



EUROPEAN UNION



SUCCESS



Research Brief

Outcomes of the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills (ALNS) initiative under EU-SUCCESS Programme in Rural Sindh

Despite 'right to education' being declared a fundamental right in 2010, [illiteracy](#) continues to be a major problem in Pakistan, where adult [literacy](#) rate is about 62.3%, translating into an estimated 60 million illiterate people in the country. In rural Sindh, the education situation shows a dismal picture as only [20% of the women](#) and 52% of the men are literate, while the rest are deprived of basic education. The large out of school population is another critical issue for Sindh, with more than 6 million children (ages 5-16 years) not in school. Rural women in Sindh are largely disadvantaged as they face multifaceted challenges of poverty, gender inequality, lack of decision-making rights and a lack of access to education, while living in a strict traditional and cultural environment.

The [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\)-4](#) aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. [Pakistan](#) has committed to achieving SDG 4.6 by 2030, so that all adults, male and female, achieve literacy and numeracy. To address this challenge, the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills (ALNS) initiative was launched under Sindh Union Council and Community Economic Strengthening Support (SUCCESS)¹ Programme, funded by the European Union (EU), and implemented by three partner Rural Support Programmes (RSPs)². The ALNS initiative used Government of Sindh approved curriculum and textbooks developed with the technical assistance of JICA. The course was designed to run for eight months (July 2021 - June 2022) and was based on the concept of 3Rs – Reading, Writing and Arithmetic skills by teaching the basic subjects of English, Sindhi, and Mathematics. It was specifically initiated for the members of the Community Intuitions (CIs)³ or other female members from their households in the eight districts of the SUCCESS programme. A total of 1,453 centres were established and 35,530 students were enrolled, with an average of 24 students per centre.

This research brief focuses on a study that assesses the ALNS initiative under SUCCESS programme carried out by DevTrio Consultants during June 2022. The full report is available here: <https://success.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Assessment-of-Adult-Literacy-and-Numeracy-Skills-ALNS-2022.pdf>.

Methodology

The 'Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills Assessment Report' used a mixed methods approach which employed qualitative and quantitative research tools for data collection. A total of 16 centres - 2 from each of the eight districts of the SUCCESS Programme - were selected for quantitative data collection. At each of the 16 centres, one teacher and seven learners were interviewed, thus bringing the total up to 16 teachers 112 learners. Focus group discussions were also conducted with these teachers and learners at

¹ The SUCCESS Programme is being implemented in rural areas of eight districts of Sindh, namely Larkana, Kambar-Shahdadkot, Jamshoro, Dadu, Sujawal, Matiari, Tando Mohammad Khan and Tando Allahyar.

² RSPs: Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO), Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) and National Rural Support Programme (NRSP).

³ Community Institutions (CIs) such as Community Organisations (COs), Village Organisations (VOs) and Local Support Organisations (LSOs) are formed through social mobilisation and these organisations are run by rural women.



each centre. As part of the Learning Outcomes Assessment, 80 learners were assessed for English, Mathematics and Sindhi subjects at the selected centres. Selection of centres was done by the respective RSPs while the learners were randomly selected from different age groups by the assessment team.

Key Findings

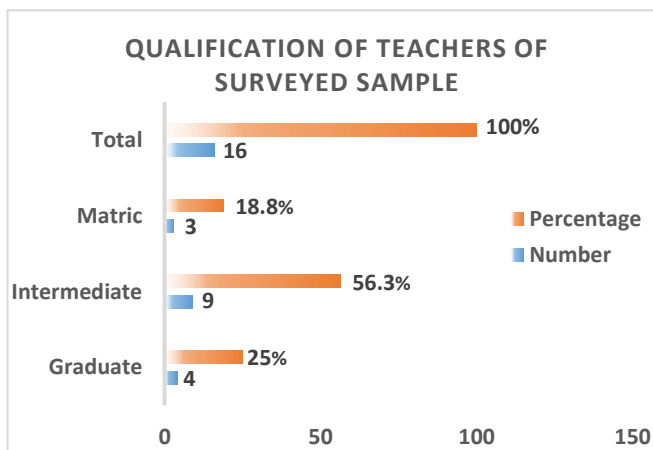
A Unique Learning Opportunity for Rural Women

The ALNS initiative under the SUCCESS programme was based on the core criteria that learners ought to be either a SUCCESS Community Organisation (CO) member or a female family member of a CO member. The overall percentage shows that 83.9% learners were family members of CO members, whereas the rest were CO members themselves. Of the total learners, 96% had no previous education. A large proportion of the learners (60%) were homemakers, 22% engaged in farming and 18% in handicraft or other income generation activities. The average age of learners was low (23.2 years), with 80% in the age group of 15 to 30 years and almost half of all learners (48%) between the ages of 15 to 18 years. Drop-out rate at the sampled centres was low (2.2%), occurring mainly because of family migration, marriage of learner and pregnancy or lactating mothers.

Experienced Teachers, Equipped Centres and Flexible Class Timings

According to the assessment study, all ALNS centres are equipped with the necessary facilities such as availability of floor mats and drinking water (100%), availability of latrine facility (94%), sufficient space for 20-25 persons (84%) and electricity (73%). Both teachers and learners (94%) confirmed that the schedule of ALNS was prepared through their consultation. About 75% of the timing of ALNS classes was scheduled after 1:00 p.m. or in the second half of the day, when both students and teachers were free after completing their daily routine in the morning.

Of the 16 surveyed teachers, 19% individuals were matric pass, 56% intermediate pass and 25% were graduation degree holders and average prior teaching experience was 3.6 years. Per attendance records, both teachers and students remained fairly regular in attending classes.



Source: Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills Assessment Report

Learners held an overall positive opinion about their experience with the ALNS course and the teaching methods adopted.

A large majority responded that teachers maintained a conducive environment for learning and gave adequate examples and exercises while teaching. Overall, almost 96% of the sampled learners were 'satisfied' or 'satisfied to some extent' about the different aspects of the course.

Excellent Performance of Learners

A final assessment of the learners was conducted, in which a large percentage (91%) of the learners were able to obtain more than 70% marks. On the other hand, only 3% of the learners obtained less than 40%

marks, while rest of the learners scored in the middle ranking. Interestingly, subject-wise, a higher percentage of learners performed the best in English, followed by mathematics, and then Sindhi.

Distribution of Learners in Grading Categories

Subject	Ranking	% & Average
English	Highest	93.8%
	Medium	3.8%
	Lowest	2.5%
	Avg. obtained %	90.95
Mathematics	Highest	92.5%
	Medium	3.8%
	Lowest	3.8%
	Avg. obtained %	89.3
Sindhi	Highest	81.0%
	Medium	13.8%
	Lowest	5.0%
	Avg. obtained %	85.1
All 3 subjects	Highest	91.3%
	Medium	5.0%
	Lowest	3.8%
	Avg. obtained %	87.62

Source: Adult Literacy and Numeracy Skills Assessment Report

Benefits of ALNS Initiative

The ALNS centres prove to be social hubs for women to gather in one place and interact. The learners reported feeling a sense of social prestige as a result of attending the ALNS programme. They realised the importance of reading and writing as living in communities with low literacy, the ALNS programme made them useful to other members of the community who could not to read and write. In addition, they could now also read signboards when visiting hospitals in cities, read expiry dates on medicines and the required quantity of dose for a particular age group. They also now used cell phones as they understood the text functions. They could also read messages sent by Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) which was not the case in past and required support from others.

Conclusion

Rural women face difficulty in taking part in income generating activities and personal development activities due to their inability of reading, writing and doing basic calculations. In this situation, the presence of ALNS centres in rural communities where girls have been deprived of basic education creates a ray of hope. The sustainability and continuation of these ALNS centres will contribute more to increasing the literacy level of women and can reduce the number of out of school children, especially girls, which could ultimately lead to women's economic empowerment and personal development.

Research Brief by Nadir Ali Shah, Field Researcher, SUCCESS - RSPN