



DIRECTORATE OF
YOUTH
AFFAIRS
KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA



KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA YOUTH POLICY

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Acronyms

4Es	Education, Employment, Engagement, Environment
ANF	Anti-Narcotics Force (Pakistan)
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
DG	Director General
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DoYA	Directorate of Youth Affairs (KP)
DYO	District Youth Officer
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IT	Information Technology
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
KPITB	KP Information Technology Board
LGRD	Local Government & Rural Development Department
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
LMS	Learning Management System
LSBE	Life Skills Based Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
NAVTTC	National Vocational & Technical Training Commission
NAYP	National Adolescent and Youth Policy
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMD	Newly Merged Districts (erstwhile FATA)
NVQF	National Vocational Qualifications Framework
PDMA	Provincial Disaster Management Authority
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
R&MH	Reproductive and mental health
RHR	Reproductive Health and Rights
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TEVTA	Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (KP-TEVTA)
ThWG	Thematic Working Groups
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
USF	Universal Service Fund (Pakistan)
WBT	Work-based training
YDC	Youth Development Commission
YERT	Youth Emergency Response Team(s)

Introduction

The KP Youth Policy 2026 provides a broader outline and roadmap to empower the youth of the province. It is rooted in the expectations and needs of young people, aligned with the National 4E framework, and responsive to the socio-economic and environmental situation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Through collaborative implementation, sufficient resourcing, and continuous engagement with youth stakeholders, this policy will tap into the huge potential of the KP youth in terms of turning the challenges into opportunities and ensuring that the youth bulge is converted into a dividend to the peace and prosperity of the province. The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, together with its partners, is committed to put this policy into practice and ensure that youth development forms a core of the province's journey towards inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Political Map of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



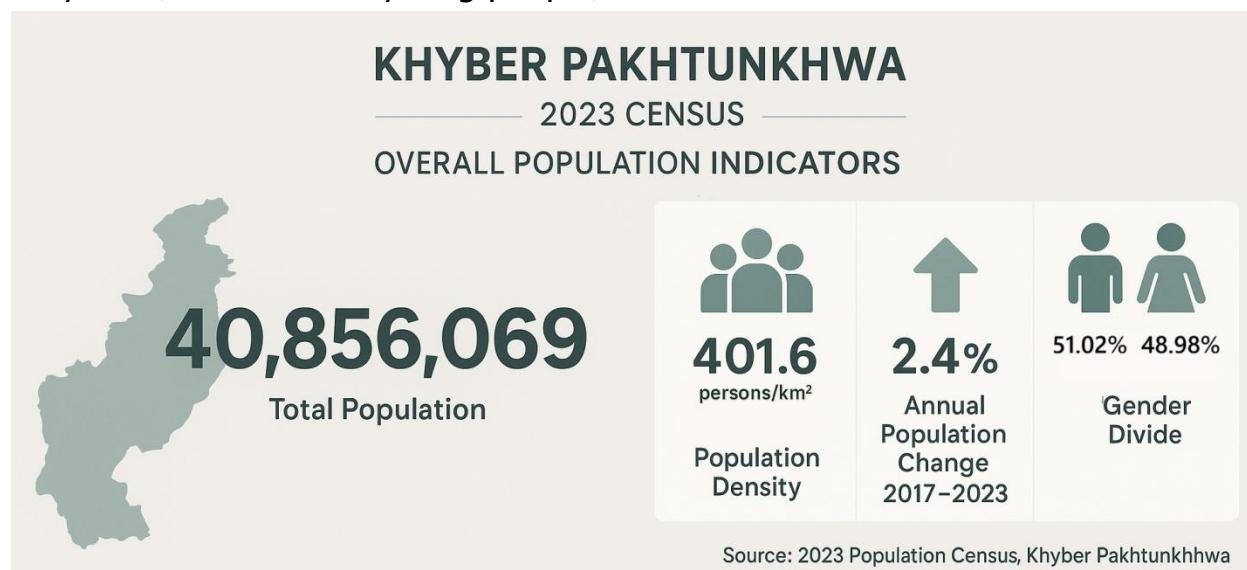
This policy is based on the foundations provided by KP Youth Policy 2016, whereby its core vision and strengths are retained, meanwhile updating its contents to address new realities and gaps identified during document reviews, stakeholder consultations and brainstorming sessions. Significant challenges such as ineffective institutional coordination, a growing gender and digital

divide, increasing climate vulnerabilities, merger of erstwhile FATA and youth mental health crises have highlighted the necessity of a new approach. Similarly, potential opportunities such as youth demographic dividend (more than 64% of KP's population is under 30)¹, growing sports and IT infrastructure, and national programs, can be utilized to the benefit of youth development.

In line with Pakistan's draft National Adolescent and Youth Policy (NAYP) 2025-35 and its "4E" framework (Education, Employment, Engagement, Environment), the KP Youth Policy 2026 adopts these pillars to organize provincial initiatives. It focuses on inclusion, equity, and rights ensuring no young person is left behind. It also includes cross-cutting priorities like digital transformation, gender equality, climate resilience, and health and well-being. This document outlines the vision, mission, objectives, guiding principles, strategic pillars, and institutional mechanisms that will lead youth development in KP for the next ten years. It is intended for formal consultation and approval by the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and will act as a provincial policy tool guiding coordinated actions across all sectors that affect youth.

Context of Youth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's overall population stands at 40.86 million (Census-2023), while roughly one in four residents is a young person (.26.26% are 15-29 years (\approx 10.7 million young people)

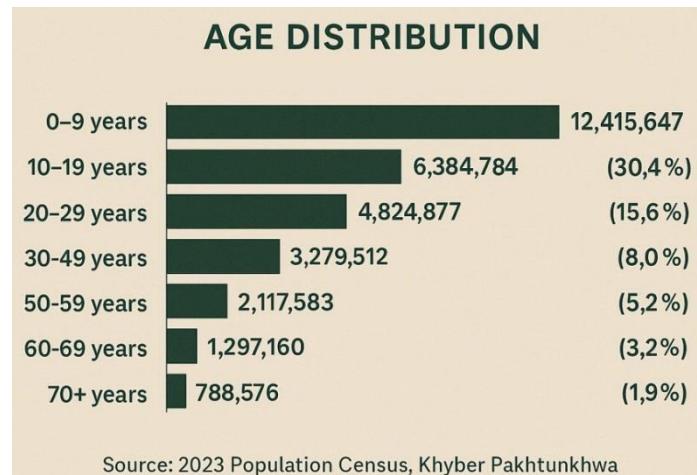


¹ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

The population graph shows that the number of young people will continue to increase for the next several years. This demographic trend presents both opportunities and challenges for the province's socio-economic and political development.

To effectively utilize the potential of this demographic dividend, it is important to support the transition and transformation of the youth so they can contribute effectively to the province's progress.².

Although, the governmental leadership has taken certain measures, including adoption of 2016 KP Youth Policy and programs focused on skill development and employment, to create an enabling environment for youth to progress. Yet, KP youth is facing huge challenges in reaching their full potential.



Poverty

Youth in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) face significant poverty challenges due to factors like regional conflict, limited investment, Outdated education and a high unemployment rate; a nationwide problem but more acute in KP. These issues are also contributing to a range of social problems.

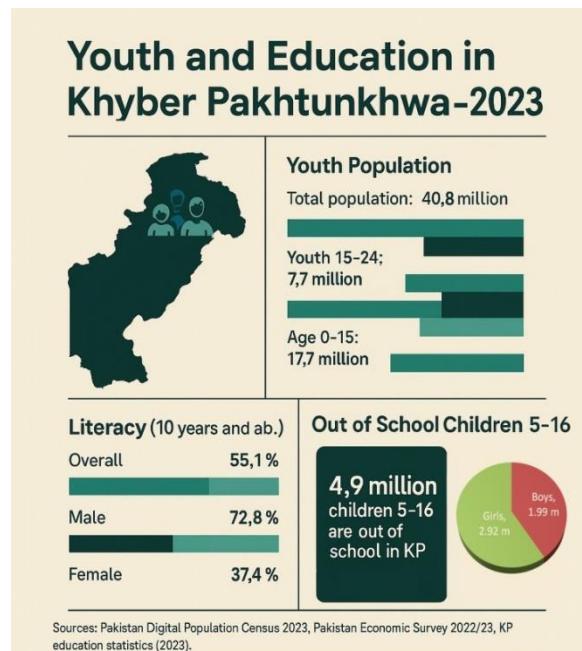
Recent World Bank provincial estimates place KP's poverty around 29.5% (2025)—well above the national projection of ~25% in FY2023/24—underscoring the need to pair youth programmes with income support, employability and local growth measures³.

The KP government, in collaboration with Federal Government and international organizations is implementing programs aimed at alleviating poverty and providing opportunities through financial assistance (like the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) and the Ehsaas Program), education, and economic development initiatives (including micro-loans).

² Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), Census-2023: KP population total and profiles

Education

Education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is facing severe crisis, with a high percentage of children out of school and challenges in both elementary and higher education. Some of the key issues are high enrollment decline in universities, gender disparities, and low learning levels, especially in rural areas and NMDs.



Many rural and newly merged districts areas still lack adequate schools and qualified teachers. For example, just 37% of girls in the merged districts attend primary school and only 5% reach secondary level, a gender gap not anticipated by the 2016 policy. School closures from 2020 to 2021 due to COVID-19, caused severe learning loss; remote e-learning was largely inaccessible for poor/rural students in KP because of no internet.

Meanwhile, university graduates report widespread unemployment and outdated curricula. Additionally, due to overall funding cuts for higher education, public universities in KP saw budgets slashed by billions (2021-24), undermining students ability to pursue research and become job-ready. Catch-up education programs, better teacher training, digital learning tools for remote areas, and more investments in girls' and higher education are some of the areas that need the KP government's urgent attention.

Efforts are being made, such as government plans to increase enrollment, implement teacher training, and declare an education emergency, but significant hurdles remain. The 2016 policy placed emphasis on "quality education" and skills development. However, lack of necessary infrastructure has proved to be the biggest challenge in policy implementation in this area.

Employment and Entrepreneurship

KP's youth face an extreme jobs crisis today. There are a huge number of job aspirants for a very few job openings. e.g., in mid-2025 *866,000 candidates* applied for only 16,454 teaching vacancies (more than 52 applicants per seat),

underscoring massive unemployment of even highly-qualified graduates. Latest labour surveys report KP's overall unemployment rose to 8.8% in 2020-21 (one of the highest provincial rates), and youth unemployment (age 15-24) reached 11.1% nationally⁴. This comes despite policy pledges for "job banks," vocational training and entrepreneurship (incubators, venture funds etc). The province did launch Youth Impact Challenge Program grants expanded to Rs.2 billion⁵, digital internship schemes, and the KP Youth Employment Program for IT skills, but all these measures could not catch up with the increasing demand. A March 2025 report by PIDE notes *31% of educated youth remain jobless* (women constitute 51% of the unemployed). Inflation and slow-growing private-sector have further reduced hope for new opportunities.

Thus, the 2016 policy's employment strategies were misaligned with reality. The issue needs more active private sector engagement, job-creation in existing and emerging sectors, skill building for the digital economy, and support for self-employment in agriculture and service industries. Due various factors including political instability and terrorism fears, the formal economy and industrial base have not grown as assumed in 2016, leaving youth underemployed. The dependence on microfinance and grants (e.g. YICP) was never sufficient to compensate for the impact of political and socio-economic challenges.

Access to Digital and Modern Technologies

Although, the KP government was aware of digital development and the 2016 policy mentioned ICT training and entrepreneurship, as a key measure to prepare youth in this area, but failed to foresee the pace in which the modern technology has advanced. . Access to digital and Modern Technologies has now become youth's fundamental need. But the gap between needs and available resources is huge. In 2023, a UNDP report found 54.3% of Pakistanis lack internet access, and only 20% of rural households have internet as compared to 60% urban. National Commission on the Status of Women, in its report "Digitalisation & Women in Pakistan" in 2023 found that, "Only 26% of women in Pakistan use the internet, compared to 47% of men. The gap widens significantly in rural areas, with only 7% of women versus 20% of men having

⁴ The News- 01 June, 2025-Joblessness crisis in KP

⁵ Business Recorder: October 12, 2018-KP Govt to increase YICP grant to Rs2bn for financial assistance of youth

internet access". In KP specifically, only 2 of 32 districts (Peshawar, Abbottabad) are "highly digitally developed". This clear lack of access by the majority of KP's rural youth means they have very few options for online learning or work. While KPITB and World Bank initiatives (ArtTech festivals, Young Experts Program training) have tried to "connect youth", the broader policy foresaw none of the home connectivity or device affordability issues revealed by COVID-19 remote schooling. Data costs and lack of infrastructure especially hurt KP youth and women. Today's youth need wider broadband, digital literacy campaigns, and tech entrepreneurship support (e.g. coding schools, startup hubs). High-speed internet in towns like Peshawar must be replicated in Swat, Bannu, NMDs and other remote areas.

Civic and Political Engagement

Youth in Pakistan are increasingly engaged in civic and political activities, often motivated by factors like political instability and corruption. However in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa youth continue to be marginalized in politics. Absence of student Unions and lack of local government elections for a considerably long time, as well as a robust mechanism (e.g. youth councils or quotas) to incorporate young voices in the legislature or party structures has reduced the youth in KP to only a slogan-shouting and other foot-soldier work, with little involvement in decision-making or policy. Youth political concerns (e.g. desire for peace, changes in representation due to NMDs) were also influenced by the rise of extremism and violent conflict in KP.

Although the 2016 policy provided for political empowerment of youth and engagement in decision-making at all levels, but it vaguely refer to "engage youth in decision-making" without any follow up strategy, leaving a vacuum. Overall, today's youth wants accountability, civil society participation, and climate/environmental engagement.

Gender Inclusion and Marginalization

Youth and gender inclusion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is a major focus for government to reduce gender disparities, particularly in education and economic participation. The provincial government took many initiatives like the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Economic Transformation (KP-RETP) project, the Climate Action Plan, and the MoU with UNICEF are designed to empower youth and women through skills development, inclusive education, and greater

participation in decision-making. However, female education and employment in KP still lags, with only 37% of women being literate (versus 65% men), and women making up over half of unemployed youth.

While the 2016 policy noted gender inequality, it provides minimal to no strategies to overcome those gaps. The policy also, does not provide any detailed strategy for marginalized groups like transgender youth (barely recognized nationally until 2018) and youth with disabilities, who face exclusion in almost all areas of development. There is a growing need of a general call for “social empowerment” that could effectively address these specific segments of the society. Emerging needs include targeted support for girls’ schooling (especially in rural/ newly merged areas), legal aid and vocational training for marginalized communities, and measures to protect young women and minorities from gender-based violence.

Security, Post-Conflict, and Merged Areas

After the 2018 FATA-KP merger, a large number of youth entered KP with distinct issues and challenges. The Youth Policy 2016 obviously could not anticipate this since at the time, when the 2016 policy was drafted, FATA was still a separate region.. These newly merged districts suffered decades of war and neglect: schools and hospitals were destroyed, roads were damaged, and local economies collapsed. For example, in the NMDs just before merger only 2,074 schools existed for 3 million+ children, and 37% of girls at primary level were enrolled .

Moreover, the overall security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has worsened due to a consistent rise in terrorism and extremism. Youth is extremely vulnerable to extremism and lack of education and decent employment increase the risk of youth becoming easy targets by extremist groups. To address these issues, the government has launched several programs to provide economic opportunities and skills to youth, including, Eco-Tourism and Camping Villages Project, The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (KPCVE) and Initiatives like youth conferences to raise awareness and encourage youth engagement in countering violent extremism. To address the challenges faced by Youth in KP province and specifically from erstwhile FATA, appropriate inclusion strategies must be adopted, including but not limited to massive education catch-up programs, livelihood projects (agriculture, tourism

etc), and social and Community support to prevent youth being drawn into radicalization.

Climate Change and Environment

The future of the province is already started to be determined by climate change. Deforestation, periodic floods and poor waste management not only jeopardize lives but also destroy livelihood pushing large portions of the population into poverty. Negative Climate changes have affected KP's young population severely. The KP government had adopted KP Climate Policy 2022 which outlines "youth involvement in climate action, training young volunteers, including climate in curricula, and exploring green jobs". However, most of the KP youth is not climate literate. On the other hand, the 2016 Youth policy did not include environmental issues and clearly overlooked sustainability or disaster preparedness as a mean to utilize youth potential in green economy and Disaster Risk Reduction. KP province has repeatedly been flooded, latest been in 2022 and 2023, its glaciers are melting, which makes it imperative for the rural youth to adopt climate-resilient livelihoods (e.g. in agroforestry or renewable energy). Initiatives must be taken to integrate environmental education, support green entrepreneurship, and engage youth in environmental conservation, in line with the 2022 KP Climate Policy.

Arts, Sports, and Culture

In recent years, KP has made strides in sports infrastructure (e.g. a "1000 sports facilities" scheme, dozens of cricket stadiums and hockey turfs) . As of recently, there is a rapid growth of creative industries – film, music, gaming and digital art. Initiatives like the ArtTech Festival (2017) and tech+arts labs by KPITB indicate youth interest in blending technology with culture , but there is no formal support from the KP government through any legal or policy measure including 2016 youth Policy. Moreover, the need for spaces like studios, theaters, and community centers has grown significantly. The 2016 policy's brief reference to "sports culture" did not translate to programs for youth artists, writers or filmmakers. Youth of this era needs creative grants, cultural festivals, and modern sports coaching.

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA YOUTH POLICY

Policy Statement

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) presents this revised Youth Policy 2026 as a comprehensive roadmap to empower its young population (primarily ages 15-29) over the next decade. This policy builds on the foundation of the KP Youth Policy 2016, retaining its core vision and strengths, while modernizing content to address new realities and gaps identified during the revision process. Key challenges such as weak institutional coordination, a growing gender and digital divide, rising climate vulnerabilities, merger of erstwhile FATA and persistent security situation have underscored the need for an updated strategy. Grounded in sustainable development principles, the new Youth Policy emphasizes inclusion, equity, and rights, making sure no young person is left behind, and integrates cross-cutting priorities like digital transformation, gender equality, climate resilience, and health and well-being.

Vision, Mission and Objectives

Vision: *To create an enabling environment for the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that provides equitable opportunities for education, employment, engagement, and a healthy environment – empowering young people to realize their full potential in a peaceful, prosperous, digitally connected and climate-resilient province.*

Mission: *To develop a generation of educated, skilled, healthy, and civically engaged youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who is economically productive, socially responsible, and actively involved in governance and community life.*

The mission commits the provincial government to invest in youth as agents of positive change – economically active, socially aligned, politically engaged, and environmentally conscious citizens – equipped with the competencies and values needed to drive inclusive growth and social cohesion.

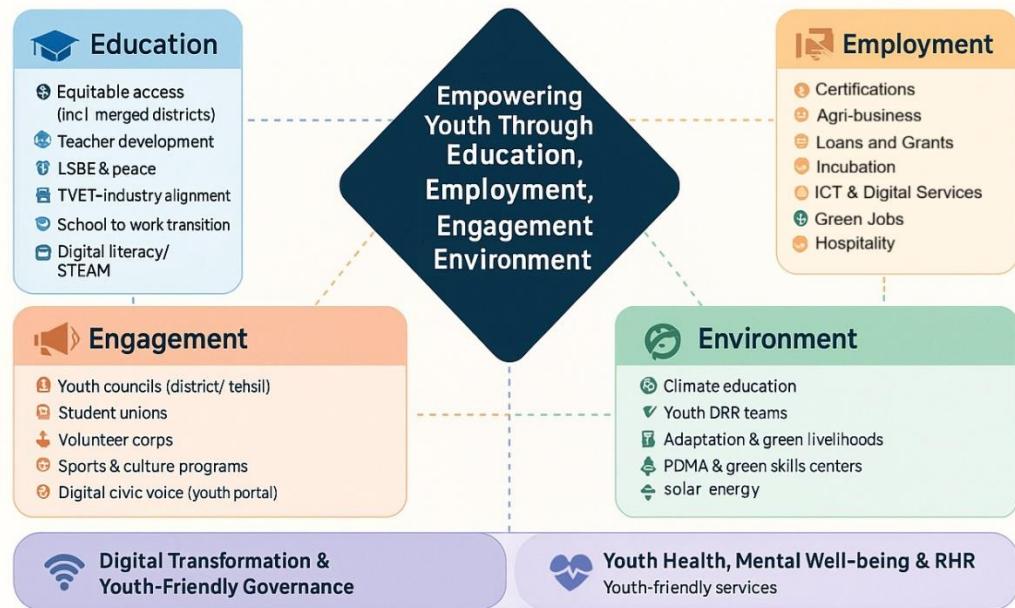
Objectives: The policy's strategic objectives, aligned with the 4E pillars and cross-cutting priorities, are:

1. **Quality Education & Skills Development:** Ensure all youth have equitable access to quality education (formal and non-formal) and skills training that are relevant to market needs, future-oriented (digital and green skills), and conducive to personal development. This includes improving education quality and infrastructure, expanding Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), and bridging urban-rural disparities in educational access.
2. **Employment & Economic Empowerment:** Enable the creation of decent work and entrepreneurship opportunities for youth to drastically reduce unemployment and NEET rates (currently ~40%. This involves aligning skills with industry demand, promoting youth entrepreneurship (startup support, microfinance), facilitating transition to the workforce, and increasing female labor force participation (currently among the lowest, e.g. ~6.8% for females 15-19) through targeted measures and safe, inclusive workplaces.
3. **Youth Engagement & Social Well-Being:** Foster a socially inclusive and politically empowered youth cohort that actively participates in community life and decision-making. This includes establishing platforms for civic engagement, volunteerism, and leadership, promoting creative expression, and preservation of shared traditions, and ensuring youth have access to health and wellbeing services (including Mental and Reproductive Health and Rights (MRHR) education). The aim is for KP's youth to be tolerant, confident, healthy, and engaged citizens contributing to peace and social cohesion.
4. **Youth and the Environment:** Increase youth awareness, resilience, and participation in addressing environmental challenges and climate change. The policy seeks to equip young people as champions of climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and green economic opportunities, recognizing that KP's youth will live through the severe consequences of climate change. Integrating climate education, green skills, and youth-led environmental initiatives will help protect livelihoods and promote sustainable development.
5. **Effective Governance & Accountability for Youth:** Establish robust institutional frameworks, legal mechanisms, and data systems to implement and monitor youth policy across sectors. This entails

operationalizing a Youth Development Commission (with legal mandate) for coordination, improving inter-departmental collaboration, instituting strong Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) and Youth Data systems, and ensuring youth voices are represented in governance. Good governance of the youth agenda – with transparent funding, accountability, and youth participation – is essential to achieve the above objectives.

These objectives will guide the strategic interventions under each pillar, ensuring that by 2036, KP's youth are educated and employed, engaged in society, thriving in health, and contributing to a sustainable environment, supported by institutions that uphold their rights and potential.

KP Youth Policy



Guiding Principles

All initiatives within the framework of this policy will be based on guiding principles that cut across the 4E pillars, ensuring an approach that is inclusive and rights-based:

- **Inclusivity & Equity:** “Leave no one behind.” Youth related interventions will confirm inclusion of all groups irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, location or socio-economic status. The diverse backgrounds of KP’s youth (urban and rural, male and female, literate and non-literate, minority communities, differently-abled, etc.) will be recognized in the design of the programs. Marginalized and vulnerable youth (e.g. young women, persons with disabilities, transgender youth, internally displaced and refugee youth) will be provided with equal opportunity and resources through special efforts.
- **Rights-Based & Youth-Centric:** The policy upholds that youth, being citizens of Pakistan, are entitled to certain basic rights and services. It endorses the rights of youth to education, decent work, healthcare (including mental health and SRHR), participation, and a safe environment. Youth will be considered full partners in development, not just beneficiaries. Youth rights and dignity should be respected by all the stakeholders during implementation of any initiative under this policy.
- **Gender Equality:** Gender-responsive measures are incorporated throughout the policy. Recognizing the stark female participation gap in KP (female youth face disproportionate barriers in education, employment, mobility, and digital access), the policy encourages empowerment of young women. This includes guaranteeing continuity of girls’ education, vocational training for women, safe transport and work environments, and addressing gender-based violence and harmful social norms. Female youth will be equal partners and beneficiaries in all initiatives.
- **Youth Engagement & Ownership:** Central to this policy’s success is Youth voices and leadership. The policy encourages effective participation of the youth in its design, implementation, and evaluation. Through the reinstatement of student unions to forming youth councils and volunteer networks, the policy provides mechanisms for youth to contribute ideas, feedback, and oversight. Participation will not be symbolic rather the youth will have representation in decision-making forums and program governance.

- **Digital Inclusion:** Reducing the digital divide is a cross-cutting priority. Access to information and communication technology (ICT) is recognized as a catalyst for education, employment and engagement. Programs will also make sure that the rural and low-income youth have access to the internet, devices and digital literacy training. Digital skills (coding, online freelancing, etc.) will be encouraged to prepare youth for the global economy. Safeguards will also be in place against digital harms (cyber-bullying, online harassment) that especially target young women (over 70% of women report online harassment). Digital inclusion will assist broader outreach and innovation across all pillars. In addition, the government will invest in providing connectivity and devices to youth living in remote and hard to access areas. For example, female-friendly digital hubs (tele-centers at Jawan Marakiz with subsidized internet access) will be established in underserved tehsils to ensure that young people particularly the rural young women are not left behind in the digital revolution.
- **Innovation & Entrepreneurship:** The policy supports innovative approaches and a spirit of entrepreneurship in dealing with youth issues. This implies using technology, creative arts, and new business models to engage youth. Public-private partners (including tech companies, social enterprises, and development partners) will be engaged to introduce new solutions such as start-up incubators, hackathons and community-led climate projects, bringing creativity and efficiency to the youth development work.
- **Sustainability & Environmental Safekeeping:** Recognizing the inter-generational responsibility of protecting the environment, all youth programs will adopt sustainable and climate resilient practices. Training on green skills and climate awareness and environmental conservation led by the youth are incorporated to make sure that gains of development are sustainable to the environment. The relevant strategies (particularly under Education, Employment, and Engagement pillars) will have a climate lens applied to them to ensure that the youth are ready and take part in mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
- **Accountability & Evidence-Based Action:** Implementation will be guided by data and evidence. Baselines, targets, and indicators will

steer programs, and robust M&E will track progress. Effective reporting (e.g. annual Youth Development reports to the Provincial Assembly) will hold duty-bearers accountable. Feedback data will allow policy refinement based on what works. There is a commitment to transparency in fund utilization – ensuring youth resources are used effectively and reach intended beneficiaries without being misused.

These guiding principles guarantee that the implementation of the policy remains fair, inclusive, and impactful. Every stakeholder – government departments, civil society, private sector, and youth themselves – is expected to uphold these principles in their contributions to the youth agenda.

Focused Youth Groups and Social Inclusion Strategies

KP's youth is not a uniform group; certain sections face exceptional barriers that require exceptional strategies. Building on the 2016 policy's identification of focused groups the 2026-2030 policy emphasizes targeted inclusion measures for the following youth segments:

- **Young Women and Girls:** Female youth in KP often face restricted mobility, early marriage, harassment, and limited economic opportunities, resulting in their high NEET rates and low rate of participation in the work force. The policy recommends that the government shall initiate gender-specific interventions like:
 - *scholarships and stipends to keep girls in school;*
 - *recruitment and training of female teachers to improve girls' education;*
 - *establishing safe women-only spaces in skill centers and workplaces;*
 - *mentorship programs connecting young women with role models; and*
 - *enforcing anti-harassment policies in educational institutes and workplaces.*
- *The policy further recommends introducing quotas for young women in certain programs (e.g. 50% female enrollment in skill training, reserved seats in youth councils etc).*

The policy will ensure all pillars integrate strategies to promote young women as equal participants.

- **Rural and Underserved Youth:** Geographic imbalance is a substantial issue – “*far-flung districts are often ignored*” for any youth initiative. Youth in such areas (including the Newly Merged Areas, formerly FATA) have less access to quality education, internet, and jobs. The policy calls for more focus, dedicated budget and mobile outreach programs for underserved districts (e.g. mobile training units, traveling sports competitions, mobile libraries). The policy recommends DoYA to expand Jawan Markaz (youth centers) down to tehsil and union council levels where feasible, to bring services closer to rural youth and partnerships with local NGOs and community leaders to approach out-of-school youth, rural communities, and those affected by conflict or displacement.
- **Youth with Disabilities:** Differently-abled youth often face social bias and lack of accessible facilities. This policy endorses their right to equal participation. In this regard the policy demands that the government of KP shall:
 - ensure all new and existing youth facilities (schools, vocational centers, sports complexes) are disability-friendly (ramps, assistive technologies).
 - strengthen province-wide Inclusive sports and cultural programs – an area where KP has pioneered efforts such as dedicated gyms and sports grounds for differently-abled youth.
 - Adapt skill training curricula for various abilities to strengthen PWDs’ livelihood opportunities.
- **Transgender Youth:** Transgender persons face extreme marginalization in KP, often excluded from education and formal employment. The policy commits to implementing the protections of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act at the provincial level and recommends that:
 - All youth programs shall be open and welcoming to transgender youth, with dedicated outreach to encourage their enrollment.
 - Safe spaces and counseling shall be provided for transgender youth facing abuse.

- Provincial departments shall coordinate to enhance access to and facilitate transgender youth for registration.
 - Skills and entrepreneurship schemes shall specifically enroll transgender beneficiaries to support their livelihoods.
- **Minority and Marginalized Communities:** Ethnic and religious minority youth, as well as refugee youth and internally displaced youth/IDPs, often have no access to educational or economic opportunities and also have no say in any decision affecting their future. The policy ensures non-discrimination in all initiatives and proactive inclusion of minority youth in scholarships, cultural programs, and councils. For refugee/IDP youth, the government shall collaborate with humanitarian partners to provide education, psychosocial support, and vocational training in camps and communities hosting refugees/IDPs. The aim shall be social integration and preventing any sense of alienation or radicalization born out of neglect.
- **Out-of-School and At-Risk Youth:** A substantial group of teenagers and youth are not in formal education or training. These include child laborers (workshop workers), street children, or those who dropped out of schools due to poverty or conflict. The policy encourages non-formal education (literacy and equivalency programs) through scholarships for re-enrollment or second-chance exams. The policy further propose the KP government shall support KP youth who is at risk of crime or substance abuse, through sports, counseling, and rehabilitation programs.

For each focused group mentioned above, specific strategies and targets are provided in the implementation plan. The principal approach shall be inclusive mainstreaming that ensures each youth program is designed to accommodate diverse youth. The policy also calls for a revision of existing quota systems for marginalized youth (e.g. persons with disabilities, transgender youth) in education, training and employment programs. The government shall redirect reserved opportunities toward higher-value skills training and career pathways – coupled with assistive support (such as assistive devices, preparatory coaching) – so that these youth can advance and compete equally in the job market. In the budget, the policy recommends that a portion of resources shall be earmarked for marginalized groups or less-developed districts, adjusting imbalances. By

doing so, KP government's aim shall be to fulfill the policy's equity principle and truly empower every young citizen over the policy period.



Pillar 1: Education – Empowering Youth through Quality Education and Skills

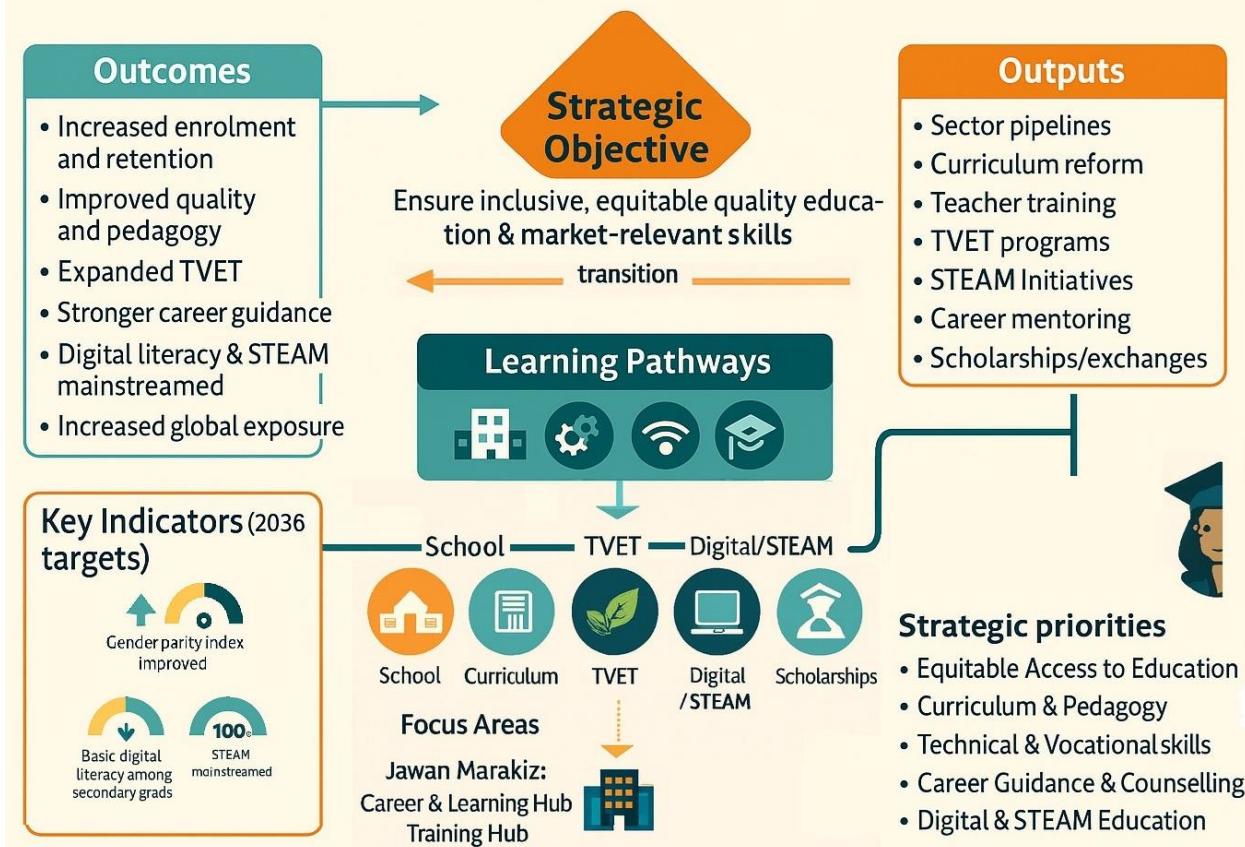
Goal: All youth in KP receive quality education and skills (including digital and life skills) training that will make them informed citizens and prepare them to become socially and economically productive in the 21st century.

To address the educational challenges that the KP government is facing despite investing heavily in education since 2016, the policy recommends the following **strategic Priorities under Education:**

- The government shall make every effort to ensure all children complete their secondary education and move to tertiary education. To finance initiatives towards this objective, the provincial government shall push for a more development-focused education budget (with donor support for infrastructure), ensuring underserved regions get the funding required for quality education.
- In line with the recommendation of the NAYP, to educate youth on democratic values and civic responsibility, the KP government shall revise curricula and pedagogy to incorporate Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE), civic education, and human rights, to bring it in line with the recommendations of the NAYP.
- The KP government shall recruit more teachers, including female teachers, in the rural and minority concentrated areas, to reduce shortages.

Pillar 1: Education

Empowering Youth through Quality Education & Skills



- The KP government, through its Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (KP-TEVTA) and support from partners such as the EU and Germany's TVET Sector Support Programme, is undertaking reforms to modernize the TVET system. Measures like Competency Based Training & Assessment (CBT&A) and a National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) are being implemented to improve quality and standardization. However, technical and vocational education reaches only a small number of youth. Furthermore, TVET education and skills are not aligned with existing market needs, leading to a skills-job mismatch. Additionally, the digital revolution has outperformed the formal education system – most public schools have yet to integrate digital literacy. These gaps results in high youth unemployment and social exclusion. The policy puts high importance on modernized vocational and technical education as a tool to address the issue of youth

unemployment and social exclusion. To achieve this objective, the following is recommended:

- Building on the existing network of 36 technical institutes and 650 vocational centers in KP, the government shall invest in establishing new vocational training centers in high-demand trades and upgrading equipment at existing institutes.
- A comprehensive review of TVET curricula shall be conducted with inputs from the private sector to ensure training produces marketable skills.
- Private sector involvement shall be further strengthened to ensure training remains demand-driven and relevant to industry needs – with a focus on high-growth sectors such as green jobs (agribusiness, water, renewable energy) and digital skills.
- The KP government shall expand TVET for young women in non-traditional trades as well, together with ensuring training centers are safe and culturally acceptable for female trainees.
- The policy further recommends for women-only training cohorts in select trades, dedicated scholarships for female trainees, and flexible class schedules (e.g. evening classes) to accommodate women's needs.
- The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government's work-based training (WBT) pilot programs and ongoing initiatives, through the KP Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (KP-TEVTA), is playing important role in providing practical, hands-on experience and improving job placement prospects for the province's youth. The policy recommends that the KP government shall broaden work-based training pilot programs across various sectors and integrate career counseling services at Schools and colleges level so that students make informed education and career choices. The policy also encourages entrepreneurship at educational institutions – incubation centers in universities/TVET colleges and student startup competitions to nurture young entrepreneurs (in line with the initiatives under the Employment pillar).
- The KP government shall, as a pilot initiative, upgrade three (03) Jawan Markaz (Youth Centers) into model Employment Hubs in partnership with local industries to link youth with nearby job opportunities.

- Realizing the importance of digital skills, the policy aim is for all secondary school graduates to be digitally literate by 2036 and recommends that the government shall introduce IT skills and courses on coding for students of secondary level and onwards. Public-private partnerships (e.g. with tech incubators or the KP IT Board) shall support setting up computer labs in high schools and training teachers in basic coding and internet use. .
- In continuation of Results for Service Deliveries (R4D) Calendar at DoYA, it is recommended that the KP government shall establish a dedicated Foreign Sponsorships and Scholarships initiative with substantial funding to give youth exposure, by reducing financial barriers, while facilitating global networking and career advancement.

By following these strategies, the KP government targets measurable improvements by 2036: increased secondary and tertiary enrollment (with reduced gender and regional gaps), higher youth literacy rates, and a rise in the percentage of youth with job-relevant skills. Alignment with SDG 4 (Quality Education) is central – ensuring inclusive, equitable education and promoting lifelong learning. Over time, these education investments will result in reduced youth unemployment and more informed civic participation, necessary for positive development. The education reforms are also foundational for the success of other pillars, supplying the knowledge and skilled human capital necessary for economic and social empowerment of KP's youth.



Pillar 2: Employment – Productive Youth, Decent Work and Entrepreneurship

Goal: Increase youth employment and income opportunities in KP by promoting job creation, skills-to-job matching, and entrepreneurial initiatives.

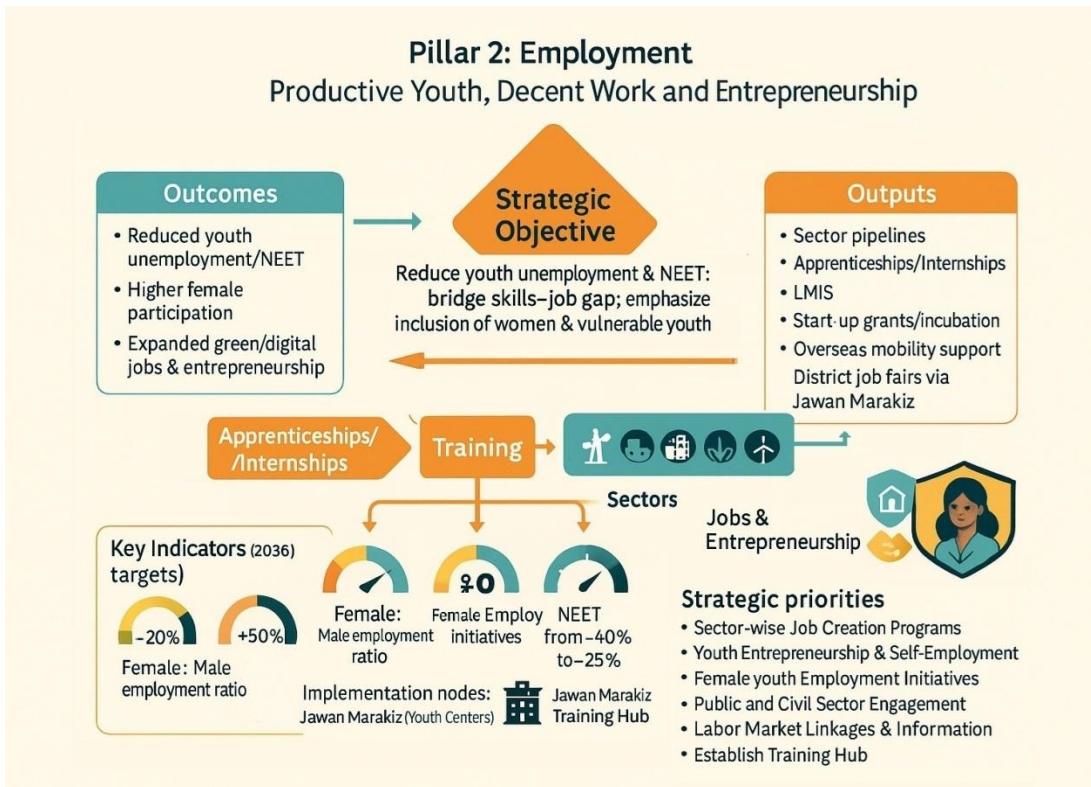
Youth unemployment and underemployment are among KP's most pressing challenges. The province has one of the highest youth jobless rates in Pakistan (~7.7% unemployment and ~40% NEET as of recent surveys). The problem is more acute for young women and in conflict-affected or rural areas where formal jobs are few. Even educated youth struggle with joblessness due to a mismatch between education outcomes and market needs. To address these issues the KP government has pioneered youth inclusion in the digital economy,

launching a provincial Digital KP Strategy with World Bank support and projects like the Digital Jobs in KP initiative, which have trained over 13,000 young people (including women and persons with disabilities) in IT skills and freelancing. Platforms such as the Digital Youth Summit and tech incubation centers (e.g. Durshal) have been fostering a growing startup culture. Leveraging these efforts alongside federal schemes will open new tech-based pathways for youth employment and innovation. This pillar of the policy therefore, focuses on converting these opportunities into actual jobs and livelihoods for young people and recommends the following **Strategic Priorities under Employment**:

- The government shall launch targeted programs in sectors with high potential of employment, identified by labour market assessments. For example:
 - **Construction and Housing:** Training and certifications in trades like masonry, electrical work, plumbing, and low-cost housing construction to meet local demand (aligning with any housing schemes).
 - **Tourism and Hospitality:** Taking advantage of KP's natural beauty and heritage, set up training for tour guides, hospitality staff, and tourism entrepreneurs in the scenic areas and cultural sites. If security permits, the revival of tourism in newly merged districts can be a blessing for the local youth job market.
 - **Manufacturing and SMEs:** Facilitate apprenticeships in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and promote industrial training in emerging economic zones (including those under CPEC). The policy supports industrial skills training programs where businesses in special economic zones partner to train and later hire local youth.
 - **Agriculture and Agri-business:** Encourage youth engagement in modern farming techniques, agribusiness, and food processing. Introduce training on climate-smart agriculture for rural youth and support youth-led agri-tech startups (e.g. farm e-commerce, precision farming tools).
 - **Information Technology and Digital Services:** Expand digital skills development and IT sector opportunities for youth. Building on KP's Digital Strategy, coding bootcamps, digital marketing courses, and ICT internships will equip young people for jobs in software development, e-commerce, and freelancing. The

government will partner with the KP IT Board and private tech companies to scale up tech incubators (such as Durshal) and establish Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) centers (like the planned Pakistan Digital City in Haripur) that can create much needed IT-enabled jobs for youth.

- **Renewable Energy (Green Jobs):** As part of climate initiatives, create youth employment in solar panel installation, micro-hydro plant maintenance, reforestation volunteers/interns, and waste management projects. Establish Green skills hubs that will train technicians for the growing renewable energy and environmental management sectors.



- Given the limited capacity in formal jobs, entrepreneurship is a key to empowering youth economically. The policy stress upon strengthen the entrepreneurship environment in KP through:
 - **Youth Business Loans and Grants:** Align with federal schemes like Kamyab Jawan (Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme) and enhance them with provincial funds to provide easy-access microloans for youth-led startups and small businesses. Special quotas or lower warranty

requirements for young women and marginalized youth entrepreneurs will be introduced.

- **Business Incubation and Mentorship:** Expand incubators through universities, TEVTA, or public-private partnerships that provide training in business management, access to workspaces, and mentorship for ambitious young entrepreneurs. Successful businesspeople will be engaged as mentors.
- **Startup Competitions and Innovation Hubs:** Organize provincial “Youth Innovation Challenges” where youth present business ideas solving local problems (in agriculture, health, education, climate, etc.). Provide seed funding to the best ideas. Established Tech hubs and co-working spaces at Jawan Markaz or other centers) in major cities (Peshawar, Abbottabad, etc.).
- **Ease of Doing Business for Youth:** Liaise with relevant departments to simplify registration, taxation, and licensing for small youth-run enterprises. Possibly create a one-window facilitation cell for youth entrepreneurs to navigate government procedures and avail incentives.
- **Freelancing and Digital Gig Work:** Encourage KP youth to participate in the online gig-economy by training them in freelancing skills (programming, graphic design, content writing) and connecting them to global freelancing platforms. The government can facilitate through shared co-working spaces with internet connectivity and maybe setting up a provincial freelancing portal or e-marketplace.
- In order to increase Female Youth Employment rate the policy recommends diverse measures including vocational programs tailored for women (in both traditional sectors like teaching, healthcare, and emerging ones like digital marketing), job placement services focusing exclusively on women (with career counseling that engages families to gain support)..
- The policy also encourages the KP government to ensure home-based and remote work opportunities for women who cannot work out of home due to cultural constraints – for example, training in online freelancing or cottage industries with established market linkages. Over the decade, the

goal is to substantially raise the female work force participation rate from its current very low base.

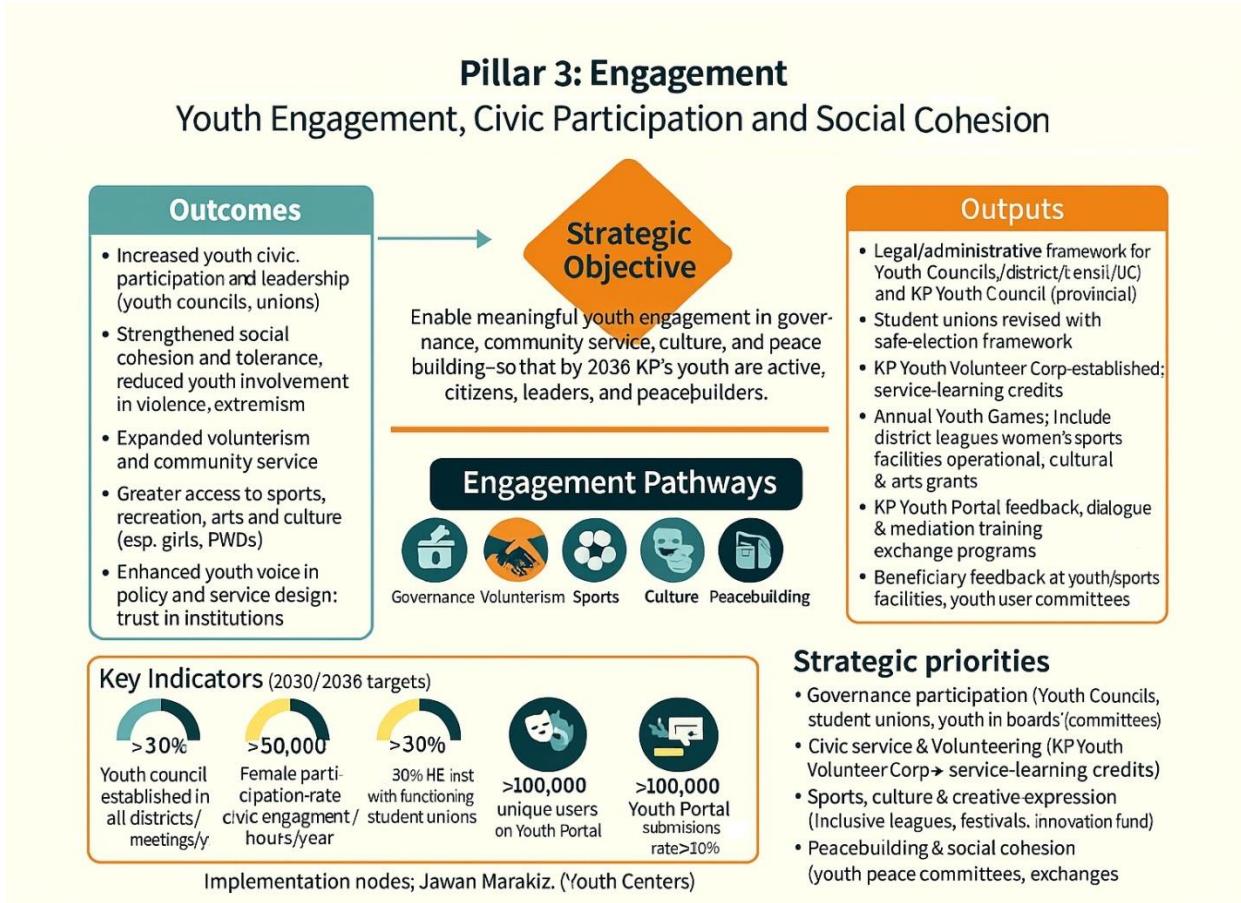
- The KP government shall create entry points for youth in public and development sectors. A Youth Internship Program in government departments can provide recent graduates with 6-12 month paid internships, offering experience and a potential recruitment pipeline. The policy advocates for a certain percentage of new government vacancies at entry level to be earmarked for young candidates (e.g. fresh graduates, under 30), to tackle age-related barriers. These measures will not only employ youth but also build their experience and civic responsibility.
- The Policy recommends for the establishment of a more effective labor market information system (LMIS) and job placement services in an effort to match supply and demand. KP Government shall arrange Job Fairs for KP youth to connect job seekers and employers.
- Moreover, the policy recognizes overseas employment as one of the areas where it can assist youth to access foreign job markets (through language training, information on overseas skill requirements therefore the KP Government shall coordinate with the Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment (BE&OE) to increase overseas employment opportunities for the KP youth.

The Employment pillar of this policy, envisions a vibrant youth workforce contributing to KP's economic development. By 2036, targets include reducing the youth NEET rate, unemployment, and achieving a more balanced male-female participation in the work force. Success of this pillar will not only be measured by the number of people who are employed but also by better livelihoods e.g. higher average earnings by youth, and overall reduced poverty levels (linking to SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth). It will also be reflected in social stability: meaningful employment is a deterrent to crime, violence, or extremism among idle youth. By empowering young earners and entrepreneurs, KP aims to channel the energy and creativity of its youth bulge into its prosperity.



Pillar 3: Engagement – Youth Engagement, Civic Participation and Social Cohesion

Goal: Ensure that youth in KP are meaningfully engaged in all aspects of community and civic life - from local decision-making and volunteerism to cultural and recreational activities - thereby fostering responsible citizenship, leadership, and social cohesion.



This pillar addresses both governance-related engagement (youth in decision-making) and socio-cultural engagement (sports, arts, community service), treating youth as stakeholders in shaping a peaceful and vibrant society. To ensure this, the policy recommends the following **Strategic Priorities under Engagement:**

- A cornerstone of this policy is to institutionalize youth engagement in governance at all levels. The province shall establish elected Youth Councils at District levels and a Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Youth Council, at the provincial level, as advisory bodies. These councils will coordinate

with local governments to raise voice for youth needs in development plans and oversee local youth projects. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Youth Council shall be composed of outstanding youth from all districts councils (with representation of women, minorities, disabled, etc.), to serve as an advisory group to the Youth Affairs Department and even provide input to the Provincial Assembly on youth matters. The KP government shall ensure Legislative or administrative cover to these bodies to ensure they are functional and have a clear mandate.

- In addition, the policy advocates for activating non-partisan student unions in universities and colleges, in line with national discussions on restoring student unions as nurseries of democratic leadership. The Government shall coordinate with federal authorities on any legal changes needed to reactivate student unions.
- The policy suggests that the Government through Department of Sports and Youth Affairs shall launch a “KP Youth Volunteer Corps” to channel youth energies into positive community service. This program will enroll and mobilize thousands of youth for volunteer activities such as literacy drives, blood donation campaigns, disaster response, environmental clean-ups, and community uplift projects. Volunteers will receive training (e.g. in first aid, tutoring, community organizing) and be given certificates or awards acknowledging their service. The model may involve small stipends (as done in some national programs) to encourage participation.
- KP government has invested in building dozens of new sports facilities (with PKR 22.4 billion invested and an ongoing project for 1,000 sports facilities). Taking advantage of KP’s strong sports culture and recent investments, the policy stresses for rolling out sports and recreational opportunities to under-served regions as a means of engagement and healthy development.
- The policy further recommends that the KP government through Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs shall organize annual provincial youth games and district level tournaments on regular bases and focus on making all sports facilities accessible to the youth (male, Female , including persons with disability. The policy calls for dedicated efforts to involve young women in sports to continue – e.g. fully operationalizing the women’s gyms and sports grounds

established in Mardan and other areas, and ensuring female coaches and trainers remain available.

- Alongside sports, cultural and creative expression shall be promoted through youth art competitions, music and drama festivals, and support to youth-run cultural clubs. The province's rich cultural heritage (poetry, handicrafts, folk music) can engage youth through heritage camps and apprenticeships with master artisans, which also create livelihood skills.
- Recognizing that today's youth often engage in the civic sphere digitally, the policy encourages the use of digital platforms for youth voice. It recommends that the KP government shall develop a "KP Youth Portal" as an interactive website where young people can learn about government programs, submit feedback or complaints, and participate in e-consultations or polls on new initiatives. This portal will also feature a directory of youth services (scholarships, trainings, counseling, etc.) and success stories to inspire others.
- KP's youth have lived through conflict and instability, therefore engaging them in peace building is an important first step. The policy recommends that the KP government shall initiate programs that encourage dialogue and understanding. Exchange visits shall be arranged – sending KP youth to other provinces and vice versa – to broaden horizons and national integration. The government shall coordinate with civil society for campaigns against extremism, drug abuse, and other social ills, using creative media (theater, social media, street art) led by youth.
- Youth are already emerging as peace-builders in KP through various initiatives. The Youth Affairs Department has organized forums like the KP Youth Peace Conference to unite young leaders in dialogue and learning. Academic and civil society actors are contributing as well – for example, the University of Peshawar's Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies educates youth on peace and conflict resolution, and the National Dialogue Forum's Youth Development Program promotes interfaith harmony and peace training for young participants. Other organizations (such as Idara Baraye Taleem-o-Taraqi, noted by Peace Insight) and international partners like Saferworld work with local youth to foster participatory approaches to peace-building. By

equipping young people with mediation, communication, and leadership skills and providing safe spaces for dialogue, these efforts help transform youth from potential drivers of conflict into agents of peace and social justice. This policy builds on and encourages KP government to amplify such approaches – empowering youth to lead community reconciliation activities and to champion tolerance, thereby creating a more optimistic and unified society. In this regard, KP government shall also coordinate with relevant Federal and Provincial Institutions to activate KP chapters of Pakistan Boy Scouts Association and the Pakistan Girl Guides Association.

Through the Engagement pillar, KP envisions a more cohesive, participatory society by 2030, with youth at the helm of community development. Tangible outcomes would include the formation and functioning of youth councils in all districts, revival of student unions in higher education institutions, and thousands of youth volunteering regularly in community service or sports clubs. Indicators such as youth voter registration and youth contesting elections could rise as youth become more civically aware. This pillar contributes to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by promoting inclusive societies and SDG 11 (Sustainable Communities) by empowering youth to make cities and communities more livable. Ultimately, engaged youth are stakeholders in KP's development, not just bystanders, ensuring the policies and programs are responsive to the largest segment of its population.

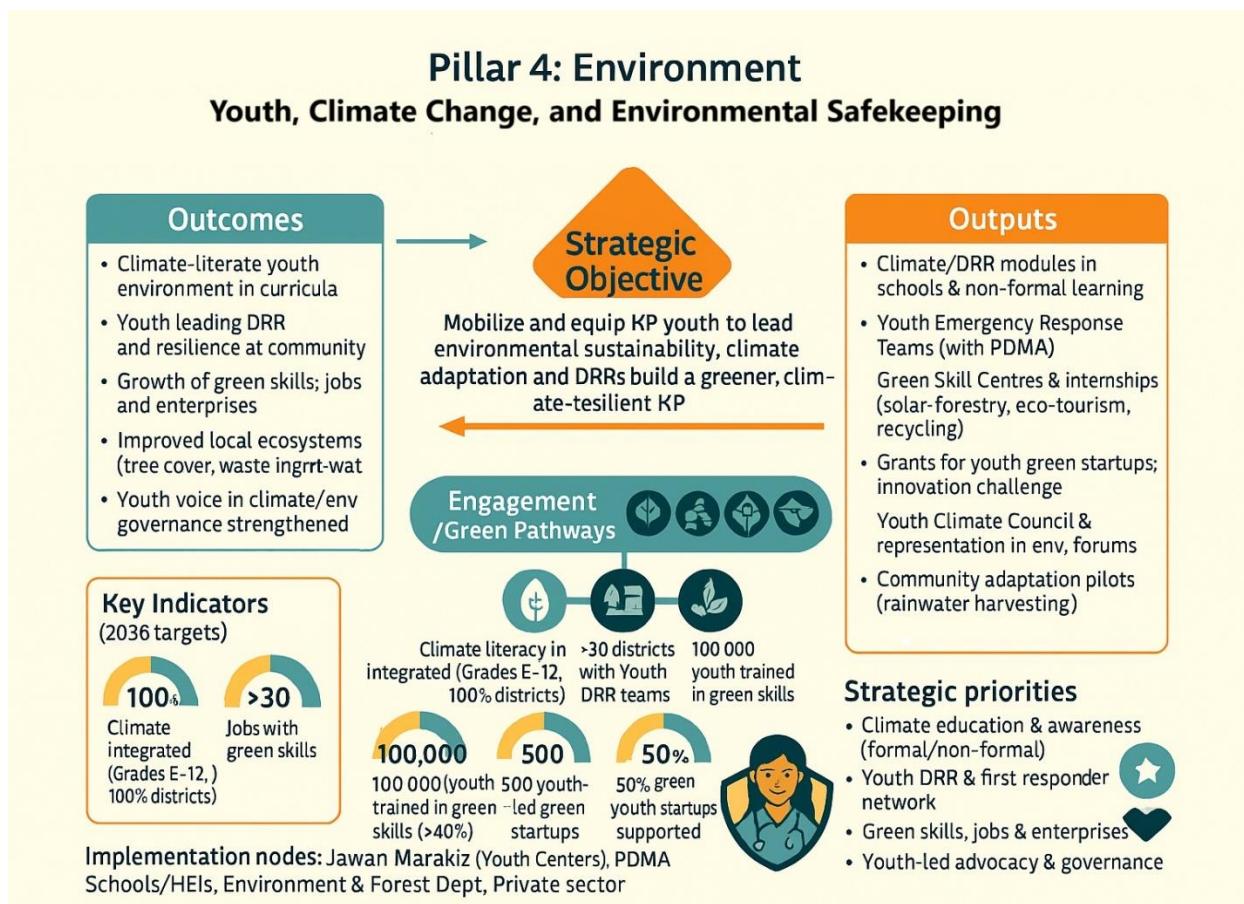


Pillar 4: Environment – Youth, Climate Change, and Environmental Safekeeping

Goal: Mobilize and equip the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to be leaders in environmental sustainability, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.

KP is on the frontline of climate change impacts in Pakistan. Over the past decade, the province has suffered frequent floods, extreme weather, and environmental degradation that directly affect youth livelihoods and well-being. In order to develop an eco-conscious generation, the following **Strategic Priorities under Environment** are recommended:

- The government shall incorporate climate change and environmental education at the primary to the higher level of education. Revised curricula shall include modules on climate change, disaster risk reduction (DRR), sustainable consumption, and Pakistan's environmental challenges, starting from secondary level through university.
- The curricula of technical training shall also be revised in consultation with industry to include required skills (e.g. renewable energy, advanced IT, English and soft skills).
- Beyond classrooms, widespread awareness campaigns shall be launched targeting youth and wider communities to spread messages on topics like water conservation, tree planting, reducing waste, and emergency preparedness. The government shall collaborate with environmental NGOs and youth groups to conduct Climate Awareness Workshops at the community level, especially in climate-vulnerable districts (such as flood-prone river valleys).



- The policy strongly recommends organizing an annual “Youth Climate Summit” in KP, gathering youth from different districts to share ideas and innovations for sustainability. The goal is to nurture a generation of climate-conscious citizens who understand the urgency and are motivated to act.
- Given KP’s exposure to natural disasters (floods, earthquakes, landslides), youth shall be trained and organized as key actors in disaster preparedness and response. The policy supports establishing Youth Emergency Response Teams within the KP Youth Volunteer Corps at the union council or village level, under the guidance of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority and District Disaster Management Units (PDMA/DDMUs).
- The Government shall ensure that schools and colleges throughout the province but more particularly in the disaster prone areas, conduct regular drills and have student emergency clubs to instill a culture of preparedness.
- The transition to a green economy offers new career pathways for youth. Building on policy measures under the Employment pillar, a tangible effort shall be made to equip youth with green skills and facilitate their entry into environment-friendly livelihoods. This includes:
 - Establishing Green Skill Centers or dedicating sections in vocational institutes(starting with existing ones) for trades like solar panel installation, energy-efficient construction, organic farming, forestry management, and recycling/upcycling businesses.
 - Supporting youth-led green enterprises - e.g. providing grants or micro-loans for startups in areas such as eco-tourism (youth-run guesthouses or tour services in scenic areas), sustainable handicrafts, aquaculture, or solar irrigation services. A Green Innovation Challenge could solicit ideas from youth on climate-smart solutions and fund the best proposals.
 - Launching large-scale afforestation and conservation programs that employ youth (as done in the “Youth Brigade” of previous tree plantation drives). The Ten Billion Tree Tsunami program and similar initiatives can be aligned with youth employment by hiring local youth as forest guards, nursery managers, or community

mobilizers for tree planting. By aligning environmental safekeeping with income generation, these actions both tackle youth joblessness and improve KP's environment.

- The policy encourages youth to be advocates for environmental issues and partners in environmental governance. Mechanisms shall be set up to give youth a voice in environmental policy forums. Using the forum of KP Provincial Youth Council, a "Youth Climate Council" for KP shall be formed, mirroring the advisory panels at national level, to regularly interface with the Climate Change, Forestry, Environment & Wildlife Department on youth-related environmental concerns.

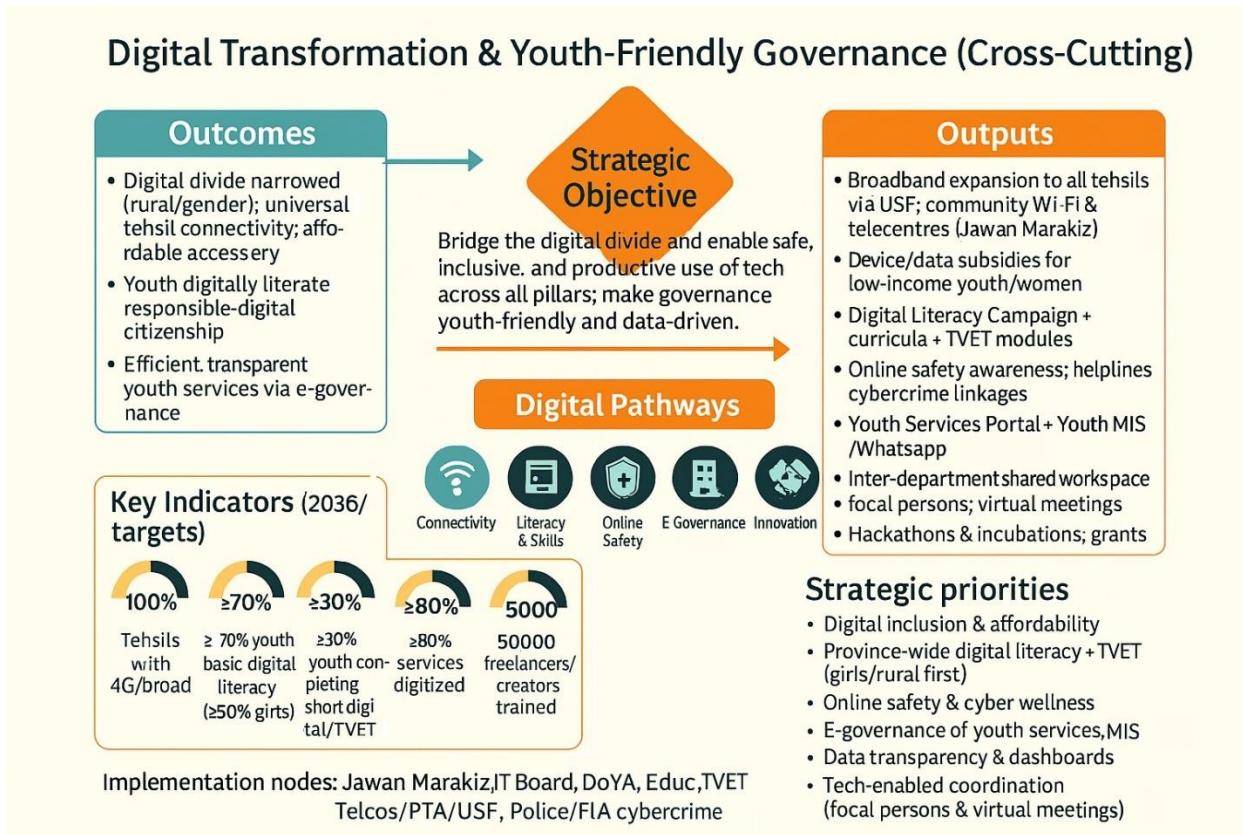
By 2036, KP intends to see its youth as active guardians of the environment, contributing to Pakistan's climate goals and the SDGs (notably SDG 13: Climate Action). Anticipated results include: a rise in climate literacy among young people (measured via surveys or inclusion of climate in curricula), the creation of new green jobs taken up by youth, and greater community resilience to disasters (for instance, reduced losses in communities with youth DRR teams). Importantly, youth engagement in the environment will also foster a sense of purpose and global citizenship. Rather than feeling victim to climate change, KP's youth will be empowered as part of the solution – innovating and taking action. This pillar has a long-term pay-off: investments in youth and environment now will yield dividends in a sustainable future, aligning with both provincial interests and international commitments (Paris Agreement, SDGs).

Digital Transformation and Youth-Friendly Governance

In today's world, digital transformation is both an opportunity and a necessity for youth development. The policy recognizes digital connectivity and literacy as a catalyst for education, employment, and engagement. However, due to rapid development in digital and Modern Technologies, stark digital divide in KP quickly grew, negatively affecting under-served youth in the province. This cross-cutting section details how the KP government shall leverage digital technology to improve outcomes under all 4E pillars and ensure a more efficient, transparent governance system for youth initiatives. It recommends:

- In partnership with federal authorities and telecom providers, KP shall advocate and facilitate expansion of broadband internet and mobile network coverage to all tehsils of the province while prioritizing NMDs. The KP government shall push the use of the Universal Service Fund (USF) to build towers and fiber optics in underserved districts. Additionally, community Wi-Fi hotspots and telecenters shall be established at public libraries, youth centers (Jawan Marakiz), and other safe spaces where youth can access free or low-cost internet.

Digital Transformation & Youth-Friendly Governance (Cross-Cutting)



- As part of Education and Employment pillars, a province-wide Digital Literacy Campaign shall be rolled out. The campaign will also cover digital citizenship – teaching youth how to navigate the online world safely and responsibly (protecting privacy, avoiding scams, respectful communication). Achieving digital literacy for all youth by the end of the policy period is a key target, enabling them to benefit from e-learning, e-commerce, and e-governance initiatives.
- The government shall collaborate with law enforcement on measures to make digital spaces safer for youth, especially girls who face online harassment. This includes public awareness on cyber bullying and

reporting mechanisms, strengthening cybercrime units to respond to harassment or exploitation of youth online.

- Technology shall be harnessed to improve how youth interact with government services and how programs are delivered. The KP Sports, & Youth Affairs Department shall digitize its key processes. It shall use KP Youth Portal (mentioned in the Engagement pillar) as a forum where youth can register for programs (scholarships, trainings, sports events), access career guidance, apply for youth grants or loans, and lodge complaints or suggestions. This portal will serve as a two-way communication channel. The back-end will be integrated with a Youth Management Information System (Youth MIS) that tracks participation and outcomes of youth programs across departments..
- The policy encourages engaging tech-savvy youth in developing solutions for youth issues. In this regard the policy recommends that the KP government shall organize Youth Innovation Hackathons on themes like education-tech (edtech), health-tech for mental well-being, or agri-tech. Federal bodies like Ignite or the National IT Board can be tapped for collaboration on such events.
- The government shall acknowledge and support the positive aspects of digital creative economy. The KP government shall coordinate with the Federal government to remove bottlenecks in the deployment of payment gateways, necessary for the growth of e-commerce businesses. The government shall fill all legal and administrative gaps to protect digital marketing, content creation, and intellectual property rights so that young creators and freelancers can improve their monetization and protect themselves legally.

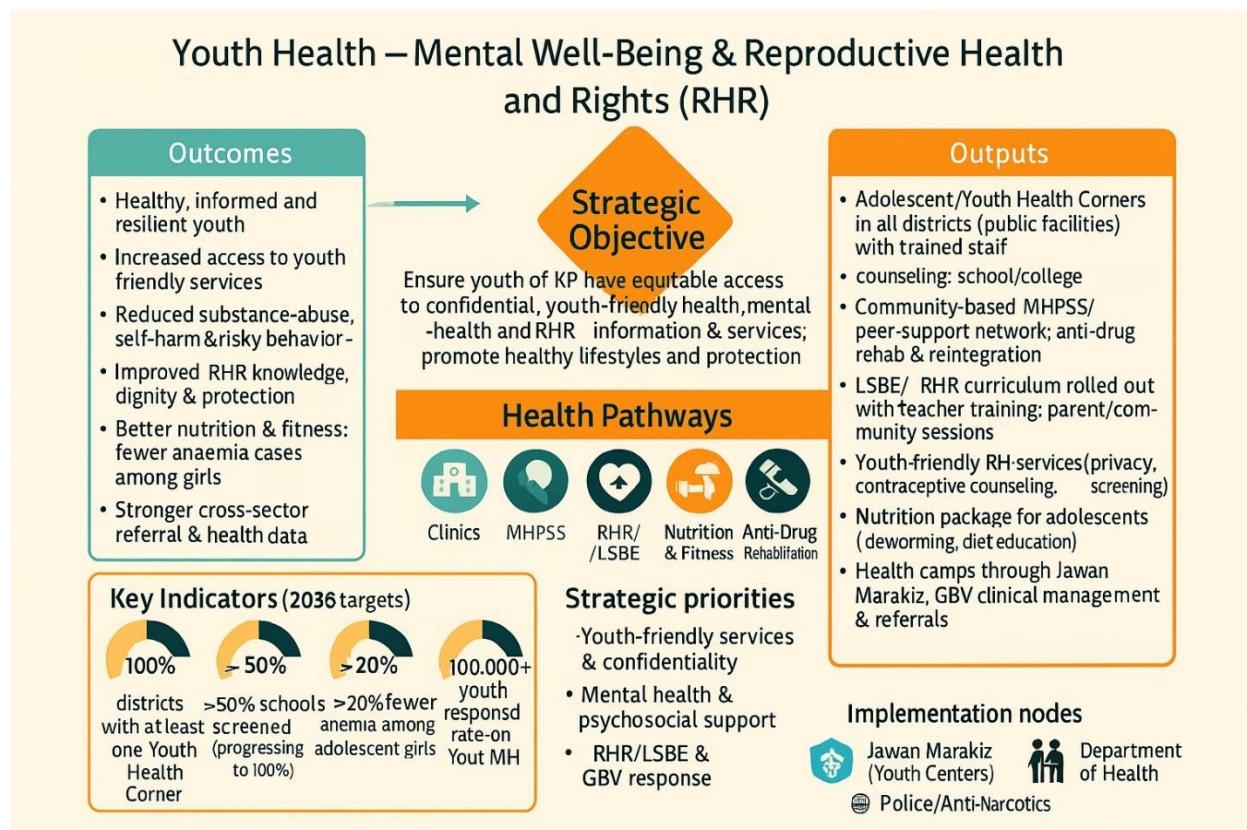
By integrating digital transformation into the youth policy, KP aims to remove traditional barriers to outreach and empowerment. A digitally empowered youth population will have greater access to knowledge, networks, and opportunities beyond their immediate physical environment – be it a rural village or a semi-urban town. This directly supports SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure) by building ICT infrastructure and innovation, and SDG 5 (Gender Equality) by enabling technology access for girls as a means to empowerment. In summary, digital transformation is envisioned as a force-multiplier for all other policy efforts, and a guard against the youth of KP being left behind in the fast-changing digital world.

Youth Health, Mental Well-Being, and RHR

The well-being of KP's youth has direct implications for their productivity, educational attainment, and quality of life, yet several indicators are concerning: rising cases of substance abuse and suicide among youth, limited awareness about reproductive health, and insufficient mental health resources. The policy outlines strategies to ensure the youth are healthy in body and mind, which in turn supports their success in education, employment, and engagement.

The following are recommended Strategic Priorities for Youth Health:

- The government shall establish Adolescent/Youth Health Corners within existing public health facilities at district and tehsil levels. These corners (or clinics) will be staffed by personnel trained in adolescent health, providing confidential counseling and services on matters such as nutrition, mental health first-line support, reproductive health queries, and addiction prevention.



- The policy also recommends anti-drug campaigns and rehabilitation efforts by the KP government: setting up or strengthening rehabilitation centers for drug-addicted youth, with programs for reintegration into society.
- In alignment with national adolescent health strategies, KP government shall cautiously but steadily integrate RHR information for youth. At the school level, Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) programs – already implemented in some regions – shall be expanded, teaching appropriate topics about puberty, reproductive anatomy, consent, and respecting boundaries in an age-appropriate and culturally sensitive curriculum. While acknowledging controversy, the policy strongly suggests that equipping youth with factual knowledge and health services is essential for their dignity and well-being, and contributes to broader goals like reducing maternal mortality (as many are young mothers) and combating gender-based violence.
- This policy supports KP's nutrition programs, recommending KP government shall target adolescents – providing micronutrient supplements in schools (iron, folic acid), deworming, and nutrition education about balanced diets. Sports and physical activity (addressed in Engagement pillar) play a role in fitness; additionally, the government shall run campaigns to discourage smoking, excessive junk food, and to promote exercise.
- All these health initiatives shall be coordinated with the education and social welfare sectors. The government shall use youth platforms like Jawan Marakiz to host health camps (e.g. vision screening, dental check-ups, vaccination drives for Hepatitis or infectious diseases if needed).

By prioritizing youth health, KP expects to see improvements in youth health, such as lower incidence of teenage pregnancies, reduced rates of depression, self-harm, or substance abuse among youth (through early intervention and support). These contribute to achieving SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) with a specific youth lens. Additionally, healthy youth are more likely to stay in school, find employment, and engage positively in society – thus this section underpins the success of the 4E pillars. Over the long term, investments in youth health yield a more resilient, productive workforce and reduce the burden of disease on the healthcare system. The policy, therefore, ensures that health and well-being are treated not as afterthoughts, but as integral to youth

empowerment, breaking the silence and stigma around issues that have held back many young people from fulfilling their potential.

Institutional Framework and Legal Mechanisms

Effective implementation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Youth Policy 2026 requires an operationalized institutional framework. Notably, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Youth Development Commission Act (2019) has been promulgated and the Commission formally constituted, yet it remains inactive ever since. This policy therefore prioritizes activating the Commission and strengthening all related bodies. The updated framework will ensure that once established by law, the Commission is fully staffed, meets regularly, and is empowered with resources and authority (including the envisaged youth budget allocation). This policy will bring following structural reforms:

- **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Youth Development Commission (YDC) (Statutory Body):** As mandated by Act XXII of 2019, the Commission is the apex multi-stakeholder body for youth affairs. It shall be treated as a corporate entity with the power to coordinate programs across departments, review annual youth plans, and advise the government. This policy calls for:
 - Amending section 4 (1) of the Act to reconstitute the Commission with members as provided in Annex A;
 - Making necessary amendments in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Youth Development Commission (Conduct of Business) Rules, 2021 to empower YDC to constitute Thematic Working Groups;
- **Thematic Working Groups (ThWGs).** The policy recommends that under the Youth Development Commission, thematic working groups (Education/Skills, Employment, Engagement, Health) shall be established, comprising focal persons (Government officials of Grade 18 or above) from relevant department(s) and necessary external experts. These groups shall be mandated to coordinate implementation of policy decisions made by the Youth Development Commission. Each ThWG shall be assisted by a Thematic focal person appointed by the Director, DoYA.
- **Strengthening the Youth Affairs Institutional Setup:** The Department of Youth Affairs (currently merged with Sports) shall be strengthened to

fulfill its coordination role. The policy recommends following administrative actions:

- *Improve capacity of Directorate of Youth Affairs (DoYA):* Capacity- of existing Directorate of Youth Affairs shall be improved with more staff at provincial and district levels, ensuring each district has a District Youth Officer (DYO) (positions already exist but shall be filled and empowered). These DYOs would report both to their local administration and to the provincial Youth Affairs Directorate for technical guidance.
- *Technical focal person:* Additionally for each Policy pillar, the DoYA shall appoint one technical focal person for each ThWG to steer the implementation of the activities under that pillar. Strengthening internal obligation in this way will make the department more effective in executing the policy.
- *Integration in Local Governance:* The government shall take initiatives to embed youth development in local governance structures. At the village/neighborhood council, a Youth Committee within each council shall liaise with the DYO on community youth needs
- **Legal Reforms and Policies:** In addition to the Youth Commission Act, it is recommended that the KP government shall take following legal measures to support youth development:
 - *Revival of Student Unions and Youth Associations:* Engage with law enforcement authorities to formulate a consensus legal framework to revive student unions, with guidelines to prevent violence and politically partisan activities on campuses. If the security situation does not allow such step, the KP government shall explore a provincial law or university regulation that allows formation of student societies/councils with elected student leaders as an interim measure to fulfill the engagement goal.
 - *KP Youth Council (Advisory) Notification:* The KP government shall, through an administrative order or law, formally constitute the Provincial Youth Council (as described in Engagement pillar), defining its membership, meeting frequency (e.g. bi-annually with the Chief Minister or Youth Minister), and role in consulting on youth policy implementation.

- *Youth Development Fund*: The KP government shall include a provision in the provincial finance bill to establish a Youth Development Fund – a ring-fenced fund that pools resources for youth programs which can carry over fiscal years. This will allow multi-year projects and donor contributions to be managed systematically. It will also demonstrate commitment by reserving funds for youth even amid budget fluctuations.
- *Sports and Creative Industries Legislation*: The KP government shall ensure that all existing cultural and sports policies are Youth-focused.
- *Affirmative Action in Public Sector*: The government shall take legal and/or administrative measures to introduce quotas for youth (e.g. a certain percentage of new public sector jobs or internships reserved for under-30 candidates, or reserved seats for youth in local councils as non-voting members).
- **Partnerships and Coordination with Federal & Donors**: The institutional framework shall extend outward to align with national and international support. In this regard, the KP government shall:
 - actively participate in the youth development focused federal bodies to ensure provincial youth interests.
 - leverage national programs (Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Kamyab Jawan, NAVTTC, etc.) by coordinating through MoUs so that provincial youth benefit fully and avoid duplication. For instance, if Kamyab Jawan is giving entrepreneurship loans, KP's own schemes should complement it and spread awareness to applicants.
 - develop a Youth Development Partners Group with UN agencies, donors like ADB, World Bank, EU, and active NGOs where the Directorate of Youth Affairs shares plans and seeks technical/financial assistance in priority gaps (e.g. M&E system development, climate/youth programs). This ensures maximizing external resources as identified in SWOT (donor programs can co-finance pilots and scale-ups).
- The policy mandates that an Annual Youth Policy Implementation Report be prepared by the Directorate of Youth Affairs and laid before the KP Assembly each year after approval by the Youth Development

Commission. At a minimum, this report shall provide detailed information on progress, expenditures, and outcomes against the policy objectives.. Mid-term (after 5 years) and end-term evaluations (10-year) by independent evaluators shall be conducted to assess impact and draw lessons, as part of the M&E framework.

By establishing a permanent, empowered institutional structure that transcends individual tenures or political cycles, championing youth interests consistently, KP aims to overcome the “project-based” or ad-hoc approach to youth issues and instead embed youth development into the governance fabric. This will address issues like inter-departmental silos, lack of M&E, and policy inconsistency when governments change.

In summary, the institutional framework will be a multi-layered structure: a legally empowered Provincial Youth Commission at the top; a professional Department/Secretariat to implement and manage programs; high-level and thematic committees to ensure cross-sector coordination; and vibrant local councils/committees to drive community-level action. By enshrining clear roles, obligations, and accountability in law, KP will create an institutional ecosystem in which youth initiatives are well-coordinated, adequately funded, and continuously monitored.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Youth MIS

The effective policy implementation depends on the strong monitoring, evaluation, and data systems. This policy, therefore, focuses on monitoring progress and outcomes for youth development. Continuous learning and accountability will be achieved through a comprehensive Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) plan and the establishment of a new youth-centered data system. This will enable evidence-based decision-making and timely course corrections over the 2026-2036 period.

- **Youth Focused M&E Framework:** Due to its importance, a detailed Results Framework for the policy has been developed and made part of the Policy. The Framework includes:
 - **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** Each of the objectives and pillars shall have specific and measurable indicators aligned with indicators used in the National Adolescent and Youth Policy and relevant SDGs, enabling comparison and collection. Baseline values

for 2025/26 shall be established using available secondary data or new surveys while setting targets for 2030.

- **Data Collection Plan:** Under the M&E Framework, the provincial disaggregation of the youth shall be done using existing surveys (Labor Force Survey, Demographic and Health Survey and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey). DoYA shall coordinate with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bureau of Statistics to conduct Periodic Youth Surveys or polls to gather data on issues like civic engagement, mental health, or values. Administrative data from departments (education enrollment, employment placement numbers, etc.) shall be collated through YDC and shall be incorporated in the Youth MIS. Where data gaps exist - e.g. data on marginalized sub-groups (transgender youth, youth with disabilities) - special studies shall be conducted to ensure such groups get their due benefit under this policy. The Planning & Development Department and Bureau of Statistics KP shall be engaged for technical support.
- **Monitoring Structure:** A small M&E Unit responsible for routine monitoring shall be incorporated in the Directorate for Youth Affairs. This unit will compile quarterly and annual progress reports. The Youth Development Commission will review these reports regularly during its meetings.
- **Youth Management Information System (Youth MIS):** At the DoYA, a centralized Youth Management Information System shall be established to serve as a data repository and management tool. Features include:
 - *Integrated Database:* The Youth MIS will collect data from various programs and departments - e.g. lists of scholarship recipients, vocational trainees, sports participants, health service users - and integrate them (with proper privacy safeguards)..
 - *Dashboards and Analytics:* The system will have user-friendly dashboards for decision-makers showing real-time stats: funds disbursed vs utilized, geographic coverage of programs, key indicator trends etc.
 - *Data Disaggregation:* All data in the MIS will be disaggregated by sex, age group (adolescents vs older youth), location (district/rural/urban), and other relevant categories (disability status, etc.) to ensure targeted analysis.

- **Evaluation and Learning:** The policy shall be evaluated on a regular basis, in addition to routine monitoring:
 - *Mid-Term Review:* Around 2030, an independent evaluation team (possibly with donor support or external experts) will conduct a mid-term review of the policy implementation. This will assess which interventions are on track, which are lagging, and why. It will also revisit the strategy if needed (for instance, if new challenges like a pandemic or major economic shift occurred, the policy may need recalibration). The findings will be used to make course corrections for the remaining period.
 - *Final Evaluation:* In 2036, a comprehensive evaluation will measure the policy's impact against its objectives. This would include quantitative analysis (e.g. how much did youth unemployment reduce, how many more youth in leadership roles, etc.) and qualitative insights (youth perspectives on changes in their lives). It will identify success stories, best practices, and also shortcomings. The final evaluation will inform the design of the next cycle youth policy beyond 2036.
 - *Reporting and Accountability:* The Youth Affairs Department will produce an Annual State of Youth Report to table in the Provincial Assembly. This report will summarize progress, backed by data from the MIS and monitoring activities. Civil society and media will be encouraged to use this data to amplify successes and flag concerns.

By establishing a strong M&E and data management system, KP will ensure that the Youth Policy 2026 acts as a data-driven living document.

Annex A

Proposed members of Youth Development Commission

a)	Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa;	Chairperson
b)	a Member of the Provincial Assembly, from treasury benches, to be nominated by the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly;	Member
c)	Secretary to Government, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa;	Member
d)	Chief of Section- Sport and Youth Affairs at Planning & Development	Member

Representatives , (Grade 19 or above) from the following Departments

e)	Local Government, Elections and Rural Development Department	
f)	Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Department	
g)	Higher Education Department	
h)	Technical Education Department	
i)	Health Department	
j)	Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department	Members
k)	Science & Technology and Information Technology Department	
l)	Labour Department	
m)	Population Welfare Department	
n)	Provincial Disaster Management Authority	
o)	Law Parliamentary Affairs & Human Rights Department	
p)	a representative of youth, to be nominated by the Chairperson;	Member
q)	a head of a civil society organization, to be nominated by the Chairperson	Member
r)	Director, Youth Affairs, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Member-cum-Secretary