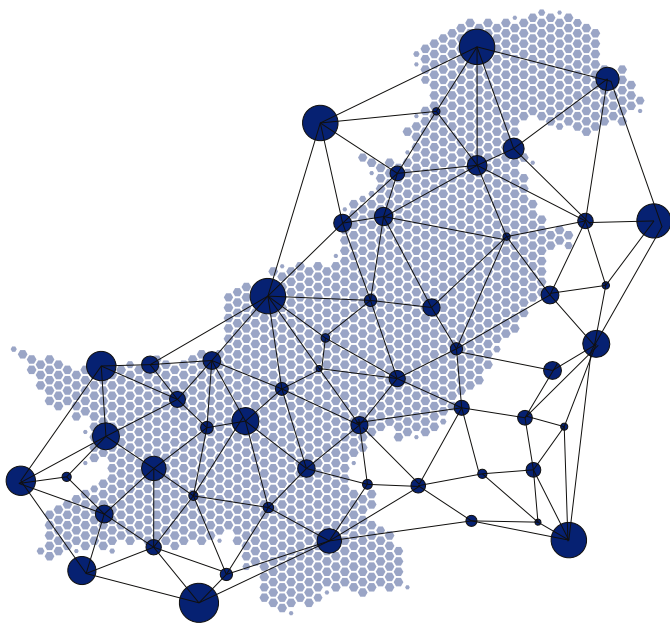


# NETWORKED IMPROVEMENT COMMUNITIES FOR SCHOOL LEADERS TOWARDS EQUITY AND INCLUSION

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD



Networked Improvement Communities for School Leaders Towards Equity and Inclusion is a project jointly undertaken by the Foundation for Information Technology and Education (FIT-ED) with partners from Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan, and funded by the GPE KIX. This focuses on the inclusion of Children with Disabilities (CWD), and on gender equality in schools, with the aid of Networked Improvement Communities (NICs). These NICs could utilize open platforms to deliver capacity building for school leaders at a large scale and/or for whole systems.

## PROGRESS SO FAR IN PAKISTAN



The project is being implemented by the Allama Iqbal Open University as the regional partner, in collaboration with FIT-ED, GPE-KIX and the IDRC. After the formation of a project team and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government, the Pakistan project team conducted a thorough government policy analysis, followed by analysis of data collected from head teachers from the Federal Capital of Islamabad and the Provincial Capital of Lahore in Punjab from both urban and rural settings.

This survey was complemented by interviews of selected head teachers and key stakeholders to get a true sense of the ground realities related to inclusion in schools in the above-mentioned regions of Pakistan.

### 1. Team formation & MOU signing

Recruitment of correct competent personnel



### 2. Policy documents analysis

Collection & analysis of policy documents on Inclusion



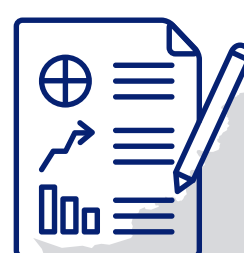
### 3. Stakeholder analysis

Analysis of key stakeholders and their interest/power



### 4. Data collection from head teachers/teachers

277 head teachers/teachers across Islamabad & Lahore



### 5. Interview of head teachers & stakeholders

Interviews of select head teachers and key stakeholders from Islamabad and Lahore



Canada

## GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- **Article 25 (a) of the Constitution of Pakistan** guarantees free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years
- **National policy for Persons with Disabilities 2002**
- **National Education Policy, 2017–2025** (by Federal Government) included policy for inclusion of girls, CWDs, special education, and minorities with a proper road map
- **Punjab Special Education Policy 2020**
- **Transgender Person's Welfare Policy 2018** (by Punjab Social Protection Authority) included provisions to help inclusion of transgender persons in schools
- **Punjab Women Development Policy 2018**



## DONOR-FUNDED INITIATIVES

- **Alight – Refugees and out-of-school children** focusing on rehabilitation of refugees in schools
- **UNHCR Education Strategy** for Refugees aimed at enhancing school enrollment and participation of refugees and girls



## STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

### Focal Person GPE:

Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training, Islamabad

### Other high influence–high interest stakeholders:

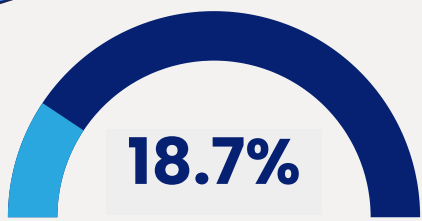
1. Ministry of Education, Punjab
2. School Education Department, Punjab
3. Directorate General Special Education (DGSE), Islamabad
4. Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), Islamabad

# SURVEY FINDINGS

A total of 277 head teachers/teachers surveyed from Islamabad Capital Territory and Punjab Provincial Capital, Lahore

Number of Children with Disabilities from each disadvantaged student group as reported by the head teachers in the survey:

Disadvantaged Student Group	None	Lesser than 10%	I don't know	Greater than 10%
Refugee Children	46.2%	35.4%	11.2%	7.2%
Nomadic Children	53.8%	26.4%	12.2%	7.6%
Children from poor background	45.5%	44%	8%	2.5%
Children with disabilities	45.8%	39.4%	9%	5.8%
Student from ethnic minorities	24.2%	41.2%	22.7%	11.9%
Orphans	5.1%	67.1%	12.3%	15.5%
Religious minorities	28.9%	53.1%	9.7%	8.3%
Lower caste/labour class families	6.9%	36.9%	7.8%	48.4%
Street Children	33.6%	21.7%	30.3%	14.4%



Only 18.7% of schools have parents of disadvantaged students in their school management committee



**96%**

Schools have electricity



**75.1%**

Schools have internet services



**88.8%**

Head teachers use their smart phones daily



**47.3%**

Head teachers who use laptop more than 3 days a week



**37.2%**

Head teachers use a tablet more than 3 days a week



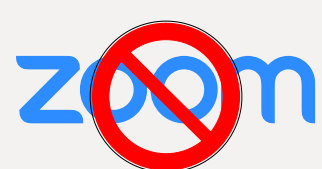
**92.8%**

Head teachers use WhatsApp daily



**92.8%**

Head teachers use Facebook daily

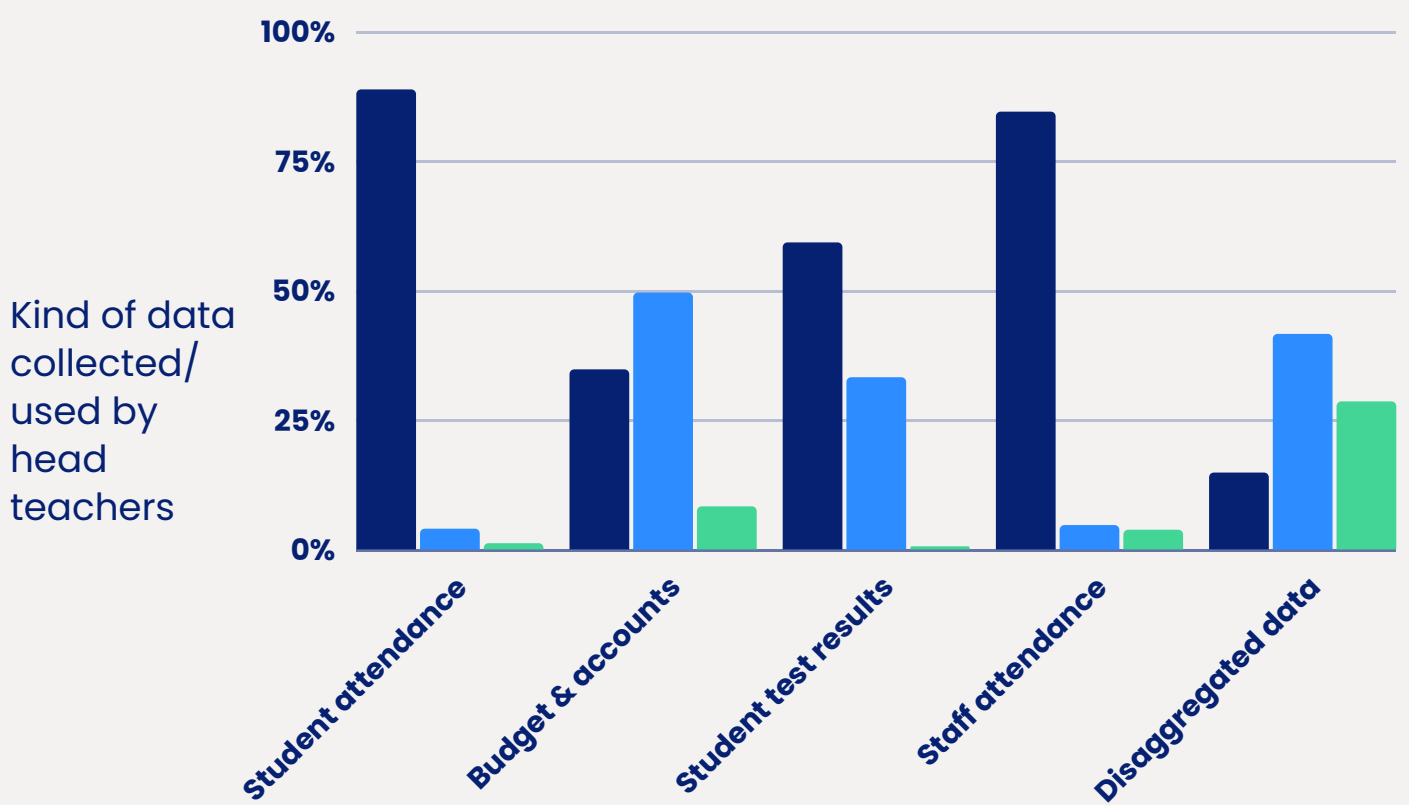
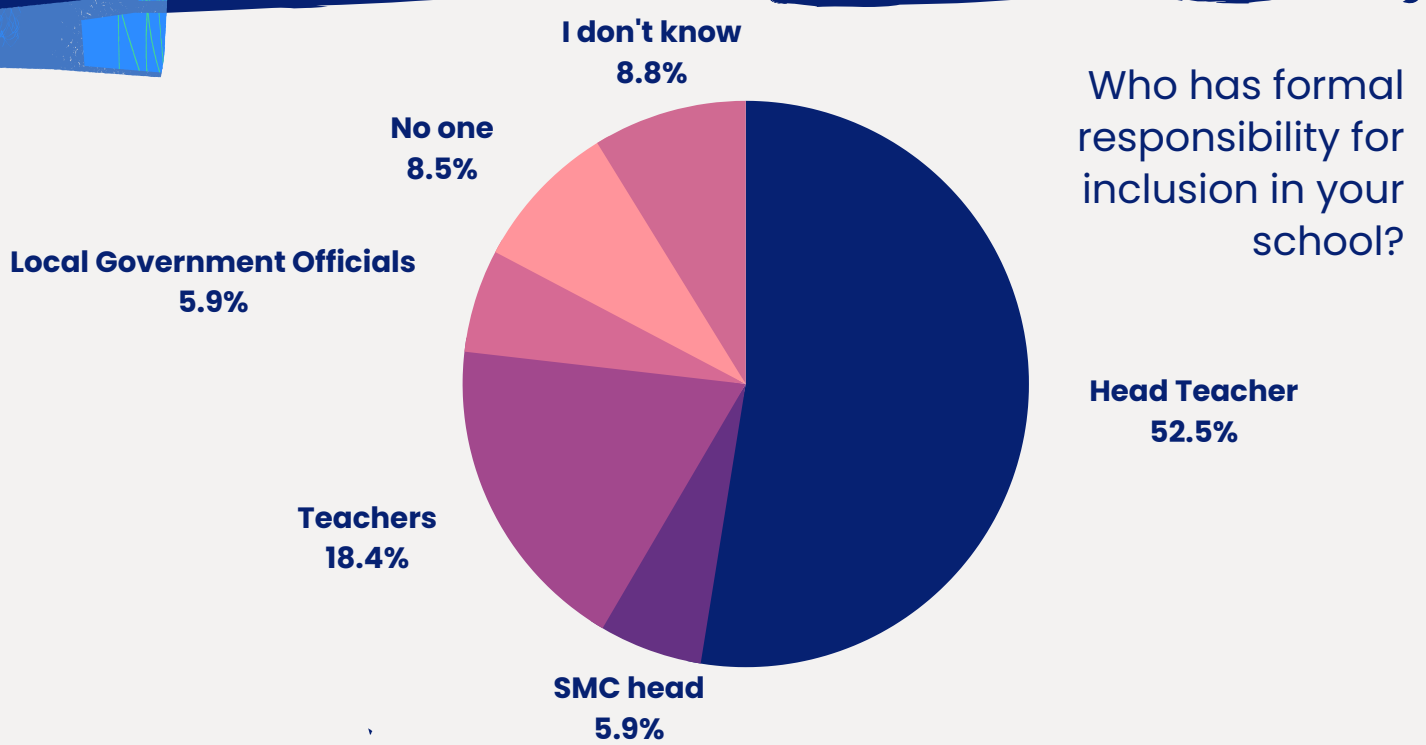
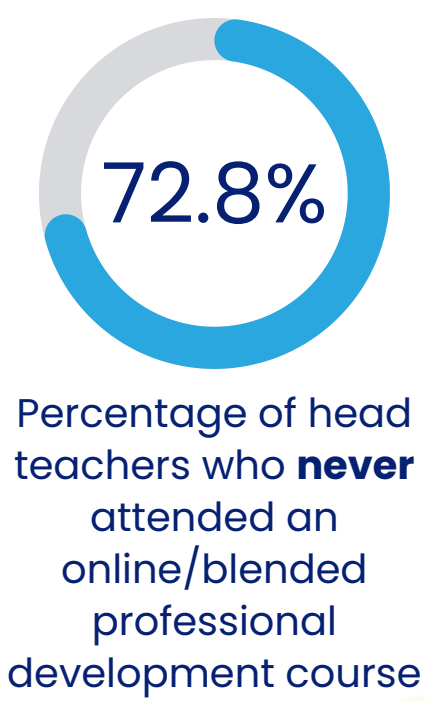
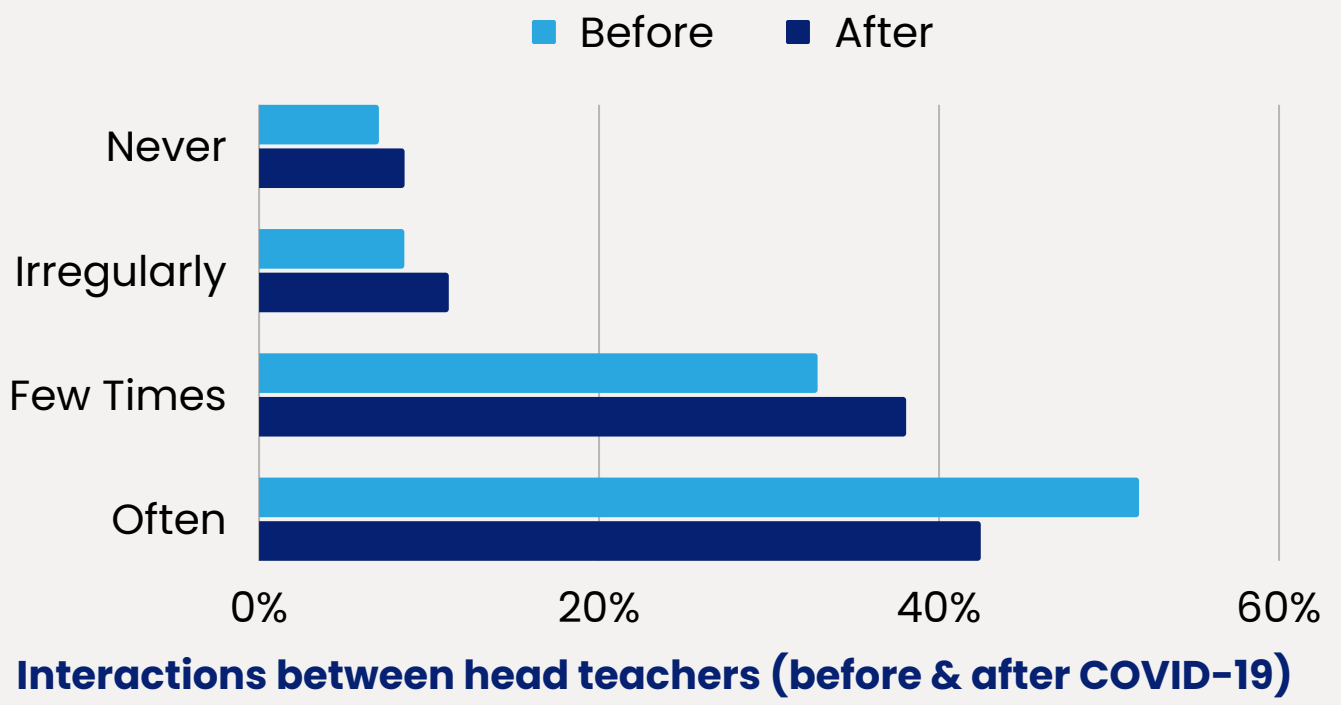


**45.8%**

Head teachers have never used Zoom

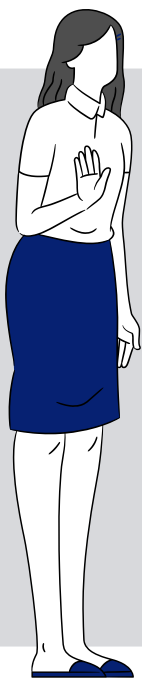
Similar numbers for Google Meet, MS Teams

# SURVEY FINDINGS



# INTERVIEWS OF HEAD TEACHERS

The total findings from the interviews of 12 head teachers from both Urban and Rural settings in Islamabad & Lahore are as follows:



## ATTITUDE & VALUES TOWARDS INCLUSION

- Most of the head teachers felt their schools were not welcoming to children with disabilities because they did not have the capacity to cater to them.
- Instead, school leaders would tell parents of CWD to have their children admitted to special schools.
- Only one head teacher had an MA in Special Education and knew of the concept of inclusion, but was still powerless to implement changes.

## LEADERSHIP ACTIONS IN RELATION TO INCLUSION

- There was a lack of action on behalf of the leadership when it came to inclusion because there were no government orders from their higher-ups for the implementation of inclusion.
- Most of the head teachers who participated in the interview & survey were unaware of inclusion, to begin with.



## LEADERSHIP DUTIES



- Leadership duties of most of the candidates included class supervision, teacher and student behavior, communication with parents, building maintenance, financial matters, promoting enrolment of out-of-school children, result improvement.
- Student attendance, and student enrolment, marks are usually noted down on a regular basis as student data. Guardian information, income, etc., is noted at the time of enrolment.

## ICT SKILLS & USE

- WhatsApp and Facebook messenger dominated the use of digital communication tools.
- Apart from one school leader, all of the interviewees had only basic access to the Student Information System (SIS) portal, but without any formal training. This portal deals with recording student data and conducting online lectures. Before that, they used Zoom and Microsoft Teams for online lectures during the pandemic.
- Internet connectivity is a big issue, as head teachers/teachers are not legally allowed to bring electronic devices on school premises. However, they still manage to bring them into their school.



# INTERVIEWS OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

After interviewing the head teachers, the project team interviewed two key stakeholders from Lahore and Islamabad. The summary is as follows:

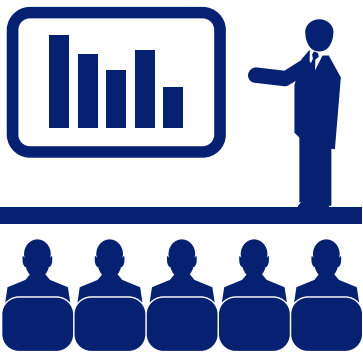


## 1. ON INTERNET & SMARTPHONES IN SCHOOLS

- Mobile phones are not allowed on school premises for both teachers and students alike because they see it as a cause of wasted time
- According to the stakeholders, it helps teachers focus on their primary duties rather than wasting time on social media



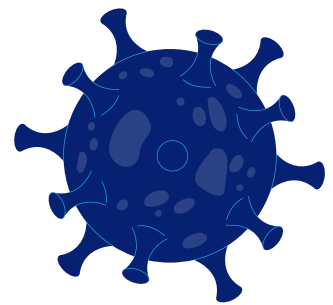
## 2. LACK OF OFFICIAL TRAINING FOR HEAD TEACHERS



- Teachers are gradually receiving training for the SIS portal that can digitize school management
- Currently, training is being provided phase by phase, therefore it is taking time

## 3. IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SCHOOLS

- Students' education suffered the most
- Schools couldn't conduct timely exams and evaluations
- Students' attendance suffered as well
- As the majority of students belong to extremely impoverished families, online classes were not as effective
- Communication between stakeholders & head teachers took place using MS Teams and WhatsApp



## 4. WHY HEAD TEACHERS ARE NOT AWARE OF INCLUSION BEING PART OF EDUCATION POLICY



- Provisions for inclusion do exist. However, funding for implementing inclusion and official permissions come from elected officials who formulate policy
- Directorate General Special Education is running a pilot project on inclusion in special schools in Islamabad. However, they admit that implementation is far behind the policy provisions

# SITUATION ON THE GROUND



Head teachers not made aware of plans on inclusion & existing policies



Lack of adequate infrastructure for CWDs & other disadvantaged children



Lack of awareness on inclusion, with many head teachers having little to no knowledge on the matter



Lack of professional training for head teachers/teachers on ICT & inclusion



Focus on student enrolment & result improvement, rather than quality of education and inclusion



Lack of governmental support as head teachers not involved in policy-making or made aware of inclusion-related policy

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DESIGN OF COURSES FOR SCHOOL LEADERS ON INCLUSION



Course timings should be during school hours as head teachers are overburdened with school tasks, alongside familial responsibilities (especially for female teachers.)



The course must provide school leaders with the necessary knowledge on inclusion & policies on inclusion along with necessary sensitivities.



The course must also enhance ICT skills of head teachers as many lack digital literacy.



Provision of laptop, tablet, or some smart device is necessary for head teachers.



Internet devices must also be provided to head teachers as connectivity is a major issue.



The course must enhance general development of school leaders' capacity as head teachers.

# GALLERY



Pictures from data collection exercises in school premises (Islamabad)

