UK International Development
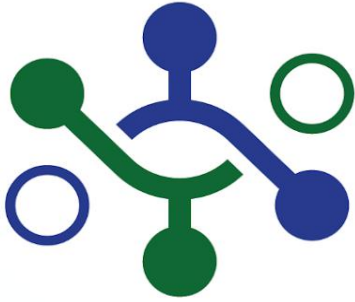
Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

DARE-RC
DATA AND RESEARCH IN EDUCATION
RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

جرأتِ تحقیق ملی

DARE-RC

Call for Applications - Cycle 4

Oxford Policy Management | THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY | Sightsavers

Contents

1. Background

The Data and Research in Education - Research Consortium (DARE-RC) is a 41-month programme (July 2023—December 2026) aimed at generating actionable evidence to support education policymakers and practitioners in Pakistan. As such, DARE-RC contributes to building a resilient, equitable education system by acting as a knowledge broker and catalysing system-level reforms. It also supports strategic collaborations and community-building to amplify research impact and improve evidence uptake among policy actors.

Since its inception, DARE-RC has commissioned over 30 high-quality studies and scoping papers currently underway focusing on four thematic clusters and two cross-cutting themes:

1. Drivers of learning for marginalised children

2. Strengthening the quality of frontline education provision

3. Resilient education service delivery

4. Accountable education systems

5. Cross-cutting themes: Effective data use and scalable solutions

The current portfolio[1] of studies investigates a range of clearly identified challenges to equitable education in Pakistan, using multiple methodological approaches - from experimental and quasi-experimental designs to qualitative and mixed-methods research - and includes studies with both national and provincial scope.

Based on **multiple consultations across provinces** and a **review of its current research portfolio** to assess emerging gaps, DARE-RC is seeking to commission further short-term research studies, focused scoping papers/evidence synthesis on **high-priority, demand-led topics with strong potential for policy uptake.**

2. The Call for Applications – Cycle 4

DARE-RC is pleased to invite Research Proposals for research studies and scoping papers/evidence synthesis from eligible national and international organisations for carrying out research, aligned with the research priorities areas and cross-cutting themes. Topics for research studies is shown under Annex 1. Topics for scoping papers/evidence synthesis is shown under Annex 2.

DARE-RC will fund two types of studies including**;**

2.1 Research studies:

These are short-term research studies. We do not plan on commissioning any studies that will require collecting extensive primary data. Studies under this type are expected to fill critical gaps in education research in Pakistan (see Annex 1). The studies may employ

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[1] For overview of DARE-RC research studies, please visit https://darerc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/10.-Overview-of-existing-DARE-RC-Research-Studies-2.pdf

secondary analysis of large-scale datasets, qualitative case studies, or mixed-method approaches which do not involve extensive primary data collection. Their purpose is to generate new insights and explanatory evidence with direct policy relevance.

- **Budget Limit and duration**: PKR 18-25 million (6–8 months)

2.2 Scoping papers/evidence synthesis:

The scoping papers/evidence synthesis will combine targeted primary data collection (e.g., interviews or focus groups) with a rigorous review of policy documents, programme reports, and relevant literature to provide a broad landscape analysis of a theme or issue. They are designed to clarify concepts, identify gaps, and frame future research or policy directions. Research Syntheses will adopt a rigorous approach to locating, appraising, and integrating existing research evidence, both global and Pakistan-specific, on a given topic. We welcome innovative proposals integrating the use of Machine Learning to streamline evidence syntheses with a clear integration strategy[2].

Budget Limit and duration: PKR 08-11 million (4-6 months)

3. **Priority Areas and Research Topics**

DARE RC invites proposals for research studies and scoping papers/evidence synthesis from eligible organisations in the areas provided in Annex 1 and 2 at the end of this document. We may commission more than one study/scoping paper in a specific theme depending on the quality of the proposals received. Similarly, we may not commission any research study/scoping paper on a given theme if relevant and high-quality proposals are not received. Proposals that cover more than one province/context are encouraged. Lead applicant organisations are welcome to submit more than one proposal. However, should multiple proposals be shortlisted, the lead applicant organisation will have to explain overlaps between research teams (if any) and justify their ability to successfully manage more than one research grant. DARE-RC will keep the above in consideration at the time of awarding of grants.

4. **Overarching Selection Criteria**

The following overarching criteria will be applied in the selection process:

a. **Clear Engagement with Existing National and International Evidence:** Priority will be given to proposals that identify, engage with and build upon existing national and international evidence, and clearly situate their ideas within existing body of knowledge. The proposals will need to explicitly outline how they would advance the evidence base and contribute to the global stock of knowledge.

b. **Policy Relevance and Demand**: Priority will be given to topics aligned with existing policy needs, as expressed by government counterparts and identified as having potential for impactful policy uptake.

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[2] Artificial Intelligence and Automation in Evidence Synthesis: An Investigation of Methods Employed in Cochrane, Campbell Collaboration, and Environmental Evidence Reviews - Scotti - 2025 - Cochrane Evidence Synthesis and Methods - Wiley Online Library

c. **Potential to Fill Critical Evidence Gaps**: Topics addressing significant evidence gaps, will be prioritised. Studies will be selected for their potential to enhance policy formulation and implementation significantly.

d. **Methodological rigour**: The proposal presents research-design that reflects methodological rigour throughout the conduct of the study.

e. **Feasibility and Timeliness:** Consideration will be given to the practicality of conducting the research within the available timeframe, with special attention to the timely accessibility of requisite data, ease of implementation, and realistic timelines for completion.

f. **Cost-effectiveness:** Studies will be evaluated in relation to their expected cost and resource implications. Studies that can deliver robust, actionable insights at reasonable costs will be prioritised.

5. **Eligibility Criteria**
   a. DARE-RC welcomes applications from the following types of national and international entities:
      - Universities (Public and Private), Research Think Tanks, research-focused NGOs, and consulting firms
      - Public or private sector entities with a track record of education research
      - Joint ventures involving local and international collaboration
   b. To be eligible, applicant entities must:
      - Demonstrate experience in high-quality education or social science research
      - Include researchers with academic affiliations
      - Show capacity for ethical and rigorous research design and delivery
      - Be in satisfactory financial health
      - Hold (or be able to obtain) No Objection Certificates for research in Pakistan (if collecting primary data)
   c. Geographical Scope: Research funded under this call may be conducted in Pakistan.
   d. Type of Funding Available: Funding is available to support research on the educational issues specified in this call for applications. These research grants are competitive in nature, and proposals will be evaluated against an **evaluation criteria**.
   e. DARE-RC especially encourages proposals that are:
      - women-led or from geographically remote institutions

- involve early career researchers and mentorship structures
- are collaborative and multidisciplinary

6. **Solicitation Process**

Applications for funding will be assessed through a single-stage application process i.e. "Submission of Research and Financial Proposals".

    a. Research Proposal:
- The research proposal should address the priority areas and research topics outlined above. It must clearly demonstrate the relevance of the proposed research to these areas, and include details of the research team, the research problem, objectives, context, design and methodology, anticipated policy implications, an ethical statement, as well as a proposed timeline (workplan) and total budget.
- Applicants must follow the "**DARE-RC Research Proposal Template and Guidelines**" if applying for a research study. Applicants must follow the "**DARE-RC Scoping Paper/Evidence Synthesis Template and Guidelines**" if applying for a scoping paper/evidence synthesis.

    b. Financial Proposal
- The financial proposal must be aligned with the scope of the research study/scoping paper and the proposed methodologies – keeping within the financial limits mentioned previously in this document. Budgets should reflect the principle of Value for Money (VfM).
- Applicants must follow the "**DARE-RC Financial Proposal Template and Guidelines**" when preparing their financial proposals. This is to be used for both research studies and scoping papers/evidence synthesis proposals.

7. **Submission of Supporting Documents:**

In addition to the submission of the research proposal and financial proposal, applicants are required to submit the following documents with their applications:

1. Basic profile of the organisation focusing on completed and ongoing relevant research projects and other activities including the details like funding institution, research study area, geographical area, total budget etc. This is to be no longer than five pages.
2. Copy of Valid Registration Certificate (for private organisations) or a copy of Byelaws or relevant law, act or other document under which a public sector organisation is registered (for public sector organisations).
3. Complete auditor's report (including audited financial statements) for the years 2023 and 2024 (applicable to both public and private sector organisations).
4. In cases where public sector organisations do not have the above-mentioned audited financial statements and auditor's reports, they may submit any two audit reports issued by the relevant office of the Auditor General of Pakistan/or the relevant authority between 2022 and 2025.
5. Tax registration certificate.

6. Links to/submission of at least two recent peer-reviewed publications relevant to the priority areas and research topics given above: these publications can be authored by any of the key members of the research team.
7. CVs (not more than two-pages each) of core research team (including Lead Investigator/Researcher and co-investigators) - and list of publications of the Lead Investigator/Researcher and co-investigators demonstrating experience of leading and conducting high-quality research in education/social sciences.
8. A confirmation on the applicant organisation's letterhead, signed by the competent authority of the applicant organisation, stating that it will obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for conducting field data collection under the DARE-RC grant.
9. A confirmation on applicant organisation's letterhead, signed by the competent authority of the applicant organisation stating, "that the applicant organisation is not bankrupt or currently involved in any litigation related to bankruptcy".
10. A confirmation on applicant organisation's letterhead, signed by the competent authority of the applicant organisation stating, "that the applicant organisation is not suspended, or debarred, or otherwise identified as ineligible by FCDO, OPM, or any other organisation".

DARE-RC reserves the right to seek further information or clarification, where required.

8. Evaluation and Notification

Complete applications will undergo evaluation by the DARE-RC's technical review team and Fund Management team. The decision of DARE-RC will be considered as final keeping in mind evaluation scores and the overall DARE-RC research portfolio.

- DARE-RC reserves the right to cancel this call for application at any time without prior notice and/or to not issue any grants under this process.
- DARE-RC reserves the right to make any revision(s) in this call document.
- DARE-RC reserves the right to reject any proposal without providing reasons.
- DARE-RC reserves the right to request successful applicants to make changes. based on DARE-RC feedback.
- A successful proposal does not guarantee subsequent funding.
- The DARE-RC Research Grant is "not for profit" and will only fund the cost of delivery. A maximum of 10% is to be allocated for overhead cost.
- DARE-RC reserves the right to adjust the grant amount, either upward or downward, based on the outcome of the final budget negotiations.
- These research grants are designed to support research costs, and do not fund programme implementation costs.
- Budget is inclusive of all applicable Federal/Provincial/relevant government tax ensuring that the budget cap mentioned above does not exceed.
- Applicable taxes will be withheld at source, in accordance with prevailing applicable government regulations, from applicants selected for these grants.
- Approved applicants will be awarded the research grant, incumbent upon clearing the due diligence process.

- Successful awards are expected to start immediately upon the signing of the contract.

9. Conflict of Interest

All applicants will be asked to submit a **Disclosure form** to help determine whether any conflicts of interest may exist in their application. The answers to these questions will be treated confidentially by the DARE-RC directorate and will not be shared with reviewers. Answers to these questions will not usually disqualify a proposal but may require the need to take additional actions to mitigate potential conflicts.

10. Privacy Policy

By submitting an application under this Call, applicants consent to the disclosure of documents they submit to DARE-RC. If selected for funding, applicants further consent to the disclosure of their name and the title of the proposed project in any announcement of selected projects.

11. Safeguarding

Strict guidelines must be followed to protect research participants, particularly those who are vulnerable, from harm. Proposals must detail plans for protecting research participants that are aligned with the DARE-RC Safeguarding Processes.

OPM, in clear alignment with the FCDO, maintains a zero-tolerance approach to sexual exploitation and abuse within supplier organisations, which includes their downstream supply chains. Successful applicants will be responsible for assessing safeguarding policies and practices of any of its downstream partners/research teams. They will comply with all OPM and FCDO safeguarding policies and will be required to demonstrate that they have robust approaches in place to reduce the risk of bullying, harassment and exploitation and to manage instances if they take place.

OPM will require assurances from successful applicants regarding protection from violence, exploitation and abuse through involvement, directly or indirectly. Applicants will be required to include a statement that they have duty of care to informants, other project stakeholders and their own staff, and that they will comply with the ethics principles in all project activities.

Safeguarding training of research staff at all levels (following the DARE-RC Safeguarding training procedures), including and especially any research enumerators who go to the field, will be necessary. Application to and/or approval from research ethics boards alone will not suffice for complying with safeguarding requirements.

12. Branding and Transparency

Researchers that receive funding must use the FCDO logo (i.e. the UK International Development logo) on their DARE-RC research projects, to be transparent and acknowledge that they are funded by UK taxpayers. However no publicity is to be given in relation to this Contract without the prior written consent of OPM.

The FCDO requires suppliers receiving and managing funds to release open data on how this money is spent, in common, standard, re-useable format and to require this level of information from immediate sub-contractors, sub-agencies and partners.

It is a contractual requirement for all suppliers to comply with this, and to ensure they have the appropriate tools to enable routine financial reporting, publishing of accurate data and providing evidence of this to the FCDO.

13. Administrative Provisions

The following administrative provisions shall be considered by all applicants, as they will need to adhere to them if they are selected.

i. Payment

Successful grantees will receive the following milestone related payments (subject to contract negotiations):

a. Research Study

1) 40% at the time of signing the agreement.

2) 10% at the time of approval of the inception report (including policy engagement and dissemination plan).

3) 20% at the time of approval of the midterm review report.

4) 30% at the time of submission of the final research report, PowerPoint slide deck of research study, policy brief, publishable article manuscript and primary anonymised data collected (if any).

b. Scoping Paper/Evidence Synthesis

1) 40% at the time of signing the agreement.

2) 10% at the time of approval of the inception report (including policy engagement and dissemination plan).

3) 10% at the time of approval of the mid-point progress report.

4) 20% at the time of approval of the final scoping paper/evidence synthesis and PowerPoint slide deck

5) 20% at the time of approval of the policy brief and primary anonymised data collected (if any).

Release of payments will be made on approval of milestones by DARE-RC. Contracts with grantees will mirror OPM's contract terms with the FCDO.

ii. Logistics and procedures

The Supplier will be responsible for all logistical arrangements required to conduct research as per the approved budget.

iii. Intellectual property

Any project specific deliverables and Project Specific Intellectual Property Rights (written documents, primary data collected, audio-visual materials, etc.) created under the research project shall be owned by the grantee. However the grantee is to grant OPM a perpetual, irrevocable, non-exclusive, assignable, royalty-free licence to use, sub-license and/or commercially exploit any Project Specific IPRs.

Research outputs produced under the DARE-RC call must be aligned to the FCDO's "Research Open and Enhanced Access Policy[3]".

Researchers are to acknowledge FCDO funding in the research project final outputs by stating that "This research product has been funded with UK International Development from the UK government under the DARE-RC programme".

14. OPM Policies

Successful grantees must comply with OPM policies, including passing due diligence requirements.

15. Questions and Support

If you have any questions or need assistance during the application process, do not hesitate to submit your questions on our dedicated email address: **info@rcdare.org.**

DARE-RC will be holding an online Q&A session on **Friday 05th December 2025 (3:00pm to 4:00pm Pakistan Standard Time-PST)**. Meeting link details for this session will be available on the DARE-RC website.

Please note that we can only respond to questions regarding the research call process, eligibility and thematic focus; we cannot provide feedback on individual proposal ideas. Responses to questions will stop on **Friday 12th December 2025, 11.59 PM (PST).**

16. Budget and payment

The grantees will need to demonstrate effective and efficient costing within the allocated budget while maintaining Value for Money and delivering high quality work. Successful grantees will receive milestone payments. Release of payments will be made on approval of milestone outputs by DARE-RC. Contracts with suppliers will mirror OPM's contract terms with the FCDO.

17. How to Apply

- Submit the **Research Proposal/Scoping paper Proposal** (MS Word), **Financial Proposal** (MS Excel), and all supporting documents via email to

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[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-research-open-and-enhanced-access-policy

grants@rcdare.org by **17ᵗʰ December 2025, 11:59 PM (PST).** Please ensure that the email size does not exceed 40MB.

Annex 1 – Topics for Research Studies

Please refer to the list of research study topics.

	Topic	Description
		Priority Area 1: Improving drivers of learning for marginalised children
1	**Girls' Access to Secondary Education in Pakistan**	This study will prioritise *what works and why* to improve girls' transitions from primary to middle and middle to secondary school in Pakistan. Proposals should select 3–4 concrete reforms in Pakistan, e.g., safe transport/route schemes, stipends or scholarships (and delivery mechanisms), placement of female teachers, middle-school access (upgrading/hostels), and essential school infrastructure (boundary walls/WASH). The study will explain their effectiveness, pathways of change, and contextual conditions. It will also accompany a concise synthesis of recent evidence on *barriers* to frame why the chosen interventions plausibly address constraints (costs, safety, distance, norms, school quality) and where heterogeneous effects are likely. Designs may briefly combine analysis of existing data with focused fieldwork to capture beneficiary views and short "life-trajectory" snapshots. The research should also explore relevant documentation/data from the Girls' Education Challenge (e.g. project evaluations and research reports). Outputs of the study will help specify enabling and hindering factors, as well as implications for scalability and (where possible) cost-effectiveness.
		Priority Area 2: Strengthening the quality of front-line education provision
2	**Optimising Teaching in Multigrade Classrooms**	Multigrade teaching remains a major barrier to quality education provision in Pakistan. However, given the resource constraints faced by many education systems, multigrade teaching is and will remain the reality for many children. A critical question then becomes, how best do we optimize teaching in multigrade settings for children in Pakistan. This research will investigate the primary challenges of small and large multigrade classrooms and identify if there are existing solutions at the local level that could be replicated and potentially scaled to address widespread issues of teacher shortages and uneven instructional quality. This includes collaborative, team-based models that involve education support staff, teacher candidates, and community members who can be leveraged to support teachers and improve student learning.
3	**Women in leadership positions in schools and in the education system**	Women remain under-represented in leadership positions in education. There is evidence, however, that there are positive, system level benefits, of having women in leadership positions both within schools but more broadly across education departments[4]. This study will map and explain women's representation and progression into leadership across provincial education departments, attached departments, and autonomous institutions in all provinces. Using a

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[4]   https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/media/4636/file/UNICEF-Increasing-Womens-Representation-School-Leadership-2022.pdf

		data-first approach, the study will be expected to establish a baseline of women in leadership by post and grade and pinpoint where the pipeline thins. It will also be required to examine how recruitment, posting and promotion rules, training access, and the composition of boards and committees enable or hinder advancement. The study should involve targeted interviews with women leaders and selection/posting authorities in addition to the administrative data to understand institutional and social barriers, including mobility, care responsibilities, and political interference. The study will also document promising Pakistan and global examples of cadre and career-path policies that promise to create transparent, competency-based routes to leadership and protect against discretionary practices. Outputs will be province-specific options for cadre policy reform with clear steps to promoting women leadership.
4	**Application of the RISE Education System Diagnostic to 'teachers'**	The RISE Education System Diagnostic can be applied to a specific topic or sub-theme. We propose this research applies it to some aspect of the 'teachers' theme to better understand the political economy considerations in the teaching life cycle. As an example, it could be applied to teacher professional development in a specific province or provinces to yield insights for informing the design and implementation of policy plans and for building the shared knowledge base on political economy in the provinces in question. Research should also map the policy architecture in selected provinces (e.g. TPD, teacher competency framework; teacher workforce policies, teacher allocation protocols etc.). We welcome proposals that suggest application of the RISE Education System Diagnostic to sub-themes across the broad theme of 'teachers'. We welcome multi-province proposals.
	Priority Area 4: Accountable education systems	
5	**Decentralized education governance and management**	Research under this area will pursue a two-part agenda: first, a diagnostic and political economy analysis of decentralisation in Pakistan's school education to identify the core enablers and constraints across accountability, resourcing, capability, and financing from provincial to district, sub-district, and school levels; second, a cross-provincial examination of what has worked and what has not, highlighting feasible, context-specific and hybrid approaches (e.g., school-based financing, teacher recruitment/deployment, local decision rights, assessment/data use). The study will be required to explain the conditions under which these models succeed or fail. It will generate realistic policy options for strengthening decentralised education management by clarifying roles, decision rights, and minimum capacities.
6	**How can assessments data be used to support system**	Research under RISE programme has shown that measuring learning reliably, regularly, and relevantly is necessary to accelerate progress in learning[5]. Education systems collect detailed data on enrolments and inputs, yet many do not use data on student learning to inform policy and improve instruction. It's crucial to measure learning over time, starting early in school.

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[5] Focus to Flourish: A Messaging Campaign on Five Actions to Accelerate Progress in Learning | RISE Programme

	coherence in Pakistan	Building on [DARE-commissioned scoping paper][6] examining the use of data systems to improve learning, inclusion and transparency, this study will update and improve this mapping outlining the availability, quality, and use of learning-assessment data across provinces in both public and private sector. Employing the conceptual thinking advanced by RISE, the study will critically explore why assessment data is not being used and why it does not lead to system coherence, where the breakdown happens and how to bridge the gap? The study will look at how assessment routines can support system coherence and drive learning-focused decisions. This will imply tracing what learning-centric data (e.g., matriculation results, NAT, ASER, FLA/EGRA/EGMA) are collected, by whom, how often, with what quality controls, and how they flow (e.g. across tiers- school leaders; AEO/ASDEO/TEO/DEO/CEO; PMIU and equivalents, and secretariats) - to inform planning, resourcing, and accountability. The study will identify gaps, bottlenecks, and good practices in data governance, inter-operability, and feedback loops, including whether regular reviews and dashboards translate into management action. It is expected to recommend province-specific options to strengthen a coherent assessment-use architecture.
7	**The role of Education Foundations in provinces in Pakistan: outcomes, leveraging potential and lessons for innovations**	This study will examine the Education Foundation's in a specific province (e.g. Sindh) and its contribution to that province's education agenda by examining outcomes and returns across access, learning, equity (including girls and other vulnerable groups), and cost-effectiveness. To do so, the study will situate the Foundation within the province's wider reform priorities (e.g., reducing OOSC, improving transitions, strengthening school quality). It will also identify how the Education Foundation can be better leveraged as a platform for innovation through structured collaborations with non-state providers. The insights generated by the study of the proposed Education Foundation will help in strengthening governance, value-for-money, besides generating lessons that can potentially inform the work of other provincial education foundations.
8	**Learning-Oriented Settlements: Rethinking the Political Economy of Education Reform in Pakistan**	The literature on the political economy of education remains 'underdeveloped in geographic scope, robustness of methods utilised and theoretical richness'. This remains largely the case, a decade after Kingdon et al (2014) made this observation, particularly for Southeast Asia and Africa that remain 'virtually untouched by research on the ways in which political economy forces affect their education sector decisions, processes and outcomes' (Kingdon et al, 2014, 46 as cited in Hicky and Hossain, 2019, 22) This study will contribute to advancing the research on the politics of education quality in developing countries as proposed by Hicky and Hossain (2019)[7] critically engaging with and further strengthening the conceptual and methodological approach the authors. The study could for example look at how elite bargains and the distribution of power within Pakistan's political settlement shape the incentives for education

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[6] [DARE-RC: Education Accountability and Student Achievement in Pakistan](#)
[7] [The Politics of Education in Developing Countries: From Schooling to Learning | Oxford Academic](#)

| | | reform, and with what implications for learning outcomes and system coherence? This study's proposed theoretical contribution could be in extending the political settlement framework by conceptualising "learning-oriented settlements" where elite interests begin to align around education quality, not just access and identifying the political preconditions and institutional pathways through which that alignment can occur. |

Annex 2 – Topics for Scoping papers/evidence syntheses

Please refer to the list of topics for scoping papers/evidence syntheses:

	Topic	Description
1	**Education policies for children with special education needs and disabilities**	Research that addresses important questions about school-level factors (e.g., facilities, assistive devices, teacher competencies) for integrating children with mild or moderate functional difficulties into mainstream schools is crucial for designing effective inclusive education policies. This scoping paper will explore the broad question of contextualised approaches and policies for children with special education needs and disabilities (special and inclusive education) through a synthesis of global and local evidence.
2	**Comparative study of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) models across Pakistan**	This study will examine the different CPD models implemented by the provinces in Pakistan. The research will examine the content of the different models to identify what they yield in terms of quality teaching. This scoping study will focus on what each of the models looks like across the different provinces as well as examining how each model performs. It will map and compare provincial CPD models, complementing DARE-RC studies in Punjab and KP, by describing their design and delivery modalities, content focus, governance and delivery chains, and the use of technology (LMS/mobile/offline). Without attempting causal-effectiveness estimates, the study will document participation, reach, and equity (including rural and female teachers), and teachers' perceptions of usefulness and classroom applicability, alongside light outcome proxies (e.g. classroom observation tools), and costing/value-for-money profiles where feasible. The study will engage with relevant robust literature on the characteristics of high quality CPD models. The study's output is expected to be a set of comparable CPD profiles and province-specific options to strengthen the CPD architecture, ultimately improving relevance to classroom practice and scalability.
3	**Artificial Intelligence in the education sector in Pakistan**	A mapping and landscaping review adopting an analytical lens on the current state of artificial intelligence in the education sector in Pakistan, identifying use-cases and pilots, assessing policy and governance, infrastructure and capacity gaps, and any ethical considerations especially in reaching the marginalised in Pakistan. The paper will propose recommendations for system-level interventions

		(funding, support, etc) that would facilitate responsible integration of AI in education.
4	**Effectiveness of School Monitoring Systems**	Monitoring systems are a significant investment area for governments and donors, but their effectiveness is rarely assessed. This scoping study will help determine whether current models offer value for money and whether simpler approaches can achieve similar outcomes. This study will map and compare real-time school monitoring systems across different provinces in Pakistan, focusing on their design, configuration, data flows, and cost-effectiveness. It will assess whether these systems provide actionable insights for school management and accountability. A review of evidence on other possibly more cost-effective approaches from other countries and international best practices such as self-reporting and sample checks can also help fill critical gaps in evidence on the availability and use of data and information management systems.
5	**Updated Education Research Synthesis in Pakistan**	This study will update an evidence synthesis conducted by Aslam and Rawal (2019) critically reviewing what has worked in Pakistan's education sector using an adapted version of the GEEAP (Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel) framework (e.g. classifying evidence on 'what works' into promising/not-promising categories). It will categorise interventions into high- and low-impact strategies, assess why certain reforms have succeeded or failed, and highlight promising, scalable, and cost-effective practices. The goal is to create a concise, updated reference point for evidence-informed policymaking. We welcome proposals that also identify donor-supported reforms and synthesize evidence on some of the remarkable learnings from donor-supported investments with a view to identify 'what worked' and 'why' and 'how'.
6	**Politics of Evidence Uptake: Demand for Evidence**	Evidence uptake remains a persistent challenge across Pakistan's education sector. This study will examine whether and how education decision-makers in Pakistan demand and use evidence to inform policy and practice. Using the Power, Capabilities, and Incentives (PCI) framework (Khan, 2022)[8], it will investigate how civil service structures, institutional incentives, and political economy factors shape research uptake and the (mis)alignment of evidence with action. It will also assess the points in the system where evidence can most effectively be introduced to support reform. This study will fill a critical cross-cutting gap by exploring how to make research more actionable and how to shift incentives

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[8] Making anti-corruption real: using a 'Power Capabilities and Interest Approach' to stop wasting money and start making progress - SOAS Anti-Corruption Evidence

		and capacities in favour of data-informed decision-making.
7	**Effective use of gender data in education in Pakistan: A Synthesis Report**	Emerging evidence on the challenges and solutions for girls' education in Pakistan suggests the need for more accurate, complete and gender-disaggregated data for female student populations across the country. This scoping study will identify gaps in gender-disaggregated data available on education through various national and provincial sources (for example, through surveys such as PSLM, MICS and ASER as well as school monitoring data) and assess the extent to which existing data on girls' education are (or are not) informing decision making, key barriers and opportunities, as well recommendations for improving use of education data.
8	**Climate resilient education systems – evidence synthesis**	In Pakistan, the consequences of climate change and environmental degradation are now being felt with an ever-increasing intensity. While governments at federal and provincial levels have made efforts to respond, measures often remain fragmented, reactive, and under-resourced. A consolidated body of evidence to guide decision-making is needed on what interventions are effective, how they work in Pakistan's context, what they cost, and what institutions need to do differently to withstand future shocks. This evidence also needs to analyse the extent to which the interventions have or have not adopted a systems lens. This situation calls for an evidence synthesis that would draw together global lessons and Pakistan-specific experiences on building climate-resilient education systems. It will examine how risk management can be better integrated into planning, what infrastructure standards and designs protect learning spaces, how continuity of teaching and learning can be sustained during closures, what forms of support safeguard the most vulnerable children, and how financing and delivery arrangements can ensure timely and equitable responses. A specific focus could be on the extent to which, and the effectiveness of, efforts to leverage disaster risk financing (DRF) and pre-arranged financing approaches to protect education services. The synthesis should also highlight how curriculum, teacher policies, and community engagement can strengthen preparedness and build resilience from the ground up. The outputs will include a comprehensive synthesis report and a concise policy brief setting out priority actions for Pakistan. These will be tailored to decision-makers at both federal and provincial levels, offering practical, cost-aware, and context-sensitive recommendations. By consolidating fragmented evidence into a clear set of policy options, the synthesis review will inform the

		policy across provinces, support more efficient allocation of resources, and ultimately reduce learning disruptions during future disasters.