

Message from Federal Minister, Ministry of Education, Pakistan

It is indeed my pleasure to share this message on the occasion of the launch of the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Pakistan 2008. The Government of Pakistan through its Ministry of Education is committed to the philosophy and practice of Public Private Partnerships, a strategy which is well acknowledged as international best practice (World Bank Patrinos 2009 & Budding, B. et al. 2007). We welcome the ASER initiative by our civil society partners which will help us to know the learning levels of children of ages 3-16 in rural areas of Pakistan.

The Ministry of Education is committed to rigorously conducting students' achievement surveys for which the National Education Assessment System (NEAS) program has been fully operationalized with its 9 affiliated bodies across all provinces and areas in Pakistan. NEAS is planned as a sample-based national assessment for Grade 4 and Grade 8 levels, in four subjects: (Language, Mathematics, General Science, Social Studies). NEAS is intended not only to make public our progress on the quality challenge but also to help develop our national capacity for taking on board learning achievements of elementary level students. It also informs the national curriculum, texts books/learning material, teachers' capacity for engaging in meaningful teaching learning processes at the classroom level, assessment/examination methodologies and inevitably policy and sector plans formulation and reviews.

ASER Pakistan 2008 is a complementary household based survey in rural areas meant to assess learning level competencies for children aged 3 to 16 years in any type of school, non-formal program and also out of school. Such a survey is extremely useful for us, providing us with a reasonably complete picture of learning in rural areas for assessing numeracy and literacy skills equivalent up to grade II level in Urdu, Sindhi other local languages and English. We thank our partners who have launched this powerful tool and wish them the very best for ensuring a consistent annual ASER survey from 2010 — 2015. It will track progress or challenges faced by children in the above age group in their learning and also learning environments. It is heartening to know that experts and concerned citizens, who are the friends of education in Pakistan, are keen to extend their services so that the citizens living in our rural areas are able to access and understand what their children learn and what they ought to achieve.

We at the Ministry of Education, sincerely hope that ASER Pakistan under the South Asia Forum For Education Development (SAFED) will in times to come extend to urban areas and continue to provide us nuanced information about the public and private sector so that as partners we can radically improve our interventions for Quality Education for All in Pakistan.

A handwritten signature in black ink is written over a rectangular official stamp. The stamp contains the text: 'Sardar Assef Ahmed Ali', 'Federal Minister for Education', and 'Government of Pakistan', with 'Islamabad' written below. The date '20/3/10' is also visible on the stamp.

Sardar Assef Ahmed Ali,
Federal Minister, Education
March 2010