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The foundation of any effective education policy is embedded in data and information resources. The ASER household survey and children's assessment are the first valuable data resources in Pakistan to have given us the opportunity to explore the patterns of children's access to school in relation to the dynamics of social and income inequalities. This ASER data is a free-to-access resource, giving researchers across the globe the opportunity to maximise the potential of this information. Our team at the School of Education, Durham University are experts in the use of secondary data resources and we are currently leading ESRC Secondary Data Initiative projects on investigating the patterns and kinds of poverty in the English schools using National Pupil Data in England. We have applied the same approaches to analysis with the ASER data, and have produced findings relevant to Pakistan such as clusters of poverty in schools and segregation of children in urban rural regions and private and public schools. This work in Pakistan is the first segregation analysis of poverty and children's school performance, which was possible only because of the availability of ASER data. We support ASER initiatives in Pakistan and especially encourage collecting the national sweeps of representative samples from households, children and schools each year. This data gives us valuable insights into poverty indicators, children's enrolment in schools and children's performance in basic literacy and numeracy.

We are building our partnership network with ASER and in this collaboration we are extending our assessment resources and expert knowledge in early childhood indicators of readiness for school (www.ipips.org) through Centre of Evaluation and Monitoring, Durham University. We are seeking funding for this project which for the first time in Pakistan will enable us to compare children's progress in Pakistan with children, of the same age, in countries such as Brazil, South Africa, England and Russia. This collaborating with ASER will benefit Pakistan which is listed in DAC, Low-Middle Income Countries and Territories and an ODA recipient. The findings from this project will have economic implications by producing evidence on what works for early childhood education in Pakistan and where in policy needs investment for long-term economic benefits. Effective and evidence-based interventions in early childhood development and education can target several challenges in Pakistan.