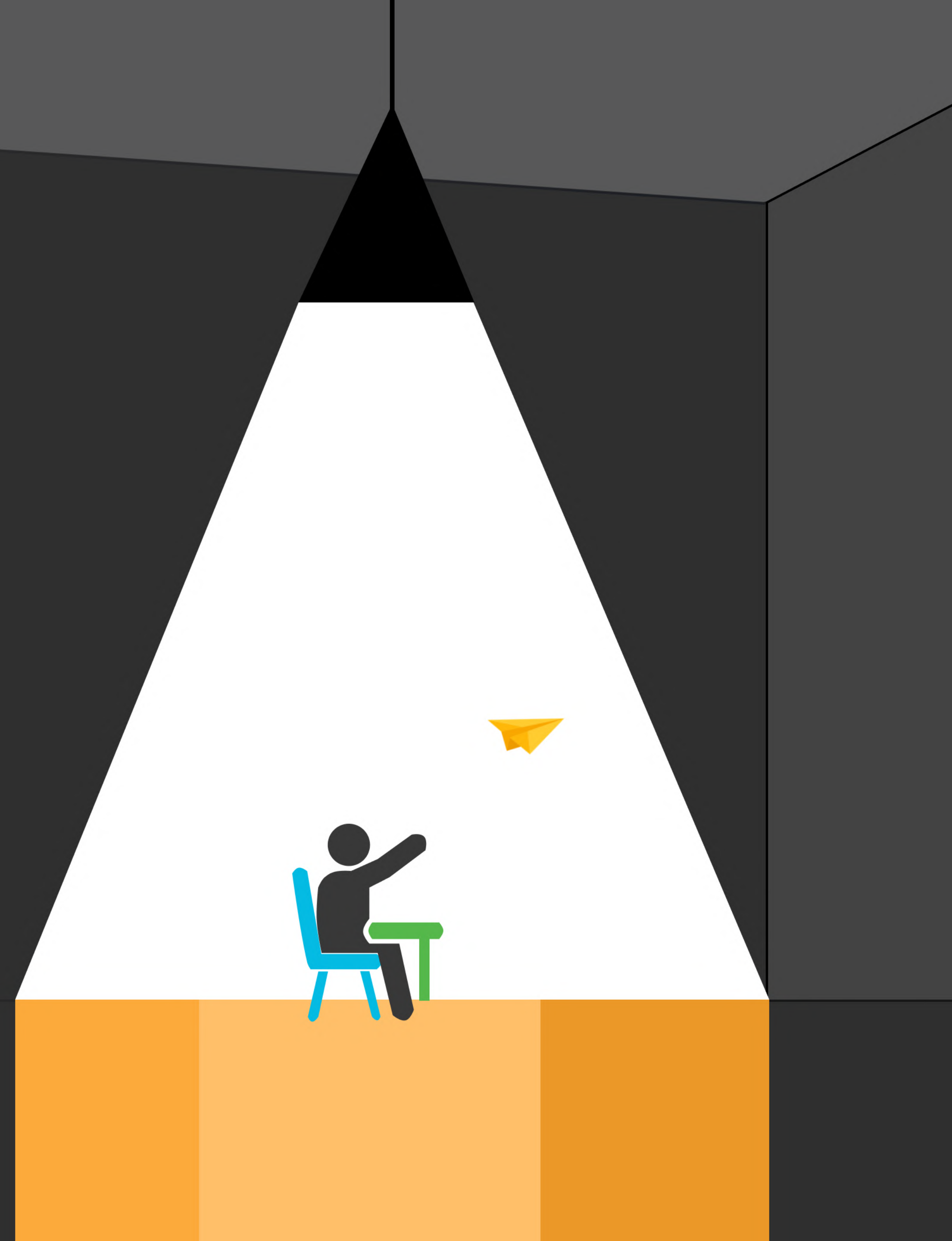


Towards Learning

Using behavioral insights to activate
parental engagement

March 2024



Overview

One of the keys to solving this crisis?

The parental role in learning must be redefined via the 'Learning Nexus'

! Pakistan has a two-fold education crisis

26 million children are out of school

43 million children in school are not learning as much as they should

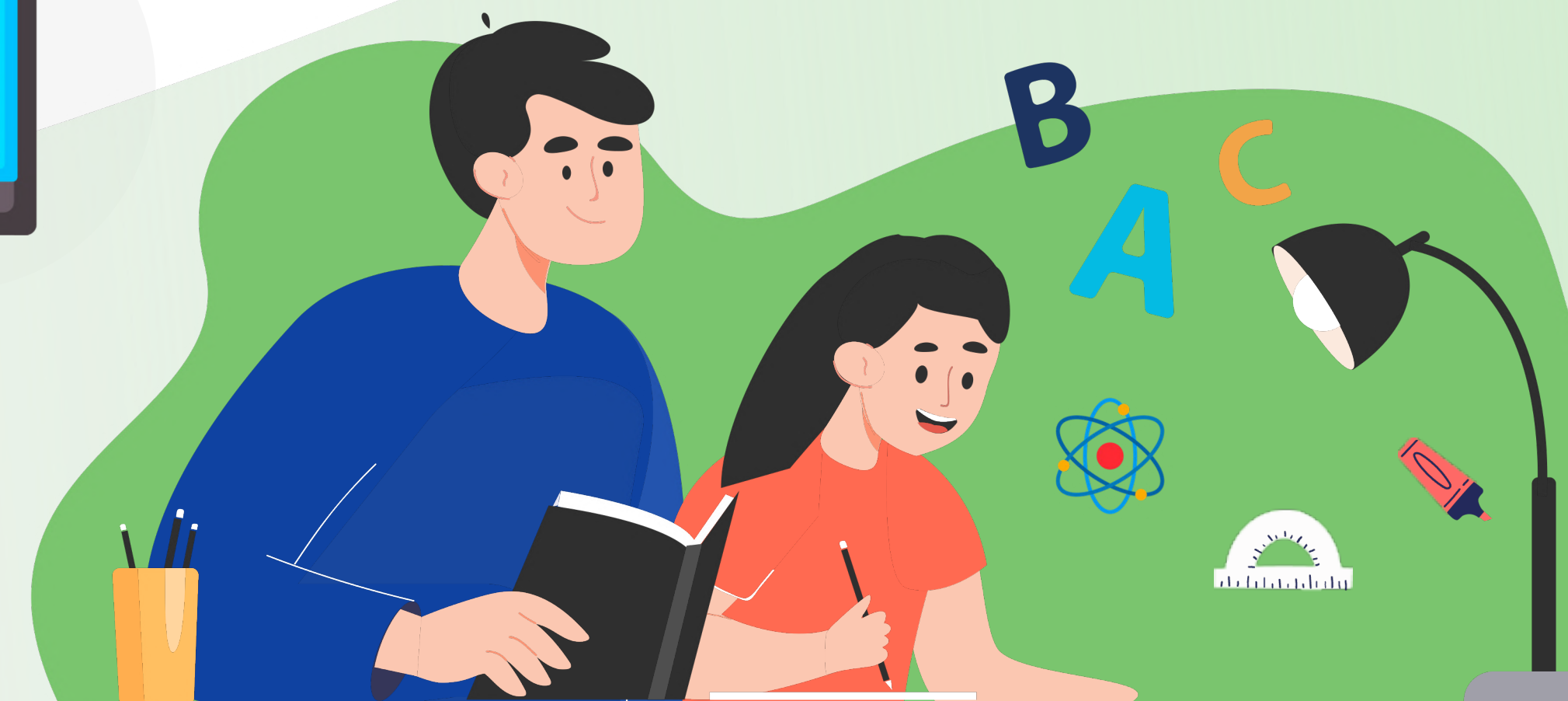
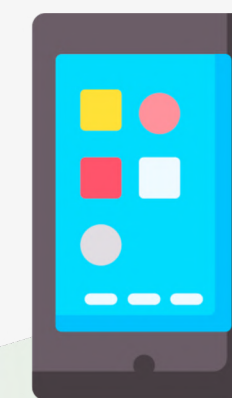
Parental engagement needs to be seen as a force multiplier to catalyse reforms

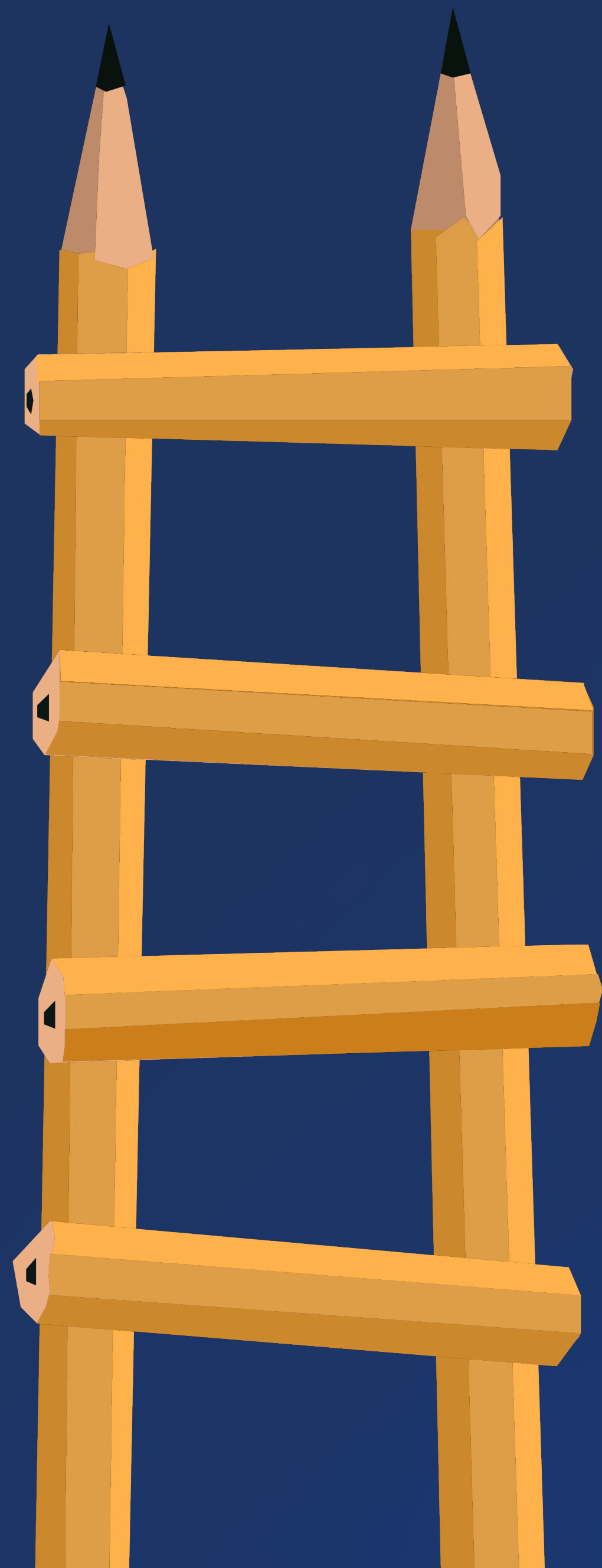
The system requires a purpose-level reset to focus on outcomes through in and out of school practices

Policy needs to focus on 'learning synapses' in everyday interactions

Parents must be enabled to become active learning partners

- 1 More data and insights to understand learning science
- 2 Infuse education policy and delivery with Behavioural Insights
- 3 Design and implement an EdTech behaviour change campaign
- 4 Include parents in a national movement for learning



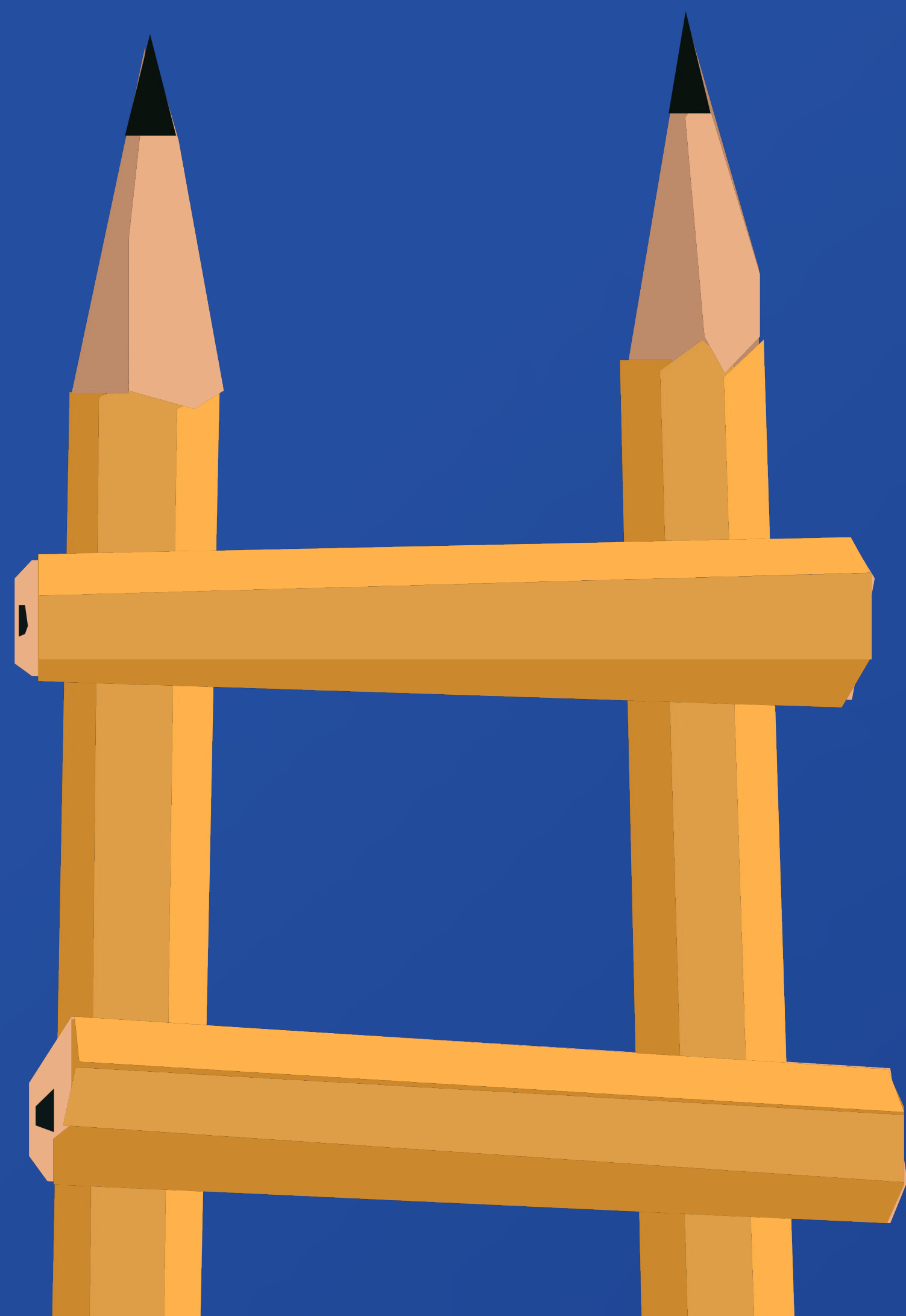


1. Pakistan vs Learning: An Unfair Contest

2. Tabadlab's Approach to Understanding Parents & Learning

3. Unpacking the Contradiction: Parents vs Learning

4. Catalysing Learning Recovery in Pakistan



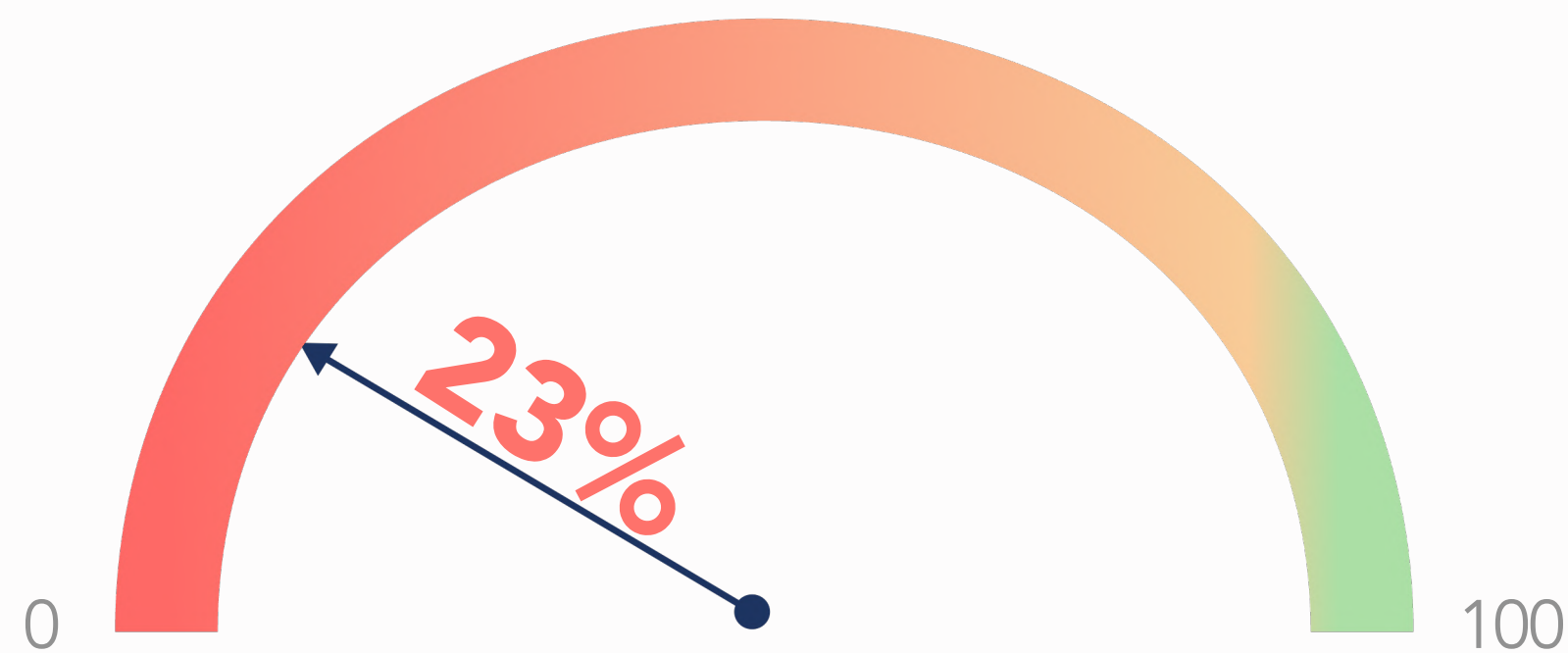
1. Pakistan vs Learning: An Unfair Contest

Pakistan has performed poorly across ALL national and international benchmarks for **learning**.

Over decades.

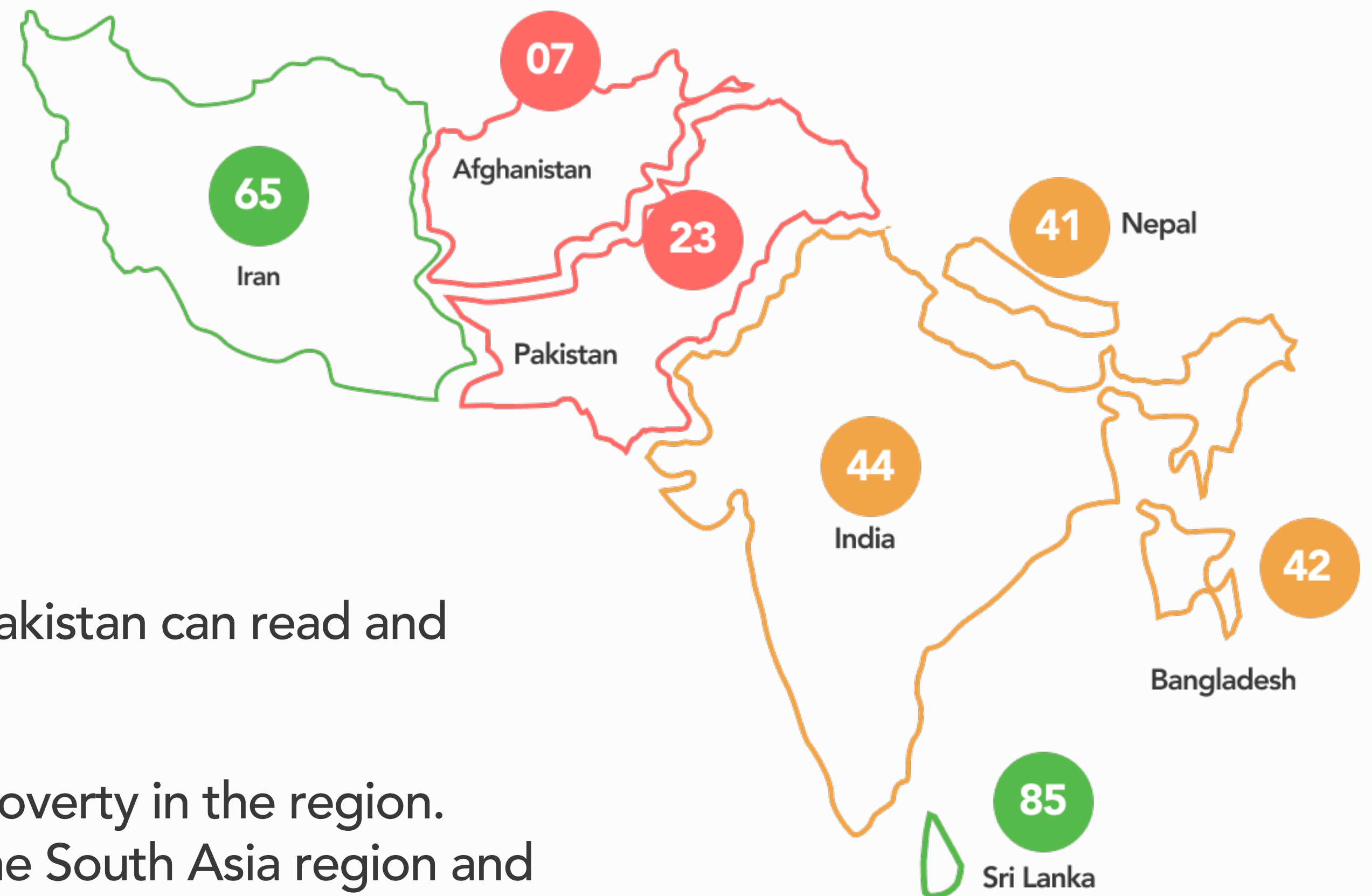
Learning Poverty

Pakistan has a two-fold education crisis: out-of-school children and poor learning outcomes. The result is a massive human capital gap: a large young population with low learning levels.



Only **23%** of students at late primary age (10) in Pakistan can read and understand an age-appropriate text.

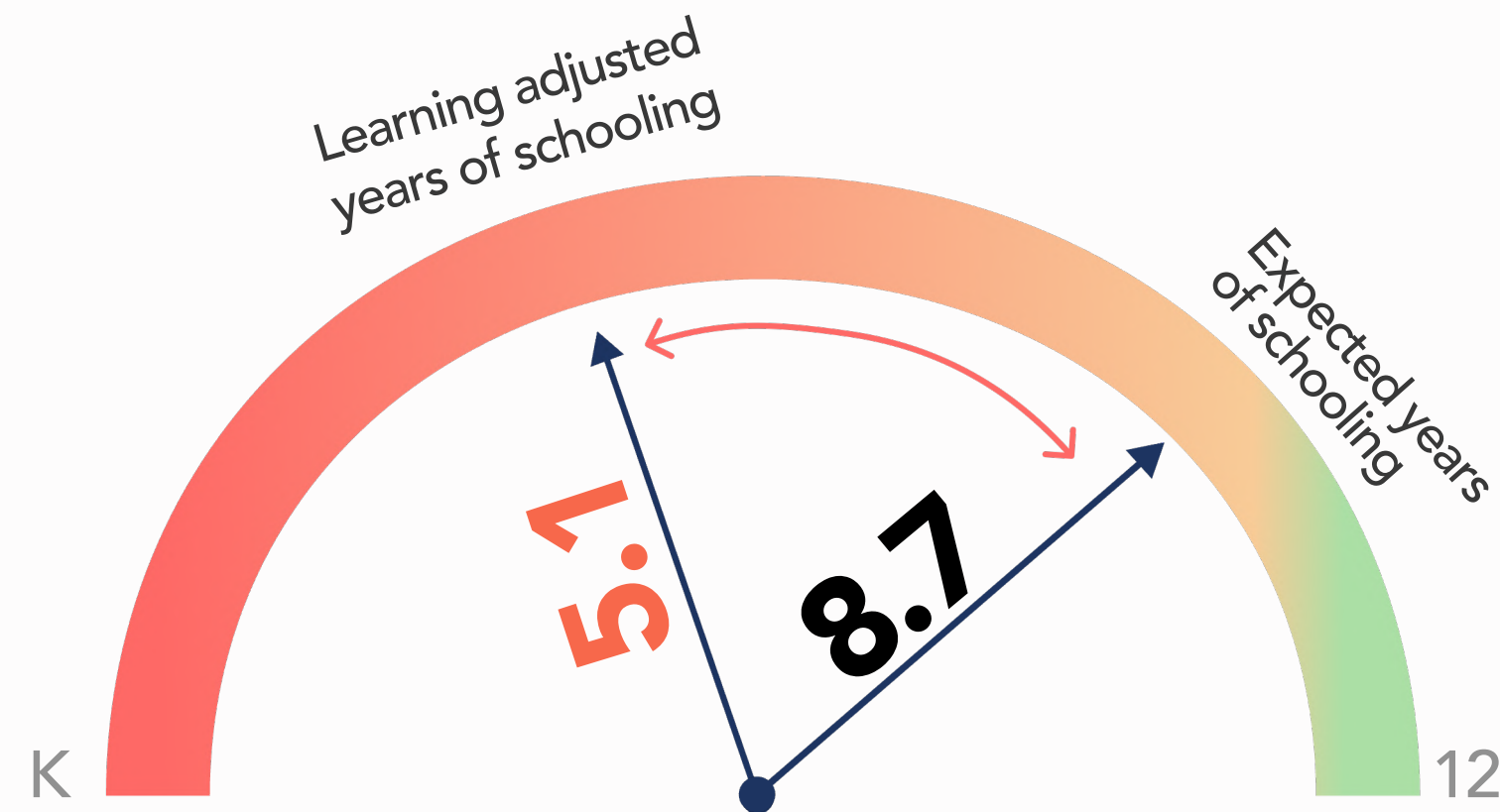
Pakistan has the **second highest** rate of learning poverty in the region. This number is **18%** higher than the average for the South Asia region and **17%** higher than the average for lower middle-income countries.



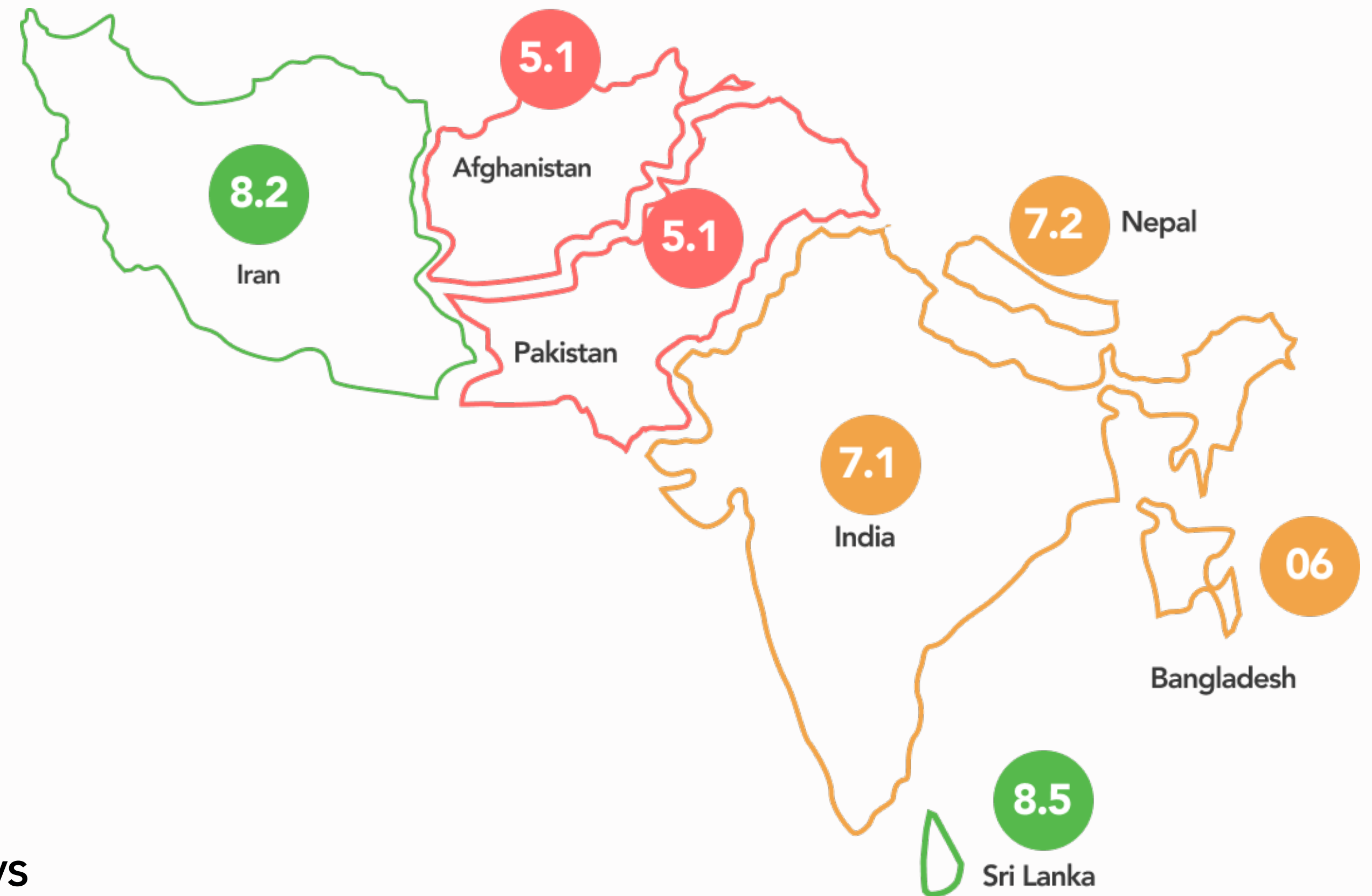
Learning Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS)

Pakistan has at least 26 million out-of-school children.
The children who attend school are learning significantly lower than their grade-level.

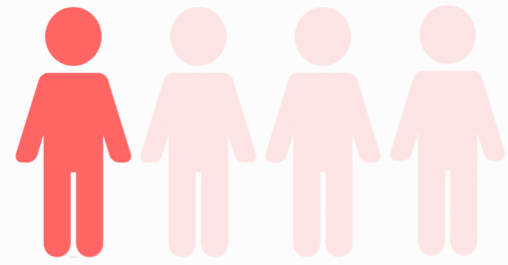
A Pakistani student spends **3.6 years** in school without learning!



Girls lose an additional **0.6 years** compared to boys



Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

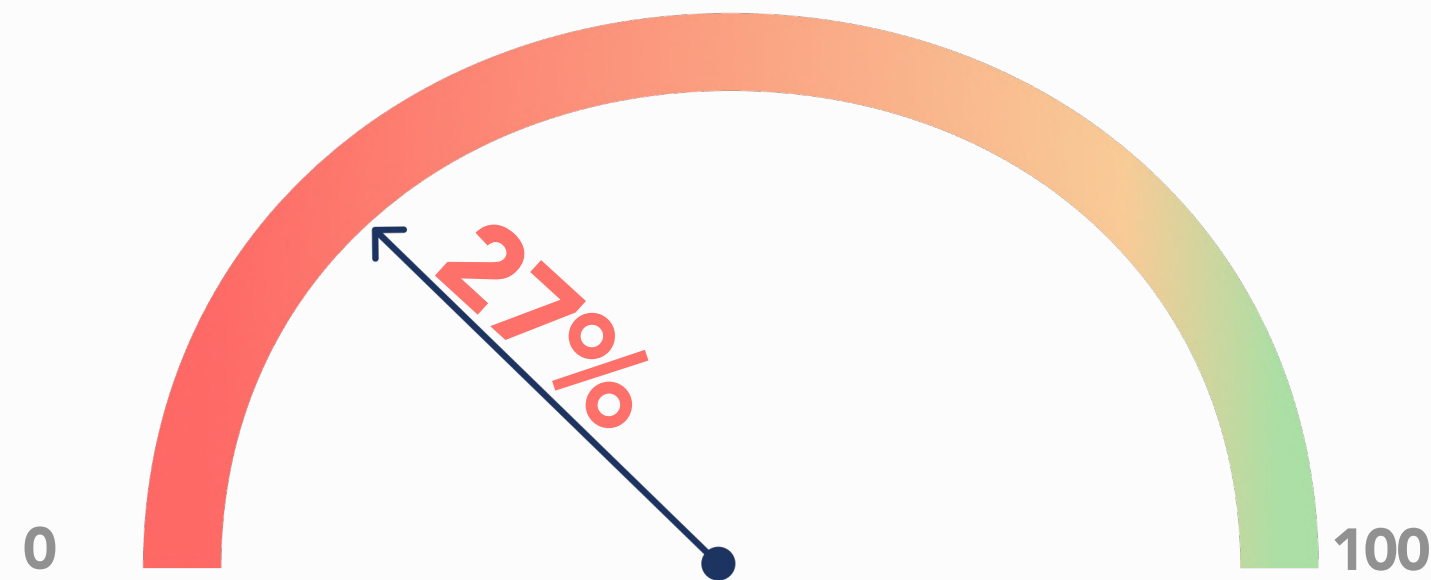
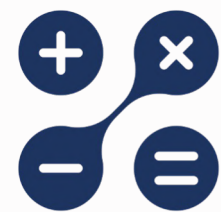


Only **one out of four** Pakistani students met the minimum international proficiency standard in mathematics and science.

64 63



Pakistan was the second-lowest ranked country in the 2019 TIMSS assessment.



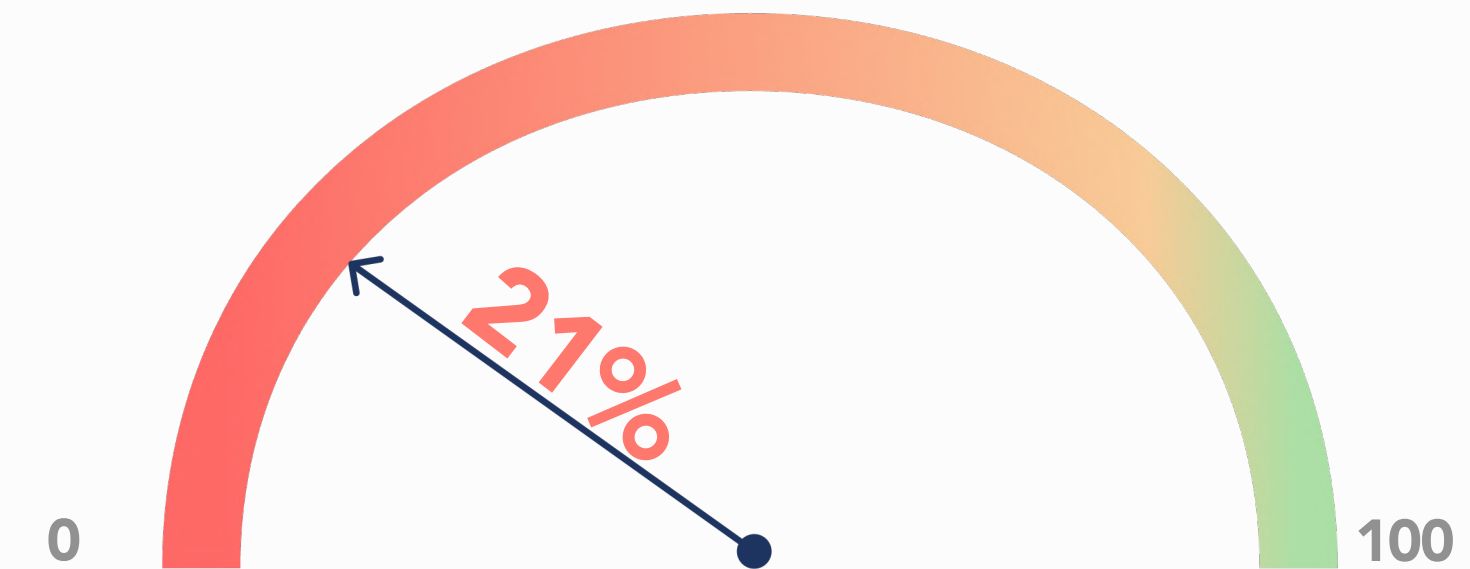
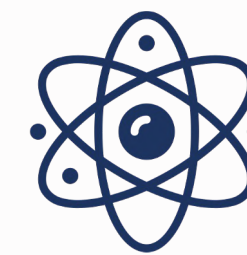
ONLY 27% of Grade 4 students met the minimum international benchmark in Maths (add, subtract, multiply or divide single or two-digit numbers)

Average Score

550

Pakistan's Score

328



ONLY 21% of Grade 4 students met the minimum international benchmark in Science (understanding of concepts or knowledge of foundational science facts)

Average Score

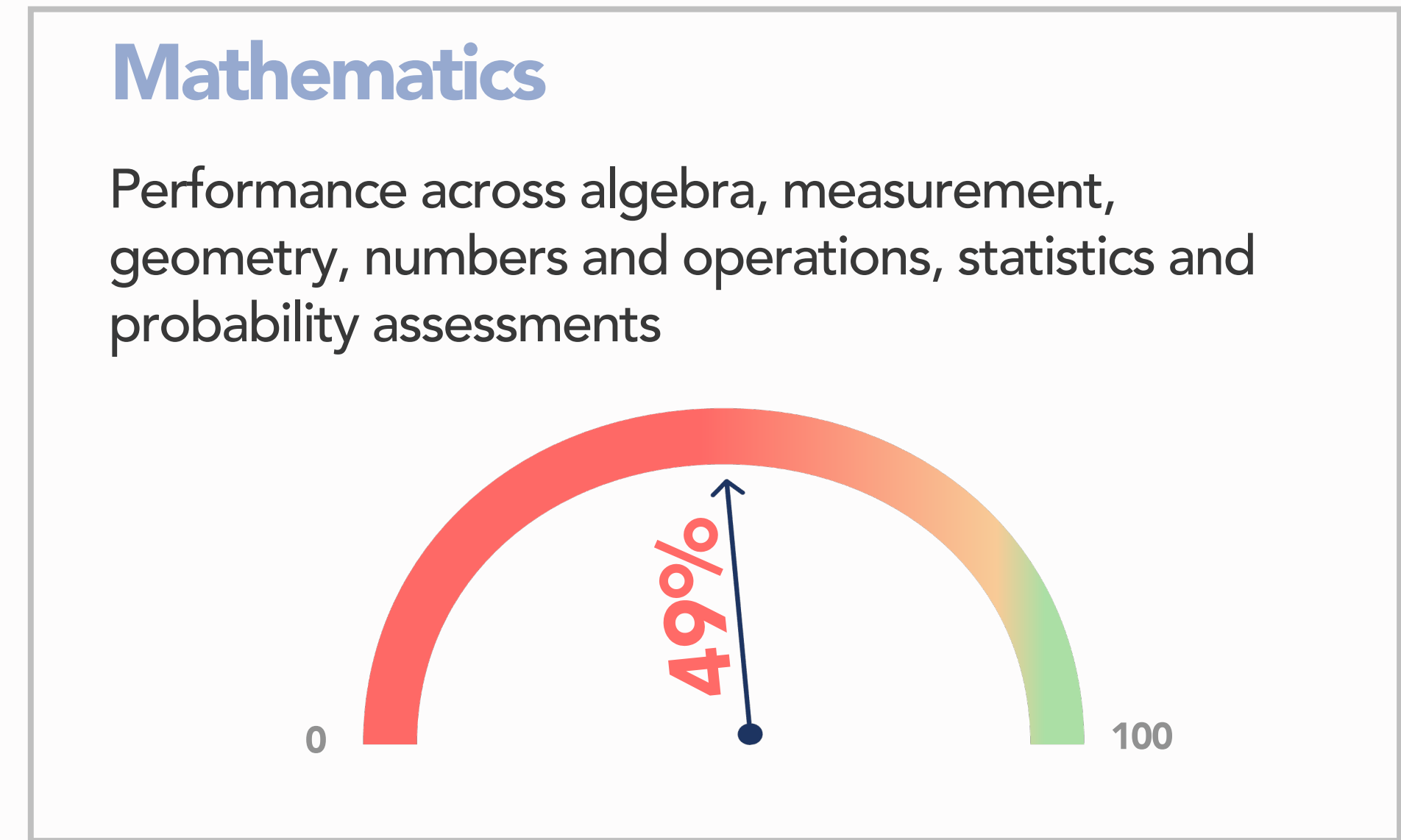
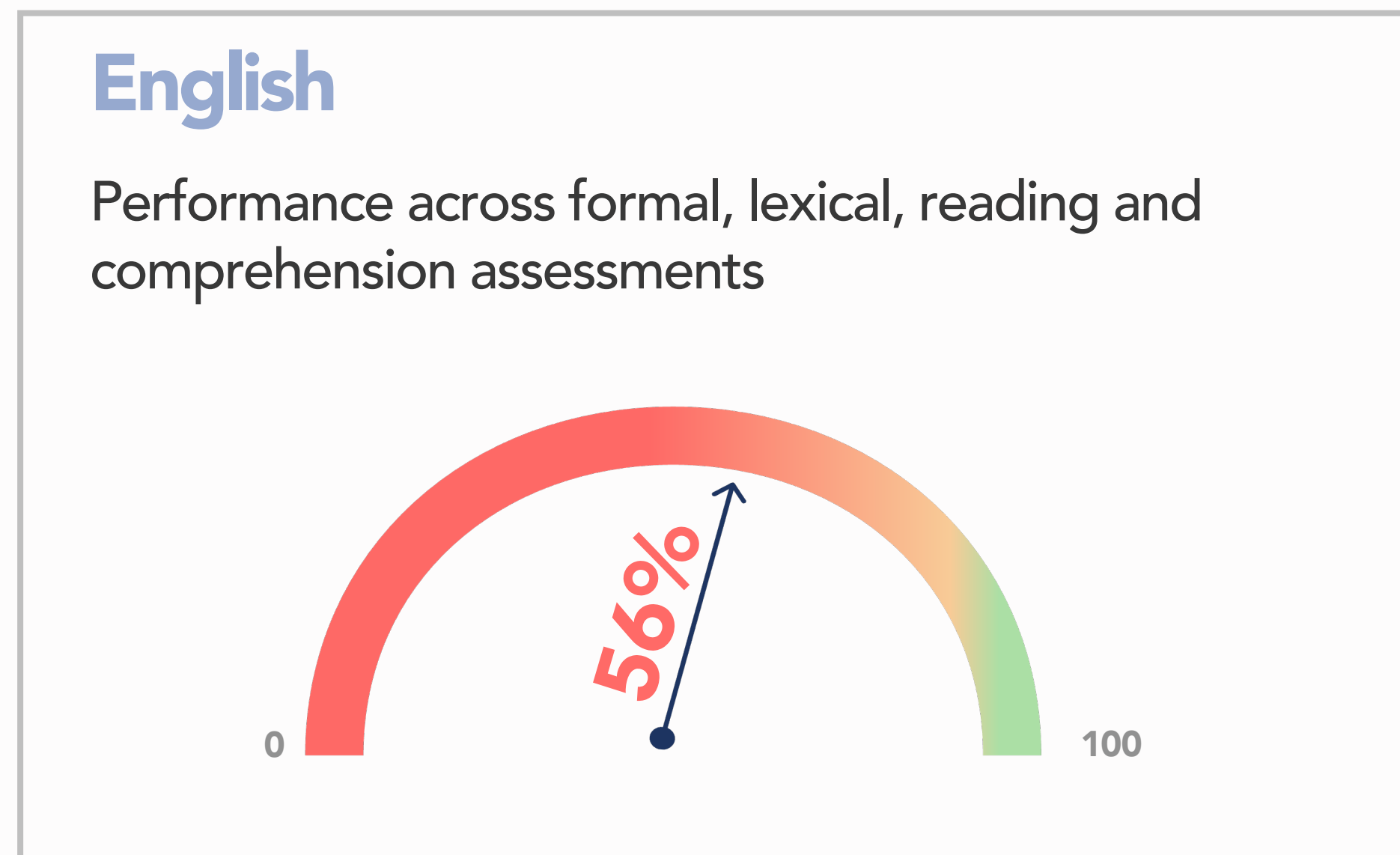
500

Pakistan's Score

290

National Achievement Test (NAT)

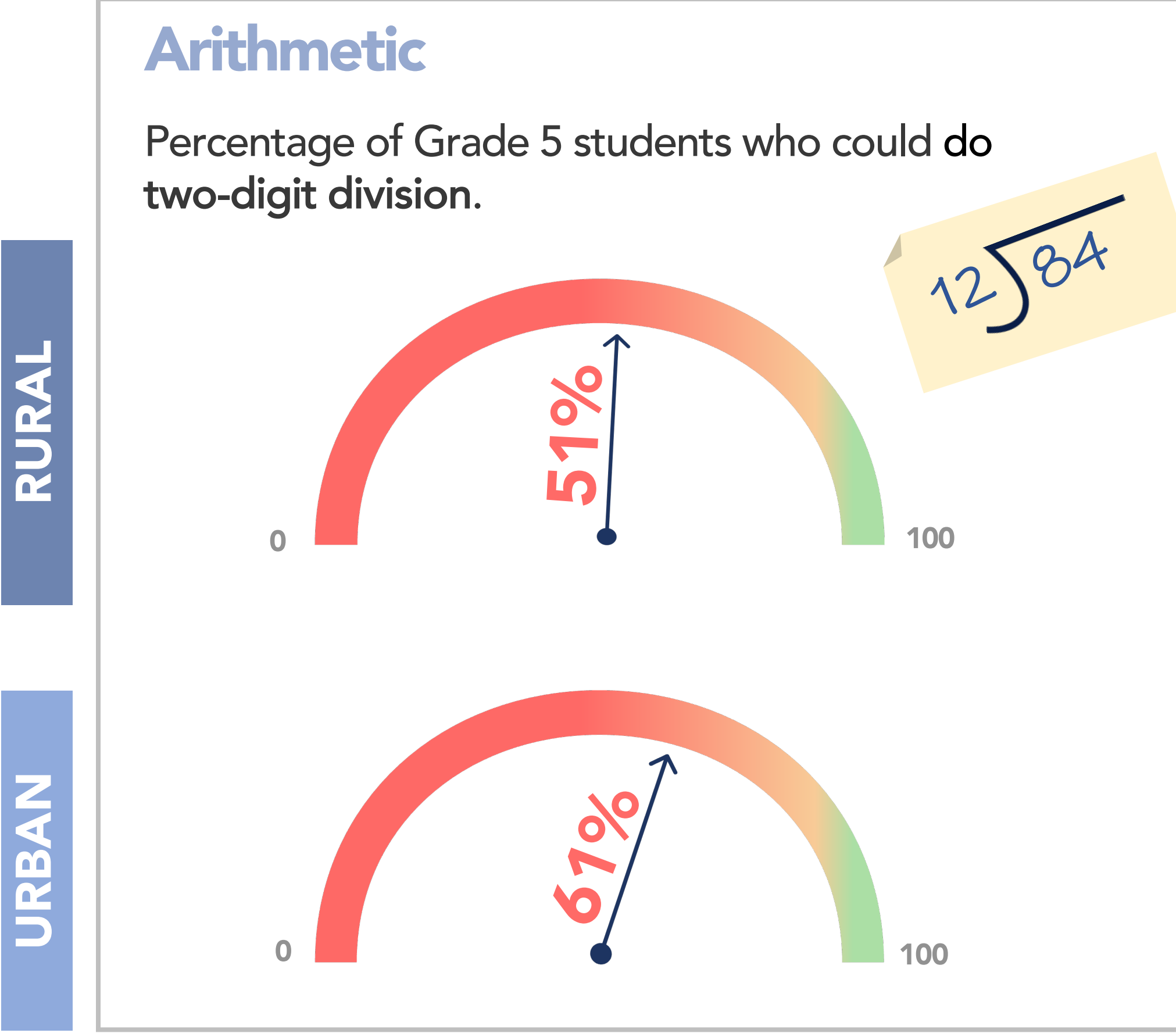
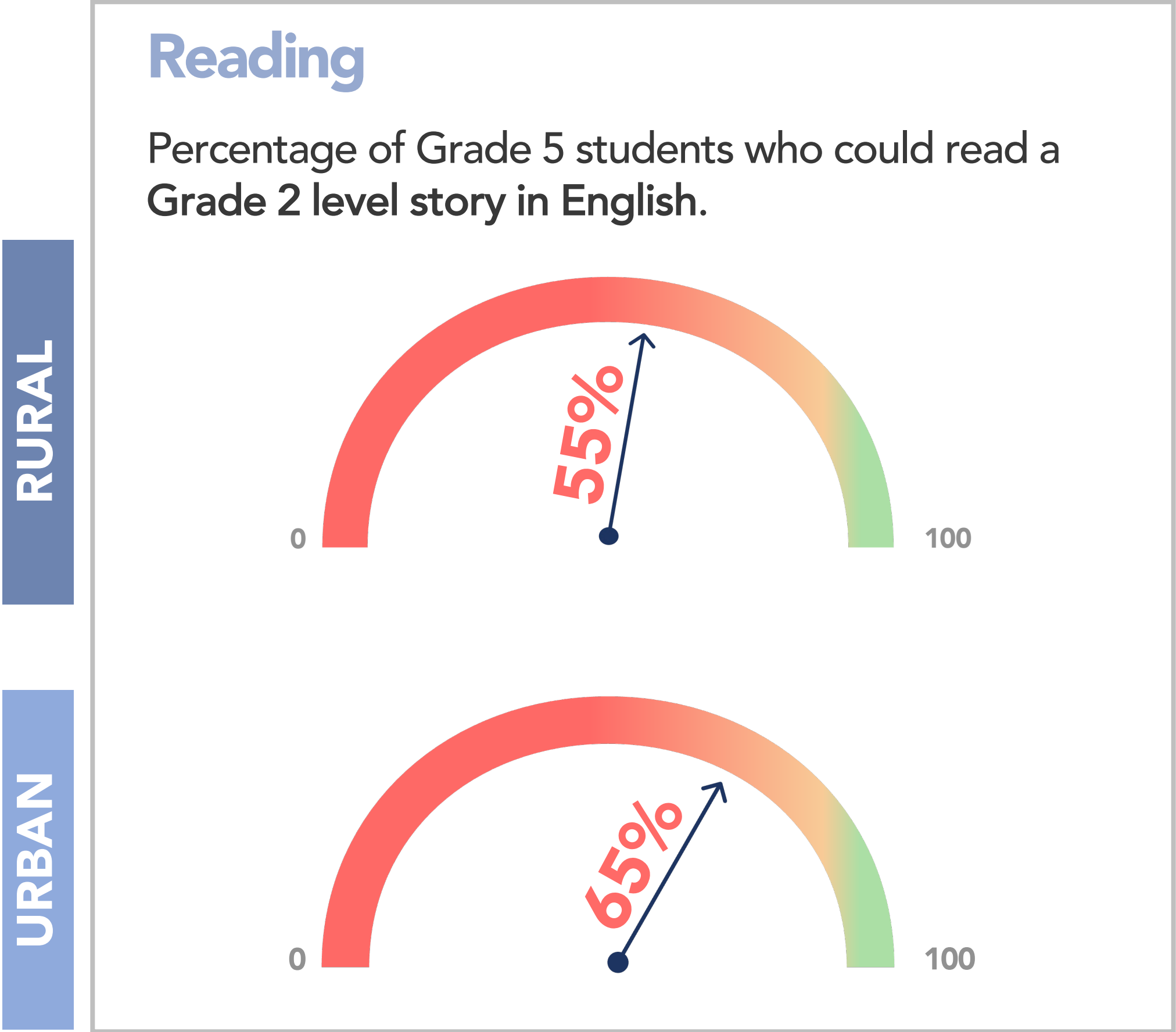
Results of Grade 4 assessments (national average) conducted across Pakistan in 2023 show concerningly low proficiency levels in language and mathematics.



An important highlight of these results is the superior performance of girls in comparison to boys across all areas of assessment.

Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)

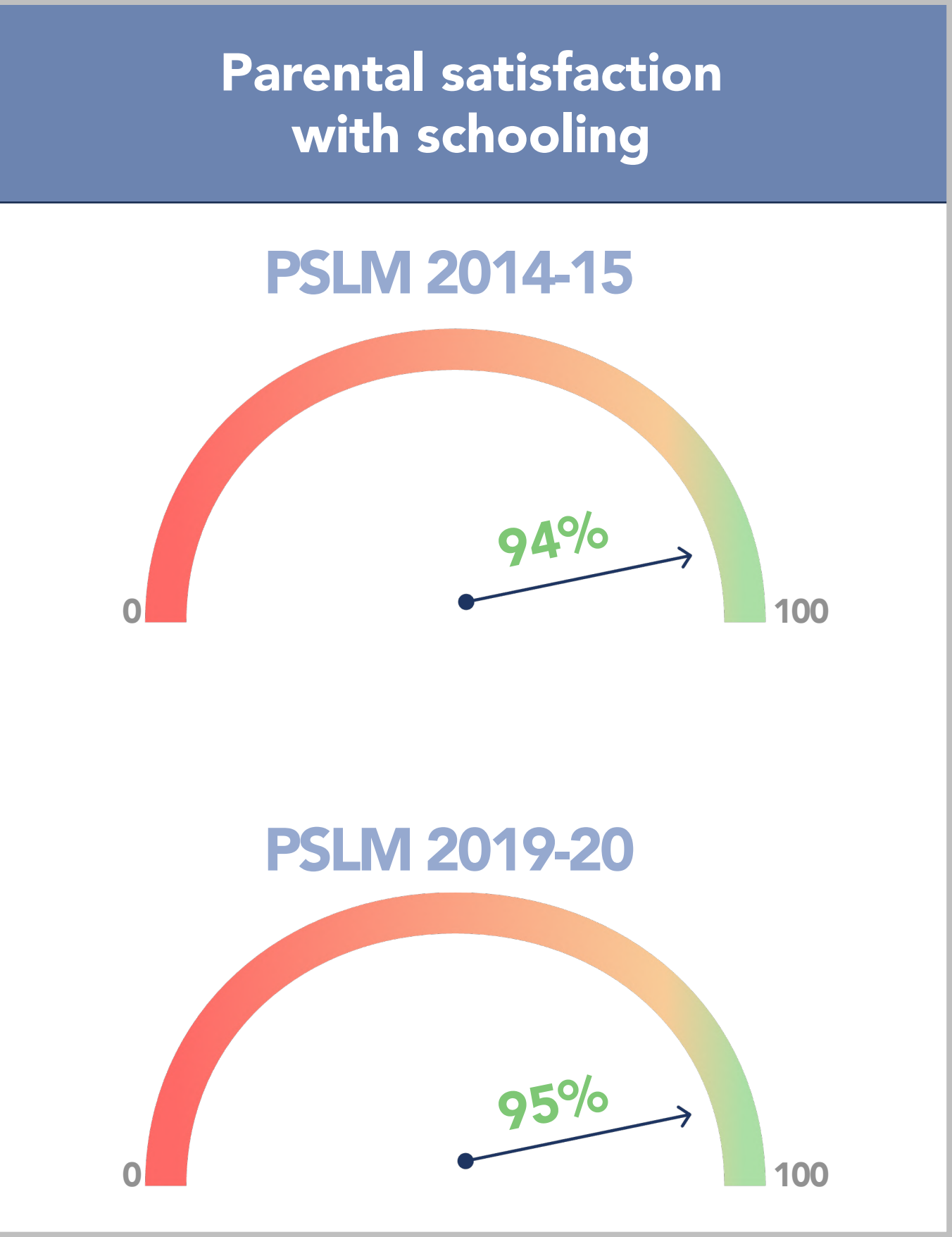
There is a nationwide low proficiency in reading and arithmetic.
Students in rural areas are learning significantly less than those in urban areas.



Source: ASER, 2022

Parental Perception of Schooling

Pakistan’s Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) and TIMSS report that an overwhelming number of parents are satisfied with the schooling of children.



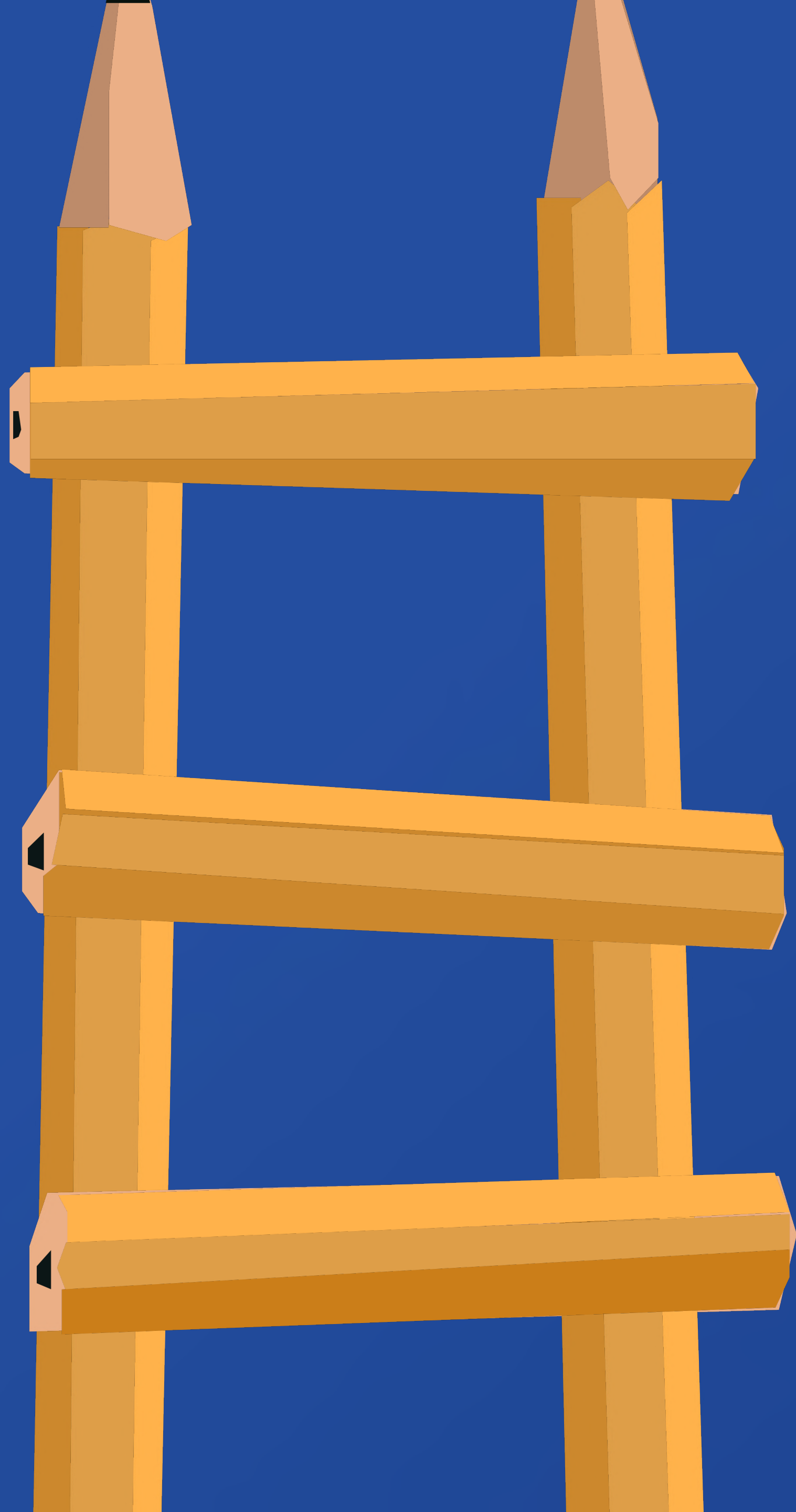
Country	Grade 4 Maths Ranking (Out of 58 countries)	Percentage of parents very satisfied with schooling
Singapore	Top-two	63
Hong Kong		54
Pakistan	Bottom-two	76
Philippines		75

Although Pakistan ranks as the second lowest performing country in the TIMSS assessment, parental satisfaction with schooling remains high.

Conversely, top-performing nations such as Singapore and Hong Kong demonstrate relatively lower levels of parental satisfaction with schooling, indicating a dedication to improving learning outcomes within their educational systems.

Additionally, NAT 2023 reports 75% of parents being satisfied with their child’s schooling.

Source: PSLM (2014-15), (2019-20) and TIMMS (2019)



2.

Tabadlab's Approach to Understanding Parents & Learning

The **decision architecture and choices** made within the education ecosystem lead to **poor learning outcomes** nationwide.

Yet, Pakistani parents are **very** satisfied with what their children 'learn'.

Why?

We explored the **knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors** of parents to understand this contradiction better.

How We Used Behavioural Insights

1 Behavioural Mapping

Identify and categorise behaviours by key stakeholders that can contribute to improved learning outcomes



2 Learning Profiles

Carry out a diagnosis of perceptions and practices around learning using a three-tiered approach:



3 Behavioural Diagnostics

Apply a behavioural insights framework to understand parental readiness in offering learning support outside school



Importance of learning:
why should children learn?



Spectrum of learning:
what should children learn?



Process of learning:
how do children learn?

KEY



Telephonic survey



Interviews



Workshops

Respondent Profile

We used purposive sampling to select participants representing key groups, allowing us to explore the dynamics of learning. The findings stem from the results of this survey.

The results and findings are based on a national telephonic survey.

Insights have been formulated by using primary and secondary data sources.

Statistical information presented cannot be extrapolated to Pakistan due to limitations of sample selection.



PARENTS

A sample of 1,100 parents was selected. Each parent responded for ONE child.

Sample: 1,100

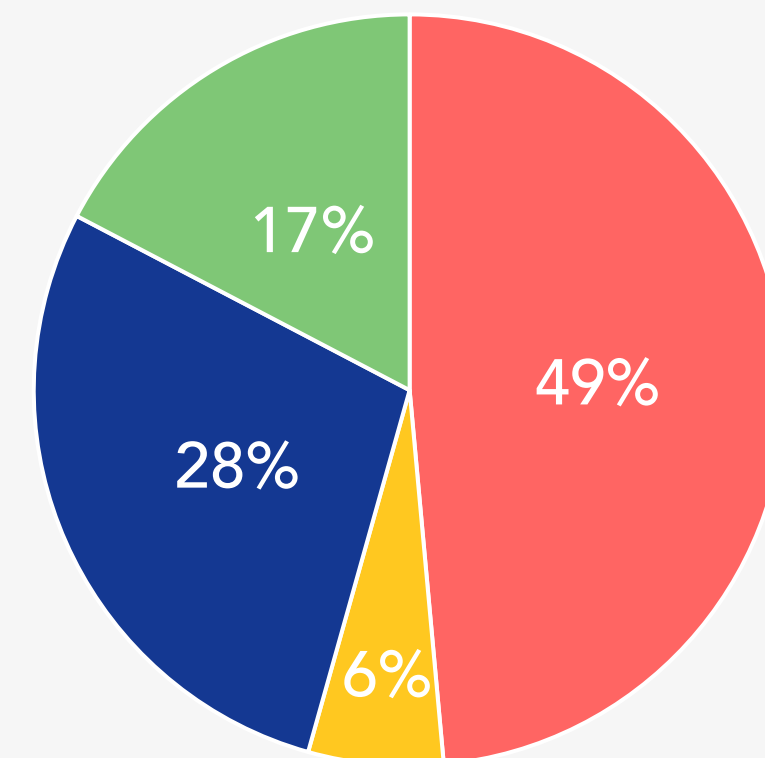
Male: 76%, Female: 24%

Aged 18-78

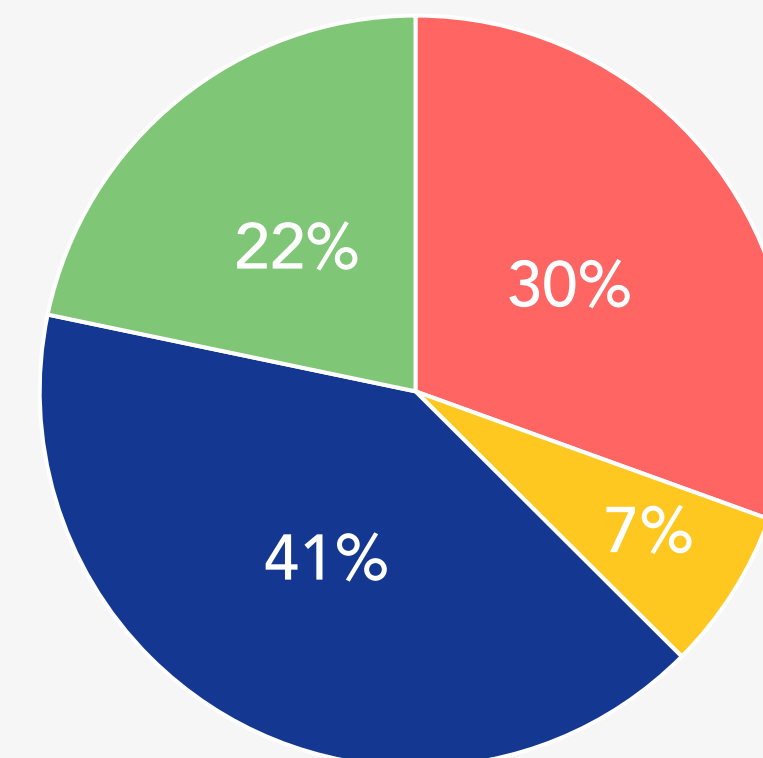
Monthly household income $\leq$ PKR 50,000

Monthly school fee $\leq$ PKR 2,000

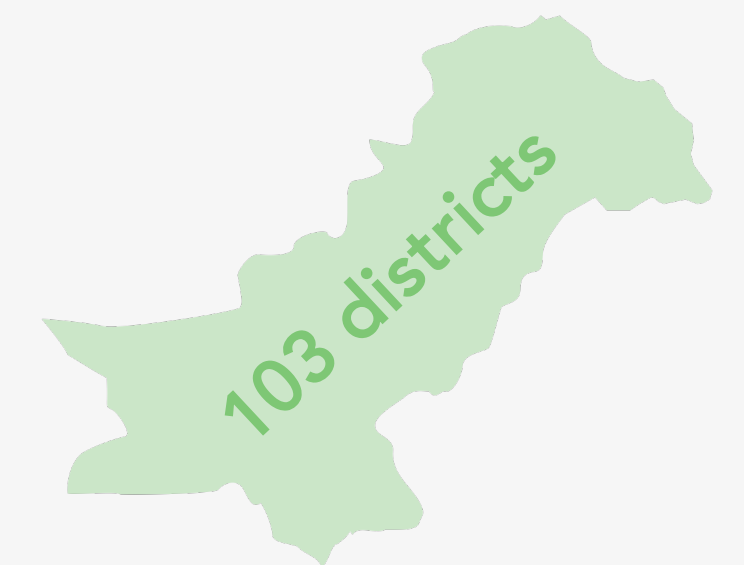
Mother's Level of Education



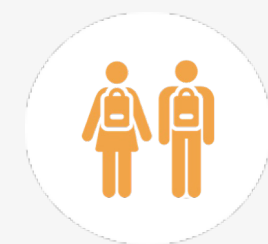
Father's Level of Education



Geographical Coverage



■ None ■ Primary ■ Middle and Secondary ■ Higher Secondary and Above

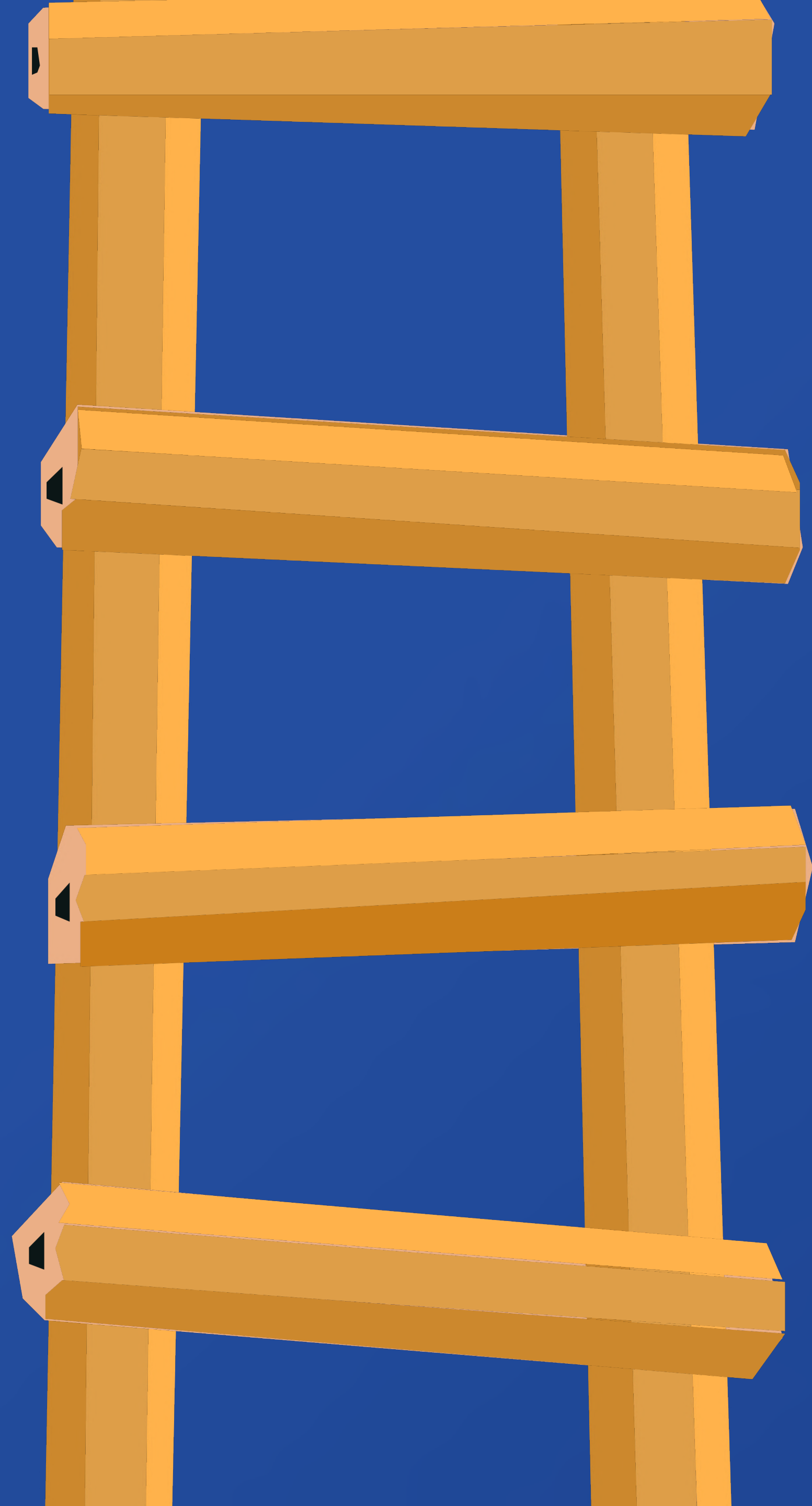


CHILDREN

Boys: 56%, Girls: 44%

Aged 5-16

Type of school: 55% public, 44% private



3.

Unpacking the Contradiction: Parents vs Learning

**The problem
isn't that
parents think
learning is not
important.**

99%

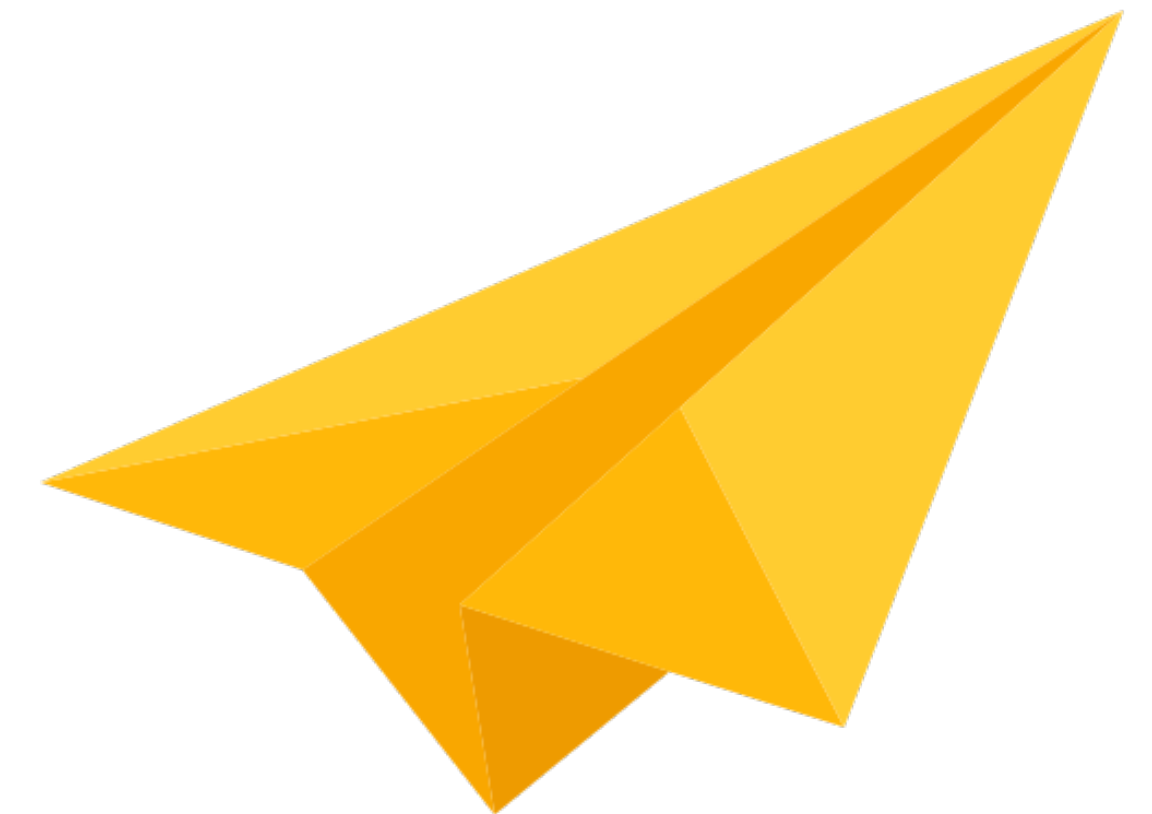
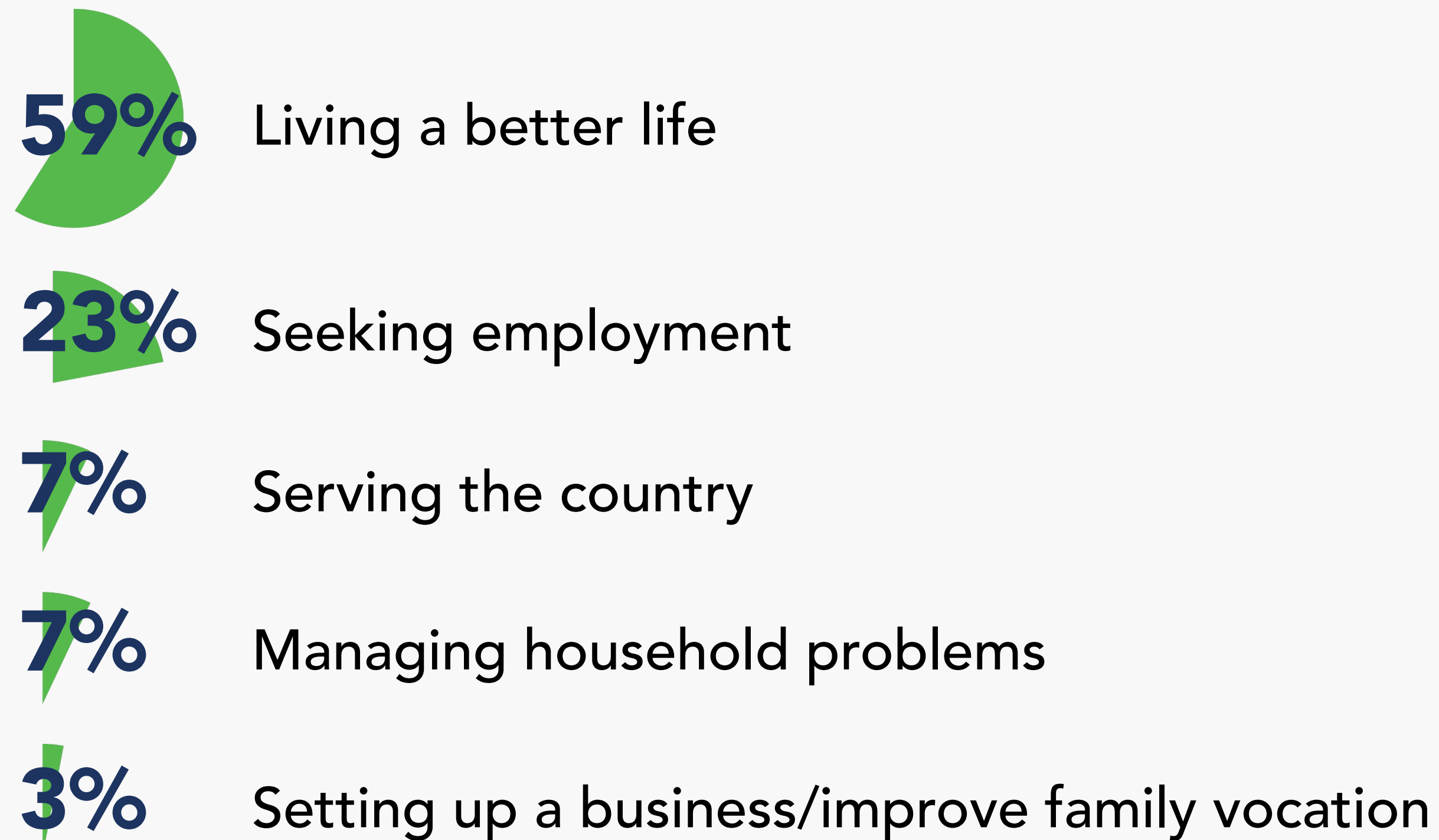
of parents reported that
learning **IS** important.

So, what is the issue?

Parental Perception of Student Learning

What is the Purpose of Learning to Parents?

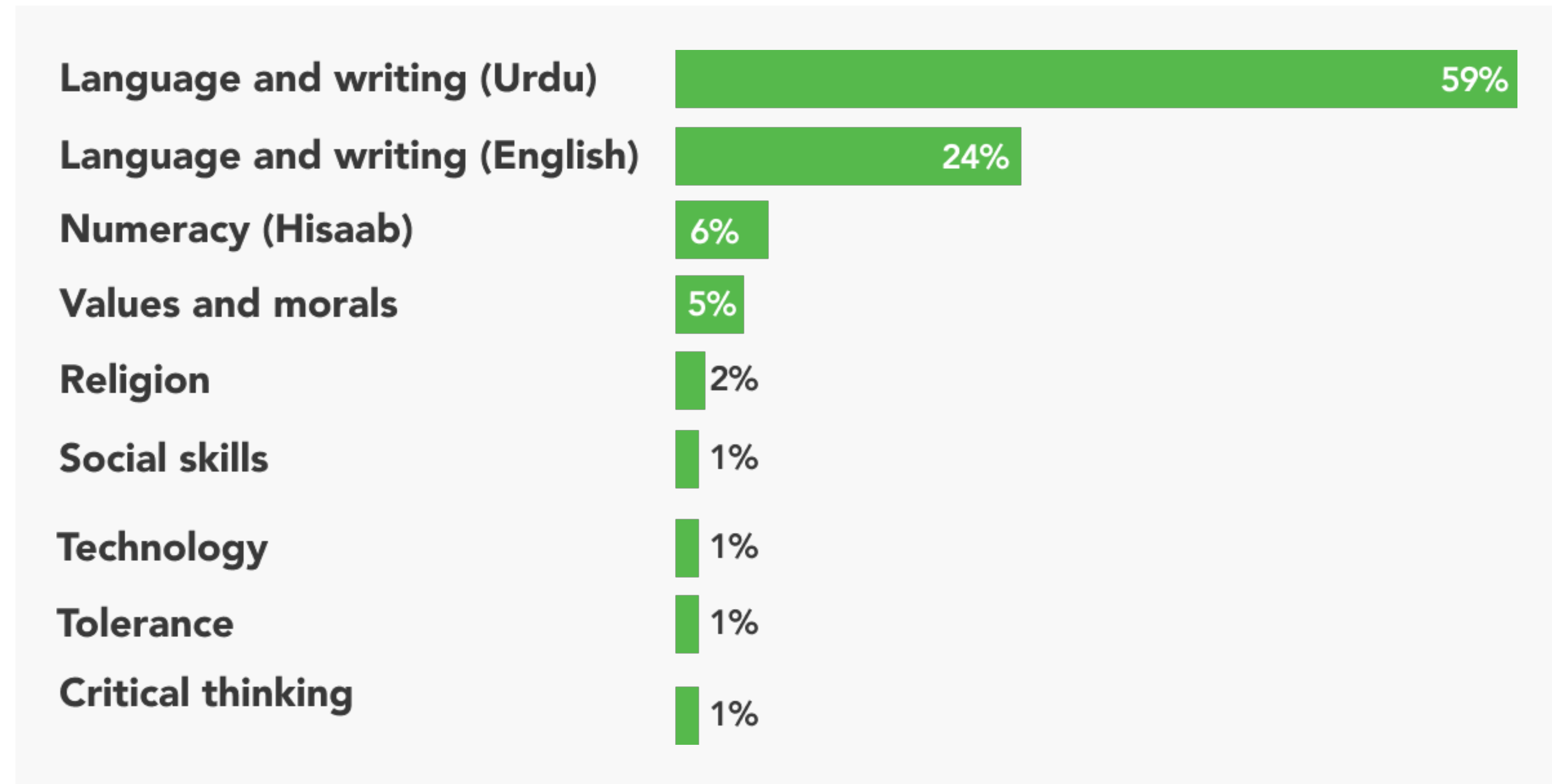
When given six* options, parents ranked “living a better life” as the main purpose of learning at school.



*Options: Living a better life, seeking employment, serving the country, managing household problems, setting up a business/improve family vocation, serving the local community

What Subjects and Skills do Parents Prioritise?

Parents chose Urdu and English as the highest ranked learning priorities for their children.

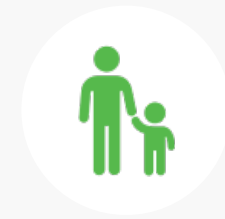


Numeracy, a core subject, is rated as important by **only 6%** of parents.

Essential 21st century skills, like **critical thinking** and **technology**, rank even lower in importance for parents.

Parental Priorities between Learning Concepts and Passing Exams

What do parents prioritise about learning in schools?



PARENTS

Attaining valuable skills/concepts additional to passing exams

57%

100

Instead of learning skills and concepts children should focus on passing exams only

41%

100

75% of this group also expressed higher satisfaction with their children's learning, indicating that their perception of learning aligns with passing assessments and grade advancement.

Shockingly, **41%** of parents fail to acknowledge the importance of learning concepts.

This discounts the application of learning in students' daily lives which hinders their skill and character development.

Parental Perception of Learning Assessments

How do Parents Assess Student Learning?

Majority of parents do not rely on school and home-based assessments collectively to assess learning levels of their children. This leads to inadequate tracking of student performance across academic cycles, significantly diminishing opportunities for **improved learning outcomes**.

Reliance by parents on school-based assessments to assess learning levels

25%

Reliance by parents on home-based assessments to assess learning levels

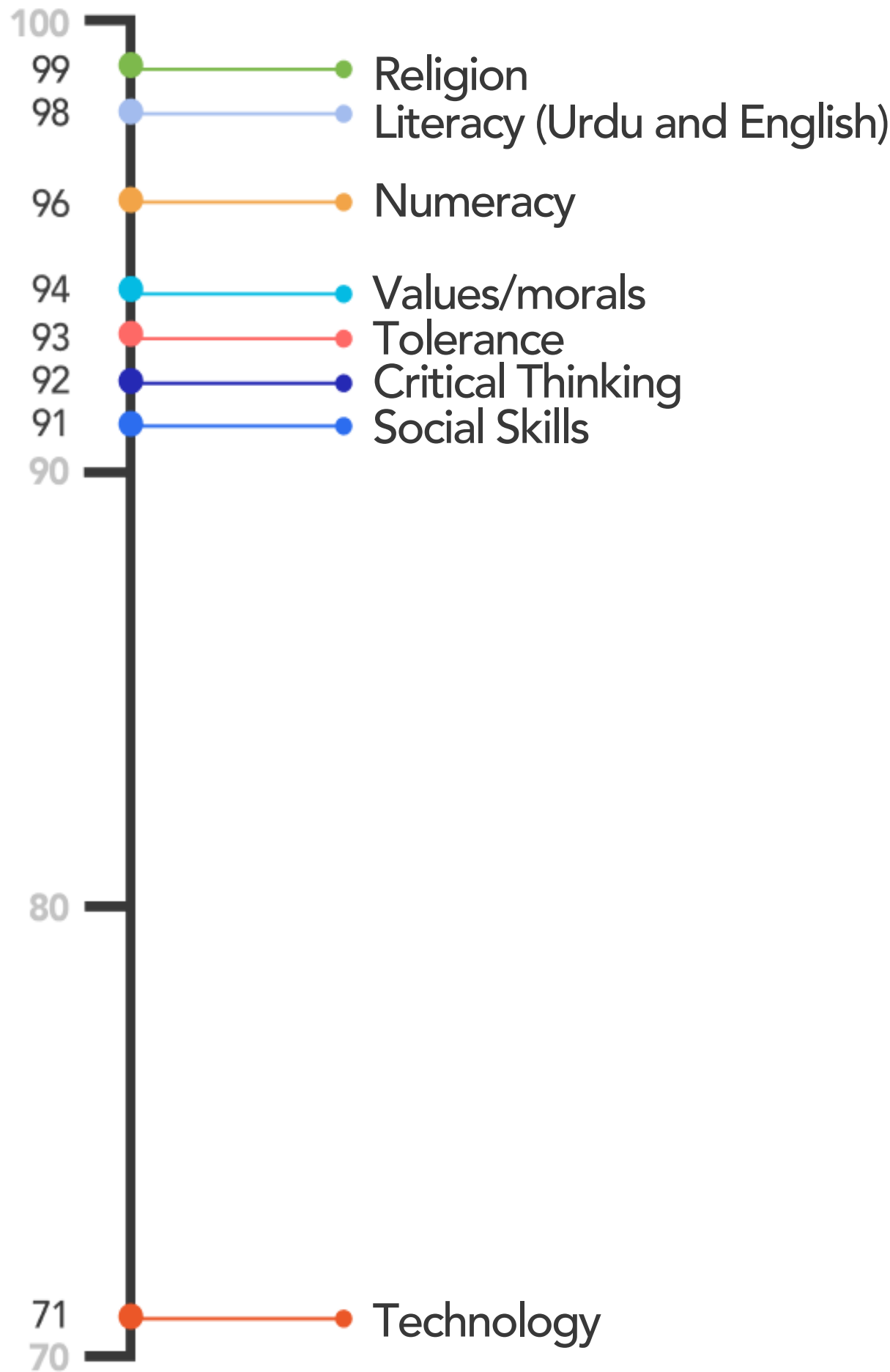
33%

Among parents relying on home-based assessments, only **26%** possess education levels above Grade 5.

This indicates a concerning scenario, suggesting that home-based assessments may have limited impact on student learning.

Parental Views on Student Learning

The scale shows the percentage of parents who agreed that their children are learning the following subjects/skills:



The significant skew towards **YES** responses underscores the gap between performance of students in assessments (curricular learning) and parental understanding of what their children are learning.

Top **Five Skills** Businesses Will Need in 2027

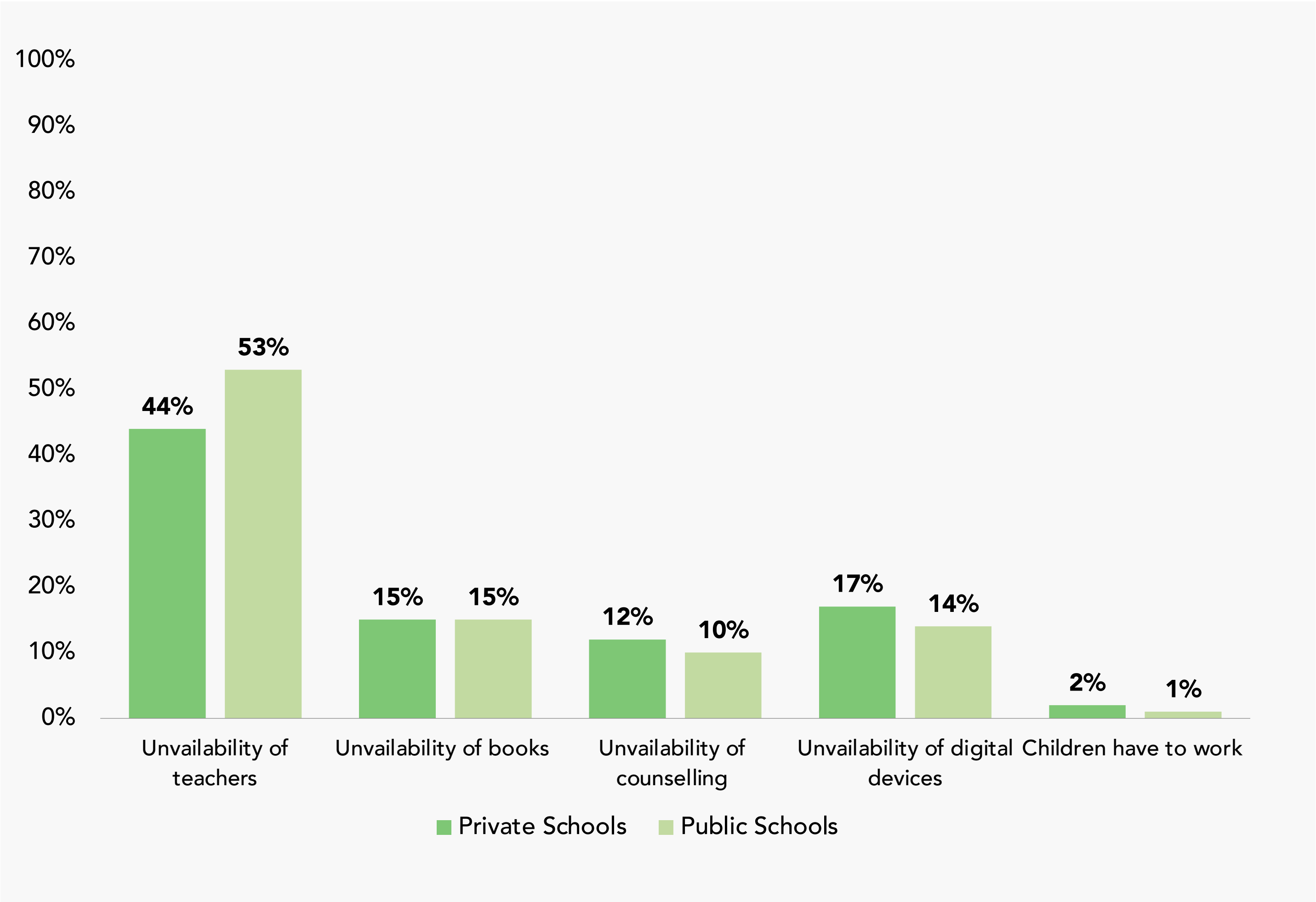
1. Analytical thinking
2. Creative thinking
3. Artificial intelligence and Big data
4. Leadership and social influence
5. Resilience, flexibility and agility



Parental subject matter priorities are **completely misaligned** with the requirements of developing a workforce for the present or the future.

Barriers to Student Learning

Barrier to Students' Learning as Reported by Parents



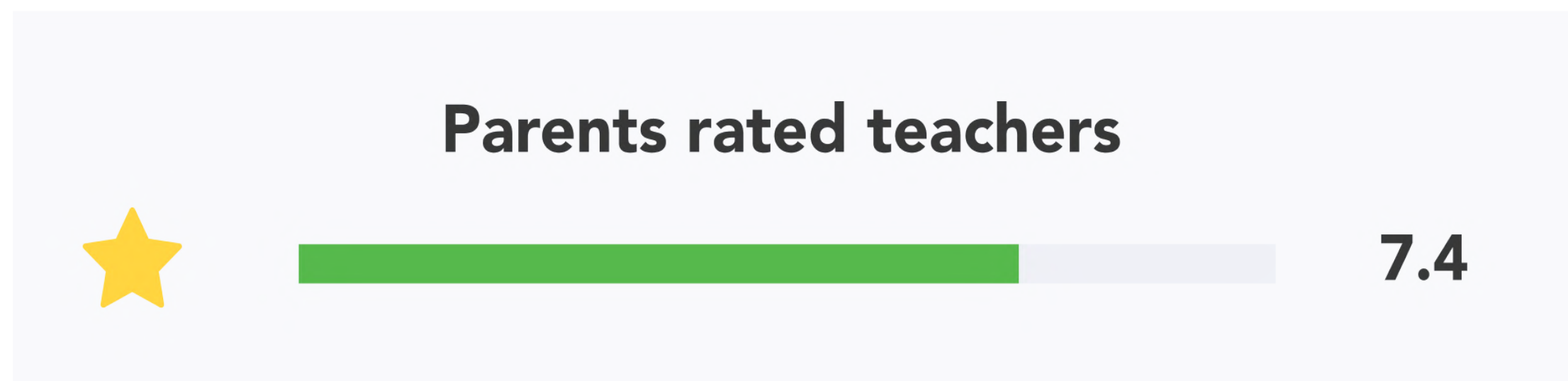
Parents, regardless of school type, agree that the main barrier to students' learning is the lack of skilled teachers.

Who Primarily Supports Learning for Students?

Parents hold a unanimous view:

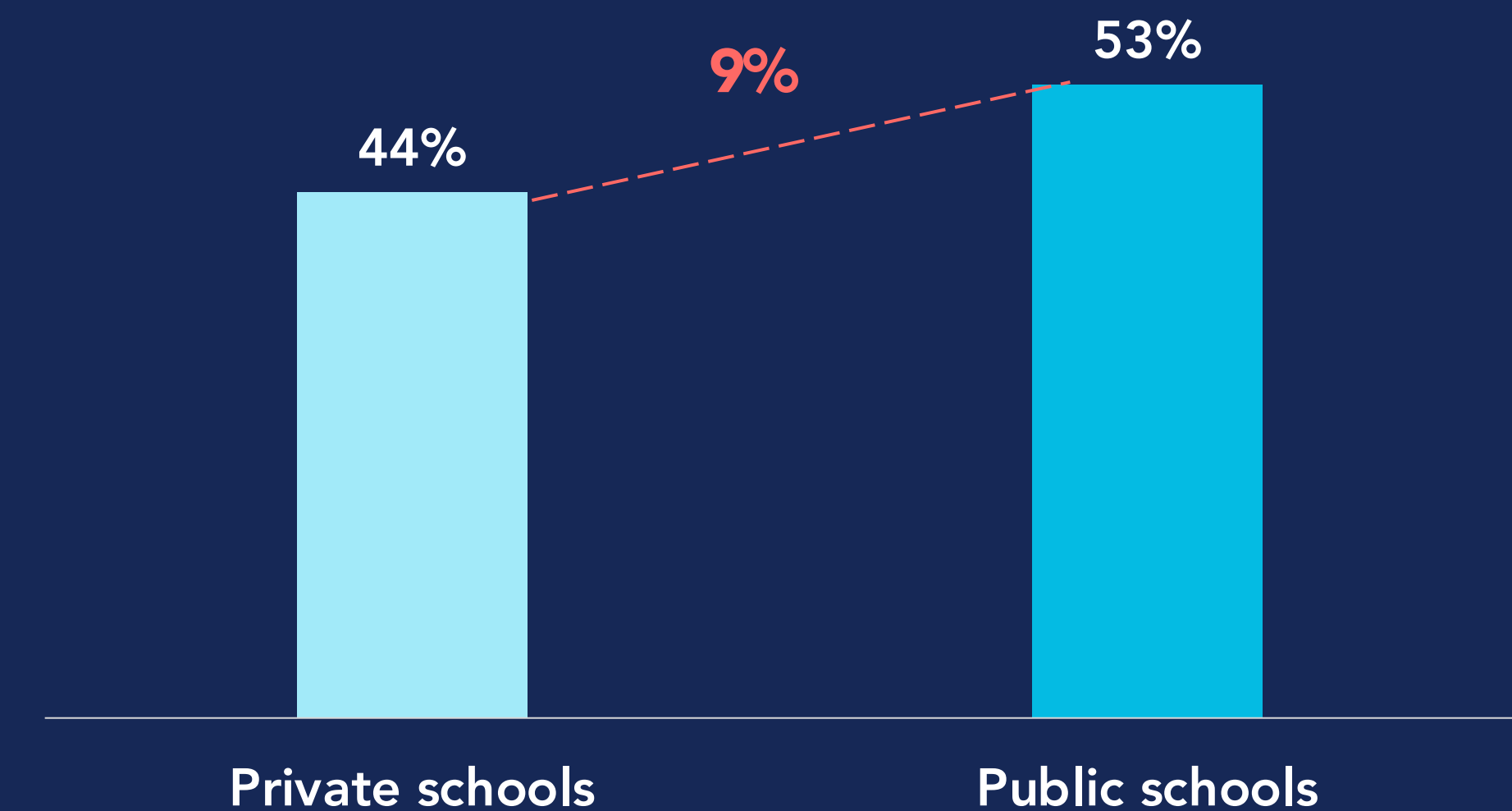
teachers are the most important stakeholders for learning.

Teachers in school outrank all other actors (such as tuition providers, caregivers or family elders) that can contribute to the learning outcomes of students.



Almost 50% of the parents cited the unavailability/lack of quality teachers as the biggest barrier.

This concern is significantly higher for public schools where the unavailability/lack of quality teachers is reported by 53% of parents in comparison to 44% in private schools.



Parents are adept at recognising the challenges in the education system, such as the scarcity of proficient teachers and the inadequacy of basic school facilities.



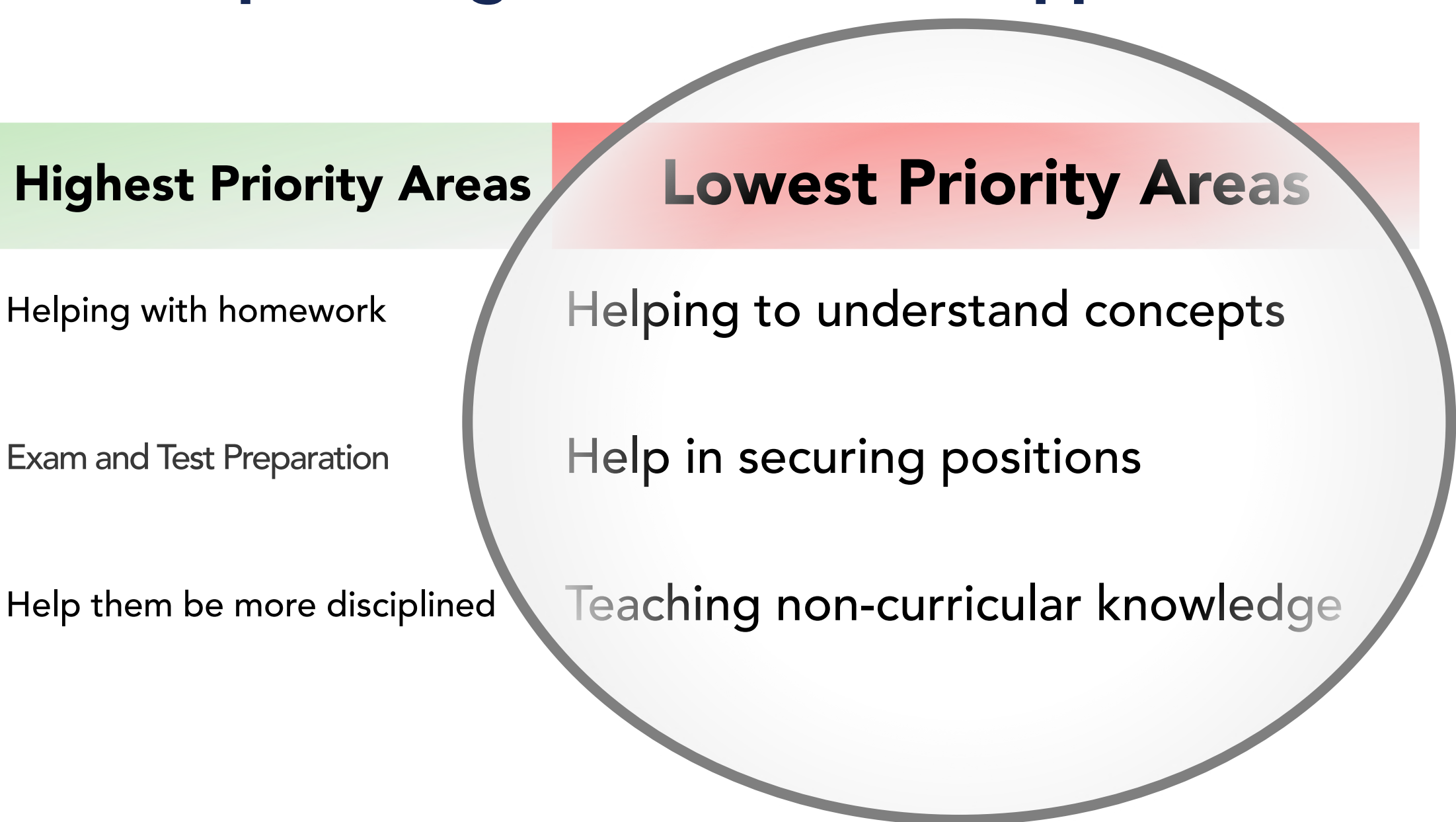
However, there is a large gap in parental awareness of issues that are even more crucial to the future of their children. The development of critical thinking skills, the absence of updated curricula and the inadequate nature of assessments are issues with little to no parental engagement.

Improving parental understanding of these kinds of key issues in their children's learning journeys is essential for fostering a more comprehensive engagement of parents in student learning.

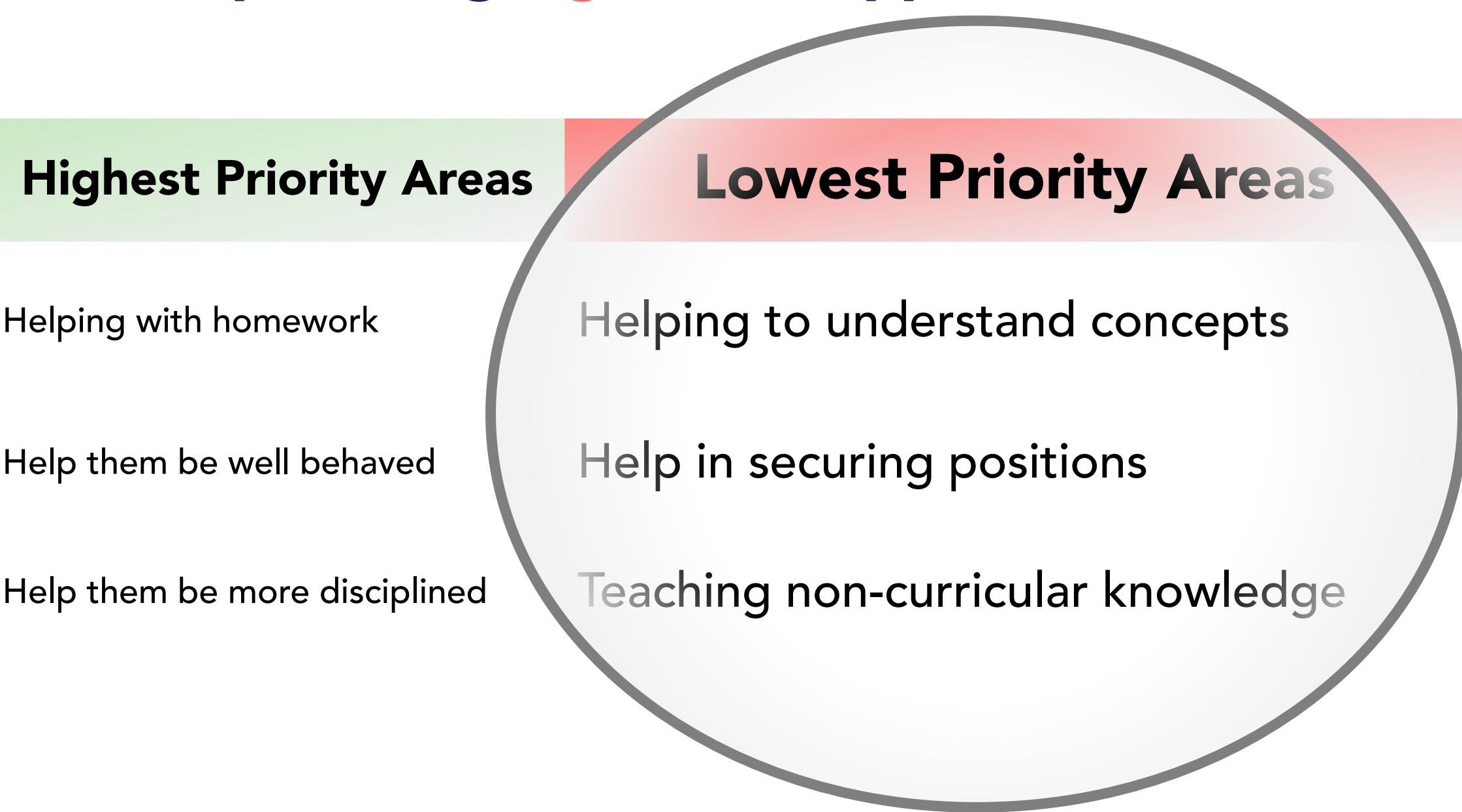
Support for Student Learning

How are Parents Helping their Children?

Parents providing **moderate** level support at home



Parents providing **high** level support at home



While providing support to students at home, **parents do not prioritise critical aspects of learning** like understanding concepts and imparting non-curricular knowledge.

Their **primary focus** is on helping with homework and disciplining students only.

Moderate support is for those parents who rated their support between 3-6 on a scale of 1-10
High support is for those parents who rated their support between 7-10 on a scale of 1-10

Understanding the 'Tutions' Phenomenon

This family of four earns **PKR 50,000** per month.

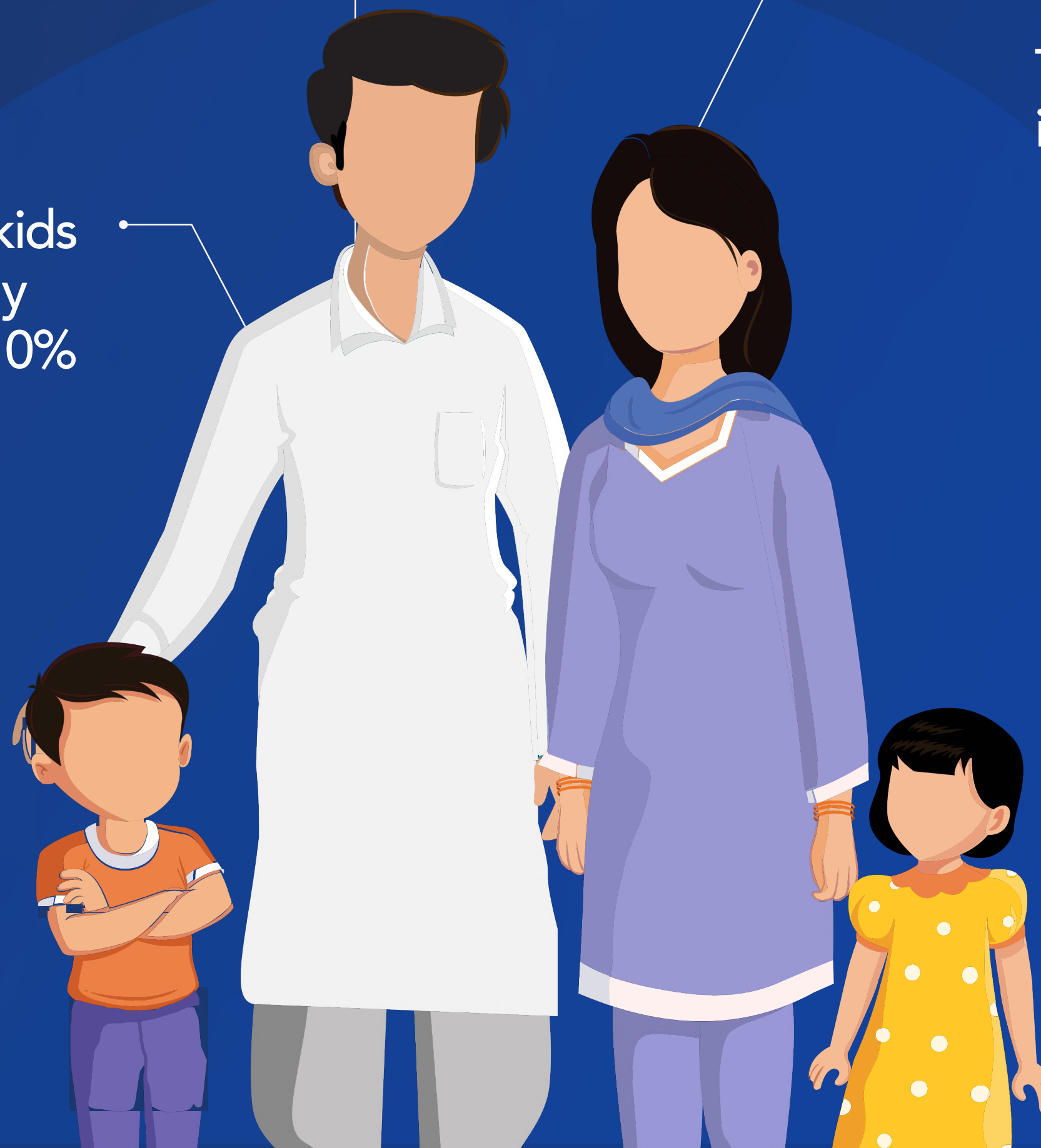
They send their **two** kids to school at a monthly fee of **PKR 5,000** or 10% of their income.

Enrolling their children in '**tutions**' has become a standard parental response to address low academic performance despite regular school attendance.

This is an additional expense of **PKR 2,000** or 4% of their income.

Despite this high percentage (14%) of income being invested in education, their children are **not learning enough**.

This is a reality across most households in Pakistan, particularly for those with lower incomes.

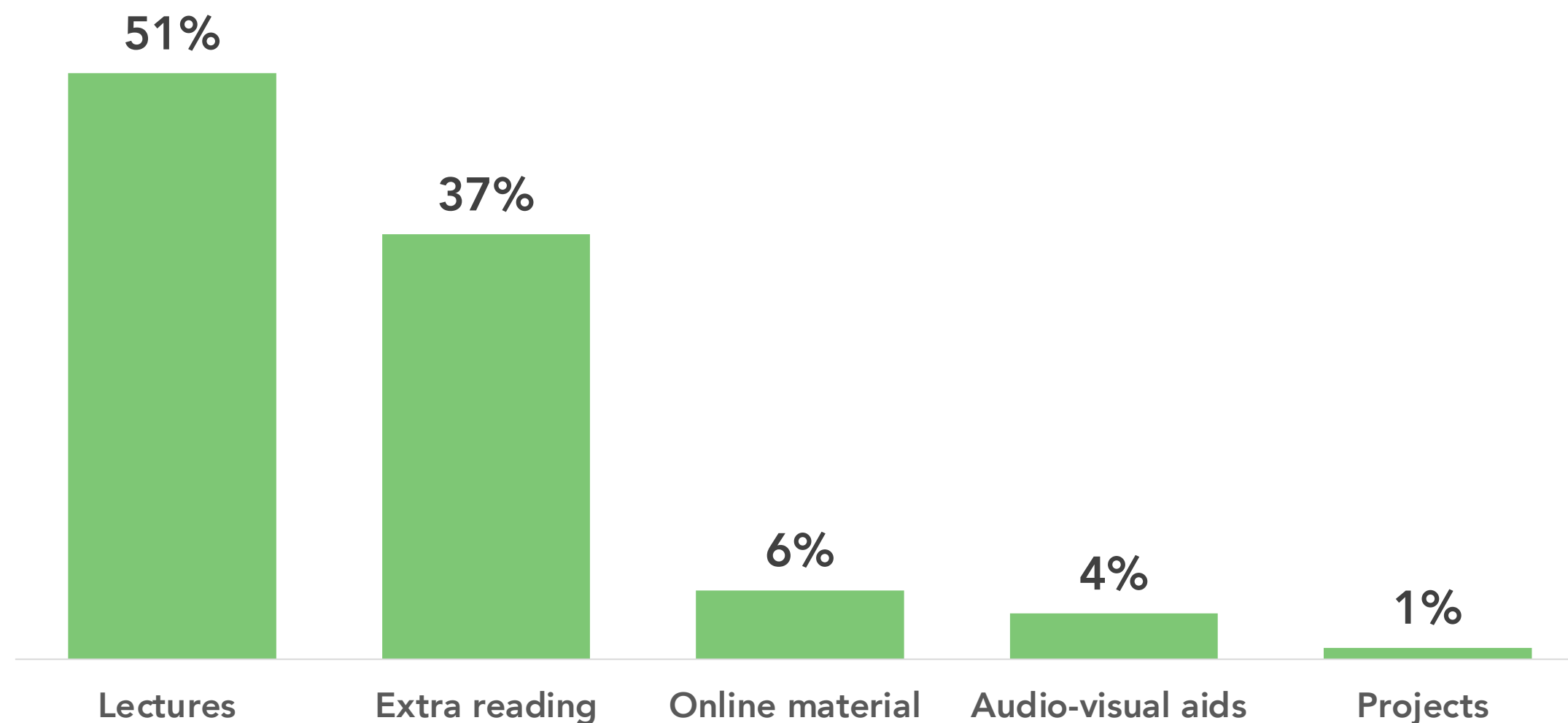


What About EdTech?

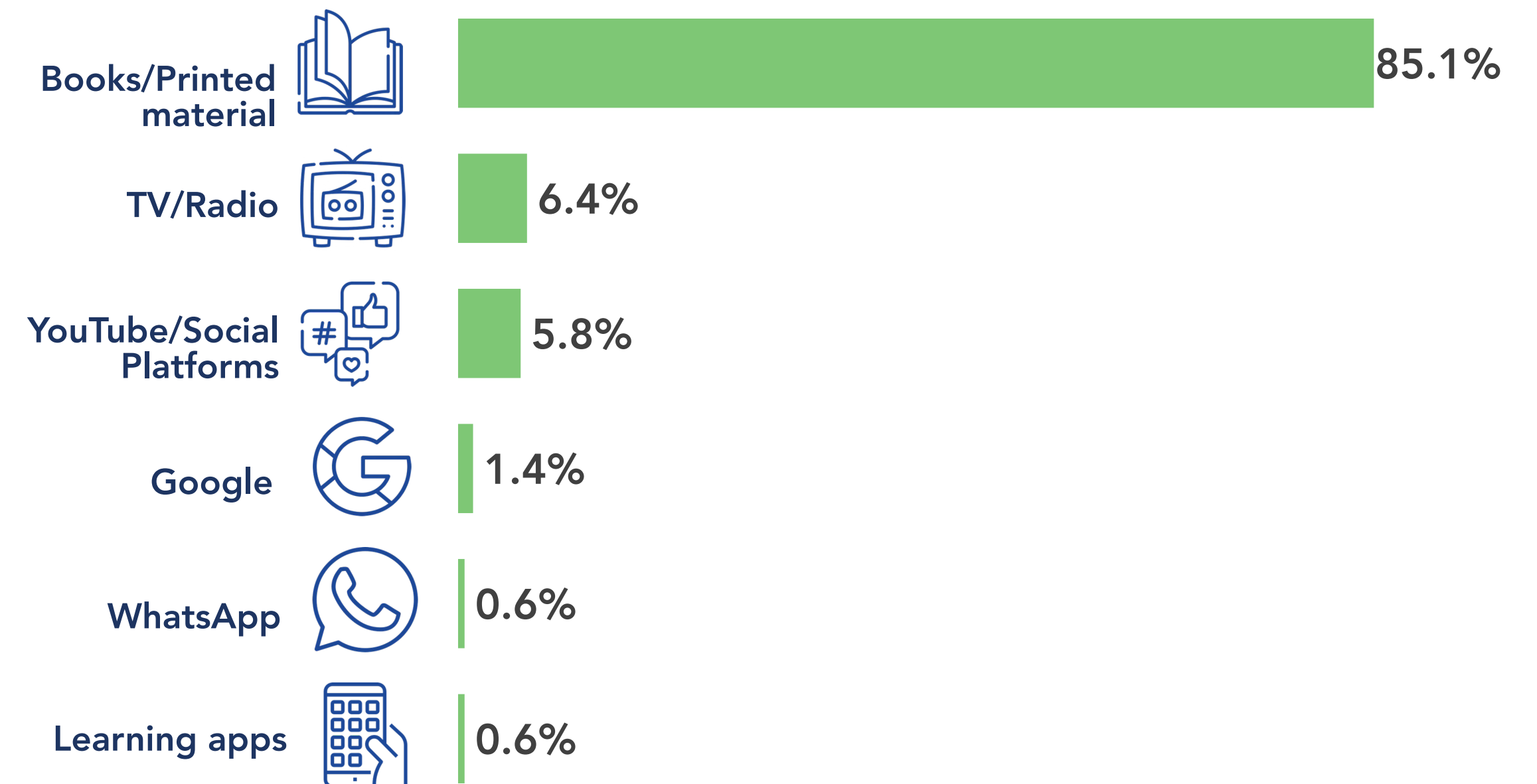


EdTech provides an alternative pathway for learning outside the traditional school ecosystem. However, parental preference for traditional & physical modes of learning is significantly higher than distance & digital channels of learning.

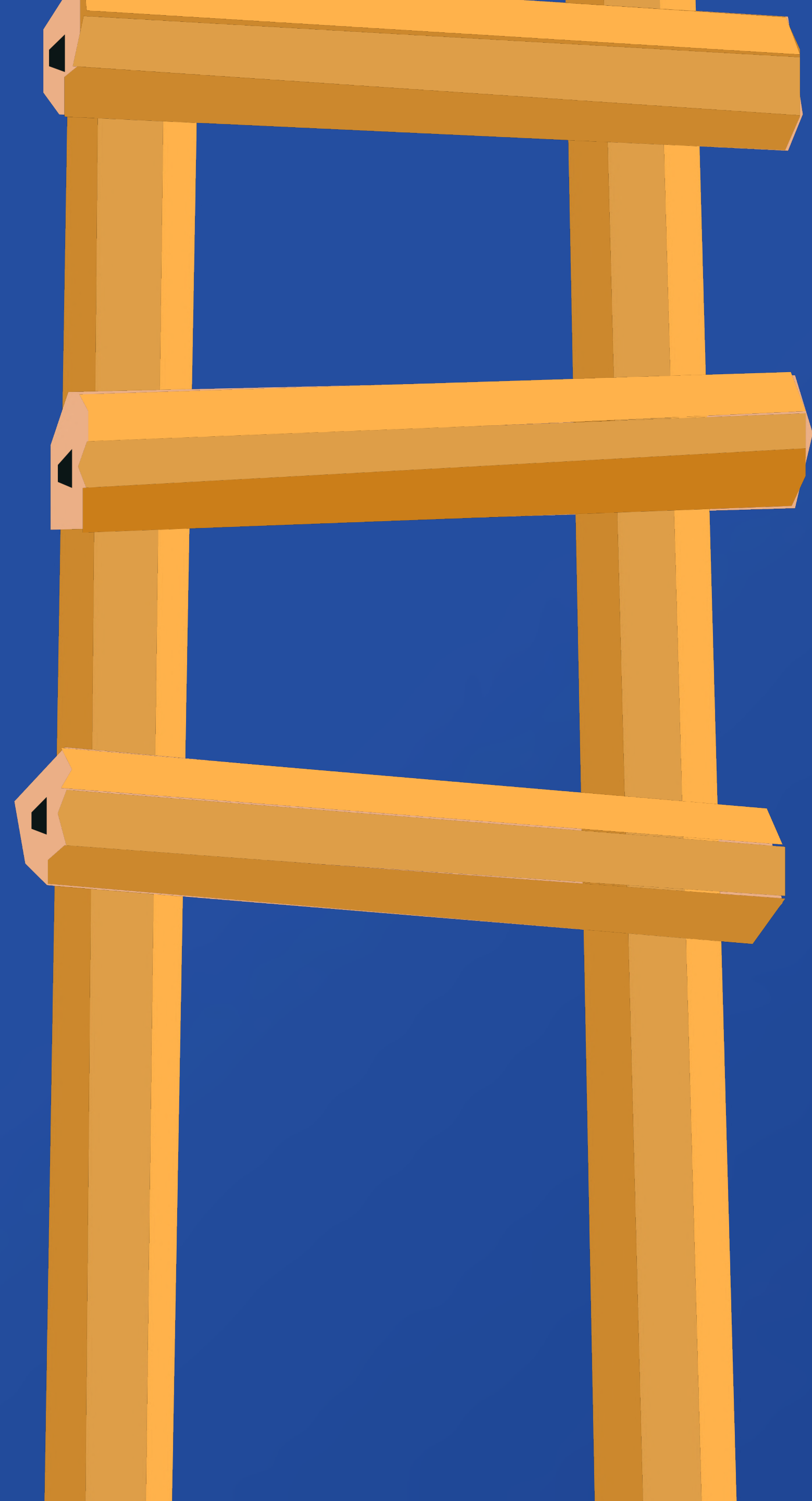
Parental view of most effective modes of learning



Learning materials provided by parents



The success of Pakistan's **EdTech sector hinges on parental support** but is currently constrained by a limited recognition of EdTech's significance in learning.



4.

Catalysing Learning Recovery in Pakistan



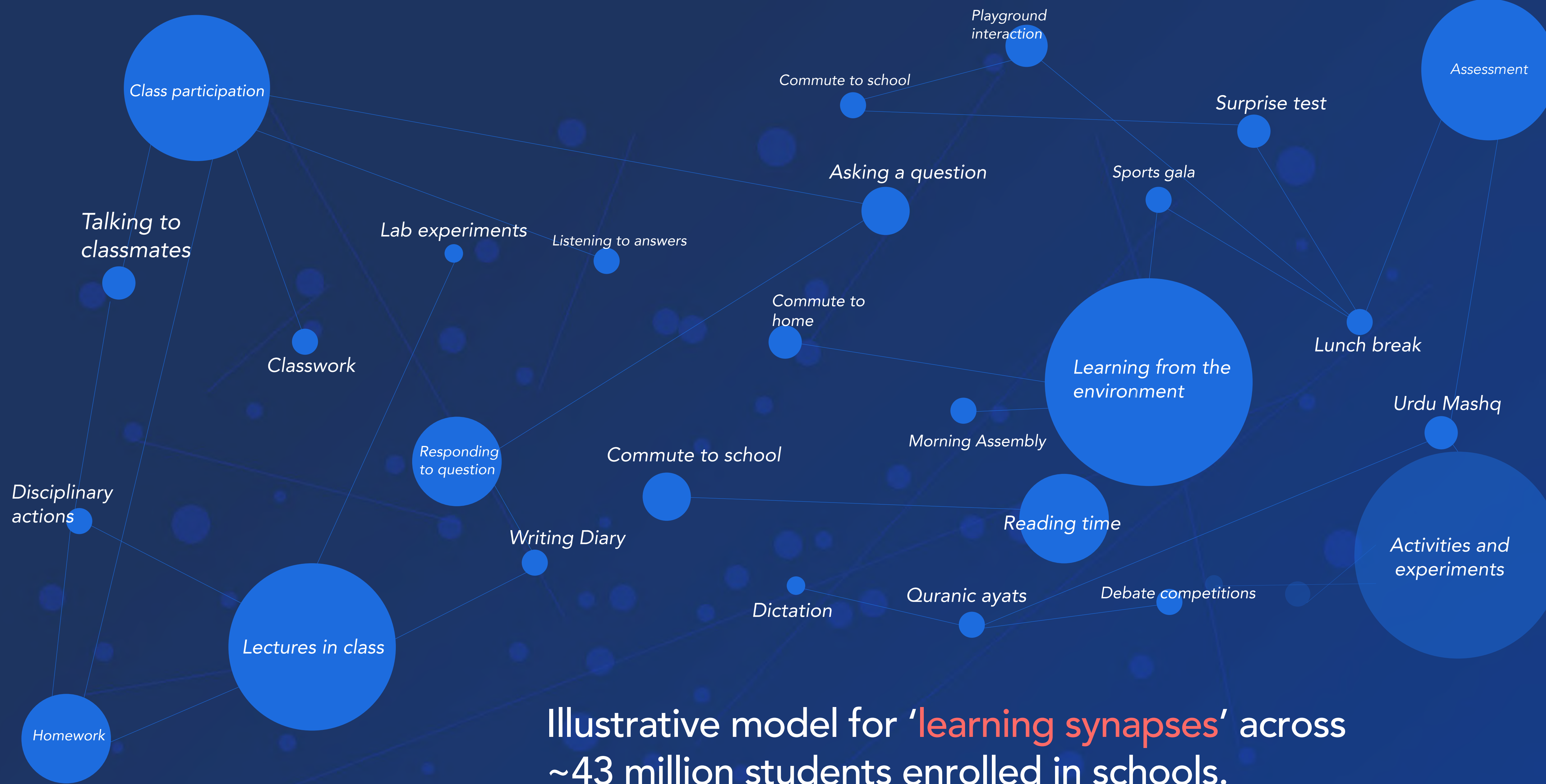
Despite these chronic failures, **trillions of educational interactions** take place every day in Pakistan.

Each education interaction represents an opportunity for positive intervention: a chance to **improve learning outcomes**.

These education interactions must be leveraged.

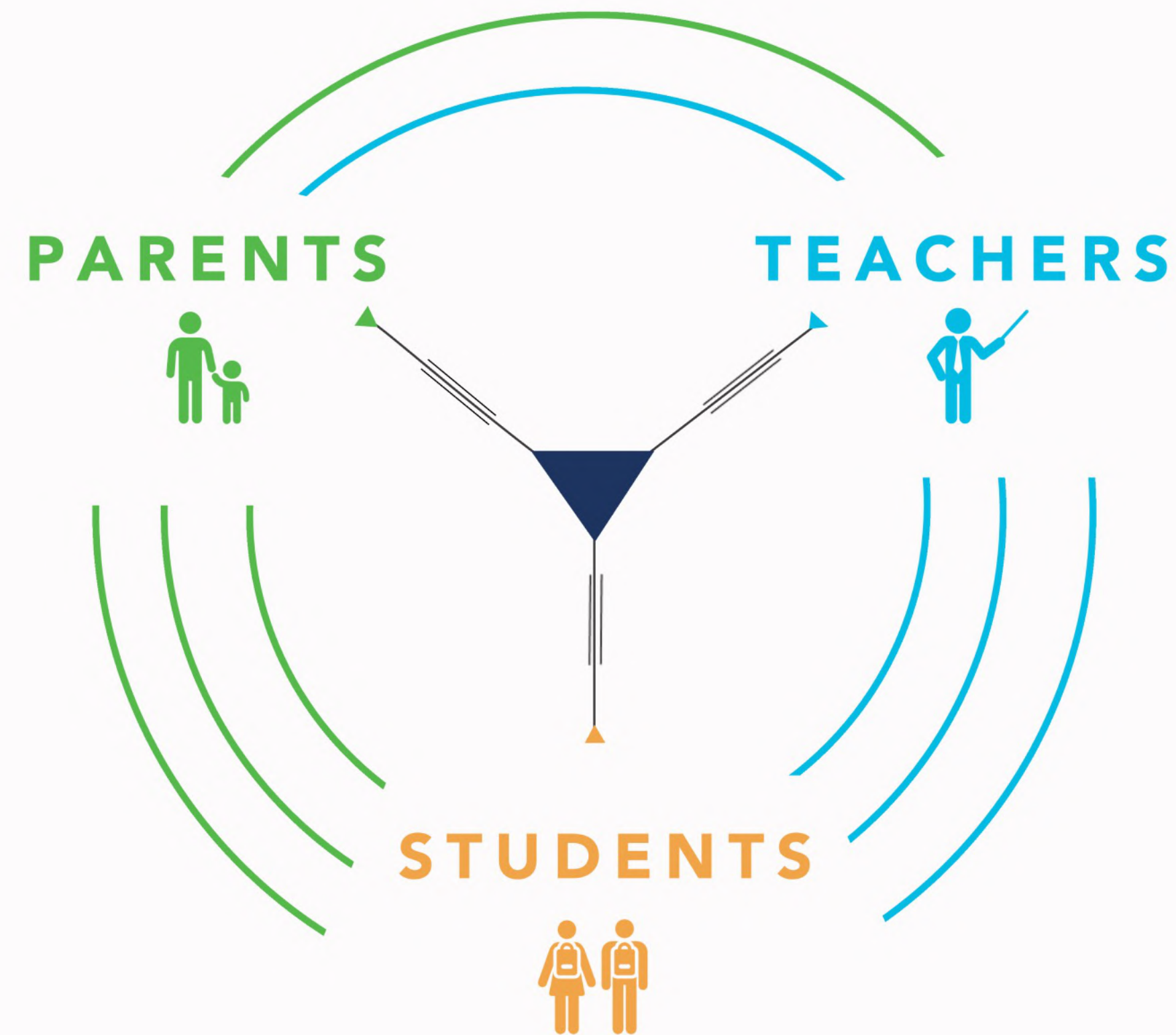
**The learning crisis requires a fresh perspective
to reconfigure the system in a way that makes learning
THE preeminent national purpose.**





Introducing the Learning Nexus

Parents and teachers, as primary stakeholders, should actively invest in learning journeys of students.



The Learning Nexus at Work

Collaboration: Engagement and active participation of parents and teachers in academic and extracurricular activities of students.

Communication: Structured engagement around student performance through regular assessment reports and parent-teacher meetings.

Motivation: Support and inspire children's active engagement in schooling and cultivating a passion for learning.

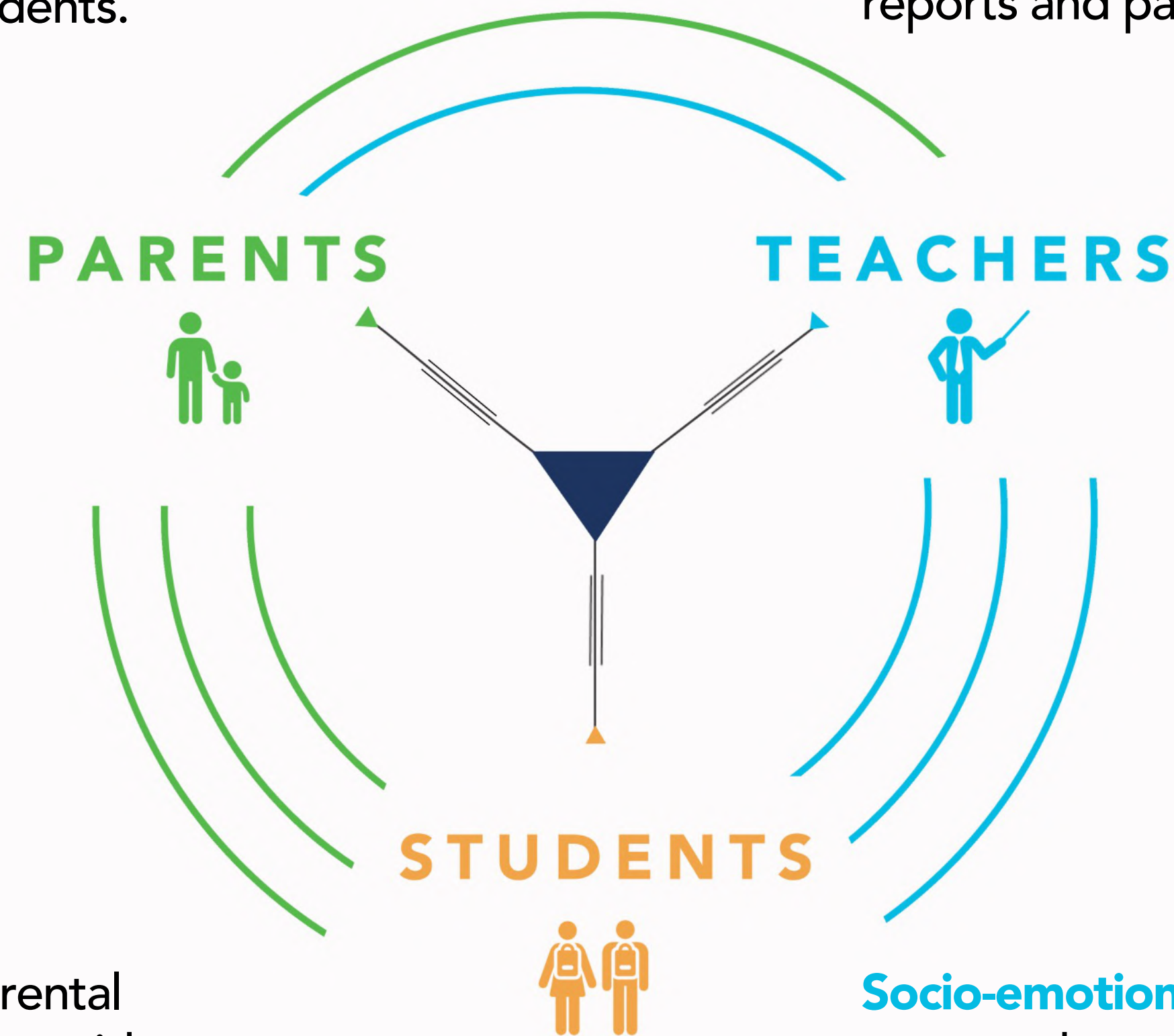
Academic growth: Ensure academic accomplishments and facilitate grade-level progression through effective pedagogy.

Learning enablement: Provide the financial and operational requirements for education – fees, books, transportation, safety and security etc.

21st century skills development: Cultivating transferrable skills like critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity in students.

Learning engagement: Ensure parental involvement in learning processes outside school like support for homework, academic performance, extra curriculums etc.

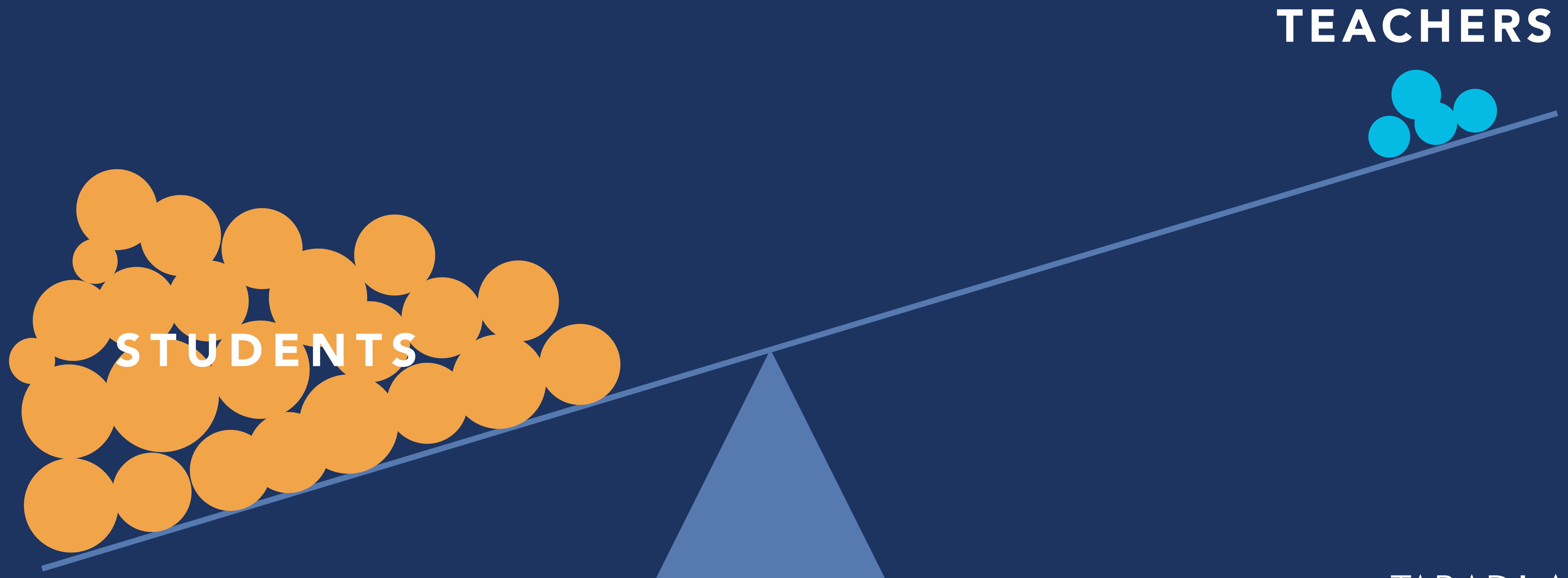
Socio-emotional wellbeing: Fostering a trustworthy and safe environment to nurture students' social interactions and mental wellness.



Balancing the Equation: Compromised Status Quo

An imbalanced distribution and **inadequate support for teachers and students** hinders the achievement of desirable learning outcomes.

The burden of learning for all Pakistani students rests on the constrained availability and readiness of approximately **two million teachers**.



Leveraging Parental Engagement: A Force Multiplier

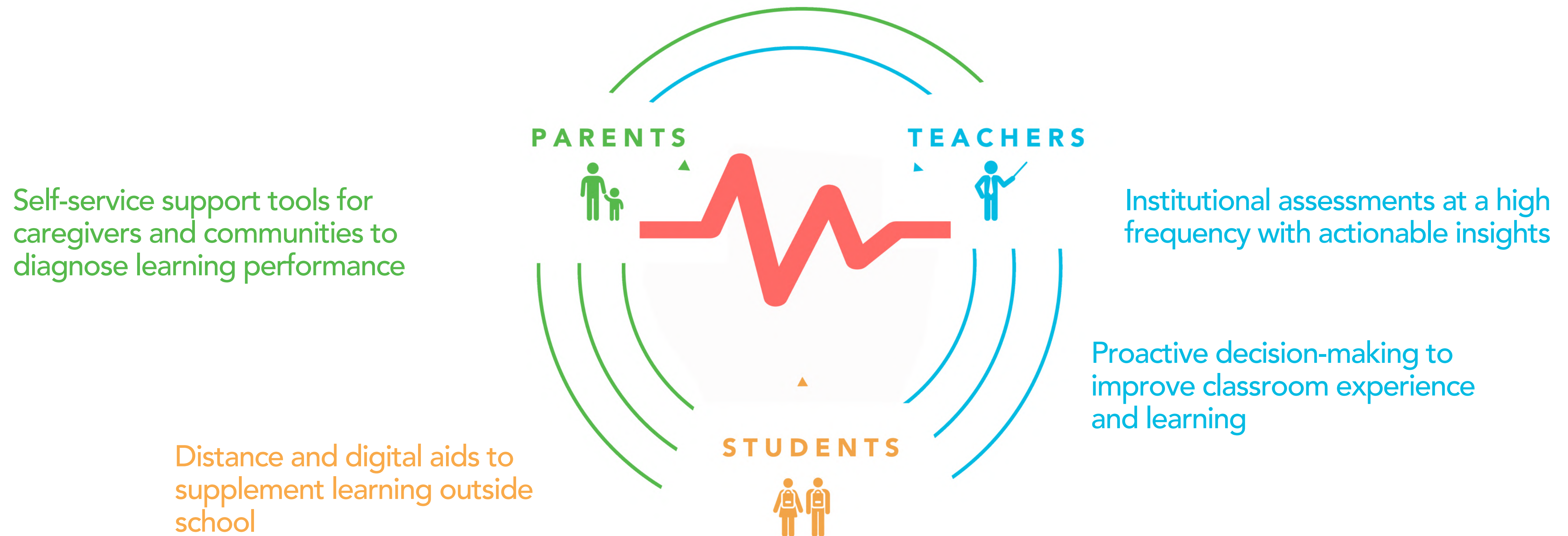
The learning crisis calls for the need to rethink ways in which the existing configuration of stakeholders (**The Learning Nexus**) in the education equation can catalyse reforms.



Pakistan's 'Learning ECG'

Develop a rigorous, robust, effective and high-frequency multi-pronged assessment regime for Pakistan that delivers:

Regular structured and unstructured engagement between teachers and parents to bridge the learning perception gap



Parents Role in the Learning Nexus

How Ready are Parents to Support Learning?

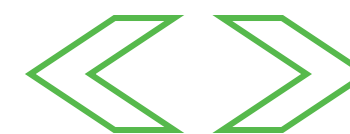
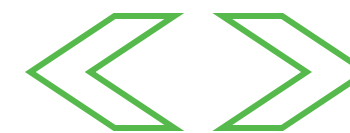
Behavioural Insights

Parents do agree that it is their responsibility to improve their child's learning.

Parents often forget about spending time with their children focused on learning.

Parents believe there are positive consequences if they spend time with their children to improve their learning.

Social approval and recognition of this engagement with a child's learning is important.



Engagement Hooks

Realisation of responsibility to be used as a central messaging anchor to incentivise action.

Facilitation through a scheduled set of calibrated nudges to serve as reminders.

Reinforcing parental engagement as a social norm can motivate parents to carry out this behaviour.

Celebrity and local influencer endorsements could be effective.

Sharing evidence of other parents spending time with their children may show positive results.

These findings are based on a behavioural diagnostic carried out using the COM-B framework to understand drivers and barriers for parental engagement on learning. Presented above are the most significant factors that can inform a shift in parental behaviours to actively engage in learning activities outside school that can improve outcomes.

How Can **Parents** Support their Children?



Uphold high expectations by encouraging children to believe in themselves and challenge them with relative real-world problems that open new ways of thinking.



Develop a habit of talking to children about their school day to express interest in their education and cultivate greater motivation.



Enable children to actively engage in extra-curricular activities by introducing them to different school and community activities such as sports, arts, social events etc.



Invest time and effort in understanding assessment results, report cards and expectations.

Monitor progress through diaries (asking the child to read it), parent teacher meetings and report cards.



For families that can afford to, parents must **establish** spaces for learning where distractions are minimised and essential study materials are available.



Provide positive reinforcement by celebrating their successes, both big or small, such as scoring well in annual exams or answering a question right or volunteering to do chores.



Engage with education service providers – teachers, tuition providers, education officials, to demand better standards of education and learning.

Role of National Assessments in the Learning Nexus

The Broken Large-scale Assessments Regime

Gaps in the execution of large-scale assessments to effectively assess proficiency levels lead to large periods of 'assessment black-outs'. This results in weak linkages between evidence and decision-making for responsive service delivery.

Assessment	Scale	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
National Achievement Test	Pakistan					Grade 4 . 8		Grade 4 . 8							Grade 4 . 8
Literacy and Numeracy Drive	Punjab							Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3
Punjab Education Commission	Punjab	Grade 5 . 8					Grade 5 . 8	Grade 5 . 8	Grade 5 . 8	Grade 5 . 8	Grade 5 . 8	Grade 5 . 8			
Sindh Standardized Achievement Test	Sindh				Grade 5 . 8	Grade 5 . 8	Grade 5 . 8	Grade 5 . 8	Grade 5 . 8	Grade 5 . 8					
Provincial Achievement Test	Sindh	Grade 4	Grade 4 . 8	Grade 4 . 8			Grade 4 . 8		Grade 3					Grade 5	
Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission	Balochistan														Grade 5 . 8



Pakistan's assessments landscape is dotted with challenges of fragmentation, inconsistency and 'assessment black-outs'.

Parents, teachers and students who continue to rely so heavily on assessments develop false constructs, deepening the already substantial learning crisis.

Creating an Effective Assessments Loop for Pakistan

5. Decisions & Actions

Responsive service delivery to improve learning outcomes and tracking impact of actions through robust performance management

4. Interpretation

Uniform system-wide understanding of results and implications with regards to quality of education

3. Results & Insights

Timely compilation and dissemination of results to all stakeholders

1. Design

Assessments aligned to prepare students for a globally competitive and future-proof labour force, especially for girls

2. Administration

Optimised frequency and credibly administered assessments (formative and summative) to inform practices in and out of school



Role of Policy Makers in the Learning Nexus

Purpose-level Reset

For the Learning Nexus to become a force multiplier, a system level reset is required to optimise interactions among critical stakeholders, realign priorities in favour of the learners, and establish a foundation for transformative education service delivery.



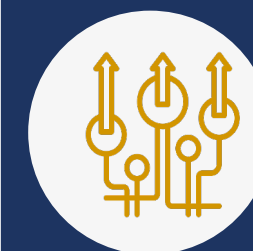
Clarity of Objectives

Priorities need to shift from input-based indicators to learning outcomes as the primary measure of progress.



Refined interactions

Adoption of a solution-oriented approach, ensuring that every interaction is purposefully aimed at enhancing children's learning experiences.



Functional learning nodes

Activating all direct and indirect stakeholders across tiers to participate and engage in the learning process every day.



Streamlined approach

Reducing parallel and outsourced structures to develop resident and contagious efficiency and effectiveness.

System-wide Responsiveness

Assessment data and insights should drive performance management routines to address challenges, calibrate incentives and align delivery chains to accelerate learning outcomes.



Enabling parental engagement

Effective communication with parents and caregivers to enable them to understand assessment results.

Foster a culture of learning through encouragement, enablement and support.



Enhancing classroom practices

Ensuring assessments data is being used by teachers to improve pedagogy.

Staffing, administrative and progression frameworks for teachers should center on learning outcomes.

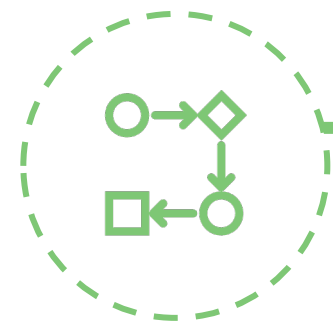


Optimised budget allocation

Evidence-informed budgeting that factors in adequately resourcing interventions that can address identified learning gaps.

Incentivise outcomes-linked performance.

Action Plan: Parental Engagement X Learning Outcomes



UNDERSTAND

More data and insights to understand learning science across the contextual diversity of Pakistan

- Larger scale national learning census – separate from administrative data on learning outcomes
- Annual exercise to proactively identify trends and shifts in preferences, behaviours and practices
- Iterative learning to improve design, communication and implementation



DESIGN

Infuse education policy and delivery with Behavioural Insights

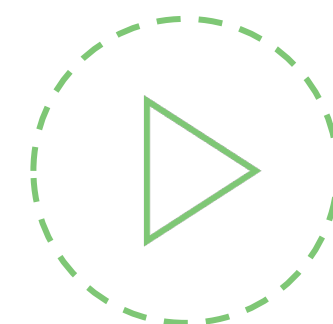
- Establish a behavioural insights unit at Pakistan Foundational Learning Hub to support national and sub-national delivery structures
- Design and implement a national nudge programme for parents
- Gamify parental engagement to generate micro-rewards and create role models for other parents



ENABLE

Design and implement an EdTech behaviour change campaign

- Mainstream understanding of the complementary and catalytic role technology can play
- Digital skills 101 for parents to engage with learning journeys using digital technologies
- National parental support portal: multichannel platform with low to high tech, and distance learning aids
- AI and linguistics R&D on local language to reduce barriers



ACTIVATE

Include parents in a national movement for learning

- Forums for participatory design and implementation
- Make SMCs/PTCs functional with an active role in learning outcomes
- National behaviour change communication campaign to activate parents in supporting better learning outcomes

#aajkyaseekha

Let us make every parent in Pakistan a partner in the nation's learning journey.

For a better future, let us ask...

#AajKyaSeekha

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Towards Learning

Using behavioral insights to activate parental engagement

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