

Back to School: The Citizens Foundation Students and Staff Return to the Classroom After COVID Lockdowns in Pakistan

As pupils return to their classrooms at The Citizens Foundation schools, the challenge is to encourage every child to complete their education

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EINPresswire.com/ -- Girls and boys from arguably the world's largest private network of low-cost formal schools are returning to their classrooms across Pakistan under the Government's health directives.



TCF pupils happy to be back in class

After one of the biggest challenges to modern education, children at [The Citizen Foundation's \(TCF\)](#) 1,687 schools are back at their desks – eager to play, learn and resume their normal school routine.

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As we emerge from the pandemic hoping for better days ahead, we still face the shadow of rising poverty and increasing risk of school dropouts in Pakistan”

*Amjad Noorani, Author,
Agents of Change (Oxford
University Press, 2021)*

But despite the good news, many obstacles remain to get children – especially girls – back to school.

“As we emerge from the pandemic hoping for better days ahead, we still face the shadow of rising poverty and increasing risk of school dropouts in Pakistan and other developing countries where universal education is probably decades away—and only if ideal education reforms are put in place at a fast pace.”

These are alarming words from California-based Amjad Noorani, an activist for education reform in Pakistan and

author of a recent book [Agents of Change](#) (Oxford University Press, 2021) which comprehensively describes the challenging K-12 landscape of Pakistan's education systems—and

suggests viable solutions starting with the elite and influential members of Pakistan's civic society to come together as a voice to demand action and change, primarily in the public school system and its management.

Previous epidemics have shown that in widespread health crises, girls are the first ones to drop out of school. Economic, social, and cultural pressures may prevent girls from returning to school altogether.

The pandemic has triggered the largest education emergency in recent history, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable and underprivileged children, especially girls.

Pakistan—a country where over 22 million underprivileged children ages 5-16 are not in school—is at extreme risk of even more dropouts and greater learning inequalities.

In the midst of these challenges, TCF, an education non-profit in Pakistan that provides formal K-10 schooling to 275,000 girls and boys from underprivileged communities, urban slums, and underserved rural areas – has managed to keep in touch with its students and support the parent communities. Teachers and school principals stayed connected with families, offering support and distributing actual learning tools for children in the form of a magazine with sections of games and fun learning material. Poor families may not have a computer but most own a television, so TCF produced a TV program for home-bound children and the show became popular on national TV, receiving over 6 million views.

Now with schools open, TCF is ensuring that all precautionary measures are in place – with a focus on social distancing, hygiene, and monitoring health – to ensure the wellbeing of its students and staff.

About TCF

The Citizens Foundation runs 1,687 schools (including more than 350 adopted public schools) in



Pupils follow strict hygiene guidelines



Students are back at school with their books

Pakistan's most challenged communities with an all-female teaching staff and a focus on enrollment and retention of girls in schools. Gender parity in TCF schools is nearly 50%.

TCF is the largest private employer of women in the country. In addition to 13,000 teachers and school principals, many women work in TCF departments involving strategic planning, academics, quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation of teachers, curriculum development, marketing, and school management.

Through funding by generous Pakistani and international donors, TCF school alumni girls and boys from the poorest slums and rural communities are going to university, becoming teachers, engineers, physicians, lawyers, and joining the civil service, police force, and defense services as officers.

To learn more about TCF's work, visit: <https://www.tcfusa.org>

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