**From Crisis to Classroom**

**Together, let us forge a path forward one that is rooted in compassion.**

[Shabnam Baloch](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/shabnam-baloch)

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The COVID-19 pandemic and cli­mate change-induced disasters have exacerbated Pakistan’s longstanding education crisis, leav­ing millions of children out of school, and hindering their consistent access to quali­ty education. A recent re­port which was commis­sioned by the International Rescue Committee to gauge the impacts of pandemic and climate change sheds light on the alarming extent of learning losses among school-going children in flood affected districts of Sindh province.

With a focused lens on assessing the cumulative learning losses of pri­mary and elementary school chil­dren post-pandemic and in the after­math of climate-induced disasters, this report offers a sobering exam­ination of the realities faced by our educational institutions and the com­munities they serve. The year 2019-2020 brought forth an unprecedent­ed crisis in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting widespread school closures that persisted well into 2022. These closures, coupled with the devastating floods of 2022, unleashed a dual onslaught upon the education landscape of Pakistan, particularly in the flood-affected dis­tricts of Dadu, Badin, Umerkot, and Sanghar in the Sindh province.

[Punjab CM assigns portfolios to eighteen-member cabinet](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Mar-2024/punjab-cm-assigns-portfolios-to-eighteen-member-cabinet)

The report’s findings indicate that children have lost nearly over 64 weeks (over an year) of education due to pandemic-induced lockdowns, while more than 2 million children have faced disruptions in schooling due to the floods of 2022. This has led to a significant increase in the num­ber of out-of-school students, further widening the educational disparities in Pakistan. It is perturbing to note that around 69% of children report­ed that they were not approached by schools to facilitate their learning during school closures. At the same time, it is heartening to observe that 77% of children relied on support from their literate family members, neighbors and community members to help them continue their learning.

The findings also indicate that there was no formal strategy de­signed to assess the learning losses caused by the abrupt and constant closure of schools. However, inde­pendently, at school level, a range of different methods were employed to gauge the level of students learning at that point in this. The government of Sindh has demonstrated proac­tive measures during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the safety of stu­dents and teachers. However, there is a need to further invest in public private collaboration to ensure edu­cation continuity during climate in­duced disasters and pandemics. Pol­icymakers must prioritize education in disaster response planning and al­locate resources for the continuity of learning during crises. It is also es­sential to strengthen institutional ca­pacity to execute initiatives aimed at mitigating the impact of disasters on continuity of education.

[US says Israel plans to build new settlement units in West Bank continue to be 'barrier to peace'](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Mar-2024/us-says-israel-plans-to-build-new-settlement-units-in-west-bank-continue-to-be-barrier-to-peace)

One of the key findings that emerge is the need to invest in innovative technological solutions. Limited ac­cess to technology has hindered the success of online learning initiatives, especially in the rural areas. The find­ings also indicate what is known as the ‘gender digital divide’, there was a difference in the number of girls ver­sus the number of boys in terms of access to digital educational content. Girls are less likely to have access to internet-enabled devices. There are restrictions placed on girls by their families, often their parents, due to local cultural norms, which made it difficult for women and girls to ac­cess digital educational services.

Additionally, alternative strategies such as tent schools and remote edu­cational programs through radio an­droid apps can help ensure continuity of learning during crises like floods in 2022. The findings further advise for efforts to address dropout rates and improve educational performance through remedial classes and engage­ment with students and parents. Fur­thermore, investments in infrastruc­ture resilience are crucial to minimize the damage to school buildings dur­ing disasters and ensure educational continuity. What emerges from this report is an urgent call to action, a call to revisit our approaches to ed­ucation in the face of mounting cli­mate-related challenges. It is a call for greater investments in not only resil­ient infrastructure but climate smart policies, and innovative strategies to ensure that no child is left behind.

[KPRA conducts workshop on automated tax deduction](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Mar-2024/kpra-conducts-workshop-on-automated-tax-deduction)

In the realm of humanitarian ac­tion and development endeavors, there are moments when we are confronted with stark realities that compel us to confront the inadequa­cies of our systems and the urgency of our collective response. The find­ings presented within this report highlight these moments of reckon­ing, as we confront the intersection of climate change and education disruptions in the context of climate crisis in Pakistan.

As the Country Director of IRC, I have had the opportunity of witness­ing firsthand the resilience of com­munities grappling with the after­math of disasters, from the COVID-19 pandemic to the devastating floods of 2022. Yet, amidst these challenges lie untold stories of perseverance and hope, as communities rally together to rebuild their lives and safeguard the future of their children.

As we navigate the complexities of our times, let us draw inspiration from the resilience of those we serve and the unwavering commitment of our partners and stakeholders. To­gether, let us forge a path forward one that is rooted in compassion, equity, and collective action to build a more climate resilient and inclusive educa­tion system for generations to come.

[DC for relief to citizens in Ramazan](https://www.nation.com.pk/07-Mar-2024/dc-for-relief-to-citizens-in-ramazan)

**Shabnam Baloch**  
The writer is Country Director at the International Rescue Committee Pakistan