Federal Non-Formal Education (NFE) Policy – 2025

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Policy & Research Wing
Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE)
Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT)

The Federal Non-Formal Education Policy 2025 provides policy guidelines to strengthen and promote NFE in Federal Areas with special emphasis on addressing the challenge of OOSC and achieve 100% literacy in Federal areas.

Basic Information

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Wing	Policy and Research Wing
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Ministry	Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT)
NEF	National Education Foundation
BECS	Basic Education Community Schools
NCHD	National Commission for Human Development
FDE	Federal Directorate of Education
National and International Development Partners	Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) UNICEF World Bank UNESCO OPM (Oxford Policy Management) Sightsavers ITA (Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi) Taleemabad

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1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Background on NFE in Pakistan

According to educational policies analysis the policy documents elaborated, the MoF&EPT (GoP) has had different perspectives of NFE subsector in different periods. National Education Policy 1998-2010 expected NFE's brilliant future, mentioning, "The non-formal education is now receiving a growing awareness and acceptance as a dominant approach to education in the future[1]" and advocated non-formal basic education (NFBE) to accelerate universal access to primary education. Afterwards, National Education Policy 2009 gave the principal focus to adult literacy without mentioning much about NFBE. Later, draft National Education Policy Framework 2018 emphasized NFE as one of the key pillars in addressing OOSC crises. Similarly, recently developed National Education Policy Framework 2024 dedicated special chapter for NFE and emphasized literacy & skills for low-literate youth and adults and NFBE/ ALP as viable learning option to address OOSC crises in Pakistan.

The Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) published two flagship reports: the Pakistan Education Statistics (PES) 2021-22 and the National Achievement Test (NAT) 2023. The PES highlighted the critical issue of over 26 million out-of-school children (OOSCs) across the country, drawing national attention to access and equity gaps. Simultaneously, the NAT report presented a comprehensive picture of the prevailing learning crisis, emphasizing widespread learning poverty and other systemic challenges in student achievement. In direct response to these findings, the Prime Minister of Pakistan declared an education emergency and allocated a Challenge Fund aimed at addressing the OOSC crisis through targeted, coordinated interventions.

Based on the significance of NFE given in previous education policies and in recent educational scenario, present government accords crucial importance to NFE approach to provide basic education for millions of OOSC including youth and adults as formal education can't cover the gap alone.

1.2 Introduction to Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE)

According to UNESCO, Non-Formal Education (NFE) is an addition, alternative and/ or complement to formal education within the process of life-long learning of individuals. NFE, being flexible learning, can cover programmes contributing to adult and youth literacy and education for out-of-school children (OOSC), as well as programmes on life-skills, work skills, and social or cultural development.

NFE programmes in Pakistan include conventional Non-Formal Basic Education programmes (NFBE) and Alternative and Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALPs) for OOSC that are equivalent to formal education and offers primary and middle level education in fast track, flexible and cost-effective manner. These programmes offer valid certificates that facilitate learning continuity during and after the programme.

NFE programmes mainly focus on the basic education for OOSC children literacy, life and work skills for illiterate youth and adults. NFBE programmes are generally equivalent, accelerated and flexible to enable learners of various backgrounds to acquire basic competence, complete basic education, or enter or re-enter the formal education system for

[1] National Education Policy 1988-2010, Ministry of Education, p.19.

learning continuity. Adult literacy/ life and work skill programmes allow illiterate/ low literate youth / adults to learn reading, writing and numeracy skills as well as life skills and trade specific work skills to become productive citizens and contribute to human development indicators.

1.3 National and International Commitments for Promotion of Literacy and NFBE

The NFE policy aims to contribute to constitutional obligations and honor international commitments that the Pakistan Government has made with international community. The policy primarily pursues article 25-A that guarantees the Right to Education (RTE) to all children between the ages of 5 and 16 years. Furthermore, the policy framework partially contributes to article 37 of the constitution of Pakistan that promotes social justice and eradication of social evils by promoting educational and economic interest of backward classes or areas, remove illiteracy and provide secondary education within minimum possible time and make professional education generally available. The policy framework proposes an integration of education, adult literacy, life skills and vocational skills for out of school children, illiterate/ low literate youth and adults with special emphasis on those belonging to marginalized and excluded areas. The policy framework regards the international commitments such as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) # 4 and other SDGs pertaining to gender equity, poverty reduction, skills provision among others. The policy contributes to other international covenants such as UNCRC, human rights declaration, and covenants about the rights of women etc.

2. SITUATION ANALYSIS OF EDUCATION, AND RATIONALE FOR NFE

2.1 Rationale and Significance of NFE approach for Pakistan

According to 7th Population & Housing Census 2023, approximately 25.3 million children of 5-16 years of age in Pakistan are out of schools, which constitutes 35.6% of the total school going age children of this age cohort. It is important to note that 60% of OOSC in Pakistan are between the ages of 10 and 16, which is the largest cohort and requires special attention as this age cohort is diverse and complex and it is somehow difficult to bring them back to formal schools as most of them are overage, involved in some work, have learning challenges or are slow learners and remain excluded of the education/ school system for other reasons.
As far as the situation of OOSC in Islamabad Capital Territory is concerned, there are approximately 89,127 children of 5-16 years of age are not attending any school; 54% of these are girls and 78% belong to 10-16 years of age.
In addition to statistics revealed by the national census, Pakistan Education Statistics Report 2023-24 states that around 25.1 million children of this age cohort are out of schools, which is very close to what was published by national population census. Nevertheless, it is evident that OOSC in Pakistan are huge, diverse and complex; hence require well thought out, cost-effective, flexible, and locally relevant learning models that genuinely help in addressing these crises.

That is why the OOSC continue to pose a serious challenge for education policy makers and practitioners. Alternative and accelerated learning models have necessarily become viable to address the OOSC crises with special emphasis on OOSC who belong to 10-16 years of age.

At the same time, illiteracy/ low-literacy in Pakistan has been among the consistent threats that continue to negatively impact the human development and human capital indicators.

According to 7th Population & Housing Census 2023, literacy rate of 10 years and older population in Pakistan is 60.6%. Literacy rate of women is 52.8% as compared to 68% for men, while literacy rate of rural women in Pakistan is 41.6%, whereas rural women in Baluchistan are only 26.59% literate, the lowest in the country. In terms of numbers, total population of 10 years and older in Pakistan is 171.7 million, out of which 104.1 million are literate, whereas remaining 67.6 million are unable to read and write. This number is huge and the policy makers have to think strategically to make these people learn foundational literacy skills and become functionally literate to actively contribute to human development indicators.

Low school enrollment, huge OOSC number, continuing drop out and low literacy especially in rural areas and for rural women are negatively impacting the human development and human capital indicators. According to human development report (HDR[2]) published in 2025, Pakistan is ranked 168 out of 193 countries, while it was 151 during 2021, which means that human development situation in Pakistan has deteriorated as compared to previous years. Similarly, human capital index (HCI[3]) by the World Bank ranks Pakistan 144 out of 174 countries in year 2020, while the same was 140 a couple of year ago, which indicates a serious decline in the development score. It is worthwhile to mention that education and literacy indicators have a huge impact on these development rankings and Pakistan can only improve on these ranks by improving education and literacy indicators, which will significantly impact on improving health, well-being, opportunities for decent work and improved income generation prospects.
The Pakistan Institute of Education's Pakistan Education Statistics (PES) and the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) datasets are closely aligned, ensuring consistency in national education data reporting and analysis. This alignment strengthens evidence-based planning and policy formulation across both federal and provincial levels. Additionally, the ICT's education initiatives—particularly the Zero OOSC campaign, integrated digital monitoring systems, and the development of an ICT-specific NFE Action Plan—have emerged as replicable best practices. These models offer practical, scalable solutions for other provinces seeking to tackle out-of-school children and improve non-formal education systems through data-driven, coordinated approaches.

Non-Formal Education (NFE) with its flexible, equivalent, and cost-effective features, proposes viable learning solutions for both OOSC and low-literacy crises. The NFBE offers alternative and accelerated learning programmes (ALPs) for primary and middle levels with skill-integrated courses that are offered at the doorstep of OOSC. Similarly, NFE offers foundational literacy and skill programmes for low-literate young people and adults to learn foundational literacy skills, learning life skills and income generations skills to become socially and economically productive and advance their work skills through recognized vocational institutions as life-long learners.

2.2 Current State of Non-Formal Basic Education in Pakistan

According to NFEMIS report[4] 2023-24, which publishes Non-Formal Education (NFBE and Adult Literacy) data, there are 1.29 million children and adults. Data reveal that 93% of the NFE enrollment comprises of NFBE/ ALP (Primary, Middle and Middle-Tech), while remaining 7% are enrolled in adult literacy programmes. Data further reveal that 57% of the total NFE enrollment are girls/ women. Similarly, province/ area specific NFE data confirm that 54% NFE enrollment is in Punjab, followed by KP with 28% centers, while Sindh, Baluchistan, GB and

[2] HDR 2025 by UNDP (https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2025reporten.pdf)
[3] World Bank (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/hd.hci.ovrl?most_recent_year_desc=true)
[4] Non-Formal Education Management Information System (NFEMIS) report is published every year by PIE

AJ&K are managing 5%, 3%, 2% and 2% respectively. Enrollment in NFE in ICT is 5% of the total enrollment of Pakistan. It is important to note that enrollment in ALP (Middle and Middle-Tech) is 83,735, which is 6% of the total NFE enrollment in Pakistan. The ALP (Middle & Middle-Tech) was introduced a couple of years ago and received wide scale acceptance with many public and private/ development actors showing intentions to scale up the same as continuing learning options for those who complete ALP (Primary). It is added that federal and provincial Governments are showing interest in developing ALP (Matric & Matric-Tech) as a new stream, which will complete the alternative learning pathways system in Pakistan as ALP (Primary) and Middle-Tech) are already in operation.

Current NFE data findings recommend emphasizing more on adult literacy by opening more centers and using alternative strategies to promote literacy in Pakistan with clear focus on digital literacy learning models. Contribution of NGOs/ CSOs as development partners is 10% in NFE, which needs to be significantly enhanced with additional investment. Quality of NFE and innovation is increasingly required as a multi-strategy approach is needed to address the OOSC and illiteracy crises.

Regarding quality of NFE, research studies conducted by Agha Khan University – Institute of Education and Development (AKU-IED) and PIE (National Education Assessment System-NEAS) have proved that age appropriate, equivalent and accelerated learning programmes have significant impact on improved learning outcomes of learners compared to conventional NFE programmes that use formal education curriculum and related delivery approaches. In addition, inadequate focus on the professional capacity of teachers and low salaries have been a major reason behind low quality of NFE programmes. Budgetary analysis has revealed that financing in NFE has remained extremely low; less than one percent of the education budget for NFE has been an impediment that caused interrupted planning and implementation of NFE programmes along with seriously harming the quality of delivery.

Low financing has also triggered governance and service delivery issues in NFE. Lack of staff and their professional capacity as well as weak provincial and district level institutional structures have created barriers in requisite expansion of NFE programmes. Despite continuous support to NFE, governance structures of the NFE in Pakistan require additional functional capacity support technical areas pertaining to curricula, learning materials, trainings, assessment and data management. At federal/ ICT level, the NFE necessarily need to create and strengthen a “central functional governance structure”, which would serve as regulatory and serve delivery arm of the MoFEPT and to build formal coordination with technical organizations responsible for these functions and other organizations such as NCHD, BECS and NEF.

Furthermore, private sector and development sector entities need to pay requisite attention to employing NFE as a strategy to address the OOSC and illiteracy crises. Therefore, a well-structured and vibrant Public Private Partnership mechanism need to be strengthened to engage public, development and private sector actors. As NFE has to deal with a range of complex and diverse issues of OOSC and illiteracy, innovation, research and development should be seriously focused.

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3. KEY POLICY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES OF LITERACY AND NFBE/ ALP IN Federal

NEPDF -2024 highlights key challenges in NFE in Pakistan are narrated under three main pillars: 1) Access and Participation, 2) Quality & Relevance and 3) Governance & Financing. The policy issues/ challenges in NFE revolve around; regulatory functions, service delivery, supply side limitations, access and equity issues, cultural barriers for girls in particular, relevance of NFE programmes and delivery strategies, quality issues owing particularly to low teacher qualification and their professional development, bottlenecks in implementation/ delivery, implementation of support systems such as data management, monitoring, assessment and low financing along with low level of political will. Such challenges were exacerbated by COVID-19 and floods that hit the country during year 2022-23.

Policy challenges are described below in three basic pillars:

Access & Participation

Following are some major policy issues that restrict accessibility:

1. The largest cohort of OOSC is between the ages of 10 and 16 years that constitute 60% of the total OOSC (78% in ICT). This age cohort includes a complex range of children who have difficulty in continuing their education in formal setting as most of them have become overage, involved in labour, have learning difficulties, and belong to low socio-economic population strata prevailing mainly in ethnic and religious minorities.
2. Girls, being more in the out-of-school children's cohort require focused attention for inclusion in an educational setting that provides easy and safe access. Among others, cultural barriers, long distances and safety and security issues cause the girls to remain out of schools.
3. It has been noted that majority of the girls who have completed primary education find it difficult to transit to post primary education programmes owing to limited options of elementary/ middle and secondary schools, which are generally not available in all the villages and areas. In such situations, NFBE/ ALP can provide post primary learning models for girls at their doorsteps.
4. In addition to girls, a large number of boys do not continue their learning beyond the primary level because they cannot find any economic relevance in post primary education. Therefore, Accelerated Learning Programme offering a blend with locally appropriate and employable vocational skill courses can generate interest among the those who have completed primary cycle or have equivalent competence.
5. Literacy rate in Pakistan is already low, however, literacy rates for rural women are extremely low especially in Balochistan and Sindh. Therefore, literacy programmes focusing rural women will strategically address the low-literacy issue.
6. NFE data has revealed that enrolment in literacy programmes is extremely low. Many adult learners find conventional literacy programmes unappealing due to their abstract nature and limited applicability to daily life. Factors such as inflexible schedules, irrelevant content, and the absence of immediate economic benefits contribute to their lack of interest. Therefore, the youth/ adult literacy programmes should offer a good range and ideally offer a blend of literacy and skill programmes to increase buy-in of the target population
7. It has also been observed that supply of NFE programmes has remained significantly low as compared to the demand that keep growing every year and remains

proportionate to the population growth rate. Therefore, the NFE programmes must be designed, offered and expanded wisely and be compatible with the growing population needs.

Quality & Relevance

Policy issues of quality and relevance are given under:

1. Though standards based NFE programmes have been initiated, yet it is highly demanded that all NFE programmes should follow standards that should be translated equally at all levels of NFE programming including curricula, learning materials, training and assessment systems.
2. A few provinces have started developing integrated curricula and learning materials for NFE programmes, yet many NFE programmes are still following the conventional formal education curricula that somehow doesn't fulfil the learning needs of the complex and diverse group of OOSC. In order to strategically address the OOSC issues, and illiteracy crises, the NFE programmes should be research based and offer an integrated curriculum that is equivalent, flexible and fast track/ accelerated and suits to the needs of the OOSC and illiterate youth and adults
3. Tech-based (digital) learning models have limited scale, which should be promoted by easing out the access to learning management system (LMS) that MoFEPT has recently introduced.
4. Professional capacity of NFE teachers / facilitators has remained a neglected area in NFE. Standards and curricula based, well designed teachers' training programmes, followed by a structured follow up and continuing professional development (CPD) mechanism is highly needed. In addition,
5. Limited options for NFE teachers to join digital learning systems for professional development continue to cause quality issues in NFE. The virtual teacher's training programmes that MoFEPT has offered should be wisely used for this purpose.
6. Assessment & Examination in NFE is a much-needed area that should be addressed across the country. Federal and provincial governments should focus on implementing the available "NFE assessment & certification systems" that have been developed and in place country wide.
7. Certification regime and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in NFE has been one of the key areas that need to be integrated with NFE (middle and matric as well as literacy). Certification system should not only cover the conventional certification for learning continuity but also involve the recognition of prior learning of the target population. In addition, RPL, if integrated with youth/ adult literacy, can help in garnering interest of the youth and adults.
8. Professional capacity of officers/ staff members designated to govern NFE at federal and provincial levels has been relatively less prioritized in past, which caused governance related challenges in NFE. Federal and Provincial Governments must prioritize professional development of NFE officers/ staff.
9. Lack of innovative, age appropriate, equivalent and accelerated programming in NFE is one of the key reasons for low sector growth. Based on the complexity and diversity of the target population that is OOSC and illiterate youth/ adults, the NFE needs to invest wisely on research and innovation to be able to offer a wide range of NFE programmes that have the ability to address learning needs of children, youth and adults.
10. Education and Non-Formal Education programmes have relatively weak linkages with economic outputs, that is why, a big chunk of population with low socio-economic profiles finds the education programmes less useful

Governance & Financing

Major policy issues that come under the governance & financing pillar are given under:
Issues highlighted by Secretary.

1. Inadequate funding for NFE has been the central problem that restricted growth of NFE as a major sub-sector of education. Less than one percent of the total education funds was being supplied to NFE, which needs to be substantially increased to address the OOSC and illiteracy issues.
2. There is currently no systematic coordination mechanism between NEF (National Education Foundation) and formal education providers, which hampers the effective mainstreaming of learners from non-formal pathways into the formal education system.
3. The NFE sector operates without a centralized governing or regulatory body. This has resulted in fragmented service delivery, duplication of efforts, and limited accountability across NFE providers.
4. There is no consistent, structured training plan for NFE teachers, nor an institutionalized mechanism for in-house capacity building or follow-up support. Teachers often lack access to continuous professional development aligned with their instructional needs.
5. Internal M&E systems largely depend on self-reporting, which compromises data reliability. Furthermore, external evaluations are sporadic and lack standardized tools and indicators for quality assurance.
6. While efforts are underway to revive and centralize the NFE assessment system through formative assessments, it lacks standardization. Support is being sought from FDE, PIE, and JICA to institutionalize assessment protocols that ensure credibility and comparability.
7. There is a pressing need to develop structured formative and summative assessments aligned with national standards to facilitate the smooth mainstreaming of NFE learners into formal schools.
8. Although NFE in ICT has witnessed some developments in its deliver and quality related aspects, NFE institutional structures need restructuring with relevant positions, adequate staffing and creation of functional organizational layout that have the capacity to manage OOSC and low literacy challenges in ICT.
9. NFE institution at federal level need to have a capacity to bring provincial NFE actors, donor agencies, INGOs and NGOs, at one platform and strengthen NFE resources in ICT
10. It has been found that functional capacity of the NFE organizations has remained weak with reference to operate a scale that sufficiently address the OOSC and low literacy challenges owing to scarcity of funds and lack of functional staff capacity. This situation has generated a need to induct staff in NFE with relevant capacity and continue to build their capacity on regular basis.
11. Limited capacity of NFE organizations to integrate digital technology with ALPs and offer distance learning, tech-based and hybrid learning models for expansion of NFE
12. Data management in NFE has been experiencing positive developments in past few years in the form of a functional NFEMIS in provinces and at national level in PIE; however, these NFEMIS hubs should be consistently strengthened and integrated with provincial and national EMIS for the purpose of joint data management and reporting.

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13. Data driven management of NFE programmes is somehow limited in NFE. NFE providers should be encouraged and trained to use data to plan and implement their NFE programmes.
14. Local governance phenomenon is critical in NFE as it provides a system to purposefully engage local communities to enhance ownership ad sustainability. Community participation in NFE programmes should be promoted widely
15. Coordination platforms for NFE actors/ providers and Public Private Partnership (PPP) in NFE is an area that needs urgent and policy level attention. Provincial and district level NFE platforms, which have already been constituted, needs to be strengthened to serve as meaningful coordination platforms
16. Coordination with formal and private school system at provincial, district and village/ area level has been found limited. This is an area that needs to be dealt at all levels and a concrete and functional coordination mechanism should be built between the formal and non-formal education systems.
17. Accreditation of NFE providers is missing in NFE, which will not only pave ways for quality enhancement, but also help in procuring quality partners for effective implementation/ delivery of NFE programmes
18. Lack of research and development is not just because of the funding scarcity, but also because of the limited functional capacity of NFE staff, which may be trained and supported in designing and conducting quality research in NFE especially by enhancing coordination with academia and existing policy reforms initiative designed by PIE.
19. Innovation and integration of digital technology with NFE to make to the programmes more attractive and offer viable distance learning options during emergencies

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4. NFE POLICY Vision

The NFE policy narrates policy goal, objectives, targets and policy interventions

4.1 Goal:

Achieve 100% literacy and achieve ZERO OOSC targets by year 2030 and contribute to human capital development and achieving the SDG-4 and other relevant SDGs.

4.2 Objectives:

The following are major objectives of the Federal NFE policy:

1. To contribute to overall education system that provides quality education to children, youth and adults to enable them to realize their potential and contribute to development of society and nation based on the ideology enunciated in the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan
2. To contribute to develop self-reliant, responsible, and thinking individuals that have the ability to learn, become economically active and contribute to human development of Pakistan
3. To revive confidence of children, youth and adults on Non-Formal Education as a system that have the ability to provide quality learning that inculcates life-long learning among individuals
4. Create a central and functional "NFE governance system" at federal level that serves as regulatory and coordinating agency and service delivery arm of the MoFEPT
5. Strengthening support systems such as monitoring, professional development of teachers, data management, and assessment & certification for quality assurance and enhancement of NFE programmes
6. Provide equivalent, age specific and accelerated learning programmes at primary and post-primary levels (ALP-Primary, Middle-Tech & Matric-Tech) to enroll and retain all OOSC in ICT
7. Provide relevant and life-skills based literacy programmes for youth and adults to improve literacy rate and contribute to human development
8. Integrate vocational skills with accelerated learning and adult literacy programmes to increase economic relevance and enhance buy-in of the target population
9. Engage local communities in managing NFE operations at local level for enhanced ownership and sustainability
10. Provide functional platform for NFE stakeholders for improved coordination and partnerships for expansion of NFE and quality

4.3 Targets:

Target population for NFE is described below:

Children including OOSC (5-16 years)

- Children including OOSC (5-7 years) [offer NFBE/ ALP as a normal programme in case there is no school available or existing schools are overcrowded, and such facility is essentially needed]
- Children including OOSC (8-16 years) preferred age cohort to be addressed through ALPs (primary and post primary)
- Special consideration for girls in remote rural areas, children and youth living in urban slums, children with special needs especially those with moderate and minor impairments/ disabilities, children in labor, children and youth who are stateless, refugees and displaced internally, as well as those affected by emergencies, transgender children and youth, population groups affected by extreme poverty and hunger and those excluded of their right to education for any vulnerability.

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Young / adults (17 years and above)

- Youth (17-24) will be preferred and be offered pre-vocational skill programmes blended with literacy courses
- Adults (25-40), willing to regularly patriciate adult literacy & life skills prrogrammes. They may be offered pre-vocational skill programmes
- Adults (41 and above), willing to regularly patriciate adult literacy & life skills prrogrammes. They may be offered pre-vocational skill programmes
- Special consideration for youth and adults belonging to vulnerable population groups such as in ultra-poverty, living in remote rural areas, urban slums, persons with special needs especially those with moderate and minor disabilities, stateless, refugees and displaced internally, as well as those affected by emergencies

4.4 Scope:

The NFE policy proposes following NFBE/ ALPs and adult literacy/ skills and other relevant programmes for OOSC and illiterate youth and adults:

Programmes/ course for OOSC (5-16 years):

1. NFBE (Primary) for 5-7 years based on conventional curriculum and learning materials
2. NFBE/ ALP (Primary) for 8-16 years based on equivalent, integrated and accelerated curriculum and learning materials (30 months' duration)
3. NFBE/ ALP (Primary) for 10-16 years based on equivalent, integrated and accelerated curriculum and learning materials (24 months' duration)
4. NFBE/ ALP (Middle) for 12-16 years based on equivalent, integrated and accelerated curriculum and learning materials (18 months' duration)
5. NFBE/ ALP (Middle-Tech) for 12-16 years based on equivalent, integrated and accelerated curriculum and learning materials (18 months' duration)
6. NFBE/ ALP (Matric & Matric-Tech) for 14-16 years based on equivalent, integrated and accelerated curriculum and learning materials (18 months' duration)

Programmes/ courses for youth/ adults

1. Adult literacy programme focusing on reading, writing and numeracy skills (3 months' duration)
2. Adult literacy & life skills programme focusing on reading, writing and numeracy skills and life skills (6 months' duration)
3. Integrated literacy & skill programmes (trade specific) focusing literacy, numeracy, life skills and trade specific skills such as agriculture, livestock, masonry, health & hygiene, etc. (6 months' duration)
4. RPL (recognition of prior learning) programme, awarding literacy certificates after assessments of youth/ adults. This will lead to enrollment in vertical skill programmes to promote skills acquisition
5. Each One Teachers One (EOTO), awarding literacy certificate through a system where one educated person teaches an illiterate person.

The said programmes will be implemented directly by the MoFEPT, NCHD, BECS, NEF, FDE and development sector NFE providers/ NGOs and private sector actors as well as by engaging public/ private schools, academia and educated youth.

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5. POLICY STATEMENTS AND POLICY ACTIONS:

5.1 Access and Participation

Policy statements and Policy actions

The MoFE&PT, Government of Pakistan shall include the excluded by addressing major causes of exclusion and ensure retention till mainstreaming or completion of the basic programme with special emphasis on girls, rural women, and those affected by emergencies.

Policy Actions:

1. **Identification of OOSC and Low-Literate youth and adults**
   The MoFE&PT shall institutionalize mechanism for identifying out-of-school children (OOSC) aged 5–16 years and low-literate youth and adults, utilizing both primary and secondary data sources, with active engagement of local communities.
2. **Enrollment and Retention of OOSC Aged 5–7 Years**
   The MoFE&PT shall ensure the enrollment and retention of OOSC aged 5–7 years through coordination with public and private sector stakeholders and provision of formal primary education prgrammes.
3. **Enrollment and Retention of OOSC Aged 8–16 Years**
   The MoFE&PT shall promote access to and retention of OOSC aged 8–16 years through the provision of Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) Primary in public and private schools, Madaris/Masajid, and community learning spaces within the ICT.
4. **Enrollment and Retention of OOSC Aged 12–16 Years**
   The MoFE&PT shall expand access to ALP (Middle and Middle-Tech) for OOSC aged 12–16 years, utilizing available infrastructure in public & private schools, Madaris & Masajids, and community-based spaces in ICT.
5. **Enrollment and Retention of OOSC Aged 14–16 Years**
   The MoFE&PT shall implement ALP (Matric and Matric-Tech) for OOSC aged 14–16 years through multi-sectoral collaboration and the use of formal, religious, and community-based learning platforms in ICT.
6. **Adult Literacy and Skills Development**
   The MoFE&PT shall offer adult literacy, life skills, and work-related skills programmes for low-literate youth and adults aged 17–40 years on priority basis and above 41 years on need basis, using public and private schools, religious institutions, and community based arrangements in ICT.
7. **Learner Retention Strategies**
   The MoFE&PT shall adopt learner-centered retention strategies—including sports, co-curricular activities, play-based learning, and digital tools—to enhance student engagement and retention in NFE programmes.
8. **Diversified Delivery Models**
   The MoFE&PT shall implement Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE), ALPs, and Integrated Literacy and Skills (ILS) programmes through conventional, digital, and hybrid delivery modalities to enhance outreach and effectiveness.
9. **Flexible Learning Spaces**
   The MoFE&PT shall operationalize NFBE, ALPs, and ILS programmes in diverse settings, including 2nd/ evening shifts in schools, religious institutions, and community-provided spaces, ensuring flexibility and equitable access with special preference to girls and women.
10. **Equity and Inclusion Prioritization**
    The MoFE&PT shall prioritize the enrollment and support of marginalized groups, including girls, working children, learners with disabilities or special needs, those in remote or underserved areas, and individuals affected by emergencies, including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).
11. **Learning Continuity and Transition**
    The MoFE&PT shall develop and implement a robust learning continuity framework that promotes learners' progression, transition, and integration into formal education and vocational/ technical pathways.
12. **Teacher Recruitment and Selection**
    The MoFE&PT shall establish a merit-based, contextually appropriate selection system to induct qualified educators for NFE programmes in ICT.

13. **Gender-Inclusive Selection of NFE Teachers**
    The MoFE&PT shall prioritize the selection of female teachers for NFE programmes to promote gender inclusion and address barriers to girls' education.
14. **Local Recruitment Strategy**
    The MoFE&PT shall encourage the selection of teachers from within the local communities to enhance contextual relevance, cultural alignment, and community ownership.
15. **Safety and Security of Learners**
    The MoFE&PT, in collaboration with local communities, shall ensure the safety and security of learners attending NFE centers, with a specific focus on the protection and well-being of girls.

Key terms: [enrollment, equity, retention, dropout, etc.] special programs to address diversity/ complexity for children with special needs (minor/ moderate disabilities), those affected by emergencies, working children, special focus on rural women/ girls and focus on urban settlements with low socio-economic indicators etc.

5.2 Quality and Relevance

Policy statements and Policy actions

The MoFE&PT, Government of Pakistan shall design and deliver equivalent, relevant, age specific and learning programmes for children, youth and adults and ensure quality by operationalizing related systems for trainings, assessment, and certification.

Policy Actions:

1. **Curriculum and Learning Material Development**
   The MoFE&PT shall design, review, and continuously improve standards, curricula, and learning materials for a range of Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE), Accelerated Learning Programmes (ALPs), and adult literacy and skills programmes, in collaboration with relevant public authorities and private/development partners.
2. **Introduction of Standards and Standards Management System (SMS)**
   The MoFE&PT shall develop and institutionalize comprehensive standards and a standards management system for NFE, encompassing learners, teachers, learning environments, curricula, textbooks, and assessment mechanisms.
3. **Curriculum Relevance and Alignment**
   The MoFE&PT shall ensure that NFE curricula and learning materials are age-appropriate, flexible, and equivalent to formal education, and that they adhere to national ideology, cultural sensitivities, and religious values as well as local economic and social priorities.
4. **Professional Development of NFE Teachers**
   The MoFE&PT shall establish and implement a professional development framework for NFE teachers, in collaboration with local training authorities, providing opportunities for induction, in-service training, and regular refresher courses.
5. **Integration with Virtual Training Platforms**
   The MoFE&PT shall link NFE teachers with the virtual training platform available on the e-Taleem portal to enhance their continuous professional development.
6. **Structured Pedagogical Supervision**
   The MoFE&PT shall provide ongoing pedagogical support to NFE teachers through structured classroom observations and systematic follow-up mechanisms.
7. **Remuneration and Career Progression**
   The MoFE&PT shall offer competitive remuneration packages and clear career progression pathways as per laws for NFE teachers to ensure motivation and retention.
8. **Inclusive and Safe Learning Environments**
   The MoFE&PT shall ensure the provision of inclusive, safe, non-discriminatory, and enabling learning environments that support the well-being and realization of learning potential of all learners, regardless of age or background.
9. **Assessment and Certification System**
   The MoFE&PT shall develop and operationalize a comprehensive assessment and certification system to ensure recognition of competence based learning and facilitate the learning continuity of learners.

10. **Assessment Cycles for NFE Learners in ICT**
    The MoFE&PT shall conduct a minimum of two cycles of standardized assessment and certification annually for NFE learners in ICT, to support their learning continuity and progression.
11. **Mainstreaming and Transition (horizontal and vertical mobility of learners)**
    The MoFE&PT shall facilitate learners' mainstreaming during programme and ensure smooth transition to higher levels of education or vocational training upon completion of NFE programmes.
12. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**
    The MoFE&PT shall establish a system for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to formally certify the knowledge and skills of children, youth, and adults, in collaboration with recognized TEVT authorities.
13. **Implementation of Each One Teaches One (EOTO)**
    The MoFE&PT shall design and implement the *Each One Teaches One* (EOTO) initiative using a structured Learning Management System (LMS) to promote literacy in ICT.
14. **Integration of Vocational Skills with NFE**
    The MoFE&PT shall collaborate with Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) authorities and trade testing boards to identify relevant vocational skills and integrate them into NFBEs, ALPs, and ILS.
15. **Linkages with Economic Opportunities**
    The MoFE&PT shall ensure that education and literacy programmes are aligned with economic opportunities, enabling learners to apply their skills for improved livelihoods and economic advancement.
16. **Integration of Digital Technology in NFE**
    The MoFE&PT shall collaborate with technology partners to integrate digital tools and platforms within ALPs and ILS to enhance accessibility and quality of learning.

Key Terms: [ALP/ literacy and skill programs, curricula, textbooks/ learning materials, training system, training of master trainers/ teachers, assessment, career counseling, blending skills with literacy and elementary level ALPs for youth and older/ working children]

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5.3 Governance and Financing

Policy statements and Policy actions

The MoFE&PT, Government of Pakistan shall create a "central NFE organization" and strengthen the same so as the system operates optimally and exhibits regulatory, administrative and technical strengths to address the OSSC and illiteracy crises with adequate financial resources.

Policy Actions:

1. **Financing for NFE**
   The MoFE&PT shall allocate adequate financial resources for Non-Formal Education (NFE), committing at least 5–10% of the total education sector budget at federal level.
2. **Establishment of a Central NFE Organization**
   The MoFE&PT shall establish a central NFE organization to oversee regulatory functions, manage service delivery, and ensure effective governance of NFE at the federal level.
3. **Institutional Strengthening of the NFE Organization**
   The central NFE organization shall regularly improve its institutional and functional capacities to address the challenges of out-of-school children (OOSC) and low literacy, and serve as a technical advisory body to provincial Literacy and NFE Departments.
4. **Professional Development of NFE Staff**
   The NFE organization shall build the professional capacities of its staff on NFE framework, lifelong learning, expansion and quality of NFE as well as coordination and regulatory functions to facilitate other NFE providers.
5. **Formal Coordination Mechanism**
   The MoFE&PT shall institutionalize formal coordination mechanism with relevant technical organizations in the areas of curriculum, textbooks, training, monitoring, assessment & certification, data systems and community mobilization.
6. **Coordination Platforms for NFE (in ICT and Inter-Provincial)**
   The MoFE&PT shall establish and operationalize coordination platforms in ICT, inter-provincial and multi-stakeholder coordination platforms, to strengthen collaboration among NFE providers, donor agencies, and relevant organizations working in NFE in Pakistan.
7. **Strengthening of Non-Formal Education Management Information System (NFEMIS)**
   The MoFE&PT, through the Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE), shall strengthen the Non-Formal Education Management Information System (NFEMIS), integrate it with national and provincial EMIS, and publish annual statistical reports on regular basis.
8. **Data-Driven Decision Making in NFE**
   The MoFE&PT shall utilize updated NFE data to plan, implement, monitor, and improve NFE programmes as part of an evidence-based and data-driven management in NFE.
9. **Monitoring and Evaluation in NFE**
   The MoFE&PT shall develop, implement, and continuously improve a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system for NFE to enhance programme design, delivery, and quality assurance & enhancement.
10. **Accreditation System for NFE programmes and providers**
    The MoFE&PT shall develop and implement an accreditation system for NFE programmes and providers, as an integral component of NFE standards and quality assurance & enhancement in NFE.
11. **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in NFE**
    The MoFE&PT shall foster public-private partnerships to mobilize private sector and development actors' investment in NFE, addressing quality gaps and expansion by engaging local implementing partners.
12. **Linkages with Social Safety Nets**
    The MoFE&PT shall collaborate with social safety nets, scholarship schemes, and support mechanisms to promote retention, learning continuity, and income-generating opportunities for NFE learners.
13. **Innovation in delivery of NFE**
    The MoFE&PT shall promote innovation in NFE through initiatives such as youth-led literacy promotion, internship opportunities for university students, radio and distance learning, and digital/hybrid delivery models suitable for emergencies.
14. **Research and Development in NFE**
    The MoFE&PT shall invest in research and development to inform NFE policy and practice through scoping studies, comparative analyses, impact assessments, and project evaluations/ impact assessments.
15. **Community Mobilization for Enhanced Ownership at Local Level**
    The MoFE&PT shall design, implement, and institutionalize community mobilization strategies in both normal and emergency contexts to ensure local ownership of NFE programmes.

16. **Community Awareness and Parental Engagement**
    The MoFE&PT shall promote community awareness and parental involvement through literacy, life skills, and positive parenting education initiatives.
17. **Support Systems for Community Mobilization**
    The MoFE&PT shall develop and disseminate a standardized community mobilization strategy, encouraging its adoption by development partners, NGOs, and private actors to ensure sustainability of NFE initiatives.
18. **Governance and Coordination for EOTO Model**
    The MoFE&PT shall establish structured systems and engage relevant academic and organizational partners to design and implement the "Each-One-Teaches-One" (EOTO) model.
19. **Federal-Provincial Collaboration for Literacy**
    The MoFE&PT shall collaborate with federal and provincial institutions to promote literacy among youth and adults through joint strategies and harmonized programming.
20. **Establishment of NFE Center of Excellence**
    The MoFE&PT shall establish a Center of Excellence in NFE to function as a national resource and research hub, supporting federal-level planning, training, and knowledge-sharing.

Key Terms: [NFE governance systems (literacy councils, legislation, NFE acts)/ institutional strengthening, quality assurance through accreditation of NFE programs/ providers, local governance/ community mobilization, financing in NFE/ international financial support, PPP in general and engaging industry to promote skills integration with literacy, creating synergies with social safety nets/ social welfare/ safety programs, use of ICT/ digital technology to promote NFE, coordination platforms/ inter-provincial coordination.

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6. Acronyms

Abbreviations	Details
AJ&K	Azad Jammun and Kashmir
AKU – IED	Agha Khan University – Institute of Education and Development
ALP	Alternative/ Accelerated Learning Programme/ Pathways
BECS	Basic education community schools
CPD	continuing professional development
CSOs	Civil society organizations

EOTO	Each one teachers one
FDE	Federal directorate of education
GB	Gilgit Baltastan
HDR	human development report
ICT	Islamabad Capital territory
ICT	Information communication technology
ILS	Integrated literacy & skill
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LMS	Learning management system
MoFEPT	Ministry of education and professional training
NCHD	National Commission for Human Development
NEAS	National Education Assessment System
NEF	National education foundation
NFBE	non-formal basic education
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NFEMIS	Non-formal education management information system
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OOSC	out-of-school children
PIE	Pakistan Institute of Education
PPP	Public Private Partnership
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RTE	Right to Education
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TVET	Technical vocational education & training

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