



NEWS RELEASE

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Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund and Opportunity EduFinance leverage new partnership to mobilize investments into education

Islamabad – March 16, 2021: Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), which has been working towards the elimination of poverty in Pakistan for over 20 years, has established a new partnership with Opportunity International EduFinance to increase access to capital for schools and parents, driving improvements in education access and quality.

PPAF sees education as critical to its poverty alleviation mission. Before COVID-19, Pakistan was reporting the second highest number of out-of-school children globally – with 22.8 million not attending school or learning. Limited access to education is even greater for girls, which COVID-19 has exacerbated. At the same time, research indicates each additional year of education generates an increase in earnings for a child above their household’s current income level. Education can literally end the generational cycle of poverty.

Through this new partnership, PPAF will identify microfinance providers (MFPs) from its wide network of partners that want to extend capital to low-cost non-state school owners and parents for school fees. Identified MFPs will be linked to Opportunity EduFinance for technical assistance to launch and grow education finance portfolios.

With access to credit, school owners can build new classrooms and add more seats, increasing education access and options for families. They can also invest in other improvements to the quality of education and learning environment of their schools, such as ICT, gender-separate washrooms, teachers’ training, improved student facilities, transportation and – most critical right now during COVID-19 – safety equipment for learners and staff. Parents with access to school fee loans can ensure all their children are enrolled in school – both boys and girls – and are not at-risk of dropping out even when household cash flow fluctuates.

Qazi Azmat, CEO of PPAF, explained why this partnership aligns with PPAF’s overall mission to eliminate poverty in Pakistan. “PPAF is pleased to initiate this collaboration with Opportunity International to advance the shared goals of expanding access to quality education to underserved communities across Pakistan. We hope that this endeavor will ensure greater enrollment, retention and learning outcomes for children and positively contribute towards SDG4.”

Andrew McCusker, Head of Opportunity EduFinance, further highlights the potential impact of this partnership on children’s access to education. “We have a massive opportunity to impact children’s education access across Pakistan. Low-cost non-state schools can play a greater role filling the gap in the supply of education if they are given the right access to capital to make investments. Our partnership is bringing together our unique expertise for the benefit of education. PPAF’s wide network of partners is critical to efficiently identify MFPs willing to go deeper in the education sector, while our technical expertise in education finance can ensure MFPs offer the

right loan products that meet school and parent needs. Working together, I believe we can mobilize significant investments, especially at this critical time of post-COVID recovery.”

ABOUT PAKISTAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION FUND

Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) is the lead apex institution for community-driven development in the country, with the aim of transforming the lives of the poor to create a more equitable and prosperous Pakistan. Set up by the Government of Pakistan, as an autonomous not-for-profit organization, PPAF has contributed significantly to Pakistan’s poverty alleviation objectives through its extensive interventions in livelihood development, education, financial inclusion, infrastructure, natural resource management and disaster risk reduction. Working through a vast network of local partner organisations, it focuses on addressing rural poverty, with special attention to gender, diversity and inclusion. To find out more about PPAF, visit <http://www.pfaf.org.pk/index.html>.

ABOUT OPPORTUNITY INTERNATIONAL EDUFINANCE

Opportunity International EduFinance, with headquarters in London, United Kingdom, partners with financial institutions around the world to help them develop, launch and manage sustainable education lending portfolios, focusing on the development of two flagship education lending products: School Improvement Loans and School Fee Loans. EduFinance currently has 63 financial institution partners in 24 countries, through which more than 14,000 schools and 133,000 parents are currently borrowing, benefiting an estimated 7.3 million children globally since the start of the program. Discover more at www.edufinance.org or join the conversation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [LinkedIn](#).

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