers who do not prioritise youth affairs or social departments. Furthermore, each new officer tends to abandon ongoing initiatives in favour of launching their own new projects.
 - There are no mechanisms in place to preserve institutional memory, leaving incoming officers without guidance on previous initiatives or ongoing tasks.
 - There are also no mechanisms in place to ensure programme sustainability.
- Interdepartmental coordination is severely lacking, with many provincial departments oblivious to the existence of a youth policy, let alone its objectives and mandate. This lack of coordination mechanisms impedes effective collaboration between youth departments and other sectors, preventing the achievement of common objectives. This is particularly

concerning given that youth development is a cross-cutting subject.

- The absence of stakeholder mapping exacerbates this issue, as there is no clear understanding of relevant stakeholders or their roles.
- Youth political participation is systemically stifled, with their voices suppressed and the formation and functioning of student unions obstructed. While Sindh is the only province that has a Student Union Act, it is not implemented.
- The commitment of high-level officials, particularly chief ministers (CMs), plays a crucial role in determining both resource allocation and the overall seriousness of youth initiatives. This means that as long as CM-level commitment to youth development remains purely rhetorical, meaningful progress in youth development will continue to be elusive.
- The most pressing challenges for the youth include securing employment and achieving economic empowerment. These issues are compounded by limited access to health and other basic facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- All provinces—except GB, as it has already developed and passed a new policy—must update their youth policies to include a clear roadmap for implementation. The policies should highlight key areas that the department will focus on in the coming five (5) years. It must contain actionable points with clear targets and timelines and a clear organisational structure with properly defined roles and responsibilities. Stakeholder mapping is also crucial for this.
- Although previous policies were complemented with annual costed plans in most provinces, these plans were not aligned with the actual available resources, limiting their applicability. Hence, departmental resources need to be properly accounted for during the development of future plans.
- These new policies must address emerging issues, such as the changing nature of work, automation and integration of AI, gig economy, inadequacy of curriculum, cyber security, political marginalisation, etc. Further, these policies must be nuanced to show sensitivity to cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Punjab and AJK must develop an independent youth department with a dedicated directorate so that its current focus on sports can be reduced to prioritise other crucial aspects of youth development. In other provinces, the secretariat needs to be sensitised on pressing youth issues besides sports, ensuring that efforts and allocations are optimised for the greater benefit of youth.
- Even in GB, the department that addresses youth issues is known as the ‘Population Welfare, Social Welfare, Women Development, Human/Child Rights, and Youth Affairs Department’, reflecting a very broad mandate. While there are dedicated positions for a director and deputy director of youth, the extensive scope of the overall department often results in youth issues being deferred in favour of competing priorities.
- Secretaries’ committees and other coordination committees with properly defined KPIs can

be formed to ensure progress along the action plan and to facilitate communication among departments. Regular coordination meetings with predefined frequency can be conducted.

- The Rules of Business need updating. Several provincial departments have indicated that they often do not coordinate with other departments because the current rules do not mandate such collaboration.
- If an idea, project, or plan is initiated under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP), it is recommended to form a working group comprising representatives from related departments. This working group should include Grade 17-19 officers from the relevant departments, along with federal representatives.
- Consolidating similar initiatives from different departments can significantly enhance coordination. This approach will help prevent duplication of efforts and ensure that resources are synergised for greater impact.
- To ensure consistency and continuity of initiatives, it is recommended that directorate-side officers be kept as permanent staff in concerned departments. Although these officers may be transferred between different offices (e.g., from one district to another), their department should remain the same.
- To preserve institutional knowledge, it is essential to thoroughly document and digitise all coordination efforts in the form of meeting minutes, reports, PowerPoint presentations, etc. Additionally, nominating a focal person from each department to attend all follow-up meetings will streamline communication.
- Creating the right incentives is important. The introduction of performance-based bonuses can help reduce rent-seeking motivations. Career advancement opportunities should be transparent and based on having met certain targets. Additionally, offering comprehensive training and development programmes is essential for enhancing employee skills and overall departmental effectiveness.
- The lack of basic facilities in most districts must be addressed by setting up dedicated district-level youth offices with district youth officers (DYOs). DYOs must be given comprehensive training in IT, e-commerce, marketing, career counselling, etc. to enable them to address broader youth issues. Well-defined job descriptions should be developed to allow them to move beyond their current role as event managers. Moreover, accessibility to hard-to-reach areas can be facilitated by providing essential vehicles to the department.
- In KP, GB, and Punjab, where youth centres have already been established, there is a need to equip these centres equitably through donor assistance. Addressing IT needs, especially in remote districts, should be prioritised to enhance equity and connectivity. To promote self-sustainability, departments should explore innovative public-private partnership models and monetisation strategies.
- To ensure the effective functioning of the youth development, it is crucial that roles and responsibilities against all staff positions are clearly defined. Each team member should have a specific set of duties, and these should be communicated transparently to avoid any overlap or confusion.

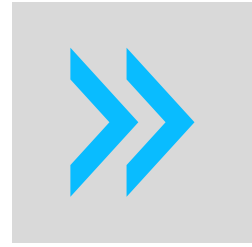
- To reduce political interference in youth departments, it is essential to establish clear, documented rules and policies that limit the power of political figures and provide a framework to challenge undue influence. Mandating that organisations working with youth departments be registered with relevant regulatory authorities will prevent politically motivated partnerships. Revising the organisational structure to streamline operations, enacting legal provisions to curtail the powers of certain actors, and hiring competent professionals on merit will further reduce political interference.
- To mitigate the use of transfers and postings as tools for manipulation and to reduce their frequency, it is imperative to ensure the effective implementation of the three-year policy. Increasing the scrutiny of employee transfers can also help ensure that they are justified and transparent. One solution can be to increase the number of notified officers as their transfers have to be justified.
- Activating student unions to allow for participatory politics is imperative. Sindh must ensure the effective implementation of the Student Union Act¹, and other provinces must follow suit.
- To address data constraints, it is crucial to enhance the capabilities of bureaus to collect youth-centric data. Improved data collection and sharing mechanisms will enable more informed decision-making and better targeting of youth programmes and policies. For GB and AJK, which do not have provincial bureaus, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) may take the lead along with donor assistance. Gradually, they should transition towards having their own statistical systems.

¹ THE SINDH STUDENTS UNION ACT, 2019. Available at <https://universitiesboards.sindh.gov.pk/files/UniversitiesBoards/Legislations/Sindh%20Act%20No.1%20of%202022%20Studet%20Union%20ACT.pdf>

SETTING THE STAGE



CHAPTER 1- SETTING THE STAGE



Pakistan's youth bulge has been widely documented over the last few years, along with the imperative for youth-centric policies to cater to the needs of this significant demographic. This includes not only education and employment opportunities but also avenues for civic engagement, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, social inclusion, and beyond.

As demographics evolve, it is becoming increasingly important to address the underlying youth issues to prevent the demographic faultlines from deepening further. While governments appear to have this awareness, evident gaps remain in the identification and implementation of youth-centric policies both at the national and provincial levels. While each political party stresses the importance of youth reforms, little headway is made.

This report aims to explore the underlying issues that inhibit the functioning of provincial youth departments. Moreover, it aims to identify the gaps in provincial youth policies and barriers to implementation faced by respective provincial youth departments. The report includes a two-fold situational analysis of provincial youth departments:

1. Political economy analysis (PEA) to understand the political environment in which youth departments operate.
2. Functional capacity assessment (FCA) to evaluate whether the youth departments are adequately equipped with the necessary human resources, financial resources, and other essential tools to effectively fulfil their objectives, particularly in implementing youth policies.

Background and Rationale

Amidst the triple-C crisis (COVID-19, Climate, and Conflict) and its indirect impacts—political instability, record-high inflation, low economic growth, and climate-induced crises—governmental priorities have undergone significant shifts. Despite the youth constituting such a significant portion of the demographic, the intensified focus on immediate relief efforts and short-term fixes for the economy has resulted in only a residual focus on longer-term youth issues.

Although youth remained particularly vulnerable to the impacts of these crises—dealing with changed work dynamics and confronting inequalities in accessing essential services like healthcare, education, and employment—their voices remain largely unheard, with limited opportunities available for them to exert their agency. Combined with low economic growth, the strength of the economy to absorb new entrants in productive jobs remains low, resulting in poor economic empowerment of youth. This is reflected in Pakistan's low ranking on the Youth Development Index (YDI): in 2022, the YDI was recorded at 0.643, ranking Pakistan 162nd out of 181 countries.

The onset of digitisation and the creative destruction during and post-pandemic has presented both opportunities and risks for young people. This digital revolution has opened doors to

new possibilities but also increased polarisation, with vulnerable groups—including adolescent girls, persons with disabilities, and those in rural and fragile contexts—facing heightened risks.

To address these emerging challenges effectively, public service providers must update and modernise their delivery methods across sectors such as health, education, skills development, and climate resilience. They need to be aware of the problems and challenges faced by the youth and must rethink their scope and vision, transforming challenges into opportunities by facilitating youth access to better prospects in fields like health, sexual and reproductive health (SRH), education, skills development, employment, entrepreneurship, and climate resilience.

Public service providers in Pakistan appear to be struggling to keep pace with changing circumstances, rendering many services for youth outdated, irrelevant, or insufficient to meet the needs of a growing population. Much of this limited focus on youth development can be attributed to the constricted fiscal space under high debt distress and other competing urgencies, including flood rehabilitation.

This fiscal constraint is further compounded by the complexities introduced by the devolution process. Devolution of youth development to the provincial level after the 18th Amendment in 2010 led to the formation of provincial youth departments, each with a distinct vision, mission, and focus. All provinces now have autonomy on youth issues, in addition to education, health, environment, labour, social welfare, and gender mainstreaming. The devolution of these thematic areas to the provinces, while essential, has led to significant disparities in performance. Each province faces its own unique structural and capacity challenges, resulting in considerable variation in their performance trajectories.

For instance, there is a significant disparity in financial allocations to youth departments across provinces. In Sindh, Rs100 million was allocated for the current fiscal year, while in Balochistan, the allocation was only Rs30 million, compared to Rs2 million in AJK¹. Regardless, all provincial directors deem the allocated sum insufficient to meet the departmental goals set in their youth policies. Besides financial constraints, the youth departments also face several critical challenges, including a lack of ownership of youth initiatives by provincial leaders, inadequate institutional mechanisms, and a shortage of basic facilities.

It is often believed that increasing spending and expenditure allocations for provincial youth departments can enhance youth development outcomes. However, despite higher allocations, the underlying capacities may not be sufficiently developed to absorb and utilise these funds effectively, thereby failing to improve youth development outcomes. In this context, it is important to conduct a functional capacity assessment of youth departments to see which capacities need to be developed for each province to respond to evolving youth needs and challenges.

In addition to functional capacities, it is often the political environment that inhibits the proper functioning of departments. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a political economy review of provincial youth departments. This assessment will allow for the accurate identification of key government and non-government stakeholders, enabling the development of strategies to mitigate any negative influences they may exert. Furthermore, strategies may be developed to leverage the influence of actors that facilitate youth-focused policies and programmes.

¹ Figures were provided by respective youth directors during the interviews.

The rationale for this study involves a comprehensive assessment of the mandate versus the functional capacities of provincial youth departments. It seeks to explore the significance of governance and political economy in the context of youth development in Pakistan, delving into the underlying issues contributing to youth underdevelopment beyond the immediate problems. The report also aims to review existing youth policies in a forward-looking context to provide actionable recommendations for enhancing the relevance and implementation of youth-centric policies for improved youth development outcomes.

Scope of work

The scope of work encompasses a comprehensive assessment of various aspects related to the implementation of youth policies by provincial youth departments. This involves evaluating the functional capacity of these departments, focusing on their ability to deliver on youth policies by reviewing their resources, including human resources, financial management, communication mechanisms, and so on. An integral part of this assessment is to understand how well these departments can collaborate with other concerned provincial entities and external stakeholders to address specific elements of the youth policy, such as SRH, skills development, and employment opportunities.

Additionally, the scope includes identifying barriers to effective implementation and full adoption of youth policies by provinces. It examines the level of commitment and focus from provincial governments towards these policies and explores the departmental capacity for integrating modernised service delivery mechanisms.

The report further offers a comprehensive analysis of the current state of youth in Pakistan, focusing on development outcomes in education, health, and social well-being. Additionally, a thematic review of existing policies is undertaken to highlight critical areas in youth policies that require further attention. Furthermore, through focus group discussions (FGDs) with youth across Pakistan, we highlight key issues that concern the youth themselves but are overlooked by the government in provincial policies.

The report extends to understanding local institutional, political, and economic arrangements that affect the uptake of youth policies. More specifically, this includes a political economy review of youth departments to identify relevant stakeholders that block or enable the youth department from delivering on its mission. The scope also includes a stakeholder analysis to identify the motivation and mechanisms through which these stakeholders exert influence.

This thorough evaluation aims to provide a clear picture of the current state of youth policy implementation and offer insights into areas for improvement. Based on our findings, we present four-tiered recommendations including: (i) department-level recommendations; (ii) programme-level recommendations; (iii) policy-level improvements; and (iv) actor-specific recommendations.

Methodology

This report uses several techniques to effectively deliver on the scope of work, including desk research, survey data analysis, in-depth interviews, consultative sessions, and FGDs.

In the first stage, we conducted a desk review of provincial youth policies to categorise its various elements thematically (see Appendix A). The objective was to identify any gaps in respective youth policies, i.e., to see if the youth policy addresses different youth-related issues or not. This was important so we could ascertain if the youth department was not performing certain functions because it was not their mandate, or if it lacked the capacity to do so.

Further, this was important so we could determine if the youth policy was relevant in the current context or not, and what are the gaps in the policies. For instance, the Punjab Youth Policy was passed in 2012, the KP Youth Policy in 2016, and the Sindh Youth Policy in 2018. The thematic categorisation of youth policy allowed us to see if it is in the mandate of youth departments to be responsive to new and evolving challenges, including political marginalisation, the gig economy, digitisation, and so on.

We then arranged in-depth interviews with focal persons from provincial youth departments. A total of six in-depth interviews were conducted with youth departments in each province. Our requirement was director-level or up so that we could get well-informed insight into the workings of youth departments. In some cases, the director was accompanied by the assistant director as well. The in-depth interview constituted two components:

- Component A: this component delved into the political environment in which youth departments operate.
- Component B: this component focused on the underlying functional capacity of the youth department along seven broad domains, including a total of 40 sub-domains (see Appendix B). A separate question was designed to assess each sub-domain. The responses were scored on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 being the highest. The points were assigned based on the following criteria:

LEVEL	POINTS	SIGNIFICANCE
Level 1	One point	The system, policy, or mechanism does not exist.
Level 2	Two points	A preliminary or basic structure is in place but is not fully operational.
Level 3	Three points	The system, policy, or mechanism is fully functional, however there is room for improvement.
Level 4	Four points	A well-functioning system, policy, or mechanism is in place and is being used optimally.

In addition to in-depth interviews in all provinces, we also conducted two consultative sessions in Balochistan and Sindh. These consultative sessions included department heads from all relevant provincial departments. In other provinces, it was not feasible to convene all stakeholders simultaneously; hence, individual interviews were conducted with senior representatives from various provincial departments. Before these consultations, elaborate stakeholder mapping was conducted to see which provincial departments are most relevant to youth development. In all, more than 40 representatives from provincial government departments were consulted in these sessions. These engagements were important so that we could see how well provincial departments work together to deliver on various aspects

of the youth policy. Youth, being a cross-cutting subject, cannot be isolated: the youth department must have effective coordination and communication channels through which they can work with other departments to ensure effective implementation of policy.

Further, these sessions allowed us to understand the nature of the political economy environment in which these departments work. They also enabled us to identify key stakeholders that facilitate or block youth-related initiatives. These consultations provided us insights into the mandate of various departments, their institutional effectiveness, staffing requirements, facilities and equipment, communication mechanisms for engaging with external stakeholders, and so on.

To amplify youth voices and to ensure youth participation remained an integral part of this report, we conducted FGDs which were designed and conducted to ensure representation from all provinces, with a strong emphasis on gender balance to capture female perspectives. Additionally, we included a diverse range of socio-economic backgrounds, incorporating voices from both universities and the non-formal sector, to make sure that youth insights were comprehensive and representative. The primary purpose of the FGDs was to identify any gaps in youth policies. The objective was to determine the extent to which existing youth-centric policies and programmes benefit the youth.

For all the instruments, i.e., interviews, consultative sessions, and FGDs, an interviewer guide was prepared to keep the discussion focused and derive maximum information in a limited time. To ensure uniformity and consistency, the focal interviewer remained the same across all provinces and all three instruments. High-level representation was ensured in consultative sessions by including senior focal persons—director-level or up—from all departments.

Concurrently, survey data analysis was conducted to map and compare youth development outcomes across provinces. Due to data limitations, most indicators could only be evaluated for four provinces—Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, and KP—with the most recent available data from either 2020 or 2021. This analysis was essential to identify provinces that are lagging in progress so they can prioritise youth development efforts to close existing gaps.

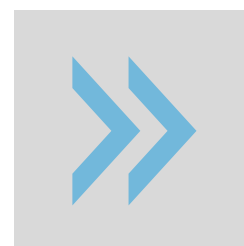
What to expect from this report

This report is organised as follows: Chapter 2 will present a critical account of the state of youth in Pakistan; Chapter 3 will look into the functional capacity of provincial youth departments; Chapters 4 and 5 will present the political economy review of youth departments, including identification of key stakeholders; and Chapter 6 will present a four-tiered set of recommendations to enhance the performance of relevant departments, enabling them to better cater to the needs of today's youth.

CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF THE STATE
OF YOUTH IN PAKISTAN



CHAPTER 2- CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF THE STATE OF YOUTH IN PAKISTAN



Before we delve into an in-depth analysis of the functional capacity of youth departments, it is important to assess the state of youth across Pakistan. For this purpose, we used survey data to estimate youth development outcomes in health, education, employment, and beyond. This will allow us to determine the extent to which certain aspects of youth development need to be prioritised in provincial policies to elevate the status of youth.

We also felt it was important to understand the relevance of existing youth policies and to get an overview of how the existing infrastructure facilitates the youth. For this, we conducted FGDs with young people between the ages of 15 and 29 across Pakistan. These FGDs were strategically planned to ensure representation across provinces, genders, and socio-cultural and economic groups. The objective was to understand the real youth issues and integrate their voices in the discourse on youth policies. Further, we felt that these voices would help explain some of the development outcomes derived from the data.

The analysis presented below is based on survey data¹ and observations relayed to us by the youth representatives during FGDs.

Demographics

Youth, defined as persons between the ages of 15 and 29 years, comprise approximately one-fourth of Pakistan's total population. Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the youth population as a percentage of the total population.

Table 1: Youth Population as a Percentage of Total Population, Total, By Province, and By Gender

	Youth Population as a Percentage of Total Population	Male Youth Population as a Percentage of Total Male Population	Female Youth Population as a Percentage of Total Female Population	Transgender Youth Population as a Percentage of Total Transgender Population
PAKISTAN	26.03	25.72	26.35	44.24
KP	26.26	25.79	26.75	54.25
PUNJAB	26.1	25.78	26.42	43.79
SINDH	25.66	25.54	25.8	40.9
BALUCHISTAN	26.06	25.51	26.65	61.05

Source: Census 2023

The majority of the youth in Pakistan live in rural areas, as shown in Figure 1. This trend is particularly pronounced in KP and Balochistan, where approximately 84 per cent and 68 per

¹ Please note that due to data constraints, the statistics presented for 'Pakistan' do not include AJK and GB. Moreover, some important statistics could not be tabulated for AJK and GB for the same reason.

cent of the youth reside in rural areas, respectively. This is concerning, as rural areas often lack the proper infrastructure needed to ensure accessibility to quality services in health, education, employment, and other areas that contribute to human development.

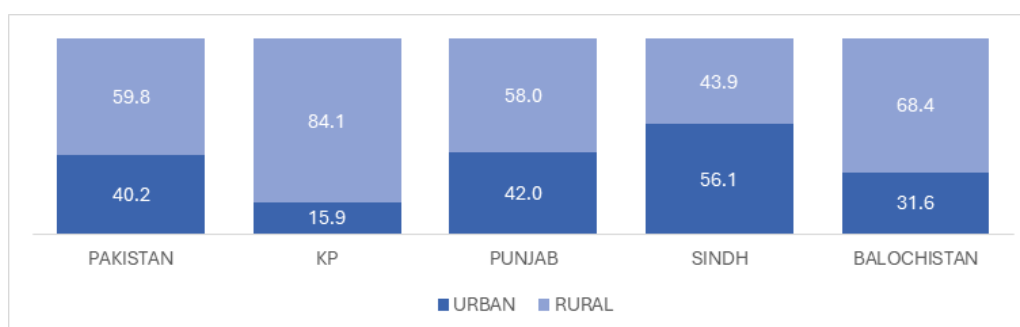


Figure 1: Population distribution, by region

Source: Census 2023

This lack of equal access to opportunities was reflected in our interactions with youth, where we sensed dejection, trust deficit towards the government, and pessimism about the future economic outlook. The pessimism was particularly evident among youth from remote areas and those from Balochistan. The provincial disparities in youth development were also striking—while other provinces argued about the quality of services, Baloch representatives complained about mere access to the same basic facilities.

Overall, youth development in Pakistan is relatively low, with the country ranking 162nd out of 181 on the YDI in 2022. The most concerning sub-index score is for youth political and civic participation, which stands at a mere 0.272. Other sub-indices were recorded at 0.892 for health and wellbeing, 0.481 for education, 0.593 for peace and security, 0.602 for employment and opportunity, and 0.735 for equality and inclusion².

Gender issues

In Pakistan, young women constitute nearly half of the youth population, as shown in Table 2, yet they face greater marginalisation compared to their male counterparts. The social and cultural norms relegate females to a secondary priority, leading to discriminatory access to basic facilities. The Global Gender Gap Index 2024 underscores this disparity, ranking Pakistan 145th out of 146 countries with a score of 0.570³.

Table 2: Gender Composition of Youth Population, by Province

	Male Population as a Percentage of Total Youth Population	Female Population as a Percentage of Total Youth Population	Transgender Population as a Percentage of Total Youth Population
PAKISTAN	50.89	49.1	0.014
KP	50.12	49.87	0.006
PUNJAB	50.65	49.33	0.018
SINDH	51.85	48.14	0.012
BALUCHISTAN	51.16	48.82	0.012

Source: Census 2023

Gender stereotyping continues to be a pervasive issue, reinforcing inequalities and limiting

² Youth Development Index. The Commonwealth. Retrieved from <https://app.powerbi.com/>

³ World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index 2024. Retrieved from https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2024.pdf

opportunities across various domains. These stereotypes create systemic barriers that hinder young girls' full participation in society. They face heightened challenges due to societal and cultural norms that restrict their freedom and instil fear, limiting their engagement in public and private spheres. Girls are not allowed to go out of their homes alone. Coupled with limited access to reliable transportation, their dependence on male household members increases. As a result, they experience inequality in terms of job opportunities, educational opportunities, health access, transportation, access to legal services, etc. Street harassment and unsafe public spaces further exacerbate these challenges, making it difficult for women to feel secure and confident in public settings, curbing their mobility. The analysis in the remaining chapter further underscores the inequities in access to basic facilities, driven by gender disparities.

Transgender individuals face particularly low social acceptability, further marginalising them and restricting their participation in both public and political arenas. This lack of acceptance creates additional hurdles for achieving equity and inclusion. The lack of comprehensive sex education prevents them from making informed decisions about their health and well-being, and it also hinders society from providing them with equal rights and opportunities.

Underage marriages, GBV, and SRH

Underage marriages, defined as marriages occurring before the legal age of 18, are prevalent across Pakistan, and frequently driven by financial stress. This issue is particularly pressing in GB, Balochistan, and KP compared to other regions, as shown in Figure 2.

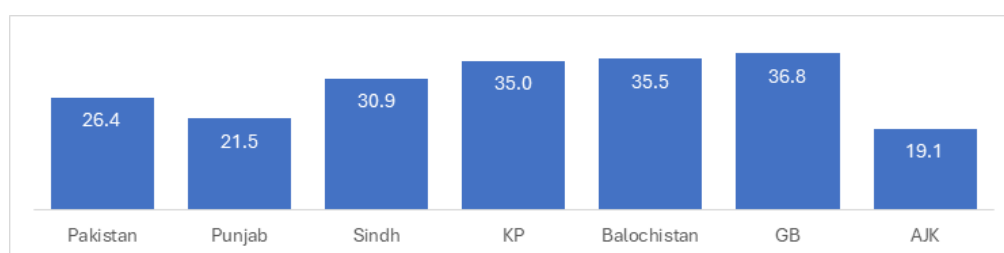


Figure 2: Proportion of women aged 20-24 years who were married before age 18

Source: NIPS, PDHS 2017-18

In our FGDs, the youth representatives relayed that it is common for girls in matric or intermediate to marry before reaching legal age, which results in high absenteeism and a decline in academic progress due to increased household responsibilities. Many girls are consequently forced to drop out of school, leading to lower academic achievement, reduced female literacy, and chronic financial dependence on their families.

Early marriages further lead to a higher incidence of gender-based violence (GBV). Compounded by low awareness and access to family planning and other SRH services, these young women continue to suffer physically, mentally, emotionally, and sexually, as shown in Figure 3.

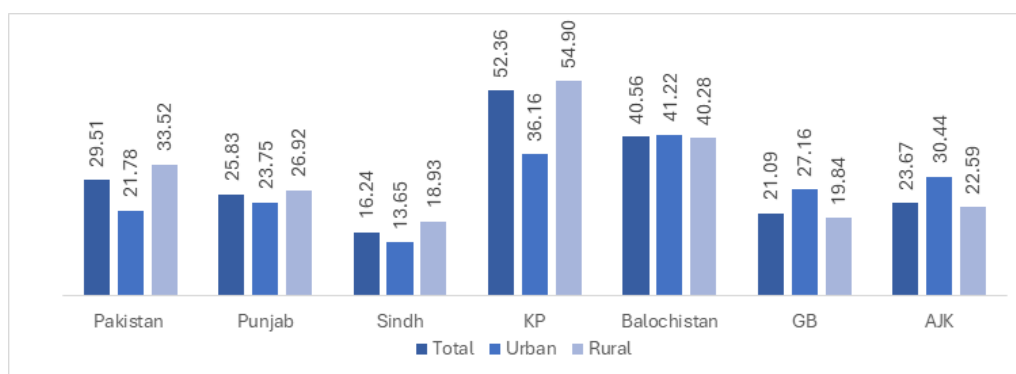


Figure 3: Percentage of ever-married women (15-29 years) exposed to sexual, physical, or emotional abuse

Source: PDHS 2017-18

We can see that the percentage of ever-married young women exposed to sexual, physical, or emotional abuse is the highest in KP, followed by Balochistan, Punjab, AJK, GB, and Sindh. Much of this abuse goes unreported, raising concerns about the on-the-ground situation of GBV. It also appears that GBV is more common in rural areas as compared to urban areas, likely due to increased literacy, higher access to legal services, and better access to police services in urban areas.

The median age at first marriage among women aged 25-49 ranges between 18.8 and 21.1 across provinces, averaging 20.4 for Pakistan, as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Median age at first marriage among women aged 25-49

Source: NIPS, PDHS 2017-18

A higher incidence of marriage among young people contributes towards higher population growth. Figure 5 shows the relationship between currently married youth and the number of births per young woman (aged 15-29 years). There is a positive correlation between the two variables, with KP having the highest number of married youths, as well as the highest number of births per woman.

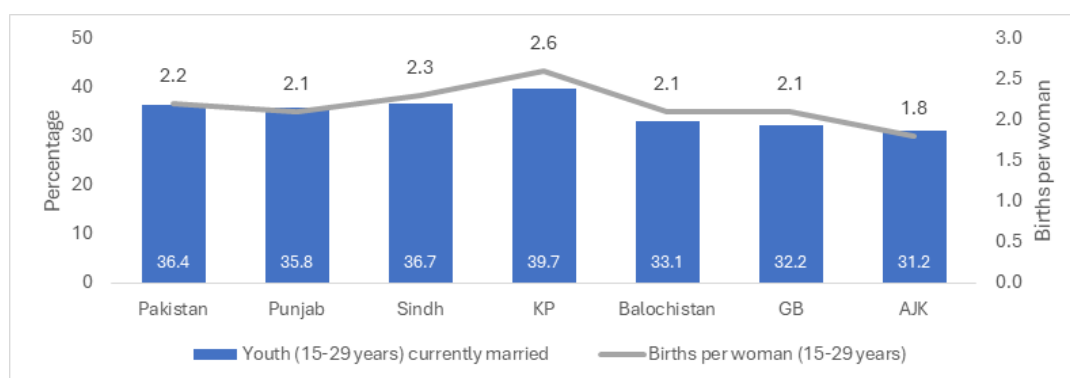


Figure 5: Percentage of currently married youth and births per young woman (15-29 years)

Source: Authors' calculations using PDHS 2017-18

Despite this, contraception use among young men and women remains low, as shown in Figure 6. Gender disparities are also evident in contraception use, with women having higher contraception use compared to men. A contributing factor to this trend is the perception that women are solely responsible for reproductive issues. As a result, men often feel absolved of this responsibility, shifting the entire burden onto women. Regardless of gender disparities, contraception use is low, highlighting the need for extending SRH services to the youth for longer term population welfare planning. Currently, youth have limited public understanding of reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and family planning due to the prevailing social taboos, cultural norms, and religious interpretations.

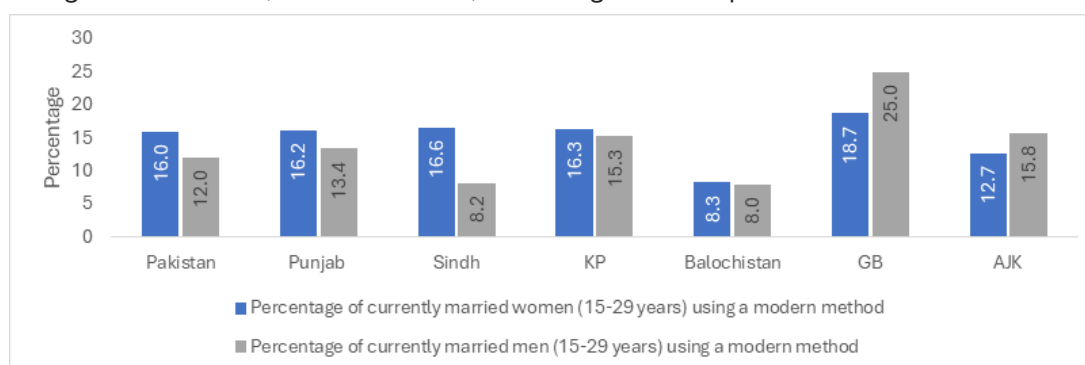


Figure 6: Contraception use among young men and women

Source: Authors' calculations using PDHS 2017-18

To sum up, early marriages, high incidence of GBV among young women, a high proportion of married youth, high fertility rates, and low contraception use underscore the significant need for extending and focusing SRH efforts towards the youth so that young men and women can make more informed choices about reproduction, family planning, support against sexual violence, and so on.

Youth (un)employment, and child labour

Economic empowerment is one of the biggest concerns for the youth, underscoring the need for decent employment opportunities. Each year, an increasing number of young people enter the working-age population, resulting in high youth labour force participation rates, as shown in

Figure 7. The highest youth labour force participation can be witnessed in Punjab, followed by Sindh, Balochistan, and KP.

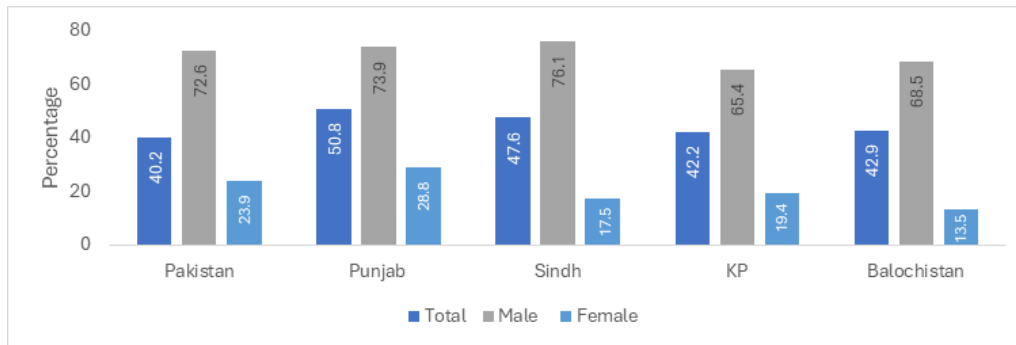


Figure 7: Youth labour force participation rate (15-29 years)

Source: Authors' calculations using LFS 2020-21

Gender disparities are distinctly evident in terms of youth labour force participation, with female labour force participation significantly lower than male participation across all provinces. The biggest gap can be seen in Sindh, where male labour force participation stands at 76.1 per cent compared to a mere 17.5 per cent for young females. This gap can be explained by the social and cultural norms that limit female participation in the formal labour market, limiting them to the confines of their own households where they engage in unpaid labour. Moreover, the sexual harassment women have to face regularly—particularly while commuting—discourages them from stepping outside their homes. When women try to access remote opportunities, they are faced with internet disruptions and digital access issues.

As the market is not able to absorb the increasing number of youth entering the workforce, it results in high youth unemployment rates. Youth unemployment, by province, is shown in Figure 8.

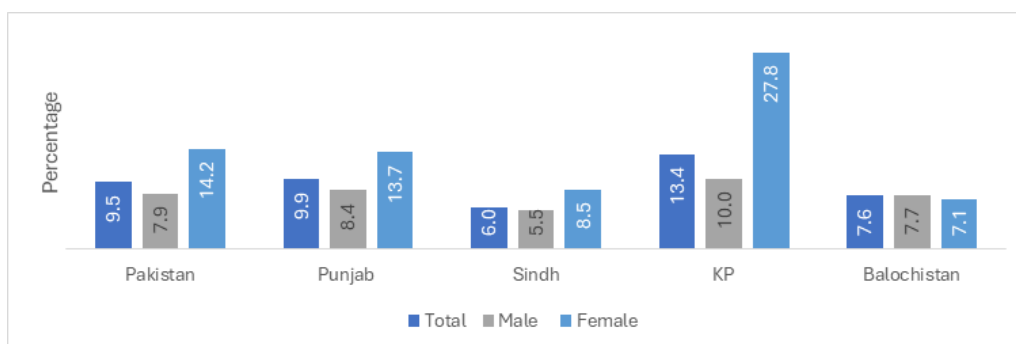


Figure 8: Youth unemployment rate (15-29 years)

Source: Authors' calculations using LFS 2020-21

The highest level of youth unemployment can be witnessed in KP. Even more worrisome is the particularly high level of female unemployment in the province, recorded at 27.8 per cent.

Many young people across Pakistan struggle to access employment opportunities due to an acute shortage of internships and paid positions, as population growth outpaces economic growth. A lack of awareness prevents many from discovering the opportunities that do exist. Without access to these opportunities, the demand for ‘experienced’ candidates creates a Catch-22 where young people struggle to gain the very experience needed for employment. The absence of management trainee programmes exacerbates this issue, limiting early-career prospects.

Hiring practices often favour those with connections rather than merit, making it difficult for individuals without social capital or ‘sifarish’⁴ to secure jobs. This issue is particularly severe in government positions, where hiring processes are slow and non-transparent, undermining fair access to employment. The lack of feedback for applicants creates uncertainty, making it even harder for young people to enter the job market. These issues lead to an increase in the number of ‘jobless graduates’, as corroborated by Figure 9. It is evident that youth in the age group of 20-24 face the highest levels of unemployment due to a lack of decent work opportunities.

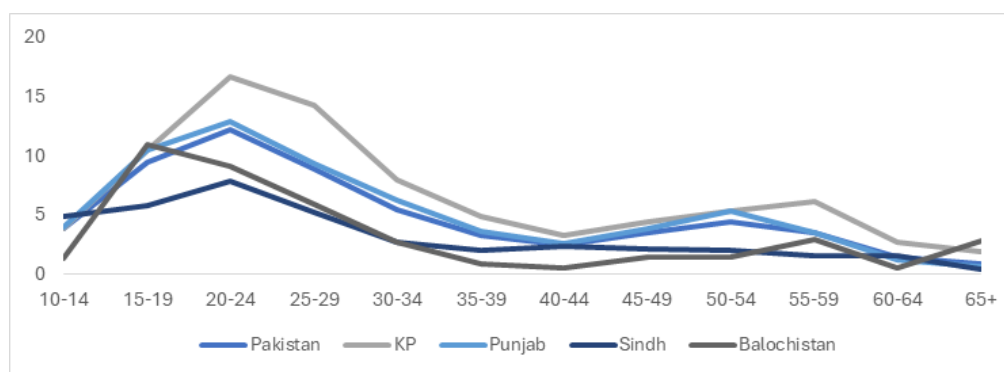


Figure 9: Age-specific unemployment rates, by province.

Source: Authors’ calculations using LFS 2020-21.

High male youth labour force participation across Pakistan is largely driven by the pressure to become financially stable enough to sustain their households. The eldest child in the family bears the greatest load of this burden, as they must achieve economic independence to marry and to support the education of their younger siblings. This pressure drives young people to the cities, where they live as migrants. During our consultations, it was revealed that young men between the ages of 15 and 18 often share a single quarter with no access to basic facilities. The high rents, compared to their meagre wages, force them to endure these harsh conditions. These youth have to work an average of 16-hour shifts (without overtime) and are not even paid the minimum wage set by law. Often, they are compelled to work seven days a week, and if they speak out against these injustices, they face severe repercussions. Their company cards are withheld, preventing them from marking their attendance. As a result, they are marked absent despite working 16-hour shifts. In other instances, their pays are deducted or withheld without any reason. They are issued a salary slip, but no salary. Shortage of job opportunities prevents these workers from leaving their jobs.

⁴ Translation: Recommendation or Intercession

These labourers are denied lunch breaks, medical facilities, and holidays. In the garment industry, although a social security card⁵ is mandated by law, factory owners deliberately avoid issuing them or delay the process as much as possible. One participant shared that her father received his social security card only after his retirement, at which point it became inactive. Some factories simply state it is not part of their policy to issue these cards.

These labour law violations are pervasive and are often perpetuated by mill and factory owners who are well-connected and influential. These factory owners prohibit their workers from joining any labour unions. Workers are discouraged from gathering or talking for extended periods. If caught conversing, they are told “party-baazian band karo” (stop colluding).

Women face even harsher conditions. Their wages are lower compared to men, and they often face harassment from managers. When they report these incidents, they are punished and publicly humiliated until they either withdraw their complaints or are fired.

In these challenging employment conditions, young workers who choose to continue their education while working find no legal support. They are denied leave even to take their exams. If factory supervisors or managers discover that a worker is pursuing an education or a second job, they are treated even more harshly.

Inadvertently, the pressures to become financially independent also promote child labour, leading to engagement in indecent work opportunities where young children may be exposed to unfavourable working conditions impacting their mental and physical wellbeing. Figure 10 shows the incidence of child labour by considering the labour force participation rate for children aged 5-17.

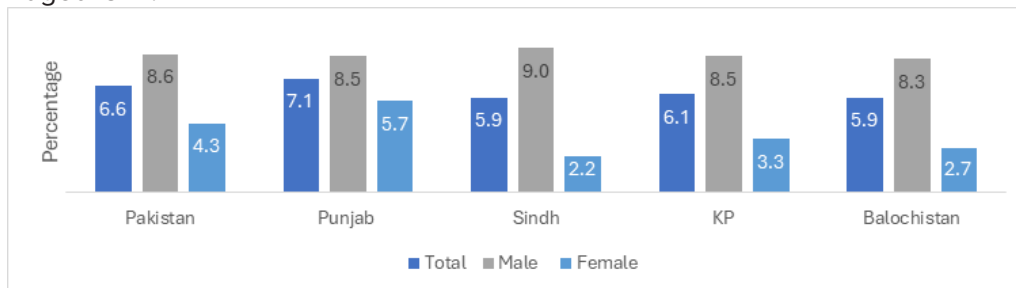


Figure 10: Child labour- labour force participation rate (5-17 years), by province.

Source: Authors' calculations using LFS 2020-21

It is disheartening to note that child labour is prevalent across all provinces, recorded at 5.9 per cent in Sindh and Balochistan, 6.1 per cent in KP, and 7.1 per cent in Punjab. It is important to note here that much of child labour remains undocumented, indicating that these values are underestimated.

Entrepreneurship among youth faces its own set of challenges. A discouraging economic outlook, cumbersome business regulations, and lack of initial capital deter many from pursuing their own ventures. The prevailing mindset prioritises traditional careers like doctors or engineers, reflecting a risk-averse attitude. This aversion to risk, combined with limited support for entrepreneurship stifles innovation and reduces motivation for starting new businesses.

⁵ The social security card provides employees in garment factories and their families with access to healthcare and education.

Education and skills development

One of the primary issues addressed in all provincial youth policies is education and skills development, which is essential given the poor human development outcomes. The net enrolment rate (NER) for primary level, i.e., grades 1-5 and ages 6-10 years, stands at 70 per cent in Punjab, 66 per cent in KP, 56 per cent in Balochistan and 55 per cent in KP, averaging at 64 per cent for Pakistan. Gender disparities are evident, with female primary NER consistently lower than male NER, as shown in Figure 11.

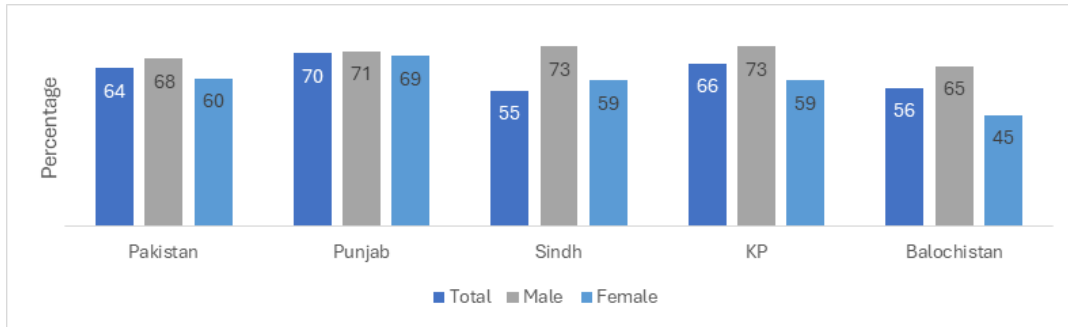


Figure 11: Primary NER (grades 1-5 & age 6-10)

Source: PBS, PSLM 2019-20

NER at the secondary level, i.e., matriculation, for youth aged 14-15 stands at a meagre 27 per cent for Pakistan, as shown in Figure 12. At the provincial level, the highest secondary NER is recorded at 30 per cent in Punjab, followed by 27 per cent for KP, 22 per cent for Sindh, and 14 per cent for Balochistan.

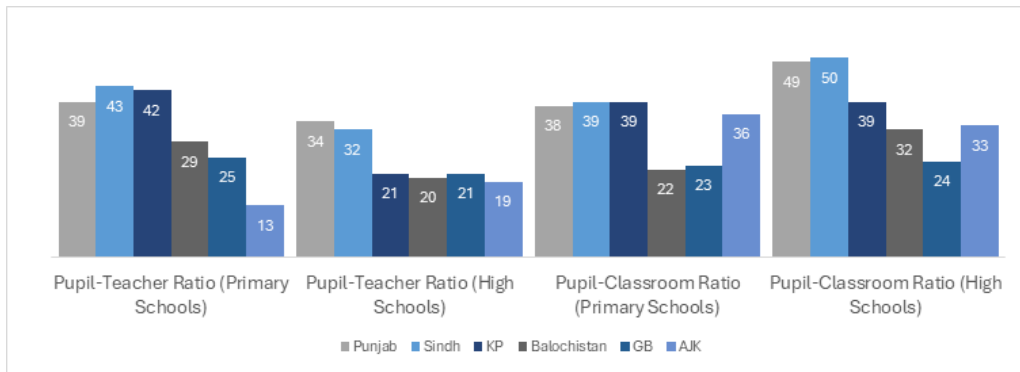


Figure 12: Secondary level NER (grades 9-10, age 14-15)

Source: PBS, PSLM 2019-20

The proportion of out-of-school children (OOSC) across provinces is also very high, raising concerns about the equity of educational opportunities. Figure 13 shows that 47 per cent of children in Balochistan between the ages of 5 and 16 do not have access to schools, followed by 44 per cent for Sindh, 30 per cent for KP, 24 per cent for Punjab and GB, and 11 per cent for AJK.

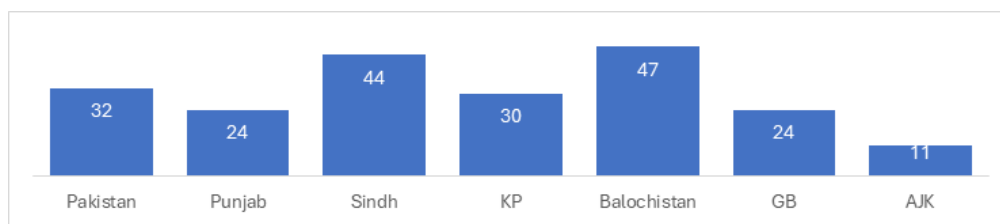


Figure 13: Percentage of Out-of-School Children (5-16 years)

Source: GB: MICS 2016-17; AJK: MICS 2020-21; and PSLMS 2019-20

The quality of education suffers due to under-resourced schools, as evidenced by high pupil-teacher ratios and high pupil-classroom ratios across all provinces at both primary and high school levels, as shown in Figure 14. These ratios indicate a lack of both trained teachers and physical infrastructure to accommodate the growing number of children.

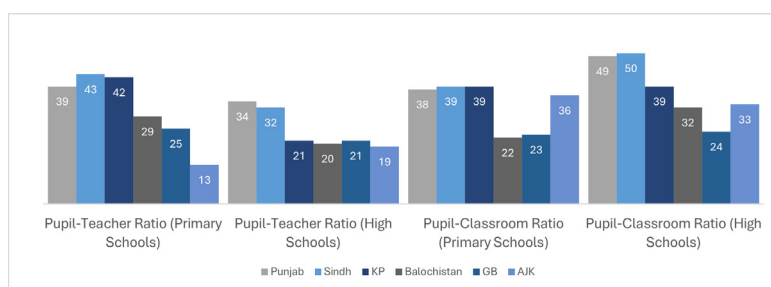


Figure 14: Quality of education indicators

Source: PIE, Pakistan Education Statistics 2021-22

The effective transition rate, i.e., the proportion of students that graduate from primary school to middle school, and from middle school to high school, is averaging 81 per cent and 90 per cent respectively. This indicates that not all students enrolled in a lower level successfully transition to higher levels of education. The transition rates at the provincial level vary, as shown in Figure 15. This can be explained by factors such as unaffordability, poor learning outcomes, and child labour, all of which may contribute to higher dropout rates. These statistics raise concern about the quality of Pakistan's future youth population.

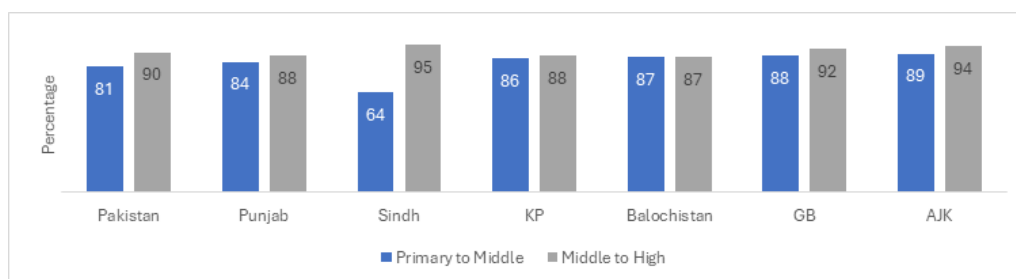


Figure 15: Effective Transition Rate (%)

Source: PIE, Pakistan Education Statistics 2021-22

Based on these indicators, it is not surprising that youth literacy remains low. Youth literacy, defined as the percentage of the population aged 15-29 years who can read or write a simple statement with understanding in any language, stands at 70.1 per cent in Pakistan. Provincial and gender disparities are evident, as shown in Figure 16.

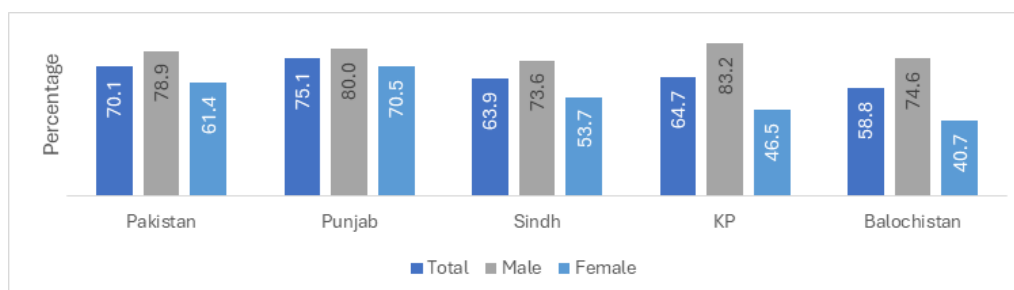


Figure 16: Youth literacy % (15-29 years)

Source: LFS 2020-21

The traditional education system faces several critical challenges that need urgent attention. One significant issue is the emphasis on theoretical, textbook-based knowledge with limited practical application. Schools focus on theory-based learning without providing practical training, which diminishes the relevance and applicability of the knowledge imparted. Many schools and universities also lack essential facilities such as well-equipped laboratories and libraries.

Affordability remains a significant concern as the availability of scholarships is limited and their distribution lacks transparency. As a result, many deserving students miss out on financial aid, leading to higher dropout rates, particularly among girls. The issue of low female literacy rates remains pressing, exacerbated by outdated syllabi and a lack of technical quality education.

Research and development (R&D) facilities are also significantly lacking, with researchers forced to rely on outdated information due to data deficiencies. This stifles innovation and the ability to think outside the box. Furthermore, the absence of exchange programmes limits the exposure and communication between youth from different regions and provinces.

Teachers often lack incentives to innovate as many are appointed based on political connections rather than merit. There are reports of underqualified or unskilled faculty members, with some even possessing fraudulent degrees. This situation fosters an unprofessional attitude among educators, who frequently feel threatened by bright students and actively discourage questioning and innovation. The prevalent 'ratta' system rewards rote memorisation, disincentivising research and new ideas.

Political instability frequently shifts priorities, leading to reduced funding for some universities and schools, ultimately leading to their closure. Recently, some schools in regions like Balochistan were closed due to funding shortages or political influence. In these areas, basic education remains inaccessible with students having to walk long distances in extreme weather conditions to attend the few available schools. Teachers' salaries are not paid, reducing their motivation to work. There is also a serious lack of accountability: classes are cancelled at the teachers' discretion, testing instruments fail to assess students' true understanding and capabilities, and grading is non-transparent.

Additional concerns with regard to education include the lack of transportation (buses, etc.), inadequate hostel facilities, and politicisation of educational institutions. Hostel accommodations

are often allocated based on nepotism and favouritism rather than need. Support staff in educational institutes are often unqualified and hired based on political connections. This practice leads to strategic placements designed to ensure that the institutions operate in a manner that serves political interests rather than educational goals.

Many of the youth are unable to access formal education, and therefore resort to non-formal training through skills development programmes. Figure 17 shows the number of non-formal education centres, the number of adult literacy centres, and the number of learners enrolled in these centres. By far, the greatest number of non-formal training centres, and the greatest number of learners is in Punjab, followed by Sindh, KP, Balochistan, GB, and AJK respectively.

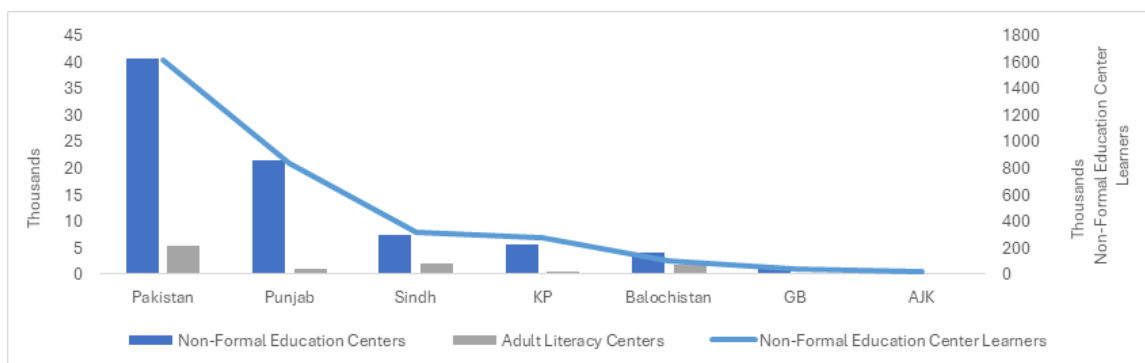


Figure 17: Number of non-formal education centres, adult literacy centres, and non-formal education centre learners.

Source: PIE, MoFE&PT, National Non-Formal Education Management Information System, Annual Statistical Report 2021

Skills development programmes suffer from lack of proper evaluation and follow-ups to assess whether students have truly acquired the skills being taught. Many young people are unaware of these programmes due to insufficient outreach and communication.

The quality of instruction is often compromised by unqualified teachers and poor management of the courses. Classes may be cancelled at the teachers' discretion, contributing to a non-serious attitude among both trainers and trainees, which limits learning outcomes. The syllabus used is outdated and teaching techniques are uninspiring. Moreover, the eligibility criteria for these programmes are often excessively lenient, resulting in the enrolment of numerous students who lack genuine commitment or seriousness. Post-pandemic, many training programmes switched to online testing for certification without implementing proper tracking mechanisms. This lack of oversight can undermine the validity and credibility of the credentials issued.

In some areas, physical access to training centres is a significant barrier, especially for females. Many training centres are located in mountainous or otherwise isolated areas, reducing their accessibility, and hence efficacy.

Given these challenges, the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) becomes high. Figure 18 shows that overall, 34 per cent of youth in Pakistan remains idle. The highest proportion of idle youth was recorded in Balochistan (45.1 per cent), followed by KP (40.3 per cent), Sindh (39.6 per cent), and Punjab (29.2 per cent) respectively.

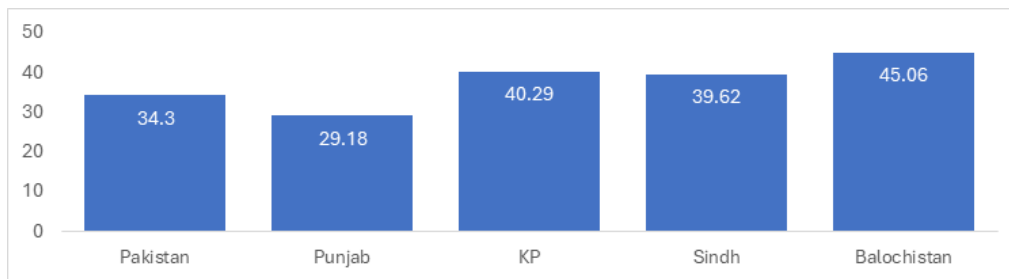


Figure 18: Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Source: LFS 2020-21

Youth political and civic participation

Young people are inherently political across the globe, largely through their involvement in student politics. In Pakistan, student unions played a crucial role in the ousting of Ayub Khan and the subsequent rise of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Recognising the potential threat posed by politically active youth, General Zia-ul-Haq dismantled student unions to neutralise this influence. Consequently, today's youth in Pakistan are markedly depoliticised, a direct result of Zia's policies aimed at suppressing student political engagement.

This sentiment was echoed during the consultation, where young people expressed their lack of active involvement in policymaking. Their voices have been suppressed through their systemic exclusion from political and civic participation opportunities. The government representatives lack perspective on real issues confronting the youth as they are often detached from ground realities, resulting in the formation of policies that are barely relevant and poorly implemented.

The majority of the youth are unaware about the existence of a dedicated youth department at the provincial level, let alone its initiatives. Many schemes, by design, are deemed exclusionary, e.g., the laptop scheme distributed laptops only amongst university students, excluding those enrolled in colleges and schools, and those engaged in non-formal sector. The efficacy of such initiatives is further limited by discriminating internet access, which exacerbates regional and socio-economic disparities by creating inequalities in access to online work, education, and entrepreneurship opportunities.

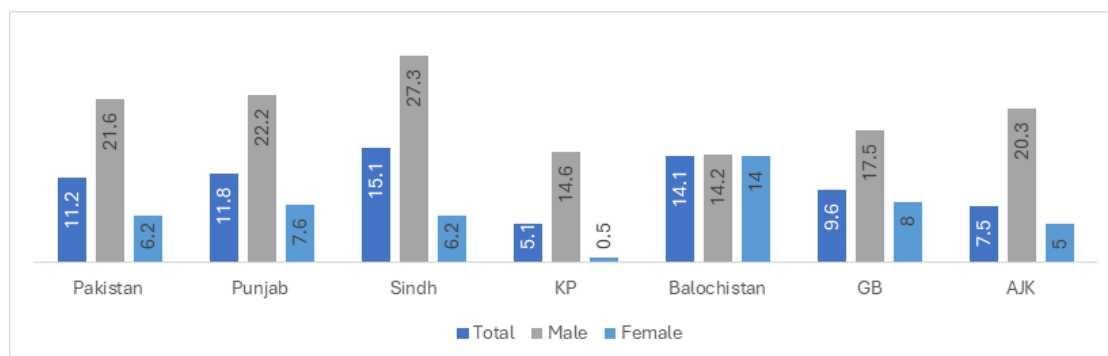
Students' clubs and unions often lack support and funding, with budgets for youth-led activities frequently diverted by faculty and other staff members to other activities. This leaves youth programmes underfunded and limits opportunities for meaningful engagement. Additionally, the approval processes required to access youth programmes can be time-consuming, disincentivising participation.

There is also a significant limitation on freedom of speech. Students are discouraged from forming student unions even in Sindh, the only province with a Students Union Act⁶. Students that are actively involved in student-led organisations face suppression, and measures are taken to limit their participation such as rustication, suspension, or a reduced CGPA.

In Balochistan, additional challenges include the troubling issue of missing students and strict censorship. Restrictions are imposed on seminars and webinars, with events at the university

⁶ Accessible at <http://www.pas.gov.pk/uploads/acts/Sindh%20Act%20No.1%20of%202022.pdf>

level frequently discouraged or forcibly halted. Few seminars featuring ‘approved’ speakers—often affiliated with organisations like ‘Voice of Balochistan’—are allowed to be held. This



leads to severe censorship and prevents the discussion of critical youth issues.

Many young people lack access to cell phones, hindering their civic, political, and economic participation. Figure 19 shows the percentage of youth with access to cell phones.

Figure 19: Percentage of youth (15-29 years) with access to cell phones, by province and by gender.

Source: Authors' calculations using PDHS 2017-18

Overall, only 11 per cent of the youth population has access to cell phones. Provincial disparities are evident, with even starker gender disparities, raising concerns about the state of inclusion.

Other psychological struggles

In addition to the issues discussed above, many young people in universities and colleges struggle with depression and anxiety exacerbated by social pressures and high parental expectations, often about career choices and academic performance. The social sciences are generally undervalued, as many parents remain unaware of the diverse career opportunities they offer, often pressuring their children to pursue medicine or engineering instead. These pressures are frequently exacerbated by comparisons made by parents with other children. The generational gap between youth and their parents, coupled with a lack of proper guidance, leaves many young people feeling directionless and uncertain about their future. Teachers' unprofessional attitudes and the absence of a supportive framework further hinder their mental well-being. Some school and college counsellors often organise one-off sessions which offer limited relief.

Social media exacerbates these problems by creating environments that often foster insecurities and lower self-esteem among young users. With limited access to effective mental health resources and recreational opportunities, the youth find it difficult to manage these challenges. As a result, the psychological burden on them continues to grow. This was evident in our FGDs, where many youth representatives reported that drug abuse is on the rise among

young people, with drugs now being readily available in educational institutions, as well as in local shops.

Self-help mechanisms

In the absence of government support, some youths have resorted to self-help mechanisms. They utilise online resources like YouTube and Google to learn new skills independently and enrol in private IT courses for more structured training. By taking on contractual or freelance work, they try to gain practical experience and financial stability. They also try to engage in part-time and non-formal jobs, such as tutoring students, to earn some income.

Conclusion

To sum up, the outcomes of youth development efforts are notably inadequate, and the support extended to young people by the government is minimal across all provinces. The limited support that does exist is often undermined by significant political interference in public service delivery, which adversely affects the quality, coverage, and relevance of the services provided. In the subsequent chapters, we will explore the factors that contribute to these trends.

POLICIES FOR THE YOUTH OR SIMPLY IN THE NAME OF YOUTH?



CHAPTER 3- POLICIES FOR THE YOUTH OR SIMPLY IN THE NAME OF YOUTH?



In recent times, the mainstreaming of youth in political discourse was observed with the rise of a political party that recognised the immense potential of the youth demographic as a significant vote bank. Following their lead, many political parties incorporated youth-centric promises in their manifestos. These promises, though similar to those made in the past, were now rebranded to appeal more directly to the youth. Resultantly, while youth issues such as unemployment, education, and social empowerment were frequently highlighted during election campaigns, the actual implementation and follow-through of policies addressing these issues remained inconsistent as priorities shifted.

The mainstreaming of youth made the development of youth policies at the provincial level a political imperative, particularly after the devolution of youth development to the provincial level after the 18th Amendment. Compounded by pressure from various advocacy groups and donors, all provinces sought to create their own youth policies. This led to the formation of the Punjab Youth Policy in 2012, the KP Youth Policy in 2016, the Sindh Youth Policy in 2018, and the most recent GB Youth Policy in 2024. Draft youth policies have also been developed by Balochistan and AJK in consultation with development partners; however, these policies have yet to be officially approved by the cabinet.

A review of these policies suggests that they are often more symbolic than practical. Having been designed to appeal to young voters, they frequently lack the necessary specificity and detail for effective implementation. The current youth policies are very lengthy and lack clear targets. Ideally, policy documents should be concise—no longer than 15-20 pages—focusing on well-defined thematic areas, clear targets, and a strategic work plan.

The youth of Pakistan, characterised by diverse cultures, socio-economic backgrounds, and ethnicities, represent a broad spectrum. Consequently, policies must be tailored to address their specific needs. A thematic cross-comparison of provincial youth policies (Appendix A) reveals that many aspects are directly replicated from the first province-level youth policy, the Punjab Youth Policy 2012. Other provinces have developed policies based on this template, incorporating a few additional measures but lacking innovation and nuances to show sensitivity to provincial distinctiveness.

In addition, the policies in Punjab, KP, and Sindh were passed several years ago, and hence do not address several new and emerging challenges. For example, the Punjab Youth Policy, passed in 2012, overlooks issues related to health, inclusivity, and environmental sustainability. Similarly, the KP Youth Policy 2016 fails to address digital inclusion, inclusivity, and environmental sustainability. The Sindh Youth Policy, passed in 2018, also neglects digital inclusion and environmental sustainability. Absences are also evident in the draft policies for Balochistan and AJK. For instance, the Balochistan Youth Policy (draft 2021) is silent on early marriages¹ and environmental sustainability, and the AJK Youth Policy (draft 2021) on disaster management.

¹ During our stakeholder consultation in Balochistan, we learned that the draft Child Marriage Prohibition Act has been prepared and is awaiting cabinet approval.

Enactment on policies remains limited as well. Most notably, all provinces have outlined the establishment of a Youth Commission to ensure progress along their respective youth policies. Despite the policy being passed in Punjab 12 years ago, in KP eight years ago, and in Sindh six years ago, none of the provinces has fully established the commission yet; only a few appointments have been made in some provinces. The GB Youth Policy 2024 mandates the establishment of a Steering Committee with representation from various provincial departments and other stakeholder groups, as well as a Policy Implementation Unit, both of which are yet to be formed. In fact, many of the departments designated to be part of the Steering Committee are not even aware of the existence of the youth policy, let alone their responsibilities within it.

Most importantly, if there had been a genuine commitment to youth development, the youth departments at provincial levels would have been adequately equipped to perform the functions mandated in the youth policy. While much of the inactivity may be attributed to financial constraints, numerous capacity challenges extend beyond mere funding. To identify these factors, a comprehensive assessment of the functional capacities of provincial youth departments was conducted.

Functional Capacity Assessment of Provincial Youth Departments

In this evaluation, we interviewed focal persons from youth departments, director-level or up, to assess the functional capacity of the department along seven key domains: leadership and governance, structure and system, human resource management (HRM) and staff development, financial management, sub-grants management, programme management, and monitoring & evaluation. This approach was adapted from the BLC Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool².

Within each component, specific questions were designed to assess 40 sub-components (see Appendix B). The responses to these questions were used to assign a score between 1 and 4 in our scoring sheet, allowing a maximum score of 160. The scoring criterion was:

LEVEL	POINTS	SIGNIFICANCE
Level 1	One point	The system, policy, or mechanism does not exist.
Level 2	Two points	A preliminary or basic structure is in place but is not fully operational.
Level 3	Three points	The system, policy, or mechanism is fully functional, but there is room for improvement.
Level 4	Four points	A well-functioning system, policy, or mechanism is in place and is being used optimally.

The same criterion was applied to all four provinces. Our findings are consolidated in Table 3.

² USAID and MSH. (2015). BLC Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool [Excel file]. Retrieved from https://msh.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2015_08_msh_ocat_tool.xls

Functional Capacity Assessment - Scoring Sheet							
Components	Sub-components ³	SD	BL	PB	KP	AJK	GB
1. Leadership & Governance	Department goal vision and mission	3	2	2	3	1	3
	Strategic plan	2	1	2	2	2	2
	Strategic plan aligned to the youth policy	2	1	1	2	1	2
	Youth Commission composition	2	1	1	3	1	1
	Youth Commission functioning and governance	2	1	1	2	1	1
2. Structures & Systems	Organogram (organisational chart) with clear roles	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Consultation and decision-making	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Internal communication	2	2	3	3	3	2
	External communication	2	2	2	3	2	2
	Accountability and transparency	2	2	2	3	1	2
3. HRM and Staff Development	Office and equipment	2	2	3	3	2	2
	Recruitment and staff diversity	2	2	3	3	3	2
	Staff expertise	2	2	2	3	3	2
	Personnel files	2	2	3	3	3	2
	Timesheets	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Discipline, grievance and conflict resolution	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Staff performance evaluation	2	2	3	3	3	2
4. Financial Management	Staff development	1	1	2	1	2	2
	Financial accounts/ accounting system	2	2	3	3	2	2
	Bank account	2	2	2	3	2	2
	Bank and cash management	2	2	3	3	2	2
	Bank reconciliation	2	2	2	3	2	2
	Financial record-keeping	2	3	2	3	2	2
	Budgets and cash flow planning	2	2	2	3	2	2
	Cost-effectiveness	2	2	2	2	3	3
	Finance staff levels and competency	2	2	2	2	2	2
5. Sub-Grants Management	Financial reporting	2	2	2	3	2	2
	Annual financial statements	2	2	2	3	2	2
	Sub-Grants Management System	2	2	2	2	1	1
	Grant management staff	2	2	2	2	1	1
6. Programme Management	Grants monitoring and reporting	2	2	1	2	1	1
	Information, knowledge and skills	2	2	2	2	1	2
	Service delivery	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Programme sustainability	1	1	2	2	1	1
7. Planning, M&E	Local government involvement	2	1	2	2	1	2
	Annual work plan	2	1	2	1	2	2
	M&E plans, theory of change framework	1	1	1	1	1	1
	M&E tools and data collection system	1	1	2	1	1	1
	M&E data analysis, dissemination and use	1	1	1	1	1	1
Evaluation contributes to organizational learning		1	1	1	1	1	1
TOTAL (Maximum = 160)		74	68	79	91	70	71

³ Refer to Appendix B to see what each sub-component denotes.

The table shows that KP has the highest score, followed by Punjab, Sindh, GB, AJK, and Balochistan respectively. Please note that the scoring is solely based on the information relayed to us by the focal person in each provincial youth department. These scores are meant to serve solely as a reference point or baseline to help assess which areas need to be prioritised to improve the functional capacity of these departments so that suitable interventions can be designed and implemented accordingly.

Overall, the resources available at the department level were clearly insufficient to effectively implement the respective youth policies across all provinces. While a comprehensive youth policy has been designed by all provinces, several critical challenges hinder its effective implementation. Youth policies are broadly defined and lack a strategic action plan with clear objectives, leading to fragmented efforts and reduced effectiveness. This lack of direction is compounded by the absence of KPIs for staff, making it difficult to measure performance against targets. Financial planning is similarly impaired due to unclear objectives and the absence of mid-term budget reviews.

To date, no province has successfully established a fully operational Youth Commission. Although KP has formed one, it has not yet notified its members, and Sindh has made only a few appointments. The organisational structure within youth departments is present but lacks clear definitions of roles and responsibilities for directors, assistant directors, and other staff members. The departments suffer from severe under-resourcing in terms of finances, technical staff, and infrastructure. Limited financial resources, combined with centralisation of financial management, create procedural delays and obstacles.

Local government setups are inadequate, with DYO's either absent or in symbolic roles without the necessary training or authority to contribute effectively. Youth offices are primarily located in provincial capitals. KP is an exception here with its Jawan Marakiz (youth centres) in districts across the province, though these centres are not uniformly equipped. Punjab is working to convert its 20 e-libraries into youth centres, but this is still in progress. Basic facilities, such as vehicles and office furniture, are also limited, with Balochistan's youth department not having even a single vehicle. This shortage of resources results in a cycle of low utilisation and reduced future allocations.

Coordination between youth departments and other sectors is lacking, and the absence of stakeholder mapping prevents a clear understanding of relevant stakeholders and their roles, increasing dependence on public finances. The absence of formal M&E systems at the departmental level further hampers progress as many donors are unwilling to fund programmes without a proper M&E system. Although some donor-funded initiatives are sporadically assessed by the P&D department, these evaluations are rare. Moreover, data limitations prevent departments from tracking progress as no baseline is available.

Youth departments are often overshadowed by sports departments, which absorb most of the available resources. Frequent officer transfers, driven by political motives or career aspirations, disrupt continuity and lead to the abandonment of ongoing initiatives in favour of new projects. Additionally, the lack of mechanisms to preserve institutional memory and ensure programme sustainability exacerbates these issues.

Financial discrepancies across provinces are also stark and appear directly linked to the ownership of youth initiatives by top-level leadership: The Balochistan Youth Affairs Department was allocated Rs30 million, Sindh Rs100 million, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa over

Rs6 billion. The Punjab Youth Wing has secured Rs937 million for a single initiative.

The remainder of the chapter presents the functional capacity assessment of provincial youth departments, beginning with Sindh, followed by Balochistan, KP, and concluding with Punjab⁴.

Sindh

The Sindh Youth Affairs Department operates within a shared secretariat alongside the Sindh Sports Department, which centralises administrative functions but can also limit focused attention to youth-specific initiatives. It is staffed by a dedicated youth director and maintains a youth office situated in Karachi, which serves as the primary operational hub for its activities.

The department's core priorities are centred around promoting youth political and civic engagement and broadening its outreach efforts through DYOs. However, the department faces significant challenges due to inadequate financial and non-financial support. The lack of sufficient funding restricts its ability to develop and implement comprehensive programmes, while limited non-financial resources, such as training and infrastructure, further constrain its operations. As a result, the department remains largely isolated and inactive, struggling to fulfil its mission and connect effectively with the youth of Sindh, and with other departments working on youth-centric themes.

The functional capacity assessment for Sindh is provided in Table 4.

⁴ Punjab does not have a dedicated youth department, only a youth wing within the Sports and Youth Affairs Department.

Table 4: Functional Capacity Assessment of Sindh Youth Department

Functional Capacity Assessment - Sindh			
Components	Sub-components	Score	Participants comments
1. Leadership & Governance	Department goal vision and mission	3	Specified on the website and the youth policy.
	Strategic plan	2	No strategic plans exist.
	Strategic plan aligned to the youth policy	2	No strategic plans exist. Although the youth policy outlines short-, medium-, and long-term goals, they are too broad. They lack specificity due to which tangible goals and objectives cannot be set.
	Youth Commission composition	2	Only a few positions have been filled.
	Youth Commission functioning and governance	2	Basic structure exists, but it is not functional.
2. Structures & Systems	Organogram with clear roles	2	Organisational structure is there, but the lack of JDs means roles are not clearly defined.
	Consultation and decision-making	2	Done on ad-hoc basis. No proper system exists.
	Internal communication	2	Done on phone. Official communication done via circulars. Official notifications are issued.
	External communication	2	Approvals are needed to even update the website to communicate with external stakeholders.
	Accountability and transparency	2	Annual progress meetings are conducted to discuss and review activities during the year.
	Office and equipment	2	Youth office exists only in Karachi. There is no setup at the district level.
	Recruitment and staff diversity	2	No quotas exist for women or marginalised segments. Recruitment is non-transparent.
3. HRM and Staff Development	Staff expertise	2	There is an acute shortage of well-trained staff. No single appointment has been made in the last three years.
	Personnel files	2	Basic files are maintained, but not properly updated.
	Timesheets	1	No timesheets are maintained.
	Discipline, grievance and conflict resolution	2	Can be reported in tribunals, which can take very long.
	Staff performance evaluation	2	No KPIs are defined, making evaluation difficult. However, ACRs are marked.
	Staff development	1	No in-house trainings have been conducted to date.

	Financial accounts/ accounting system	2	Records exist on paper. No digitalised records are maintained.
	Bank account	2	Not operational anymore. Now payments are made through the accountant general of Sindh. No bank accounts that Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) used to utilise are operational anymore.
	Bank and cash management	2	Petty cash use is minimal, covering only essential office expenses.
	Bank reconciliation	2	Bank reconciliation was performed up until the enactment of the Sindh Public Finance Management Act, 2020.
4. Financial Management	Financial record-keeping	2	Records maintained on paper.
	Budgets and cash flow planning	2	Not performed properly.
	Cost-effectiveness	2	The Schedule of Operations (SO) budget overlooks this aspect. The department submits its requirements without conducting a cost-benefit analysis. To address this, there is a need for a dedicated officer to handle these tasks.
	Finance staff levels and competency	2	Dedicated staff is not available.
	Financial reporting	2	Audit report is prepared at the end of each FY. Not done for any donor as no projects were undertaken.
	Annual financial statements	2	Prepared annually. No written financial policies and procedures.
	Sub-Grants Management System	2	Policy is there. Registered audited NGOs are required.
5. Sub-Grants Management	Grant management staff	2	Need well-trained staff.
	Grants monitoring and reporting	2	Grants are monitored. However, for the last decade, no donor-funded project has been undertaken.
	Information, knowledge and skills	2	Annual progress meetings
	Service delivery	2	No approved written quality standards. No system exists to gauge public satisfaction with services that are provided.
6. Programme Management	Programme sustainability	1	Never witnessed any self-sustainable project. When the government discontinues funding, the entire project goes to waste.
	Local government involvement	2	No involvement. But in Sindh LG's structure, there are young counsellors. They represent youth. But they are not effective or active. Have no real powers. Symbolic significance. They are not sensitisers or motivators.

7. Planning, M&E	Annual work plan	2	Focus is on service delivery and structural growth. Currently, making an M&E plan with UNFPA. It is underway. Will be developed in 3-6 months.
	M&E plans, theory of change framework	1	Needs to be developed.
	M&E tools and data collection system	1	Needs to be developed.
	M&E data analysis, dissemination and use	1	Needs to be developed.
	Evaluation contributes to organisational learning	1	Needs to be developed.

Balochistan

In Balochistan, both the Youth Affairs Department and the Sports Department operate under the same Secretariat. However, within this shared administrative framework, the Sports Department often takes precedence. As a result, the Balochistan Youth Department is severely under-resourced, facing significant constraints that impact various aspects of its operations, including programme implementation, personnel, and infrastructure.

The department struggles with inadequate funding, insufficient staff, and limited facilities, which severely hampers its ability to effectively develop and execute initiatives aimed at youth empowerment and development. Moreover, there is minimal ownership of youth-centric programmes at the top levels of government, which further impedes the allocation of resources. This shortage of resources not only compromises the quality and reach of existing programmes but also impedes the department's capacity to innovate and expand its services. The department's top priority is to economically empower the youth by providing them with decent work opportunities and counselling.

The functional capacity assessment of the Balochistan Youth Department is provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Functional Capacity Assessment of Balochistan Youth Department

Functional Capacity Assessment - Balochistan			
Components	Sub-components	Score	Participants comments
1. Leadership & Governance	Department goal vision and mission	2	Specified on the draft youth policy.
	Strategic plan	1	No strategic action plan exists.
	Strategic plan aligned to the youth policy	1	The action plan, which will align with the youth policy, is currently not in place. It will be developed once the youth policy is approved. The draft policy is ready and has been sent for approval to the cabinet.
	Youth Commission composition	1	Will be formed after the youth policy is approved.
	Youth Commission functioning and governance	1	Will be formed after the youth policy is approved.
2. Structures & Systems	Organogram with clear roles	2	A basic organogram is in place, but with limited staff. Job descriptions are available at the general government level but are lacking at the departmental level. No department currently has well-defined job descriptions for its positions.
	Consultation and decision-making	2	Decisions are made independently by the department, without engaging other stakeholders. The absence of a policy means there is no established mechanism for collaboration.
	Internal communication	2	Internal communication is conducted through meetings and letters with relevant departments.
	External communication	2	External communication is handled through the Facebook page.
	Accountability and transparency	2	There is no formal mechanism for Annual General Meetings (AGMs); meetings are conducted on an ad-hoc basis. Some secretaries hold weekly progress meetings.
	Office and equipment	2	Only a building/space is available, and it is located solely in Quetta. All other basic facilities are missing.

3. HRM and Staff Development	Recruitment and staff diversity	2	Appointments are politically motivated, with only a five per cent quota allocated for women.
	Staff expertise	2	Staff lacks expertise as appointments are not merit-based
	Personnel files	2	Personnel files are not maintained. Instead, only a service book is kept, which may not provide detailed or up-to-date information on employee qualifications, performance, or other relevant details.
	Timesheets	1	Timesheets are not maintained.
	Discipline, grievance and conflict resolution	2	Disciplinary rules are specified. But no special forum or committee exists for grievance redressal.
	Staff performance evaluation	2	ACRs are marked, but there are no defined KPIs to assess performance objectively.
	Staff development	1	No trainings are conducted.
4. Financial Management	Financial accounts/accounting system	2	Annual auditing is conducted. However, the process relies on a paper system and has not been digitised.
	Bank account	2	Payments are handled through a Drawing and Disbursing Officer (DDO). No dedicated system.
	Bank and cash management	2	PPRA rules and general government financial rules are followed.
	Bank reconciliation	2	Since there is no separate bank account, no bank reconciliation is done at the department level.
	Financial record-keeping	3	Proper records are maintained for auditing but on paper. No digitised system.
	Budgets and cash flows planning	2	No mechanism is in place.
	Cost effectiveness	2	Cost effectiveness is assessed based on past experiences. Occasionally, firms are hired through a tender process with the lowest-cost firm being selected.
	Finance staff levels and competency	2	Well-trained financial staff is not available.
	Financial reporting	2	Audit records are available.
Annual financial statements	2	PPRA rules and general government financial rules are followed.	

5. Sub-Grants Management	Sub-Grants Management System	2	No system is in place.
	Grant management staff	2	Trained staff is not available.
	Grants monitoring and reporting	2	No guidelines at the department level.
6. Programme Management	Information, knowledge and skills	2	Review meetings for reporting results, sharing knowledge, experiences, and lessons learned, as well as re-strategising, are conducted irregularly.
	Service delivery	2	No written service delivery standards. Monitoring is discretionary.
	Programme sustainability	1	No system is currently in place, but the department plans to do this in future.
	Local government involvement	1	There is no district-level setup; the youth office exists only in Quetta.
7. Planning, M&E	Annual work plan	1	No system is in place.
	M&E plans, theory of change framework	1	No system is in place.
	M&E tools and data collection system	1	No system is in place.
	M&E data analysis, dissemination and use	1	No system is in place.
	Evaluation contributes to organisational learning	1	No system is in place.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

In KP, the Secretariat for Sports and Youth Affairs manages three directorates: two dedicated to sports and one focused on youth affairs. This distribution underscores the higher priority given to sports compared to other youth-related issues, as evidenced by the greater allocation of resources and administrative focus on sports.

KP's notable feature is its district-level structure, with DYOs and Jawan Marakiz established in every district. While facilities are currently inequitable, the government is dedicated to addressing these disparities by forming strategic partnerships with external stakeholders to equip the Jawan Marakiz. A particularly encouraging aspect is the chief minister's strong commitment to youth development, and the director's resolve to transform the youth department into more than just an event management entity. The department's priorities focus on harnessing the entrepreneurial potential of youth, transforming youth centres into comprehensive one-stop solutions for all youth-related issues, and providing training for DYOs.

The functional capacity assessment of the Directorate of Youth Affairs KP is provided in Table 6.

Table 6: Functional Capacity Assessment of KP Youth Department

Functional Capacity Assessment - KP			
Components	Sub-components	Score	Participants comments
1. Leadership & Governance	Department goal vision and mission	3	Specified on the website and the youth policy.
	Strategic plan	2	Strategic plan needs to be developed.
	Strategic plan aligned to the youth policy	2	A strategic plan aligned with the youth policy needs to be developed.
	Youth Commission composition	3	Already fully formed with members from different segments to ensure representation. Just need to officially notify the members.
	Youth Commission functioning and governance	2	Yet to be developed.
	Organogram with clear roles	2	An organogram is there, but currently roles are not clearly defined due to a lack of JDs.
2. Structures & Systems	Consultation and decision-making	2	'Rules of Business 1985' are followed which do not specify any mechanism for inter-departmental coordination. Additionally, departments do not regularly consult with one another due to conflicting priorities.
	Internal communication	3	WhatsApp groups with all district youth officers. Monthly progress meetings are also conducted with DYO's. Any emerging issues are discussed with the concerned DC.
	External communication	3	Facebook, official website, Instagram, X account.
	Accountability and transparency	3	Monthly progress meetings are conducted. Reports are uploaded on the website and shared with the government.
	Office and equipment	3	Sufficient office space and buildings are available, but equipment is needed in Jawan Marakiz across KP, especially to fulfil IT needs.

3. HRM and Staff Development	Recruitment and staff diversity	3	<p>Hiring is done through the Educational Testing and Evaluation Agency Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for recruitment up to Grade 16. An 'Establishment code' is in place that defines weightages for tests and interviews.</p> <p>A women's quota is there and also for minorities.</p> <p>Grade 17 and up recruitment is conducted through the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission (KPPSC). Very tough competition. A women's and minorities quota is there (two per cent).</p>
	Staff expertise	3	<p>Staff and HR wise, the department is well equipped. It has more than 400 staff members. District youth officers are there in every district along with supporting teams. Twelve staff members for each Jawan Markaz have been hired already.</p> <p>As hiring is on a merit basis through competitive exams, the staff is capable. But often there is a mismatch of skills. A minimum requirement of a Bachelor's degree is set, with no specific major required. This often leads to scenarios where individuals with degrees in fields like law end up working in departments such as finance.</p>
	Personnel files	3	<p>Personnel files are maintained but are not digitised. They contain academic and service records.</p>
	Timesheets	1	<p>Not maintained.</p>
	Discipline, grievance and conflict resolution	2	<p>General government rules are followed: Establishment code and discipline rules.</p>
	Staff performance evaluation	3	<p>ACRs are marked by the immediate boss, based on performance.</p>
	Staff development	1	<p>No training, even for DYO's who severely need it. When DYO's were first appointed, they were trained by officers who were on deputations and who did not train them properly with commitment.</p>

4. Financial Management	Financial accounts/ accounting system	3	Records are maintained.
	Bank account	3	A separate bank account for each scheme is maintained. The finance department releases funds in that account. Unused funds are returned to the government as surplus.
	Bank and cash management	3	Very transparent process. Pre-audit is also done when bills are being paid. Any inconsistency in the system is immediately reported.
	Bank reconciliation	3	An annual audit is done.
	Financial record-keeping	3	All expenditure records are maintained.
	Budgets and cash flow planning	3	Planning is done, but sometimes utilisation is low so budget lapses. Utilisation is often low due to the lack of an action plan.
	Cost-effectiveness	2	No defined mechanism is in place.
	Finance staff levels and competency	2	Currently, the staff is not too competent, e.g., a law degree holder is managing finances.
	Financial reporting	3	Capacity exists.
	Annual financial statements	3	General financial rules are in place and followed properly. Predefined policies clearly outline the financial regulations, specifying the spending limits for each officer under various budgetary categories.
5. Sub-Grants Management	Sub-Grants Management System	2	No donor-funded project has been undertaken to date. All initiatives are government-funded. However, the department is open to working with donors, especially for capacity building of DYOs, and equipping the Jawan Marakiz.
	Grant management staff	2	Need technical staff.
	Grants monitoring and reporting	2	As no grants have been taken, no system is in place. But capacity exists.
6. Programme Management	Information, knowledge and skills	2	As a strategic plan is not in place, staff cannot report results against specific targets. However, monthly progress meetings are conducted.
	Service delivery	2	No written standards. But general rules are followed by all departments, such as open-door policy, etc.
	Programme sustainability	2	The current director has the CM's backing, so he plans on staying for at least five years.
	Local government involvement	2	Excessive devolution has created challenges, particularly at the tehsil level, where the process is still ongoing. The extensive manpower required to make these units functional is currently putting a strain on resources. Indirectly, they are hindering the performance of provincial departments, as they remain idle due to the absence of a well-defined mechanism outlining their roles.

7. Planning, M&E	Annual work plan	1	Needs to be developed.
	M&E plans, theory of change framework	1	Needs to be developed.
	M&E tools and data collection system	1	Needs to be developed.
	M&E data analysis, dissemination and use	1	Needs to be developed.
	Evaluation contributes to organisational learning	1	Needs to be developed.

Punjab

In Punjab, a critical gap in the approach to youth development is the absence of a dedicated youth department. Instead, youth affairs are managed by a youth wing within the sports department, which primarily prioritises sports activities. This is particularly disappointing given that Punjab was the first province to develop a youth policy in 2012. The lack of a standalone directorate for youth issues raises concerns about the province's commitment to addressing the full spectrum of youth development needs.

A positive aspect of Punjab is the ownership of youth initiatives by the top leadership. The CM's first speech was about youth, and it was revealed that recently 957 million was allocated for a single scheme aimed at youth internships. Overall, governance structures are more streamlined. However, the absence of a dedicated directorate hampers performance, with many departments that work on youth-related issues completely unaware of the functioning of the youth wing.

The functional capacity assessment of the Punjab Youth Wing is provided in Table 7

Table 7: Functional Capacity Assessment of Punjab Youth Wing

Functional Capacity Assessment – Punjab			
Components	Sub-components	Score	Participants comments
1. Leadership & Governance	Department goal vision and mission	2	The department's goal vision and mission is defined, but it is very broad. 'Work for promotion of youth'. Youth Affairs is currently clubbed with sports as a youth wing under the sports department, whereas it should be the other way around, with sports falling under Youth Affairs.
	Strategic plan	2	The youth wing was established under the sports department in 2019-20, despite the youth policy being introduced in 2012. There is no strategic plan, and while plans exist on paper, they face numerous implementation hurdles due to a lack of institutionalisation. The department adapts to situations rather than following a clear system, and formalities are so lengthy that the process of developing and approving plans involves excessive back and forth.
	Strategic plan aligned to the youth policy	1	There is currently no strategic plan that aligns with the youth policy, which has led to a disproportionate focus on sports. A dedicated youth department has not yet been established, and the youth wing operates under the sports department. As a result, activities such as speech and calligraphy competitions, Youth Day celebrations, and occasional university seminars are organized, but these initiatives often lack comprehensive planning. While sports events are prioritised, other important aspects of the youth policy do not receive the attention they deserve.
	Youth Commission composition	1	The Youth Commission, mandated in 2012, has not been formed or officially notified. Various NGOs are actively advocating for its establishment.
	Youth Commission functioning and governance	1	No system is in place.

2. Structures & Systems	Organogram with clear roles	2	When the youth wing was established in 2019-20, the DG Sports was redesignated as Punjab's DG Sports & Youth Affairs. The department now plans to redesignate 'District Sports Officers' as 'District Sports and Youth Officers', but clear job descriptions are not yet available. The Youth Wing is staffed by one director and two assistant directors. The director reports to the DG, who in turn reports to the secretary.
	Consultation and decision-making	2	There is no proper consultative mechanism in place. The department tends to engage with NGOs that reach out to it, but there is no formalised process for this engagement. The directorate is primarily responsible for executing policies made at the top level, where all the decision-making occurs.
	Internal communication	3	Communication occurs via WhatsApp, circulars, and letters. Interactions with the DG follow proper channels, including noting and drafting, with correspondence and directions routed through the DG.
	External communication	2	Relevant information is uploaded on the website. The department has an open-door policy with NGOs, actively welcoming and facilitating their engagement.
	Accountability and transparency	2	Meetings are held irregularly, on a need basis. NGOs that play an effective and active role are included in the discussions.
	Office and equipment	3	Twenty e-libraries in districts across Punjab as active, with the main hub in Lahore. Includes IT labs, AC rooms, auditoriums, counselling services, etc.

3. HRM and Staff Development	Recruitment and staff diversity	3	Regular positions are filled through standard government procedures, with advertisements placed in newspapers and hiring conducted through the Public Service Commission. Quotas exist for women and minorities.
	Staff expertise	2	Many unfilled positions due to a hiring ban. Some positions are politically motivated.
	Personnel files	3	Personnel files are maintained.
	Timesheets	1	No system is in place.
	Discipline, grievance and conflict resolution	2	DG Sports and Youth Affairs is DG Authority. If any issue arises, he calls the concerned director or staff to discuss it. There is a redressal committee, but the director is also a member of the committee.
	Staff performance evaluation	3	With limited staff, the director is aware of individual contributions, and evaluations are based on this knowledge. This process lacks transparency.
	Staff development	2	There is no formal training mechanism; training is provided on the job by the director. Recommendations for government-level training are made situationally if opportunities arise.

4. Financial Management	Financial accounts/ accounting system	3	There is no dedicated system in place; requisitions and demands are sent to headquarters, which has a structured system with relevant personnel, including the Director Admin, DDO, AD Budget, Caretaker, and Purchase Committee. The DDO handles matters within their capacity. A lack of a dedicated system may lead to procedural delays.
	Bank account	2	No dedicated system.
	Bank and cash management	3	PPRA rules and general government financial rules are followed. Petty cash is limited to rents from auditoriums, which are deposited into the board's account.
	Bank reconciliation	2	Centrally done. Not conducted by the department.
	Financial record-keeping	2	Direct expenditures are not incurred. Managed through the headquarters.
	Budgets and cash flow planning	2	At the department level, budgets and cash flow planning is not done. Requirements are sent to HQ, where costing and planning processes are carried out.
	Cost effectiveness	2	No mechanisms to gauge cost effectiveness at department level. Processes are centralised.
	Finance staff levels and competency	2	Limited staff is available. Most processes are centralized.
	Financial reporting	2	Annual audit reports are available centrally.
	Annual financial statements	2	PPRA rules and general government financial rules are followed.
5. Sub-Grants Management	Sub-Grants Management System	2	Not at the department level. The Project Management Unit, placed in the P&D department, deals with all development projects.
	Grant management staff	2	Limited staff is available. Positions have been requisitioned.
	Grants monitoring and reporting	1	The system is not available.

6. Programme Management	Information, knowledge and skills	2	There is no strategic plan in place; plans are made situationally. Execution follows these plans, and SoPs exist on paper for each programme.
	Service delivery	2	Service delivery standards are situational and not documented in writing. When specified, standards are maintained; otherwise, they are not.
	Programme sustainability	2	Programme sustainability is affected by political instability. However, the e-Rozgaar programme, established in 47 institutions, has been handed over to relevant universities to ensure its continued sustainability.
	Local government involvement	2	The department plans to redesignate District Sports Officers (DSOs) as District Sports and Youth Officers (DSYOs) and convert e-libraries into youth centres. Additionally, local government has its own initiatives, and directions are given at the chief secretary level. Overall, the field hierarchy needs much improvement.
7. Planning, M&E	Annual work plan	2	SOPs and ToRs are defined. Can map progress against them. But no proper mechanism.
	M&E plans, theory of change framework	1	No system is in place.
	M&E tools and data collection system	2	The Punjab P&D department collects data regularly for the Punjab Growth Strategy. M&E can be done using that data. But no dedicated setup at the department level.
	M&E data analysis, dissemination and use	1	No system is in place.
	Evaluation contributes to organisational learning	1	No system is in place.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

At the onset, it is important to note that AJK does not have an independent setup for Youth Affairs: there is one department, Sports, Youth, and Culture department, that overlooks all three functions. Even the staff at the directorate level is jointly responsible for all three functions, e.g., Director of Sports, Youth and Culture. Hence, it is not possible to isolate the youth affairs department (or wing) and assess its functional capacity independently.

It was noted in our interviews that the primary focus of the department is on sports, as evidenced by the disproportionate amount of focus and resources allocated towards it. For instance, during the last financial year, Rs20 million was spent on sporting events contrasted by a mere Rs6 million for youth development.

The province has yet to establish a dedicated youth policy. Currently, the department prioritises sports, viewing it as the key avenue for engaging youth in positive, health-oriented activities. There is still work to be done in sensitising the directorate on the importance of a separate youth policy framework which overlooks themes beyond sports. Donors have attempted to collaborate with the department, but there is often a clash of priorities due to which few youth development projects have been undertaken.

Overall, the department faces stringent financial constraints as most resources demanded from the federal government do not flow to the province. While the regular budget is increased annually by 5-8 per cent, the budget allocated under the PSDP is never fully released, leading to gaps between planning and actual execution.

The functional capacity assessment of the AJK Sports, Youth, & Culture department is provided in Table 8:

Table 8: Functional Capacity Assessment of AJK Sports, Youth, and Culture Department

Functional Capacity Assessment - AJK			
Components	Sub-components	Score	Participants comments
1. Leadership & Governance	Department goal vision and mission	1	The department is heavily focused on sports, with no clear vision or mission outlined on its website. The website itself uses a generic template, lacking distinctiveness or detailed information about its goals.
	Strategic plan	2	Strategic planning is constrained by a lack of financial resources. Hence, the department is only able to focus on the short-term planning of one-off events, that too are primarily related to sports.
	Strategic plan aligned to the youth policy	1	Aligned with the budget as no youth policy exists. It is worrisome to note that the directorate is not sensitised to the need for a dedicated youth policy for AJK.
	Youth Commission composition	1	No commission has been formed.
	Youth Commission functioning and governance	1	No system is in place.

2. Structures & Systems	Organogram with clear roles	2	The department has a clearly defined organogram, with job descriptions outlined in accordance with the Rules of Business. SOPs are well-established, providing clarity on roles and responsibilities. However, there is no distinct youth division, resulting in combined roles such as Director of Sports, Youth, and Culture, and Assistant Director of Sports, Youth, and Culture, which limits specialised focus in each area.
	Consultation and decision-making	2	No stakeholders have been identified and no system is in place to directly engage with them in decision-making.
	Internal communication	3	Internal communication is strong, with the directorate maintaining direct contact with all district officers. This is easy as the overall setup is small with only 10 districts.
	External communication	2	No clearly defined mechanism. Announcements are generally made on social media.
	Accountability and transparency	1	No system is in place.
	Office and equipment	2	Facilities are available in all 10 districts, but they are solely sports-focused.
3. HRM and Staff Development	Recruitment and staff diversity	3	The department comprises both permanent staff and contract-based staff, engaged for six-month terms as required, and selected based on specific expertise.
	Staff expertise	3	The staff shows a lot of dedication. Technical staff is hired on a contractual basis for specialised tasks. The staff is highly capable.
	Personnel files	3	Files are maintained and evaluated annually.
	Timesheets	1	No system is in place.
	Discipline, grievance and conflict resolution	2	Higher management has the authority to resolve internal conflicts, or a committee can be formed for special circumstances.
	Staff performance evaluation	3	Staff performance is evaluated annually through progress reviews. ACRs are maintained. With a limited number of staff, the director is well-informed about individual contributions.
	Staff development	2	Courses are conducted at the Kashmir Institute of Management, and training or refresher courses are a prerequisite for staff promotion. But they are for all government employees, not specific to the youth department.

4. Financial Management	Financial accounts/ accounting system	2	Annual auditing is conducted. However, the process relies on a paper system and has not been digitised.
	Bank account	2	No dedicated bank account. The system is centralised.
	Bank and cash management	2	No dedicated bank account. The system is centralised.
	Bank reconciliation	2	Managed centrally as there is no dedicated bank account.
	Financial record-keeping	2	Annual audit reports are maintained.
	Budgets and cash flow planning	2	Typically, unutilised budgets lapse; however, in the case of AJK, the budget does not lapse due to minimal releases, resulting in full utilisation of the allocated funds.
	Cost-effectiveness	3	Tenders are invited for every project.
	Finance staff levels and competency	2	Limited staff overlook multiple functions.
	Financial reporting	2	The audit report is prepared at the end of each FY. Not done for any donor as no projects were undertaken. The report is prepared by the AG office. If any discrepancy or anomaly occurs, a draft para is prepared and answered. They go to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).
	Annual financial statements	2	Prepared annually. No written financial policies and procedures.
5. Sub-Grants Management	Sub-Grants Management System	1	The department has no experience of working with donors. No donor-sponsored programmes have been conducted as there is often a clash of priorities.
	Grant management staff	1	The department needs specialised staff.
	Grants monitoring and reporting	1	No system is in place.

6. Programme Management	Information, knowledge and skills	1	No strategic plan exists, hence cannot be reviewed to adjust direction and re-strategise.
	Service delivery	2	No system is in place. The department focuses on organising events rather than providing services.
	Programme sustainability	1	No system is in place. Lack of vision and resources results in the organisation of one-off events primarily related to sports.
	Local government involvement	1	There is no coordination with the local government.
7. Planning, M&E	Annual work plan	2	Sporting activities occur throughout the year in a continuous cycle.
	M&E plans, theory of change framework	1	No system is in place.
	M&E tools and data collection system	1	No system is in place.
	M&E data analysis, dissemination and use	1	No system is in place.
	Evaluation contributes to organisational learning	1	No system is in place.

Gilgit-Baltistan (GB)

The GB youth affairs department, in collaboration with the UNFPA, is currently in the process of updating its systems. A youth policy has recently been passed, and an independent youth directorate has been established, with core positions filled. While divisional-level posts have been created, they remain vacant.

The department operates under a consolidated secretariat with other sectors like social welfare, women's development, population welfare, human rights, and child rights, all under the umbrella of the 'social development sector'. Hence, the department faces significant challenges with a single-line budget that must be divided across multiple needs, and there are limited resources to address the budgeting process effectively. There is also a critical shortage of technical staff, compounded by the fact that federal-level decisions result in limited funding for GB. Difficult terrain and dispersed settlements increase the challenges manifold.

The functional capacity assessment of the GB Youth Affairs department is presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Functional Capacity Assessment of GB Youth Affairs Department

Functional Capacity Assessment - GB			
Components	Sub-components	Score	Participants comments
1. Leadership & Governance	Department goal vision and mission	3	Clearly defined in the youth policy. The policy has been recently passed by the cabinet.
	Strategic plan	2	The draft is ready. Will be reviewed in coordination with stakeholders before being implemented after approval from the steering committee.
	Strategic plan aligned to the youth policy	2	Being formed in collaboration with the UNFPA.
	Youth Commission composition	1	A steering committee will be formed, headed by the CM (19 members in total who will meet biannually). Youth representatives from the divisional level will be included after the election (the mechanism of their election is not yet clearly defined). The committee will also include secretaries from all line departments including education, health, finance, etc. Youth Policy also talks of the formation of an implementation unit. The unit will be required to convene regular meetings.
	Youth Commission functioning and governance	1	A system is being formed. Not yet in place.

2. Structures & Systems	Organogram with clear roles	2	Staff at the directorate level have clearly defined ToRs. However, technical staff is scarce.
	Consultation and decision-making	2	Historically, external stakeholders were engaged on a need basis. But now it is part of policy.
	Internal communication	2	Small setup, so decisions are communicated easily. However, district-level officers have yet to be hired, so a communication mechanism has yet to be developed properly.
	External communication	2	Face-to-face meetings conducted with external stakeholders. Youth resource centres (YRCs) are being used for this purpose. However, the department itself has limited resources and relies on donor cooperation.
			In writing, communication is in the form of formal notification through the secretariat. Social media handles exist for the overall 'Social Development Department' which comprises the Social Welfare, PW, Human Rights/Child Rights, Women Development, and Youth Affairs departments. No dedicated channel exists for Youth Affairs.
	Accountability and transparency	2	Stakeholder engagement is activity-based. Frequency not defined.
Office and equipment	2	Currently, YRCs are located in Gilgit, Diamer, GIZIR, and Skardu. More YRCs are in the pipeline in other districts. IT equipment is needed in all centres.	
3. HRM and Staff Development	Recruitment and staff diversity	2	Grade 16 and above hiring is done through the Federal Public Service Commission. Below Grade 16, induction is done locally through the HEC testing service. Transfers and postings may be politically motivated.
	Staff expertise	2	Technical staff is lacking. District-level staff has yet to be hired.
	Personnel files	2	Maintained in paper form.
	Timesheets	1	No system is in place.
	Discipline, grievance and conflict resolution	2	Case taken up as per government rules.
	Staff performance evaluation	2	ACRs are maintained. KPIs are not defined as of now but are in the process of being specified.
	Staff development	2	Standard government trainings are conducted for all departments. Nothing specific for the youth department.

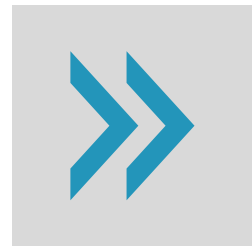
4. Financial Management	Financial accounts/ accounting system	2	Annual auditing is conducted. However, the process relies on a paper system and has not been digitised.
	Bank account	2	No dedicated bank account. The system is centralised.
	Bank and cash management	2	No dedicated bank account. The system is centralised.
	Bank reconciliation	2	Managed centrally as there is no dedicated bank account.
	Financial record-keeping	2	Annual audit reports are maintained.
	Budgets and cash flow planning	2	Typically, unutilised budgets lapse; however, in the case of GB, the budget does not lapse due to minimal releases, resulting in almost full utilisation of the allocated funds.
	Cost-effectiveness	3	Tenders are invited for every project.
	Finance staff levels and competency	2	No dedicated staff is available.
	Financial reporting	2	An audit report is prepared at the end of each FY. Not done for any donor as donors manage their own finances. The report is prepared by the AG office.
	Annual financial statements	2	Prepared annually. No written financial policies and procedures.
5. Sub-Grants Management	Sub-Grants Management System	1	No dedicated system
	Grant management staff	1	No dedicated staff currently exists at the department level. Technical staff is needed.
	Grants monitoring and reporting	1	No dedicated setup at the department level.
6. Programme Management	Information, knowledge and skills	2	Meetings conducted on project-basis to re-strategise.
	Service delivery	2	Defined in PC-1.
	Programme sustainability	1	No sustainability mechanisms are currently in place.
	Local government involvement	2	Request their input as needed.

7. Planning, M&E	Annual work plan	2	Yearly plans shared with the P&D department. They publish annual reports to map progress.
	M&E plans, theory of change framework	1	No system is in place.
	M&E tools and data collection system	1	Data is scarce. While national-level surveys are conducted in GB, data is not published. The department relies on the BISP socio-economic registry for development planning.
	M&E data analysis, dissemination and use	1	No system is in place.
	Evaluation contributes to organisational learning	1	No system is in place.

THE QUESTION OF WHY? CHALLENGES, BARRIERS, GAPS, AND TABOOS



CHAPTER 4- THE QUESTION OF WHY? CHALLENGES, BARRIERS, GAPS, AND TABOOS



Beyond functional capacities, the political economy may inhibit the formation and effective implementation of certain youth-centric policies. Based on our findings from provincial consultations involving senior representatives from various provincial departments, we realised that while tangible functional capacities may vary from province to province, the political environment is largely the same. As a result, the findings from all provinces have been consolidated and presented below.

1- Provincial government silos

Provincial government departments work in silos, lacking coordination and communication mechanisms—stakeholder mapping is neglected, actions are not clearly defined, and relevant departments are not informed. This fragmented approach leads to duplication of efforts, inefficient use of resources, and a lack of synergy in addressing youth issues, ultimately resulting in disjointed policies and missed opportunities for comprehensive youth development.

A significant issue is the evident lack of awareness about the mandates of other departments, leading to poor linkages and coordination. Each department independently develops policies, often resulting in significant overlaps with other provincial policies. There is no coordination or consultation between departments; for instance, skills development, women development, college education, and health departments are not consulted when developing youth policies. Similarly, other departments do not inform the youth department when designing their policies or programmes. This is particularly concerning as youth issues are cross-cutting and require collaborative efforts. Most departments adhere to the Rules of Business, which do not outline any interlinkages between departments.

This lack of coordination is evident at the implementation level as well. No department takes the initiative to include the youth department, even when working with youth through NGOs. Youth is often not considered significant enough by other departments, and many are unaware of the existence of a youth policy. Administrative barriers further limit coordination, as the youth department must navigate complex bureaucratic processes to communicate with other departments, for instance, they have to go through sections to communicate with another department.

As a result, programmes are not implemented under a unified framework, with multiple departments working on skills development simultaneously yet independently. There are no defined mechanisms for resource sharing between departments for programmes of mutual interest, making collaboration rare. For the few joint projects that do exist, the Planning and Development (P&D) department typically takes charge, with steering committees housed within P&D. These committees handle midterm reviews, grievance redressal, monitoring and evaluation, etc.

Many departments view the youth department as a mere event management unit focused on keeping the youth entertained rather than strategic development. Coordination with other provincial departments is often misaligned with youth department goals, with some departments merely coordinating the youth department to request volunteers for certain events.

2- High political intervention

It was also revealed that departments face very high political intervention in their operations, particularly in the secretariat. Representatives from all provinces agreed that political pressure and interference in their work are often more pressing than financial constraints and significantly hinder their efficacy. This interference is often exerted through PSDP projects: projects are rewarded based on political allegiances, with a greater focus on home constituencies. Priorities are also guided by political motives.

Politically compromised officers further use transfer and postings as a currency of bargaining. Non-compliant officers are posted to remote areas where there is no access to basic facilities. Often, their vehicle and office space are withdrawn, their promotions are blocked, and they are popularized as unprofessional and inefficient officers.

Many government officers use their influence to secure postings in their home districts, where they have strong political connections. This practice severely compromises the department's HR capacity, particularly when a Grade 19 officer remains in a Grade 17 position because it suits their personal interests. This not only reduces the officer's exposure to diverse experiences but also hinders their professional growth and development, disrupting the overall effectiveness of the department.

Furthermore, cadre posts are created in the directorate to accommodate compliant officers. Most hiring is based on likes and dislikes. These appointments violate merit, thereby reducing the technical expertise required to effectively fulfil the mandate of their position. The absence of forums where political intervention can be challenged exacerbates the situation. Participants agreed that if political intervention is reduced (as it was during the caretaker setup), their efficiency can be improved significantly.

3- Cumbersome 'approvals' and procedural handicaps

Every minor initiative must navigate a lengthy chain of approvals before the directorate can implement it. Many participants discussed how "filain ooper neechay jaati hain, but kuch nahi hota", i.e., files go up and down the bureaucratic hierarchy, but little headway is gained. Policies are often stalled in the cabinet or secretariat, taking a long time to pass. These bureaucratic delays hinder progress, often stifling initiative.

Thick layers of red tape further discourage directorate-level officers from taking initiative. It was relayed that sometimes funds are not released because finance staff does not know how to categorise the expenditure. Such petty issues reduce the incentive to pursue new ideas and innovation.

4- Frequent transfers and postings

One of the biggest challenges faced by departments is the frequent transfer and posting of officers, which undermines the continuity and sustainability of initiatives. "Pata hee nahi chalta, subah officer betha hota hai, shaam ko uska transfer ho jata hai", i.e., an officer may be present at their desk in the morning, yet by evening, they could be transferred.

It is often the secretaries that decide which officer 'suits' them at which position. This disruptive practice undermines officers' incentive to perform well as they are uncertain about their job stability and whether they will remain in their current positions for long. Even if an officer takes initiative, they are often transferred before they can see it through to the implementation stage. This high turnover hampers progress and demoralises the officers, ultimately affecting the department's overall effectiveness and efficiency.

This issue is particularly pressing at the secretariat level, where every new secretary takes 6-7 months just to familiarise themselves with the procedures and rules. Shortly thereafter, they are transferred (often by choice). Section officers, additional secretaries, deputy secretaries, etc. are all changed with similar frequency. While a transfer to a better position can help build valuable connections, it mostly disrupts continuity. Although the law is in place that “the normal tenure of an officer on the same post should be three years”, it is ubiquitously violated. In one example, six transfers were made for a single post in one year. Some officers take a stay order to avoid a transfer, but most officers prefer to avoid the legal complications altogether.

The system is designed to reward politically well-connected people. Most officers aim to secure and prolong tenure in home districts where they have strong political capital. In this pursuit, they forego opportunities to undertake social initiatives, prioritising the enhancement of their political influence instead. Consequently, these officers frequently neglect to report emerging issues, creating a misleading impression of stability. Furthermore, it limits the officers' exposure to different environments, curbing their learning.

While concerning, frequent postings and transfers are often inevitable as departments need to make space to accommodate newly trained officers. The situation is much more stable in the directorate, as it primarily consists of technical personnel who are not easily transferable to other departments. In the directorate, stations may change, but the department usually remains the same.

5- Compromised continuity of programmes and initiatives

Frequent transfers and postings, and an overall politically unstable environment disrupt the continuity of programmes and initiatives. “Jo bhi aata hai, nayi raah dikhata hai”, i.e., each new administration tends to take a new direction and emphasize different priority areas. This approach is often taken to differentiate the current government from its predecessors and to ensure that its achievements are recognised.

No mechanisms are in place to preserve or manage institutional memory. The absence of digitised government records results in the loss of valuable knowledge whenever an individual departs, as they take their entire stock of institutional memory with them.

6- Lack of digitisation

Political economy issues hinder digitisation efforts, compromising the accuracy, transparency, and continuity of initiatives. The basic infrastructure to integrate digitisation is also lacking which further hinders the process.

7- Creation of cadre posts

Often within the directorate, cadre posts are created by the secretariat to accommodate favoured government employees. These posts are created either for promotions or to place officers from the Provincial Management Service (PMS), Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS), etc. This practice presents a significant structural problem, as these appointees typically lack the necessary information, skills, and technical expertise to perform effectively in specialised departments. Moreover, they often lack the drive and innovative mindset needed to set new directions for the department, unlike competent individuals hired from the market based on merit.

8- Human resource constraints

Apart from the creation of cadre posts, several other factors constrain the human resource capacity of provincial departments. Youth department positions are often seen as parking slots

for bureaucrats who prefer roles like ‘director youth’ over ‘officer on special duty’, reflecting a lack of seriousness towards youth issues. Many important posts remain vacant as it is not in the interest of career officers to take up postings in social sector departments. Officers who do get posted are always looking for a way to get transferred to other departments where there is greater scope for public dealings and infrastructure development projects. Social sector departments are often perceived as less influential, leading to a persistent shortage of section officers, additional secretaries, deputy secretaries, and other key roles. This issue puts undue pressure on the existing staff, negatively impacting their productivity.

Furthermore, there is a lack of investment in human resource development—no training sessions, workshops, or capacity-building exercises are arranged. Administrative barriers also impede the hiring of technical staff. Files circulate up and down the hierarchy without resulting in actual hires, leaving the HR needs of departments unmet.

9- Financial resource constraints

Low prioritisation of the social sector reflects evidently in dismal expenditure allocations towards these departments. Despite the complete utilisation of funds, financial allocations are not increased beyond the minimal annual 10 per cent, which creates liabilities for some departments. There is little sensitisation of youth-centric issues at the top level. For instance, when the youth department requests funds, they might be told that NAVTTC is already handling skills development, or that the health department is addressing adolescent health, resulting in inadequate funding for their specific needs.

Financial releases are often politically motivated and dependent on bureaucratic relationships. Departments must leverage influential individuals to secure more resources, with many budgetary demands remaining unmet due to bureaucratic rifts. Even if funds are released, spending is driven by political motivations rather than actual needs, leading to inequitable and inefficient spending patterns.

10- Missing external stakeholder mapping

At the department level, there is no practice of identifying or engaging with external stakeholders to improve the scope, reach, scale, or efficacy of programmes. CSOs, NGOs, the development sector, think tanks, etc. are only engaged on an ad-hoc basis. No standardised rules, procedures, or mechanisms are in place to partner with external service providers directly on projects. In some projects, partnerships are formed, but external stakeholders often take the lead in forming them, and in driving the initiative forward.

11- Symbolic policies

Major social policies, including the youth policies, are largely developed symbolically, without a genuine commitment from the political elite. Most policies are developed under tight deadlines and donor pressure, aligned with their requirements but devoid of true commitment from government departments. “It is not the Bible, we can change it later, they say. But no one changes it”, said one participant, referring to the attitudes of departmental secretaries and directors when developing these policies. As a result, beyond rhetorical support, few concrete initiatives are implemented to drive meaningful progress.

The current youth policies in all provinces, except GB, lack a mid-term budgetary framework and an action plan supported by budgetary allocations. A clear action plan, which outlines specific budgetary needs, is essential for persuading the government to allocate funds. Currently, the policies remain vague, making it difficult to justify funding requirements. The limited funds allocated are often spent on isolated events like career counselling seminars, which fail to yield lasting impact.

12- Youth is a mere buzzword

Despite the ubiquitous mention of youth in political discourse and electoral campaigns, the top leadership does not take genuine ownership of youth initiatives. Instead, the youth population is often viewed solely as a voter base, rather than a critical demographic deserving of targeted attention. This lack of ownership from the highest levels of leadership hinders departmental performance and stifles meaningful youth development. Until the top leadership, particularly the CM, takes proactive ownership of youth initiatives, progress will remain elusive at the provincial level, and the potential of the youth population will continue to be underutilised.

13- Vicious cycle of low utilisation and lack of basic facilities

Provincial departments face a significant challenge in utilising their allocated funds due to a lack of basic resources, creating a vicious cycle. Social departments' HR demands remain unmet (as discussed earlier in point number 8), with district-level officers absent or overburdened, often overseeing multiple districts without adequate support, particularly transportation. This scarcity of resources and capacity leads to poor fund utilisation, which in turn results in reduced future allocations. A stark example is the Balochistan Youth Department, which operates from a mere two rooms with no furniture, accommodating 147 staff with only five chairs. Although a building is available, it lacks essential facilities. Addressing these fundamental gaps is essential to enhance departmental efficacy and fund utilisation.

14- Limited outreach, inadequate district-level infrastructure, and non-functional local governments

The absence of a district-level setup for youth departments poses significant administrative challenges. In Sindh, the only district-level youth department office is located in Karachi, while in Balochistan, there is a single office in Quetta. In Punjab, the main hub is in Lahore, and DSOs are only now being redesignated as DSYOs. The lack of dedicated offices at the district level hinders effective management and oversight, making it difficult to efficiently coordinate and deliver youth programmes and services. Balochistan's vast and expansive terrain further compounds the challenge, making it nearly impossible to reach remote areas due to the lack of transportation facilities. The situation is dire, as the Balochistan Youth Department does not even have a single vehicle at its disposal, severely hindering its ability to access and serve the province's far-flung regions.

The peculiar case of KP

In the local governance context, KP presents a unique challenge: while other provinces lack dedicated youth officers at the district level, KP is moving towards establishing a setup at the tehsil level. However, this requires substantial resources, which are currently unavailable. Although the law has been passed, the process of devolution to the tehsil level has stalled due to insufficient resources, leaving many provincial departments unable to function effectively as tehsil governments remain idle without a clear framework or financial support.

Moreover, devolution at the tehsil level has created a dilemma regarding the reporting structure of DYO. With one DYO potentially responsible for multiple tehsils—often up to five—it raises the question of which tehsil the DYO should report to. To resolve this, 980 (later reduced to 122) more posts will have to be created to make the youth department functional at the tehsil level, which is a very high expenditure for the government to bear, especially considering there are a total of 27 departments in the KP provincial government.

Currently, funding is channelled into district accounts through the Provincial Finance Commission (PFC). By policy, 2.5 per cent of the total district budget should be allocated to youth development, but this guideline is often ignored. Many DCs are unaware of the existence of DYOs, and even those who do know tend to view them merely as event managers. The core issue lies in the absence of clear JDs for these officers.

The absence of local government involvement in the functioning of youth departments creates a significant gap in the implementation of youth programmes, resulting in a stark disparity between

the attention received by central regions versus peripheral areas. Although youth hostels have been built in some districts, many remain incomplete and are deemed a misallocation of resources for youth development. Our consultations revealed that these hostels often serve as mere token initiatives, with rooms frequently allocated to individuals based on political connections rather than genuine youth needs. Furthermore, these hostels often get reassigned to other departments, such as sports or education, undermining their intended purpose.

15- Grievance redressal is often non-transparent

Redressal committees and notified committees exist at the departmental level, but some representatives stressed that their effectiveness is hindered by political interference. Additionally, a significant gap remains in addressing district-level issues, as committees only exist at the provincial level. To bridge this gap, establishing divisional and district-level committees is necessary for effective grievance redressal and accountability.

16- Brick and mortar

Hard infrastructure projects, such as construction and irrigation, often receive priority funding over social development initiatives. This may be attributed to their tangible nature, visibility, and potential for political gain, as well as opportunities for rent-seeking. This approach can result in uneven resource allocation, fragmentation of efforts, and compromised effectiveness and efficiency of public spending.

Funding decisions may be swayed by political considerations, leading to project prioritisation based on political gain rather than an objective criterion. Furthermore, social development programmes may receive inadequate attention and funding, potentially due to their perceived intangibility or lower political value. Proposals put forward by the directorate are not given any importance if there are no political gains associated with them. This can lead to insufficient resource allocation for initiatives with significant potential to benefit youth.

By far, the highest allocations—surpassed by even higher utilisation—are made to departments engaged in hard infrastructure development, while social sectors lack political ownership. Even within social departments, ‘brick and mortar’ projects took precedence over capacity development initiatives, e.g., construction of youth hostels as opposed to developing an online job portal.

17- (Dis)incentives matter

The lack of accountability and clear KPIs in the departments has led to a culture of complacency. Many officers are motivated by personal gain, seeking benefits like vehicles, offices, and fuel, rather than a desire to deliver results. This has resulted in reduced drive and motivation within departments, with progress hindered by procedural delays and bureaucratic red tape. The patronage of department heads is often prioritised over merit, leading to the suppression of innovative projects.

During our consultations, the P&D department, which serves as a coordination body, highlighted another concerning trend: a pervasive lack of engagement and follow-through from other departments on their own initiatives. In P&D’s efforts to seek clarification on PC-1 forms or proposals, they fail to get any response from the relevant departments, hindering effective collaboration and project progress.

Without incentives to deliver, the system inadvertently rewards latency and inaction. The absence of timesheets, departmental KPIs, and financial or non-financial incentives has created a disincentive to work hard. Political influence and a lack of motivation to partner with external

stakeholders further exacerbate the issue. Ultimately, the department's capacity issues are compounded by a lack of clarity, thought, and initiative among officers, stifling the performance of the youth department.

18- Tug of war between sports and youth departments

In all provinces, except Punjab and AJK, the sports and youth departments share a secretariat but maintain separate directorates, leading to a perpetual power struggle over resources. The sports department invariably dominates this contest, leaving the youth department to operate with scarce resources and limited support. Consequently, the majority of initiatives and programmes aimed at supporting youth development are sports-focused.

In Punjab and AJK, the situation is more dire, with no dedicated directorate for youth. Instead, there is only a youth wing under the Sports and Youth Affairs department in Punjab and a combined sports, youth, and culture department in AJK.

The tangible nature of sports initiatives (cricket tournaments, hockey stadium, etc.) leads to a prioritisation of expenditures in sports departments, often at the expense of more critical youth issues like education, mental health, and employment programmes. Fearing political instability, political entities are driven to prioritise tangible, high-visibility projects that can be showcased as achievements, improving their chances of re-election. These sporting events also have high entertainment value, which appeals to the voter base. This motivation often takes precedence over more nuanced, long-term initiatives, as they seek to secure a tangible legacy to demonstrate their effectiveness and justify their return to power.

19- Political instability results in shifting priorities

Political instability poses a significant challenge to governance, as frequent regime and leadership changes lead to shifting priorities and a focus on short-term, tangible projects. Each new administration brings its own agenda, disrupting the continuity of existing initiatives and compromising their progress. To mitigate this issue, a policy was introduced to allocate a minimum of 33 per cent of funds to ongoing schemes, ensuring some level of stability. However, this allocation has been subsequently reduced to 20 per cent, and further cuts have been made this year, potentially undermining the effectiveness of the policy.

20- Planning deficits

Most provincial departments suffer from poor planning and ineffective budget cycle management, leading to inefficient resource allocation. For instance, a single department hired 31 people concurrently after a prolonged hiring freeze with no positions or space to accommodate them. This indicates a serious lack of strategic planning.

At the departmental level, inadequate planning for programmes and projects occurs during the pre-budget phase, resulting in unclear objectives and poor execution. Ambiguous ToRs, absence of action plans, and inadequate implementation strategies contribute to these trends. Actions are not marked for other departments which curbs coordination. Furthermore, there is a lack of SOPs due to which planning deficits are evident. Some other examples shared with us during consultations to highlight planning deficits include:

- Technical officers have been hired without the necessary infrastructure (e.g., computer labs) in Balochistan.
- Handicraft instructors are employed without dedicated centres where they can train others.
- Programme officers are in place without supporting resources.

- While business incubation centres have been established in KP, mechanisms to run them have not been developed.
- Youth centres have been established without proper technical staff.

21- Youth policy is too broad

One key factor which inhibits the performance of youth departments is a lack of specific targets. Policies need to be targeted and have specific objectives. However, the provincial youth policies—like many other province-level policies—are too broad and comprehensive. Due to this, clear targets cannot be set, and performance cannot be mapped. Although the Sindh Youth Policy categorises objectives into short-, medium-, and long-term goals, they remain vague and lack the necessary specificity.

22- Programme evaluation is not done

There are no formal feedback mechanisms, with feedback sought only on an ad-hoc or individual basis. Additionally, the lack of an internal M&E system and data challenges mean that post-project evaluations are rarely conducted.

In some joint projects, especially those related to PSDP, initiatives are monitored and executed at the P&D level, with post-project reviews and follow-up meetings. However, this practice is not adopted by individual departments, resulting in frequent oversight of impact assessments. To date, only a few impact assessments have been conducted, primarily for foreign-funded projects.

23- Data gaps impair planning

Data challenges persist and significantly hinder the ability to track progress in youth development outcomes. This issue extends beyond youth-related data to other areas as well. Obstacles in the collection, consolidation, and sharing of youth data—such as incomplete datasets and inconsistent reporting practices—complicate efforts to assess needs, allocate resources effectively, and evaluate the success of development initiatives.

24- Conflict of interest

In several instances, a clear conflict of interest arises when a minister is also appointed as the chairperson of the authority responsible for overseeing their department's operations. This situation is problematic because the authority, established as an independent entity by law, is meant to monitor and evaluate the department's performance. Combining these roles undermines the authority's independence and effectiveness in its oversight function.

More conflict of interest manifests in other departments, deliberately underplaying the youth department because they fear that mainstreaming the youth department may lead to a reduction in resources earmarked for their own departments. For instance, if the youth department starts focusing on adolescent health, it could lead to a reduction in resources allocated to the health department. This creates a sense of competition and resistance among various departments.

25- Us versus them

Another pressing issue the government faces when introducing new initiatives is resistance from the public due to a serious trust deficit, more pronounced in some regions of Balochistan. For instance, certain groups in Gwadar, Turbat, and along the surrounding belt perceive government initiatives as efforts to promote nationalism with the underlying agenda of indoctrinating the youth of Balochistan under the guise of patriotism. As a result, inhabitants in these regions perceive government workers as a security threat and actively resist any attempts at development.

26- Lack of youth participation in policy-making processes.

There are no coordination mechanisms to communicate with the youth or to include their voices in policymaking to ensure their issues are well-represented. There is not even sufficient staff to collect youth data from participants at events, seminars, and workshops, making it difficult to engage the same youths for future initiatives. As a result, there are no means to remain connected.

In the Sindh local government's structure, some young counsellors represent the youth. However, they are not effective as they possess no real power and serve only symbolic significance.

27- Coordination failures

In our consultations, we observed certain coordination failures as well. Coordination failure occurs when individuals or groups struggle to align their actions and decisions effectively, hindering their ability to reach a common objective. Below are two main examples:

Example 1:

- The secretariat believes that the directorate is inefficient, lacks drive, is unwilling to work, and is primarily interested in securing more funds for personal gains.
- Conversely, the directorate perceives the secretariat as politically compromised.

Example 2:

- Departments do not receive external funding from donors because they lack an M&E setup.
- Departments do not have an M&E setup because they do not receive donor funding.

28- SRH and child marriages are still considered taboo.

Certain issues impacting youth development, unfortunately, remain taboo, presenting significant challenges. The lack of awareness and education at the primary and grassroots levels contributes to resistance against programmes aimed at addressing these issues, thereby hindering governmental efforts. This resistance is further complicated by prevailing religious, social, and cultural diversity issues, which limit the government's ability to openly address these matters and underscore the need for stronger legal frameworks. Cultural barriers, particularly those related to women's issues, also play a crucial role in this resistance.

Despite these challenges, experience suggests that public opposition to issues such as SRH, GBV, mental health, child marriages, and child labour is generally manageable, especially when appropriate incentives are provided. Some regions with strong religious sentiments may exhibit higher levels of resistance to some initiatives. Nevertheless, Pakistan's overall cultural and social climate is largely prepared to engage with and address these critical issues.

Table 10 provides a summary of the issues highlighted in this chapter and identifies where the issue lies: at the directorate level, secretariat level, interdepartmental/government level, or community level.

Table 10: Where the Problem Lies

	Issue	Directorate level	Secretariat level	Interdepartmental /Government level	Community level
1	Provincial government silos				
2	High political intervention				
3	Cumbersome 'approvals' and procedural handicaps				
4	Frequent transfers and postings				
5	Compromised continuity of programmes and initiatives				
6	Lack of digitisation				
7	Creation of cadre posts				
8	Human resource constraints				
9	Financial resource constraints				
10	External stakeholder mapping is missing				
11	Symbolic policies				
12	Youth is a mere buzzword				
13	The vicious cycle of low utilisation and lack of basic facilities				
14	Limited outreach, inadequate district-level infrastructure, and non-functional local governments				
15	Grievance redressal is often non-transparent				
16	Brick and mortar				
17	(Dis)incentives matter				
18	Tug of war between sports and youth departments				
19	Political instability results in shifting priorities				
20	Planning deficits				
21	Youth policy is too broad and comprehensive				
22	Programme evaluation is not done				
23	Data gaps mar planning				
24	Conflict of interest				
25	Us versus them				
26	Lack of youth participation in policy-making processes				
27	Coordination failures				
28	SRH and child marriages are still considered taboo				

LOOKING BEYOND THE OBVIOUS: STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION



CHAPTER 5- LOOKING BEYOND THE OBVIOUS: STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION



The youth department encompasses a wide array of stakeholders across various hierarchical levels. At the higher government level, stakeholders influence policy formulation and implementation using both de jure and de facto powers. Other stakeholders are involved in specific youth-related themes and impact service delivery on the ground. These stakeholders can act as enablers, blockers, swing actors, change agents, service providers, or regulators, each guided by their interests.

Systemic and structural power imbalances may favour certain individuals with vested interests, skewing outcomes in their favour. Others may use power tactics such as lobbying, coalition-building, or leveraging media influence to assert their position and sway decisions. These tactics can further complicate the dynamics, making it essential to identify and understand the motivations and strategies of each stakeholder to effectively address their concerns and harness their potential contributions.

Figure 20 presents a sample stakeholder map, identifying stakeholders at various levels. Some stakeholders influence specific domains within the youth department's mandate, while others impact its overall functioning. Understanding this stakeholder map can help recognise the key players, their areas of influence, and how they interact with the youth department.

The stakeholder map shows that the youth department—encompassing the secretariat and the directorate—must deal with various stakeholders at different levels. All these stakeholders use different mechanisms to exert their influence. As the youth department deals with a myriad of issues, different stakeholder lists have been provided for each theme to ensure relevance. Please note that the stakeholders listed under each theme represent only the primary stakeholders and are not exhaustive. This identification aims to propose a preliminary framework for youth departments, facilitating their ability to establish synergies with these other actors.

Within these actors, it is important to identify the motivations that drive the stakeholders' actions so that the youth department can strategise accordingly. Moreover, it is crucial to carefully assess their levels of influence, and the mechanisms they use to exert that influence. The aim must be to reduce the influence of those actors that block positive reforms or initiatives and leverage the power and influence of those who want to bring positive change.

As this report focuses on the political economy of youth departments, we will conduct a detailed analysis of the broader stakeholders that affect the departments' overall efficacy and contribute to the political environment. These stakeholders include political actors, coordinators, bureaucrats, administrators, external service providers, and youth themselves. Nevertheless, the youth department must perform a thematic stakeholder analysis so that external influences in its performance can be optimised.

Table 11 succinctly presents the political economy review of provincial youth departments, identifying key actors, their motivations, their levels of influence, and the mechanisms they use to exert influence, including both de jure and de facto powers. The analysis is presented based on observations from consultative sessions with provincial representatives and in-depth interviews.

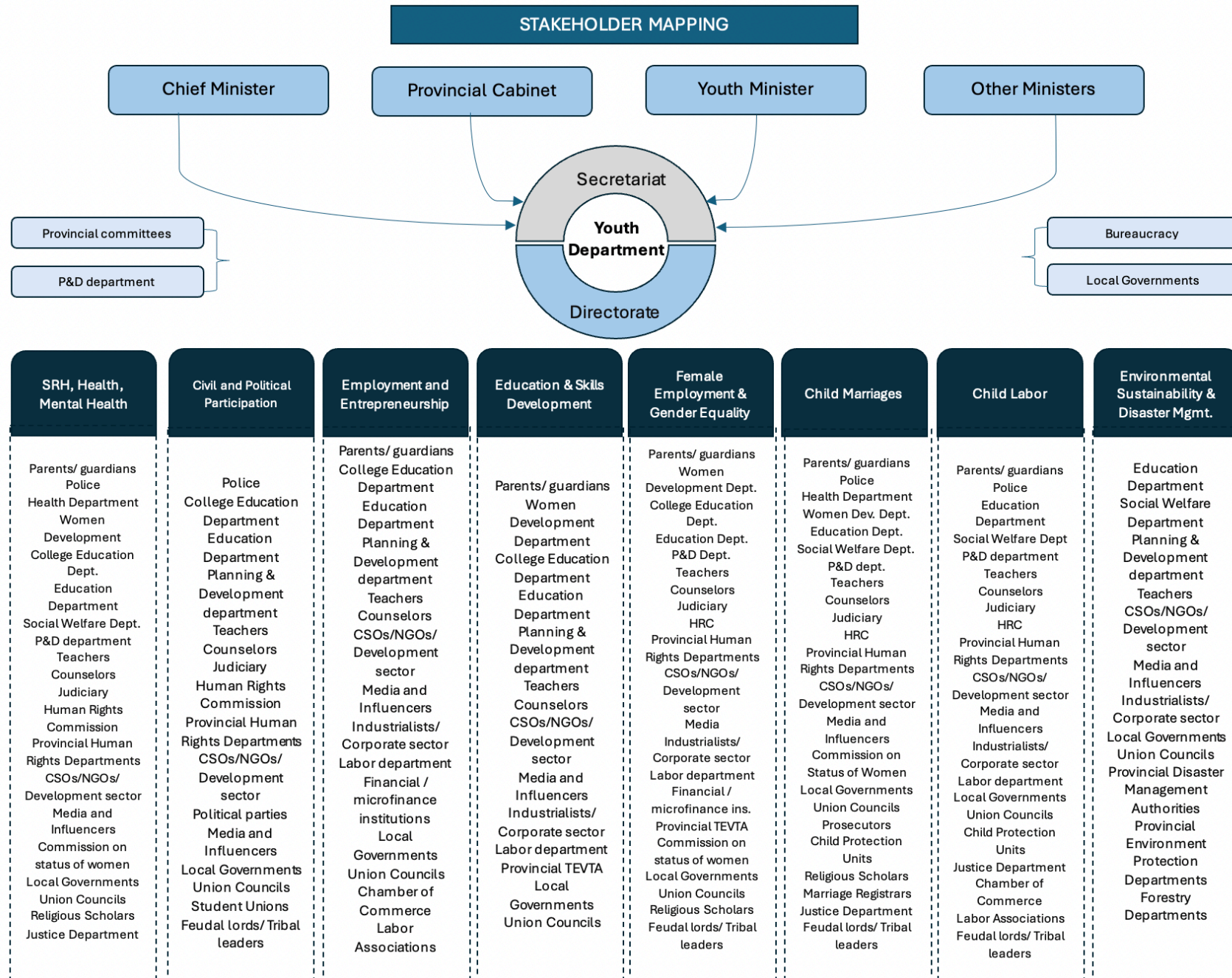


Figure 20: Stakeholders Map

POLITICAL ECONOMY ASSESSMENT OF YOUTH DEPARTMENTS				
Political	Chief minister	Securing maximum resources from the federal government for provincial development. Political survival under a highly politically unstable environment. Rent-seeking.	Very strong	<p>De jure power:</p> <p>Sets overall strategic direction for the province. Appoints youth minister.</p> <p>De facto power:</p> <p>Sets priorities. Reinforces them in public speeches, policy forums, etc. Influences budget allocation. Can influence cabinet decisions.</p>
	Provincial cabinet	Rent-seeking. Strengthening of political clout. Political survival.	Strong	<p>De jure power:</p> <p>Pass youth-centric policies and legislation.</p> <p>Has the power to form proper forums where political intervention can be reported. Has the power to mandate coordination mechanisms between youth and other departments.</p> <p>De facto power:</p> <p>Influence budget allocation. Some policies may get tabled. Resist attempts to form proper policies/ rules/ procedures to curtail the power of bureaucracy.</p>
	Youth minister	Strengthening political clout and voter bank for survival. Rewarding loyalists to strengthen political capital. Rent-seeking behaviour. Prioritising sports for tangible outcomes.	Very strong	<p>De jure power:</p> <p>Prioritising certain aspects of youth development</p> <p>De facto power:</p> <p>Rewarding maximum 'development' projects to own people. Thwarting youth involvement in policymaking. Politically motivated hirings and firings. Bypassing merit-based hiring processes. High staff turnover reduces the efficacy and continuity of initiatives. Cadre posts created for own people in the department. Own people rewarded with promotions etc. Hindering modernisation of youth-centric policies. Prioritisation of sports. Procedural delays. 'Approvals' needed for every small initiative. Block efforts to digitise departmental records.</p>
	Other departmental ministers	Competing priorities: downplaying the role of the youth department to secure maximum resources for own department.	Strong	<p>De jure power:</p> <p>Advocating in favour of their own departments. Securing projects and finances for own departments.</p> <p>De facto power:</p> <p>Securing maximum schemes for home constituencies. Lobbying for subsidies, grants, or policies. Influence legislation aimed at improving youth rights or welfare. Ministers controlling finance or budget allocation may reduce funding earmarked for youth programmes in favour of funding for hard infrastructure.</p>

Coordinators	Secretaries' committee, standing committees, & provincial coordination committees.	Monitor the impact of youth programmes and recommend adjustments to improve provincial performance.	Medium	<p>De jure power: Monitoring departments and proposing adjustments.</p> <p>De facto power: Might influence the department's performance in exchange for a favourable assessment.</p>
	P&D department	Maintaining discretionary powers for rent-seeking. Strengthening of political clout. Political survival.	Medium	<p>De jure power: Setting priorities by rejecting certain projects in favour of others.</p> <p>De facto power: Prioritising hard infrastructure projects. Rewarding maximum projects to home constituencies. Creating delays and procedural hurdles.</p>
Bureaucracy	Secretaries, additional secretaries, etc.	Strengthening political clout to get preferred postings. Lengthening tenure at preferred post. Strong likes and dislikes. Maintaining discretionary powers for rent-seeking. Prioritising infrastructure development to deepen rent-seeking opportunities and strengthen political and economic allies.	Very strong	<p>De jure power: Setting the strategic direction of the department by developing programmes, and initiatives. Engaging in negotiations and advocacy to secure additional resources for the department.</p> <p>De facto power: Cadre posts created for favoured people. Lobbying for political capital. Officers who resist are demoted, their reputations ruined and labelled as bad officers. Transfers/postings to unfavoured areas. Vehicles withdrawn Office space withdrawn Promotions blocked Creation of non-formal rules and procedures. Procedural delays and roadblocks. Strategise to move to departments with more public dealings. Block efforts to digitalise departmental records. Funding diverted towards hard infrastructure development projects. Creating hurdles for CSOs to deliver.</p>
Administrators	Department directors	Securing maximum funding for projects. Minimising effort in absence of incentives. Want to increase their tenure.	Medium	Follow-up on projects is inefficient. Do not actively engage with external stakeholders to develop synergies for maximised impact. Do not challenge bureaucracy openly for fear of losing their positions.
	Local governments	Maximising funds for capacity development. Securing 'development' projects.	Very low	Remain inactive in the absence of resources and incentives.
External service providers	CSOs, NGOs, and development sector.	Improved access and development outcomes.	Medium	Advocacy, policy briefs, publications, funding for focused programmes.
Beneficiaries	Youth	Access to better and equitable socio-economic opportunities.	Very low	Social media Protests, demonstrations, etc.

THEORY OF CHANGE-POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION



CHAPTER 6- THEORY OF CHANGE-POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION



Having assessed the current state of youth and their pressing issues, identified functional capacity constraints of provincial youth departments, analysed political economy and other challenges, and examined key stakeholders, the next step is to outline actionable recommendations. This chapter presents four-tier recommendations to enhance youth development outcomes:

1. Recommendations to enhance the functional capacity of youth departments
2. Programme-level recommendations
3. Policy-level recommendations
4. Actor-specific recommendations

Tier 1: Enhancing Functional Capacity of Youth Departments

Dedicated youth department for Punjab and AJK, with its own directorate. Secretariats in other provinces must focus on broader aspects of youth development, beyond just sports

Punjab and AJK must develop an independent youth department with a dedicated directorate so that its current focus on sports can be reduced to prioritise other crucial aspects of youth development. Although initiatives such as internship programmes, e-libraries functioning as youth centres, and seminars have been introduced, a comprehensive framework that addresses the full spectrum of youth development is still lacking.

In other provinces, the stark discrepancies in resources and attention allocated towards sports versus youth affairs also need to be revisited. The secretariat must be sensitised to the critical need to focus on other aspects of youth development, particularly decent employment. The development sector can play a pivotal role by providing technical support to the secretariat and advocating for increased resource allocation to advance youth development initiatives. They can also provide a clear roadmap for restructuring the department to give equitable weightage to sports and youth affairs departments.

Updating the youth policy to include new and evolving issues, making it more specific with tangible, intermediate targets

All provincial youth departments—except GB's—must work to develop a new youth policy for their province that is concise and specific. These policies should be no longer than 15-20 pages long, specifying well-defined targets and setting a clear direction for the department. The policies must highlight key areas that the department aims to target over the next 3-5 years on a priority basis, along with the required resources.

The policies must also be nuanced to exhibit sensitivity to cultural diversity rather than being

a direct replication of other provinces' youth policies. The policies must address evolving needs, such as green skills, the gig economy, automation, and artificial intelligence, within the realms of education, skills development, entrepreneurship, and employment. In this regard, the development sector can facilitate by providing technical expertise to draft more targeted youth policies.

Developing a clear roadmap and monitoring progress

A detailed action plan must be developed by the youth department that is aligned with the youth policy. This strategic framework should outline specific goals, timelines, and milestones for each initiative within the youth department, incorporating clear objectives, resource allocation, and mechanisms for monitoring progress. This plan must mark specific actions for other concerned departments in each initiative as well. Clearly delineating these responsibilities and establishing timelines will foster accountability and ensure coordinated efforts across all departments. This action plan can be developed in close coordination with the development sector.

Stakeholder mapping is also crucial for this. Conducting a thorough mapping process for all thematic areas will help identify all relevant parties involved in or impacted by youth-related policies and initiatives. Engaging these stakeholders to understand their interests and potential contributions will aid in aligning efforts and enhancing the overall effectiveness of the implementation process.

In addition, cabinet members can ensure the formation of secretaries' committees and/or other coordination committees with properly defined KPIs to ensure progress along the action plan. These committees should be responsible for regularly assessing progress, addressing challenges, and facilitating communication among departments. It was discussed in our consultations that this can be an effective approach as these committees are typically fair and transparent, and less likely to face political intervention since resources and money are not directly involved. However, proper incentives need to be in place for these committees to function properly.

It is important to note here that the creation of a Youth Commission is already stipulated in all youth policies; however, there has been limited implementation of this mandate. The development sector must play its role in advocating the formation of a representative Youth Commission in all provinces on a priority basis by onboarding cabinet members, ministers, and the secretariat.

Improving coordination

In addition to monitoring progress, these committees can help improve coordination by facilitating communication between different departments. Regular coordination meetings with predefined frequency can be held to allow departments to learn about each other's activities. An event calendar can be developed by the youth directorate to facilitate this process.

If an idea, project, or plan is initiated at the PSDP level, it is recommended to form a working group comprising representatives from related departments. This working group should include Grade 17-19 officers from the relevant departments, along with federal representatives. To ensure transparency and accountability, the group should conduct regular meetings with detailed minutes recorded for each session.

Additionally, consolidating similar initiatives from different departments can significantly enhance coordination. This approach will help prevent duplication of efforts and ensure that resources are synergized for greater impact.

Other coordination mechanisms involving both internal and external stakeholders must also be

established. The youth department must take the lead in developing these mechanisms. For instance, an e-newsletter can be developed to highlight new initiatives, and the website can be updated regularly.

Ensuring specialisation, continuity of initiatives, and preserving institutional knowledge

To ensure consistency and continuity of initiatives, it is recommended that directorate-side officers be kept as permanent staff in concerned departments. Although these officers may be transferred between different offices (e.g., from one district to another), their department should remain the same. This approach will help preserve institutional memory and prevent the disruption caused by frequent transfers across different departments, such as health, education, and women's development.

To preserve institutional knowledge, it is essential to thoroughly document and digitise all coordination efforts in the form of meeting minutes, reports, PowerPoint presentations, etc. Nominating a focal person from each department to attend all follow-up meetings will also help streamline communication.

Reforming the incentives model

Creating the right incentives is important. The introduction of performance-based bonuses can help reduce rent-seeking motivations. Career advancement opportunities should be transparent and based on having met certain targets. Additionally, offering comprehensive training and development programmes is essential for enhancing employee skills and overall departmental effectiveness. In addition, giving due acknowledgement and credit to dedicated staff members can act as a great motivator.

Improving outreach and linkages with local governments by equipping youth centres and training DYOs

The lack of basic facilities in most districts must be addressed by setting up dedicated district-level youth offices. These offices would facilitate more localised and effective service delivery and enhance linkages with the local governments. Moreover, accessibility to hard-to-reach areas can be facilitated by providing essential vehicles to the department.

In KP, Punjab, and GB, where some youth centres have already been established, there is a need to equip these centres equitably through donor assistance. IT needs must be addressed on a priority basis as access to digital infrastructure can open a world of opportunities for marginalised youth. DYOs will also need comprehensive training in IT, e-commerce, marketing, career counselling, etc. to enable them to address broader youth issues. Well-defined job descriptions should be developed to allow them to move beyond their current roles as event managers. This is particularly crucial in Punjab, where DSOs are now being redesignated as DSYOs, and in KP, where DYOs often serve merely as event organisers for DCs.

Developing staff KPIs and defining roles and responsibilities

To ensure the effective functioning of the youth departments, the roles and responsibilities of all staff positions must be clearly defined. Each team member should have a specific set of duties, and these should be communicated transparently to avoid any overlap or confusion.

Reducing political intervention

To reduce political interference in youth departments, the provincial cabinets need to establish clear and documented rules, policies and regulations. By outlining specific guidelines that limit the power and influence of political figures, departments can create a framework that protects them against undue interference. When these rules are in writing, it becomes easier to challenge

politically motivated actions by referencing the established policies.

Another important measure is to mandate that any organisation working with the youth department must be registered with the relevant regulatory authority, e.g., the Punjab Charity Commission, Balochistan Charities Registration & Regulation Authority, Sindh Charity Commission, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Charitable Commission. This requirement will prevent ministers from partnering with certain organisations for personal gain, as all collaborations would need to meet the registration criteria.

Revising the organisational structure of youth departments is another strategy to minimise political interference. This could involve downsizing or restructuring certain areas to streamline operations and reduce procedural hurdles. Legal provisions should be enacted to curtail the powers of certain actors, ensuring that their influence is kept in check and that decisions are made in the best interest of all youth, not just a select few. A proper framework can be developed in coordination with donors to regulate district-wise allocations for youth development. A youth expenditure review can also be conducted to highlight which areas/districts have been prioritised over the past, and which need to be focused on in the future for more equitable outcomes.

Finally, it is crucial to hire competent professionals for key administrative positions on a merit basis from the open market. By ensuring that qualified individuals manage the department's affairs, the likelihood of political interference will be further reduced.

Reducing the frequency of transfers and postings

To mitigate the use of transfers and postings as tools for manipulation and to reduce their frequency, several strategic measures can be undertaken. Most importantly, it is imperative to ensure the effective implementation of the three-year policy. Although the policy is in place to limit frequent transfers, its execution has been inadequate. To address this, robust mechanisms must be developed to enforce compliance and challenge any violations.

Second, addressing the low motivation among officers in social sectors is crucial. These officers often seek transfers to more engaging public dealing departments due to dissatisfaction with their current roles. To retain skilled personnel and improve motivation, it is necessary to reduce the incentives that encourage such transfers.

Increasing scrutiny of employee transfers can also help ensure that they are justified and transparent. One solution can be to increase the number of notified officers as their transfers have to be justified—were they transferred for higher education, retirement, or because of any corruption allegation? This heightened scrutiny will serve as a barrier to frequent transfers and postings, promoting greater accountability and stability within the department.

Finally, reinforcing the importance of maintaining institutional memory and enhancing departmental performance is vital. By preserving knowledge and experience within the department, continuity and effectiveness of initiatives can be ensured.

Incentivising innovation

The youth department suffers from a lack of originality, which affects its effectiveness and relevance. To address this, it is essential to incentivise innovation and align initiatives with global best practices. Updating existing programmes and approaches will help modernise efforts and ensure they remain relevant. The Head of Department (HoD) should adopt a dynamic approach to keep programmes and initiatives current. Embracing new ideas and methodologies will improve effectiveness.

Additionally, introducing flexibility into the system is crucial. Rigidity can reduce efficiency, responsiveness, and the incentive to innovate. Allowing for adaptability will enhance the department's ability to meet evolving needs and improve overall performance.

Tier 2: Programme-Level Recommendations

Data, data, and more data

A key challenge highlighted in the report is the lack of representative data on youth. To enhance decision-making and policy implementation, a nationally representative youth survey must be conducted on a priority basis, so that reliable and up-to-date data can be collected, consolidated, and made available at the tehsil level.

Providing localised data will allow for a more accurate understanding of regional needs and ensure that solutions are tailored to address the specific challenges faced by youth in different areas. At present, all provincial youth departments suffer from data deficits that affect their ability to prioritise certain initiatives and areas. Reliable and comprehensive youth data will support more effective and responsive governance which ensures equity. It will also enable more accurate impact assessments, as baseline data will be available for comparison, helping to track progress and measure the effectiveness of interventions.

To achieve this, provincial bureaus of statistics must take action. In the case of AJK and GB, the PBS may take the lead, eventually paving the way for provincial statistical departments to be established in these two regions as well. As a pilot initiative, the survey could be launched in KP, with plans to gradually extend it to other provinces. This phased approach would allow for refining the process before scaling it nationwide.

Needs assessment and functional capacity development of line departments, including Women Development, Population Welfare, Social Welfare, and others

Youth is a cross-cutting sector that demands collaborative implementation of initiatives, requiring strong coordination and support to and from other departments. However, many youth-centric initiatives struggle due to capacity constraints within line departments.

A comprehensive capacity development and functional review should be undertaken to address this, starting with a detailed needs assessment of relevant departments, particularly social sector departments. This will enable two-way collaboration in implementing youth initiatives, ensuring that both youth departments and their counterparts have the necessary skills and resources for effective execution and synergised impact.

Enhancing social acceptability of sensitive issues and targeting low-hanging fruit

To improve social acceptability for sensitive issues such as SRH, GBV, and early child marriage, it is crucial to reframe these topics thoughtfully. For example, reframing 'sexual and reproductive health' as 'health and reproductive rights' can reduce resistance to these issues. In addition, leveraging educational initiatives is vital. Youth departments can nominate and train student ambassadors who can advocate for these issues within their schools and communities. Their role will be to facilitate discussions, raise awareness, and promote understanding. Awareness campaigns should be utilised to reach a wider audience. Social media offers a powerful platform for disseminating information and engaging with various demographics.

Looking beyond government funds

When government funds are insufficient, the department must explore alternative funding sources to sustain and advance initiatives. Engaging with NGOs and CSOs can be an effective

strategy in this case, particularly when these organisations are eager to work with the government to advance youth development initiatives.

Another effective strategy is to establish public-private partnerships in collaboration with the corporate social responsibility (CSR) units of multinational corporations and other private local firms. These partnerships can facilitate sustainable financing and support initiatives aimed at providing financial assistance to young entrepreneurs, advancing the digitisation of mechanisms, and creating livelihood and education opportunities.

To form a successful collaboration, clarity of direction is essential. When officers and departments demonstrate drive and motivation, they can attract financial support from donors and other non-governmental sources by pursuing them directly. For this, it is important to overcome any defeatist attitudes and maintain a focus on leveraging the resources and institutions available, however limited they may be. Strengthening HR and other basic capacities is also critical to ensure that these opportunities are effectively utilised and sustained.

Revamp skill development programmes

In our consultations, we learned that many different departments were concurrently offering skill development programmes, without any linkages with each other. This poses a problem because there is no consistency in the quality of courses or curriculum being taught. Skills development programmes should be consolidated and brought under a single umbrella for more optimal resource utilisation and synergised impact.

It is also important to update the curriculum of the courses offered in these programmes to better align with the evolving job market, thereby enhancing the employability of graduates. This requires conducting market assessments to ensure that courses equip students with the skills most in demand by employers—both nationally and internationally. Further, to improve employability, practical knowledge should be imparted in these programmes. The syllabus should be revised and changed to focus more on practical skills, and with greater emphasis on emerging subjects including green skills, digital skills, artificial intelligence, etc.

It is also essential to connect skill development programmes directly with employers seeking to hire trained graduates. This linkage will help ensure that the skills being taught are aligned with job market demands and increase the likelihood of successful employment of participants after course completion. The Foreign Office can be engaged in forming these linkages with employers in other countries.

To ensure these skill development programmes are managed properly and a level of seriousness is sustained, departments must enforce stricter eligibility criteria and admission requirements so that only students with genuine interest get enrolled. It is also important to enhance outreach efforts to ensure that more youth are aware of and can benefit from these programmes. Similarly, the quality of trainers needs to be properly monitored. Most importantly, accessibility of these training centres must be ensured to close gender disparities.

Enhancing youth participation and representation

To improve youth civic and political participation, it is important to create opportunities for the youth where they can contribute positively to their own development. One way to do this is by taking young people on board for voluntary services by fixing an intern quota in youth departments. Ensuring merit-based appointments for dedicated youth can help resolve HR capacity constraints as well. These interns will bring in new ideas to bring innovation to the functioning of the youth department. The youth can also receive training in the process, benefitting them in their future endeavours. In provinces with a history of similar setups, youth

voluntary committees can be reinstated to support ongoing youth engagement. This can be managed in close coordination with the development sector and the academia.

The importance of activating youth commissions proposed in each of the youth policies cannot be emphasised enough here. The bodies must be formed or activated with immediate effect, ensuring adequate representation of youth to effectively address their needs and priorities.

Volunteerism in other fields must also be encouraged. Though it is part of all provincial youth policies, intern quotas are not implemented uniformly to create opportunities for youth in the private sector, which increases resentment. Incentives can be introduced for the corporate sector to encourage them to provide internship opportunities for youth, such as tax benefits, government recognition and awards, etc.

Universities should prioritise constitutional literacy to ensure students are well-informed about their rights, as well as the rules and procedures necessary to achieve their goals. This focus can also help curb extremism and intolerance by guiding youth toward legal avenues for making a lasting impact. In this context, the development sector can also play a crucial role by organising workshops for the youth to engage in discussions on policy issues while equipping them with the skills to effectively analyse and utilise data to support their arguments.

Most importantly, ensuring the implementation of the Sindh Student Union Act 2022 and introducing similar legislation in other provinces is vital for increasing youth activism and engagement in universities. Suppressing youth voices may offer temporary relief, but it is ultimately a ticking time bomb.

The importance of economically empowering the youth

Much of the youth's underdevelopment stems from their lack of economic empowerment. Therefore, the top priority for all provincial governments must be to create economic opportunities for the youth so they can become financially independent. For this, multiple departments would have to work in tandem to develop a roadmap which helps young people capitalise on their skills and education.

One way to achieve this is by establishing a youth endowment fund so that they can be facilitated beyond skill provision. This fund could provide seed money to top graduates of skill development programmes, enabling them to start small, independent businesses. While the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) offers easy financing options for youth, the distribution of these funds is not equitable. For instance, youth from remote or indigenous areas often do not have access to these loans, as the SBP lacks awareness of the on-the-ground realities in these regions.

Other private sector actors and financial institutions can play a crucial role by offering low-interest or interest-free loans to young entrepreneurs with strong potential. Additionally, providing incentives to support SMEs can further stimulate youth-led business ventures and contribute to economic empowerment.

Ensuring the implementation of the Labour Policy is also of utmost importance to elevate the status of non-formal youth, and to integrate them into the formal economy.

Amplifying impact through strategic resource pooling and partnerships

The youth department must take the lead to form effective partnerships with other well-funded departments that work on issues more relevant to youth. For example, it must try to build strong linkages with college education departments to organise collaborative events. This coordination can begin at the divisional level, ultimately extending to the provincial level.

Likewise, culture departments often have high funding; the youth departments can work in close collaboration with them and pool resources to design and implement more impactful programmes. The directorates will have to take the lead on this.

Tier 3: Policy-Level Recommendations

Reforming the bureaucratic hierarchy

To alleviate undue pressure and mitigate inefficiencies within the bureaucratic system, it is imperative that all individuals and departments strictly adhere to their constitutionally defined roles and responsibilities. Challenges emerge when senior bureaucrats and ministers intercede to impact decisions that fall within the purview of junior officials. Such interventions disrupt the established chain of command and undermine the effectiveness of governance. Therefore, it is crucial to enforce a clear delineation of roles to ensure that decision-making processes remain unimpeded.

Rules of Business need to be revisited

Several provincial departments have indicated that they often do not coordinate with other departments because the current provisions stipulated in their respective Rules of Business do not mandate such collaboration. This lack of interdepartmental coordination hinders the effectiveness of policies and programmes that require a unified approach. Updating the Rules of Business to explicitly encourage and facilitate interdepartmental collaboration would optimise resource utilization and enhance the effectiveness of policy implementation.

Prioritising social spending and youth development at the policy level beyond lip service

Despite the political rhetoric, the social needs of the youth population in Pakistan remain pressing. Issues such as high unemployment rates, inadequate access to quality education, and limited opportunities for social and economic mobility continue to affect the youth. Addressing these needs requires a sustained and coherent policy approach that goes beyond electoral cycles and political agendas.

Provincial governments must recognise that long-term, sustainable development is achievable only through substantial investments in the quality of the population. And so, the political leadership must take ownership of youth initiatives. The secretary should actively follow up and reinforce these efforts to enhance political commitment. This commitment must be reflected in the PSDP and ADPs through a focused allocation of resources toward youth initiatives.

Completing tasks by freezing PSDP and ADP schemes

One significant issue that hinders overall development across all provinces is the disruption of projects due to frequent leadership changes. In this politically unstable environment, many projects are abandoned midway as each new leader seeks to introduce their own initiatives, often driven by vested interests. This practice not only leaves ongoing projects in disarray but also disrupts continuity, creating further incentives for political interference.

A prime example of this is infrastructure projects: a 10 km road project may see 4 km completed before a new minister takes over, leaving the remaining 6 km unfinished. As a result, the initial 4 km built may eventually deteriorate, rendering the entire project wasteful. This pattern occurs because every new minister prioritises benefiting their own constituency to gain political mileage and strengthen their influence, often at the expense of ongoing work.

To mitigate these disruptions, it is crucial to implement a policy that freezes PSDP and ADP

schemes for five years at both the federal and provincial levels. During this timeframe, no new schemes should be introduced, allowing for a focused approach to completing existing projects. Health, education, and social spending must be prioritised within these five years to ensure sustained development.

Participatory policymaking

To ensure that youth policies address genuine issues, it is crucial to include the voices of young people in the policymaking process. The significant disconnect between the broader population and political representatives often leads to the creation of policies that are generic, broad, and ineffective. Engaging the youth directly can help tailor policies to their specific needs and concerns.

Participatory policymaking is hindered by the sidelining of dedicated political party workers. Currently, political engagement is largely dominated by wealthy individuals motivated by power, influence, or personal gain, rather than loyalty to the party's vision. These representatives prioritise personal gains and powerful positions over genuine commitment to party goals and human development. To address this issue, mechanisms for participatory politics must be established, including the reactivation of student politics.

In this regard, the development sector can play a pivotal role by providing a platform for young people to communicate their issues and collaborate on identifying practical solutions. One effective approach would be to organise a two-day Townhall Symposium that brings together youth representatives, policymakers from relevant ministries, and higher authorities. By conducting discussions under Chatham House Rules, the symposium will foster open dialogue, allowing participants to voice their concerns and work together towards meaningful youth development initiatives.

Additionally, establishing parliamentary forums, such as a 'Young Parliamentarians Caucus for Youth Development', can be highly effective. This caucus, comprising young politicians, must hold at least one meeting in each of the six provinces annually, allowing youth representatives and other stakeholders to actively participate in discussions. This collaborative approach will ensure that the voices of young people are heard and integrated into policy development.

Centrally decentralised model in KP

Youth affairs in KP should be centrally managed at the provincial level, rather than being devolved to individual districts. A uniform policy across all districts is essential to maintain consistency and efficiency in addressing youth-related issues. Coordinating with multiple DCs and commissioners often complicates efforts due to varying local priorities. Therefore, while DYOs may operate under DCs, the overarching policy and strategic guidelines must be established at the provincial youth department.

To ensure the effective utilisation of the youth budget, particularly the allocated 2.5 per cent, it is crucial to implement robust financial monitoring mechanisms. Instead of allowing these funds to be held and distributed at the discretion of the DCs, they should be directly allocated to district accounts or deducted at the source by the provincial government. This approach would enable the directorate to plan and execute youth initiatives more effectively, ensuring that DYOs receive the necessary resources in a timely manner, without being subject to the preferences or decisions of individual DCs.

Ensuring strict implementation of the Labour Policy

While labour policies exist on paper to protect the rights of workers, their implementation

remains largely absent. The current state of youth employment and the prevalence of indecent job opportunities highlight the urgent need for robust enforcement of labour policies. To address this, it is essential to facilitate the formation of labour unions that can advocate for the rights and status of young non-formal workers.

Tier 4: Actor/Issue-Specific Recommendations

Youth Development Dialogue

To make youth more aware and sensitised to key policy issues, we recommend conducting a Youth Development Dialogue on a quarterly basis in collaboration with academia, CSOs, and government. This initiative will focus on creating awareness of emerging youth issues while facilitating meaningful engagement with policymakers. Ensuring provincial and gender representation is essential, as is the inclusion of youth involved in both formal and informal employment, to capture a comprehensive range of perspectives.

The dialogue may take the form of seminars and webinars, culminating in year-end reports that outline actionable policy recommendations. Additionally, a year-end 'Youth Policy Blueprint' may be issued that summarises the findings and recommendations, providing a clear direction for future youth development initiatives.

Power in unity

Collective action is essential. The youth must organise more effectively and organically to advocate for their demands, free from the influence of political parties that might exploit them for their own agendas. Overcoming intolerance and extremist attitudes is crucial, with a shared focus on youth development through greater investment in social sectors. The recent example of Bangladesh demonstrates the transformative power of the youth in challenging dynastic politics and other injustices. When united and well-organised, their potential is undeniable.

Where there's a will, there's a way

A strong sense of drive and motivation among departmental directors is essential for success. When directors are committed, they can secure or redirect financial resources and support to ensure optimal outcomes. Hence, even in challenging political environments, determined directors can drive meaningful change with the backing of CSOs, NGOs, and other private sector partners.

To achieve this, the director and other leadership must be competent and well-versed in youth issues. Decision-making authorities must receive proper training and stay informed about the broad and ever-evolving spectrum of challenges facing youth for more informed policymaking.

Resolving trust deficit

To resolve the trust deficit between the government and youth, it is essential to eliminate the 'us versus them' mentality. This can be achieved through practical, tangible measures that go beyond symbolic gestures like seminars. Instead of focusing on promoting nationalism and patriotism, the government should prioritise addressing the fundamental issues that concern young people. By offering real solutions and focusing on their needs, the government can build trust and foster a more collaborative relationship with the youth.

Addressing child marriages through female empowerment

To effectively tackle child marriages, it is essential to focus on improving female literacy and

financial independence. Empowering women to become decision-makers can be achieved through several measures, such as providing opportunities for remote jobs, offering basic skills training, and ensuring low fees for female education to enhance affordability.

Another critical strategy is to enhance protection mechanisms and incentivise whistleblowing, encouraging the reporting of child marriage and related abuses. This approach helps uncover and address instances of child marriage more effectively.

Stakeholders, including media and family, can play a crucial role in this effort. Resistance to female empowerment often stems from men who fear the social and cultural changes it may bring, particularly from within the family. Support from media, religious scholars, and teachers can be leveraged to foster supportive environments to reform these attitudes.

Additionally, providing well-trained and professional counsellors in schools, universities, and clinics is vital for supporting the mental health of young girls, and for guiding them towards productive avenues. This support helps them cope with their situations and seek constructive solutions rather than succumbing to a defeatist mindset.

Establishing a Youth Employment Portal

To enhance youth employment, a dashboard can be established on the youth website of each province to provide transparent and accessible information about job opportunities and internships, particularly in government departments. The provincial governments must prioritise long-term programmes over one-off seminars for career development. Implementing initiatives such as internships that lead to job opportunities and providing sustained and impactful support in the form of counselling can help improve youth outcomes. Further, linkages with the private sector must be strengthened to initiate management trainee programmes for fresh graduates.

Taleem-e-Balighan: Programme to Support Youth Workers in Continuing Education

To empower young workers and enhance their prospects, it is essential to implement a programme that enables youth workers to continue their education while remaining employed. This programme should offer flexible learning options, such as evening classes, online courses, and vocational training that can be integrated with their work schedules. Additionally, partnerships with educational institutions and employers can be established to provide scholarships, tuition assistance, or paid study leave.

Most importantly, it is crucial to sensitise political stakeholders to the long-term importance of youth development. Rather than focusing on one-off conventions, seminars, or events that are often held under the pretext of youth development, there should be a concerted effort to prioritise initiatives that are sustainable and have lasting impacts.

Appendix A: Thematic Comparison of Provincial Youth Policies

Themes	Punjab 2012	KP 2016	Sindh 2018	Balochistan (Draft 2021)	GB (Draft 2021)	AJK (Draft 2021)
SRH	<p>The government would establish a “Youth Helpline” for counseling of adolescents on their health and reproductive issues.</p> <p>Undertake education and communication activities in reproduction rights at the school level with cultural sensitivities of the regions in view.</p> <p>The government will initiate life-skill programmes for children and youth in schools.</p> <p>Create awareness on high risk behaviors such as HIV/AIDS and STIs and increase availability of integrated sexual and reproductive health information and services for adolescents and youth, especially the most marginalized and help prevent HIV/AIDS and STIs.</p>	<p>Undertake education and communication activities in reproduction rights at the school level with cultural sensitivities of the regions in view.</p> <p>The government will initiate life-skill programmes for children and youth in schools.</p> <p>Drug demand reduction projects, entertainment opportunities for youth, social awareness, establishment of rehabilitation centre for drug addicts.</p>	<p>Support policy environment for adolescents/youth health, SRH and rights. Advocacy for provision of adolescent and youth friendly SRH services in primary healthcare system.</p> <p>Undertake education and communication activities in reproduction rights at the school level with cultural sensitivities of the regions in view.</p> <p>Increasing mental health awareness, and issues of drug-use, tobacco use, aids, hepatitis, STDs.</p> <p>The government would establish a “Youth Helpline” for counseling of adolescents on their health and reproductive issues.</p>	<p>Information and counselling on sexuality, safe sex and reproductive health; Contraception and protective method provision; STI diagnosis and management; counselling (and referral for testing and care); Pregnancy testing and antenatal and postnatal care; Counselling on sexual violence and abuse (and referral for needed services); and Post-abortion care (PAC) etc.</p> <p>Youth groups and organizations will be encouraged to disseminate information regarding healthful practices and health services.</p> <p>Information and counseling of youth in the areas of HIV infection and AIDS prevention.</p> <p>Promotion of healthy lifestyle and protection from harmful addictions such as tobacco and drugs would be important components of integrated healthcare.</p> <p>Education programmes on nutrition, anaemia, early age marriages and reproductive health.</p> <p>initiate Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE) programmes for children and youth in schools, to provide information and skills on Reproductive Health, Health Hygiene, Environment, safe drinking water, building civic sense, career counseling to the young people and empower them to adopt safe health-seeking behaviors and protect themselves from abuse.</p> <p>Establish a “Youth Helpline” for counseling of adolescents on their health and reproductive issues.</p>	<p>Awareness regarding SRH, hygiene, family planning and adolescent issues. Expand access to the right to information and services regarding SRHR.</p> <p>Cultural taboos restricting access of the health department and existing NGOs to community for SRHR awareness and training must be mitigated.</p> <p>Availability of family planning centers for all must be ensured.</p> <p>Full engagement of community elders, local influencers, religious leaders, government, social media, and mass messaging campaigns led by the government, civil society, and the youth.</p> <p>Establishment of youth health and well-being centers to provide SRHR, health counseling, mental health counselling and general well-being center. Formation of safe and friendly youth spaces in every UC.</p> <p>HIV awareness and protection sessions need to be conducted within communities. Young newly married couples must have adequate access to the family planning counselling, services and products.</p>	<p>Population welfare and rehabilitation care facilities for the benefit of young people, as well as encouraging healthy practices among youth.</p> <p>Establishment of adolescent counselling centres.</p> <p>Launching awareness raising and preventive campaigns and programmes to combat drug abuse, smoking, HIV/AIDS, other communicable diseases, nutritional imbalances, accidental injuries, psychological and mental illnesses, and environmental hazards. Community Youth Health Committees and a confidential counselling helpline will be established for this purpose.</p> <p>Raising awareness and advocating for young people’s sexual and reproductive health and well-being through counselling and access to information.</p> <p>Conducting awareness raising and advocacy campaigns to combat female genital mutilation.</p> <p>Providing access to life skills-based education and services to prevent, diagnose and treat sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies.</p> <p>Establishing separate trauma centres for survivors of rape and ensuring the training and sensitization of all hospital staff to meet the needs of with rape survivors, without causing further harm or further endangering their lives.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Civic engagement</p>	<p>Punjab Youth Volunteers Movement (PYVM) The government would engage youth in mass campaigns and emergencies i.e. i.e. Anti-Dengue, floods, etc. Promote and support Youth Development Organizations. Require all autonomous bodies and state owned enterprises to appoint 'Youth Ambassadors' on their boards. Promotion of youth associations on campuses and in communities. Annual awards to those youth group which have successfully implemented projects to promote youth rights.</p>	<p>Promotion of student-led societies, clubs, etc to promote extra-curriculars for collective youth action. Introduction of service learning and community service programs. Coordinate youth debates on youth bulge. Youth-led mass awareness campaigns for promoting family planning in the province. Promote community service and volunteerism at school-level. Offer incentives for volunteerism- "Volunteer points" to be drawn up. Enrolment and registration of youth organizations and groups through youth affairs department. Annual awards to those youth group which have successfully implemented projects to promote youth rights.</p>	<p>Construction of youth development centres. Youth-led mass awareness campaigns. Devise models of elected student unions. Exposure trips. Youth engagement in community service and volunteerism activities by incentivising. Formation of active peer groups and networking. Engaging local bodies, youth councillors, LHWs and women councillors to pursue the rule of law. Appreciation and reward mechanism for volunteers. Require all autonomous bodies and state owned enterprises to appoint 'Youth Ambassadors' on their boards.</p>	<p>Support initiatives of Boy Scouts and Girl Guide movements and link youth to public campaigns related to education, health, sports, environment, gender and peacebuilding and commemoration of national and international days. Youth volunteers to manage extra-curricular events and gain hands on experience of using skills like communication, coordination, event management, documentation and action-planning, etc. Public and private universities will be encouraged to initiate volunteer programmes for partial fulfilment of their degree programmes. Literate youth will be made essential part of the campaigns and during commemoration of national and international days. Mass awareness campaigns for promoting family planning in the province. Conduct youth- led awareness programmes and campaigns. Civil society organizations and youth groups and organizations will be encouraged to be part of community education programmes. Prevent youth entering into militancy. Establishment of student councils on campuses. Launching of a 'Balochistan Youth Volunteers Movement (BYVM)'</p>	<p>Compulsory modules in civic, political, and constitutional literacy in schools, colleges, and universities should be ensured. Develop soft skills of the youth to filter-out disinformation, misinformation, and fake news. Expansion of platforms for volunteerism in addition to the Gilgit-Baltistan Boy Scouts Association, Imamia Scouts, Ismaili Scouts, and Pak Muslim scouts. Volunteerism should be incentivized by rewarding volunteers in school and college admissions and in employment. Provide the necessary funds and support for spreading the culture and platforms of community service. Encourage the existing networks of local organizations like Local Support Organizations (LSOs), etc. to give greater space, membership, and responsibilities to the youth.</p>	<p>Arranging national and international visits for young people to let them experience different areas, monuments, museums, dwellings, etc. Interacting with Kashmiri and international corporate leaders, researchers, academics, social workers and other icons through visits, meetings, seminars, chat programmes, video conferences and other avenues for mutual exchange. Enabling young people's interaction with high achievers. Arranging organized visits to different locations to achieve cross-cultural learning. Building and funding outdoor leadership schools, and empowering existing Girl Guide and Boy Scout initiatives to run them. Promoting a State Youth Volunteer Corps to engage young people in practical work for social and economic development. Encouraging films, dramas, documentaries and other content which promotes civic morals, an understanding of civic duty, and the ethics of creating a safe, secure, inclusive and just society. Establishing a dedicated and separate juvenile jail/ reformatory school. Designing a merit- and competition-based National Youth Award.</p>
--	--	---	--	---	---	--

<p style="text-align: center;">Political participation</p>	<p>Allocation of 5 percent quota to youth under the local government law to include them in decision making. Youth exposure trips will be organized to important government institutions like the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab. The Political Parties Order 2002 needs a thorough revision to incorporate the democratic and political rights of youth. Manifestos of political parties should elaborate their youth development agendas. Sensitization of teachers and parents to discontinue calling politics a futile exercise.</p>	<p>Mobilize Jawan Markaz and youth councilors to create spaces and platforms for youth at local level. Promotion of societies in educational institutions. Involve youth in electoral and legislative process. Manifestos of political parties should elaborate their youth development agendas. Sensitization of teachers and parents to discontinue calling politics a futile exercise. Student unions/ councils to have leaders delinked from mainstream politics. The Political Parties Order 2002 needs a thorough revision to incorporate the democratic and political rights of youth. Allocation of 5 percent quota to youth under the local government law to include them in decision making. Youth exposure trips will be organized to important government institutions like the Provincial Assembly of the KP. Seminars/workshops/ conferences to raise awareness about youth civic responsibility, political participations, etc.</p>	<p>Establishment of district youth development committees. Reactivation of student unions. Youth-led consultative meetings/workshops to develop district-specific frameworks creating mass mobilization for educating youth at all levels, creating intra-dept linkages, strengthening working relationship between youth and institutions, & harnessing political accountability with responsive governance for improved service delivery. Allocation of 5 percent quota in the elected local bodies for youth. Youth-led campaigns to run voter registration campaigns. Youth parliament model at district level. Incorporation of democratic values in Teachers Training manual.</p>	<p>Social sector will be encouraged to provide information and interaction opportunities for skill development and help youth to participate in democratic and civic processes. The Government will open doors of the prestigious institutions like Balochistan Assembly and the Governors House for visiting youth groups from schools, colleges and universities and provide them opportunities to interact with government personalities. Establish youth political school where youth will be enrolled and trained on country politics, political education from bottom to top (Union Council to Provincial and National Level) will be given to youth, link the proposed school to National Defense University (NDU) and other institutions of the country. Allocation of 5% quota to youth under the local government law to include them in decision making and increase leadership opportunities for youth in the Balochistan.</p>	<p>“Shadow” programmes for students, enabling them to spend at least five weeks with relevant government departments. Empower the youth with the knowledge of the state, the economy, and society to become engaged and empowered citizens by becoming activists for good governance, upholding of human rights, countering extremism, and peace narratives. Spread awareness among the youth regarding the key role played by associations, organizations, and other platforms in a democratic polity. Guidance and support (financial & institutional) to establish youth groups, NGOs, associations, and organizations on literary, scientific, cultural, economic, occupational, professional, and political themes. Ensure modules on Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Fundamental Rights under 1973 Constitution of Pakistan, the fundamental rights under GB Order 2018, the rights guaranteed under International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) are included in the formal educational curricula. Ensure understanding of the macro-economic issues and democratic values and principles to help youth make informed decisions on voting, etc. Formation of student political bodies at intermediate, graduate, and post-grad levels in GB should be encouraged. All parties should be legally bound to give 30 percent representation to the youth in party positions and cabinets. Establishment of Gilgit-Baltistan Youth Development Commission. Establishment of youth councils.</p>	<p>Encouraging civil society organizations to adopt democratic means of choosing their leadership. Encouraging youth parliaments. Enabling a workshops based campaign for the Youth of AJ&K in raising their awareness regarding Local Government elections under SDG 17. Conducting specialized sessions on voter registration process, how to submit nomination papers, awareness on voter rights, campaign on enhancing voter turnout, encouraging female participation.</p>
---	---	---	---	--	---	---

<p style="text-align: center;">Employment</p>	<p>Initiating National and international job market analysis Creation of online job bank. On-campus jobs for at least 5% of university full-time students. Universities to set up career placement offices. Punjab internship program. Encourage large organizations, companies and enterprises to provide internship opportunities equal to at least 5% of their sanctioned/ approved strength of officers to young people/ graduates.</p>	<p>Conduct national and international job market analysis and train youth accordingly. Support youth in the process. Soliciting funds through PPP for HRM. Establishment of a job bank. Employer on line/Job bank on line. Certification of informally acquired skills by technicians and workers. Develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth. KP internship program through PPP. Encourage large organizations, companies and enterprises to provide internship opportunities equal to at least 5% of their sanctioned/ approved strength of officers to young people/ graduates with stipends greater than or equal to that offered by government program. On-campus jobs for at least 5% of university full-time students. Universities to set up career placement offices. Launch “Social Assistance and “Employment Insurance” programmes to cater for temporary or short-term unemployment.</p>	<p>Centralised information system on youth development and a job database. Formation of a job bank. Establishment of institute placement bureaus through IT interface. Mapping of skills (modern cultural and traditional) and job market analysis. Sindh internship programme. Encourage large organizations, companies and enterprises to provide internship opportunities equal to at least 5% of their sanctioned/ approved strength of officers to young people/ graduates. Persuading big landowners through land revenue system to create decent work opportunities. On-campus jobs for at least 5% of university full-time students.</p>	<p>In the social sector, NGOs and youth groups will be inspired to run youth- involving internship programmes with proper certification. Carry out skills mapping studies preferably under the Balochistan TETVA to ascertain district-level skill-set in a given economic corridor. The public and private universities will also be encouraged to assign exploratory studies and student projects on skill mapping and market analysis in Balochistan. Government will arrange public service messaging, campaigns and Information Education Communication (IEC) materials to underscore the need for decent work especially among the literate youth. Both literate and illiterate trainees of technical and vocational programmes to be properly certified to duly win over access to national and international markets. Initiating National and International job market analysis. Encourage large organizations, companies and enterprises to provide internship opportunities equal to at least 5% of their sanctioned/ approved strength of officers to young people/ graduates. Develop and promote Balochistan Internship Programme through public-private partnership.</p>	<p>Conferences, seminars, and informal meets on emerging employment needs. Internships and fellowship programmes for enrolled students in public and private organizations. The industry should hire research assistants or project coordinators from among the enrolled students of relevant departments in universities. Universities should provide hands-on training to at least 5 percent of its student body as research assistants, teaching assistants, etc. on weekly pay. Apprenticeship programs and fellowships should also be provided to students. These opportunities should be given to at least 5,000 students over the next five years. Government needs to make the recruitment processes in government departments fair, transparent, accountable, and accessible for all. Formation of Gilgit-Baltistan Public Service Commission to ensure merit-based recruitment in public service jobs, and legislation on regulation of private jobs for merit-based recruitment, promotion, and rewards. Establishment of a central portal for all government jobs, and making it legally binding on all departments to post jobs to portal. Effectively eliminate child labor from GB. Establishment of GB Jobs Bank. Legislate to ensure all private companies, organizations etc. with more than ten employees are registered with the government and advertise open positions through the portal.</p>	<p>Conducting an analysis of national and international job markets to identify skills requirements in target markets, and training youth in relevant fields. Creating a centralized information system/database of job opportunities for youth in the public and private sectors, in order to guide and counsel youth on job-seeking. Expanding and improving the national internship programme. Introducing mandatory internship programmes as a fixed condition for the receipt of certification or degrees by incorporating credit hours for various activities. Encourage large organizations, companies and enterprises to provide internship opportunities equal to at least 5% of their sanctioned/ approved strength of officers to young people/ graduates. Encouraging all universities to set up job placement and career service offices for students. Young people will also be supported to seek job placements in local and foreign markets.</p>
--	---	--	--	--	--	--

<p style="text-align: center;">Education</p>	<p>Model Danish Schools at the divisional level Scholarships to high achievers will be provided. Extra-curricular competitions among students will be promoted Uniform basic and secondary education to promote integration and social cohesion. Researches on the regional scale and depths of youth bulge in the Punjab. Books and research materials and facilities would be made available to the young researchers through internet access, libraries, book banks or book loaning programmes.</p>	<p>Required skill sets, equality and standardisation and non-formal education. Curriculum and Peace education. Setting uniform standards and competencies for students at different education stages. Uniform basic and secondary education to promote integration and social cohesion. Promoting peer education culture on like skills, interactive and leadership skills, etc. Leadership programmes in schools, colleges, & universities. Promotion of non-formal basic education programs. PPP to expand scope & outreach of education. Scholarships for marginalised segments. Books and research materials and facilities would be made available to the young researchers through internet access, libraries, book banks or book loaning programmes. Prepare teacher training material for primary level.</p>	<p>Research and mapping studies on youth bulge. Life-skill based education programme for in school and out of school. Leadership programmes. Establishment of student support fund. Reviewing curriculum and education facilities. Comprehensive program on learning outcomes and skill-sets/competencies to standardise quality of education across all streams. Promoting peer-education culture.</p>	<p>Upgrade the status of the curriculum wing of education department and make it more proactive so that the required skill-sets in students are clearly spelt-out and acquired, including a combination of hard skills and soft skills. Quality teaching and student-centered methodologies. For that teachers have to be updated with refresher courses in knowledge imparting methodologies. The syllabus in schools will further provide for curricular and co-curricular activities. A system of invoking non-academic programming will be at place in schools and colleges to enhance competencies of the youth. Inter-provincial exchange and scholarship programme. Out of school and non-formal education and curricular activities will be promoted. Strengthen educational institution-community linkages. The government will coordinate youth researches, events and debates on the scale and depths of youth bulge in the province. Establishment of multi languages learning centers.</p>	<p>Building more universities, reliable transportation systems, residential learning, and need and merit-based scholarships to improve access. Update post-secondary education curricula in all fields. Focus on the development of critical faculties and innovative abilities of the students. Periodic and continuous development of teachers in capacity, attitude, and seriousness of purpose. Year-round activities regarding choice of educational fields and career on constant basis should take place. Dedicated career counsellors and youth resource centers for guidance of the students should be established. Setting up professional societies and regular meetings for knowledge sharing and forming associations. Develop linkages between the industry and the academia (teachers and students) to collaborate on each other's needs, expectations, and goals. The industry should fund joint ventures, programs, conferences with their relevant departments in universities to impart the knowledge and skills that the industry requires in its employees. Teachers must include modules in their syllabi to give students industry-specific skills. Appointment of in-service government officials and industry experts as adjunct faculty for hand-on, practical knowledge. Compulsory life skill education for all in IT, data, and modern research methods including basic programming, data analytics, statistical methods, business planning and business research. Students in GB's universities and colleges should be adequately funded and trained to develop a culture of research through research seminars, trade, and innovation fairs. Student-run journals in their respective fields to publish undergraduate and graduate research. Training on basic financial literacy, money management principles, civic responsibilities, as well basic understanding of macro-economic trends in the national economy to make decisions and to participate in democratic processes</p>	<p>Increasing the number of scholarships available for studies at the higher secondary, undergraduate and graduate levels. Starting and augmenting programmes for education-related loans and Qarz-e-Hasna for students. Providing special funds to facilitate the participation of young students and professionals in conferences. Reviewing the curriculum, and strengthening its quality and enhancing inclusion. Facilitating special tutorials, training and guidance sessions to prepare students to join and study at prestigious, world-renowned institutions. Making books, research, development resources and facilities available and accessible to young researchers through the internet, libraries, book banks or book loan programmes. Arranging inter-school, inter-college and inter-university debates and conventions. Ensuring the development and functionality of libraries in each district, as well as the creation of a digital database of academic resources (journals, research papers and research material). Bringing computer literacy at par with education literacy as a long-term goal.</p>
---	--	--	---	---	--	---

<p style="text-align: center;">Skills development</p>	<p>Skills development through IT by providing laptops Provision of stipends for technical education especially in the South Punjab. Technical education to unemployed educated youth and provision of micro-credits. Update curriculum of Technical education and prepare a phased expansion programme of such training facilities. Programme of certification of informally acquired skills by technicians and workers.</p>	<p>Conduct a demand assessment and capacity assessment of skill dev facilities, and enhance them accordingly. Crash program on technical education under certified trainers. Provide equitable access to microcredit to graduates for self employment. Update curriculum of vocational training programs. Specialized institutions for trainings in area-specific needs, e.g. agriculture. ICT and higher-end trainings of international standards.</p>	<p>A crash programme of technical education to the unemployed youth. Certified skills development programmes for illiterate youth. Demand-led skills programs for girls and other vulnerable youth. Testing and Certification for literate/semi-literate workers in the formal and informal sector. Develop linkages with international institutions to get skills certification courses/ diploma for youth. Scholarships for marginalised segments.</p>	<p>Government will run regular and weekend programmes for skill development and technical training. The Government, private sector and relevant development agencies can fund such programmes. Run crash programmes in Training of Trainers (TOT) mode to the unemployed educated youth and link them with existing micro-credit facilities extended by private and social enterprises. Strengthen institutions like the Balochistan TEVTA. Provision of stipends and tool kits for technical education.</p>	<p>Continuous professional development of young professionals through training in research, drafting, programme, and financial management. Professional development of at least 5,000 young professionals at the start of their careers. Skill enhancing programs for the youth to become certified professionals in all fields of services related to construction. Establishment of a technical education university. Skills for All project through the Kamyab Jawan Project: a fixed quota in the program should be sought by GB's government.</p>	<p>Technical and skills development programmes to be enhanced based on skills demand assessment. Schools in the public and private sector may start regular evening and weekend programmes for skills development and technical training. Updating the curriculum of vocational training institutions. Instituting a skills certification programme for informal technicians and workers. Ensuring the accreditation of pre-existing diplomas/ certifications issued by the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA) by recognized bodies.</p>
--	--	---	--	--	--	---

<p>Entrepreneurship</p>	<p>Establishment of Youth Venture Capital Fund by public-private partnership. Entrepreneurship and training programme and guide and train youth to do business, to innovate and expand business. Creation of small incubator offices equipped with all office facilities for young graduates. Support and promote Innovation Competition to attract and fund best business ideas. Facilitate and guide young entrepreneurs regarding procedures for opening of new companies and provide legal advice as needed. Expansion of micro finance sector in terms of outlets, products and access by the young. Local crafts based youth enterprises for income-generation at village and urban-neighborhood level.</p>	<p>Establishment of Youth Venture Capital Fund. Entrepreneurship and training programme to enable youth to learn from existing enterprises, learn to make business plans to raise funds, learn how to do business, innovate and expand, etc. Creation of small incubator offices equipped with all office facilities for young graduates. Facilitate and guide young entrepreneurs regarding procedures for opening of new companies and provide legal advice as needed. Expansion of micro finance sector in terms of outlets, products and access by the young. Local crafts based youth enterprises for income-generation at village and urban-neighborhood level. Enhance the outreach of programmes by Small Industries Corporation KP. Create respect for poor and small entrepreneurs (rags to riches empowerment).</p>	<p>Establishment of youth venture capital fund. Annual provincial innovation competitions and Formation of small incubation centres at the universities and campus-market links. Entrepreneurship training of youth at universities and trained by the private sector. Hassle-free low-interest youth loans to youth. Local crafts based youth enterprises for income-generation at village and urban-neighborhood level. Establish youth entrepreneurship wing within youth affairs department. Support and promote annual innovation competitions to attract and fund best business and social entrepreneurship ideas.</p>	<p>The Government will arrange soft loans for technical and vocational training recipients, when needed on merit basis, with the help of national and international agencies. Promote entrepreneurship and management skills among youth in cottage industry, local crafts and handicrafts, local trade fairs, hotel management, IT, accounting and finance, marketing and branding, company registration, and office services, etc. Local textiles and handicrafts will be promoted through micro-credit facilities at the community level and training will be imparted to the entrepreneurs for branding and marketing their products. Supporting and strengthening small scale business incubation centers. Facilitate initiatives of the social and private sector organizations to guide young entrepreneurs regarding procedures for opening of new start-ups. Enhance the outreach of Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (SMEDA) and train youth to do business, to innovate and expand business.</p>	<p>Easing the business environment for big corporations to move to GB. Entrepreneurship friendly co-working spaces. Establishment of investment firms and boards, and forming incubation centers and IT parks in every district. Provision of uninterrupted electricity supply to entrepreneurs and businesses on affordable rates and on priority basis. Improving road infrastructure. Provision of grants, loans, and aid for various entrepreneurial ventures, esp.in agriculture, IT, tourism and mineral. GB Entrepreneurship Advisory Board for mentoring and guiding young entrepreneurs, providing them with financial literacy and proper direction. Create a portal to centrally organize the entrepreneurial opportunities by creating a database of loans, investors, and business opportunities for entrepreneurs. Access to opportunities such as loans under the Kamyab Jawan entrepreneurship scheme, loans from the GB Youth Development Fund, etc. Digitizing the entire processes of business registration and encouraging the adoption of financial technology (FINTECH) by consumers. Public recognition of entrepreneurs.</p>	<p>Establishing Youth Centres at the divisional level that will act as incubation and e-learning centres. Creating youth venture capital funds to facilitate new developments and the implementation of new ideas. Creating small incubator offices in universities. Guidance for young entrepreneurs on the procedures for opening a new company, and legal advice as needed. Establishing and encouraging local craft-based youth enterprises to promote income generation at the village and urban neighbourhood levels. Professional assistance will also be provided for marketing the products of these enterprises. Arranging entrepreneurship and training programmes to learn from existing enterprises and companies, learning how to formulate business plans and how to pitch ideas to venture capital or other funds. Enhancing the outreach of programmes undertaken by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Small Industries Corporation. Guiding and training small-scale service providers to grow into large enterprises. Providing financial resources or loans to young people from low-income households. Expanding the microfinance sector in terms of outlets, products and access for youth.</p>
--------------------------------	---	--	--	---	--	--

<p style="text-align: center;">Female empowerment/ Gender equality</p>	<p>The government will reserve 15 % quota for girls in employment. Portrayal of equality of boys and girls through all public messages and curricula.</p>	<p>Women participation and leadership programs. Portrayal of equality of boys and girls through all public messages and curricula.</p>	<p>10 percent quota ensured for female youth in the job market. Development of safety and security plans for young girls. Ensure implementation of legislation against GBV, child protection, child labor, etc.</p>	<p>Female youth will be especially provided greater access to loaning facilities. Specially designed vocational courses for girl students will be run in educational institutions. Promote formation of women youth groups and organizations to mobilize awareness on gender equality. They will be encouraged to collaborate actions with members of the Women Parliamentary Caucus for mass contacts and building support for anti-discrimination drives in Balochistan. Allocate 15 percent quota for women entering job market. Engage women in policy forums.</p>	<p>Women should have adequate quotas in all public jobs. Private sector should be legally required to ensure at least 35 percent of their staff are women. Reliable urban transportation for women for improved mobility. Provide small and soft loans and grants for family and home-based cottage industries, and linkages with local and online markets. Undertake a study to expand public spaces for women and their expression.</p>	<p>Promoting and encouraging gender-sensitive youth counselling centres in universities, hospitals and large enterprises, among other institutions. Setting up Women Police Stations to enable women survivors of violence to come forward and register complaints. Moreover, training law enforcement officials, first responders and medico-legal officers specifically in dealing with incidents of GBV and sensitizing them regarding various intricacies involved in such cases. Ensuring the efficient enforcement of anti-workplace harassment laws in all public and private work spaces. Setting up Anti-Harassment Committees in all educational institutions. Raising awareness of gender equality and the equal rights of all persons, and fostering a culture of tolerance and acceptance in society. Establishing whistle-blower facilities to enable the reporting of cases of gender-based violence, both in society and in institutions, while protecting the identity of the reporter and, especially, protecting the identity of the victim/survivor.</p>
---	---	--	---	--	---	--

Early marriages	<p>Strict measures for implementing laws against forced and early marriages. Involve religious scholars in debates against forced and early marriages.</p>	<p>Strict measures for implementing laws against forced and early marriages. Involve religious scholars in debates against forced and early marriages.</p>	<p>Implementation of early marriage act.</p>		<p>Do a complete study to collate the data and analyze the drivers of child marriages in GB. Laws, politics, and programs should be initiated to end Child Marriages as soon as possible. Campaigns at community levels against youth marriages, through the support of local influencers and community leaders and elders (especially religious leaders).</p>	<p>Supporting youth to access information and key services on issues such as child marriage and family planning. Ensuring that all law enforcement agencies are trained on how to track and stop child marriages without causing more harm to the endangered child/children. Strictly enforcing the minimum age limit on marriage and putting an end to child marriage through strict compliance with marital laws. Advocating for an increase in the minimum legal age of marriage for both boys and girls, from 16 years to 18 years, without exception. Educating and sensitizing communities on the harmful impacts of child marriage on girls. Implementing support programmes to empower girls at risk of child marriage, as well as underage girls who are already married.</p>
Disaster management	<p>Re-activation of Boys Scout and Girls Guides at school level. Mentoring of youth on disaster management.</p>	<p>Mentoring of youth on disaster management. Civil defense movement to be mobilized for training youth in basic emergency services through outreach programmes.</p>	<p>Re-activation of Boys scouts and girls guide at the school level. Mentoring of youth on disaster management and emergency services.</p>	<p>The curriculum will include special components on life skill education.</p>		

<p style="text-align: center;">Sports and Culture</p>	<p>Province-wide sports activities and festivals will be organized. Ensure that no school without sports facilities is registered. Provision of playgrounds on the minimum basis of area population. Encourage the private sector to spend on sports as part of corporate social responsibility. Promote local languages, arts and music through institutions like PILAAC.</p>	<p>Mapping existing sports facilities and cost planning of missing facilities. Ensure that no school without sports facilities is registered. Provision of playgrounds on the minimum basis of area population. Organize school-level tournaments with the help of local elders and private sector. Generating funds with the help of private sector using playgrounds. Persuade young entrepreneurs to run sports events for earning. Encourage the private sector to spend on sports as part of corporate social responsibility. Run youth-led mass campaigns to promote sports by involving celebrities. Promoting local festivals with fundraising potential. Encourage private sector to promote local art and music.</p>	<p>Mapping existing sports facilities and cost planning of missing facilities. Ensure that no school without sports facilities is registered. Provision of playgrounds on the minimum basis of area population. Organize school-level tournaments with the help of local elders and private sector. Generating funds with the help of private sector using playgrounds. Persuade young entrepreneurs to run sports events for earning. Promoting local festivals with fundraising potential. Run youth-led mass campaigns to promote sports by involving celebrities. Establishment of artisan support program. Engage local body institutions to facilitate youth in sports at UC, tehsil, and district level.</p>	<p>The curriculum will include special components on art, music and local geographies. Physical education and sports will be included in the curriculum. Standards for schools and colleges for provision of sports and recreational facilities, and yearly calendars for sports. A cadre of qualified sports trainers, communicators, umpires and referees will be created especially in football. Help sports associations to bring national events to Balochistan, creating opportunities for sports volunteers and engagement of youth in sports. Review performance of its sporting associations and revamp their systems. Sports associations to raise profiles of Balochistani players and create sports icons. Showcasing and exhibiting of local work for media visibility. Traditional crafts, performing, visual and fine arts will be promoted harnessing the potential of community-based enterprise for local artefacts. Outreach programmes at the Local departments of fine arts will be set up to undertake and facilitate training programmes. A committee comprising of journalists, intellectuals and experts on folk and tribal culture will advise the govt. Linkages of national theatre houses in the social sector to the universities, colleges and youth groups and organizations to form local theatre groups.</p>	<p>Development of inclusive and safe physical recreational spaces like parks, picnic points, natural reserves, sports complexes etc. should be prioritized. Incentivize the private sector to invest in recreational and sports facilities and businesses. Design and expand intra-provincial sports competitions on monthly and yearly basis. Recreational and heritage trips for the youth of GB.</p>	<p>Supporting youth to access information and key services on issues such as child marriage and family planning. Ensuring that all law enforcement agencies are trained on how to track and stop child marriages without causing more harm to the endangered child/children. Strictly enforcing the minimum age limit on marriage and putting an end to child marriage through strict compliance with marital laws. Advocating for an increase in the minimum legal age of marriage for both boys and girls, from 16 years to 18 years, without exception.</p>
--	--	--	---	--	---	--

<p>Sectoral initiatives</p>	<p>Sectoral initiatives in livestock and dairy development i.e. Rehabilitation of Mustahqeen-i-Zakat (eligible to receive alms money) by promotion of livestock keeping, training of unemployed youth as veterinary workers, replication of Idara-e-Kissan model, provision of milk cooling tanks and promotion of livestock under the Barani Village Development Project.</p>	<p>Sectoral initiatives in livestock and dairy development, tourism, mining, etc.</p>	<p>Design market oriented trade courses and incorporate in existing vocational & technical institutions with special focus on rural economy including agriculture, livestock, etc.</p>	<p>Government will update curriculum of the vocational training institutes in accordance with clustering requirements and job opportunities in the agriculture, livestock, veterinary, mining, fruit processing and fisheries fields and will prepare a phased expansion programme of such training facilities to other growth nodes in Balochistan. Intervention on multi sectoral approaches for creation of employment.</p>	<p>Preparing a Strong Labor Force for CPEC and Maqpoondas SEZ. Secure supply chains for agricultural entrepreneurs, cold storage, better access, and transportation from farms to markets and value addition for cash crops and agriproducts. Encourage youth in agriculture to adopt technology for production and value-addition. Entrepreneurship in retail and services industries should be encouraged for employment purposes. Promoting food tourism, adventure tourism, and cultural tourism. Soft loans for the youth in car workshops, and training liaisons with major manufacturers to train the youth in their facilities</p>	<p>Opening specialized institutions to provide training on area-specific needs, such as training on agricultural labour, etc.</p>
<p>Health</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>Adopt policies to address holistic health needs of the youth. Protection, survival, and development of children and youth.</p>	<p>Engagement of stakeholder groups to get support in initiating youth health programs in collaboration with CSOs.</p>	<p>Protection of youth from physical, mental, social, and psychological abuse. It will curb use of drugs, tobacco, and other toxic substances. Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement</p>	<p>Accessible parenting courses, and guidance to new and young parents on the requirements and skills needed to raise children. Awareness campaigns for hygiene and sanitation need to be planned and implemented. Establishment of public/community toilets, and provision of proper trash disposal points needs to be ensured. Ensure mental health awareness and normalize seeking mental health counselling and treatment. Removal of stigma surrounding mental health. Mitigate the negative mental health impacts of strong religious, tribal, patriarchal systems of GB.</p>	<p>Increased access to physical, mental, and preventive healthcare. Ensuring special provisions for young refugees that mainstream their health care needs. Setting up separate rehabilitation centres for young drug addicts. Establishing a Youth Helpline to address suicidal tendencies, as well as to provide mental health and career counselling to impressionable youths. Conducting regular trainings and awareness sessions on mental health and well-being in educational institutions and public as well as private workplaces. Establishing psychological counselling and safe rehabilitation centres for survivors of gender-based violence.</p>

Digital inclusion	Help bridge digital divide by promoting positive use of ICT in the marginalized youth especially in the semi-urban and rural areas.			Expanding information access to its programmes, services and facilities through the IT interface and websites of its institutions. E-business start-ups will be especially encouraged. Providing laptops on merit to students to facilitate skills development through IT.	Provision of fast, reliable internet for all across Gilgit-Baltistan. Ensure digital accessibility for blind persons, especially to important government websites.	Placing an emphasis on e-commerce and e-learning in skills development programs. Ensuring better access to the internet for the youth of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, especially in rural areas. Enabling easy access to computers and other digital equipment's through Youth Centres and district level libraries.
Social cohesion	Youth-led mass campaigns for inter-faith and intra-faith harmony. Strict implementation of laws against hate speech.	Revise curriculum to promote peace, love, and pride for local culture, diversity, pluralism and tolerance. Safe/violence-free campuses. Youth-led mass campaigns against hate speech. Strict laws against hate speech. Screening of literature and text books to celebrate diversity.	Youth-led mass campaigns for inter-faith and inter-faith harmony and against hate speech. Mapping of conflict zones. Design and implement conflict resolution programme.	Registration of refugee adolescents and youth in the public documents. Support activities to build peace, promote a culture of peace, and prevent conflict. Youth who have shunned militancy will be provided with platforms to express themselves and to get into discussions on positive youth development. Involve youth in public service messaging and campaigns against hate-speech and celebrating diversity of Balochistan.	Cross-sect and cross regional engagement for mitigating the impact of the traumatic and violent recent sectarian history and overcoming any lingering elements of hate or misperception between diverse groups. Prioritize de-radicalization and counter extremism by weaning the youth away from extremist views and religious fanaticism.	Countering violent extremist ideas among youth. Involving youth and elders in television, radio and media programmes, talk shows, competitions and discussions to promote peace and tolerance.

<p>Youth Mobility</p>	<p>“See Pakistan Programme” for youth mobility. Inter-provincial youth exchange programmes hosted by local colleges and universities. Building of new youth hostels and encouraging private sector for affordable hotel business.</p>	<p>Inter-provincial youth exchange programmes hosted by local colleges and universities. Building of new youth hostels and ensuring availability of govt college hostels for group tourism during peak seasons when hostels are vacant. Special travel packages for group tourism. Opening of government guest houses for public. Setting up camping sites near every rest house.</p>	<p>Inter-provincial youth exchange programmes hosted by local colleges and universities. Special travel packages for group tourism. Encouraging the private sector to invest on tourism publishing, group tourism and affordable hotels. Establish youth hostels in far flung areas.</p>	<p>Devise a ‘See Balochistan Programme’ and promote its itinerary with the help of youth groups and organizations for visitors. Form a Backpackers Club consisting of youth for group tourism and guiding facilities.</p>	<p>Enabling local administrations to run special transport on weekends for city visits for youth. Arranging nationwide tours, running youth trains and youth buses, and giving young people concessions on bus tickets during summer vacations (June– September) to promote excursion travel. Facilitating student camping/ lodging facilities on the premises of selected educational institutions during the summer to facilitate low-cost tours. To this end, a ‘back pack’ lodging scheme will be launched, in collaboration with educational institutions. Constructing new youth hostels in Azad Jammu and Kashmir’s districts and tourist hotspots. Establishing youth development centres in tourist areas/hotspots. These centres will include youth hostels, vocational training centres, indoor game facilities, open theatres and craft bazaars.</p>
------------------------------	---	---	--	---	--

<p style="text-align: center;">Inclusivity</p>			<p>Two percent job quota for minority, differently-abled, and other vulnerable youth groups. Engage private sector and CSOs for diverse capacity development programs.</p>	<p>Rural/tribal groups will be provided crash courses on livelihood, life skills and health in nonformal settings. The Government will create opportunities and platforms for youth, especially rural and tribal youth, for increased participation in development programmes.</p>	<p>Skills provision, employment, and a change in public perception towards out of school women, children, women in household settings and persons with disabilities. Schemes, campaigns, and programme for encouraging marginalized segments to enter technical education and self-employment fields in home-based or community-based cottage industries, trades, and industries, particularly with digital skills, will help mainstream them. At least 20,000 marginalized youth should be brought to the mainstream by training them to earn a decent income. 35 percent of all jobs reserved for women should be provided to women with low education and in technical and vocational education. Counselling should be provided for the marginalized youth to confidently undertake businesses, jobs and other ventures. Marginalized youths should be connected to grants, funds, loans, machinery for plumbers, electricians, tile and construction workers, youth on farms, and females in home-based cottage settings. Ensure safe and good working conditions, regulation, and access of the industries and cottages related to women at home and persons with disabilities. Targeted public messaging and awareness campaigns to remove the stigma against PWDs, and creating acceptance towards differences or disabilities. Ensuring special job quotas for PWDs. Ensuring all public places, offices, or spaces are accessible.</p>	<p>Establishing a distinct quota for rural youth in employment and scholarships. Ensuring enrolment of differently-abled youth in the already existing special education schools. Conducting awareness raising sessions and capacity building trainings to eradicate social stigmas associated with disability. Ensuring special provisions for transgender people in all aspects of their social and professional lives, in order to prevent discrimination and curb the stigma associated with the transgender community. Establishing a Gender Protection Helpline at the state level to increase vigilance, similar to the helplines created in Pakistan's provinces.</p>
---	--	--	--	--	---	---

Environmental Sustainability						<p>Galvanizing the youth to create momentum around the campaign regarding climate change.</p> <p>Empowering the youth can create a paradigm whereby they can hold policy makers accountable, and demand action on climate change.</p> <p>Capacity building of youth to take charge on climate resilience that can be built in communities.</p>
-------------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

Appendix B: Functional Capacity Assessment-Questionnaire

Components	Sub-components	Question
1. Leadership & Governance	Department goal vision and mission	Does the department have a clear mandate, vision and mission? What are the main objectives and goals of your youth department?
	Strategic plan	Does your department have a clearly written strategic plan aligned with the vision and mission statements guiding your work?
	Strategic plan aligned to the youth policy	Does your department's strategic plan address specific elements of the youth policy? Which ones?
	Youth Commission composition	Has a Youth Commission been established in accordance with the youth policy?
	Youth Commission functioning and governance	Does the Youth Commission have a proper organizational structure in place?
2. Structures & Systems	Organogram (organisational chart) with clear roles	Does the department have a clear organisational structure? Is there a systematic organisation of staff members with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, supported by comprehensive job descriptions?
	Consultation and decision-making	Are decisions made independently by the department, or in consultation with relevant stakeholders? Is there a clear, structured process for consultation and decision-making that is understood and followed?
	Internal communication	How are decisions communicated within the department? Does your department have a well-developed system for communication using a range of internal communication tools such as face-to-face meetings, emails, newsletters, shared folders, or an intranet?
	External communication	How are decisions communicated externally? Does your department have a well-developed system for communication between internal and external stakeholders?
	Accountability and transparency	Does your department have a systematic, transparent process for disseminating decisions and results, such as community forums, stakeholder meetings, or Annual General Meetings (AGMs), to ensure that staff, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders can clearly understand them?
	Office and equipment	Does your department have adequate office, meeting, and storage space, and do you maintain an up-to-date inventory of these resources? IT equipment?
3. HRM and Staff Development	Recruitment and staff diversity	Can you describe your hiring, firing, and transfer processes? Does your department have transparent, competitive recruitment procedures that ensure equal opportunities for women and vulnerable groups?
	Staff expertise	Do you have adequate and capable staff to implement the department's strategy?
	Personnel files	Has the department maintained and regularly updated personnel files for all staff members, ensuring they are securely stored?
	Timesheets	Does the department keep timesheets for staff members that are reviewed monthly, ensuring that work and project activities are accurately coded?
	Discipline, grievance and conflict resolution	Does the department have a formal system for discipline, grievance, and conflict resolution that is widely known and consistently applied, ensuring compliance with local laws?
	Staff performance evaluation	How is staff performance evaluated? Specifically, is performance regularly assessed against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to enhance performance and service delivery? How is good performance rewarded?
	Staff development	Does the department have a policy and system for encouraging staff development, and is staff development valued within the department? Any trainings conducted?

4. Financial Management	Financial accounts/ accounting system	Does the department keep accurate records of accounts that can be presented or substantiated upon demand?
	Bank account	Is there a designated bank account to hold the department's funds, and are appropriate safeguards in place to protect those funds?
	Bank and cash management	Are procedures in place to handle petty cash and unused or presented checks safely and accountably?
	Bank reconciliation	Does the department undertake regular, accurate bank reconciliations?
	Financial record-keeping	Do you maintain supporting receipts and invoices for every expenditure to justify disbursements?
	Budgets and cash flow planning	Do you prepare, monitor, and review budgets and cash flow projections?
	Cost-effectiveness	Is cost-effectiveness analysed to guide management decisions?
	Finance staff levels and competency	Does the department have adequate and capable finance staff?
	Financial reporting	Does the department produce proper financial reports on time and in accordance with donor requirements? Are financial reports reviewed internally?
	Annual financial statements	Does the department have written financial policies and procedures?
5. Sub-Grants Management	Sub-Grants Management System	Does the department have a Grants Management Manual that covers the roles, responsibilities, policies, and procedures for the full grants cycle (from conception to close-out)?
	Grant management staff	Do you have adequately trained and capable staff with knowledge of the local context and donor regulations to responsibly manage the grants cycle?
	Grants monitoring and reporting	Does the department have monitoring and evaluation, financial and technical reporting guidelines audit requirements and tracking systems to ensure compliance and adequate oversight during grant implementation?
6. Programme Management	Information, knowledge and skills	Does the department implement programmes in line with the strategic plan and has periodic review meetings to report results, share knowledge, experience and lessons learned and re-strategise?
	Service delivery	Does the department have written quality standards for service delivery? Are they monitored? Do communities and beneficiaries express satisfaction with service delivery?
	Programme sustainability	Does the department have a clear exit strategy, and takes steps to ensure the sustainability of programmes?
	Local government involvement	How involved is the local government in the management and implementation of youth-centric programmes?
7. Planning, M&E	Annual work plan	Are sound M&E and annual work plans used to monitor and evaluate progress towards desired results?
	M&E plans, theory of change framework	Does the M&E plan include a 'theory of change'/results framework, objectives, indicators and targets?
	M&E tools and data collection system	Are M&E tools used to collect data in line with M&E plans? Is data collected regularly? Is there a robust system for storing and managing it?
	M&E data analysis, dissemination and use	Is M&E data analysed and used to inform decision-making? Does relevant and reliable data exist to inform decision-making? Are data readily accessible to those who need it?
	Evaluation contributes to organisational learning	Do programmes undergo evaluation, and are the findings of these evaluations discussed, disseminated, and utilised to inform departmental learning?