
YEARN TO LEARN: UNDERSTANDING GIRLS' MOTIVATIONS FOR CONTINUED ENROLLMENT IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN BALOCHISTAN, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

What motivates girls enrolled in Non-Formal Education (NFE) programs to continue to attend? While scholars have determined the factors resulting in dropouts from formal education programs, few have researched non-formal education programs. Our study hopes to fill the gap in the literature by asking, are there substantial pull factors that dictate continued enrollment for students? If so, what are these factors? To answer these questions, we conducted 30 semi-structured interviews in NFE centers located in five districts of the Balochistan province of Pakistan. Our findings indicate that most girls enrolled in the program have limited educational backgrounds, and students are interested in joining NFE programs because of an innate desire to learn. Some significant pull factors such as their teachers' abilities and access to free education in a nearby facility guarantee continued attendance. An interesting finding of our research is that the social values of household and community members did not pose a barrier to educational instruction for most girls.

KEYWORDS

Non-formal education, Balochistan, students, motivation, and enrollment

INTRODUCTION

The formal education system in Balochistan is underdeveloped and cannot adequately provide for the province's population (Buzdar, 2018). While more urbanized areas like Quetta have higher levels of education and higher density of schools, rural areas have a thinly spread population across a large geographic area, resulting in longer average distances between households and schools (Maqsood 2020). Furthermore, because there are fewer schools in the region, there are fewer opportunities to establish gender-segregated classrooms - a crucial need in the social context of Balochistan, which is culturally and religiously conservative. Overall, this results in fewer opportunities to receive an education and higher dropout rates in schools amongst girls.

In response to these concerns, education programs aside from public schools have been on the rise in Balochistan - specifically, Non-Formal Education (NFE) programs. These programs take the place of formal education where it is lacking. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) work in collaboration with International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) as well as state funders to provide out-of-school children (OOSC) with access to education in relatively neglected districts of Balochistan.

The current literature on NFE programs only offers a preliminary analysis of the facilities provided. Most studies involve either survey research that records the responses of teachers and parents or research on how effective previous versions of NFE programs were. Previous NFE programs were designed differently from current ones since the gaps in the formal education system have changed over time. Therefore, the literature is outdated and only provides a surface-level understanding of the programs. Current research does not account for the experiences of a particular stakeholder - students. This study will fill the gap in the literature by focusing on the students' perspectives of current NFE programs. Specifically, this paper will investigate why girls continue to remain enrolled in these programs.

In the following pages, we will begin by reviewing the reasons behind low and discontinued enrollments in primary and secondary education programs of both formal and non-formal systems. The literature review will also analyze research on motivations for continued enrollment and explain how our research adds to the existing findings. Next, we will describe our methodology and justify our case selection. Lastly, we will discuss the results of semi-structured interviews, future areas of research, and the practical implications of our findings for NGOs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Non-formal education is a well-known subset of education within the development sector. However, the academic community hardly focuses on NFE. Our literature review first examines the existing literature on NFE in general. Focusing on the case of dropouts, we investigate all the external reasons for dropouts (from formal and informal education streams). Realizing that factors like a student's interest contribute to their continued education, we explore research on the role of motivation in education.

Non-Formal Education

The Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 include SDG 4: equality of education for all (Global Campaign for Education, 2020). A vital step in providing equal education for all is ensuring that education centers are accessible to all students. Access to public education, especially in Balochistan, falls short of this goal because of under-developed transportation routes and distant schools (Secondary Education Department, 2020). One solution to this problem is non-formal education programs that can fill the gap in areas without public schools.

Non-formal education is an umbrella term for education outside of the traditional schooling system, including after-school classes, adult education, vocational skills training, etc. La-Belle describes the differences between informal and non-formal education as:

“informal education [is] a lifelong process by which every person acquires and accumulates knowledge, skills, attitudes, and insights from daily exposure to the environment [,] *non-formal education is defined as any organized, systematic, and programmatic educational activity, external to formal education frameworks and providing target subgroups with selected types of learning.*” (qtd. in Romi & Schmida, 2009)

For this paper, NFE holds the same meaning it does for the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF): providing an alternative learning pathway/accelerated learning program (ALP) for out-of-school children (under the age of 18) who are unable to access formal education due to lack of nearby schools, language barriers, etc. (Zuberi, 2021). This type of non-formal education is also known as para-formal education, which runs parallel to the education system, providing a substitute for full-time schooling (Hoppers, 2006). Recently in the global South non-formal education centers are initiated by civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), commonly with funding from external international organizations or donors, as a way of bridging the barriers to education in far-flung areas (Zuberi, 2021).

Academic research on non-formal education is limited, with a sizeable gap between theory and practice. In a comprehensive overview of non-formal education, Romi & Schmida noted that a significant portion of the research done on non-formal education is published as research reports and documents from educational commissions and INGOs instead of academic scholars (Romi & Schmida, 2009). According to Beckerman & Silberman-Keller (2003) and Romi & Schmida (2009), this is due to less importance being given to NFE because it is less valued than formal education.

While there are some comprehensive academic overviews of the costs and benefits of non-formal education, none of the studies from the past decade focus on current NFE programs, leading to a gap in understanding recent non-formal education systems (Bekerman & Silberman-Keller, 2003). Secondly in the existing literature, there is little research on the experiences of important stakeholders in non-formal education, most crucially, children. Although there are several studies on children's learning, understanding, and enjoyment in formal schooling, academic research on children in non-formal schools is limited. This study contributes to filling that gap, by highlighting the motivations and hindrances that students themselves express with regard to learning in NFE programs.

Reasons for Discontinued Enrollment in Schools

The literature on dropout rates in education programs outlines several reasons for early dropouts. One of the most common reasons is poverty. Some parents, with few financial resources, are not able to send their children to educational institutions because they are working on providing basic necessities for their families. In a study investigating the reasons for disparity in school enrollment rates across different regions in Indonesia, scholars Zuilkowski, Samanhudi, and Indriana (2019) found that financial hurdles were the overwhelming reason for early dropouts. Farah and Upadhyay (2017) build on this finding through their analysis of survey data from Bangladesh. They found that the richest segments of society have the lowest dropout rates. Inversely, dropouts were more likely for families with more than three children or more than five members. Other factors preventing continued enrollment, according to Farah and Upadhyay (2017), include a lack of access to electricity and costly commute. As such, since educational attainment is associated with a myriad of other expenditures, poorer families are not able to make the long-term investment in their children's future because they are concerned with immediate financial liabilities.

In addition to socio-economic factors, an important dimension to consider in early dropout literature is gender. Patel et al. studied communal influences on dropout rates for girls finding that the most common factors affecting girls' dropouts are poverty, non-egalitarian gender attitudes, and lower literacy among mothers. In a similar study of dropout rates for girls in the Swat region of Pakistan, Bibi and Ahmad (2019) found

that inadequate infrastructure (such as a lack of walls around the school) restricts parents from sending their daughters to school due to privacy concerns. They also point out that there is fear of violent retaliation against girls seeking an education due to the presence of conservative insurgency groups in Swat. Lastly, girls may be more likely to drop out of school at a young age due to societal expectations of marriage (Uddin, 2021). In a survey of the effect of child marriage on girls' school dropout rates in Nepal, Sekine and Hodgkin (2017) find that girls in the 15-17 age group are at the highest risk of dropping out due to early marriages. Additionally, they find that the level of education of the household head in the Kirat region also affects the likelihood of girls continuing to pursue an education (Sekine & Hodgkin, 2017). The literature on dropout rates highlights a gender dimension to this discourse and helps determine that girls are under additional familial and societal pressures to discontinue their education early.

Some factors such as poor academic performance and issues related to teachers persist beyond the dimension of gender. Through detailed interviews with 14 fathers of sons who had dropped out of school, Mughal (2020) finds that another common reason for disengagement from educational institutions is the lack of success in educational programs. For instance, students that do not receive high marks in their examinations feel demotivated from pursuing an education and dropout of school (Mughal, 2020). Additionally, teachers may not be providing the assistance required by their students. Academic instruction and the innate motivations of students may impact their desire to remain committed to attending classes. Non-Formal Education programs also have similar dropout rates. Our study investigates the experiences of students enrolled in NFE to understand motivations for continued enrollment. This paper fills the gap in the current literature by bringing NFE programs back into the conversation.

Motivation in School Performance

When it comes to education, motivation is key to the learning experience for children, both in a formal and non-formal classroom. Motivation to learn and persist, particularly in the education sector, is a complex umbrella term used to describe several psychological concepts, including grit, self-determination theory, self-regulation, and "the will to learn" (Harlen & Deakin-Crick, 2003). Motivation has two main types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, where intrinsic motivation is considered the autonomous desire to "perform an activity for its own sake, for the pleasure and satisfaction it provides," extrinsic motivation is generally "performing an activity for instrumental reasons rather than for its intrinsic qualities" (Guay, 2022).

Both types of motivation play a vital role in an individual's education and schooling. In a systematic review, Harlen & Deakin-Crick (2003) examine the relationship between students' motivation and the use of assessments for learning. The authors

discuss how a student's type of motivation often changes from intrinsic to extrinsic as they age, due to external pressures and weight on grades. A more recent study on first-grade and third-grade elementary school students reveals a similar outcome: higher levels of mastery and judgment motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation) lead to better grade performances in third graders. However, only higher levels of mastery motivation (intrinsic motivation) lead to better grade performances for first graders. Broussard & Garrison (2004) speculated the reason behind stating that third graders had grown accustomed to the education system and having their work "judged" by teachers, leading to more weightage on judgment and external criteria as they stayed in the system. This research shows that young learners tend to be intrinsically motivated, which slowly changes due to the formal education system.

Beyond internal motivation, some key factors mediating school enrollment include parental involvement and social engagement. Moreira et. al's (2013) study of 384 secondary school students used theories of educational motivation as well as educational persistence to understand what could predict academic performance, with socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and academic goals predicting 9.3%, 6.4%, and 4.9% of student performance respectively. Similarly, a study by Marjoribanks (2005) analyzing different theoretical frameworks and empirical studies on family learning environments and children's school outcomes found several links between family social status, family perspectives towards academic achievement, parental engagement with academics, socio-economic class, and one's academic motivation and performance.

Focusing on parental involvement specifically, Pavalache-Ilie & Țîrdia's (2015) study on 3rd and 4th-grade students in Romania reveals that better academic performance was significantly associated with parental involvement (as gauged by teacher interactions) and intrinsic motivation. A study on secondary school students in Pakistan had similar results, showing that correlations between parental involvement and academic achievement were high, while correlations between motivation and academic achievement were moderate - the combination of parental involvement and motivation produced the best results (Atta & Jamil, 2012).

Although there is a wide variety of research on motivation in schools, we were unable to find any literature on the role of motivation for children enrolled in non-formal education programs. However, some observations from the existing literature indicate the role that motivation may play for children in NFE programs. For instance, children who have not interacted with the education system before may have higher levels of intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, lower socioeconomic status and a lack of parental support could contribute to lower levels of academic achievement and persistence. Therefore, to address this gap, this study involves children as the main

participants, to understand learner's motivation from the learners themselves.

Continued Enrollment in NFE Programs

As compared to other literature on Non-Formal Education programs, this study is unique because it occurs at a post-intervention stage. Non-governmental organizations in Pakistan recognize that girls do not get access to mainstream education due to the location of educational programs and associated expenses. Therefore, NGOs set up Non-Formal Education programs that are located closer to the students' homes and free. Our study, instead of analyzing the reasons for dropouts from government schools, recognizes that NFE programs have been used as an intervention to solve for dropouts from public schools. Therefore, our research interviews students to account for their experiences after an NFE intervention has taken place.

Our study also focuses on a relatively neglected stakeholder in the education sector: the students themselves, particularly those enrolled in NFE programs. Furthermore, the research hones in on a neglected region of South Asia, less prominent rural districts from the Balochistan province of Pakistan. In fact, in their report on education in Balochistan, the Balochistan Education Ministry failed to account for the status of students in these districts (Secondary Education Department, 2020).

Theory

Non-formal education (NFE) programs provide educational opportunities where the governmental system of education fails. As such, in the absence of NFE, we would theorize that the students would not have any prior education since no alternatives are available. Additionally, the NFE programs we are choosing to focus on are at the primary level. Therefore, it would be unlikely for students to have prior education because the programs start at the 1st-grade level to provide a pathway to enter educational training. A similar justification explains our elaboration on the hypothesis - girls enrolled in the program would not have more than 2 years of educational training, since that would put them close to halfway through the program, making the content repetitive.

Additionally, the societal attitudes in the Balochistan province of Pakistan, the area we focus on, contribute to our theory that girls have joined the program with limited educational backgrounds. Women and girls in Balochistan are restricted to the domestic sphere by the heads of the households. These restrictions extend to educational opportunities when same-gender teachers are not available.

H1: Girls will have limited educational backgrounds, with no more than two years of education, due to 1) few available public schools and 2) conservative communities

removing them from schools.

As discussed in the literature review, the desire to learn is intrinsic, particularly in young students. In line with our hypothesis that girls will have limited educational backgrounds, we assume that these girls have limited exposure to formal education systems and will be intrinsically instead of extrinsically motivated. A non-formal education program provides an affordable and accessible option for girls to act on this existing desire to learn. Therefore, we hypothesize that the girls harbored a motivation to learn which influenced their decision to join the NFE program.

H2: Girls will be intrinsically motivated to join the NFE program.

Non-formal education programs are similar to educational institutions in some aspects, such as the formation of peer groups. We theorize that the girls enrolled in the NFE program want to stay in the program if significant pull factors are drawing them towards continued attendance. For instance, girls would be more likely to attend these programs if they make new friends at the program that they associate with the institution.

Another social group that may influence the educational pursuits of the girls could be the individuals not involved in the program. Within this social group, we include siblings, aunts, uncles, and neighbors. We theorize that if close contacts of these girls are actively getting an education or have recently received educational training, the girls may be more likely to pursue an education because they see those they admire following a similar path.

H3: Girls will want to stay in the NFE program if there are significant pull factors (such as friends enrolled in the program or other contacts that are pursuing an education).

In thinking about the futures of the students enrolled in the NFE program, we theorize that since the program we are investigating is at the primary level, most students will want to continue their education. The main justification behind this hypothesis is that education is the necessary precondition for upward mobility, and these students will want to build on their education to achieve upward mobility. In addition to that, even relatively basic reading and writing skills are a great asset in the job market for many positions. As such, to continue to practice these skills, we think the students will want to remain in a learning environment. Furthermore, since students have the experience from this program, they know what continuing their education in a similar program would look like. However, an alternative pathway, for instance, skills training for a particular job may be foreign to them. Since they are unfamiliar with it, or its likelihood to yield successful outcomes they would be inclined to stick with educational programs instead.

H4: Girls will want to continue pursuing an education as opposed to alternative pathways such as technical vocational training.

Methods: Deciding on the Districts of Balochistan

As a test for our hypotheses, we apply our theories to an NFE program implemented in five districts of the Balochistan province of Pakistan. These districts are Chaghai, Chaman, Kharan, Killa Abdullah, and Pishin.ⁱ The NFE program chosen, the TEACH program, has been in implementation since 2019 via a consortium of NGOs, including International Rescue Committee (IRC), Balochistan Education Foundation (BEF), Developments in Literacy (DIL), and Tameer e Khalaq Foundation (TKF). The districts selected for the NFE program were chosen through discussions within the consortium, as well as discussions with the local Balochistan government via IRC.

From these districts of Balochistan, we collected a sample of semi-structured interviews of 30 students, 3 students from each NFE center and two centers in each of the five districts that we surveyed.ⁱⁱ Interviewers for the study were selected from a group of field monitors already hired for a separate health-related project of TKF, so that we could minimize bias in collecting data from students in the centers. The interviewers were local to each district, and they spoke to the students in local languages to allow for ease in communication and to ensure students felt comfortable. All interviewers identified as women, which was crucial to accommodate for social norms.

Semi-structured interviews were used in this study for a few reasons. First, data collected from semi-structured interviews provides the most amount of relevant information from respondents. The general outline of the questions allows interviews to guide respondents towards providing information relevant to the study (Magaldi and Berler, 2020). However, since the questions are often open-ended the interviewer has the ability to add information that they deem relevant, but the researcher may not have thought of prior to the interview stage (Magaldi and Berler, 2020). Furthermore, conducting semi-structured interviews allows each interviewer to present their own viewpoint without being influenced by the answers of other respondents, as they may be in a focus group discussion (Adams 2015).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To interview students enrolled in NFE programs to understand their educational background and motivations for continued attendance.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

1. Girls will have limited educational backgrounds, with no more than two years of education, due to

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- 1.1. Few available public schools and
 - 1.2. Conservative communities removing them from schools.
 2. Girls will be intrinsically motivated to join the NFE program.
 3. Girls will want to stay in the NFE program if there are significant pull factors (such as friends enrolled in the program or other contacts that are pursuing an education).
 4. Girls will want to continue pursuing an education as opposed to alternative pathways such as technical vocational training.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Our study used a qualitative research design. We conducted 30 semi-structured interviews with girls enrolled in 10 different centers of five districts in Balochistan – 3 students were interviewed from each center. Each interview lasted approximately 10-15 minutes, and consisted of around 16-20 questions, depending on the students' responses. The interview questions were divided into 5 different sections, addressing demographic and educational background, motivation, learning, future plans and any additional information. Answers were collected and entered into an online Google form. Then these responses were analyzed using content analysis. The analysis involved discerning common themes, repeated phrasing and similarities or differences in the pull factors that the girls identified.

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Responses from the interviews provided strong evidence in favor of most hypotheses. Girls did have limited educational backgrounds, although a few of them had up to 4 years of education - nonetheless, as most students were in the 10-12 age range, this was still less education than they should have received. Almost all students expressed the desire to learn/study as the reason for joining the program, and confirmed that the nature of the NFE program (local, affordable and integrating locals to teach) allowed them to join this school compared to others, implying that extrinsic factors had previously limited their education, not intrinsic factors. While we hypothesized that pull factors such as friendships would be a key reason for wanting to stay in the program, most students expressed the desire to continue studying and receiving free education as their motivations to stay in the program; however, almost all students had old friends and made new ones through the center, which may have influenced their levels of enjoyment while in the program and therefore affected their desire to stay. Finally, as hypothesized, almost all students stated that they wished to continue studying, rather than expressing a desire to work or stay home. A more detailed, section by section, content analysis is detailed below.

Demographic and Educational Background

As mentioned above, the five districts we conducted interviews in were Chaghi,

Chaman, Kharan, KillaAbdullah, and Pishin. For each district we collected data from two centers.

Table 1: Districts and associated centers included in the study

District	Center 1	Center 2
Chaghi	Killi Dawood Abad Chilghazi	Killi Naeem Abad Dalbandin Saddar
Chaman	Landi Karez	Killi Haji Nazar Muhmmad
Kharan	Hindu Muhalla	Nok Abad
Killa Abdullah	Killi Mama Rustam Habibzai	Killi Kondal Piralizai
Pishin	Killi Allah Abad	Killi Haji Razaq

The age range of the respondents is 8-14. The youngest respondent is from Chaghi and there are several respondents from various districts aged 14. Out of the 30 respondents we interviewed, only 5 respondents had attended schools before joining the TEACH NFE program. 3 of those 5 respondents were from the same center in district Chaman. The reason for attending schools before was either that there was an educational facility close by or that the interviewee really enjoyed learning. On the other hand, the main reasons for not attending school before joining this program were: lack of access to nearby facilities, poverty, low parental interest and occasionally other responsibilities bestowed on the children (such as caring for their siblings).

In relation to our first hypothesis, that girls attending the program would have limited educational backgrounds with no more than 2 years of education, we find that the respondents did in fact have limited educational backgrounds. However, some girls had received 3 to 4 years of educational instruction before joining the program, which was not predicted. Additionally, while the first reason, of limited availability of public institutions, was a common one cited by students, the communities' values did not seem to pose a barrier to educational instruction for most girls.

Motivations to Join

When asked about their motivation to join the program, students' reasons were overwhelmingly either out of expressing a desire to learn more ("I was interested in learning") or otherwise studying further ("To get an education"). Other reasons were that the centers were free and provided free studying materials, and that it was a nearby location. One student stated that they saw their friends learning to read and write and wanted to join. This supports our second hypothesis, as there was already a desire to study that was simply facilitated by the presence of the NFE program. As a follow-up, students were asked about what they hoped to achieve by joining the program; however, students tended to answer the question with the benefits of the program. The

most common answer was that students were learning to read and write (in both English and Urdu), with a few students crediting the center and teachers for teaching them in a way that facilitated learning. In terms of benefits, common answers were the free facilities, approachable teachers, and the overall opportunity to learn.

All students confirmed that their parents had agreed to send them to the program. Reasons for parental consent were that parents wished for their children to learn something new or receive an education, not having to pay for the education, the center being nearby (therefore making it safer and cheaper than public schools as transport is expensive), and the teacher being a local female who was often known to the family. When students were asked if they had to convince their parents to join the program, 17 said they did and 13 of them said they did not. Still, when asked a follow-up question on if it was easier to convince them to let the students go to this program as compared to a conventional school, all students agreed, with reasons being the same as those discussed above, as well as the fact that other family members and friends in the village were going to the NFE center as well. This relates to our third hypothesis, where friends and family act as a significant pull factor for the students.

Factors behind continued enrollment

After inquiring about their motivations to join the program, the interview questions centered on the reasons for the continued enrollment of the girls. In discussing whether they were enjoying the program, every student stated that they were enjoying the program. The most common reasons for enjoying the program were the teacher's positive attitude and abilities, the joy of learning, studying and playing with their classmates, making good friends at the center, and the classroom facilities which included free books and beautiful charts. Students stated that they continued attending the program because of a desire for progress, access to a free and quality education, the closer location of the center, the teachers' abilities, and a general interest in learning.

When asked if they have close friends in the program from before joining the program, 27 out of 30 students responded that they did, whereas 3 students responded that they did not have close friends from before, enrolled in the program with them. As a follow up question, the students were asked how they felt about attending school with their close friends. The students said that having friends in the program made it easier to travel to and from the center, they were able to play with their friends, study together with their friends, and compete to perform better. When asked if the students had made any new friends in the center, 25 students responded that they had whereas 5 stated that they had not. Of the 30 respondents, 24 noted that their neighbors or siblings are also getting an education. However, 6 stated that none of their family members or neighbors were getting an education. Some of the students that said they were not

getting an education, did note that their siblings were going to madrassas instead. As such, with regards to the third hypothesis, we can note that there are significant pull factors including friends enrolled at the program and the teachers at the center. However, the educational attainment of other contacts did not factor into the decision making for attending the program, even though most girls had other contacts pursuing an education.

Future Plans

Our last hypothesis was that girls would want to continue pursuing an education as opposed to alternative pathways for involvement in training. The most common response from students, when they were asked about their future plans, was indeed that they would want to continue their education. Some students elaborated that if they were not able to continue their school in the current center they would join another center or similar program, while others specified that they would need parental support. Some students said that they wanted to pursue a career as a teacher after this program. Others still were not sure about their future plans or did not have any. As such, it did not come as a surprise to us that when they were asked about whether they would continue their education under favorable circumstances, every student said that they would, with some adding the caveat of parental permission.

DISCUSSION

The present study allowed us to examine the motivations and interests of girls enrolled in NFE programs after removing important external barriers. Firstly, as stated in previous reports, these interviews made it clear that non-formal education programs such TEACH, remove typical hurdles to acquiring an education in rural areas, which actively helped in getting parental consent and made the girls more comfortable and excited to learn. This study will fill the gap in the literature on non-formal education.

Secondly, all students stated that they were enjoying the program, with a large portion stating they were enjoying studying and learning to read and write, and all students expressed a desire to continue staying in the program to complete their education. Furthermore, some responses showed initiative beyond simply studying; at the end of our interviews, when asked if they had anything else to add, some of the respondents offered that they would like to become teachers and open a center as well. Others requested that the center be continued and the students provided with a uniform so that the center can feel more like a school and they can further their education. These responses provide insights into the experiences of the students. However, they also highlight substantive topics that are under researched. Future scholars could explore the trajectory from student to teacher in NFE programs or investigate the effect that a uniform can have in cultivating a school environment in these centers. Additionally, scholars can compare programs that provide a monetary incentive with those that do

not, to gauge the completion of the programs under both circumstances.

NGOs designing NFE programs in the future should prioritize decreasing average distances to NFE centers, creating more opportunities for co-curricular engagement, and encouraging group activities in the curriculum. First, while societal factors are often assumed to be the deterrent in allowing girls to pursue an education, our research shows that conservative values did not influence decisions about whether girls will attend the NFE programs. Rather, as reported by the students, community members were more concerned about having to travel larger distances to attend educational programs. Second, as the demands of the students indicate, including “fun” co-curricular activities could diversify the material taught in the current programs and enrich the experiences of the students enrolled. Lastly, since pull factors such as making new friends encourage continued enrollment, NGOs could craft curriculums around group activities that may allow for more peer-to-peer interactions among students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NGOs designing NFE programs in the future should prioritize decreasing average distances to NFE centers, creating more opportunities for co-curricular engagement, and encouraging group activities in the curriculum. First, while societal factors are often assumed to be the deterrent in allowing girls to pursue an education, our research shows that conservative values did not influence decisions about whether girls will attend the NFE programs. Rather, as reported by the students, community members were more concerned about having to travel larger distances to attend educational programs. Second, as the demands of the students indicate, including “fun” co-curricular activities could diversify the material taught in the current programs and enrich the experiences of the students enrolled. Lastly, since pull factors such as making new friends encourage continued enrollment, NGOs could craft curriculums around group activities that may allow for more peer-to-peer interactions among students.

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