In February 2014, the Government of Pakistan and the UNESCO signed the Malala Funds-in-Trust agreement for establishing the overarching programme “Support to national capacity building to realize girls’ right to education in Pakistan”. The purpose of the programme is to support the government’s efforts in increasing access to and improving the quality of girls’ primary education through capacity building and targeted interventions at both institutional and community level. The Government of Pakistan has contributed US$ 10 million to the fund of which US$ 7 million are earmarked to UNESCO for a four years implementation.

Starting from July 2015, the programme is implemented through nine provincial and area specific sister projects in selected districts of four provinces (Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh), and four federal areas Pakistan Administered Kashmir, Federally Administered Tribal Areas - FATA, Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad Capital territory-ICT). These projects aim at achieving the following three objectives:

(a) Increase girls’ enrolment in the primary schools in marginalized communities through mobilization of local communities and advocacy.

(b) Improve retention and quality of girls’ primary education in the marginalized communities through improvement in school physical and learning environment.

(c) Improve the capacity of relevant provincial and district education officials to create an enabling school environment for girls’ education.

The programme is in progress in 14 very marginalized districts of the country selected in consultation with concerned education counterparts. Basic indicators for education, such as literacy rate, enrolment and retention of girls, and level of learning outcomes in primary grades are quite low in each selected district.

Each province and area based project has three integrated components: (a) improving girls’ access through social mobilization and advocacy, (b) improving retention through improvement in school physical and learning environments — activation of parents-teachers committees (PTCs), school management committees (SMCs) and teachers training in multi-grade teaching and activity-based learning and, (c) capacity building of education officials at district, provincial and national level to create an enabling environment for girls’ education. All projects are implemented through local civil society organizations (CSOs) as implementing partners in consultation with national, provincial and area education departments.