

PAKISTAN

Youth Opportunity and Exclusion Report 2026

District Youth Opportunity Index | Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor



Ahmad Nadeem

Principal Investigator – AI Integrations and Systems Development Specialist

Centre for Social Analytics and Development Support (CSADS)

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Population and Housing Census 2023; Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025; Household Integrated Economic Survey 2024 to 2025; Pakistan Economic Survey 2025 to 2026. Evidence reviewed through October 2026.

Disclaimer

The findings and interpretations in this report are those of the author and CSADS. The District Youth Opportunity Index is an independent research measure and is not an official statistic of the Government of Pakistan.

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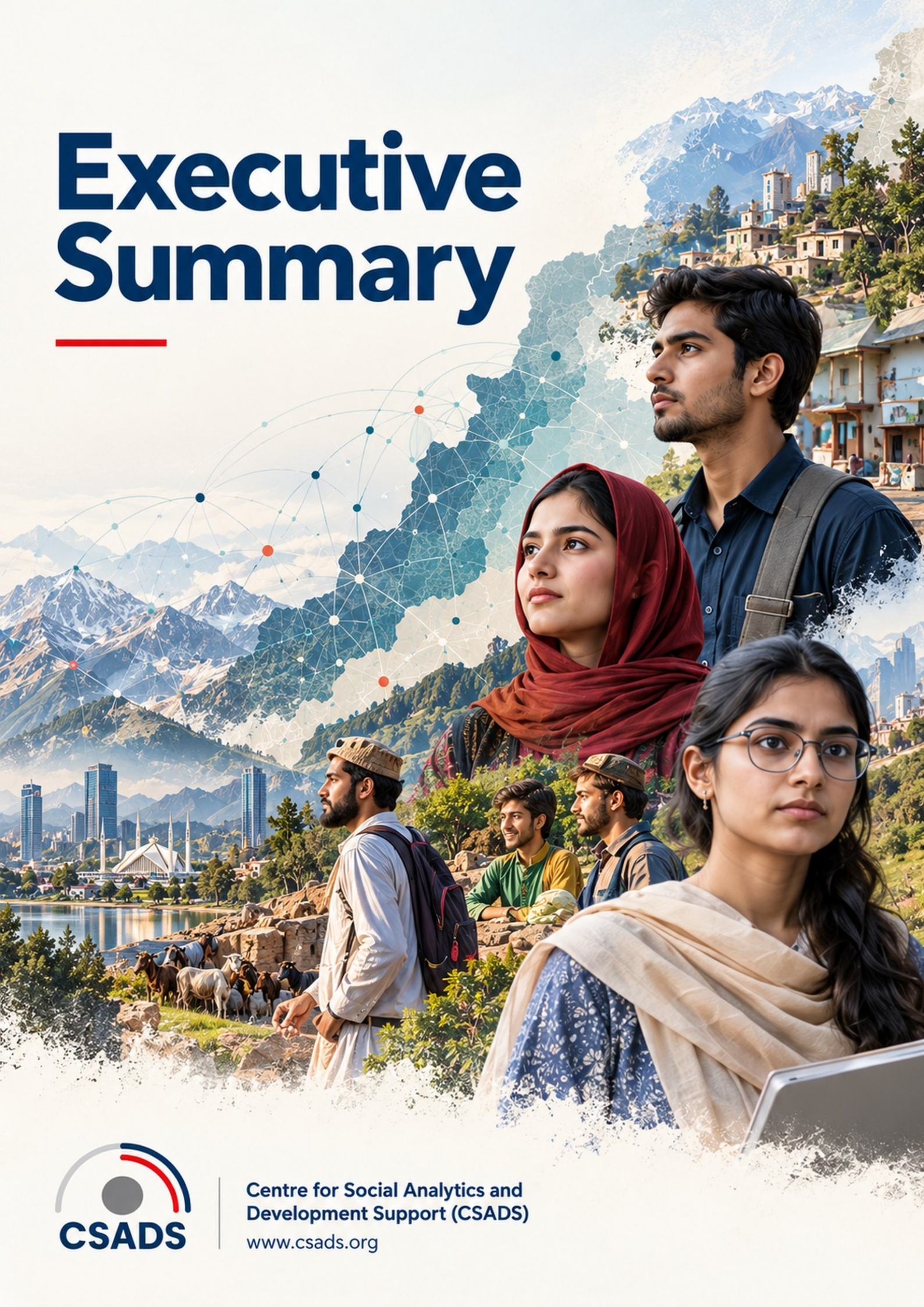
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Abbreviations

AYOM	Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor
CSADS	Centre for Social Analytics and Development Support
DYOI	District Youth Opportunity Index
HIES	Household Integrated Economic Survey
ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NAVTTTC	National Vocational and Technical Training Commission
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
PBS	Pakistan Bureau of Statistics
PSLM	Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training

Executive Summary



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Key Figures

62.6 million

people aged 15 to 29 in 2023, 26.0 per cent of the population

Census 2023

28.4%

of people aged 15 to 24 were NEET in 2024 to 2025

LFS 2024 to 2025

45.4%

NEET rate among young women, against 13.0 per cent for young men

LFS 2024 to 2025

14.2 million

young people aged 15 to 24 who cannot read and write

Census 2023

74 of 136

districts where female youth literacy is below 50 per cent

Census 2023

10.6%

of illiterate youth live in the 27 lowest band districts, home to 5.3 per cent of young people

DYOI 2023

11.0%

of people aged 10 and above have ever received technical or vocational training

LFS 2024 to 2025

70%

of households have internet access; 57 per cent of individuals use the internet

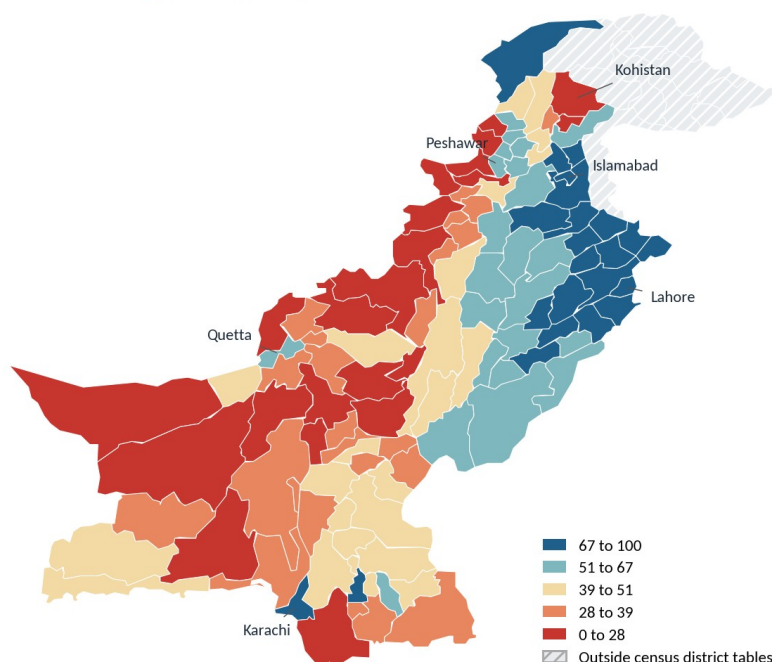
HIES 2024 to 2025

6.2 to 91.2

range of district scores on the District Youth Opportunity Index

DYOI 2023

District Youth Opportunity Index, core score



Map 1. District Youth Opportunity Index, 2023. Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023); authors' calculations. Mapping conventions in Annex C.

The central question

This report asks where Pakistan should prioritise investment in youth education, skills and employment opportunity to reduce economic exclusion, and how progress should be measured. It answers with two products. The District Youth Opportunity Index (DYOI) maps where opportunity was weakest at the 2023 census. The Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor (AYOM) tracks newer national and provincial evidence each year.

The national picture

The 2023 census counted 62,589,992 people aged 15 to 29, or 26.0 per cent of the population, and 44,622,831 aged 15 to 24. Among those aged 15 to 24, 68.2 per cent were literate, which leaves 14,200,604 young people who could not read and write. Female youth literacy was 62.6 per cent (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023).

Economic exclusion and gender gaps

The Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025 found that 28.4 per cent of people aged 15 to 24 were not in employment, education or training (NEET): 45.4 per cent of young women and 13.0 per cent of young men. Provincial rates ranged from 24.8 per cent in Punjab to 36.0 per cent in Balochistan. Youth unemployment was 12.5 per cent under the 13th ICLS standard and 12.8 per cent under the 19th; the two official series are labelled separately throughout (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025). The census records a related but different measure for 2023: 40.7 per cent of people aged 15 to 24 were outside the labour force and not studying, including 58.4 per cent of young women and 23.9 per cent of young men (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023).

District findings

The DYOI combines youth literacy, current enrolment, the inactive non student share and market employment for 136 districts. Scores range from 6.2 to 91.2. Lahore, Karachi Central and Islamabad rank highest; Upper Kohistan, Kolai Palas Kohistan and Lower Kohistan rank lowest. The 27 districts in the lowest band, 13 in Balochistan, 12 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 2 in Sindh, hold 5.3 per cent of young people but 10.6 per cent of illiterate youth. Punjab has no district in the two lowest bands, yet it is home to 5.6 million illiterate young people, including 456,445 in Rahim Yar Khan. Female youth literacy is below 50 per cent in 74 districts, and the gap between young men and young women reaches 48.7 percentage points in Hangu. Within provinces, the distance between the highest and lowest scoring district is widest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (71.8 points) and Sindh (69.1), and Punjab's five lowest ranked districts all lie in the south of the province.

Where to prioritise

Four targeting lenses follow from the evidence. Intensity points to the lowest band, where foundational education is weakest. Scale points to large districts such as Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Peshawar and Lahore, where the most young people are affected. Gender points to the districts with female youth literacy below 50 per cent and to ten Khyber Pakhtunkhwa districts where at least 75 per cent of young women are recorded outside study and the labour force. Evidence quality points to 17 districts whose rank changes by more than 30 places across reasonable specifications and which need local data before funds are allocated by rank.

Skills and digital opportunity

Eleven per cent of people aged 10 and above had ever received technical or vocational training in 2024 to 2025: 14.4 per cent of men and 7.4 per cent of women (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025). Seventy per cent of households had internet access and 57 per cent of individuals used the internet, but household ownership of a computer, laptop or tablet remained at 14 per cent (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2026a; FAFEN 2026). None of these measures is specific to young people, and none measures skills or employment outcomes.

How progress should be measured

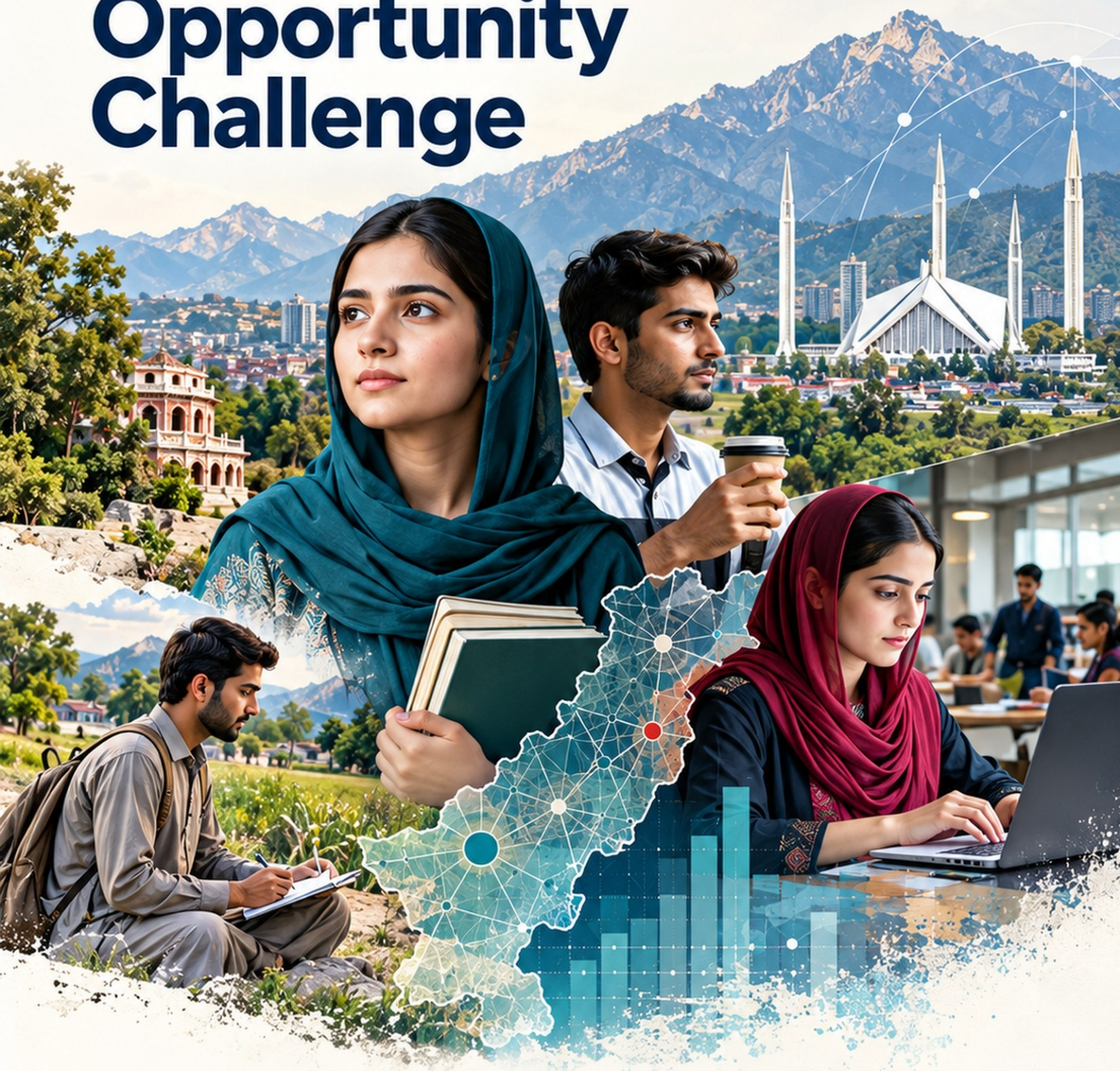
The AYOM should report the youth NEET rate, which is Sustainable Development Goal indicator 8.6.1, with a fixed unemployment standard, sex and provincial detail, and the observation year of every figure. The DYOI should be recalculated only when comparable district representative data are released, most likely the Youth Development module of the district survey. Every district result should show its rate, its count and its sex gap together.

Evidence base and limitations

Every statistic in this report was checked against the original official file or official release. The census category published as Not L.F & Stud is not defined in the tables; it is interpreted as young people outside the labour force who are not students, and the index has been tested without it. District maps use the most recent openly licensed boundaries, which represent 2019 geography, with newer districts shown inside their parent units. The DYOI is a research measure and has not been adopted by any government body.

CHAPTER 1

Pakistan's Youth Opportunity Challenge



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KEY MESSAGES

- 1** Pakistan has 62.6 million people aged 15 to 29, or 26.0 per cent of its population, according to the 2023 census.
- 2** Almost three in ten people aged 15 to 24 are outside employment, education and training; among young women the share is 45.4 per cent.
- 3** Opportunity varies sharply by place: district scores on the District Youth Opportunity Index range from 6.2 to 91.2.

1.1 A large cohort at a decisive stage

Pakistan's 2023 census counted 62,589,992 people aged 15 to 29, or 26.0 per cent of the population, and 44,622,831 aged 15 to 24 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023). Most of this cohort is moving through secondary school, post secondary study, technical training, a first job or unpaid household work. The size of the cohort gives even modest differences in schooling and access to work a national weight. A gap of a few percentage points in literacy or employment translates into hundreds of thousands of young people.

Opportunity and exclusion are related but distinct ideas. Opportunity concerns access to educational and economic capabilities. Exclusion concerns measurable absence from the main pathways of study and work. A young person in low quality work may still face narrow opportunities, while a young person temporarily outside work may be studying, caring for others or searching for a job. The measures in this report keep those situations apart.

1.2 What the evidence shows

The Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025 found that 28.4 per cent of people aged 15 to 24 were not in employment, education or training (NEET), including 45.4 per cent of young women and 13.0 per cent of young men (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025). The census recorded a youth literacy rate of 68.2 per cent for the same age group in 2023, which leaves 14,200,604 young people who could not read and write (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023). These two figures frame the report. Economic disconnection is large and strongly gendered, and a substantial share of young people lacks the foundational skill on which further learning and most formal work depend.

1.3 The geography of disadvantage

National averages conceal wide differences between places. Provincial youth NEET rates ranged from 24.8 per cent in Punjab to 36.0 per cent in Balochistan in 2024 to 2025 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025). At district level, the District Youth Opportunity Index developed for this report shows scores ranging from 6.2 in Upper Kohistan to 91.2 in Lahore, on a scale set by the range of the 136 census districts (Chapters 7 and 8). Districts with similar rates can also differ greatly in the number of young people affected, so the report presents rates and population counts side by side.

1.4 Gender as a structural dimension

Gender runs through every part of the evidence. Young women are three and a half times as likely as young men to be NEET. Female youth literacy is below 50 per cent in 74 of 136 districts, and the gap between young men and young women reaches 48.7 percentage points in Hangu (Chapter 8). The report therefore presents sex specific rates and percentage point gaps beside every composite measure, so that a favourable district average cannot hide a large disadvantage for young women. It interprets these associations with care and does not infer individual motivations or causes from aggregate tables.

1.5 The evidence base and its time frames

Four official sources anchor the analysis, each with its own population and observation period: the Population and Housing Census 2023 for district geography; the Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025 for national and provincial labour outcomes; the Household Integrated Economic Survey 2024 to 2025 for digital access and household conditions; and the Pakistan Economic Survey 2025 to 2026 for skills and training systems (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023, 2025, 2026a; Finance Division 2026). The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics has included a Youth Development Index module for ages 15 to 29 in its district survey programme for 2026 to 2027, which will become an important source once its results are released (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2026b, 2026c). Each statistic in this report carries its own observation year, and a newer provincial estimate is never presented as a change in a district's census based result.

1.6 Two complementary products

Product	Question it answers	Update rule
District Youth Opportunity Index	Where were educational foundations and connection to study or market work weakest in 2023, and how many young people were affected?	Recalculated when comparable district representative data are released
Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor	How are youth employment, education, skills and digital participation changing nationally and by province?	Published each year, with every indicator labelled by its observation period

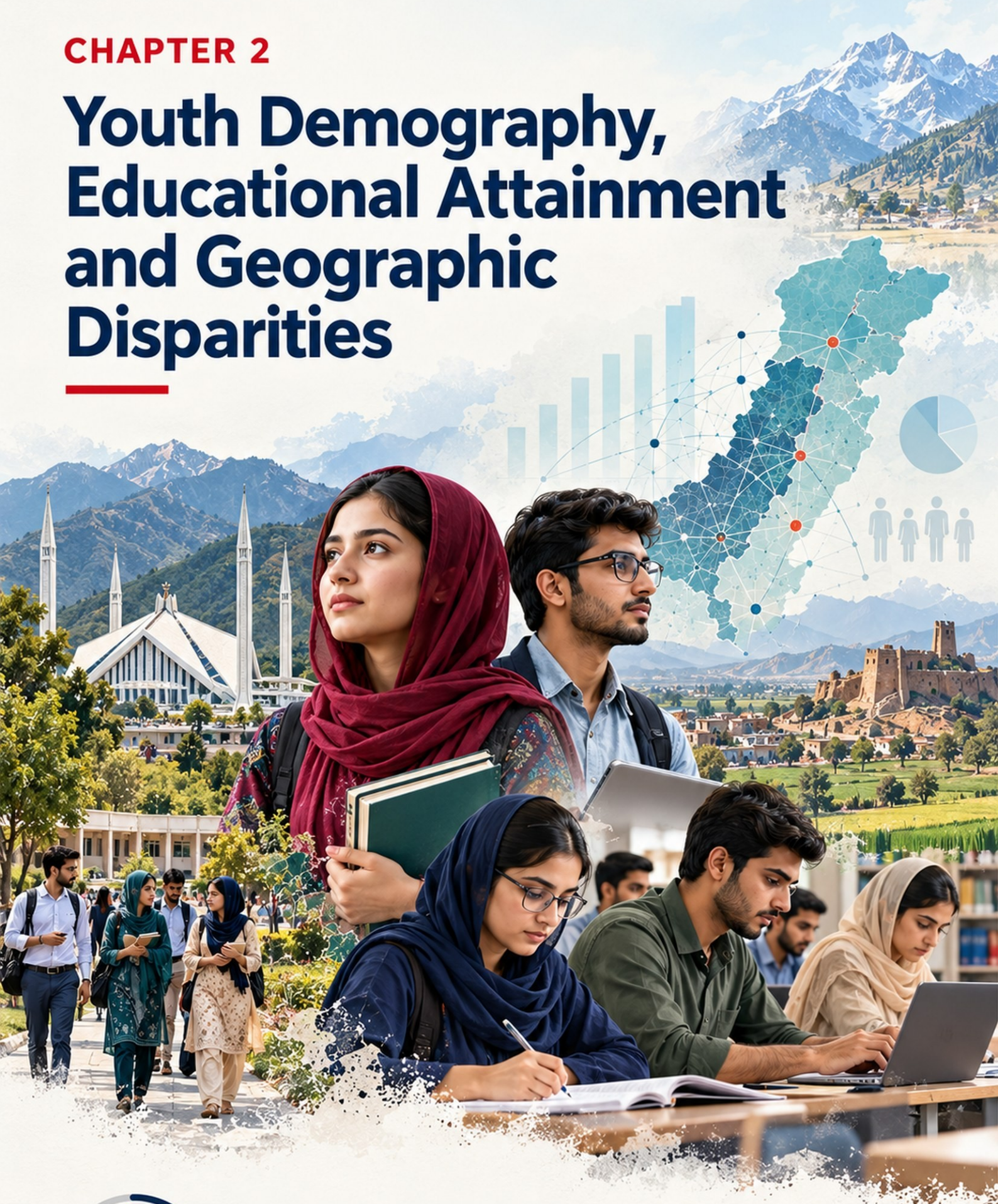
The index establishes the relative geography of verified outcomes at a fixed reference date. The monitor tracks newer evidence at the level each source supports. Keeping the two apart protects the district series from false annual precision and lets readers interpret each statistic in its proper context.

1.7 How the report is organised

Chapters 2 to 6 examine the evidence by theme: demography and education, economic participation and exclusion, skills and training, digital access, and gender. Chapter 7 sets out the District Youth Opportunity Index method and its validation, and Chapter 8 presents the district results, maps and profiles. Chapter 9 sets out the Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor. Chapter 10 draws the policy implications and Chapter 11 concludes. The principal audiences are federal and provincial planning departments, education, labour and skills institutions, development partners and researchers.

CHAPTER 2

Youth Demography, Educational Attainment and Geographic Disparities



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KEY MESSAGES

- 1 People aged 15 to 19 form the largest youth age band, at 24.2 million in 2023.
- 2 The share aged 15 to 24 differs little between provinces, from 18.4 to 19.4 per cent, but absolute numbers differ greatly.
- 3 Census tables report literacy, enrolment and labour status by sex for ages 15 to 24 in all 136 districts.

2.1 The scale of the youth cohort

Pakistan's youth opportunity agenda begins with population scale. The 2023 Population and Housing Census recorded 62.59 million people aged 15 to 29, representing 26.0 per cent of the enumerated national population of 240.46 million. Of these, 24.15 million were aged 15 to 19, 20.47 million aged 20 to 24 and 17.97 million aged 25 to 29 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023, Table 4). These are census observations for 2023, rather than estimates of the youth population in 2026 or 2027.

The distribution matters for public investment. The largest group, young people aged 15 to 19, is at an age when completion of secondary schooling, access to further learning and early transitions into work can shape subsequent opportunities. Those aged 20 to 24 and 25 to 29 are more likely to face decisions about tertiary study, vocational training, entry into paid employment and the stability of their livelihoods. A single composite score can obscure these different stages, so this report retains age band comparisons wherever the census tables permit.

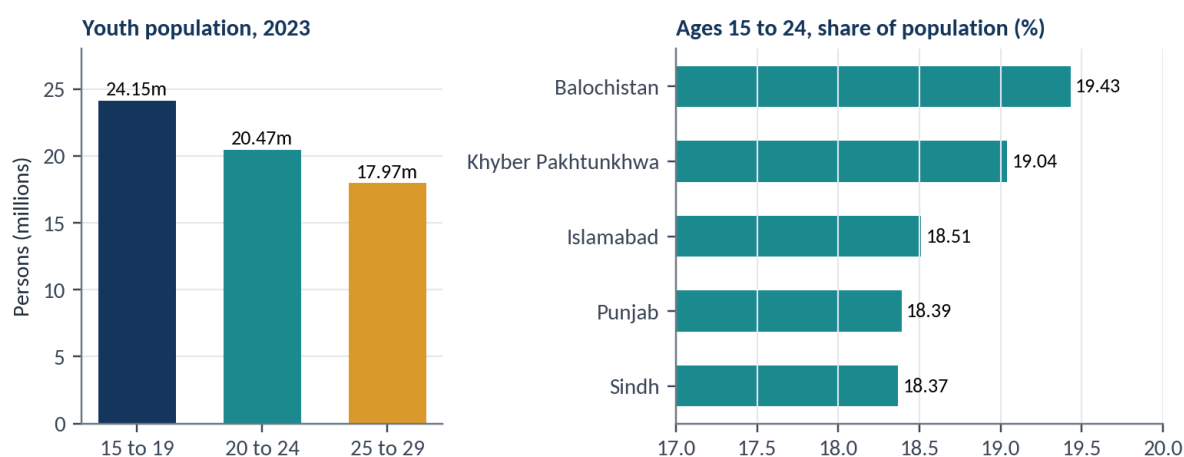


Figure 2.1. Youth population by age band, 2023, and the share aged 15 to 24 by province Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023), Census 2023 Table 4.

Age group	Population, 2023	Share of total population
15 to 19	24,154,118	10.0%
20 to 24	20,468,713	8.5%
25 to 29	17,967,161	7.5%
Total 15 to 29	62,589,992	26.0%

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023), Census 2023 Table 4, national file. Shares calculated from the published totals.

2.2 Youth population by province

The four provinces and Islamabad have different demographic structures. According to the 2023 census, young people aged 15 to 24 represented 19.43 per cent of Balochistan's population, compared with 19.04 per cent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 18.39 per cent in Punjab, 18.37 per cent in Sindh and 18.51 per cent in Islamabad Capital Territory (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023, Table 4). The variation across these five jurisdictions is modest for the 15 to 24 age band. Substantially larger differences appear when younger children are considered: the population below age 15 accounted for 49.66 per cent in Balochistan and 32.28 per cent in Islamabad.

These contrasts imply different near term planning pressures. In places with a very large child population, the flow of future adolescents into secondary education, skills programmes and employment will be substantial relative to the current population. In other places, the immediate challenge may be the quality of opportunity available to young people already reaching working age. This report therefore analyses the share and the number of young people together: a less youthful but populous district can have more young residents than a smaller district with a higher youth share.

Jurisdiction	Ages 15 to 24 as % of population	Below age 15 as % of population
Balochistan	19.43	49.66
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	19.04	43.45
Punjab	18.39	38.21
Sindh	18.37	41.78
Islamabad Capital Territory	18.51	32.28

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023), Census 2023 Table 4, provincial files. Shares calculated from the published provincial totals.

2.3 What district census data can measure

A national district index requires observations recorded against a consistent geographic unit and an explicit population denominator. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics provides 2023 census district tables in spreadsheet and PDF formats. Table 4 includes population by single year of age and sex; Table 5 reports selected age groups; education and economic activity tables offer further relevant variables (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023). These tables have now been extracted for all 136 district level units and reconciled with the national totals (Chapter 7).

The report distinguishes three geographic comparisons. Population counts indicate the scale of potential service demand. Rates show the relative prevalence of an observed outcome among comparable groups. Gender gaps describe the difference between young women and young men on the same indicator. Each is useful, but none can substitute for the others. Reporting all three makes it possible to identify areas with large affected populations alongside districts where disadvantage is particularly concentrated.

The census is an appropriate baseline for geographic comparisons, but an observation collected in 2023 remains a 2023 observation in subsequent annual reports. New district rankings therefore await genuinely comparable data; the index is not updated with model based estimates. District boundaries, any renaming or reorganisation, census definitions and the treatment of areas outside the principal four provinces and Islamabad require an explicit harmonisation register, which accompanies the district database (Chapter 7).

2.4 Education as a foundation for opportunity

Education is an important pathway into work, but the relationship is neither automatic nor uniform. Literacy provides a foundation for navigating written information; secondary completion is often a prerequisite for further study or entry to formal training; and higher qualifications can broaden access to occupations. Yet credentials alone do not establish the availability, quality or accessibility of employment. The index measures educational outcomes directly and examines their association with economic opportunity, without treating one as proof of the other.

Pakistan Education Statistics 2023 to 2024, published by the Pakistan Institute of Education, reports enrolment, institutions and teachers across the education system (Pakistan Institute of Education 2025). The publication primarily describes educational institutions and learners, with a strong emphasis on ages 5 to 16. It provides context for the education pipeline but is not an interchangeable measure of educational attainment among youth aged 15 to 29.

School facilities such as electricity, drinking water, toilets and boundary walls describe school conditions rather than demonstrated youth skills or completion. They are relevant to the long term opportunity pipeline but belong in explanatory context rather than in a youth outcome index.

2.5 Gender and the education to work transition

District results in this report are presented by sex wherever the census tables allow. National averages can conceal sharply different educational and economic pathways for young women and men. The census provides the possibility of examining literacy, attendance and selected economic characteristics by sex and age. The extracted tables provide literacy, attendance and enrolment by sex for ages 15 to 24, while the census employment table has no sex split (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023).

Gender gaps are expressed in percentage points when rates are compared. For example, a district with 70 per cent literacy among young men and 50 per cent among young women would have a 20 percentage point gap, not a 20 per cent difference. The illustrative example is offered only to clarify statistical presentation. Verified district values are reported in Chapter 8.

The district profiles also differentiate educational disadvantage from economic disconnection. The latter requires particular caution: a census category describing people outside education and employment may differ from the internationally defined “not in employment, education or training” (NEET) measure. These labels are used only according to the source’s confirmed definitions.

2.6 Annual monitoring

The index and annual monitor have complementary time horizons. The District Youth Opportunity Index establishes the spatial distribution of youth opportunity from a common census baseline and is refreshed when comparable district representative observations become available. The Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor uses more recent national and provincial survey results and selected administrative records, identifying their reference periods in every table and chart.

The ongoing PSLM District Survey 2026 to 2027 includes an official youth development module covering ages 15 to 29. Its eventual data release could provide an important new source for recalibrating or expanding the index. Until released datasets have been assessed for geographical representativeness, variable definitions

and public availability, they remain a prospective source rather than a basis for reported results (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2026b).

The latest Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025 offers more recent employment related evidence at supported reporting levels, while recent Pakistan Institute of Education statistics support analysis of education system provision. Such data can update the national narrative without implying that 2023 district census outcomes have changed. Every published figure therefore carries its data vintage.

2.7 Implications for the district index

The verified extraction supports an index built around four census measures for ages 15 to 24: literacy, current enrolment, the inactive non student share and market employment (Chapter 7). Gender disparity is reported as a parallel scorecard rather than inside the composite score.

Evidence component	Role in first edition	Validation requirement
Youth population aged 15 to 29	Core district denominator and scale	Reconcile single year ages, sex and totals
Youth literacy / attainment	Candidate index dimensions	Verify age bands and education categories
Education / employment disconnection	Candidate exclusion measure	Check census classification and denominator
Female to male opportunity gaps	Separate equity scorecard	Compute from comparable sex specific rates
Latest labour market outcomes	Annual monitor at supported levels	Apply LFS design and standard definitions
Education administrative indicators	Context and annual tracking	Identify academic year and institutional coverage

Source basis: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023, 2025, 2026b); Pakistan Institute of Education (2025). Indicator tests are reported in Chapter 7.

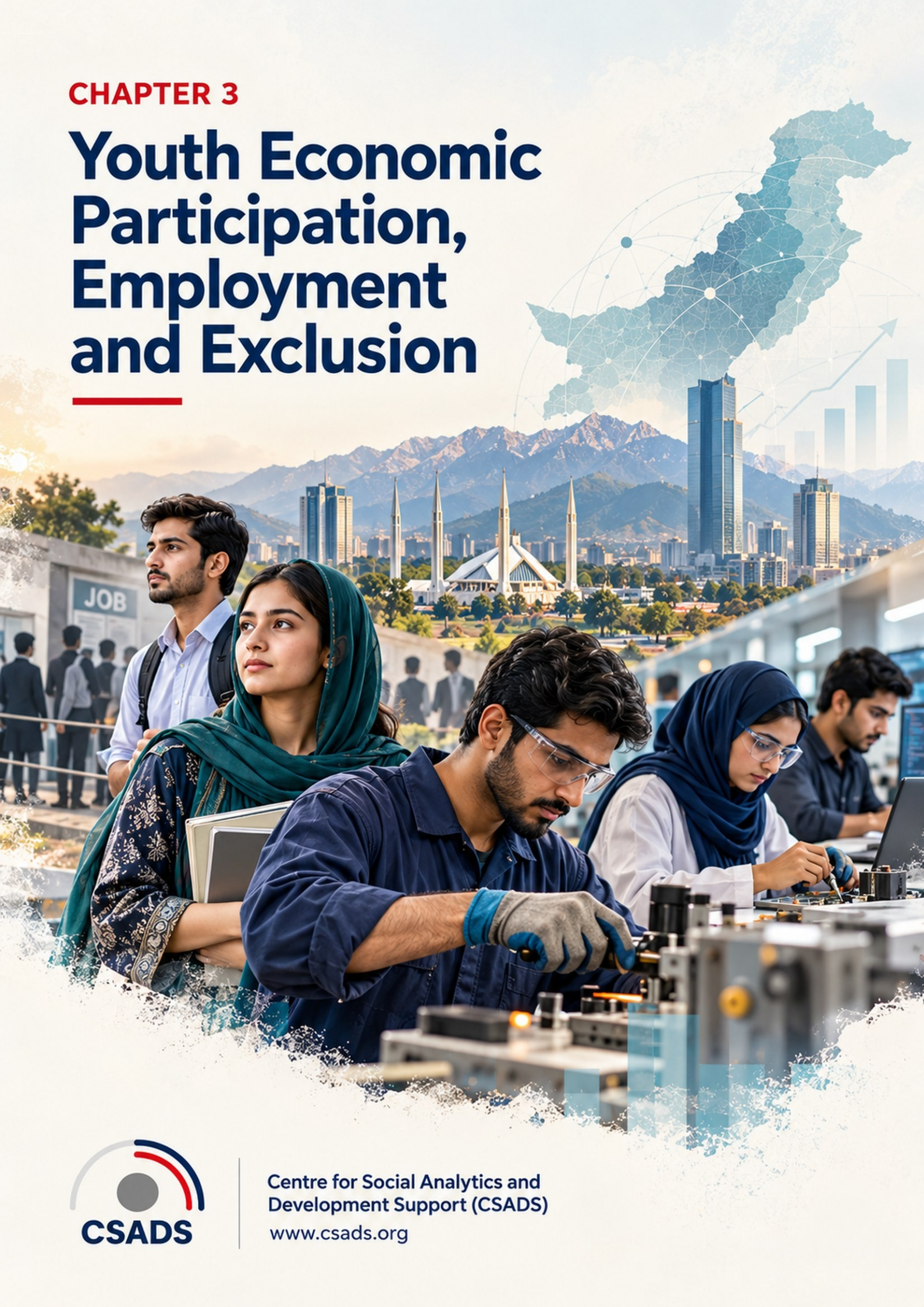
2.8 Conclusion

Pakistan's youth opportunity question is both demographic and geographic. The 2023 census records 62.59 million residents aged 15 to 29, with considerable differences across age cohorts and jurisdictions. Education sector reporting confirms the scale of the institutional pipeline but also illustrates why enrolment, school conditions, attainment and labour market outcomes must remain analytically distinct.

The district index makes these differences visible through a small set of verified, comparable measures. Its most valuable findings are likely to combine three perspectives: how many young people are affected, what share of their peers experience the condition, and whether the experience differs systematically between young women and men. This provides a numerical foundation for a national evidence series while allowing subsequent chapters to examine economic opportunity and exclusion in greater depth.

CHAPTER 3

Youth Economic Participation, Employment and Exclusion



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KEY MESSAGES

- 1** Youth NEET fell from 32.5 to 28.4 per cent between 2020 to 2021 and 2024 to 2025, as the female rate fell 9.9 points and the male rate rose 2.5.
- 2** Female youth NEET ranges from 37.6 per cent in Punjab to 60.5 per cent in Balochistan.
- 3** NEET and unemployment measure different things: youth unemployment was 12.5 per cent under the 13th ICLS standard and 12.8 per cent under the 19th.

3.1 Working, seeking work and disconnection

Young people experience exclusion through different pathways. Some are unemployed and actively seeking employment; others work in activities that offer limited earnings or security; and a substantial group is neither employed nor engaged in education or training. These experiences have distinct policy implications. Treating them as one category would conceal the problems that education, skills programmes, social protection and employment policy are expected to address.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2024 to 2025 is the main recent source for nationally comparable labour market indicators. Its reported estimates describe the survey reference period and sampled populations, not the employment status of every young person counted in the 2023 census. The census is valuable for district distribution, whereas the LFS provides detailed labour concepts and nationally or provincially supported estimates (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025).

3.2 Almost three in ten young people are NEET

According to the PBS Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025, 28.4 per cent of people aged 15 to 24 were not in employment, education or training (NEET). The corresponding rate was 13.0 per cent for young men and 45.4 per cent for young women. Thus, the recorded female rate exceeded the male rate by 32.4 percentage points. The gender disparity is more revealing than the national average alone: it indicates that the transition from education to work is markedly different for young women and men (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025, table 8.8).

Population aged 15 to 24	NEET rate, 2024 to 2025 (%)	NEET rate, 2020 to 2021 (%)
All youth	28.4	32.5
Young men	13.0	10.5
Young women	45.4	55.3
Female to male gap (percentage points)	32.4	44.8

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2025), Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025, table 8.8; gender gaps calculated from published rates. NEET includes young people outside employment, education and training; it is not the same as unemployment. Changes across survey rounds should be interpreted with attention to questionnaires and statistical definitions.

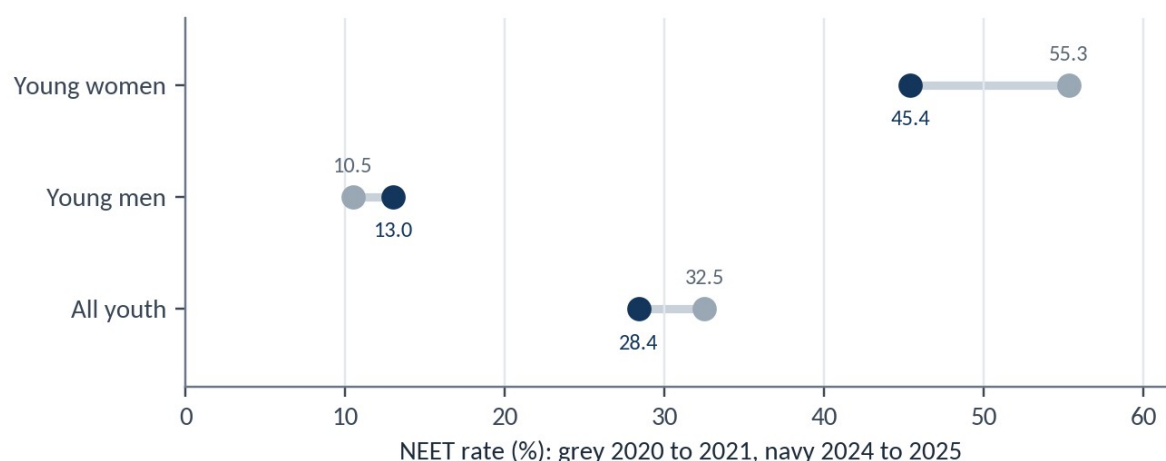


Figure 3.1. Youth NEET rates, 2020 to 2021 and 2024 to 2025 Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2025), Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025, Table 8.8.

The total NEET rate was 4.1 percentage points lower in 2024 to 2025 than in 2020 to 2021. This combined movement conceals diverging trends: the female rate was 9.9 points lower, while the male rate was 2.5 points higher. The resulting gender gap narrowed, although it remained substantial. These descriptive comparisons show how conditions differed between survey rounds; they do not, by themselves, attribute the change to any particular government initiative or economic event.

3.3 Provincial differences in exclusion

The latest LFS reports pronounced provincial variation. In 2024 to 2025, the NEET rate among young people was 24.8 per cent in Punjab, 32.0 per cent in Sindh, 32.7 per cent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 36.0 per cent in Balochistan. The 11.2 percentage point difference between Punjab and Balochistan illustrates why a single national measure offers an incomplete picture of youth opportunity. Female NEET rates varied even more widely: 37.6 per cent in Punjab, 51.6 per cent in Sindh, 57.6 per cent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 60.5 per cent in Balochistan (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025, table 8.8).

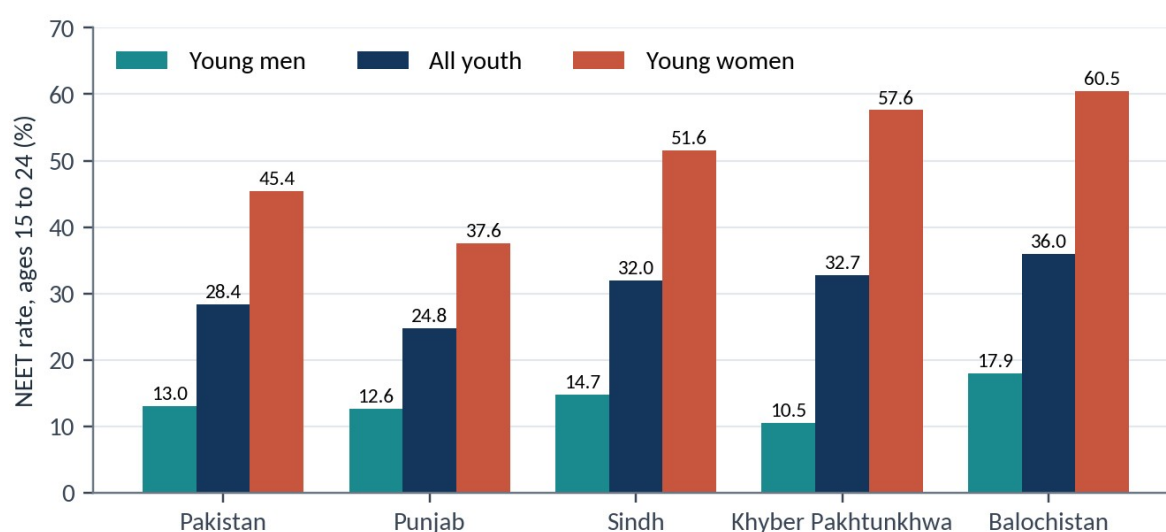


Figure 3.2. Youth NEET rates by province and sex, 2024 to 2025 Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2025), Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025, Table 8.8. Provincial survey estimates, not district rates.

The spatial pattern should guide further investigation rather than a simplistic conclusion about district performance. Province level comparisons can identify regions requiring attention, but the causes of exclusion may differ substantially across local labour markets, education pathways, social norms, transportation conditions and household responsibilities. Targeted explanations require supporting evidence.

3.4 Youth unemployment and its limits

Under the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) presentation in the LFS 2024 to 2025, unemployment for people aged 15 to 24 was 12.5 per cent, compared with 11.1 per cent in 2020 to 2021. Among young men the reported rate was 12.3 per cent in 2024 to 2025 and among young women 13.2 per cent. For ages 25 to 34, the corresponding overall rate was 8.1 per cent, with female unemployment at 14.1 per cent (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025, table 9.5).

The LFS also provides estimates under the 19th ICLS labour standards. The distinction is consequential because standards for classifying employment and other labour force statuses affect comparisons. This chapter labels the 13th ICLS unemployment statistics explicitly and avoids mixing unemployment rates from different standard series. The annual monitor designates a primary standard, marks methodological breaks and retains the alternative official series for transparency.

Unemployment is calculated among people in the labour force, whereas NEET measures a share of the total youth population in the specified age band. Young people outside the labour force can therefore appear in NEET without being unemployed. For programme planning, both measures are necessary.

3.5 What the 2023 census adds

The 2023 Population and Housing Census makes possible a much finer geographical analysis. Its special age group employment Table 15 includes an age 15 to 24 population count and census classifications of employed and unemployed persons, alongside a category labelled “Not L.F & Stud (15 to 24)”, which the tables do not define. At national level, Table 15 records 44,622,831 people aged 15 to 24 and 15,174,084 classified as employed in the census framework (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023, table 15).

These figures should be read as census descriptors rather than substituted for LFS labour rates. PBS explicitly warns in the census table that its employment information was collected with a one year reference period for demographic and social profiling and is not comparable to the detailed Labour Force Survey. This distinction also prevents the census category from being labelled an ILO standard NEET measure. In 54 districts the census labour categories overlap, so a NEET rate cannot be assembled from them (Chapter 7).

Source	Period	Geographic role	Use in flagship
Population and Housing Census	2023	Potentially district level	Age specific counts and census defined economic disconnection
Labour Force Survey	2024 to 2025	National/provincial and supported domains	NEET, unemployment, employment quality, sex and rural to urban comparisons
Future PSLM district youth module	2026 to 2027, not yet released	Prospective district source	Future index refresh following public release and definition checks

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023, 2025, 2026b). District tables have been extracted and validated for all 136 district level units (Chapter 7).

3.6 Employment quality

Being classified as employed says little on its own about earnings adequacy, stability, working hours, social protection or prospects for advancement. The LFS 2024 to 2025 includes tables on employment status, industry, occupation, informal sector work, underemployment, digital platform employment and unpaid domestic and care work. These provide a much richer agenda for the annual monitor than a single unemployment headline (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025).

Measuring youth specific employment quality requires age disaggregated official tables or accessible microdata; until PBS publishes them, the Monitor treats employment quality as context rather than as a scored indicator. Employment characteristics for all people aged ten and over cannot be presented as outcomes for youth aged 15 to 29. This distinction is particularly important for informal work, platform employment and wage statistics.

With such tabulations, the Monitor can report the composition of young workers by employment status, education and industry; the proportion of youth in vulnerable employment categories; and the gender distribution of unpaid care responsibilities. Each indicator requires a consistent population base and a source defined meaning. No employment quality score is published until its variables have been tested for repeatability and double counting.

3.7 Gender, location and overlapping disadvantage

The combination of sex and location provides an essential analytical lens. The LFS reported NEET rates of 28.7 per cent in rural areas and 28.0 per cent in urban areas in 2024 to 2025. The national rural to urban difference of 0.7 percentage points appears modest; among young women, however, the rates were 47.0 and 42.9 per cent, respectively. The gap between young men and young women is therefore far larger than the national rural to urban difference (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025, table 8.8).

These comparisons warrant further examination of schooling histories, care responsibilities, available employment and barriers to participation. The index recognises that constraints accumulate but reserves causal statements for research designs that can support them. The annual monitor does not equate inactivity with individual preference or lack of effort.

3.8 Implications for the district index

The district index uses the 2023 census as a geographically consistent baseline, and its economic component is labelled according to census definitions. For each district, the report publishes the inactive non student share, the number of young people affected, and the gap between young women and young men wherever the census tables allow the comparison. The results are presented in Chapters 7 and 8.

The annual monitor tracks four recurring measures from the Labour Force Survey: the NEET rate, unemployment under a fixed labour standard, labour force participation, and indicators of employment quality. Each is reported only at the geographic level the survey supports, so no district estimates are derived from provincial data. When new district representative data are released, the index will be recalculated using a documented bridging procedure.

Proposed recurring statistic	Required population / denominator	Status
Youth NEET rate	All people aged 15 to 24	Available in LFS 2024 to 2025 at published domains
Youth unemployment	Youth labour force under labelled ICLS standard	Available in LFS 2024 to 2025
Female to male exclusion gap	Comparable sex specific youth rates	Available provincially in LFS; district literacy and inactivity gaps calculated from the census (Chapter 8)
District census inactivity	Not L.F & Stud / census youth population aged 15 to 24	Extracted and validated for 136 districts; definition inferred
Youth employment quality	Employed youth in the specified age group	Age specific tabulation or microdata audit needed

3.9 Conclusion

The economic exclusion of young Pakistanis is measurable, substantial and unequal. In 2024 to 2025, 28.4 per cent of people aged 15 to 24 were outside employment, education or training, with a particularly pronounced disparity between young women and men. Provincial differences are large enough to demand geographic analysis, while the contrast between NEET and unemployment underscores the need for multiple, carefully defined indicators.

The intended evidence series has a workable division of labour: the census can locate district level disadvantage at a common baseline, and the LFS can provide a more current picture of employment and economic disconnection at its supported reporting levels. Combining them carefully produces a clearer public account of opportunity while preserving the methodological distinctions on which an annual research series depends.

CHAPTER 4

Youth Skills, Training and the Transition to Employment



Centre for Social Analytics and
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KEY MESSAGES

- 1** About one in nine people aged 10 and above (11.0 per cent) has ever received technical or vocational training.
- 2** Training exposure is diverging by sex: it rose to 14.4 per cent among men but fell to 7.4 per cent among women.
- 3** Tracer evidence exists only for named cohorts, such as 1,436 certified of 2,000 trained in the Huawei Batch I; no national measure links training to jobs.

4.1 From training provision to economic opportunity

The central question for youth policy is increasingly whether education and training translate into sustained economic opportunity. Training institutions can count seats, courses and certificates with relative ease. Establishing whether a young person subsequently secures suitable work, improves earnings or establishes a viable enterprise requires evidence that follows participants beyond course completion. These outcomes are especially important for Pakistan's proposed Youth Opportunity and Exclusion framework: a district with many training places may still offer weak pathways into employment.

Pakistan's most recent official labour survey and Economic Survey provide complementary views. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2024 to 2025 reports previous exposure to technical or vocational training among the population aged 10 years and above. The Pakistan Economic Survey 2025 to 2026 records TVET enrolment and NAVTTC programme activity. These sources have different populations, units of measurement and reporting periods and should be interpreted together without aggregating their counts (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025; Finance Division 2026).

4.2 Reach of technical and vocational training

The LFS reports that 19.8 million people aged 10 and above had ever received technical or vocational training in 2024 to 2025, or 11.0% of the population in that age group. The corresponding proportion in 2020 to 2021 was 10.9%. The change is 0.1 percentage point; it offers little evidence of a substantial increase in population level training exposure over the period. These are lifetime training exposure measures and are neither annual trainee counts nor estimates restricted to youth (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025, Table 10.4).

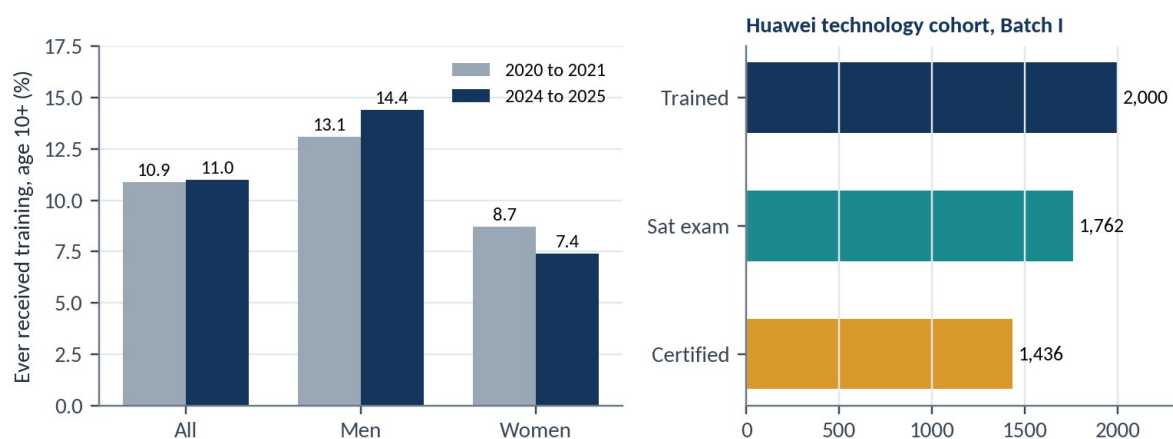


Figure 4.1. Lifetime technical or vocational training among people aged 10 and above, and the Huawei Batch I cohort Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2025), Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025, Table 10.4; NAVTTC (2026). In 2024 to 2025, 19.8 million people aged 10 and above had ever received training, against 17.4 million in 2020 to 2021.

The gender difference deserves attention. Men's reported training exposure increased by 1.3 percentage points, whereas women's decreased by 1.3 percentage points between the two survey rounds. In 2024 to 2025 the male to female gap was 7.0 percentage points. Changes in the age composition of respondents, survey definitions and the nature of training reported should be examined before inferring the causes of this divergence. The figures nonetheless identify a clear question for programme design: whether existing provision reaches young women on equitable and practically usable terms.

4.3 Training institutions and programme delivery

The Economic Survey 2025 to 2026 reports technical and vocational institute enrolment of approximately 0.46 million in 2023 to 2024, compared with 0.45 million in 2022 to 2023. It also reports an estimated 4,746 functional technical and vocational institutes and 51,440 teachers during 2024 to 2025. These are institutional and enrolment estimates; they are not unique annual entrants to the labour market, nor can they be directly compared with lifetime training exposure in the LFS (Finance Division 2026, section 10.1).

The same Economic Survey states that NAVTTC and participating public and private institutions provided training to more than 100,000 youth during FY2025 in information technology, industrial and conventional trades. Its associated programme table combines training targets, implementation statuses and one completed initiative. Care is therefore needed when interpreting the programme summary: target numbers and completed trainees cannot be combined into a single verified outcome total (Finance Division 2026, section 10.4).

Programme or system figure	Reported value	Meaning / limitation
Technical/vocational enrolment, 2023 to 2024	0.46 million	Recorded sector enrolment; not completions
Functional TVET institutes, 2024 to 2025	4,746 (estimated)	Institutional supply indicator
NAVTTC reported youth trained in FY2025	More than 100,000	Programme delivery statement; not independently verified employment outcomes
Registered institutes under NAVTTC reforms	1,503	Registration based system measure, not access in each district
Licensed national assessors, 2025 to 2026	1,600	Assessor capacity, not trainee competence

Source: Finance Division (2026), Pakistan Economic Survey 2025 to 2026, chapter 10. Measures refer to different years and statistical units.

4.4 Evidence linking training to jobs

Employment tracer studies offer more direct insight into transitions than simple training totals. NAVTTC's published account of its Huawei technology initiative reports that 2,000 trainees completed Batch I; 1,762 sat certification examinations and 1,436 passed. The observed pass proportion among examination participants was approximately 81.5%, calculated from the reported counts. The same institutional account cites overall employment of 67%, an average monthly income of PKR 87,298 among employed graduates, and approximately 88% placed within six months (NAVTTC 2026).

These are useful programme specific monitoring results, but they should not be generalised to all vocational graduates. The public summary does not establish a national probability sample, a counterfactual comparison group or fully documented tracer response rates. The employment figure also needs to be distinguished from causal programme impact: participants might have obtained jobs without the intervention.

Huawei Batch I indicator	Institutional report	Interpretation
Trained participants	2,000	Programme cohort
Sat certification examination	1,762	Examination participants
Passed certification	1,436	81.5% of examination participants, calculated
Reported employment	67%	Tracer reported outcome; denominator/method to be verified
Average earnings of employed graduates	PKR 87,298/month	Conditional average for employed respondents

Source: NAVTTC (2026), Planning and Development. Calculated examination pass rate = $1,436 \div 1,762 \times 100$; programme reported outcomes may reflect selection and response biases.

4.5 The missing transition evidence

A young person's path from education to employment is a sequence: access to a course, attendance, completion, demonstrated competence, job search, entry into employment and retention. Nationally accessible sources document the early stages of this sequence more consistently than the later stages. This makes a straightforward national "training to jobs conversion rate" difficult to calculate from public administrative reports alone.

For the Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor, a clear distinction is needed among programme reach (unique participants), completion (participants who finish), certification (participants who meet an assessed standard), placement (participants entering work), sustained employment (remaining in work after a specified interval) and earnings. A complete indicator would identify the reporting cohort, eligible denominator, follow up date, response rate and definition of employment.

The quality of work matters alongside entry to employment. A short term placement, unpaid family work, platform activity and sustained paid employment have different implications for economic inclusion. Sex disaggregated and age disaggregated outcomes also matter: a national aggregate can conceal barriers faced by young women and other groups with limited mobility, resources or access to training facilities.

4.6 Implications for the district index

District rankings require evidence that is both geographically complete and conceptually comparable. Publicly reported national training participation rates and NAVTTC programme totals do not, on their own, establish district representative skills outcomes. Geographic location of an institute is also a weak proxy for

youth access: students may commute or migrate, and registered institutes may vary greatly in capacity, programme quality and completion rates.

Candidate district metric	Readiness for DYOI	Recommended treatment
Youth educational attainment	Conditional: census district tables	Retain within education opportunity domain after age specific checks
Technical/vocational institutes per youth population	Conditional: validated district inventory	Context indicator; exclude from core score subject to a coverage check
Youth technical training participation	Awaiting representative district data	Future candidate from PSLM 2026 to 2027
Certified youth by district of residence	Currently unverified	Report only with comparable administrative records
Employment six months after training	Not nationally district comparable	Use programme case studies, not district ranking

Training supply and tracer outcomes are therefore reported in the Annual Monitor and in thematic district profiles rather than in the composite index, until the PSLM 2026 to 2027 youth module or verified administrative datasets provide suitable district evidence. This protects the composite index from mixing direct outcomes with institutional activity counts.

4.7 A reporting model for the annual monitor

The Monitor presents the latest verified observation for each indicator, even when reference years differ. Its skills to work panel is designed to combine lifetime training exposure from the LFS, annual TVET enrolment from sector reporting, completion and certification counts from programme records, and tracer employment outcomes only for specifically named cohorts.

Headline number	Latest verified example	Observation period
Ever trained, ages 10+		11.0% LFS 2024 to 2025
Gender gap in ever trained measure	7.0 percentage points	LFS 2024 to 2025
TVET institute enrolment	Approx. 0.46 million	2023 to 2024
Huawei technology cohort exam pass rate	81.5% of exam sitters (calculated)	Batch I; institutional update to 2026

These headline numbers represent different populations and denominators. They should not be added together or presented as a common youth skills rate.

4.8 Policy and programme implications

Three priorities emerge. First, NAVTTC and provincial technical education and vocational training authorities should move routine reporting beyond aggregate training targets and report unique enrolments, completions, certifications and subsequent employment using consistent cohort identifiers. Second, federal and provincial training authorities should record trainees' districts of residence and employment destinations, with explicit privacy safeguards. Third, institutions commissioning tracer surveys should publish instrument definitions, follow up timing, response rates and disaggregated outcomes, so that decision makers can judge the robustness of placement claims.

There is also a clear opportunity to connect labour market intelligence with training provision. Industry participation, verified occupational demand and employer feedback can improve programme selection, but training demand must be distinguished from demand for actual jobs. Longitudinal records could eventually show whether a training intervention increases earnings and employment stability, with appropriately designed impact evaluations used where causal claims are required.

4.9 Implications for the index and the monitor

For the District Youth Opportunity Index, available evidence supports cautious treatment of skills as a future domain rather than a current core score. Until comparable district level observations are validated, the district comparison rests on census education and economic indicators. For the Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor, training exposure, TVET capacity and selected programme outcomes are already publishable, provided source year, population and statistical limitations accompany each value.

The resulting distinction is useful: the district index describes relative structural opportunity, while the monitor documents newer changes in training provision, participation and observed transitions. Connecting these evidence streams over time can make the series increasingly informative without overstating what current administrative data establish.

CHAPTER 5

Youth Digital Access, Digital Skills and Economic Opportunities



Centre for Social Analytics and
Development Support (CSADS)

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KEY MESSAGES

- 1** Household internet access more than doubled, from 34 to 70 per cent, between 2018 to 2019 and 2024 to 2025; individual use rose from 17 to 57 per cent.
- 2** Only 14 per cent of households own a computer, laptop or tablet, unchanged across the two surveys.
- 3** Access and use are not skills: youth specific digital capability is not yet measured.

5.1 Digital connectivity and opportunity

Digital connectivity is increasingly a condition of participation in education, training, job search and enterprise. Yet the presence of internet service or a mobile phone does not establish whether a young person can use digital tools independently, safely or productively. For the Youth Opportunity and Exclusion Report, the central concern is the progression from access to useful capabilities and, ultimately, demonstrable economic opportunity.

The latest Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024 to 2025 provides an important recent account of digital access and use. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) National Human Development Report 2023/24 provides an established district oriented Digital Development Index. These sources are complementary, but neither should be presented as a national district by district measure of youth digital competency in 2026 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2026a; UNDP 2024).

5.2 Connectivity has expanded rapidly

The Household Integrated Economic Survey 2024 to 2025 reports that 70 per cent of households had internet access, up from 34 per cent in 2018 to 2019, and that 57 per cent of individuals used the internet, up from 17 per cent. Ninety six per cent of households had a mobile phone or smartphone (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2026a). Individual mobile phone ownership among people aged 10 and above rose more slowly, from 45 per cent to 50 per cent, while 92 per cent of individuals used a mobile phone (Associated Press of Pakistan 2026). Household ownership of a computer, laptop or tablet stayed at 14 per cent across the two survey rounds (FAFEN 2026).

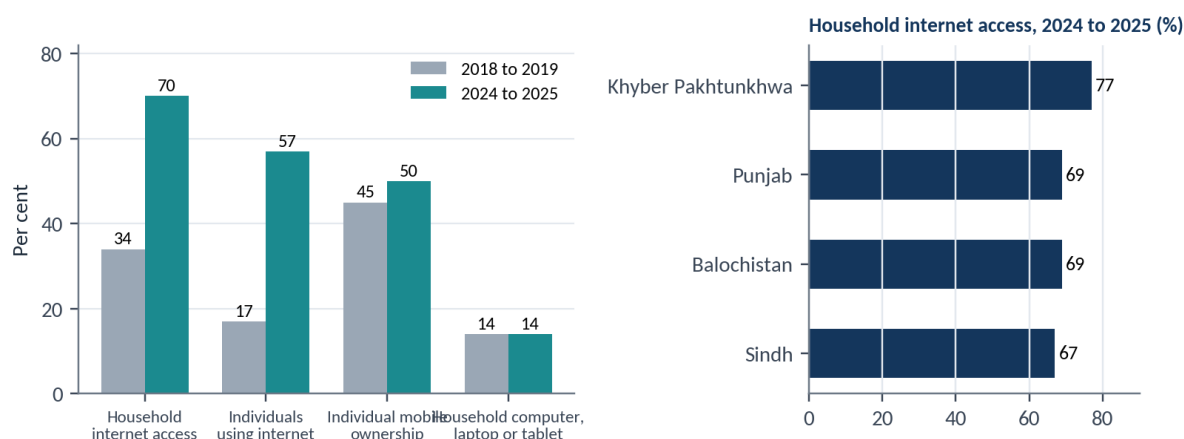


Figure 5.1. Household and individual digital access, 2018 to 2019 and 2024 to 2025, and household internet access by province Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2026a); Associated Press of Pakistan (2026); FAFEN (2026). Individual measures cover people aged 10 and above; none of the measures is specific to young people.

The pattern is clear. Access through mobile devices has spread quickly, while access to devices suited to document preparation, spreadsheets and technical work has not changed. Mobile access supports communication, platform work and course access, but many employment related tasks still depend on a computer, reliable connectivity or shared facilities.

5.3 Access, use and ownership differ

The 70 per cent household access figure and the 57 per cent individual use figure measure different things and should not be subtracted from each other. The first counts households with a connection. The second counts persons who used the internet. Individual ownership of a phone, at 50 per cent, is lower again because household members share devices or use them under different conditions (Associated Press of Pakistan 2026). For young women in particular, the presence of a device in the household does not guarantee independent and regular use.

At the national level, women and men used the internet at almost the same rate in 2024 to 2025, and in urban areas women's use (71 per cent) exceeded men's (67 per cent) (Associated Press of Pakistan 2026). Use is not skill, however. Parity in reported use does not show whether young women and men can complete the same practical tasks, apply for jobs online or earn through digital work.

5.4 Provincial differences in access

Household internet access was highest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 77 per cent, followed by Punjab and Balochistan at 69 per cent and Sindh at 67 per cent. Individual phone ownership was 51 per cent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 50 per cent in Punjab and Sindh, and 42 per cent in Balochistan (FAFEN 2026). These provincial patterns differ from the provincial ordering of youth NEET rates, a reminder that connectivity and economic participation are separate dimensions of opportunity. Survey reports on reasons for non use, such as cost, lack of need and lack of knowledge, are not specific to young people and require youth specific tabulation before they can guide programme design.

5.5 From connectivity to digital skills

Useful digital proficiency can be demonstrated through tasks such as searching for vacancies, completing application forms, using spreadsheets, sending documents, evaluating online information, protecting personal information and receiving digital payments. Each task requires a clear assessment rule. A respondent's declaration that they can complete a task is different from observed performance under a standardised assessment.

HIES includes reported digital skills indicators, providing a potential national or provincial source once the age specific tables and microdata are assessed. For an index focused on ages 15 to 29, overall digital skill percentages should not be repurposed as youth estimates. The planned PBS district survey 2026 to 2027 includes a youth development module with digital literacy questions, which may create an important opportunity for improved geographic coverage after its results are released (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2026a; Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2026b).

The Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor reports four concepts separately where data allow: (i) device access, (ii) individual internet use, (iii) self reported digital tasks and (iv) directly demonstrated competencies. No composite digital readiness percentage is published until consistent age group data and clear proficiency thresholds exist.

5.6 District digital inequalities

UNDP's Pakistan National Human Development Report 2023/24 introduced a Digital Development Index covering access, adoption, skills and broader transformative potential. It places Pakistan in the moderate category with an index value of 0.205, finds that almost half of the country's districts have low digital development, and classes Islamabad as the only district with very high digital development, followed by Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Haripur and Abbottabad in the high category (UNDP 2024). The measure is an important precedent for geographic digital analysis.

The existence of this index has direct implications for the proposed District Youth Opportunity Index. Reproducing UNDP's digital district rankings would add little independent value. The more useful question is whether young people in districts with weaker infrastructure and digital opportunities also face greater educational and economic exclusion, using matched periods and defensible units of analysis. This is a hypothesis for investigation, not a relationship demonstrated by the evidence compiled in this chapter.

This report therefore treats the UNDP index as contextual evidence. Incorporating its score directly into a youth specific composite would risk double counting the relationship between connectivity, education and economic disadvantage, and could introduce indicators that do not isolate the youth population.

5.7 Digital programme outputs and outcomes

Digital public programmes and development initiatives may report learners reached, courses delivered, certificates issued, freelance registrations or enterprises assisted. These are different from demonstrable paid work, sustained earnings or business survival. Programme reports of this kind document reach rather than proficiency or employment, and they should not be read as national youth rates.

A defensible digital opportunity framework would require information on the percentage of trainees who complete a curriculum; demonstrate specific skills; secure paid digital employment or self employment; continue earning after a defined period; and have access to safe payment channels. The source register

currently supports reporting selected programme outputs, while nationally comparable outcomes, especially at district level, remain a substantive evidence gap.

Potential annual monitoring measure	Evidence type	Publication treatment
Individual internet use by age and sex	Representative household survey	Include when age specific estimates verified
Practical digital skills by age and sex	Self report or task assessment	Clearly distinguish measurement mode
Programme participants completing digital training	Administrative programme records	Report named programme, period and denominator
Digital course graduates in paid work after 6 months	Tracer study	Include only for eligible cohort with response rate disclosure
District digital opportunity score	Composite/model based	Exclude until youth relevant district evidence validated

5.8 Implications for the district index

Digital exclusion is substantively relevant to youth opportunity, but current public statistics establish stronger national and urban to rural comparisons than a complete, youth specific district indicator series. Digital variables therefore remain outside the core score of the District Youth Opportunity Index, because district data for the same age range, definitions and coverage are not available.

When district representative youth digital data become available, they will be tested for incremental validity: whether a digital indicator captures a genuinely new aspect of opportunity after controlling for education and household socioeconomic position. Indicators that add little will be published as a stand alone profile rather than used to alter composite district ranks.

5.9 Implications for the annual monitor

The Annual Monitor can publish new digital access observations as they become available, including the latest HIES findings and carefully described programme statistics. Each headline specifies its unit and age range. The 2024 to 2025 household internet access figure of 70% and the individual internet use figure of 57% appear as distinct measures with separate explanations.

Future editions will prioritise youth representative statistics on independent device access, internet use, practical digital skills and paid economic outcomes. Doing so would help move the debate beyond subscriber or household connectivity counts toward whether young people can turn digital access into meaningful opportunity. The source data, uncertainty and observation year accompany every national or provincial comparison.

CHAPTER 6

Gender Inequalities in Youth Opportunity and Economic Exclusion



Centre for Social Analytics and
Development Support (CSADS)

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KEY MESSAGES

- 1** Young women are 3.5 times as likely as young men to be NEET: 45.4 against 13.0 per cent.
- 2** Female youth literacy is below 50 per cent in 74 of 136 districts; in Hangu the gap with young men reaches 48.7 percentage points.
- 3** Internet use is close to parity between women and men, but use does not establish skill or earnings.

6.1 Measuring gender across the opportunity pathway

The transition from education to economic participation is shaped by several linked opportunities: completing foundational education, acquiring usable skills, accessing information, obtaining work and sustaining earnings. Women and men encounter these conditions differently. A narrow focus on unemployment misses young people who are outside the labour force altogether, including those reporting household responsibilities or other forms of economic inactivity. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2024 to 2025 therefore provides an unusually useful starting point for examining gender differences in youth opportunity (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025).

This chapter examines economic disconnection among 15 to 24 year olds alongside supporting evidence on skills and digital participation. Where a statistic covers everyone aged 10 or above, the chapter explicitly treats it as contextual evidence, not an estimate for young women or men. The resulting analysis identifies what can be reported now and what must be calculated from district census tables before geographic conclusions are drawn.

6.2 Young women face far higher disconnection

The LFS 2024 to 2025 reports that 28.4% of young people aged 15 to 24 were neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET). The female NEET rate was 45.4%, compared with 13.0% among males: a gap of 32.4 percentage points. On this measure, young women were approximately 3.5 times as likely as young men to be outside these three pathways. These are survey estimates for 2024 to 2025 and should not be read as district rates (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025).

Indicator: ages 15 to 24	Female	Male	Total / derived
NEET rate, 2024 to 2025	45.4%	13.0%	28.4% overall
Female to male NEET gap	,	,	32.4 percentage points
Female/male NEET ratio	,	,	3.49 : 1

Source: PBS (2025), Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025, youth NEET tables. Gap and ratio calculated from the published rounded rates; ratio is indicative.

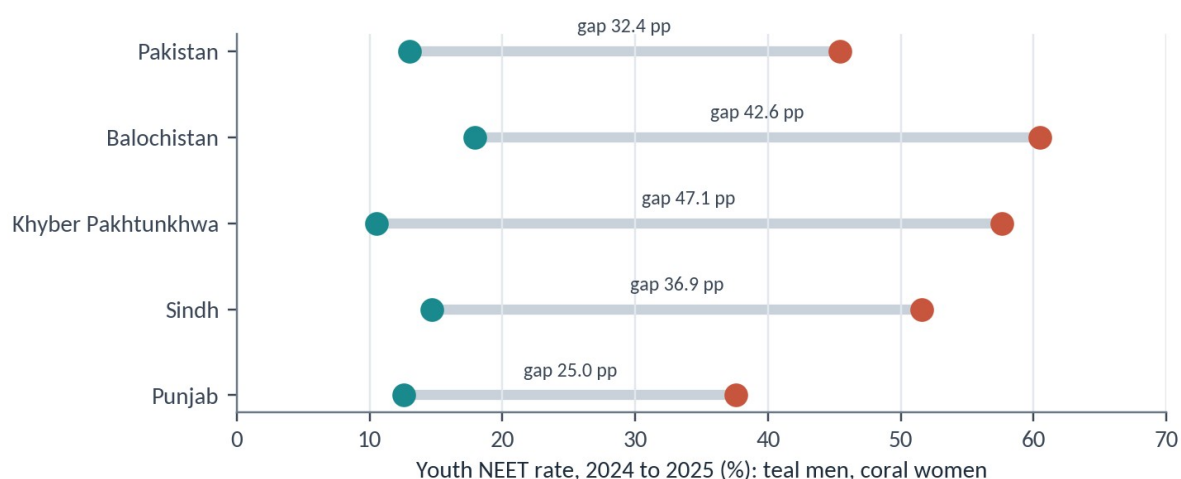


Figure 6.1. Female and male youth NEET rates by province, 2024 to 2025 Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2025), Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025, Table 8.8.

This gap identifies an important exclusion pattern, although the NEET category combines individuals with varied circumstances. Some are seeking work; others are engaged in unpaid care or domestic responsibilities; others may face constraints associated with distance, affordability, safety, health or local employment demand. The survey rate alone cannot establish which factor predominates. Explanatory claims require additional tabulations and, where appropriate, specialised research.

6.3 A widening gender gap in training

The same LFS finds that 11.0% of the population aged 10 and over had ever received technical or vocational training in 2024 to 2025. The corresponding shares were 14.4% among males and 7.4% among females. The resulting difference is 7.0 percentage points. Compared with 2020 to 2021, the reported share rose from 13.1% to 14.4% among males but fell from 8.7% to 7.4% among females (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025, Table 10.4).

Technical/vocational training received, age 10+	Male	Female	Gap (male to female)
2020 to 2021	13.1%	8.7%	4.4 pp
2024 to 2025	14.4%	7.4%	7.0 pp
Change in percentage points	+1.3	minus 1.3	+2.6 pp

Source: PBS (2025), LFS 2024 to 2025, Table 10.4. The indicator concerns lifetime receipt of any technical/vocational training among people aged 10+, not current youth training enrolment.

The difference indicates unequal reported exposure to training, rather than differences in competence, training quality or employment returns. Nor do these aggregate figures reveal whether women and men received similar course content or credentials. For the Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor, separately reporting access to training and transitions from training into work is essential. National programme completion totals should not be converted into employment outcomes without appropriate tracer evidence.

6.4 Digital use and skills

Digital use shows a different gender pattern from economic participation. In 2024 to 2025, women and men used the internet at almost the same rate nationally, and urban women's use (71 per cent) exceeded that of

urban men (67 per cent) (Associated Press of Pakistan 2026). These figures cover people aged 10 and above and are not youth specific rates.

Parity in reported use does not establish parity in capability or economic return. Searching for work online, preparing applications, managing documents and using professional platforms require skills, suitable devices and practice. Household ownership of computers, laptops or tablets stood at 14 per cent (FAFEN 2026), which limits the tasks that many young people can complete at home. Youth specific tabulations of practical digital tasks by sex are needed before digital capability can enter the monitoring framework as a gender indicator.

6.5 Educational foundations by district

The 2023 Population and Housing Census supplies a direct district level pathway to measuring female to male differences in youth literacy and educational attainment. Its national Table 13(a) identifies a specific 15 to 24 age group; for that group, the overall literacy rate was 68.18% in 2023. A district gender gap analysis requires separate male and female numerators and denominators for precisely the same age group and boundary definition (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023).

District extraction now shows where these gaps are widest. Hangu has the largest youth literacy gap in the country, 48.7 percentage points (78.6 per cent for young men against 29.9 per cent for young women), and female youth literacy is below 50 per cent in 74 of 136 districts (Chapter 8).

6.6 Gender in the district index

A composite index can conceal substantial differences within districts if a favourable overall score offsets a large female disadvantage. The District Youth Opportunity Index therefore reports sex specific rates and gender gaps alongside the composite score, together with the underlying population counts (Chapter 8 and the companion workbook). The gender gaps are a companion output and are not absorbed into the weighted composite score.

District statistical measure	Required inputs	Interpretation / guardrail
Female youth literacy rate	Literate females aged 15 to 24 / total females aged 15 to 24	Direct census measure once district table validated
Male youth literacy rate	Literate males aged 15 to 24 / total males aged 15 to 24	Uses identical age range and census definition
Literacy gap	Male youth literacy % minus female youth literacy %	Percentage points; retain direction and source year
Female youth economic exclusion	Validated census category and denominator	Label according to census wording; do not equate mechanically with ILO NEET
Scale of exclusion	Rate × matching sex/age population denominator	Report persons as well as percentages

Analytical specification. Calculated values are reported in Chapter 8 and the accompanying workbook.

A stable geographic comparison also requires a district master code, administrative boundary version and treatment of newly formed districts. The index preserves each observation year, and administrative information published later is not used to claim that the underlying 2023 census indicator has changed.

6.7 Interpreting overlapping disadvantages

The available evidence points to disadvantages that may reinforce one another: educational exclusion can restrict entry to training, limited digital engagement can narrow search and application options, and household responsibilities can reduce time available for paid work. The size of each pathway and the extent of overlap cannot be inferred from marginal national percentages. For example, comparing the female NEET rate with the female training rate does not reveal how many individuals belong to both groups, because the survey populations and concepts differ.

The next analytical step is joint tabulation within each representative dataset: NEET status by sex, educational attainment, urban/rural location, marital status and province where sample sizes allow. Association tables would clarify which patterns are observed together. Identifying causal barriers or programme effects would require additional designs and evidence.

6.8 Implications for the annual monitor

The Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor retains a compact gender evidence panel: All figures identify the population, source and observation year. If no new representative labour survey is released in a given year, the latest measured youth outcome is carried forward with its original year, while updated administrative and programme figures are shown separately.

This distinction also improves public communication. A memorable statement such as “45.4% of young women aged 15 to 24 were outside employment, education or training in 2024 to 2025” has a defined statistical meaning; a generalisation such as “half of young women lack opportunity” exceeds the measure. The credibility of the series depends on maintaining that precision.

6.9 Conclusions and policy priorities

The documented gender gap in youth economic disconnection is large: 45.4% of young women and 13.0% of young men aged 15 to 24 were classified as NEET in 2024 to 2025. Wider population evidence also shows different exposure to technical training, while reported internet use is now close to parity between women and men. Together, these patterns justify a sustained gender lens across education, skills and labour market monitoring, while each indicator retains its own population and measurement definition.

For governments and development partners, the immediate priority is to locate geographic concentrations of disadvantage and distinguish barriers that require different programme responses. The district census evidence can support this work after extraction; the recent labour survey provides the national/provincial analytical context; and more detailed joint tabulations can inform the design of interventions for young women in different circumstances. This chapter establishes those measurable questions without substituting assumptions for district evidence.

CHAPTER 7

District Youth Opportunity Index: Methodology and Validation



Centre for Social Analytics and
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KEY MESSAGES

- 1** The index combines four census indicators for ages 15 to 24 in two equally weighted domains: education and economic participation.
- 2** District totals reconcile exactly with national figures, and two independent calculations give identical results for all 136 districts.
- 3** Ranks are robust at the top and bottom; 17 districts with wide rank ranges are best read by band.

About the index. The District Youth Opportunity Index is calculated for 136 district level units and validated through an independent second calculation. It measures relative differences in observed educational and economic conditions among young people aged 15 to 24 at the Census 2023 reference date. It is not a NEET measure and does not describe conditions after 2023.

7.1 Purpose, scope and design decisions

The District Youth Opportunity Index (DYOI) is a diagnostic tool. It shows where young people face the weakest educational foundations and the weakest connection to education or market work, and it places those differences beside the number of young people affected. A score summarises selected indicators. It does not measure each district's whole youth development performance, and it does not explain why differences exist.

Three design decisions follow from the structure of the census tables and from testing the candidate indicators.

- **Age band.** The census literacy, enrolment and labour status tables report a special age group of 15 to 24 only. Table 4 reports single year ages, so the population aged 15 to 29 is available for every district, but no census rate for ages 25 to 29 can be built. All index rates therefore refer to ages 15 to 24. Counts of the population aged 15 to 29 are reported as context (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023).
- **Labour category label.** The tables published by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) label the census labour category "Not L.F & Stud (15 to 24)" and give no definition note. This report uses the published label and a descriptive name, "inactive non student share", and does not call it NEET.
- **Employment indicator.** The share recorded as employed counts unpaid family helpers in agriculture and moves in the opposite direction to education across districts (Section 7.7). The core index therefore uses a market employment share, and the total employment share is retained as an alternative specification.

7.2 Source architecture

The index uses four district level tables from the 7th Population and Housing Census, published by PBS as Excel files on its detailed results page (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023). Each file was downloaded on 11 October 2026 and archived with a checksum in the companion source inventory.

Table 7.1. Census tables used and their roles

Table	Content used	Population and sex detail	Role
13(a)	Population, literate, ever attended, enrolment by level, never attended	Ages 15 to 24; all sexes, male, female; rural and urban	Education indicators and sex specific literacy
15	Employed by status, unemployed, Not L.F & Stud	Ages 15 to 24; rural and urban; no sex split	Economic indicators
14	Not L.F & Stud by sex	Ages 15 to 24 for this row only; all other rows cover ages 10 and over	Sex specific inactivity share
4	Single year age by sex	All ages; used for ages 15 to 29	Population context and reconciliation

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023), Census 2023 district tables 4, 13(a), 14 and 15. Table 15 contains no sex disaggregation, so no sex specific employment indicator can be built from the census.

Four other evidence streams were considered and kept outside the index. The Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025 supports provincial and national estimates and cannot be allocated to districts (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025). The district Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement survey of 2019 to 2020 has not been reconciled with the census age definitions and boundaries. The Youth Development module planned for 2026 to 2027 has not been released. Household survey measures of digital access and administrative training counts are not representative at district level for young people. All index inputs therefore carry one observation year, 2023.

7.3 Eligibility audit

Before any score was calculated, every district record passed a set of internal consistency tests, and the district totals were reconciled with the national totals published in the same tables. One coverage issue requires care. Malakand is labelled "Malakand Protected Area" in the PBS file rather than with the word District; omitting it leaves Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 825,377 persons short of its provincial total. With Malakand included, the 136 units reconcile exactly. Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan reconciled exactly from the start. The Punjab file also lists a "De Excluded Area Rajanpur" sub unit. It lies inside the Rajanpur district total and is not counted separately.

Table 7.2. Internal consistency tests applied to each of the 136 district records

Test	Records tested	Failures
Population aged 15 to 24 in Table 13(a) equals Table 15	136	0
Population aged 15 to 24 equals Table 4 ages 15 to 19 plus 20 to 24	136	0
Not L.F & Stud in Table 14 equals Table 15	136	0
Male plus female plus transgender equals all sexes (population, literate, Not L.F & Stud)	136 each	0
Rural plus urban equals all localities (population)	136	0
Literate does not exceed population	136	0
Ever attended plus never attended equals population	136	0
Employment status components sum to employed	136	0

Source: authors' extraction from files retrieved from the PBS website on 11 October 2026.

Table 7.3. Sum of 136 districts compared with published national totals

Measure	Sum of districts	Published national	Difference
Population aged 15 to 24 (Table 13(a))	44,622,831	44,622,831	0
Literate aged 15 to 24	30,422,227	30,422,227	0
Employed aged 15 to 24 (Table 15)	15,174,084	15,174,084	0
Unemployed aged 15 to 24	6,197,628	6,197,628	0
Not L.F & Stud aged 15 to 24	18,160,400	18,160,400	0
Population aged 15 to 19 (Table 4)	24,154,118	24,154,118	0
Population aged 20 to 24	20,468,713	20,468,713	0
Population aged 25 to 29	17,967,161	17,967,161	0
All ages	240,458,089	240,458,089	0

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023), authors' calculations. The national population aged 15 to 29 is 62,589,992, or 26.0 per cent of the total.

Two further audit findings shape how the labour indicators are used. First, in 54 of the 136 districts the sum of employed, unemployed and Not L.F & Stud exceeds the population aged 15 to 24, so the three categories are not a clean partition of youth. A NEET rate cannot be assembled from them. Second, the meaning of the Not L.F & Stud label is not documented in the tables. The reading used here is that it records young people outside the labour force who are not students. Two facts support that reading: nationally 58.4 per cent of young women and 23.9 per cent of young men fall in the category, and the number of young people left unassigned after subtracting the three labour categories from the population tracks enrolment closely across districts (correlation 0.97). The reading remains an inference until PBS confirms the definition, so the index has been tested with the indicator removed (Section 7.8).

7.4 Indicator specification

Table 7.4. Core and companion indicators

Domain	Indicator	Definition, ages 15 to 24	Direction	Weight in index
Education	Youth literacy rate	Literate persons divided by population	Higher is better	25 per cent
Education	Currently enrolled share	Persons enrolled at any level (primary to graduation and above) divided by population	Higher is better	25 per cent
Economic	Inactive non student share	Persons recorded as Not L.F & Stud divided by population	Lower is better	25 per cent
Economic	Market employment share	Paid employees, employers and non agricultural own account workers divided by population	Higher is better	25 per cent
Companion	Sex gaps in literacy and inactivity	Male rate minus female rate, in percentage points	Smaller is better	Not weighted
Context	Affected counts	Illiterate youth; inactive non student youth; population aged 15 to 29	Not scored	Not weighted

Source: authors' specification. Every indicator has complete values for all 136 districts, so no imputation was used and no provincial averages were substituted for district values.

Literacy and enrolment capture a stock and a flow of educational opportunity. Literacy reflects the cumulative result of past access to schooling. Enrolment shows how many young people are still in education. The two economic indicators separate young people who are outside both study and the labour force from those in market work, where market work means paid employment, employers and non agricultural self employment. Agricultural own account work and unpaid family help are left out of the market employment share because they are common where wage opportunities are scarce and do not signal access to paid work.

The share of young people who have never attended school was tested and excluded from the core. It is almost the mirror image of literacy (correlation negative 0.99), so including it would count one condition twice. Digital access, technical training and school quality were excluded because no comparable district measure for young people exists in the public record.

7.5 Construction of the score

Each indicator is rescaled to run from 0 to 100 using the lowest and highest district values. For a beneficial indicator, the score is 100 multiplied by the difference between the district value and the lowest district value, divided by the difference between the highest and lowest district values. For an adverse indicator, the result is subtracted from 100, so that a low inactive share scores high. The education score is the mean of the two education indicator scores. The economic score is the mean of the two economic indicator scores. The DYOI score is half the education score plus half the economic score (OECD, European Union, and Joint Research Centre 2008).

Districts are ranked from 1 for the highest score. No two districts share a score, so no ties occur. For presentation, districts are divided into five bands of 27 or 28 districts each by core rank. Band 1 holds the highest opportunity districts and Band 5 the lowest.

Three interpretation rules apply. The score is relative to the 136 district range and moves if districts are added or removed, so it is not a percentage of young people with opportunity. A national figure should be computed from national counts, not by averaging district scores. And the sex gaps are shown beside the score and are not deducted from it, because a district with high average attainment and a wide gap and a district with low attainment and no gap answer different questions.

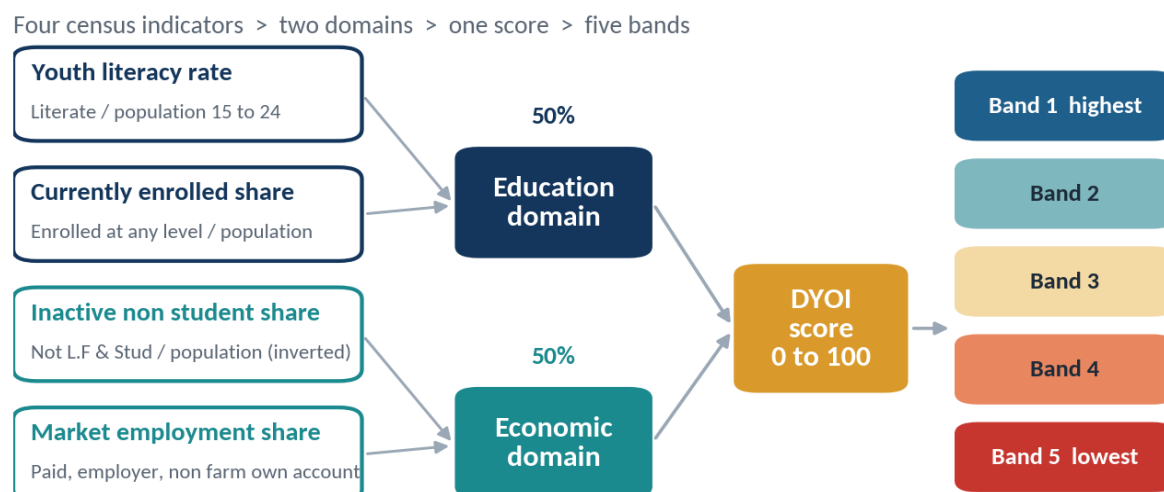


Figure 7.1. How the District Youth Opportunity Index is built. Source: authors' specification.

7.6 Independent verification

The index was calculated twice by separate routes. The primary route read the Excel files with a label driven parser and wrote every extracted value with its source file and cell address. The second route read the same files again with a different library and a position based parser, recomputed all four indicators and the DYOI

with separately written code, and compared the results. All 136 districts matched. The largest difference in any score was 0.0000000000000007 points, and no rank differed. Recomputed literacy rates also matched the percentages printed in the PBS tables exactly. The calculation workbook contains live Excel formulas for the core index next to the Python values, so a reader can reproduce every score without running code.

136 district units, all with complete values Coverage	0 difference between district sums and national totals Reconciliation	2 independent calculation routes; identical results Verification	13 alternative specifications tested Robustness
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Source: authors' calculations.

7.7 Indicator correlations

Table 7.5. Correlations across 136 districts

Pair	Correlation	Reading
Literacy and currently enrolled share	0.93	Related, kept as separate stock and flow measures
Literacy and never attended share	negative 0.99	Redundant, never attended excluded
Literacy and inactive non student share	negative 0.67	Districts with low literacy have more inactive youth
Literacy and market employment share	0.63	Market work is more common where literacy is higher
Literacy and employed share of all youth	negative 0.50	Total employment is higher where literacy is lower
Enrolled share and employed share of all youth	negative 0.68	Employment replaces study where enrolment is low
Market employment and employed share of all youth	negative 0.01	Different constructs
Education score and economic score	0.67	Domains overlap but carry distinct information

Source: authors' calculations.

The negative relationship between total employment and education explains the change to the core specification. In the census, the employed category includes unpaid family helpers and agricultural own account workers, and the employed share of youth is highest in the districts with the lowest literacy. Rewarding that share would score the lowest education districts better on the economic domain for reasons that do not indicate opportunity. The market employment share does not behave this way. The original specification remains in the robustness set as specification S12.

7.8 Robustness and rank stability

Thirteen specifications were calculated: the core, two alternative domain weightings, a set with all candidate indicators, a geometric aggregation, percentile rank and truncated z score normalisation, fixed goalposts at 0 and 100, four versions that drop one indicator at a time, and the original candidate employment indicator. Rank order is highly stable across them.

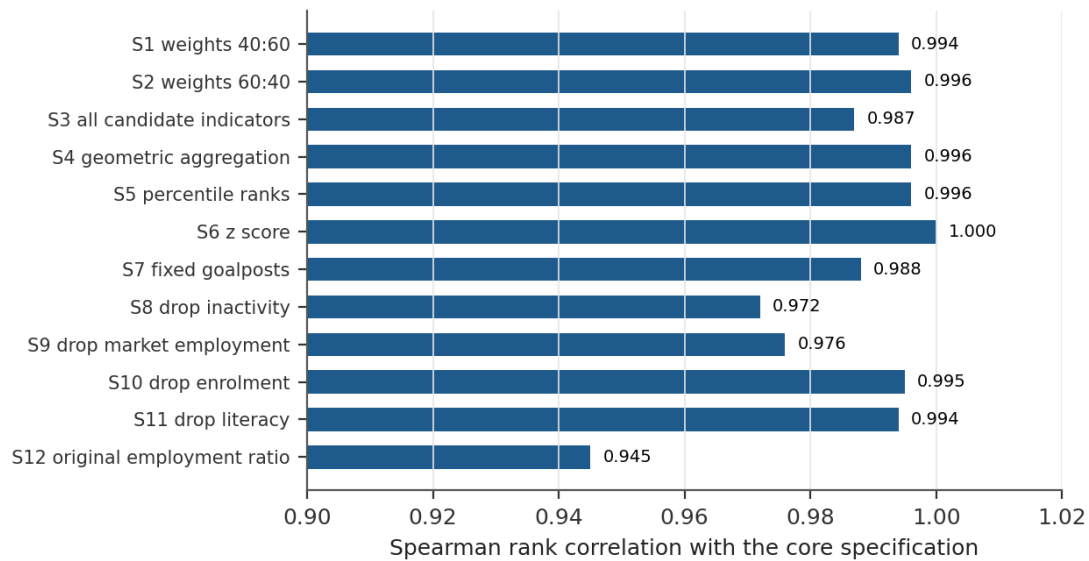


Figure 7.2. Spearman rank correlation of each specification with the core. Source: authors' calculations.

The lowest correlations arise when the inactivity indicator is dropped (0.972) and when the original employment ratio replaces market employment (0.945). Even so, no specification reorders the districts radically. Individual positions are less secure than the overall order. Across the thirteen specifications, the median district's rank spans 16 places, and the mean span is 19.2. Sixty one districts have a rank range of 15 or less, 58 have a range between 16 and 30, and 17 have a range above 30. The least stable districts are Karachi West, Keamari, Malir, Quetta, Kohat, Kech, Sohbatpur, Swat, Karak, Panjgur, Kashmore, Hangu, Nasirabad, Khyber, Barkhan, Kohlu, Torghar.

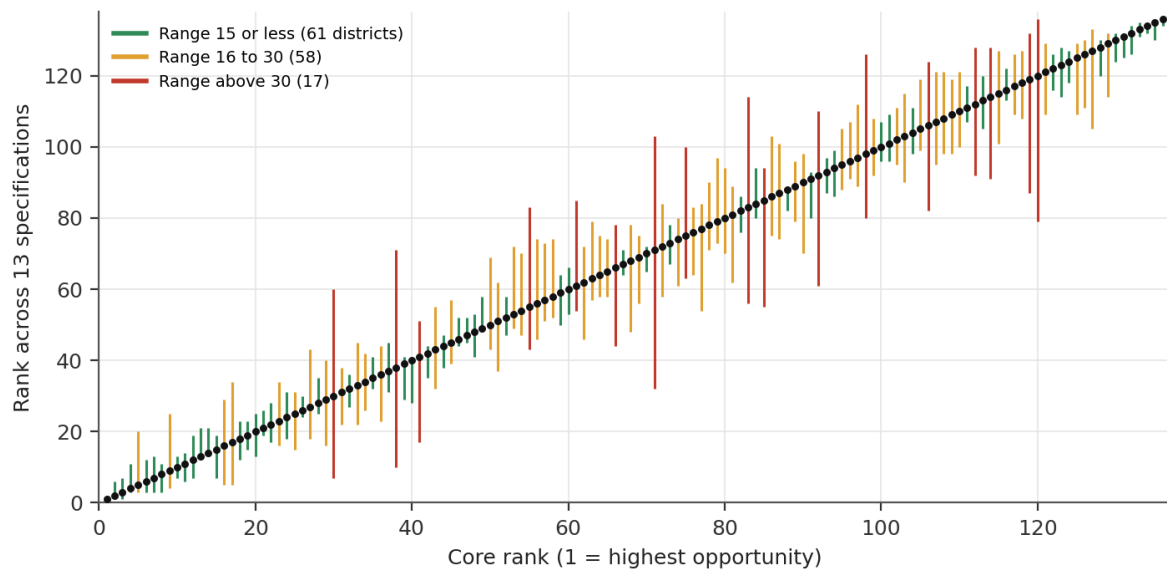


Figure 7.3. Rank of each district across 13 specifications, shown as a vertical line with the core rank as a dot. Source: authors' calculations.

The practical rule is to read the band and the rank range beside the rank. The extremes are secure. The three highest ranked districts stay within positions 1 to 7 under every specification, and the three lowest stay within positions 130 to 136. In the middle of the distribution, many scores lie within one or two points of their neighbours, and a rank difference of a few places should not be interpreted as a difference in conditions.

7.9 Companion outputs

Four companion outputs accompany the score for every district. The sex specific literacy rates and the male minus female gap in percentage points describe education equity. The female and male inactive non student shares describe differences in economic disconnection. The counts of illiterate young people and of inactive non student young people describe scale. The count of the population aged 15 to 29 gives the larger youth cohort for planning. A rate identifies intensity and a count identifies scale, and the two lead to different districts (Chapter 8).

7.10 Limitations

- **Reference period.** All values are census observations for 2023. The census employment variables use a one year reference period and are not comparable with Labour Force Survey estimates, which PBS states in the census tables.
- **Measurement scope.** The index covers literacy, enrolment and market work. It does not measure learning quality, skills, job quality, earnings, digital capability or the availability of local jobs.
- **Definition risk.** The Not L.F & Stud definition is inferred. Removing the indicator changes ranks modestly (correlation 0.972), but the economic domain should be read as conditional until PBS confirms the definition.
- **Heterogeneity inside districts.** A district score averages urban and rural conditions. Large urban districts such as Karachi and Lahore are internally diverse.
- **Relative scale.** Scores depend on the 136 district range. The fixed goalpost variant correlates 0.988 with the core, so the order is robust, but the numeric score is not an absolute standard.
- **Boundaries.** The index uses Census 2023 district geography as published. Comparison with earlier surveys requires a boundary reconciliation that has not been done.
- **Inference.** The results are cross sectional and descriptive. They do not identify causes or programme effects.

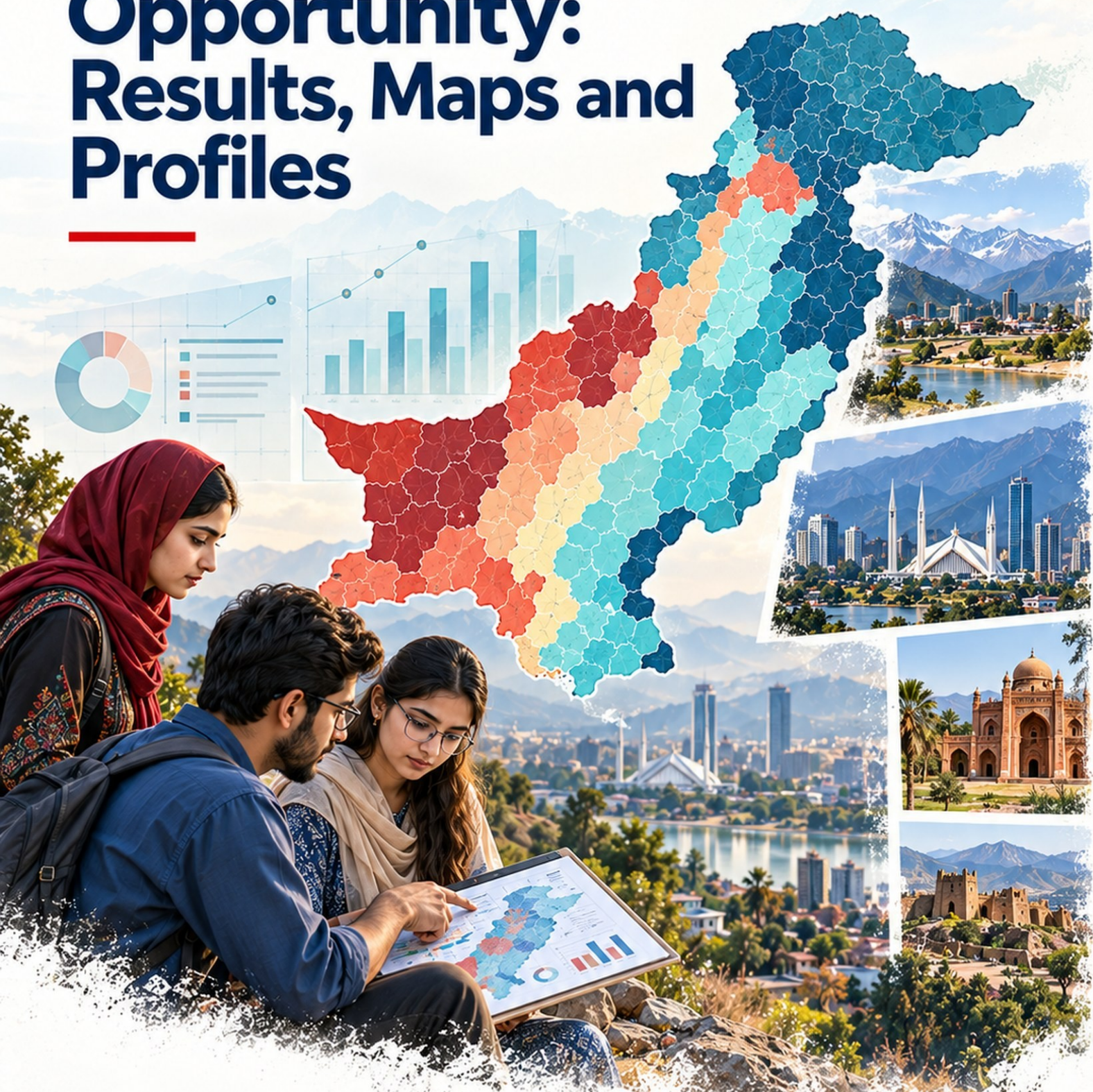
7.11 Release rules and updates

This is version 1.0 of the DYOI. A national ranking is published because all 136 units pass the eligibility audit, reconcile exactly with national totals and have been reproduced independently. Release as an official statistic would additionally require external statistical review and PBS confirmation of the labour category definition. Neither has occurred, and no government body has adopted the index.

The index will be recalculated when comparable district representative data become available, most likely the district survey Youth Development module once released. Indicators that remain comparable will extend the series. Indicators whose meaning changes will start a new series and a new version number. The Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor is unchanged and continues to report the latest Labour Force Survey and household survey evidence at national and provincial level, with each statistic labelled by its own observation year.

CHAPTER 8

District Youth Opportunity: Results, Maps and Profiles



Centre for Social Analytics and
Development Support (CSADS)

www.csads.org

KEY MESSAGES

- 1 Lahore, Karachi Central and Islamabad rank highest; the three Kohistan districts rank lowest.
- 2 The 27 lowest band districts hold 5.3 per cent of young people but 10.6 per cent of illiterate youth.
- 3 Within provinces, the gap between the highest and lowest district reaches 71.8 points in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 69.1 in Sindh.

Evidence status. Every figure in this chapter is calculated from the Census 2023 district tables for 136 district level units and has been reproduced by an independent second calculation (Chapter 7). Findings describe conditions among young people aged 15 to 24 in 2023. They are descriptive, they do not show causes, and they are not a measure of NEET.

8.1 The national picture

The census counted 44,622,831 people aged 15 to 24, and 30,422,227 of them were literate, a national youth literacy rate of 68.2 per cent. That leaves 14,200,604 young people who could not read and write, or 31.8 per cent of the age group. About 26.4 per cent were enrolled in education at some level. The census recorded 18,160,400 young people, 40.7 per cent, in the category published as Not L.F & Stud. The category is far more common among young women (58.4 per cent) than among young men (23.9 per cent) (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023). These are census measures for 2023. They differ in reference period and definition from the Labour Force Survey NEET rate of 28.4 per cent reported for 2024 to 2025 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025).

District scores on the DYOI range from 6.2 to 91.2, with a median of 46.2. The middle half of districts lies between 30.4 and 64.0. The spread is therefore wide: the gap between the highest and lowest scoring district is 85.0 points on a 100 point scale. Bands of 27 or 28 districts summarise the distribution.

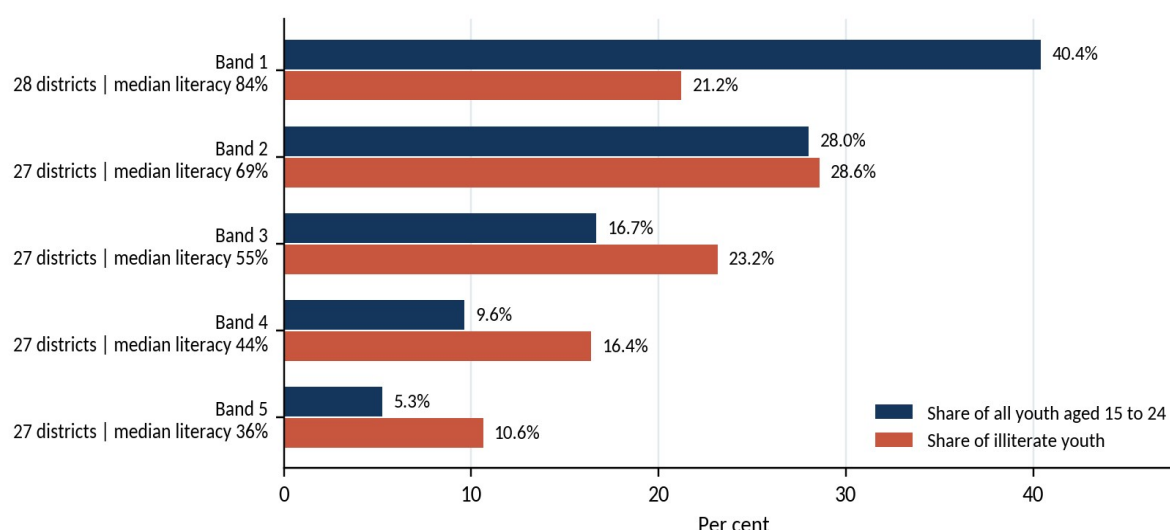


Figure 8.1. The five opportunity bands: share of all youth and of illiterate youth, with the number of districts and median youth literacy in each band. Bands are quintiles of the core rank; score ranges are 66.6 to 91.2 (Band 1), 51.2 to 66.5, 38.9 to 50.5, 28.0 to 38.8, and 6.2 to 27.5 (Band 5). Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023); authors' calculations.

8.2 National distribution and rankings

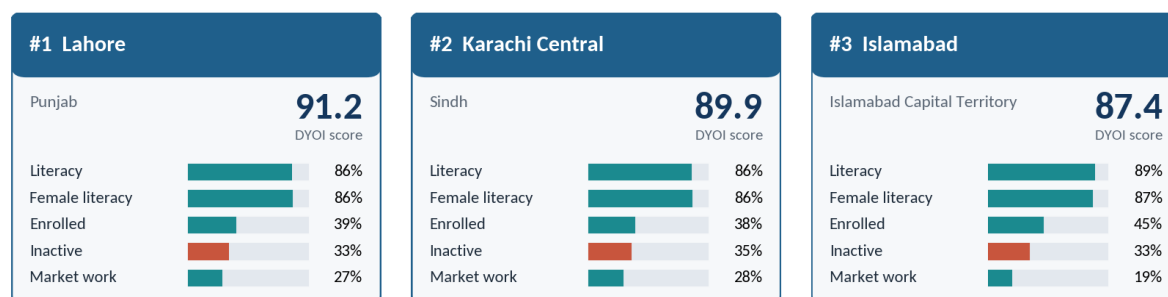
Table 8.1. The ten highest and ten lowest ranked districts

Rank	District	Province	Score	Literacy %	Inactive non student %	Band	Rank range, 13 specifications
1	Lahore	Punjab	91.2	85.8	32.6	Band 1	1 to 2
2	Karachi Central	Sindh	89.9	85.5	34.7	Band 1	1 to 6
3	Islamabad	Islamabad	87.4	88.7	33.3	Band 1	1 to 7
4	Karachi East	Sindh	86.3	80.1	35.2	Band 1	3 to 11
5	Karachi South	Sindh	83.8	84.2	38.4	Band 1	3 to 20
6	Rawalpindi	Punjab	83.5	90.1	35.2	Band 1	3 to 12
7	Sialkot	Punjab	82.6	88.9	33.9	Band 1	3 to 13
8	Gujranwala	Punjab	81.8	86.6	34.4	Band 1	3 to 11
9	Korangi	Sindh	81.5	82.8	39.4	Band 1	4 to 25
10	Faisalabad	Punjab	80.1	82.8	35.2	Band 1	7 to 13
127	Kachhi	Balochistan	21.1	31.6	46.8	Band 5	105 to 133
128	Sujawal	Sindh	20.8	29.4	50.9	Band 5	120 to 130
129	Bajaur	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	20.3	32.6	55.6	Band 5	114 to 132
130	Chagai	Balochistan	18.0	36.8	53.9	Band 5	124 to 132
131	Sherani	Balochistan	17.1	25.0	52.4	Band 5	125 to 132
132	Dera Bugti	Balochistan	14.6	27.8	56.4	Band 5	126 to 134
133	Washuk	Balochistan	12.9	22.1	53.9	Band 5	131 to 135
134	Lower Kohistan	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	10.4	24.1	55.0	Band 5	132 to 134
135	Kolai Palas Kohistan	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	7.5	20.4	53.1	Band 5	130 to 136
136	Upper Kohistan	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	6.2	21.4	56.7	Band 5	134 to 136

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023), authors' calculations. The complete ranking of 136 districts is in the accompanying workbook.

Band 1 contains 28 districts: 19 in Punjab, 5 in Sindh, 3 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad. The Sindh districts are Karachi Central, Karachi East, Karachi South, Korangi and Hyderabad. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa districts are Abbottabad, Haripur and Upper Chitral. Lahore ranks first with a score of 91.2, followed by Karachi Central (89.9) and Islamabad (87.4). Four of the seven Karachi districts rank within the top nine, while Karachi West, Keamari and Malir rank 30, 38 and 41.

Highest ranked districts



Lowest ranked districts

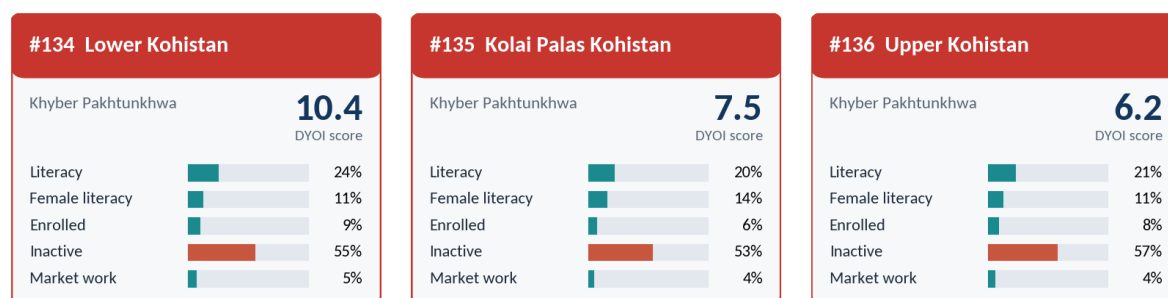


Figure 8.2. Profiles of the three highest and three lowest ranked districts, ages 15 to 24, 2023. Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023); authors' calculations.

Upper Chitral illustrates why the score and the headline literacy rate can diverge. It has the highest youth literacy rate in the country, 94.7 per cent, and ranks 17th overall, but only 9.0 per cent of its young people are in market employment, the economic score is low, and the district holds only 38,022 young people. The bottom of the ranking is dominated by the three Kohistan districts (Upper Kohistan, Kolai Palas Kohistan and Lower Kohistan) and by Washuk, Dera Bugti, Sherani and Chagai in Balochistan, with Bajaur, Sujawal and Kachhi completing the lowest ten. In Upper Kohistan, 21.4 per cent of young people are literate and 56.7 per cent are in the inactive non student category.

District Youth Opportunity Index, core score

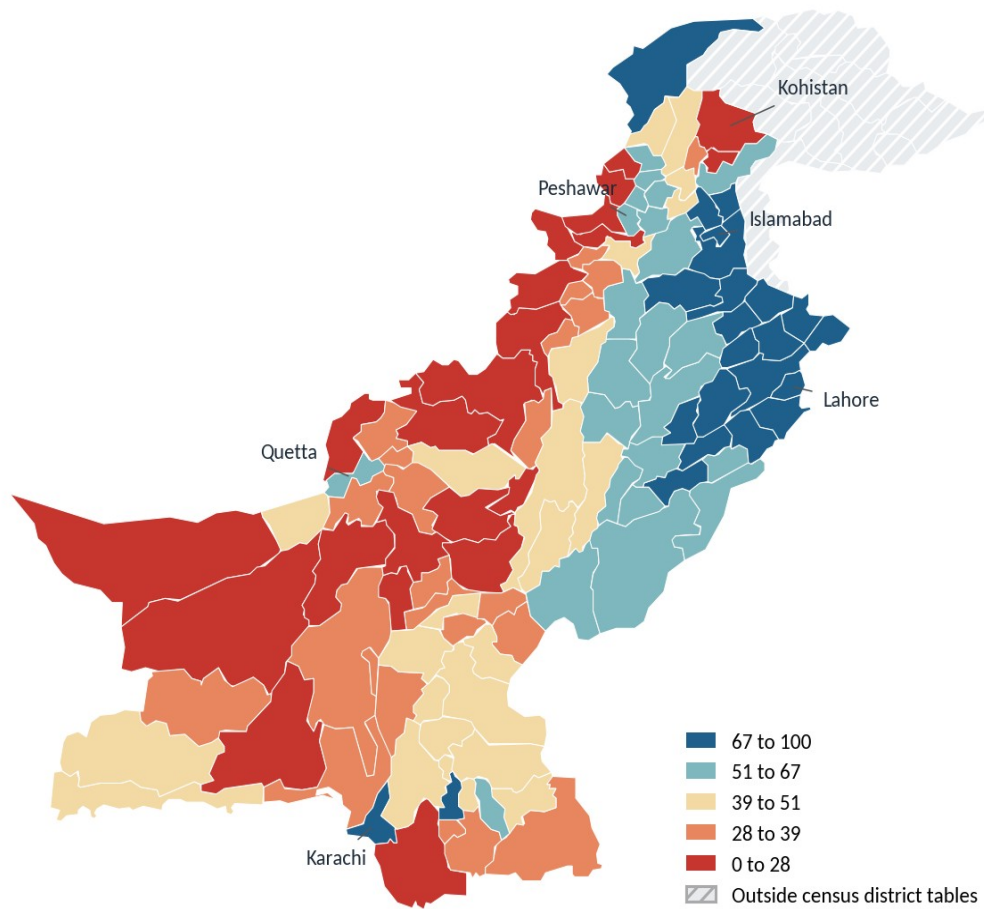


Figure 8.3. District Youth Opportunity Index core scores, 2023. Classes follow the five bands. Districts created after 2019 are shown within their 2019 boundary unit, with values recomputed from summed census counts. Areas hatched are outside the census district tables. Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023); boundaries from geoBoundaries (Runfola et al. 2020); authors' calculations.

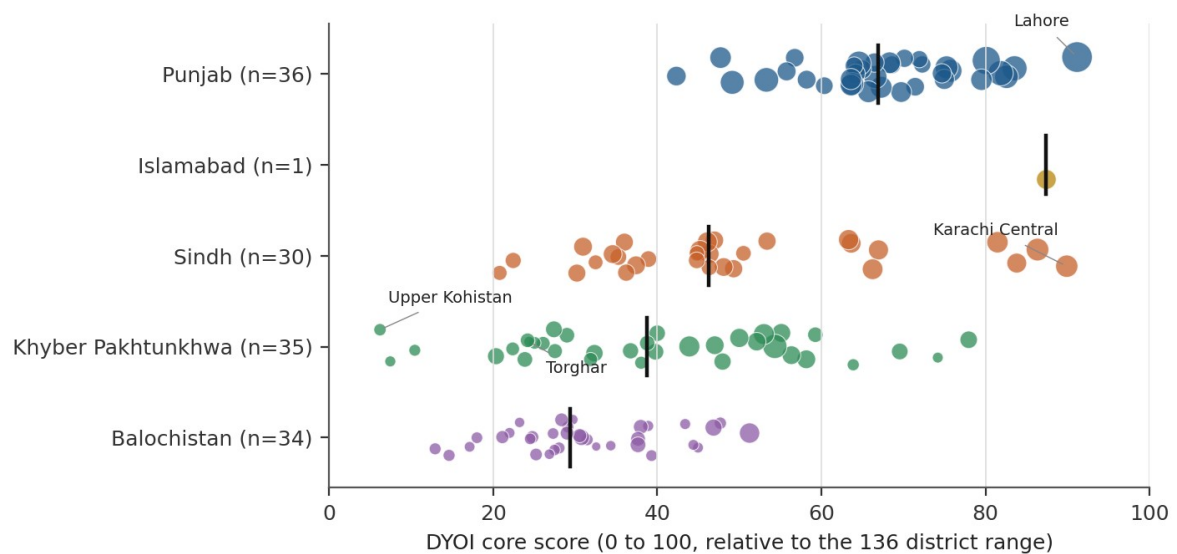


Figure 8.4. District DYOI core scores by province. Bars mark provincial medians; bubble area scales with the population aged 15 to 24. Source: authors' calculations.

8.3 Provincial comparison

Table 8.2. Provincial summary

Province	Districts	Youth 15 to 24	Literacy %	Female literacy %	Female inactive non student %	Median score	Lowest to highest score	Illiterate youth
Punjab	36	23,414,305	76.2	73.6	53.6	66.9	42.3 to 91.2	5,563,331
Sindh	30	10,219,410	60.7	54.8	61.0	46.2	20.8 to 89.9	4,018,171
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	35	7,737,721	60.8	47.3	69.3	38.8	6.2 to 78.0	3,032,413
Balochistan	34	2,828,786	45.6	37.8	60.7	29.4	12.9 to 51.2	1,538,855
Islamabad	1	422,609	88.7	86.9	46.0	87.4	87.4	47,834

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023), authors' calculations. Literacy and inactivity percentages are population weighted province totals.

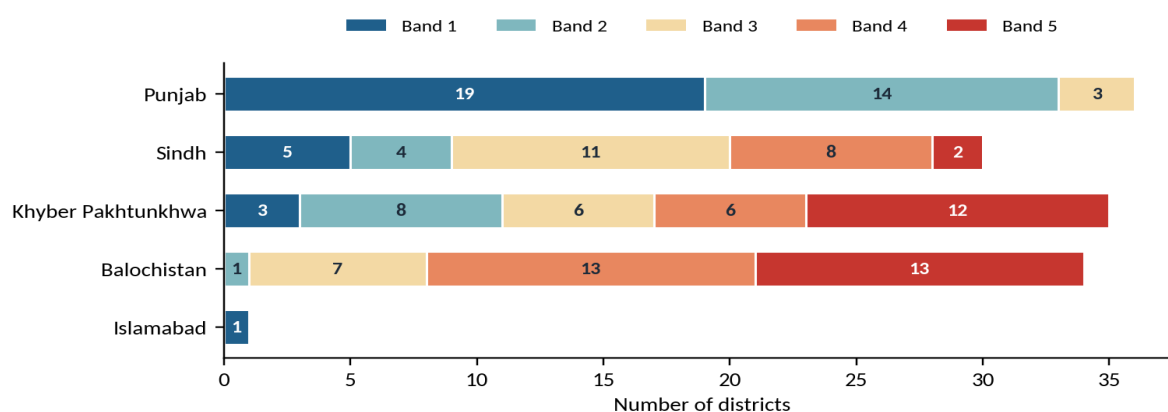
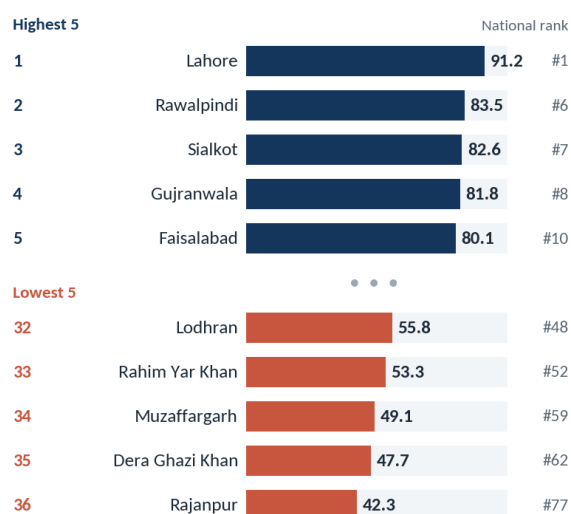
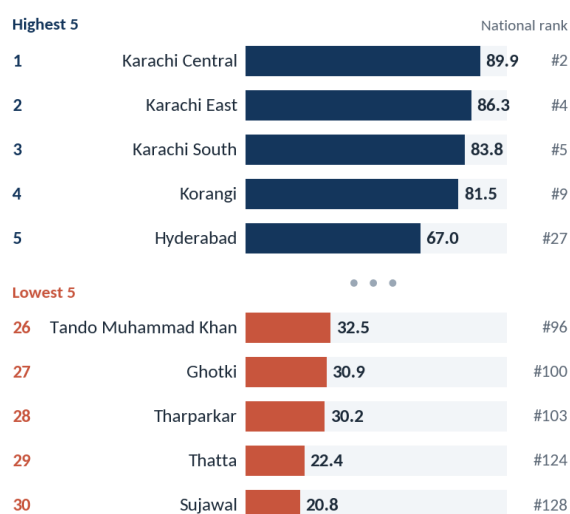
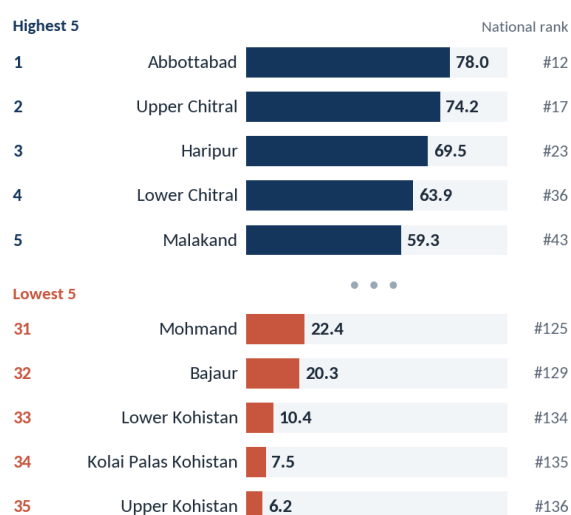
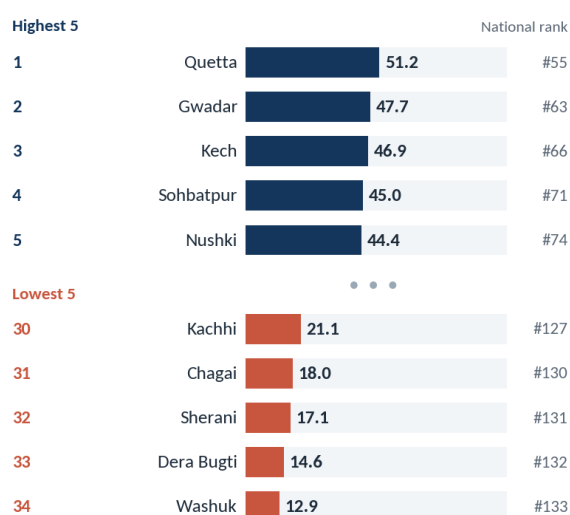


Figure 8.5. Number of districts in each band, by province. Source: authors' calculations.

Ranking districts within each province shows how wide internal differences are and where provincial programmes might look first (Figure 8.6). The gap between the highest and lowest scoring district is 71.8 points in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 69.1 in Sindh, 48.8 in Punjab and 38.3 in Balochistan. In Sindh, the four highest ranked districts are in Karachi, while the coastal districts of Thatta and Sujawal rank last. Punjab's five lowest ranked districts, Lodhran, Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur, all lie in the south of the province. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Abbottabad, Upper Chitral and Haripur lead, while the three Kohistan districts, Bajaur and Mohmand rank lowest. Balochistan's ranking is compressed at a lower level: its highest scoring district, Quetta (51.2), would rank 34th of 37 if placed among Punjab's districts. Within province ranks carry the same uncertainty as national ranks (Section 8.7), so neighbouring positions should not be read as firm differences.

Punjab (36 districts)**Sindh (30 districts)****Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (35 districts)****Balochistan (34 districts)**

Bars show the DYOI core score (0 to 100). Numbers on the left are ranks within the province. Islamabad, a single district, ranks 3rd nationally.

Figure 8.6. Five highest and five lowest ranked districts within each province, DYOI core score, 2023. Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023); authors' calculations.

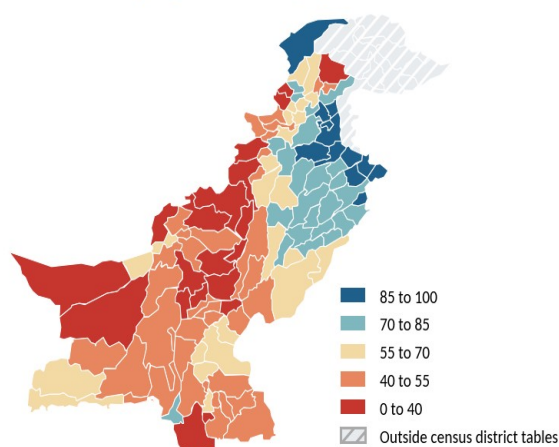
The provincial order matches the order in the Labour Force Survey NEET rates for 2024 to 2025, which are lowest in Punjab (24.8 per cent) and highest in Balochistan (36.0 per cent), with Sindh (32.0) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (32.7) between them (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025). That agreement is reassuring, but it is a consistency check and not a validation. The two sources measure different things, in different years, for different populations. The district results add what the provincial rates cannot show. Punjab has no district in Bands 4 or 5, yet it contains 5.6 million of the country's illiterate youth. Balochistan has 13 districts in Band 5 and only one above Band 3. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has the widest internal range, from Upper Chitral and Abbottabad in Band 1 to the three Kohistan districts at the bottom.

8.4 When education and work diverge

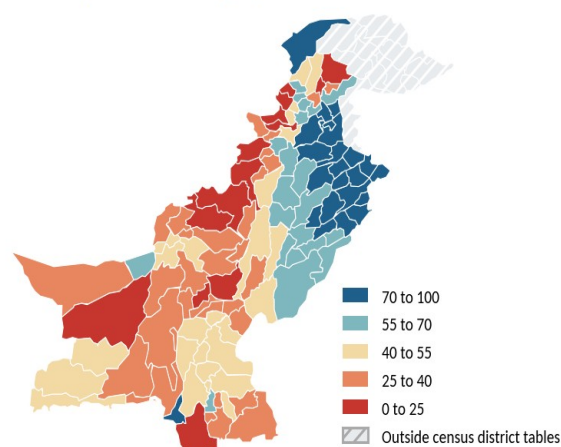
The education score and the economic score are positively related (correlation 0.67), but the relationship is far from one to one. Several Khyber Pakhtunkhwa districts rank well on education and poorly on the economic domain. Karak has a youth literacy rate of 76.3 per cent, above the national rate, yet it ranks 32nd on education and 135th of 136 on the economic domain, with 56.5 per cent of its young people in the inactive non student category and 5.9 per cent in market employment. Lower Dir (literacy 71.8 per cent), Hangu, Upper Dir and Kohat show the same pattern. The reverse pattern appears in parts of Sindh and Balochistan, where economic positions are better than education positions: Tando Allahyar ranks 96th on education and 24th on the economic domain, and Panjgur 117th and 53rd.

These patterns show where the two domains diverge. They do not show why. A high inactive share among young women in the census, local job availability, migration of young men for work, and the way household work is recorded could each contribute, and the census tables cannot separate them. Both domains are shown for every district so that planners can see which kind of gap they face.

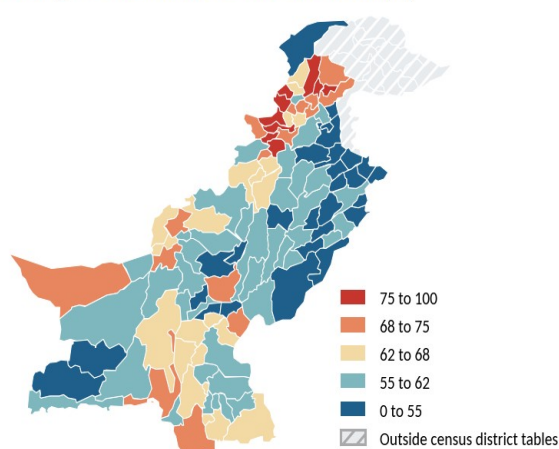
Youth literacy, ages 15 to 24 (%)



Female youth literacy (%)



Young women inactive non students (%)



Youth in market employment (%)

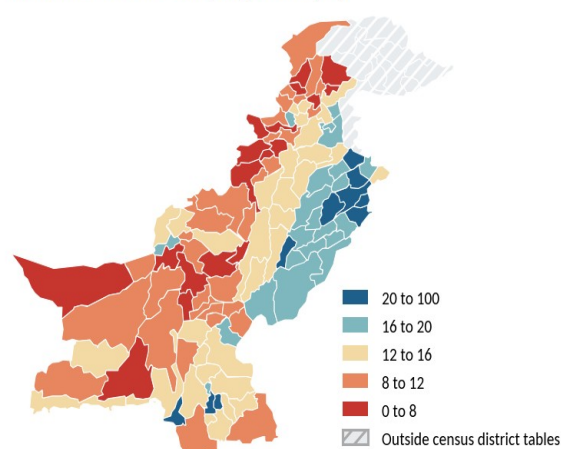


Figure 8.7. Youth literacy, female youth literacy, young women recorded as inactive non students, and market employment, ages 15 to 24, 2023. Mapping conventions as in Figure 8.3. Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023); boundaries from geoBoundaries (Runfola et al. 2020); authors' calculations.

8.5 Gender disparities

Table 8.3. The ten largest male to female literacy gaps, ages 15 to 24

District	Province	Male literacy %	Female literacy %	Gap, percentage points	Female inactive non student %	Core rank
Hangu	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	78.6	29.9	48.7	81.7	98
Khyber	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	68.6	20.9	47.6	81.4	112
Torghar	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	61.4	16.4	45.0	90.0	120
Orakzai	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	64.4	19.6	44.8	76.0	117
Shangla	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	60.9	21.0	39.9	77.1	107
Lakki Marwat	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	76.8	37.3	39.5	67.0	89
Mohmand	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	57.5	18.2	39.2	76.7	125
Batagram	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	66.4	29.7	36.6	80.8	115
Buner	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	75.0	38.6	36.4	72.2	79
Bannu	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	66.0	29.8	36.2	71.0	97

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023), Tables 13(a) and 14, authors' calculations. Gaps are in percentage points, not per cent.

Hangu has the widest gap in the country. Its young men have a literacy rate of 78.6 per cent and its young women 29.9 per cent, a gap of 48.7 percentage points. Khyber (47.7), Torghar (45.0), Orakzai (44.8) and Shangla (39.9) follow. Female literacy is below 50 per cent in 74 of the 136 districts: 30 of Balochistan's 34 districts, 22 of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's 35, 19 of Sindh's 30, and 3 in Punjab. It is below 30 per cent in 32 districts: 15 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 12 in Balochistan and 5 in Sindh.

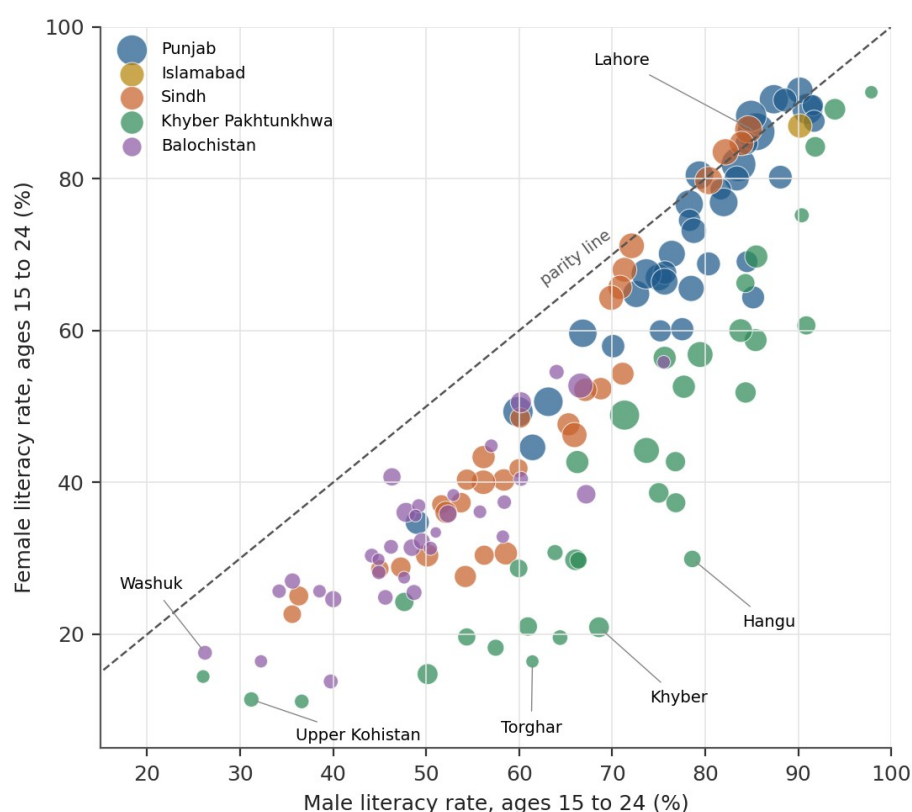


Figure 8.8. Male and female youth literacy by district. Districts below the dashed line have higher male literacy. Bubble area scales with youth population. Source: authors' calculations.

Ten districts show female literacy at or above male literacy: Lahore, Karachi Central, Karachi South, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Korangi, Gujrat, Sheikhupura, Narowal and Mandi Bahauddin. Economic disconnection shows a

similar divide. The median gap between female and male inactive non student shares across districts is 34.1 percentage points. In ten districts, all in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, at least 75 per cent of young women fall in the category: Torghar (90.0 per cent), Hangu, Khyber, Batagram, Bajaur, Shangla, Mohmand, Orakzai, Swat and Karak. A narrow gap is not always good news. Washuk has a literacy gap of only 8.6 points because female literacy (17.6 per cent) and male literacy (26.2 per cent) are both very low.

8.6 Rates versus counts

Table 8.4. The ten districts with the most illiterate young people

District	Province	Illiterate youth	Youth literacy %	Core rank	Band
Rahim Yar Khan	Punjab	456,445	54.8	52	Band 2
Muzaffargarh	Punjab	388,491	56.9	59	Band 3
Peshawar	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	383,937	60.2	50	Band 2
Lahore	Punjab	346,694	85.8	1	Band 1
Faisalabad	Punjab	297,803	82.8	10	Band 1
Multan	Punjab	296,416	70.6	33	Band 2
Bahawalpur	Punjab	283,527	63.3	37	Band 2
Dera Ghazi Khan	Punjab	279,834	53.1	62	Band 3
Rajanpur	Punjab	233,784	42.0	77	Band 3
Sanghar	Sindh	221,080	48.2	69	Band 3

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023), authors' calculations. Illiterate youth equals population aged 15 to 24 minus literate.

Rates and counts identify different places. The 27 districts in Band 5 hold 5.3 per cent of the country's young people but 10.6 per cent of its illiterate youth, which shows concentrated intensity. Bands 4 and 5 together hold 14.9 per cent of young people and 27.0 per cent of illiterate youth. None of the ten districts with the largest number of illiterate young people is in Band 5, and six of them are in Bands 1 or 2: Rahim Yar Khan, Peshawar, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan and Bahawalpur. Rahim Yar Khan has the largest number, 456,445, with a youth literacy rate of 54.8 per cent and a core rank of 52. Lahore has 346,694 illiterate young people despite a literacy rate of 85.8 per cent, because its youth population is 2.4 million. For economic disconnection the largest counts are again in large districts: Lahore (794,457), Faisalabad (607,524), Peshawar (432,931), Multan (422,173) and Rahim Yar Khan (408,885).

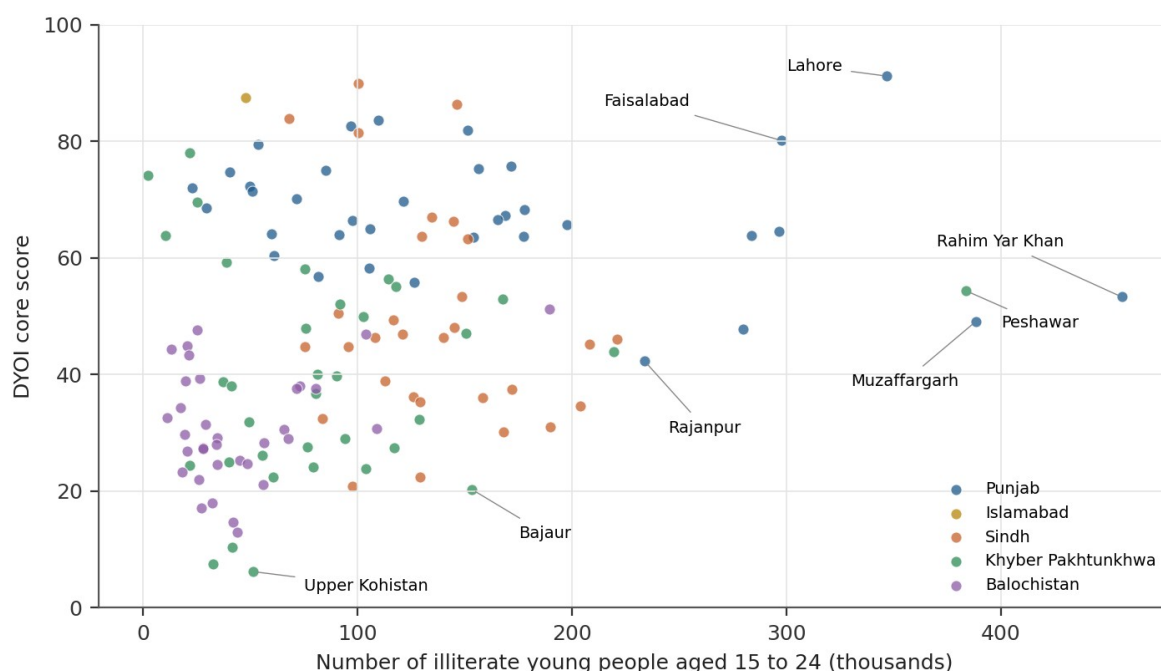


Figure 8.9. Illiterate youth and DYOL core score by district. Source: authors' calculations.

A cluster of South Punjab and Sindh districts combines large counts with middle or low ranks: Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Bahawalpur, Sanghar and Khairpur each have more than 200,000 illiterate young people. A targeting rule based on rank alone would miss most of them.

8.7 How to read the ranks

The ranking is more reliable at the extremes than in the middle (Chapter 7). Seventeen districts have a rank range wider than 30 positions across the thirteen specifications and should be described by band only: Karachi West (7 to 60), Keamari (10 to 71), Malir (17 to 51), Quetta (43 to 83), Kohat (54 to 85), Kech (44 to 78), Sohbatpur (32 to 103), Swat (63 to 100), Karak (56 to 114), Panjgur (55 to 94), Kashmore (61 to 110), Hangu (80 to 126), Nasirabad (82 to 124), Khyber (92 to 128), Barkhan (91 to 128), Kohlu (87 to 132), Torghar (79 to 136). Hangu, for example, has a core rank of 98 but ranks between 80 and 126, because its literacy is moderate while its inactive non student share is among the highest. Three districts often used as examples show the spread: Attock ranks 34th (literacy 84.2 per cent), Chiniot 35th (67.6 per cent) and Hangu 98th (54.5 per cent). None is a national extreme. District youth literacy runs from 20.4 per cent in Kolai Palas Kohistan to 94.7 per cent in Upper Chitral.

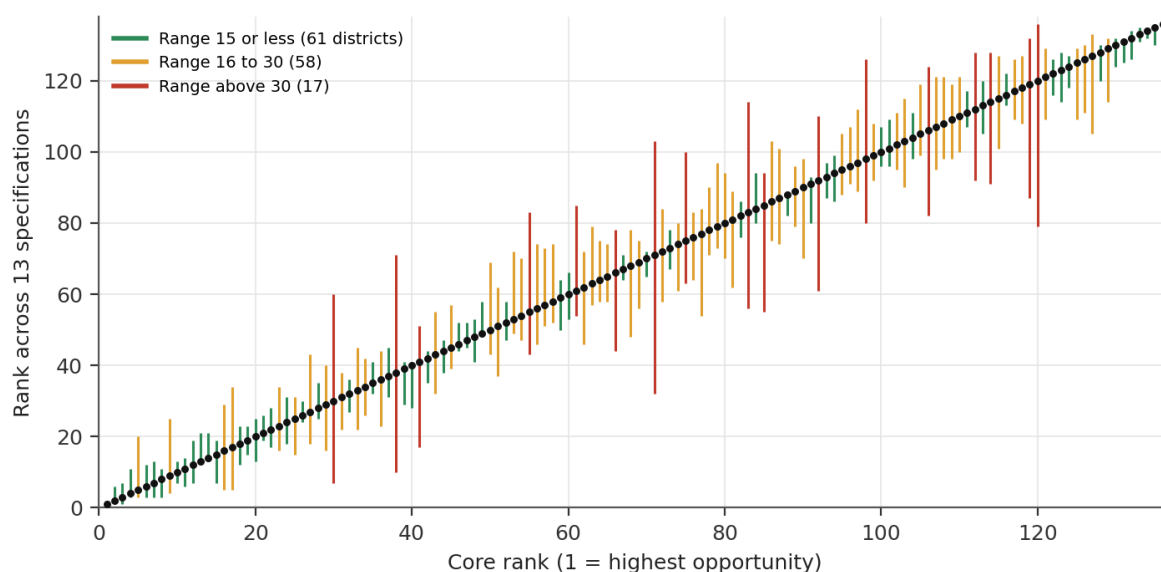


Figure 8.10. Core rank and rank range across 13 specifications. Source: authors' calculations.

8.8 Implications for targeting

The central policy question is where Pakistan should prioritise investment in youth education, skills and employment opportunity, and how progress should be measured. The census evidence supports four complementary targeting lenses. Each answers a different question and none replaces the others.

Table 8.5. Targeting lenses derived from the district evidence

Lens	Question	Evidence in the data	Implication for planners
Intensity	Where is disadvantage deepest?	27 Band 5 districts: 13 in Balochistan, 12 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2 in Sindh (Thatta, Sujawal). 10.6% of illiterate youth.	Candidates for foundational education and school completion support, with delivery capacity assessed first
Scale	Where are the most young people affected?	Largest illiterate counts in Rahim Yar Khan, Muzaffargarh, Peshawar, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan; largest inactive counts in Lahore, Faisalabad, Peshawar	Candidates for large volume skills and employment services; rate alone understates need
Gender	Where is the female gap widest?	74 districts with female literacy under 50%; 10 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa districts with female inactivity of 75% or more	Programme design that tracks access, completion and placement separately for young women
Evidence quality	Where is the ranking itself uncertain?	17 districts with rank range above 30	Collect local data before allocating funds by rank in these districts

Source: authors' calculations from Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023).

These findings are relevant to national priorities. The World Bank Group states that its Country Partnership Framework for Pakistan for fiscal years 2026 to 2035 is aligned with Uraan Pakistan, the government's National Economic Transformation Plan (World Bank 2025). The Labour Force Survey reports youth NEET as the measure for Sustainable Development Goal indicator 8.6.1 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025). The DYOI complements that indicator by showing the geography beneath provincial averages, and the Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor continues to track the NEET series itself. No government body has adopted the DYOI, and nothing in this chapter should be read as an official allocation formula.

The district patterns suggest questions for programme design, not conclusions about what works. Where literacy and enrolment are low and young women are most affected, the evidence points to foundational learning, secondary school completion and safe access to education as first order questions. Where literacy is moderate but few young people are in market work, as in several Khyber Pakhtunkhwa districts, the

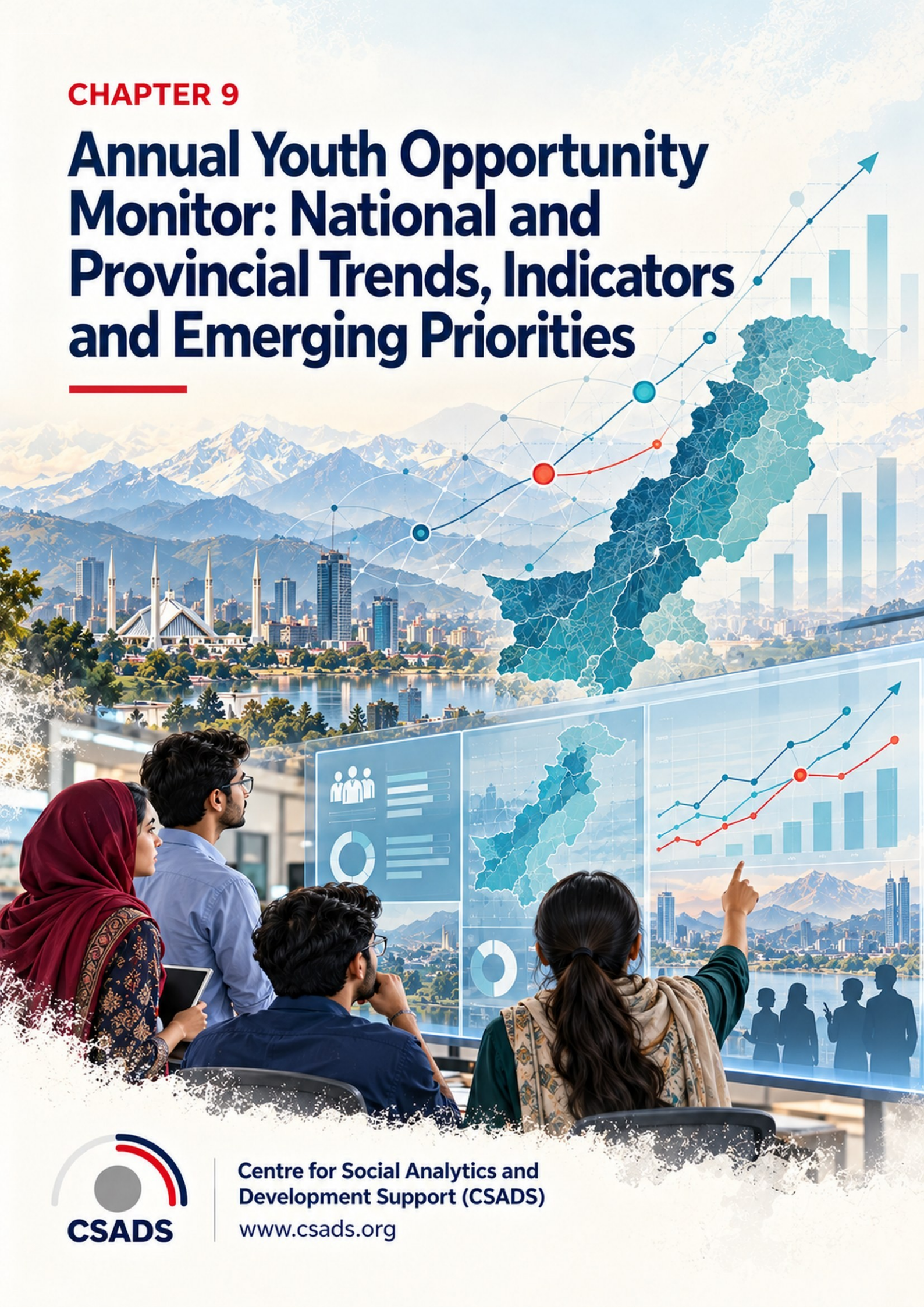
question shifts to local employment pathways and to why so many young women are recorded outside study and work. Programme effects in either setting would need to be established through evaluation. Progress should be measured by repeating the same district indicators when new comparable data arrive, and by reporting rates, counts and sex gaps together.

8.9 Limits of the analysis

Three limits apply. First, the maps use the most recent openly licensed district boundaries, which represent 2019 geography. Twenty five Census 2023 districts lie inside a 2019 unit that has since been divided, such as the seven Karachi districts, the three Kohistan districts, and Chiniot within Jhang. These units are mapped with values recomputed from the summed census counts of the districts they contain, so the maps show the combined value while the tables and rankings use each Census 2023 district separately. Second, the results are cross sectional observations for 2023. They do not show change since the census, and the Labour Force Survey provincial figures for 2024 to 2025 cannot be placed on the district ranking. Third, the economic domain depends on the interpretation of the Not L.F & Stud label, which PBS has not documented in the published tables. The education domain stands without that assumption, and its ranking is provided separately in the accompanying workbook.

CHAPTER 9

Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor: National and Provincial Trends, Indicators and Emerging Priorities



KEY MESSAGES

- 1 The Monitor tracks youth NEET, unemployment, participation and employment each year, with every value labelled by its observation period.
- 2 In 2024 to 2025, 44.4 per cent of people aged 15 to 24 were in the labour force and 38.7 per cent were employed.
- 3 Rural young women are the most disconnected group: their NEET rate is 47.0 per cent, against 42.9 per cent in urban areas.

9.1 Why an annual monitor is needed

Pakistan's youth development picture changes faster than its district census and household survey baselines. Employment and earnings conditions respond to economic activity, while education enrolment, training provision, technology access and public programmes move according to different reporting calendars. A credible annual publication must therefore connect the newest available observations without assigning them the same reference year or suggesting that every youth outcome has been remeasured annually.

Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor

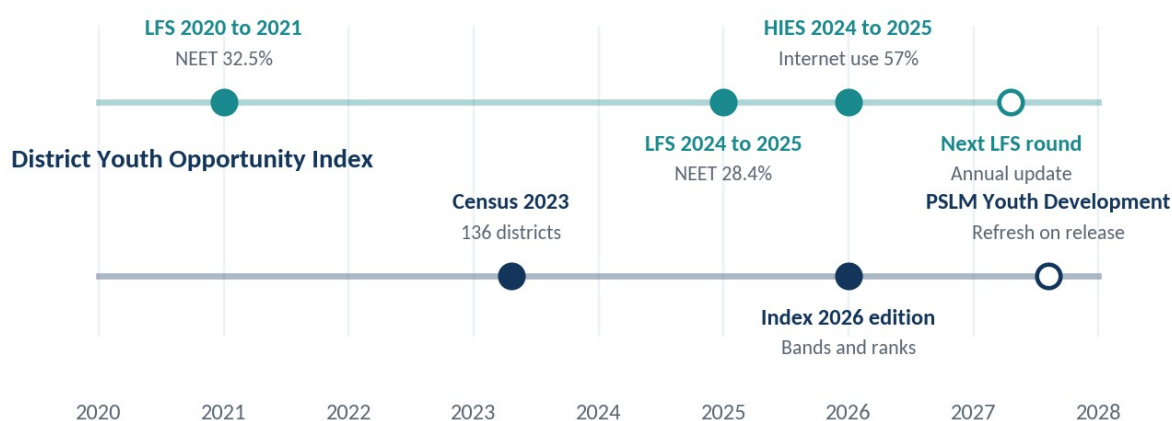


Figure 9.1. How the Monitor and the district index fit together Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023, 2025, 2026a, 2026b). Hollow markers show expected future releases; no release dates are assumed.

The Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor (AYOM) is the recurring national and provincial companion to the District Youth Opportunity Index (DYOI). Its purpose is to describe measurable changes in access to education, work, skills and digital opportunity, identify population groups facing persistent exclusion, and record gaps in the evidence available for policy decisions. The 2023 census anchors district level comparisons; this chapter principally draws on the Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2024 to 2025, the Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024 to 2025, Pakistan Education Statistics 2023 to 2024 and the Pakistan Economic Survey 2025 to 2026 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025, 2026a; Pakistan Institute of Education 2025; Finance Division 2026).

The principal monitored age band for current labour market outcomes is 15 to 24, consistent with the published international youth NEET indicator. The wider report also covers people aged 15 to 29, where

supporting data permit. Every figure below retains the population, observation period and geographic coverage of its source.

9.2 Youth disconnection

The LFS 2024 to 2025 estimates that 28.4% of people aged 15 to 24 were neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET). The corresponding rate was 13.0% for young men and 45.4% for young women, a gap of 32.4 percentage points. These figures point to a broader problem than open unemployment: many young people outside productive work are also outside education and training, including those who are not actively looking for work (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025, indicator 8.6.1).

National averages mask pronounced provincial differences. Balochistan had the highest published provincial NEET rate, 36.0%, followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 32.7%, Sindh at 32.0% and Punjab at 24.8%. The difference between the highest and lowest rates is 11.2 percentage points. These are survey estimates for provincial populations, not district specific measurements.

Geography	All youth	Young men	Young women	Female to male gap
Pakistan	28.4%	13.0%	45.4%	32.4 pp
Punjab	24.8%	12.6%	37.6%	25.0 pp
Sindh	32.0%	14.7%	51.6%	36.9 pp
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	32.7%	10.5%	57.6%	47.1 pp
Balochistan	36.0%	17.9%	60.5%	42.6 pp

Table 9.1. Percentage of young people aged 15 to 24 neither in employment nor in education or training, by sex and province, 2024 to 2025. Source: PBS Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025, indicator 8.6.1; gaps calculated from published percentages.

The provincial gender differences are particularly consequential. The NEET rate among young women was 60.5% in Balochistan, 57.6% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 51.6% in Sindh and 37.6% in Punjab. These values describe economic and educational disconnection, not the reasons for it. Explanations involving social norms, unpaid care, local job access or mobility require additional evidence and careful contextual research.

9.3 Rural and urban patterns

At national level, the rural NEET rate was 28.7%, close to the urban rate of 28.0%. This apparently modest geographic difference conceals much sharper differences by sex. Rural young women had a NEET rate of 47.0%, compared with 42.9% in urban areas; young men showed the reverse pattern at 12.0% rural and 14.5% urban (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025).

Table 9.2. NEET rates by sex and place of residence, Pakistan 2024 to 2025. Plus/minus values indicate rural rate less urban rate. Source: PBS LFS 2024 to 2025, indicator 8.6.1.

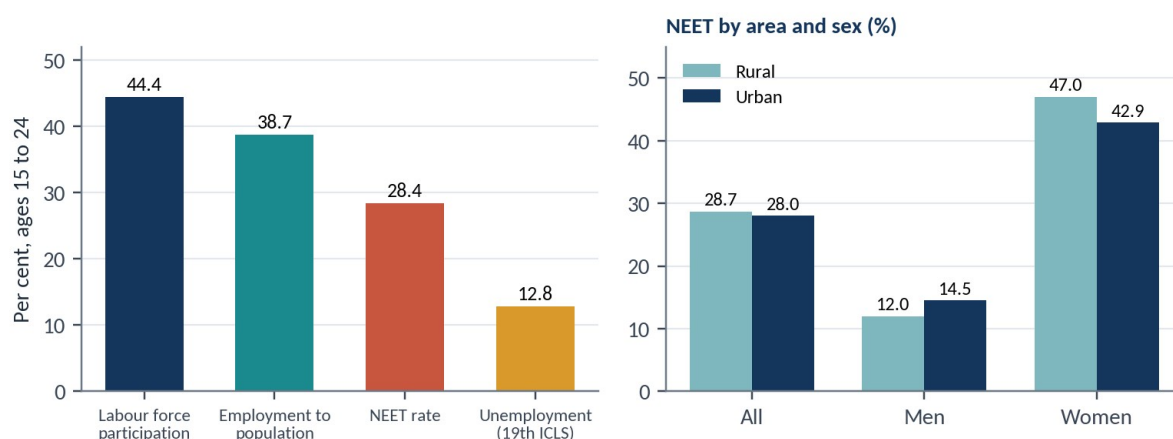


Figure 9.2. Core youth labour indicators and NEET by area and sex, ages 15 to 24, 2024 to 2025 Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2025), Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025, Tables 8.7 and 8.8. Unemployment uses the 19th ICLS standard.

The most useful interpretation is therefore an interaction between geography and gender, rather than a single rural to urban divide. Provincial rural to urban patterns also differ: Balochistan's rural NEET rate was 38.1% against 31.5% urban, while Punjab recorded 23.5% rural and 26.6% urban. Such contrasts warrant locally grounded investigation rather than a uniform geographic prescription.

9.4 Unemployment versus exclusion

The LFS estimates a youth (15 to 24) labour force of 20.6 million in 2024 to 2025, including 17.9 million employed and 2.6 million unemployed, on figures rounded in the published table. The youth unemployment rate under the 19th ICLS standard was 12.8%, while the employment to population ratio was 38.7% and labour force participation rate 44.4% (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025, Table 8.7). The unemployment rate uses the labour force as its denominator; the employment to population ratio and NEET rate refer to the relevant youth population. They must not be used interchangeably.

Indicator	2024 to 2025 value	Definition / denominator
Youth unemployment rate (19th ICLS)	12.8%	Unemployed youth as share of youth labour force
Youth employment to population ratio	38.7%	Employed youth as share of youth population
Youth labour force participation rate	44.4%	Employed plus unemployed youth as share of youth population
Youth NEET rate	28.4%	Neither employed nor in education/training as share of youth population

Table 9.3. Complementary labour and economic exclusion indicators, age 15 to 24. Source: PBS LFS 2024 to 2025, Tables 8.7 and SDG indicator 8.6.1.

The four rates answer different questions. A youth population can experience modest unemployment alongside substantial NEET prevalence if large numbers are outside the labour force and outside education. Equally, employment alone reveals little about earnings, hours or quality of work. The Monitor will add a distinct employment quality module when directly comparable age specific results become available.

9.5 Education participation

Pakistan Education Statistics 2023 to 2024 reports enrolment, institutions and teachers across the education system (Pakistan Institute of Education 2025). These are system measures, not counts of enrolled youth aged 15 to 24 or 15 to 29.03% increase (Pakistan Institute of Education 2025). The figure covers the education

system across ages; it is not a count of enrolled youth aged 15 to 24 or 15 to 29. Its annual value is in showing system capacity and enrolment trends, which can be linked analytically to, but should remain distinct from, young people's actual education to work transitions.

Recent HIES 2024 to 2025 reporting also identifies 28% of children aged 5 to 16 as out of school; that result concerns school age children, not the youth population used for NEET statistics (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2026a). The Monitor communicates the distinction because foundational educational exclusion today may shape later youth outcomes, but it is a leading contextual condition rather than an observed youth labour market result.

The priority for a genuine youth education series is to extract age specific enrolment, attainment and discontinuation indicators from representative surveys when released. Administrative measures can add institutional context, but they should not be used as population participation rates without compatible numerators and denominators.

9.6 Skills and digital participation

National surveys and administrative systems provide partial evidence on the relationship between training and economic opportunity. The LFS 2024 to 2025 includes technical and vocational training measures, but the reported 11.0% ever trained figure relates to the population aged 10 and above. It is relevant context and cannot be labelled the current youth training rate. Training enrolment and graduation counts from NAVTTC or provincial authorities similarly measure programme activity; claims about jobs created or earnings improved require validated tracer or outcome evidence (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025; Finance Division 2026).

HIES 2024 to 2025 reports internet use by 57% of the eligible surveyed population and internet access in approximately 70% of households, alongside substantial geographic and gender differences (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2026a). Neither headline figure represents digital skill proficiency among youth. The Monitor therefore keeps three concepts separate:

This distinction matters for the emerging AI and platform economy. Increased connectivity can widen access to information, applications and training, but there is insufficient basis to infer a corresponding increase in decent employment from connectivity alone. Assessing whether young people complete practical digital tasks, apply for opportunities and secure income generating work requires a dedicated youth module in a PBS survey.

9.7 Dashboard and update rules

28.4% Youth NEET rate, ages 15 to 24 LFS 2024 to 2025	45.4% Female youth NEET rate LFS 2024 to 2025	12.8% Youth unemployment, 19th ICLS LFS 2024 to 2025	44.4% Youth labour force participation LFS 2024 to 2025
11.0% Ever received technical or vocational training, age 10+ LFS 2024 to 2025	70% Households with internet access HIES 2024 to 2025	57% Individuals using the internet, age 10+ HIES 2024 to 2025	28% Children aged 5 to 16 out of school HIES 2024 to 2025

Figure 9.3. Monitor dashboard: the latest observed value of each core indicator and its observation period. A value changes only when a new comparable survey round is released. Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2025, 2026a).

The Monitor requires a permanent indicator registry, with one dated observation per source edition and geography. It displays the latest value, prior comparable value where valid, year of observation, source, survey universe, geographic level and technical caveat. Data are eligible for trend claims only when definitions, sampling and calculation procedures are comparable or appropriately harmonised.

Domain / headline metric	Latest verified source	Reporting level	Release rule
NEET, ages 15 to 24	LFS 2024 to 2025	National, provinces, rural to urban	Update on comparable LFS release
Youth unemployment / LFPR / EPR	LFS 2024 to 2025	National, provinces where published	Update on comparable LFS release
Educational system enrolment	PIE 2023 to 2024	National; provincial if verified	Update on next PIE statistical release
Youth skills/training	LFS; verified administrative reports	Level depends on indicator	Publish outcomes separately from activity counts
Internet use/access	HIES 2024 to 2025	National, provinces where published	Update on new household survey
District opportunity index	Census 2023 (calculated); new district survey awaited	District	Refresh only after district level validation

Table 9.4. Proposed core annual dashboard. Reference years differ by domain; a new report date does not change an indicator's observation year.

Each annual edition preserves original estimates in an accessible statistical archive and notes revised source editions when they occur. The Monitor reports an explicit “no new observation” status where appropriate. It also distinguishes estimated values from administrative counts and publishes uncertainty intervals where design information and source tables permit.

9.8 Priority findings and policy questions

Three themes stand out from the available statistics. First, almost three in ten young people aged 15 to 24 were outside both work and education/training in 2024 to 2025. Second, exclusion disproportionately affected young women in every province, especially Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. Third, province level averages hide distinct rural and urban gender patterns. These are descriptive findings that justify policy attention; they do not identify the causes of exclusion or establish a causal effect of any programme.

The most useful follow up questions concern transitions. How many young people leave education without subsequently entering work? Which groups have access to training but remain economically disconnected? What kinds of jobs are available, and how durable and adequately paid are they? Which provincial or local interventions are linked to observable improvements? Future editions of the Monitor will examine these questions through source matched cohorts, comparable statistical series and programme specific evaluations, as evidence permits.

For programme planners, the national NEET rate signals scale; provincial and sex specific indicators identify differentiated needs; and the District Youth Opportunity Index contributes a slower moving geography of underlying disadvantage. Planners allocating resources should use all three levels of evidence, together with local service capacity, projected demand and implementation feasibility.

9.9 Continuity and integrity

The Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor is released on a fixed annual schedule with a stable dashboard and a short, data led narrative. At each release, the latest official observation for every indicator is checked. Where no update exists, the previous value is carried forward with its original date and an explicit status label, never presented as newly measured. Published revisions are traceable to source version changes and calculation logs.

The Monitor and the District Youth Opportunity Index remain complementary products. The Monitor reports the 2024 to 2025 provincial NEET series alongside the 2023 district census baseline but does not use the newer provincial rates to re estimate district scores without an independently validated small area model and explicit uncertainty reporting. That division protects both products from false temporal or geographic precision.

The statistical baseline establishes a clear headline: Pakistan's youth exclusion challenge is both substantial and gendered, with material differences across provinces. The value of the annual series is ultimately judged by whether it can reproduce these indicators accurately, identify genuine changes as new data arrive and present them in a form useful for public decisions.

CHAPTER 10

Youth Opportunity, Economic Exclusion and Policy Implications



Centre for Social Analytics and
Development Support (CSADS)
www.csads.org

KEY MESSAGES

- 1** Geographic targeting should combine four lenses: intensity, scale, gender and the reliability of district evidence.
- 2** Training programmes should be judged on placement, retention and earnings rather than enrolment volumes.
- 3** Digital access is a starting point for opportunity, not an employment outcome.

10.1 From evidence to policy decisions

The preceding chapters establish a consistent pattern: Pakistan's youth challenge extends beyond open unemployment. Educational participation, foundational learning, access to technical training, opportunities to use digital tools and the ability to enter paid work are interconnected, but available statistics describe different parts of this pathway at different points in time. Public policy becomes more effective when these indicators are interpreted together without treating them as interchangeable measures of opportunity.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2024 to 2025 reported that 28.4% of young people aged 15 to 24 were neither employed nor in education or training (NEET); the rate was 45.4% among young women and 13.0% among young men, a difference of 32.4 percentage points (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025). The youth unemployment rate of 12.8% (19th ICLS standard) in the same survey uses the youth labour force as its denominator and captures a narrower condition. Taken together, these measures indicate that interventions limited to registered jobseekers would leave a substantial part of the economically disconnected youth population outside their reach.

The evidence also calls for geographic differentiation. In 2024 to 2025, the provincial NEET rates for ages 15 to 24 were 24.8% in Punjab, 32.0% in Sindh, 32.7% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 36.0% in Balochistan (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025). These are province representative survey results; they cannot be used as district unemployment or NEET estimates. The 2023 census supplies a separate, slower moving district baseline for educational and selected economic characteristics (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023).

10.2 Five policy priorities

The priority framework below distinguishes an observed disadvantage from the intervention that might address it. A high NEET rate signals disconnection but does not, by itself, reveal whether the binding constraints are local employment demand, qualifications, mobility, unpaid care, household resources, disability related accessibility or another factor. The five priorities below therefore identify actionable areas and the additional evidence required for targeting.

Policy priority	Observed evidence / concern	Decision implied	Validation needed
1. Reconnect excluded youth	NEET: 28.4% nationally, ages 15 to 24 (2024 to 2025)	Coordinate outreach, education re entry, skills and employment services	Reasons for inactivity; youth profiles; local demand
2. Narrow gender gaps	Female NEET: 45.4% against 13.0% male	Make access, safety, care and job placement measurable programme dimensions	Locally grounded barriers and programme uptake
3. Align training with labour demand	Training participation and job outcomes are different measures	Fund training with documented placement, retention and earnings follow up	Comparable tracer data and employer evidence
4. Address geographic inequity	Provincial NEET varies by 11.2 percentage points	Target support through validated need and delivery capacity criteria	Comparable district indicators, service and labour demand
5. Convert digital access into opportunity	HIES reports 57% internet use in its relevant population; not a youth skills measure	Measure practical competencies and income generating outcomes	Youth specific skills and employment evidence

Table 10.1. Evidence to decision matrix. Figures refer to their stated source populations and reference periods. Sources: PBS LFS 2024 to 2025; PBS HIES 2024 to 2025; PBS Census 2023.

10.3 Integrated transition services

Young people outside both work and education or training are unlikely to be reached by a single pathway. Those who left school early may need foundational learning and flexible re entry; trained jobseekers may need employer connections or placement support; young people doing unpaid household work may need accessible services compatible with care responsibilities. Provincial employment and skills departments should first separate these groups using a short, standardised participant assessment and record the reason for each referral.

Provincial employment and skills institutions could pilot integrated transition services through existing education, technical training, employment and community platforms. The service offer would include assessment of educational qualifications and practical skills, career information, appropriate bridging or training, referrals to employers and follow up after placement. It should include self employment only where enterprise feasibility and market demand are demonstrated. Such approaches would require local evaluation; the national NEET statistics alone cannot establish their effectiveness.

The strongest performance measures are transitions and sustained outcomes: number of previously disconnected youth reached; share completing a defined education or training pathway; share entering paid employment or viable self employment; employment retention at six and twelve months; and earnings where ethically and reliably measurable. Implementing agencies should report participation, certification and placement as separate stages. Programme level tracer studies already form part of NAVTTC's monitoring approach, providing an institutional basis for standardised outcome reporting (NAVTTC 2026).

10.4 Young women's economic opportunity

The scale of the gender gap is the clearest consistent signal in the current youth labour evidence. In the LFS 2024 to 2025, the provincial female NEET rates ranged from 37.6% in Punjab to 60.5% in Balochistan, with 51.6% in Sindh and 57.6% in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025). The figures do not imply that young women in these provinces face a single common barrier; however, they establish a strong case for diagnosing barriers before programme design.

Government and implementing organisations should distinguish demand side constraints, such as jobs available within feasible commuting distance, from participation constraints, including transport, safety, accessible facilities, care responsibilities and information. Training authorities should evaluate provision on whether it leads to suitable jobs or sustainable income for women, not solely on the number of women enrolled. Their monitoring should cover application, selection, attendance, completion, placement and retention, disaggregated by sex and relevant age groups.

District youth opportunity profiles can assist geographic prioritisation where census based youth literacy and other indicators are comparable. Yet the district index is not a direct measure of women's employment opportunities, because its contributing variables concern education and labour status. Its gender gap results identify exactly which outcomes are measured.

10.5 Measuring skills results

The distinction between training provision and economic outcomes is central. The LFS 2024 to 2025 finding that 11.0% of people aged 10 and above had ever received technical or vocational training is a population wide measure and cannot serve as a current youth training rate. Administrative enrolment or certificate counts from training systems likewise show activity, while employment outcomes require follow up with trainees (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025; Finance Division 2026).

A practical policy response is to introduce a shared minimum tracer protocol across participating vocational and digital skills programmes. This would standardise programme cohort definitions, pre training employment status, course completion, employment or self employment at fixed intervals, occupation, earnings bands, work hours and the relevance of training to the work secured. Results should show nonresponse and attrition rates, and distinguish verified observations from self reports. Comparisons between providers should account for differences in participant background and local labour markets.

NAVTTTC reports technology training cohorts with certification and tracer study outcomes on its institutional website, demonstrating that programme level monitoring is operationally possible. These cohort specific rates should not be extrapolated to all TVET trainees or interpreted as causal training impacts without an appropriate evaluation design (NAVTTTC 2026). A national series can add value by publishing a comparable, documented outcome framework rather than combining incompatible success rates.

10.6 Digital access is a starting point

PBS HIES 2024 to 2025 reports internet use of 57% among the relevant surveyed population and internet access in 70% of households (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2026a). These are useful indicators of the environment in which young people seek opportunities, but they do not measure youth specific digital literacy, employability, AI readiness or online earnings.

The policy priority is to examine a practical progression: access to connectivity; ability to undertake common tasks; use of technology for education, applications and enterprise; and a verified economic or educational result. PBS could include short task based assessments in a national youth digital module, alongside questions on actual use. Provincial youth and information technology departments could pilot whether support for digital applications and career information increases completed applications and placements, rather than relying on device distribution or course attendance as proxies for opportunity.

In the Annual Monitor, digital access and capability are separate dashboard dimensions. District digital rankings are withheld until youth specific, representative indicators can be verified, because importing household connectivity rates into the District Youth Opportunity Index could obscure both age and household level differences.

10.7 Geographic targeting

District rankings can make disparities visible, but decisions about resource allocation require more than league table positions. A high exclusion rate signals intensity, while the estimated number of affected young people signals scale. A district with a smaller population but greater relative disadvantage may need a different response from a populous district with a moderate disadvantage rate. This report therefore shows both rate and count beside every district score.

The District Youth Opportunity Index (DYOI) uses validated census based indicators with a fixed population definition, explicit boundary version, published weighting rules and robustness checks. Provincial LFS 2024 to 2025 findings belong to the companion Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor and should not be mechanically projected onto districts. The national index has now been calculated for 136 districts from the validated census extraction, and its ranks should be read with their bands and rank ranges (Chapters 7 and 8).

Geographic decision question	Proposed measure	Policy use	Interpretation safeguard
Where is disadvantage most intense?	District rate for validated education/exclusion indicator	Prioritise high incidence areas	Source year and age denominator shown
Where are most youth affected?	Eligible youth population × validated rate	Size service capacity	Counts labelled observed or calculated
Where are gender gaps largest?	Female to male percentage point difference	Focus inclusion diagnostics	Compare same age group and definition
Where are interventions deliverable?	Local training/employer/service capacity	Select viable pilot locations	Separate administrative capacity from need
Where are conditions changing?	Repeated comparable observations	Monitor progress over time	No annual district score changes without new evidence

Table 10.2. District targeting framework for programme and financing decisions.

The forthcoming district level PSLM 2026 to 2027 youth module may materially strengthen the evidence available to the index. Its usefulness for trend analysis depends on publication, access to relevant estimates or microdata, representative geographic coverage and harmonisation with the 2023 census and historical PSLM definitions. Until then, district trend claims should be restricted to indicators with verified comparable rounds.

10.8 A results framework

Pakistan's youth opportunity agenda connects to national education, employment and productivity priorities. The World Bank Group Country Partnership Framework for FY2026 to 2035 emphasises human capital, stronger private investment, inclusive development and measurable outcomes, and explicitly aligns with Uraan Pakistan (World Bank 2025). This alignment supports the relevance of youth opportunity evidence, though it neither establishes a specific programme impact nor implies financing for any specific programme.

Government agencies and development partners can apply a results framework at three levels. At the population level, track youth NEET, employment, education attainment and gender differences from representative sources. At the service system level, report training places, completion and availability of referral or placement mechanisms, with clear denominators. At the participant level, measure post programme employment, retention, earnings and other results through validated monitoring and evaluation. Each level answers a different question and should remain distinct in published scorecards.

Responsible actor / potential user	Evidence needed for decisions	Recommended response
Federal policy and statistical institutions	Comparable national/provincial trends and district baselines	Maintain definitions, release calendars and public tabulations
Provincial P&D, education, labour and TEVTA bodies	District need, transition pathways and local demand	Target differentiated pilots and publish outcomes
Training providers and employers	Course to occupation alignment and sustained placements	Implement comparable graduate tracer follow up
UN agencies and development partners	Equity, programme coverage, cost and credible outcomes	Commission validation and evaluations where decision relevant
Researchers and media	Accessible observed rates, counts, trends and limitations	Use reproducible datasets and dated district scorecards

Table 10.3. Institutional uses of a common youth evidence system. Institutions listed indicate functional relevance, not confirmed programme commitments.

10.9 Priority actions and milestones

Federal and provincial institutions should begin by improving how youth opportunity is measured and used. Within the first year, participating institutions can agree on a small set of compatible youth indicators, publish disaggregated baseline dashboards and pilot a common tracer instrument for selected training cohorts. In subsequent periods, programme evidence can support sharper diagnosis of barriers and carefully designed evaluations of interventions. The emphasis should remain on the quality of observed transitions and outcomes.

Time horizon	Priority action	Verification milestone
0 to 6 months	Publish national/provincial youth indicator registry; audit district index data	Definitions, source tables, dates and scripts independently reviewed
6 to 12 months	Launch pilots for integrated youth transition tracking and graduate tracing	Documented cohorts, follow up rate and baseline outcomes
12 to 24 months	Apply results to selected provincial/district programme targeting	Public criteria for locations, population and service capacity
24+ months	Assess trends and selected programme effects with suitable designs	Comparable repeated measures and independently reviewed evaluation findings

Table 10.4. Proposed implementation milestones. Timing is illustrative and depends on institutional access, financing and administrative capacity.

10.10 Implications for the annual series

For the Pakistan Youth Opportunity and Exclusion Report, the policy value rests in delivering understandable numbers while preserving statistical meaning. The District Youth Opportunity Index makes spatial disparities visible where valid district evidence exists. The Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor provides current national and provincial observations, retains the original year of each measure and identifies genuine changes only when comparable data support them.

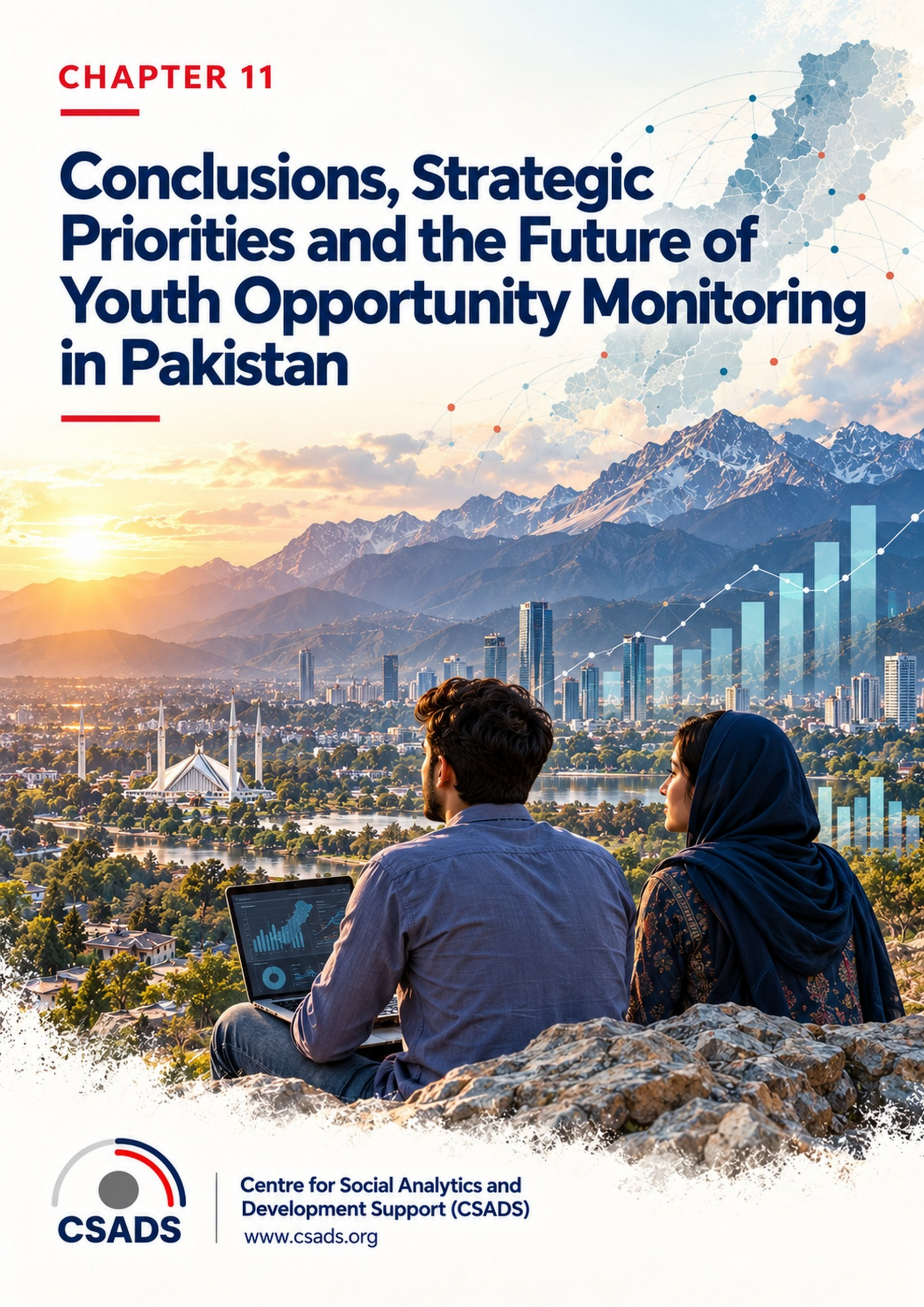
Editorial discipline is essential. Composite scores are published with their component percentages and underlying population counts. Headline changes are checked for survey redesign, revised sources and

uncertainty. Findings about persistent association are not expressed as causal effects, and administrative activity is not represented as improved youth wellbeing or employment without outcome evidence.

The available evidence already supports a substantive policy conclusion: youth economic disconnection is significant, systematically gendered and geographically uneven. What remains to be established through finer data and evaluation is which combinations of opportunity, access and employment interventions are most effective for particular groups and places. A credible annual publication can help bridge that gap by repeatedly asking the same questions, using transparent measures and making the results useful to those responsible for public decisions.

CHAPTER 11

Conclusions, Strategic Priorities and the Future of Youth Opportunity Monitoring in Pakistan



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Development Support (CSADS)
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KEY MESSAGES

- 1** Youth exclusion in Pakistan is substantial, gendered and geographically uneven.
- 2** The district index and the annual monitor answer different questions and work best as separate, linked products.
- 3** The next index update depends on the release of comparable district data, expected from the PSLM Youth Development module.

11.1 A national challenge with distinct local patterns

Pakistan's youth opportunity challenge is shaped by the intersection of education, access to skills, economic participation and the conditions under which young people can secure productive livelihoods. The preceding chapters show why any single aggregate statistic is an incomplete guide to policy. Young people enrolled in education, those seeking work, those occupied with unpaid responsibilities and those engaged in insecure employment face different constraints and require different responses.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2024 to 2025 places the share of people aged 15 to 24 neither in employment nor education or training (NEET) at approximately 28.4%, with 45.4% among young women. Provincial variation is considerable: the survey's displayed totals range from 24.8% in Punjab to 36.0% in Balochistan (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2025). These results establish the scale and structure of economic disconnection, but do not explain every underlying cause or indicate the effectiveness of any individual programme.

Census 2023 district tables make it possible to examine geographic variation in selected education and economic classifications (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023). Their observations, however, refer to 2023. Sound policy use therefore calls for two connected products: an index based on genuinely comparable district observations and an annual monitor that presents newer information at the geographic level it supports.

11.2 Principal conclusions

Five conclusions emerge across the report. First, opportunity is multidimensional: a literacy rate, a training certificate or internet access alone conveys little about the likelihood of entering stable work. Second, differences between young women and young men are sufficiently large to justify gender specific diagnostics, while programme responses should be tailored to locally demonstrated constraints. Third, educational and labour outcomes need to be examined jointly, without assuming that their association is causal.

Fourth, the distinction between population rates and absolute numbers is central to geographic targeting. A relatively small district may exhibit severe exclusion as a percentage, while a larger district may account for substantially more affected young people. Fifth, the evidence ecosystem itself needs investment: administrative counts often measure inputs and outputs, whereas reliable measures of transitions into employment, job retention and earnings require more systematic follow up.

Evidence signal	Interpretation	Decision implication
High female youth NEET	Large observed gender disparity; mechanisms vary	Design and evaluate differentiated access and transition pathways
Variation across provinces and districts	Geographic patterns differ by indicator and reference year	Use both rate and affected population to prioritise programmes
Training programme completions	Delivery output, not proof of employment impact	Require standardised tracer results and validation
Connectivity and digital access	Enabling conditions, not demonstrated job outcomes	Track practical skills, job use and income outcomes separately

Table 11.1. Synthesis of policy relevant evidence and the decisions it can inform. Sources: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023, 2025, 2026a); NAVTTC institutional documentation.

11.3 Strategic priorities

Federal and provincial youth, education and labour departments should put transitions and sustained outcomes at the centre of youth policy. Education departments, skills agencies and employment services could develop shared referral and follow up mechanisms for young people at risk of prolonged economic disconnection. An effective service pathway might connect foundational learning, short occupational training, employer engagement, placement assistance and subsequent follow up, with success measured in actual transitions.

Programme designers should base interventions for young women on barriers observed locally, including safe mobility, time demands, access to suitable work, digital resources and care responsibilities, rather than inferring them from the aggregate female NEET rate alone. Provincial and district profiles can guide which questions deserve investigation first, while programme evaluations establish what works in a particular context.

Training authorities and their implementing partners should move towards a minimum common outcomes dataset: enrolment, participation, completion, competency assessment where appropriate, employment at specified follow up intervals, job retention, earnings and the quality of employment. Outcome statistics should retain programme identifiers and eligibility definitions so comparisons reflect like for like groups. This approach is consistent with a broader policy emphasis on human capital and productive inclusion (World Bank 2025).

11.4 The district index as a public good

The District Youth Opportunity Index (DYOI) is a transparent statistical framework for interpreting comparable district evidence, not a mechanism for producing annual league tables on a fixed calendar. Its initial purpose is to provide a 2023 district baseline from the Population and Housing Census, and this baseline has now been validated and calculated for 136 districts (Chapters 7 and 8).

The first edition uses four measures: youth literacy, current enrolment, the inactive non student share and market employment, with gender disparity reported separately. Normalisation, weights and thirteen robustness specifications are published with the results, and each district scorecard displays its constituent rates, population counts and observation year.

The 2026 to 2027 district level PSLM youth module offers an important possible refresh of youth related evidence for ages 15 to 29; its results will enter the index only after publication, access, questionnaire level review and a documented comparability assessment (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2026b). A series that

changes definitions or age bands requires recalculation of historical estimates where possible, or a clearly identified series break.

11.5 Continuity of the annual monitor

The Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor (AYOM) is published every year, even when the district index cannot be recalculated. Its function is to organise the latest valid information on youth employment, educational participation, skills, digital activity and programme outputs, distinguishing each measure by observation period, source population and geographic coverage.

A national or provincial LFS result is never allocated to districts as an observed district outcome. Similarly, annual TVET enrolment statistics should not be interpreted as evidence of increased job readiness or employment. These distinctions allow a timely monitoring publication to remain credible as data availability changes.

Product	Update trigger	Geographic claim	Minimum release condition
District Youth Opportunity Index	New comparable district level census or survey evidence	Districts satisfying a fixed coverage rule	Validated data, method and uncertainty review
Annual Youth Opportunity Monitor	Scheduled annual publication with latest available observations	National/provincial; district only when directly supported	Source vintage, definitions and verification recorded
Special topic / programme module	New policy question and suitable evidence	As supported by study design	Separate methods and outcome interpretation

Table 11.2. Proposed publication architecture and quality gates.

11.6 Data priorities and partnerships

The most valuable future improvement is a district level research database with stable district codes, boundaries and age definitions, linked to a source register that records the original table, reference year, publication date and extraction code. Future editions will seek access to the complete census district tables, the PSLM youth module when released, provincial education management information systems and suitably documented skills programme outcomes.

Technical collaboration with PBS, the Pakistan Institute of Education, provincial education and labour institutions, NAVTTC and universities could improve definition harmonisation, interpretation and peer review. Conversations with UN and development partners should focus on concrete information needs and ways of improving existing systems; references to their mandates or published strategies do not establish funding commitments.

11.7 Reproducibility and data governance

Every result in this report traces to an archived official file and to scripts that reproduce it. The district index was calculated twice by independent routes, and its workbook recomputes every score from the census counts with live formulas. Future editions will keep that standard: a locked dataset for each release, documented code, automated checks for anomalies, and manual verification of every headline figure.

Data on individuals require lawful access, minimisation, safe storage and aggregation that protects confidentiality. Where source systems use different age bands, sex categories or employment concepts, their values should remain separately labelled rather than combined. Transparency about uncertainty and the limits of available data strengthens credibility.

11.8 Priorities for future editions

Horizon	Priority	Evidence based milestone
Inaugural edition	Validate and publish census based district profiles; launch annual monitor	Documented source register; reproducible selected indicators; technical review
Second edition	Incorporate genuinely new survey and administrative observations	Updated national/provincial monitor and comparability log
When PSLM 2026 to 2027 results are released	Assess youth module variables for the index	Eligible district indicators and documented series bridges
Third and subsequent editions	Expand independently verified programme outcome evidence	Repeatable tracer module and adoption by policy users

Table 11.3. Proposed sequence of evidence building priorities; timing of future data releases is not assumed.

11.9 Credibility and sustainability

The public value of the series is reflected in whether its figures are used correctly by planners, researchers, journalists and programme managers. A fixed annual release schedule, accessible indicator definitions, source links, standard district profiles and a modest independent technical panel can support continuity. Where funding partners commission supplementary analyses, contracts should preserve editorial independence and public disclosure of methods.

Practical success measures include the share of headline statistics independently reproduced during review, completeness of metadata, consistency across editions, documented use in policy and programme decisions, and the quality of recurring partnerships. Media references are valuable when they accurately convey the measure, geography and reference year.

11.10 Final conclusion

Pakistan has sufficient official evidence to begin a distinctive, numbers led youth opportunity publication. The strongest near term opportunity is to organise valid district census indicators into an accessible baseline and combine this with an annual monitor of more recent national and provincial developments. The resulting series can become a practical reference for understanding which young people face restricted educational and economic opportunities, where the greatest disparities occur and how changes can be measured credibly over time.

Its long term contribution depends less on the complexity of a single index score than on disciplined measurement, geographic clarity, transparent methodology and continuity. A publication that reports a small number of reliable and memorable figures, while showing the detail behind them, has a realistic prospect of informing public debate and better targeted development decisions.

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Annexures



District Indicators

District	Population (thousands)	Education (0-24)	Labour Force (%)	Double Family	Digital Internet
1 Islamabad	1,000	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80
2 Rawalpindi	1,200	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
3 Lahore	1,500	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
4 Faisalabad	1,800	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65
5 Multan	2,000	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60
6 Peshawar	2,200	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55
7 Quetta	2,500	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
8 Karachi	2,800	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45
9 Hyderabad	3,000	0.40	0.40	0.40	0.40
10 Sindh	3,200	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35
11 Balochistan	3,500	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30
12 Gilgit-Baltistan	3,800	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
13 Azad Jammu & Kashmir	4,000	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20

eYouth Opportunity Index

District	Education	Skills	Employment	Digital Access	Inclusion
1 Islamabad	0.87	0.85	0.73	0.82	0.83
2 Rawalpindi	0.85	0.83	0.75	0.80	0.81
3 Lahore	0.83	0.81	0.77	0.78	0.79
4 Faisalabad	0.81	0.79	0.79	0.76	0.77
5 Multan	0.79	0.77	0.81	0.74	0.75
6 Peshawar	0.77	0.75	0.83	0.72	0.73
7 Quetta	0.75	0.73	0.85	0.70	0.71
8 Karachi	0.73	0.71	0.87	0.68	0.69
9 Hyderabad	0.71	0.69	0.89	0.66	0.67
10 Sindh	0.69	0.67	0.91	0.64	0.65
11 Balochistan	0.67	0.65	0.93	0.62	0.63
12 Gilgit-Baltistan	0.65	0.63	0.95	0.60	0.61
13 Azad Jammu & Kashmir	0.63	0.61	0.97	0.58	0.59

Education and Skills

District	Enrollment	Completion	Employment	Index (0-100)	Detached	Inclusions
1 Islamabad	0.87	0.85	0.73	0.82	0.83	0.83
2 Rawalpindi	0.85	0.83	0.75	0.80	0.81	0.81
3 Lahore	0.83	0.81	0.77	0.78	0.79	0.79
4 Faisalabad	0.81	0.79	0.79	0.76	0.77	0.77
5 Multan	0.79	0.77	0.81	0.74	0.75	0.75
6 Peshawar	0.77	0.75	0.83	0.72	0.73	0.73
7 Quetta	0.75	0.73	0.85	0.70	0.71	0.71
8 Karachi	0.73	0.71	0.87	0.68	0.69	0.69
9 Hyderabad	0.71	0.69	0.89	0.66	0.67	0.67
10 Sindh	0.69	0.67	0.91	0.64	0.65	0.65
11 Balochistan	0.67	0.65	0.93	0.62	0.63	0.63
12 Gilgit-Baltistan	0.65	0.63	0.95	0.60	0.61	0.61
13 Azad Jammu & Kashmir	0.63	0.61	0.97	0.58	0.59	0.59

Economic Opportunities

District	Enrollment	Completion	Employment	Index (0-100)	Detached	Inclusions
1 Islamabad	0.87	0.85	0.73	0.82	0.83	0.83
2 Rawalpindi	0.85	0.83	0.75	0.80	0.81	0.81
3 Lahore	0.83	0.81	0.77	0.78	0.79	0.79
4 Faisalabad	0.81	0.79	0.79	0.76	0.77	0.77
5 Multan	0.79	0.77	0.81	0.74	0.75	0.75
6 Peshawar	0.77	0.75	0.83	0.72	0.73	0.73
7 Quetta	0.75	0.73	0.85	0.70	0.71	0.71
8 Karachi	0.73	0.71	0.87	0.68	0.69	0.69
9 Hyderabad	0.71	0.69	0.89	0.66	0.67	0.67
10 Sindh	0.69	0.67	0.91	0.64	0.65	0.65
11 Balochistan	0.67	0.65	0.93	0.62	0.63	0.63
12 Gilgit-Baltistan	0.65	0.63	0.95	0.60	0.61	0.61
13 Azad Jammu & Kashmir	0.63	0.61	0.97	0.58	0.59	0.59



Annex A. District Results, All 136 Districts

Indicators refer to young people aged 15 to 24 at the 2023 census. Band 1 is the highest opportunity quintile and Band 5 the lowest. Rank in province compares each district with others in the same province. The rank range shows the best and worst national rank across 13 alternative specifications. KP: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; ICT: Islamabad Capital Territory.

Rank	District	Province	Rank in province	Score	Band	Literacy %	Female literacy %	Enrolled %	Inactive non student %	Market work %	Rank range	Youth 15 to 24
1	Lahore	Punjab	1 of 36	91.2	1	85.8	86.2	38.9	32.6	26.9	1 to 2	2,438,029
2	Karachi Central	Sindh	1 of 30	89.9	1	85.5	86.5	37.9	34.7	28.2	1 to 6	692,655
3	Islamabad	ICT	1 of 1	87.4	1	88.7	86.9	45.2	33.3	18.8	1 to 7	422,609
4	Karachi East	Sindh	2 of 30	86.3	1	80.1	79.7	39.1	35.2	26.2	3 to 11	735,406
5	Karachi South	Sindh	3 of 30	83.8	1	84.2	84.6	35.4	38.4	27.4	3 to 20	432,500
6	Rawalpindi	Punjab	2 of 36	83.5	1	90.1	89.2	41.1	35.2	18.6	3 to 12	1,104,561
7	Sialkot	Punjab	3 of 36	82.6	1	88.9	90.5	36.2	33.9	19.9	3 to 13	870,774
8	Gujranwala	Punjab	4 of 36	81.8	1	86.6	88.3	32.4	34.4	22.8	3 to 11	1,126,252
9	Korangi	Sindh	4 of 30	81.5	1	82.8	83.5	32.5	39.4	28.2	4 to 25	581,660
10	Faisalabad	Punjab	5 of 36	80.1	1	82.8	81.9	32.0	35.2	23.3	7 to 13	1,727,702
11	Gujrat	Punjab	6 of 36	79.5	1	90.9	91.6	33.2	37.6	21.4	6 to 14	590,854
12	Abbottabad	KP	1 of 35	78.0	1	91.5	89.1	39.0	38.0	16.4	7 to 19	257,126
13	Kasur	Punjab	7 of 36	75.7	1	77.5	76.7	28.9	36.0	23.3	12 to 21	760,709
14	Sheikhupura	Punjab	8 of 36	75.3	1	79.9	80.5	28.7	37.1	23.2	13 to 21	777,994
15	Toba Tek Singh	Punjab	9 of 36	75.0	1	81.8	80.0	28.7	33.8	19.3	7 to 19	466,307
16	Narowal	Punjab	10 of 36	74.7	1	89.4	90.3	34.5	34.8	13.7	5 to 29	382,086
17	Upper Chitral	KP	2 of 35	74.2	1	94.7	91.4	42.1	37.3	8.9	5 to 34	38,022
18	Hafizabad	Punjab	11 of 36	72.3	1	80.1	78.6	29.8	35.3	17.8	12 to 23	249,517
19	Jhelum	Punjab	12 of 36	71.9	1	90.6	89.7	33.8	39.8	15.5	15 to 23	242,732
20	Mandi Bahauddin	Punjab	13 of 36	71.4	1	84.5	84.7	30.2	36.6	16.3	13 to 25	330,082
21	Nankana Sahib	Punjab	14 of 36	70.1	1	76.4	74.5	28.4	37.5	19.6	19 to 26	302,882
22	Sahiwal	Punjab	15 of 36	69.7	1	76.0	73.1	27.8	35.7	18.2	17 to 28	505,722
23	Haripur	KP	3 of 35	69.5	1	88.0	84.2	36.0	41.8	14.4	16 to 34	210,479
24	Chakwal	Punjab	16 of 36	68.6	1	89.7	87.6	31.9	41.1	14.8	18 to 31	286,670
25	Vehari	Punjab	17 of 36	68.3	1	71.0	67.0	24.2	34.5	19.6	15 to 31	613,260
26	Okara	Punjab	18 of 36	67.3	1	73.3	70.1	26.0	37.1	19.1	24 to 30	632,221
27	Hyderabad	Sindh	5 of 30	67.0	1	69.8	68.0	28.7	41.7	22.5	18 to 43	444,844
28	Sargodha	Punjab	19 of 36	66.6	1	79.4	76.9	29.9	40.5	17.0	25 to 35	802,919
29	Layyah	Punjab	20 of 36	66.5	2	74.7	68.8	27.0	35.2	15.4	16 to 40	387,042
30	Karachi West	Sindh	6 of 30	66.2	2	71.6	71.2	23.3	46.2	28.5	7 to 60	510,654
31	Bahawalnagar	Punjab	21 of 36	65.7	2	68.8	64.8	23.4	35.1	18.8	22 to 38	634,421
32	Pakpattan	Punjab	22 of 36	64.9	2	71.7	67.6	23.9	37.2	18.7	27 to 36	372,790
33	Multan	Punjab	23 of 36	64.6	2	70.6	67.5	27.0	41.9	20.9	22 to 45	1,007,721
34	Attock	Punjab	24 of 36	64.2	2	84.2	80.2	29.2	42.0	14.7	26 to 42	376,766
35	Chiniot	Punjab	25 of 36	64.0	2	67.6	60.0	24.8	38.1	19.4	32 to 41	281,672
36	Lower Chitral	KP	4 of 35	63.9	2	82.8	75.2	36.9	42.1	10.1	23 to 44	59,314
37	Bahawalpur	Punjab	26 of 36	63.8	2	63.3	59.6	24.5	36.3	19.1	31 to 45	771,809
38	Keamari	Sindh	7 of 30	63.6	2	68.4	65.7	21.9	47.3	28.8	10 to 71	411,355
39	Khanewal	Punjab	27 of 36	63.6	2	71.2	66.4	23.4	37.6	18.2	29 to 41	614,906
40	Jhang	Punjab	28 of 36	63.6	2	72.3	65.5	24.6	37.7	17.1	28 to 40	555,955
41	Malir	Sindh	8 of 30	63.3	2	67.2	64.3	23.9	43.8	24.5	17 to 51	461,798
42	Khushab	Punjab	29 of 36	60.4	2	77.0	69.1	27.2	41.7	14.2	35 to 44	265,699

Rank	District	Province	Rank in province	Score	Band	Literacy %	Female literacy %	Enrolled %	Inactive non student %	Market work %	Rank range	Youth 15 to 24
43	Malakand	KP	5 of 35	59.3	2	75.5	66.2	34.9	41.8	8.9	32 to 55	157,445
44	Bhakkar	Punjab	30 of 36	58.2	2	69.1	60.2	24.1	40.3	15.4	38 to 47	341,137
45	Mansehra	KP	6 of 35	58.2	2	77.7	69.7	29.8	45.8	13.8	39 to 57	338,742
46	Mianwali	Punjab	31 of 36	56.8	2	75.1	64.4	27.2	43.3	12.7	44 to 52	327,978
47	Nowshera	KP	7 of 35	56.3	2	66.1	56.4	27.8	43.0	14.7	45 to 52	337,174
48	Lodhran	Punjab	32 of 36	55.8	2	64.3	57.9	19.8	39.6	16.6	41 to 53	353,702
49	Charsadda	KP	8 of 35	55.1	2	65.4	52.6	27.0	43.9	15.0	48 to 58	340,119
50	Peshawar	KP	9 of 35	54.3	2	60.2	48.9	28.0	44.9	16.2	43 to 69	965,304
51	Mirpur Khas	Sindh	9 of 30	53.4	2	49.9	40.3	20.3	36.1	15.6	37 to 62	296,749
52	Rahim Yar Khan	Punjab	33 of 36	53.3	2	54.8	49.3	18.3	40.5	19.1	47 to 58	1,009,967
53	Mardan	KP	10 of 35	53.0	2	68.3	56.8	30.4	46.9	12.4	49 to 72	529,620
54	Lower Dir	KP	11 of 35	52.1	2	71.8	58.7	34.9	46.9	7.6	47 to 70	324,930
55	Quetta	Balochistan	1 of 34	51.2	2	59.8	52.7	22.9	47.1	18.4	43 to 83	471,458
56	Tando Allahyar	Sindh	10 of 30	50.5	3	44.5	37.1	15.2	41.6	22.7	46 to 74	163,935
57	Swabi	KP	12 of 35	50.0	3	72.1	60.0	28.4	47.9	10.3	51 to 73	367,793
58	Sukkur	Sindh	11 of 30	49.3	3	61.1	52.3	21.3	46.8	16.8	52 to 74	299,835
59	Muzaffargarh	Punjab	34 of 36	49.1	3	56.9	50.6	18.9	41.3	14.5	50 to 64	902,256
60	Shaheed Benazirabad	Sindh	12 of 30	48.1	3	56.6	47.6	19.4	42.2	14.0	53 to 66	334,455
61	Kohat	KP	13 of 35	48.0	3	68.7	51.8	29.5	49.0	9.7	54 to 85	241,858
62	Dera Ghazi Khan	Punjab	35 of 36	47.7	3	53.1	44.6	17.8	39.3	13.2	46 to 72	596,285
63	Gwadar	Balochistan	2 of 34	47.7	3	59.5	54.5	24.0	46.4	13.6	57 to 79	62,404
64	Dera Ismail Khan	KP	14 of 35	47.0	3	55.2	42.7	23.7	44.8	13.1	58 to 75	336,293
65	Naushahro Feroze	Sindh	13 of 30	47.0	3	62.8	54.3	19.2	44.5	13.0	58 to 74	325,131
66	Kech	Balochistan	3 of 34	46.9	3	55.5	50.5	17.8	39.4	11.7	44 to 78	232,920
67	Larkana	Sindh	14 of 30	46.4	3	60.0	52.2	21.4	45.4	12.8	64 to 71	350,569
68	Umer Kot	Sindh	15 of 30	46.3	3	44.2	30.4	17.6	38.6	14.4	48 to 78	193,339
69	Sanghar	Sindh	16 of 30	46.1	3	48.2	40.0	17.0	41.1	15.3	56 to 75	426,850
70	Khairpur	Sindh	17 of 30	45.2	3	56.2	46.2	20.8	44.6	12.6	65 to 72	475,721
71	Sohbatpur	Balochistan	4 of 34	45.0	3	45.9	32.9	18.2	34.4	8.2	32 to 103	38,186
72	Matlari	Sindh	18 of 30	44.8	3	51.0	41.9	16.5	45.3	17.2	58 to 84	153,785
73	Jamshoro	Sindh	19 of 30	44.8	3	54.5	48.5	20.1	45.6	14.1	67 to 78	210,263
74	Nushki	Balochistan	5 of 34	44.4	3	66.0	55.8	20.1	46.0	10.1	61 to 80	38,658
75	Swat	KP	15 of 35	43.9	3	59.2	44.2	28.9	49.9	10.0	63 to 100	537,952
76	Duki	Balochistan	6 of 34	43.4	3	46.4	36.1	11.6	42.6	18.0	64 to 83	39,930
77	Rajanpur	Punjab	36 of 36	42.3	3	42.0	34.7	15.2	39.1	13.0	54 to 84	402,926
78	Upper Dir	KP	16 of 35	40.0	3	59.3	42.7	28.0	48.0	4.9	71 to 90	199,296
79	Buner	KP	17 of 35	39.8	3	56.9	38.6	27.6	49.0	6.6	73 to 97	209,660
80	Loralai	Balochistan	7 of 34	39.3	3	48.5	37.4	21.3	43.4	7.8	70 to 94	51,239
81	Jacobabad	Sindh	20 of 30	38.9	3	45.6	37.3	14.1	41.8	11.4	62 to 89	207,542
82	Sibi	Balochistan	8 of 34	38.9	3	51.1	44.8	17.7	44.8	10.0	76 to 86	40,548
83	Karak	KP	18 of 35	38.8	4	76.3	60.7	27.4	56.5	5.9	56 to 114	156,565
84	Tank	KP	19 of 35	38.0	4	47.6	30.8	17.3	45.9	11.6	80 to 94	78,746
85	Panjgur	Balochistan	9 of 34	38.0	4	43.6	40.7	9.2	39.9	12.5	55 to 94	129,665

Rank	District	Province	Rank in province	Score	Band	Literacy %	Female literacy %	Enrolled %	Inactive non student %	Market work %	Rank range	Youth 15 to 24
86	Lasbela	Balochistan	10 of 34	37.7	4	44.3	35.9	15.4	47.8	15.2	75 to 103	128,537
87	Pishin	Balochistan	11 of 34	37.6	4	52.1	38.4	13.1	48.5	14.7	74 to 101	168,278
88	Dadu	Sindh	21 of 30	37.4	4	49.8	43.3	16.0	46.2	11.3	82 to 88	342,586
89	Lakki Marwat	KP	20 of 35	36.7	4	57.3	37.3	19.6	49.2	8.6	79 to 96	187,944
90	Shikarpur	Sindh	22 of 30	36.2	4	47.5	40.4	13.5	43.6	10.1	70 to 98	240,009
91	Kambar Shahdad Kot	Sindh	23 of 30	36.0	4	44.5	36.1	14.1	44.6	11.4	80 to 93	285,519
92	Kashmore	Sindh	24 of 30	35.3	4	38.2	28.8	12.9	40.0	9.4	61 to 110	209,141
93	Badin	Sindh	25 of 30	34.6	4	40.6	30.4	13.5	46.0	12.9	87 to 97	343,231
94	Ziarat	Balochistan	12 of 34	34.3	4	45.7	38.3	16.4	46.0	9.1	86 to 99	31,886
95	Harnai	Balochistan	13 of 34	32.6	4	42.8	33.4	14.2	45.9	9.6	88 to 105	19,688
96	Tando Muhammad Khan	Sindh	26 of 30	32.5	4	37.0	28.6	13.1	46.4	12.7	91 to 107	132,968
97	Bannu	KP	21 of 35	32.3	4	48.6	29.8	22.2	50.6	6.7	89 to 112	250,363
98	Hangu	KP	22 of 35	31.9	4	54.5	29.9	25.5	57.0	8.1	80 to 126	108,220
99	Mastung	Balochistan	14 of 34	31.4	4	51.1	40.5	18.1	50.7	7.6	92 to 108	59,434
100	Ghotki	Sindh	27 of 30	30.9	4	45.3	30.7	15.4	49.8	10.0	96 to 107	346,938
101	Khuzdar	Balochistan	15 of 34	30.7	4	42.3	36.0	12.0	48.3	11.6	96 to 109	188,377
102	Jaffarabad	Balochistan	16 of 34	30.5	4	40.1	31.4	15.0	46.3	8.4	95 to 111	109,607
103	Tharparkar	Sindh	28 of 30	30.2	4	41.0	27.6	13.5	45.8	8.2	90 to 115	284,922
104	Musakhel	Balochistan	17 of 34	29.7	4	37.8	27.5	12.1	47.1	10.9	98 to 111	31,354
105	Zhob	Balochistan	18 of 34	29.1	4	37.7	30.4	16.0	46.6	7.4	99 to 119	55,358
106	Nasirabad	Balochistan	19 of 34	29.0	4	32.5	24.6	11.5	42.5	8.2	82 to 124	100,160
107	Shangla	KP	23 of 35	29.0	4	41.5	21.0	21.6	53.5	8.8	95 to 121	161,071
108	Chaman	Balochistan	20 of 34	28.3	4	41.6	32.3	8.0	48.6	12.2	98 to 121	96,673
109	Surab	Balochistan	21 of 34	28.0	4	38.9	31.5	8.3	46.2	10.3	98 to 119	55,687
110	Kurram	KP	24 of 35	27.5	5	44.7	28.7	22.5	52.8	5.0	100 to 121	138,641
111	Kharan	Balochistan	22 of 34	27.5	5	41.2	31.3	11.7	50.0	10.3	107 to 117	47,581
112	Khyber	KP	25 of 35	27.4	5	46.0	20.9	19.8	56.0	9.1	92 to 128	216,922
113	Kalat	Balochistan	23 of 34	27.3	5	43.2	36.9	15.4	49.0	6.3	105 to 120	48,992
114	Barkhan	Balochistan	24 of 34	26.8	5	37.8	29.8	13.1	45.2	5.6	91 to 128	33,262
115	Batagram	KP	26 of 35	26.1	5	48.4	29.7	19.4	56.2	7.3	101 to 127	107,368
116	Killa Saifullah	Balochistan	25 of 34	25.2	5	35.2	24.9	13.0	49.8	9.1	113 to 122	69,367
117	Orakzai	KP	27 of 35	25.1	5	43.2	19.6	21.2	53.5	4.5	109 to 126	70,416
118	Killa Abdullah	Balochistan	26 of 34	24.8	5	37.1	25.5	6.8	50.1	12.2	108 to 127	76,819
119	Kohlu	Balochistan	27 of 34	24.5	5	30.1	25.7	6.9	43.0	7.7	87 to 132	49,503
120	Torghar	KP	28 of 35	24.4	5	39.3	16.4	15.1	60.4	15.2	79 to 136	35,679

Rank	District	Province	Rank in province	Score	Band	Literacy %	Female literacy %	Enrolled %	Inactive non student %	Market work %	Rank range	Youth 15 to 24
121	North Waziristan	KP	29 of 35	24.2	5	37.1	19.6	14.6	48.5	5.2	109 to 129	126,022
122	South Waziristan	KP	30 of 35	23.9	5	36.3	24.3	14.2	49.9	6.7	116 to 126	163,161
123	Awaran	Balochistan	28 of 34	23.2	5	42.4	35.6	18.0	55.0	6.2	114 to 128	31,362
124	Thatta	Sindh	29 of 30	22.4	5	30.8	25.1	10.0	50.8	10.6	118 to 127	186,670
125	Mohmand	KP	31 of 35	22.4	5	38.0	18.2	13.8	55.1	9.6	109 to 129	97,871
126	Jhal Magsi	Balochistan	29 of 34	22.0	5	32.3	25.7	9.4	48.0	7.4	111 to 130	38,493
127	Kachhi	Balochistan	30 of 34	21.1	5	31.6	27.0	8.4	46.8	6.3	105 to 133	81,948
128	Sujawal	Sindh	30 of 30	20.8	5	29.4	22.6	7.8	50.9	10.9	120 to 130	138,380
129	Bajaur	KP	32 of 35	20.3	5	32.6	14.8	14.3	55.6	9.5	114 to 132	227,032
130	Chagai	Balochistan	31 of 34	18.0	5	36.8	28.1	9.8	53.9	6.9	124 to 132	50,949
131	Sherani	Balochistan	32 of 34	17.1	5	25.0	16.4	6.7	52.4	10.6	125 to 132	36,168
132	Dera Bugti	Balochistan	33 of 34	14.6	5	27.8	13.8	9.9	56.4	8.8	126 to 134	58,023
133	Washuk	Balochistan	34 of 34	12.9	5	22.1	17.6	4.5	53.9	10.1	131 to 135	56,272
134	Lower Kohistan	KP	33 of 35	10.4	5	24.1	11.2	8.7	55.0	5.3	132 to 134	54,499
135	Kolai Palas Kohistan	KP	34 of 35	7.5	5	20.4	14.4	5.9	53.1	3.5	130 to 136	40,767
136	Upper Kohistan	KP	35 of 35	6.2	5	21.4	11.4	7.6	56.7	4.2	134 to 136	65,307

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2023), Census 2023 Tables 13(a), 14 and 15; authors' calculations. The formula driven workbook reproduces every value from the census counts.

Annex B. Data Sources and Quality Notes

Source	Observation period	Used for	Quality notes
Population and Housing Census 2023, district Tables 4, 13(a), 14, 15	2023	All district indicators, youth population, literacy, enrolment, labour status	Retrieved as original Excel files; district sums equal published national totals; employment uses a one year reference period and is not comparable with the LFS
Labour Force Survey 2024 to 2025, Annual Report	July 2024 to June 2025	NEET, unemployment, participation, employment, training exposure	Provincial and national estimates only; 13th and 19th ICLS unemployment series reported separately
HIES 2024 to 2025 key results	2024 to 2025	Household internet access, individual internet use, household mobile access, out of school children aged 5 to 16	Headline results; individual measures cover people aged 10 and above, not youth specifically
PTA statement and FAFEN analysis of HIES 2024 to 2025	2024 to 2025	Individual phone ownership, internet use by sex, provincial household internet access, computer ownership	Secondary reports of PBS results
Pakistan Economic Survey 2025 to 2026, Chapter 10	2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025	TVET institutes, teachers, enrolment, NAVTTC programme activity	Institutional and enrolment estimates, not individual outcomes
NAVTTC, Planning and Development	Batch I cohort	Huawei technology cohort outcomes	Programme reported; no counterfactual or published response rate
UNDP National Human Development Report 2023/24	2023 to 2024	District Digital Development Index categories	Used as context; not combined into the DYOI
geoBoundaries Pakistan ADM2	2019 boundaries	District maps	Public domain; newer districts shown within 2019 parent units (Annex C)

Annex C. Map Units and Boundary Concordance

The maps use the geoBoundaries second level administrative boundaries for Pakistan, released in the public domain and representing 2019 geography (Runfola et al. 2020). Census 2023 reports 136 district level units. Where a 2019 unit contains more than one Census 2023 district, the map shows that unit with indicators recomputed from the summed census counts of its districts, and the composite score is calculated with the same normalisation range as the district index. Rankings, tables and all statements about individual districts use the 136 Census 2023 districts. Areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan lie outside the census district tables and are shown hatched.

2019 map unit	Census 2023 districts shown within it
Mansehra	Mansehra, Torghar
Sheikhupura	Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib
Qilla Abdullah	Killa Abdullah, Chaman
Kharan	Kharan, Washuk
Zhob	Zhob, Sherani
Loralai	Loralai, Duki
Sibi	Sibi, Harnai
Kalat	Kalat, Surab
Jaffarabad	Jaffarabad, Sohbatpur
Karachi	Karachi Central, Karachi East, Karachi South, Karachi West, Korangi, Keamari, Malir
Thatta	Thatta, Sujawal
Qambar Shahdadkot	Kambar Shahdad Kot, Larkana
Jhang	Jhang, Chiniot
Chitral	Upper Chitral, Lower Chitral
Kohistan	Upper Kohistan, Lower Kohistan, Kolai Palas Kohistan

Source: authors' concordance, using point in polygon tests on district headquarters locations against the 2019 boundaries.



Centre for Social Analytics
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This publication was developed through an evidence-based research process supported by artificial intelligence tools. AI-assisted workflows contributed to document review, evidence synthesis, analytical drafting, data processing, visualization and publication design. Research design, indicator selection, methodological decisions, interpretation of findings and final quality assurance remain matters of human analytical responsibility and professional judgment. All key findings are intended to remain traceable to credible and verifiable sources.