



## PARENT TEACHER COUNCILS

FATA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - PAKISTAN

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### CONTEXT AND INITIATIVE

Located along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) were a semiautonomous tribal region until they were merged with the neighbouring province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). For years, the local population has been suffering from violent conflicts and military operations which resulted in the destruction of social infrastructure. In addition, tribal patriarchal culture and traditions enforced women's restricted mobility and socio-economic participation and caused a huge gender gap in all development indicators. Since the merger in 2018, local governmental and administrative structures are being expanded to areas where people have still been relying on traditional tribal ways of conflict resolution and decision making. The FATA-Development Programme (FDP) supports inter alia the Elementary and Secondary Education Department (E&SED) in the preparation and implementation of the Education Sector Plan and in its align-



ment with Annual Development Plans and District Education Plans. FDP contributes to the design of a conditional grant programme and provides capacity development to Parent Teacher Councils to use development funds for needs-based school improvement and heightened transparency and service delivery.

### GENDER - A QUALITY FEATURE OF OUR WORK

Triggering community-led school improvement through public funds had never been tested in the Merged Areas, and given the cultural context and structural imbalances, it was difficult to conceive that women-led parent-teacher councils (PTC) would implement projects themselves to improve situations of girls' schools. FDP developed capacity development and engineering manuals for PTC to be trained on their rights and newly assigned roles. As FDP was not granted Non-Objection Certificates needed to visit the Merged Areas, it implemented the activities through the Institute of Management Sciences based in Peshawar. FDP, through its implementing partner, was able to solicit and use support from men and women from the communities in the Merged Areas who participated in capacity development efforts. FDP also cooperated with commercial banks that helped by establishing dedicated desks for the opening of biometrically verified bank accounts at the district education offices.

### GENDER IMPACT

In a complex and unpredictable security situation and with constant threats from militants FDP designed a strategy that, after several setbacks, led to successful capacity development of 3,352 female members from 1676 girls' schools. In addition, PTCs of 1881 girls' schools were supported to open bank accounts enabling them to receive funds from the provincial government under the conditional grants programme. For the first time and under comprehensive and transparent procedures, women community members and female teachers became co-signatories of a joint bank account. Overall, 64% of all PTCs (32% of women led PTCs) were capacitated to utilize the public funds to complete their projects with regards to the provision of water, toilets, and additional classrooms.

