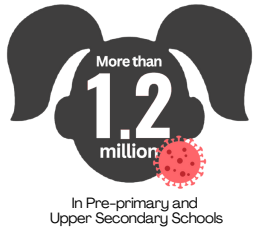


# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON EDUCATION IN ASIA-PACIFIC

## FOCUS ON GIRLS' EDUCATION



The COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected education budgets in many countries in the Asia Pacific. The **effects on girls' education** have been extensive, further **increasing dropout rates, amplifying risk for gender-based violence, and widening the gender digital divide in learning opportunities.**



### DROPOUTS

Potential dropouts in **East Asia & the Pacific** due to the pandemic <sup>1</sup>

In addition to **15 million** girls not enrolled before COVID-19 <sup>2</sup>

### Dropout Causes in Pakistan & Samoa

- financial constraints & pressure to work
- household & childcare responsibilities
- loss of learning time & disruption in education routine leading to loss of motivation
- lack of support from home to continue learning
- early & forced marriages and early / unwanted pregnancies

**2.5 million girls**

will be at risk of marriage by 2025 due to the pandemic



**South Asia** will be hardest hit with nearly **200,000 more** at risk of child marriage in 2020.<sup>3</sup>

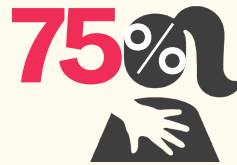


**1 million more**

will be at risk of pregnancy in **2020** alone.

Childbirth is the leading cause of death among **15- to 19-year-old girls.**

### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



Women who experienced sexual harassment in **Asia and the Pacific** <sup>4</sup>



Greater % of women who report having experienced **physical or sexual violence** by an intimate partner within their lifetime <sup>5</sup>



**There has been an increase in interpersonal partner violence and sexual abuse**

since lockdowns & extended quarantine prevented women & girls from leaving home and seeking help.

Women (aged 15-49) who experienced physical & sexual violence in **Pakistan**



### GBV in Pakistan & Samoa attributed to

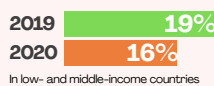
- poverty, low socio-economic status and unemployment
- alcohol and drug use
- patriarchal societies which reinforce gender role stereotypes
- male control of wealth and decision-making in families
- history of sexual abuse (as witness and/or victim)
- unbreakable cycle of violence within the family

### GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE

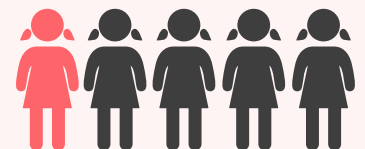


**18% less likely**

to own a smartphone compared to men (2021)<sup>6</sup>



Mobile internet use in **South Asia** continued to increase among men and stalled among women, widening the gender gap.<sup>6</sup>



**1 out of 5 (40 million)**

had no access to distance learning in **East Asia and the Pacific.**<sup>1</sup>

### Gender Digital Divide heightened by

- high cost of internet service
- poor internet connections
- lack of computers and mobile phones
- girls with less access to gadgets
- home contexts not conducive to learning
- less time spent on online learning
- girls burdened with household duties
- lack of teacher training in distance learning
- virtual learning perceived as less effective

#### References

- <sup>1</sup> Plan International. (2021). Smart, Successful, Strong: The Case for Investing in Adolescent Girls' Education in Aid and COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- <sup>2</sup> UNICEF. (2020). Issue Brief: COVID-19 and Girls' Education in East Asia and Pacific
- <sup>3</sup> Save the Children. (2020). Protect a Generation: The impact of COVID-19 on Children's Lives
- <sup>4</sup> UNFPA. (2019). kNOWVAWdata Regional VAW Map
- <sup>5</sup> WHO. (2018). Violence Against Women Prevalence Estimates
- <sup>6</sup> GSMA. (2022). The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2022

# THE GOOD PRACTICES

## PAKISTAN

### Rozan Counseling Helpline's Multipronged approach

- 1** **immediate psychosocial support** to victims of gender-based violence (GBV)
- 2** **partnership** with shelters, police & financial assistance institutions, and maintenance of accurate information on all supportive mechanisms for GBV survivors
- 3** **training and capacity building** for staff of government initiatives on database management, effective response to GBV cases and addressing psychosocial needs of the community

## SAMOA

The Ministry for Education, Sports and Culture (MESC) organized **radio and TV educational programs** for students to supplement hard copy learning materials.



It also negotiated with telecom company Digicel for students' **free internet access** to MESC learning materials; and worked with UNESCO and Vodafone to give students internet access and to develop an E-Learning Portal.

## TAJIKISTAN



The government introduced **alternative distance learning methods** through TV programs and radio channels, recorded video lessons, and online courses.

**Parent and school meetings** were held to discuss emerging problems and other issues related to children's education.

# THE CALLS TO ACTION



**Prioritize the development of comprehensive economic and social welfare policies** along with increased funding dedicated to women empowerment and girls' education.



**Design policies to retain girls in schools** and develop long-term strategies to ensure they do not drop out.



**Provide technical and financial support** to schools who can work with communities to identify at-risk girls and secure their return to school



**Promote and implement holistic strategies to prevent and mitigate the effects of gender-based violence**, which include gender-sensitivity and consciousness-raising in schools and communities



**Provide gender-equitable, inclusive and diverse distance learning solutions** to support all learners, which include access to the internet, online resources and other tools for learning



**Create strategies, partnerships, and financial investments** aimed at improving the online learning environment and digital pedagogical resources

*A series of infographics was created by ASPBAE in partnership with national education coalitions based on the country case studies on the impact of COVID-19 on different areas of concerns in education. This infographic highlights the challenges, good practices, and calls to action in Girls' Education in Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Samoa.*