Evaluating the effectiveness of a community-oriented girls' education program in Pakistan: Community-based participatory research

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Girls’ Education in Pakistan

• Pakistan has some of the largest gaps in access to education and gender equality globally, (Razzaq, 2016).
• Pashtun tribal regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) have some of the lowest enrolment rates in Pakistan (Memon & Naz, 2015) and a rural female literacy rate of 37% (Bureau of Statistics, 2020) where girls’ education has long been a contested social, economic, political, and religious issue (Jamal, 2018).
• In Pashtunwali, an unwritten social code, women are traditionally secluded from general society with their roles and responsibilities centered at home (Jamal 2018). These traditional gender roles create barriers for girls’ education.
• Girls’ education in traditional communities has higher rates of success when initiatives are valued and supported by the community, meeting families’ specific contextual and cultural needs (Burde & Linden, 2013; Razzaq, 2016).

Canadian Association for Children’s Education in Pakistan (CACEP)

• CACEP, a Calgary-based non-profit, promotes gender justice and children’s education in KP, a conflicted-affected province of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan.
• Since 2013, CACEP has supported 80+ students in overcoming barriers to education.
• Using a community-based solidarity model, schools, families, leaders, and volunteers work together to support children’s education with Canadian financial support.
• Research will allow CACEP children and stakeholders to share their voices for the evaluation and improvement of CACEP’s model.

Study Design

• Using mutual aid theory and community-based participatory research, this project will engage CACEP stakeholders through photovoice.
• A steering committee will involve Pakistani and Canadian CACEP stakeholders.
• Participants will take photos and provide narratives that capture their perspectives and experiences regarding CACEP, education, empowerment, and gender justice.
• Photovoice participants will include Canadian sponsors and board members and Pakistani children, parents, alumni, and volunteers.
• Photovoice narratives will be presented at exhibits and inform CACEP’s practice model.

Expected Outcomes

• 1) Improvement of CACEP’s model through the critical insights of CACEP families and stakeholders
• 2) Sharing of CACEP’s research-informed practice model with international social development practitioners and policymakers
• 3) Strengthening support for gender justice and girls’ education work through knowledge mobilization in Pakistan and globally
• 4) Creating a foundation for further nonprofit and academic research partnerships focused on gender justice and girls’ education.

References