

DEVELOPMENT ADVOCATE PAKISTAN

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A close-up photograph of a hand holding a piece of white chalk, writing on a dark grey chalkboard. The hand is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the frame. The chalkboard has some faint, partially visible markings. A teal-colored graphic of a pencil is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, pointing towards the hand.

Making
Education
Work:

The Governance Conundrum

DEVELOPMENT ADVOCATE
PAKISTAN

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Development Advocate Pakistan provides a platform for the exchange of ideas on key development issues and challenges in Pakistan. Focusing on a specific development theme in each edition, this quarterly publication fosters public discourse and presents varying perspectives from civil society, academia, government and development partners. The publication will make an explicit effort to include the voices of women and youth in the ongoing discourse. A combination of analysis and public opinion articles promote and inform debate on development ideas while presenting up-to-date information.

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The impact of education investments is considered a simple linear function of inputs and outputs in most developing countries, including Pakistan. The measure of performance and the process through which inputs are converted into outputs, and subsequently, outcomes, are seldom discussed. Good governance—in terms of setting up performance benchmarks, systems of monitoring and accountability, and budgeting and distribution formulae—can considerably improve institutional effectiveness and results in the education system, without new inputs.

It is important to discuss the capacity issues of service providers unable to spend allocated resources. It is equally critical to analyse the process through which resources are allocated and the time it takes to release them to end users. Tracking expenditure is essential, but ensuring responsible spending is also important. There is a general consensus that both financial and non-financial incentives help improve results, but the possible negative externalities generated should be noted. These are among the governance issues that require urgent attention.

Budgeting and public finance management are integral parts of governance. Pakistan is one of the few countries that spend around two percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) on education. Pakistan's education expenditure is less than that of its South Asian peers; India and Nepal spend 3.3 and 4.7 percent of their GDPs on education, respectively. But low allocation is not the only issue. In 2012–13, actual development expenditure on education was a mere 50 percent of the allocated amount. On average, 82 percent of allocated funds are used on non-developmental items.

In addition to allocation and expenditure issues, the *process* through which budgets are prepared and distributed across different geographic areas requires serious consideration. Is there a formula that accounts for education poverty? That guides resource allocation to different districts? A simple example from district Dera Bugti illustrates the severity of education inequality across the country. The district's net enrolment ratio stands at 12 percent whereas district Chakwal's is 81 percent. Dera Bugti's survival rate and literacy rate are 9 percent and 16 percent, respectively. The

highest corresponding figures in the country are for Islamabad, which are 76 percent and 89 percent, respectively. There are also gender-based disparities. The gender parity index for primary education in Pakistan is 0.9 as compared to 1.02 for Nepal and Bangladesh, 0.98 for India and 0.99 for Sri Lanka. A structural mechanism to distribute resources to different districts based on a multi-dimensional poverty index would help address such inequalities, which are otherwise destined to rise.

Good governance in education promotes effective service delivery. There is an urgent need for a sound performance measurement system that goes beyond measuring inputs (the use of funds), outputs, (enrolment) and outcomes (students' examination results). Such a system could use a set of key performance indicators for various tiers within the education system. Countries like Colombia and Mexico have introduced online 'dashboard' systems that provide real-time information and updates. Senior political officers use them to assess the effectiveness of implementation strategies. The Government of Punjab has also established such a system for the Punjab Education Sector Reforms Programme. The Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform is considering a similar mechanism for its Vision 2025 and next five-year plan. A sound performance management system could instil a culture of accountability.

Pakistan will need to invest in its statistical systems to provide timely data and analysis for informed decision making in education. Setting up parallel structures and processes is not the answer; existing statistical institution capacity must be enhanced. These new technologies provide cost-effective approaches to data collection and monitoring, and Pakistan would do well to learn from the experiences of other countries.

Lastly, the political context of education plays a crucial role in determining whether or not any plans or strategies can or will be implemented. Indeed, some of the most innovative education interventions in the world stemmed from the special interest of the political elite. Sustainable improvement in education will remain a distant dream unless the people demand, and the politicians deliver.

Education:

Governance conundrum



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Article 25-A of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan was adopted in April 2010 and made education a basic right. Four years down the road, by most estimates, more than 20 million children aged 5–16 years are still out of school. The 18th Amendment also made education a provincial subject. It remains to be seen how the various provinces/territories have responded to the obligation that 25-A has imposed on them, to gauge progress. On the legal side, only the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Sindh and Balochistan have made laws for the implementation of 25-A, while Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) still have just drafts. ICT was the first to make the law, but the rules and regulations for implementing it are still being framed. Clearly, the response so far has been slow and ineffective. Is it any wonder Pakistan will not be meeting most of its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

Why are all children not in school and how are access issues being handled? For those who *are* in school, what are they learning and how well? Finally, how are equity concerns being addressed by the education system in Pakistan; are we moving towards equal opportunities?

Access: Still an issue

Significant progress has been made in getting children into schools, and access remains the primary focus for provinces and the various education campaigns they are running. However, Pakistan has not even reached the goal of universal primary enrolment, much less universal secondary enrolment. Data from the Pakistan Social and Living Standards (PSLM) for 2012–13 (Table 1) show that the primary level (5–9 years) net enrolment rate (NER) was still, overall, only 57 percent. It falls to 38 percent at the middle level and further to 26 percent at the high school level. These levels show high dropout and poor completion rates, as well. The fact that three of four high school-aged children are not in school does not bode well for Pakistan's ability to manage the current and future youth bulge. The demographic dividend that stakeholders often speak of is likely to become a demographic nightmare.

The percentages in Table 1 reveal two more variations that need to be kept in mind. First, there is significant variation in literacy and enrolment figures across the provinces. Punjab is performing relatively better than the other provinces. Some of the differences are very large and show alarming conditions. Only seven percent of girls in the 14- to 15-year-old cohort are in schools in Balochistan. At 18 percent, the situation in KP is only slightly better. Even at the middle school level, only 17 percent of girls aged 11–13 are in school. Here, the differences between Balochistan and other provinces are quite significant.

The gender gap has closed slightly over the last few decades, but is still prominent; 69 percent of males compared with 45 percent of females, are literate. The gender gap exists at almost all levels of enrolment and across all provinces. It is the narrowest in Punjab, but is quite large in the other provinces.

	Percentage	Pakistan	Punjab	Sindh	KP	Balochistan
Adult literacy	Male	69	69	72	67	58
	Female	45	50	45	30	18
	Total	57	59	59	48	39
NER (5–9) primary	Male	61	64	56	59	54
	Female	54	62	48	48	35
	Total	57	60	52	54	45
NER (11–13) middle	Male	40	39	39	44	36
	Female	35	40	32	31	17
	Total	38	39	36	38	28
NER (14–15) high	Male	28	28	28	31	19
	Female	23	27	21	18	7
	Total	26	28	25	25	14

Table 1: Adult literacy and net enrolment rate (NER)¹

Enrolment patterns have changed significantly over the last 20 years, and now a substantial percentage of enrolled children are attending non-state schools. Most are in private, for-profit schools, the majority of which are low-fee private schools where tuition fees are generally less than PKR 2,000 per child, per month. More than 30 percent of enrolled children were attending private schools in 2011. This figure is based on government data; private school associations believe the figure is higher. Most children residing in large cities attend private schools and the figure for villages is quite impressive, as well. In fact, micro-level datasets reveal that a large percentage of villages, particularly in Punjab, have more than one private school. This is especially



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true of larger villages.

As expected, there are geographic patterns to the spread of private school enrolment. Over 40 percent of children enrolled in primary schools in Punjab go to private schools. The corresponding figure for Balochistan is slightly higher than ten percent. In general, private schools are more prevalent in large cities and developed markets, and mainly in Punjab and urban Sindh and KP.

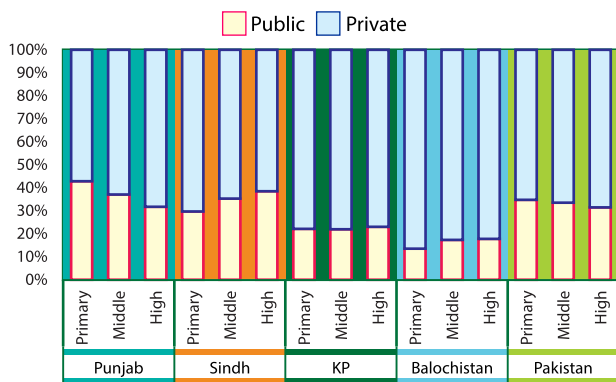


Figure 1: Percentage enrolment in public and private schools by province and school level, 2011²

Article 25-A of the Constitution calls for the provision of 'free' and 'compulsory' education to all children aged 5–16 in Pakistan. Sufficient progress has not been made to achieve universal enrolment, even at the primary level, despite the provinces' priority focus on enrolment. There are differences across provinces and a gender gap in the gains that have been made. In addition, a significant proportion of these gains were achieved through private enrolment. How do we square the promise of 25-A with the fact that over 30 percent of parents have to pay for education? Private, for-fee schools also vary considerably in terms of cost and quality. How will the state achieve education equality when the education provision landscape is so differentiated?

Quality: A neglected dimension

The issue of access was traditionally at the forefront of the debate on education; quality could wait until all children were in school. This is still largely true, and most provincial governments are still using 'access first' arguments. However, access and quality are integrally linked with each other – poor quality will lower perceived and real private and public returns to education, and parents will likely stop sending their children to school. Enrolment would decrease and dropout rates would increase (Table 1). There are strong hysteresis effects in education. Poor education quality at the primary level affects children's performance at higher levels and limits their employability, as well. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) tested a large sample of children across Pakistan. Findings showed that on average, 30 percent of first-grade children recognized numbers in the range 10–99, 40 percent of third-grade children could perform simple subtraction. A similar percentage of fifth-grade children could perform simple division (Figure 2).

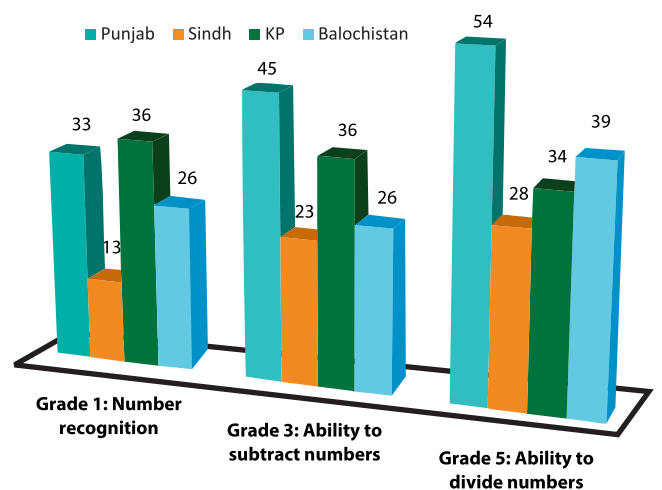


Figure 2: Arithmetic learning outcomes³

Similarly, children's language skills were shown to be very poor. English is considered more of a challenge, but children's skills in local languages were no better (Figure 3 and 4).

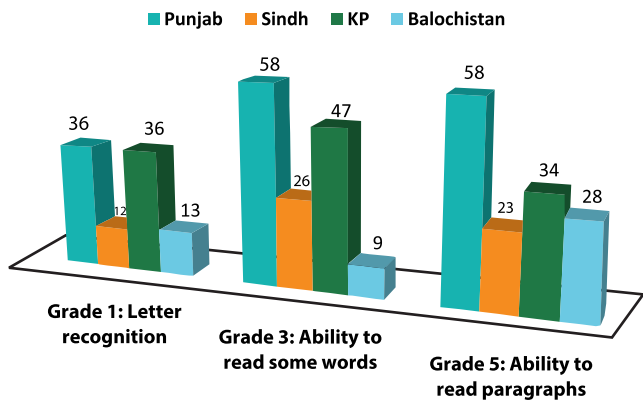


Figure 3 : English language learning outcomes³

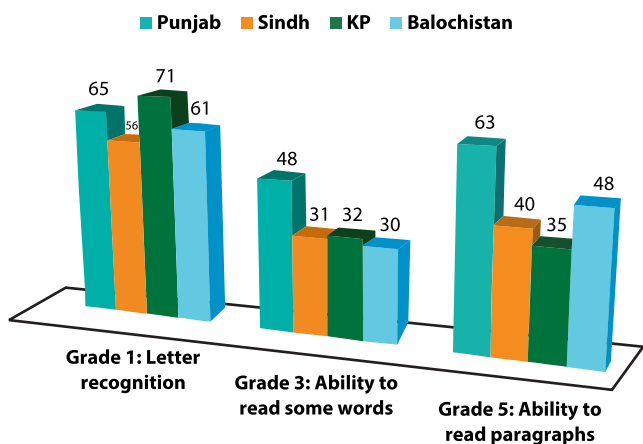


Figure 4: Regional language learning outcomes (Urdu, Pashto, Sindhi)³

Regional differences are worth noting as they speak to equity issues, as well. Sindh's arithmetic learning outcomes are consistently poorer than those of other provinces and the differences are significant. Sindh and Balochistan perform quite poorly in English language outcomes, as well (Figure 4). Aslam et al. (2011) attribute poor learning outcomes, at least in part, to teacher competency (Figure 5)⁴. Just 36 percent of the teachers in the sample answered complex multiplication questions correctly. It is not surprising, therefore, that just five percent of students given the same test were able to obtain the correct answers.

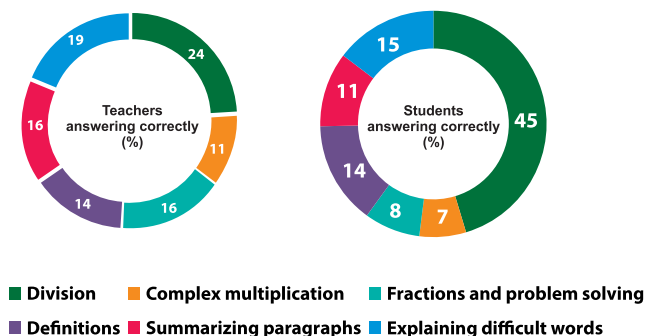


Figure 5 : Competencies of teachers and students on identical tests, 2011⁴

The education sector reform debate is dominated by issues of access and infrastructure/hardware availability. The question of quality is conspicuously absent. By all accounts, the quality of education in Pakistan is quite poor in both public and private sector schools. Poor quality affects access (enrolment) by lowering perceived/real rates of return to education and dropout rates. Finally, there are considerable differences in quality across schools, which exacerbate societal inequalities.

Education governance: Part of the problem

The 18th Amendment devolved education, standards, curriculum and assessments completely to the provinces, which are still grappling with how these new responsibilities are going to be managed. School and teacher management have been provincial subjects for much longer, yet major issues affecting access, quality and equity, remain. Bari et al. (2014) examined some of the issues related to teacher recruitment, postings and transfers and retention in Punjab⁵. The study is not exhaustive, but it does cover problems with the management of the teacher cadre in Punjab, the one province said to be at the forefront of addressing problems in education. Teachers undoubtedly play a crucial role in the education sector, and education goals cannot be achieved unless and until teachers are motivated, well-managed and performing optimally. Teacher rationalization has been a goal of successive provincial governments in Punjab. The results are dismal, and the number of filled posts did not match sanctioned posts in any district in 2012 (Figure 6).

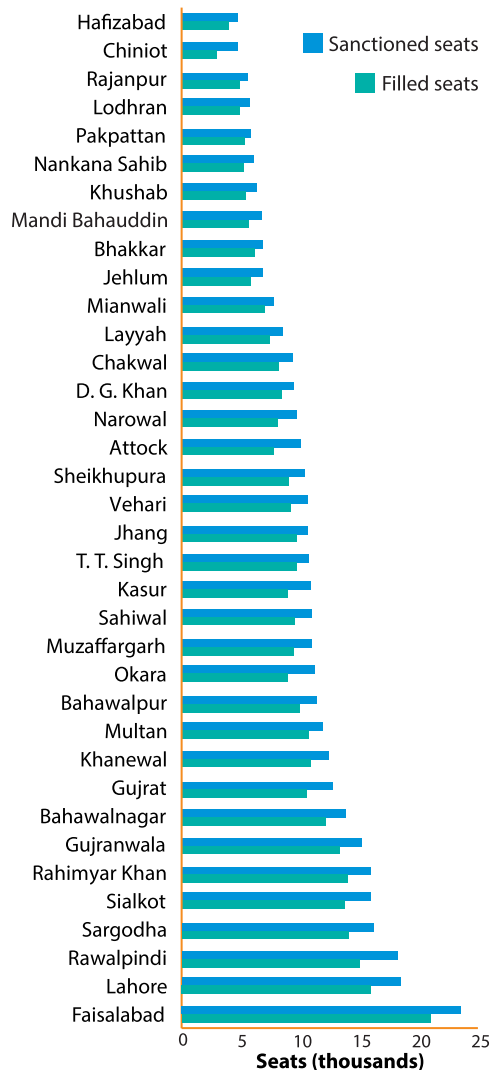


Figure 6: District-wise sanctioned/filled posts, 2012^{5, 6}

In fact, the difference between filled and sanctioned posts was several thousand in some cases, such as Faisalabad. Enrolment, student retention and education quality cannot be achieved if the required number of teachers is not present in schools. This point is supported by the number of single-teacher public schools in Punjab (Figure 7).

The proportion of such schools varies from a low of 2.43 in Faisalabad to a high of 31.57 in Hafizabad. Single-teacher schools involve multi-grade teaching, which naturally affects teaching quality.

Punjab is currently implementing its fourth or fifth teacher rationalization policy, but without any significant success, given prevailing supply and demand conditions and the government's stipulated student-teacher ratio (STR) of 40:1 (Figure 8). Most districts face significant over-supply/-demand issues. The state should be able to effect in-district rationalization, if not cross-district rationalization, but this has not happened. Education outcomes cannot be expected to improve if teachers' careers are not effectively managed, or if they are not adequately motivated and supported.

Punjab is considered to be the leading province in education-related reforms. If the aforementioned variables are indicative of how education is managed in Punjab, one can only conjecture on the state of affairs in other provinces.

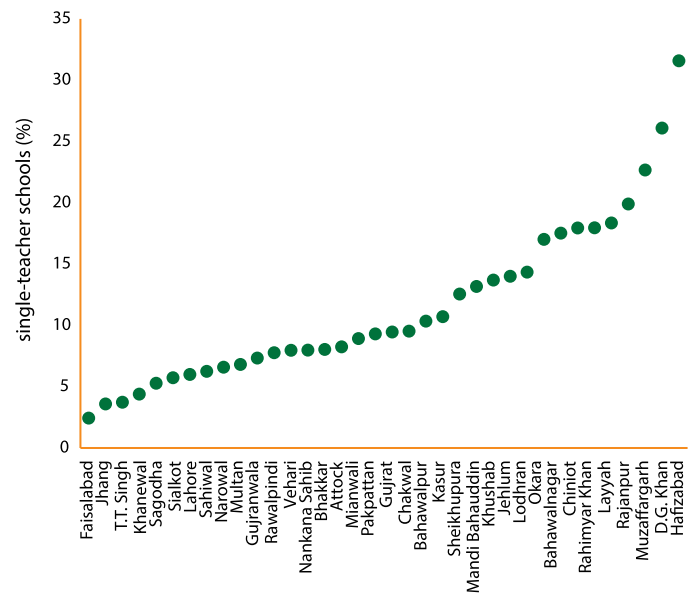


Figure 7: Percentage of single-teacher schools by district, 2012⁵

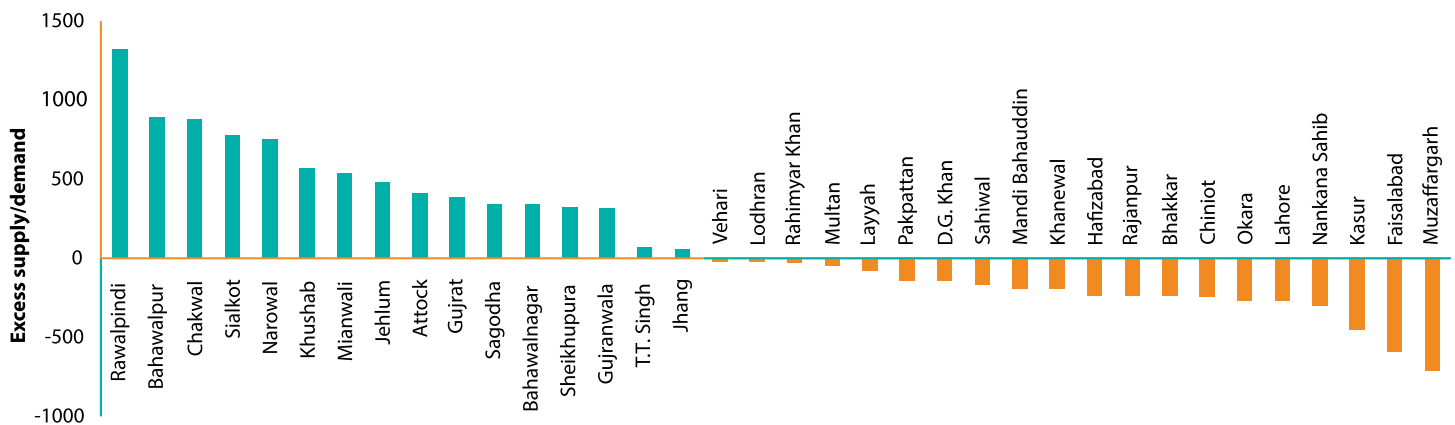


Figure 8: Excess supply/demand in primary schools based on a 40:1 STR, 2012⁵

Whither money?

Moving forward from management issues, the amount of money spent on education and how it is spent also explains poor education outcomes. The combined (federal and provincial) budgetary allocations for education amounted to just 1.9 percent of the GDP last year, and this figure has remained more or less stagnant over the last two to three years (Figure 9).

Pakistan ranks 177th, globally, in terms of public spending on education; just seven developing countries in the world spend less on education than Pakistan⁷. The Prime Minister recently announced that Pakistan would be raising its expenditure on education to four percent of GDP, but this is not likely to happen until 2017 or 2018. In addition, the provincial governments that promised significant increases in education budgets have not delivered. In fact, as a percentage of GDP, the allocations have hardly changed at all.

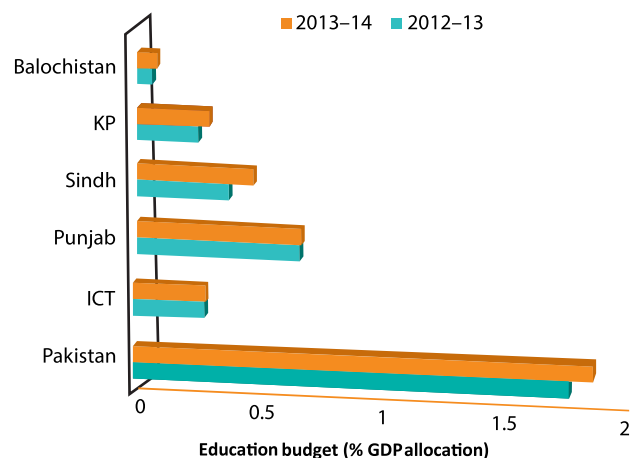


Figure 9: Trends in budgetary allocations⁸



Approximately 83 percent of the overall budgetary allocation to education is for current expenditure, mainly staff salaries, and only about 17 percent is for development expenditure. There is some variation between provinces. For example, Balochistan has allocated 30 percent of its budget to development while Sindh's corresponding figure is just 10 percent, the lowest in the country. Budget allocations are not actual budget spending. The latter is reported at the end of a financial year. Actual education development expenditure for 2012–13 by all four provinces combined, was less than 50 percent of what was allocated to the sector. Punjab had the highest rate of under-utilization in 2012–13, spending just 21.4 percent of what was allocated for education development.

The future

The state made a promise to Pakistan's children when it added 25-A to the Constitution. The promise remains unfulfilled four years later. None of the fundamental aspects of education (access, quality, equity, dispensation) have been addressed. The amounts spent are inadequate and poorly managed. Society needs to decide whether or not it plans on living up to this promise and preparing children for tomorrow's world - this is as much a societal decision as it is for the state. The state must take decisive action to reduce the demographic dividend and prevent the demographic nightmare from becoming a reality.

¹ Pakistan, *Statistics Division, Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey, 2012–13* (Islamabad, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Available from <http://goo.gl/4xn1y0>.

² Pakistan, Ministry of Education, Trainings and Standards in Higher Education, *Pakistan Education Statistics 2011–12* (Islamabad, Academy of Educational Planning and Management, 2012). Available from <http://goo.gl/pM1iUk>.

³ Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi, *Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2013 - National (Provisional)*, (Lahore, 2014). Available from <http://goo.gl/zqXhaK>.

⁴ Monazza Aslam, Baela Raza Jamil and Shenila Rawal, "Teachers and school quality: Some policy pointers from rural Punjab", Research Paper (Lahore, South Asian Forum for Education Development, 2011). Available from <http://goo.gl/UYbTUw>.

⁵ Faisal Bari, Monza Salam, Neelum Maqsood, Reehana Raza and Bisma Khan, "An investigation into teacher recruitment and retention in the Punjab", Research Paper (Lahore, Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives, 2014). Available from <http://goo.gl/wtWuQ1>.

⁶ Bari et al. (2014) used data from the Education Management Information System (EMIS), 2012.

⁷ Khalid Malik and others, *Human Development Report 2013, The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World* (New York City, New York, United Nations Development Programme, 2013). Available from <http://goo.gl/gQfhVK>.

⁸ Alif Ailaan, "Alif Ailaan's analysis of the 2013–14 budget for education", 10 July 2013. Available from <http://goo.gl/6XoOWV>.



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In August 2013, the Punjab Examination Commission (PEC) issued show cause notices to several teachers in the primary and middle schools of Punjab, seeking explanations for poor teacher performance. These notices were issued under the Punjab Employees Efficiency, Discipline and Accountability Act of 2006. The definition of 'poor performance' was simple.

And simplistic.

Teachers had performed poorly if their fifth and eighth grade classes had examination pass rates of 25 percent or less. Earlier, the government of Punjab announced its plans to incentivize teacher performance by tying salaries, promotions and transfers to performance. Incentivizing teacher performance is becoming increasingly popular around the world. The theory of change behind this model makes the assumption that teachers *matter*. This is both reasonable and supported by evidence. The second assumption is that performance incentives based on students' achievements can change teachers' behaviour in ways that would help improve students' learning achievements. Simple and straightforward as they are, these ideas help policy-makers. This is one reason why test-based accountability is becoming a tool of choice to improve education.

Test-based accountability policies attempt to raise academic achievement, which is a laudable goal. However, emerging evidence from around the world suggests that these policies may be working against their own goals by creating *perverse incentives* for the teachers. It is not difficult to see why test-based accountability can lead to perverse incentives for teachers and schools. They occur when there are high stakes associated with evaluative measures (tests); stakeholders then have an incentive to influence test outcomes, if possible. Literature on the consequences of test-based accountability suggests that these policies have created incentives for students to game the system by resorting to unfair means, and for teachers to discourage low-performing students from appearing in the tests.

In Pakistan's case, the menace of examination malpractice has already assumed intractable proportions, regardless of test-based accountability policies. It is well-known that the system of governance is too weak and that boards of education and other authorities do not possess the wherewithal to effectively check examination malpractice. When coupled with the fact that examinations carry high stakes, the use of unfair means is often a matter of routine. Problems begin to crop up when teachers' performance is assessed using students' performance.

The use of unfair means is only one facet of test-based accountability policies. Even well-administered tests and honest test-taking cannot be defended as measures of teachers' performance. One can never be confident that a good or bad test score accurately reflects a teacher's performance. This is so because of a wide range of factors that influence learning; teaching is just one. Even when controlling for teaching quality, the same test given to different students may produce wildly different results, depending on contextual factors such as students' socioeconomic background, the use of after-school tuitions and parents' education levels.

As variations in student performance can be explained with variables other than just teaching, there is little sense in relying on student test results to judge teachers' performance. Indeed, some 'problem children' are unable to learn from a teacher whose other students perform well above average. According to Diane Ravitch, an eminent education policy analyst,

"If Johnny takes a test on a Monday, he could take the same test a week later and get a higher or lower score depending on any number of things, including Johnny's mood, his health, the weather, the testing conditions in the room, or just random variation. The tests also sometimes contain errors or ambiguities. These are weak reeds on which to hang the fate and future of students, teachers and schools."

Test scores are likely to be misused when they become instruments to punish teachers or schools; test-based accountability policies are not likely to succeed. What may happen instead is a shift of focus from curriculum to improving test scores. Teachers and schools will game the system to avoid show cause notices and stagnated salaries. Test-based accountability has had these very impacts in parts of the Global North, as well - cheating in the classroom and lowered education standards to keep scores high.

What are some of the alternatives to test-based accountability? Answering this question requires refocusing our attention on the *purpose* of assessment. Ideally, student achievement data from assessments and examinations should help teachers reflect upon, and improve teaching practices. This requires careful analysis to identify problem areas and provide feedback to teachers, teacher trainers and development agencies that invest in education projects. None of this requires linking teachers' rewards and punishments to students' performance.

¹ Eric A. Hanushek and Steven G. Rivkin, "Teacher quality", in *Handbook of the Economics of Education*, Eric A. Hanushek and F. Welch, eds. (Amsterdam, Elsevier B.V., 2006). Cited chapter available from <http://goo.gl/hT7G6e>.

² Eva L. Baker, Paul E. Barton, Linda Darling-Hammond, Edward Haertel, Helen F. Ladd, Robert L. Linn, Diane Ravitch, Richard Rothstein, Richard J. Shavelson and Lorrie A. Shepard, "Problems with the use of student test scores to evaluate teachers", EPI Briefing Paper, No. 278 (Washington, D.C., Economic Policy Institute, 2010). Available from <http://goo.gl/nnY8mr>.

³ Diane Ravitch, "Pass or fail", *New Republic* (March 2010) Available from <http://goo.gl/1L3OLT>.





Test-based accountability and its discontents

Analysis

Innovations in monitoring and evaluation



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A robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system is the *sine qua non* of good governance as it generates evidence for accountability and transparency. An effective M&E system should be independent of implementation, relatively inexpensive and provide real-time information for informed decision making. Technology has evolved considerably to provide the means necessary to monitor and evaluate different approaches and their progress, with an aim to identifying and advancing designs most likely to cause desired innovations in education.

The UNDP and other UN agencies have given some thought to the new approaches and paradigms in measurement and evaluation, and are at the forefront of both creating and observing—or analyzing—new approaches to measuring the impact of policies, programmes, initiatives and service delivery. There are a number of factors driving the creation of these new techniques and technologies for evaluation and feedback. These include:

- **The need for flexible and faster M&E:** Increasingly unpredictable, rapidly-changing circumstances and a dynamic environment require more flexible and energetic approaches to measurement and evaluation; adapting policies quickly and effectively. Traditional systems will simply not do.
- **Theories of change need intermediate outcomes that can be measured quickly and acted upon:** The fast-cycle measurable is a useful tool for managing and assuring the quality of policies, programmes and service delivery.
- **Civil societies' demand for accountability has increased:** Increasingly energetic and active civil societies around the world are driving the demand for greater transparency and public accountability. This requires constant data collection and rigorous M&E.
- **Enhanced complexity in delivery and evaluation:** Programmes are being implemented and services provided in increasingly complex and ever-changing social, economic, ecological and political contexts. A single M&E approach cannot fully describe and analyze the interaction among all of these different factors.

Together, these factors have created an environment ripe for innovation. These approaches foster more inclusive, collaborative and responsive processes across the programme development cycle: from planning, to implementation, to M&E. They allow increased frequency of input and feedback and greater outreach to stakeholders, including those not traditionally part of the development process.

Our experience suggests that these innovations bring significant benefit to the development process by enabling more frequent testing of theories of change, and facilitating timely, evidence-based course corrections. Bottlenecks could be easily identified by engaging the most affected population in the design of policies and programme and service delivery. Organizations achieve better results when they are capable of absorbing this information and have systems that are flexible enough to respond to it: more relevant policies, more effective programmes and improved service delivery.

Advances in M&E technologies

There have been many innovations in M&E technologies, recently. 'M&E innovation' satisfies at least two of the following criteria:

They lead to significant improvement in the measurement and evaluation process

Innovations in M&E are technologies, products, services, processes or interactions that have shown a significant impact on how M&E is practiced—not just innovation for innovation's sake—or illustrate clear potential to change M&E to improve the value or usefulness of monitoring information and evaluating findings. Typically, innovations with a great potential impact also address a core M&E need or challenge.

They catalyze change

Innovations cannot just be better, faster and cheaper. Rather, they must go beyond incremental change by reframing, re-imagining or recombining existing elements to yield new pathways for M&E. That is why it often takes outsiders or unconventional partnerships to break old paradigms in M&E.

They are concrete

Innovations in M&E must be sufficiently concrete. Ideas and theoretical approaches are not innovations (although they can lead to innovations). Innovations are concrete if they are already being implemented (at least as pilots), can be replicated and are potentially scalable across different contexts and regions. A number of innovative M&E approaches seem to fit the bill. The following table identifies 11 innovations, based on extensive research and analysis by colleagues at UNDP and other UN agencies.

	Crowdsourcing	A large number of people actively reporting on situations around them, using mobile phones and open source software		Real-time, simple reporting	A means of reducing programme and project managers' formal reporting requirements to a minimum and freeing up their time to provide more frequent, real-time updates, including text, pictures and videos
	Participatory statistics	An approach in which local people generate statistics; participatory techniques are replicated with a large number of groups to produce robust quantitative data		Mobile data collection	The targeted gathering of structured information using mobile phones, tablets or PDAs using special software
	The micro-narrative	Collecting and aggregating short stories from citizens using special algorithms to gain insights into real-time issues and societal changes		Data exhaust	Passively collecting transactional data on a massive scale from people's use of digital services like mobile phones and web content such as news media and social media interactions
	Intelligent infrastructure	Equipping infrastructure or items, such as roads, bridges, buildings, water treatment systems, hand-washing stations, latrines, cookstoves, etc., with low-cost, remotely accessible electronic sensors		Remote sensing	Observing and analysing distant targets using information from satellites, aircrafts or other airborne devices
	Data visualization	Representing data graphically and interactively, using videos, interactive websites, infographics, timelines, data dashboards, maps, etc.		Multi-level mixed evaluation method	The deliberate, massive and creative use of mixed (quantitative and qualitative) methods on multiple levels for complex evaluations, particularly for service delivery systems
	Outcome harvesting	An evaluative approach that does not measure progress towards predetermined outcomes, but rather collects evidence of what has been achieved, and works backwards to determine whether and how projects or interventions contribute to change			

Increased frequency of input and citizen participation are key features in most of these innovations and many present cost-conscious and flexible approaches to managing and assuring the quality of policies, programmes and service delivery.

These innovations promote citizen engagement—active participation and passive engagement—and enhance the usefulness and accessibility of collected information, presenting progressive methodologies for measuring and interpreting results more credibly. Most are not mutually exclusive. For example, mobile data collection can be used with micro-narratives to provide different perspectives on a particular initiative.

Crowdsourcing, for example, allows large numbers of people to actively report on a situation around them using mobile phone technology and open source software. Good examples include *Ushahidi* (<http://ushahidi.com/>), *I paid a bribe* (www.ipaidabribe.com) and *HARASSmap* (<http://harassmap.org/en/>).

Such innovations have already been applied in Pakistan and some actually originated from Pakistan. Crowdsourcing allows a win-win situation in M&E, whether it is reporting on incidences of standing water in the case of the Punjab Government's dengue response, or an absent teacher or ghost school in education. It can lead to greater citizen participation and civic engagement (process improvement), allow data collection on a scale not possible with traditional tools (catalytic) and is established across countries, including Pakistan (concrete).

Conclusion

Many of the aforementioned technologies could help address Pakistan's education emergency and actually disrupt the education status quo. Such technology should be utilized wherever possible. However, it must be an independently determined facilitator of our objectives and interventions must not end up being driven by technology, thereby becoming hostage to developers and vendors. Technology alone is not enough, though. Incentives systems would have to be adjusted within the educational bureaucracy to better align it with our objectives. People and organizations are not predominantly *honest/clean* or *dishonest/corrupt*, but circumstances and systems of checks and balances make them so. Pakistan's problem of ghost schools and ghost teachers could easily be abated using monitoring systems coupled with incentives systems, e.g., performance-based pay.

Private schools: The 'misunderstood' education zone



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The private education sector in Pakistan—which now accounts for almost 50 percent of enrolment in Punjab alone¹—has arisen from a complex set of reasons, and has more ramifications than those captured by research and policy responses. The sector needs to be taken more seriously for both the risks it poses and the opportunities it provides. At present, a parallel amorphous private sector continues to mushroom without an adequate harness and clarity on its eventual direction. The state will have to take charge as *laissez faire* in education, like any other fundamental right, cannot exist. To be successful, it will first have to reform itself, view the private sector as a medium for education proliferation and comprehend the sector thoroughly, before applying any policy.

The poor quality of public schools is often quoted as the primary cause of growth in the private education sector. However, the picture has more to it than simple, real or perceived, quality differentials. Parents value their children's security above all else and will send them to the nearest school if they know a teacher will be present. Perceptions of quality differentials, provided parents have a clear understanding of the term, play a smaller role than purported. The distance to the nearest government school provides as much of an incentive, if not more, to parents to send their children to a private school.

The growth of low-cost private schools began as an urban trend in large cities. The demonstration effect led to the spread to smaller towns and even rural areas, across Pakistan. Contrary to prevailing perceptions, long distances and difficult commutes are not just rural phenomena. Urban sprawl, through rural-urban migration, has shifted population centres away from the nearest government school. Transportation costs exceed fees at the nearest school as a result, and security is an added concern, especially for girls. These facts apply to both large cities and the small towns that serve as pit stops for migrating populations.

Public school planning has failed to adjust to the needs of new and evolving demographics of both rural and urban areas in the more densely populated provinces. The last schools developed in urban centres are 40–60 years old,

primarily due to prohibitive land prices, which prevent free-of-cost land donations to the government and piecemeal planning approaches in the public sector.

Perceived quality differentials—especially the need to learn English—form another subset of the demand factor. The Learning and Educational Achievement in Punjab Schools (LEAPS) study showed relatively better learning achievements from private schools in rural Punjab, and considered the higher demand for private schools to be a rational choice for parents. Significantly, the study highlighted the differences in learning as only relative, due to an extremely low benchmark set by government schools. By extension, the outcomes in life for low-cost private school students may not be significantly different from their government school-going peers. (Some) parents' desire to break the elite barrier cannot be fulfilled through current quality.

The relative difference—and size of the sector—led to the formation of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in provinces, often supported by a development partner. These partnerships viewed the 'better quality' of private schools as an opportunity. There was also an implicit notion of 'giving up' on the irredeemable public sector. However, the structures' failure to recognize the scale of the problem and the need to revert to the state—irrespective of the models used and their limitations—have begun to manifest. The largest effort, in Punjab, has failed to cover more than five to six percent of the scale achieved by the regular government sector, despite some good results and capacity. The cycle has begun to shift back towards the public schools, but not necessarily in the best fashion.

Over time, the PPP and the traditional public sector have become parallel, often antagonistic, structures and concepts. Rivalry and distrust between the government and private sector also continue to grow, as do opportunities and challenges in the form of the private sector as a parallel, unregulated system.

The need for regulation cannot be overstated. As a fundamental right, education has to be provided to all children within the bounds of a state-determined set of standards. The public sector's failure to develop and implement quality standards for its own schools diminishes its legitimacy and authority to impose any regulation on private schools. State proposals on regulation often target private-school teacher salaries and qualifications - the public school's two comparative advantages (physical infrastructure being the third). Given the history of state

intervention, the private sector fears intrusion into its affairs, resisting any suggestions of regulation.

The prolongation of the status quo carries a number of risks. First, parental dissatisfaction with the outcomes of low-cost private school education may begin to increase over time, as the social divide supposedly covered by the 'English' taught in these schools, widens. Second, the government has no control over the content and ideas taught in private schools. This ignorance carries serious potential risks, especially in a country with a risk of extremism. Finally, the state cannot abdicate its responsibility of providing quality education to all children of the private sector, as only the former can define the ethos of quality education in a country.

The state has to make a call. It cannot—and may not need to—invest in infrastructure in the presence of private entrepreneurship in the sector. This will be especially true of urban centres. It has to look inwards, improving its own quality and comprehension of education, and ensure, within a broader policy framework, that a regulated private sector provides education as per state-prescribed standards. The objective seems elusive with current state capacity, but room for optimism *does* exist. The devolution of education to the provinces after the 18th Amendment and the continuity of the democratic process have made education a higher priority for all provincial governments. Greater interest and seriousness can now be expected of these governments, than at any point in recent history. One hopes for a more informed and education-friendly response, and the inclusion of the private sector in a student-focused policy. The targets of Article 25-A of the Constitution, which calls for compulsory and free education for all children aged 5–16, may become even more distant without such an approach.

¹ Pakistan, *Private School Census 2011–12* (Lahore, Department of School Education, 2012).



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There are few political issues on which Pakistan is as united as that of education; there is consensus across political parties, ethnic groups and provinces that all children deserve a good education. Yet, 25 million children aged 5–16 are out of school and half of all fifth-grade children are unable to demonstrate second-grade competencies.

Generic appeals to education are easily endorsed. Articulating the contours of the change required to make education for all a reality, becomes nearly impossible. Debate descends into clichés and platitudes instead of a comprehensive and urgent to-do list. As a result, nothing happens. There is only one way this will change.

Politics.

Transforming 'better education' from a slogan to reality is an arduous political process. Converting an ineffectual consensus into an incisive debate that drives concrete reform, is also a political process. We will never shift education outcomes from their current situation unless we learn to map, navigate and negotiate that process.

Politics responds to demand, rather than need. The need for education sector reform is clear, but the status quo will remain unchanged unless someone can articulate this need and have others echo it. We need a framework that can contextualize the need for education within political demands that are capable of successfully competing with other, more prominent lobbies, interest groups and issues - we need to make education as politically relevant as national security, the Pakistani identity, international pressure and economic and fiscal pressures.

First, national security is perhaps, the most noticeable aspect of Pakistani politics. The country has suffered repeated security crises and endured armed conflict with neighbours and non-state actors. Second, Pakistan is a young country where politics is sensitive to issues of identity and culture. Rigorous debate ensues when Pakistani identity is under threat or questioned. Third, international pressure is a vital part of the political discourse in Pakistan, and when channelled constructively, can be useful in inspiring and supporting reform. Fourth, economic and fiscal pressures are important landmarks in Pakistan's political landscape. Even the most predatory elite require a minimum resource baseline to pursue elite interests. These resources cannot be collected unless a robust economic framework is in place. Money and economic stability matter, and revenue generation and expenditure are integral to the political debate.

Education reform in Pakistan will only become politically relevant if it stimulates one of these four political pressure points.

Can a nation of over 50 million illiterate young people be secure? Education champions must make the case that reform is critical to national security.

Can a nation become more assertive and confident in a scenario where only failure is projected and success stories are hidden? Education champions need to point to those very successes.

Can a nation be taken seriously by the international community if it fails to provide the basic needs and requirements of its people without prodding from its friends and benefactors? Education champions must leverage international experience and support in favour of local and organic reform efforts.

Can a nation grow, economically, without an educated workforce? Education champions must turn education into an economic issue, describing the cost of failure and the dividend of success.

Enduring change brings together popular will and dominating elite interests in a democratic system of governance. The popular will for better education already exists, which is evident from the massive growth in private education and survey results that confirm this demand. Making education a national security, identity and economic imperative, while drawing on international inspiration, will assert this will more forcefully and more politically. Change will become more

likely as the voice of ordinary parents translates into a language that Pakistan's elite understand.

The theory of change for education must come from politicians, the people's representatives. Any potential for meaningful change in education is limited without politicians being the owners, stewards and guardians of the agenda. We know this because a de-politicised policy community has been trying to achieve reform for two generations. They have treated education as a technical issue and tried to extract it from politics - a failed experiment. Technocrats have helped sustain and deepen Pakistan's education emergency.

That is not to sideline educationists. The policy community is, of course, a vital source of information, data, assumption, fact-checking and implementation for the theory of change. But the actual articulation of what must change and how, needs to be politically owned.

Moreover, political ownership must reflect the reality that education reform is not a one-term issue; real transformation will take a generation and cannot be achieved in a vacuum of political power or if political parties subscribe to very different visions of the required change. Broad ownership of any theory of change is needed by a large cross-section of the political class.

Pakistan's political class—despite its venality—has demonstrated the ability to reach a conclusive consensus on issues of urgent national interest, in the past. Such a consensus is possible if education is framed as an issue where survival is at stake. When this happens, leaders will want to know what they need to do to bring about that change.

We need to be ready to escape from our technocratic comfort zone to start thinking and acting politically. We must not be disheartened by the simplicity or venality of public discourse, and we must not allow the trends in the discourse to dominate the education debate. We must protect and cultivate a consensus-oriented narrative in the public discourse that allows for quick and meaningful changes, before plunging into more difficult issues. We must invest in a politically-relevant education reform discourse immediately and urgently for the sake of 25 million children being denied their constitutional right to education.

Adapted from Mosharraf Zaidi, "The politics of education reform - towards a theory of change for education in Pakistan", *March for Education Campaign, Pakistan Education Task Force (2011)*. Available from <http://goo.gl/U17Q7>.



Politicizing education reform

Analysis

School facilities and education outcomes:

A preliminary examination



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Investment in school facilities has been a central component of education policy-making and school spending in Pakistan. It is a reaction to the fact that a significant proportion of schools in all provinces and territories in Pakistan often operate without basic amenities like electricity, running water, functioning toilets and safe buildings.

The issue's importance is highlighted by the fact that school facilities appear in the national discourse on education, on a regular basis. A significant portion of government school data¹ reports on 'missing facilities', the commonly-used term.

Parents often cite missing school facilities—and teacher absenteeism—as a major complaint. The media similarly focuses considerable airtime and column inches on missing facilities and ghost schools, when reporting on education.

Finally, all major political parties made campaign promises of substantial increases in education spending on new school buildings, teacher salaries and improved school facilities.

However, do improvements in school facilities lead to widespread improvements in education outcomes?

Numerous published studies examining the relationship between school resources and education outcomes in developing country contexts have proved inconclusive². In Pakistan's case, there has been little exploration of the high priority given to improving school facilities, as opposed to improving teacher recruitment and training, increasing parental engagement, curriculum development, etc.

We make a first attempt at examining the implicit logic behind continued investment in school facilities.

Using district-aggregated data compiled for the annual Alif Ailaan Education Rankings, we find mixed evidence for improved education outcomes, where infrastructure is better.

Enrolment (rather than other education outcomes) appears to be linked with school facility improvements. This is especially true for girls' enrolment. However, some caveats apply.

First, this is a preliminary examination of the data and

requires further study. We use correlation to investigate the relationship between measures of education outcomes and measures of school infrastructure. Inferring a direct causal relationship would be premature.

Second, we do not control for other variables such as income levels and budgets. Some of these may negate any positive relationship suggested by the correlation.

The Alif Ailaan Education Rankings³

For the purposes of our analysis, we use the two education scores produced for the Alif Ailaan Education Rankings. The rankings calculate two different district-level 'scores'. The education score, calculated to represent education outcomes as a whole, is a composite calculation based on gross enrolment rates, literacy, achievement scores, survival rates⁴ to the fifth grade and gender ratios at enrolment and of survival. Table 1 shows details of the variables used to represent access, attainment, achievement and gender parity.

Variable	Indicator	Data source
Access	Gross enrolment rate for 6–10-year-olds	PSLM ⁵ , ASER ⁶
Attainment	Survival rate to the fifth grade Literacy rate of over ten-year-olds	NEMIS ⁷
Achievement	Achievement scores of fifth graders in reading English and Urdu and ability to perform basic arithmetic	PSLM ASER
Gender parity	Gender parity index based on ratio of female and male students enrolled, and those who have survived to the fifth grade	NEMIS

Table 1 : Education score components

The second rankings are based on a composite calculation of school infrastructure variables, including percentage of schools with electricity, percentage of schools with running water and so forth. It represents the state of (public) school infrastructure in each district^{8, 9}.

Comparing school infrastructure and education outcomes

We calculated a coefficient of correlation (r) of .503 when comparing district education scores with school infrastructure scores for 2013 and 2014 (Figure 1). The evidence suggests that there may be a relatively strong positive relationship between education outcomes and school infrastructure.

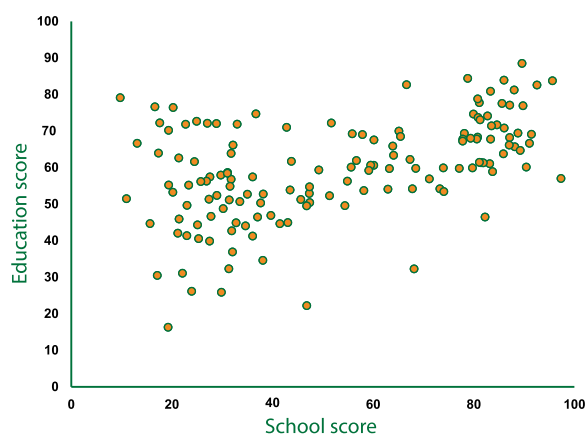


Figure 1: The correlation between school score and education score

We ran correlations of the education score against the five components of the school infrastructure rankings. The strength of the relationship appears weaker when examined against the availability of electricity (.433), water (.386), toilets (.467) and boundary walls (.384). The only relatively strong positive relationship appeared to exist between the education score and satisfactory building conditions (.503).

When examining achievement scores against school infrastructure availability, we found the relationship to be much weaker, compared to the overall education score, suggesting that enrolment, attainment—measured as survival till the fifth grade—and gender parity may have a more significant relationship.

We then attempted to examine the specific components of the education score most likely to have a significant relationship with school infrastructure i.e. net enrolment and survival. We used gender-disaggregated primary net enrolment rates (PSLM) and survival rates till the fifth grade (NEMIS) (Table 2).

School facilities	Net enrolment rate		Survival rate	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Electricity	.552**	.386**	.318**	.197*
Water	.639**	.545**	.204*	.201*
Toilets	.626**	.488**	.481**	.048
Boundary walls	.628**	.481**	.336**	.105
Satisfactory building conditions	.604**	.486**	.441	-.009

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level

Table 2: Correlation of gender-disaggregated enrolment and survival rates with school facilities (n = 145)

A clearer picture emerges when examining the correlations in Table 2:

- Girls' enrolment and survival—another way of examining retention—have stronger relationships with the availability of school facilities than do boys' enrolment and retention.
- The availability of school facilities appears to have a greater impact on attracting enrolment than on retaining students. Note the drop in correlations with school facilities from enrolment rate to survival rate.
- The availability of toilets and running water appear to be the most important factors, followed by boundary walls.
- Electricity availability seems to have the least significant impact on either enrolment or survival.

Examining the data, split by province, we found that the linkage

between education score and school facilities was the weakest in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), where, despite some of the lowest availabilities of school facilities, education outcomes were high. This may be due to the fact that education facilities are based on government-run schools while education outcomes are based on *all* children. Where a significant proportion of children are enrolled in private schools, the relationship between student outcomes and government school facilities would, *ipso facto*, be low. However, the case of AJK and GB should give pause to any analysis of the relationship between education outcomes and school infrastructure.

Conclusions

It is important to reiterate that this is a very preliminary examination of the relationship between school facilities and education outputs. Nonetheless, some trends have emerged, which further analysis may confirm.

First, school facilities do appear to have some effect on education outcome, and the relationship is positive. However, the strength of this relationship varies by type of education outcome.

Second, the apparent relationship of school facilities is stronger when examining correlations with girls' enrolment and survival to the fifth grade. This suggests that improving school facilities—especially the availability of running water and toilets—could improve girls' enrolment and retention rates. Finally, it is important to note that the relationship between improved school facilities is not strong enough in any of the examined cases to suggest that it would be a panacea for resolving education problems. Therefore, any policy aimed at simply improving school facilities without a broader focus—teacher training, improving school environments, parental inclusion—would not lead to large increases in education outcomes, and may even be a more expensive way of achieving stated targets (as suggested by the cases of AJK and GB). Further exploration of the data is needed, including comparisons with district-level economic and education budgetary data, to develop a better picture.

¹ The National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) provides considerable data on the availability of basic amenities at public schools throughout the country.

² Paul Glewwe, Eric A. Hanushek, Sarah Humpage and Renato Ravina, "School resources and educational outcomes in developing countries: a review of the literature from 1990 to 2010", Working Paper, No. 17554 (Cambridge, M.A., National Bureau of Economic Research, 2011). Available from <http://goo.gl/wZkrHe>.

³ Full disclosure: we are co-authors of the Alif Ailaan District Education Rankings. The rankings were produced jointly by the Alif Ailaan campaign and SDPI. The first iterations were produced in 2013 and the second were launched on 22 May 2014 in Islamabad.

⁴ Survival rates measure the likelihood of enrolled students staying in school until a certain future year.

⁵ Pakistan, *Statistics Division, Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey, 2012–13* (Islamabad, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Available from <http://goo.gl/4xn1y0>.

⁶ Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi, *Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2013 - National (Provisional)*, (Lahore, 2014). Available from <http://goo.gl/zqXhaK>.

⁷ NEMIS data.

⁸ Such data does not exist for private schools.

⁹ Further details of ranking calculations are available in the Rankings reports of 2013 and 2014.

Improving public sector education:

The role of community-based organizations



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Shandana Khan has 18 years of extensive grassroots and policy-level experience in rural development, concentrating on women's programmes and gender issues, rural development and social mobilisation.

There are almost 27 million children eligible for primary education in Pakistan, a basic right for children aged 5–16 years, under Article 25-A of Pakistan's constitution. However, the literacy rate stands at just 58 percent (69 percent for boys and 49 percent for girls), one of the lowest in the region. The statistics from 2013 are alarming:

- Approximately 21 percent of children aged 6–16 years were not enrolled in schools;
- Almost 60 percent of children aged 3–5 years remained un-enrolled;
- About 57 percent of fifth-grade students could not read at a second grade level or perform simple two-digit division;
- Almost half of these students were unable to read second grade texts in their native languages, Urdu, Sindhi, and Pashto¹.

Such figures mean Pakistan cannot possibly meet its Millennium Development Goal (MDG) commitments to achieve 100 percent primary enrolment ratios and an 88 percent literacy rate by 2015. Weak governance and public sector failures are often cited as reasons, but it should be noted that a challenge of this magnitude cannot be met by the state, alone. Major supply-side challenges remain, despite the government's measures to address the education emergency. Rural communities, especially, face problems like poor or missing school facilities, security issues—which affect students and teachers alike—absent teachers collecting salaries, and poor student performance. Recent efforts to partner with non-government organization (NGOs) have borne some fruit, but decades-long political commitment is required to sustain this and make a real difference. The best solution, perhaps, is to build synergies between people's organizations and the government.

Organizations like the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and the Department for International Development (DFID)-funded Alif Aliaan encouraged exactly this using the 'social mobilisation' approach.

Technical and financial support, coupled with careful planning and organization, helps people bring themselves out of poverty through the formation of grassroots community organisations (COs) or local support organizations (LSOs) that bridge gaps between people and the government. Typically, capacity building measures allow communities to identify development schemes, oversee implementation and maintenance and engage local government for funds and support.

In this case, the LSOs work with school management committees (SMCs) and local government to improve schools. The approach has been very successful and there are now over 300,000 LSOs geared towards better education across Pakistan.

The CO/LSO approach has demonstrated numerous advantages over conventional top-down methodologies. Cost and time efficiency is one such advantage, where, for example, infrastructure development programmes have been completed under community supervision in short spans of time at affordable costs. Ownership and sustainability are another, where communities maintain a core stake in the end result, and often provide their own funds to programmes, giving them a longer running life and maintaining their [the programme's] importance in the community. In the case of primary schooling, parents and community members recognize the education crisis, and are able to partner with local government to make public education services more accountable to the people. Their greatest strength is their membership and outreach, and therefore, their enhanced bargaining power. This allows them to create district-level linkages with government education to demand better services, increase enrolment, hold teachers accountable and help drive improvements. Stakeholders typically include parents, un-enrolled children, notable community members and religious leaders, teachers and SMC members, the Department of Education, political party workers and election contestants/winners.

A telling example comes from village Latifabad in Bahawalpur where the LSO mobilised the local SMC to discuss issues faced by teachers, parents and children. This included reviewing the SMC's spending patterns. When the SMC was



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unable to provide funds to build a boundary wall around the local school, the LSO approached local politicians and successfully mobilized PKR 925,000 from the District Education Department for the purpose - students and teachers, alike felt safer and enrolment actually increased by 53 percent. Other LSO-managed programmes have had similar successes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. Once familiarized by civil society with basic 25-A rights and understanding their potential role in creating local accountability through continuous engagement with local politicians, the LSOs undertook baseline surveys to identify out-of-school children, canvassed neighbourhoods and arranged awareness walks. Within nine months, enrolment increased by 36 percent and girls constituted 46 percent of the newly-enrolled children.

These experiences shows that considerable change is possible and that scaling efforts up can affect education at the national level. A large, institutionalized network of LSOs is a critical accountability mechanism that can effectively oversee community partnerships with the government. Efforts are being made to formalize and cement these relationships with the government and facilitate the creation of yet more LSOs. Once federated at the district and provincial levels, they will create strong civil society pillars that actually hold government accountable. Continued political commitment is key and must be encouraged through constant interaction between the people and their local government.

While such projects have shown success,

they need to be scaled up through support from, and partnerships with, government institutions.

¹ Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi, *Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2013 - National (Provisional)*, (Lahore, 2014). Available from <http://goo.gl/zqXhaK>.

Prof. Ahsan Iqbal

Federal Minister
for Planning, Development and Reform

What governance issues do you think are constraining Pakistan's efforts to increase enrolment and retention in primary schooling? What solutions does the government propose to tackle these issues?

First, reform is impossible without political intent and will. However, the government of Punjab has shown some movement on that front, and is beginning to show results. It has introduced computers, a regular monitoring system to ensure teacher presence in schools and the concept of merit in teacher recruitment, which has shown remarkable results and will help raise public sector education standards.

Second, overcentralization is dangerous. Education suffers from it, even at the provincial level. Much like the devolution of education from the centre, the provinces should play a supervisory role while devolving the subject to the districts. I was involved in an initiative in Punjab where laws were passed to create autonomous professional district education authorities tasked with supervising and running education systems. They are supervised by similar education authorities at the provincial level. This will allow petty matters like headmaster transfers and promotions to be addressed at the local level.

Third, public education in Pakistan is not aligned with society's needs; education needs to be relevant. The country and economy require modern professionals with skills such as creativity, analysis, problem solving and team work, which the current system does not teach. To that end, a conference of all provincial education ministers was held, recently, where the creation of a national curriculum council was proposed. All of these important elements are being incorporated into Pakistan's Vision 2025 to modernize the education system so that it can cater to society's demands now, and in the future.

Fourth, public education does not ensure equal technological access to all children, resulting in an 'education apartheid.' In this regard, the government of Punjab has taken a very bold initiative in setting up 4,000 computer laboratories in government high schools across the province.



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These have provided many students from poor families the opportunity to sit down at a computer and learn to use it. Language is worth mentioning, as well. We need to prepare students for the global stage; the introduction of Arabic, Mandarin, and French, among others, is imperative. I would also like to speak about the issue of English and Urdu medium education. Children thinking in Urdu may face difficulties in expressing themselves in English if their classroom learning is restricted to just English. A poor command over expression translates into poorly and insufficiently expressed thoughts - early stage learning and conceptualization require free expression in both languages, and a free internalization of knowledge. We are trying to create a consensus among provinces on this issue.

What interventions has the government planned or proposed to address governance issues in education and to accelerate progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

We have lagged behind on the MDGs. Punjab has shown some political will on that front, and is now undertaking a universal primary enrolment drive. I am, however, very concerned about the other provinces, so we are working with all of the provincial chief ministers to initiate similar campaigns. Nationally, all children must be brought into schools and we cannot afford to waste any time doing this. There have been meetings and senate debates on the issue. This is part of our efforts to sensitize our people and leaders to the importance of meeting these goals and in investing in human resources,

because development starts and ends with people. Previous eras of growth were driven by investment in physical infrastructure, and never translated into development. We are now working with various stakeholders to create awareness to the importance of investing in education. This may involve linkages with civil society and the non-government sector. The private sector can play an important role, as well. In fact, to supplement education targets, the Punjab Education Foundation has been awarding scholarships to children from poor families to study in private schools. Finally, the question is, "how can we make primary schools more attractive to students?" We are working on a programme to address this. It requires creating an environment more conducive to learning and training and equipping teachers with methods and approaches to ensure students do not drop out of school. Of course, the provision of basic facilities in schools like toilets, boundary walls, drinking water and furniture can help increase enrolment.

Are there any bottlenecks to implementing the planned interventions? What innovative solutions are being employed to address them?

A major one is the lack of provincial coordination. The federal government can only work in partnership with the provinces and play a coordination role, as education is now a fully devolved subject. I believe the centre has a responsibility to the subject, as education has national implications; the centre must ensure no province is left behind. The provinces have now realized the need for national standards and are setting

up a national curriculum council and permanent secretariat through the Interprovincial Education Ministers' Committee.

How are you ensuring provincial "buy-in" for your proposed interventions in the post-18th Amendment scenario?

Each region has unique problems. We are trying to develop a national plan based on regional needs to ensure an equal distribution of education standards.

say that again

"...reform is impossible without political intent and will."



Youth Voices



Syed Abbas Hussain

The government sends polio workers door-to-door. Why not representatives with enrolment forms to explain the importance of education? Media campaigns could be a part of this. Community youth could devote some of their free time to voluntary work with both private and public sector organizations working towards providing education to the underprivileged.



Private schools do play a role, but only for those who can afford them. The government should regulate them and ensure that they follow the same syllabus as public schools, so that students from public schools can compete with privately-educated students. In addition, public schools need better amenities and better salaries for teachers.



Mehrunisa Khan



Shahwan Bibi

Education is not important, here. Parents would rather send their children to work to earn money. We need grants and scholarships. Funding and infrastructure are major problems. Public-private partnerships could work – perhaps government oversight, but with private management. And, of course, girls' schools need boundary walls, clean drinking water and toilets. In addition, communities should be involved in monitoring school activities and ensuring checks and balances.



Public schools need better-trained teachers and infrastructure. We need to see better schools with toilets, clean drinking water, computer labs and libraries. Schools cannot be located near factories or busy roads. Otherwise, how can children be expected to learn?



Muhammad Islam (Boota)



Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan

Minister for School Education,
Higher Education and Youth Affairs,
Sports, Archaeology and Tourism, Punjab

say that again

"We are working on creating district education authorities. While policy will be more centralized, actual function will be the mandate of these authorities."

What governance issues do you think are constraining Pakistan's efforts to increase enrolment and retention in primary schooling? What solutions does the government propose to tackle these issues?

There are several governance issues, ranging from poor physical access to schools in southern Punjab, to inadequate facilities. A particularly pressing one is teacher capacity. The government of Punjab has been making efforts to increase it. We have hired 140,000 new teachers, mainly women, in the last year and a half. We have started pre-service training for teachers, training 200,000 in the last two years. In addition, we are working with the British Council to implement the Punjab Education and English Language Initiative (PEELI) to improve English teachers' skills.

Enrolment is affected by the lack of school facilities, including boundary walls, drinking water, washrooms, electricity, furniture, additional classrooms, and, of course, qualified teachers. We spent PKR 12 billion this year addressing these issues, of which over 60 percent was spent on girls' schools.

Student retention has been a problem – the dropout rate was discouraging. We appointed Monitoring and Evaluation Assistants (MEAs) equipped with tablet computers to monitor teacher and student attendance. They transmit data to a central command centre, so we always have attendance information. The result has been excellent.



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Are there any bottlenecks to implementing the planned interventions? What innovative solutions are being employed to address them?

There has been considerable resistance from teachers. However, under our new plan, we will hire 40,000 new teachers, and retire 20,000 every year. Hiring will be done purely on merit; the selection examination is hard, so the process is very competitive. Those hired will be required to go through pre-service training, and promotions will not be based solely on seniority; results and performance will matter.

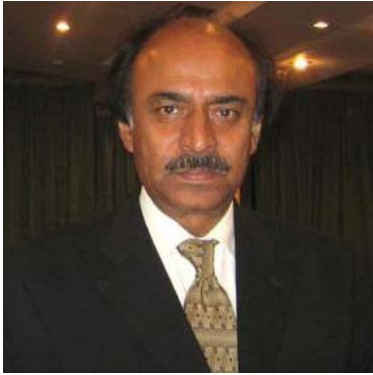
Do you think there should be coordination between the provinces for education issues?

Syllabus and curriculum uniformity is very important. The Federal Ministry has convened meetings and we all agree on the need for a national curriculum authority.

What is your opinion on devolving education further from the provinces to the districts?

We are working on creating district education authorities. While policy will be more centralized, actual function will be the mandate of these authorities. The relevant bill has reached the standing committee and they are working on it. It will hopefully be presented in the assembly and passed, within a few months. The authorities will then begin work.

Interview



Nisar Ahmed Khuhro

Senior Minister for Education, Sindh

What governance issues do you think are constraining Pakistan's efforts to increase enrolment and retention in primary schooling? What solutions does the government propose to tackle these issues?

The biggest issue constraining Pakistan's efforts to increase enrolment and retention in primary schools is the absence of an efficient governance framework and a lack of awareness and demand from the people. The situation is exacerbated by teacher absenteeism and non-functional schools, which lead to parents not sending their children to school, and early-year dropouts.

A number of new initiatives are being implemented in Sindh to address this situation. We are in the process of recruiting at least 20,000 primary, secondary and high school teachers. The process will be completed by June 2014. The process is being conducted in a transparent manner and recruitments are made on the basis of a test conducted by the National Testing Service (NTS). The Sindh Education Department has planned to introduce evening shifts in public schools where second shifts will use the services of retired teachers at fair wages. Teacher absenteeism will be addressed by introducing biometric and monitoring systems. This will involve the recruitment of at least 2,000 monitors.

Are there any bottlenecks to implementing the planned interventions? What innovative solutions are being employed to address them?

There are no bottlenecks right now. We have taken steps to remove such constraints.

Do you think there should be coordination between the provinces for education issues?

Coordination between provinces is extremely helpful. It helps share experiences and provides opportunities to learn from each other. We are fully aware and appreciative of the importance of coordination with other provincial education departments and are in touch with them on a number of areas of concern.

What is your opinion on devolving education further from the provinces to the districts?

We are not very enthusiastic about it as we have had bad experiences in the past, when it was devolved during President Pervez Musharraf's tenure. The devolution of power to the district level has a negative effect on the education sector and we do not wish to repeat past mistakes.

say that again

"The biggest issue constraining Pakistan's efforts to increase enrolment and retention in primary schools is the absence of an efficient governance framework and a lack of awareness and demand from the people."



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Youth Voices



Aly Hassam

Improving public education should begin with teacher training and a zero-tolerance policy on child labour. Funding allocation is an issue, and checks and balances are required all the way from the individual school to the Ministry for Education. Intellectual leadership is also important - private sector academics should be incentivized to work for the government, instead.

Public education would benefit from an increased and well-allocated budget. Public schools suffer from quality issues-teachers are often not paid and books are not revised, leaving children unmotivated. Improved education is an urgent need. Without it, children cannot find work later in life, and may even resort to crime.



Nashrah Baqi

Planning is essential. This means national standards, specified provincial enrolment targets and estimates of required financial, technical and human resources. Greater opportunities should be provided to marginalized groups of society, particularly girls and people with special needs. Monitoring and inspection systems are required to ensure quality service delivery.



Saima Gul Mairani

Literacy battles crime, political unawareness and extremism. Funding is not a problem *per se*; mismanagement, corruption and improper execution are largely to blame for the current state of public education. Private schools need regulation - a uniform curriculum in line with public schools. Youth can play a role by pointing out irregularities in their own institutions and by creating youth parliament platforms to express their concerns.



Shoaib Islam

Interview



Muhammad Atif Khan

Minister for Education
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

What governance issues do you think are constraining Pakistan's efforts to increase enrolment and retention in primary schooling? What solutions does the government propose to tackle these issues?

We have made some progress in increasing enrolment, but poverty remains a big issue. Poor families prefer sending their children to work instead of school, to earn a livelihood. Public sector school standards are low which does not instil confidence for a bright future and thoughts of children going on to become engineers and doctors. This is a primary reason for low enrolment and high dropout rates and why we must focus on improving standards. Gaining parents' trust is a key point. Knowing that one's children can excel in life once armed with a good public school education will help resolve issues of enrolment and dropouts.

Another very serious governance issue is administration and facilities. There are about 2,800 government schools in KP, and governing them is no small task. The vast majority lack basic facilities, and sometimes, even teachers. These things affect enrolment, as well.

There are issues of governance and political interference; I do not deny these problems exist, but we are on the right track and will overcome them.

We are working on the education emergency from several angles - these problems cannot be resolved by working in one direction. First, we are focusing on increasing enrolment by providing missing facilities, using government and donor funds. We have launched the 'Tameer-e-School Programme' where private individuals and local and international organizations contribute resources to provide missing facilities. Some 122 schools are listed on our website, displaying lists of missing facilities. Contributors can decide what they would like to pay for. In addition, money spent for this purpose is administered through

say that again

"[A] very serious governance issue is administration and facilities. There are about 2,800 government schools in KP, and governing them is no small task. The vast majority lack basic facilities, and sometimes, even teachers."

parent-teacher councils rather than government officials.

We have also set up monitoring units that operate completely independently of schools and teachers. We are able to collect real-time data about the monitors by using smart phones and global positioning system (GPS) tracking to ensure the monitors do their jobs. The information they themselves collect—e.g. on missing facilities—helps us make well-informed decisions.

Are there any bottlenecks to implementing the planned interventions? What innovative solutions are being employed to address them?

Not as such, but political interference does hamper our interventions, somewhat. One solution to this is to base postings and transfers purely on merit.

Do you think there should be coordination between the provinces for education issues?

We do not currently interact with the other provinces very much – it is usually restricted to conferences. Education became a provincial subject after the passage of the 18th Amendment and officials began working on education issues, making decisions and approving budgets in their own provinces – interprovincial coordination was not a particularly high priority. However, I believe it is a good idea that would enable provinces to learn from one another's sector experiences.

What is your opinion on devolving education further from the provinces to the districts?

We are planning on introducing a local government system. The education department will be devolved after the local government elections. Policy-making will remain within the ambit of the provincial government, but implementation will fall to the districts. In addition, a certain percentage of development funds will be administered and spent at the district level.

Youth Voices



Nihal Tabasum

“ The problem with cash flows in public education is more a utilization problem than one of supply. Checks and balances are required. The private education sector does contribute, but not all such schools are actually 'good'. The government must regulate them. School facilities are all very well, but a good curriculum and properly trained teachers are of the utmost importance. ”

“ The government should regulate private schools. Public-private partnerships are possible, perhaps paying private school fees instead of building new public schools. This could be based on student performance. Other issues include political interference and infrastructure. And finally, youth can volunteer to create awareness about the importance of education in their communities. ”



Mohammad Ashfaq



Abbas Ali

“ The government needs to improve the public school image. This will require better infrastructure and qualified teachers, which, of course, cost money. We have lost schools to disasters and militants, and funds are required to rebuild them. Private schools are also a problem and must be regulated. Right now, they just mint money. And there is no need for public-private partnerships. ”

“ Private schools have done a tremendous job, but they must be regulated by the government. This means a uniform curriculum. Educated youth should play their part, too, perhaps teaching orphans. Youth complain about the lack of jobs. Teaching the underprivileged in their own communities for a wage could help address this problem. ”



Samina Naz

Interview



Sardar

Raza Muhammad Khan Barrech

Education Advisor to the
Chief Minister of Balochistan

What governance issues do you think are constraining Pakistan's efforts to increase enrolment and retention in primary schooling? What solutions does the government propose to tackle these issues?

Balochistan covers 43 percent of Pakistan's land area but is home to just 5.2 percent of the population. There are only 12,500 schools for 22,500 settlements; 6,000 of those schools are single-room buildings with one teacher - most schools in Balochistan are community based and teachers are recruited from the local community. Presently, 1.1 million children are enrolled in schools and just a third of them are girls. Only 330 children of every 1,000 are actually enrolled in schools. And of course, we face the problem of low enrolment rates for girls. Roughly half the population is unable to receive even a basic primary education. Lastly, the system has its own problems; political pressure influences teachers' postings and transfers.

What interventions has the government planned or proposed to address governance issues in education and to accelerate progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

We cannot achieve the MDGs without improving our infrastructure. However, we are making efforts to implement Article 25-A of the Constitution in letter and spirit by bringing all children into schools. We are also going to devise a policy to bring private schools, religious seminaries and mosque schools into the mainstream education system - many religious schools have already agreed to teach modern syllabi in addition to their own.

Following other provinces, we are also going to adopt a policy whereby students will receive free books, uniforms and transportation facilities. On the teaching front, we are taking steps to ensure that teachers are in their classrooms and doing their jobs. It is practical steps like these that will increase Balochistan's literacy rate.

Are there any bottlenecks to implementing the planned interventions? What innovative solutions are being employed to address them?

We have a large land area, but limited financial resources. Twenty-five percent of our total development budget was allocated to the education sector. We are making plans to build schools across the entire province, concentrating on areas with few or no schools.

Free and compulsory education is the right of every human being. We are making serious and sincere efforts to provide education within our financial resources. The government's new education policy is to bridge the gender gap in education, increase enrolment and decrease dropout rates - we will ensure that every child receives an education.

Do you think there should be coordination between the provinces for education issues?

We are in favour of the idea and are eager to obtain such guidance from the developed education systems of other provinces. Balochi students are already benefitting from educational institutions in other provinces.

What is your opinion on devolving education further from the provinces to the districts?

The government of Balochistan has designed a plan and strategy called the 'High School Cluster System' to supervise the works and performance of middle and primary schools at the district level. We plan to use the global positioning system (GPS) and geographic information systems (GIS) to monitor teacher and student attendance. Another technological initiative planned for next year is the provision of free laptops and android devices to students.

say that again

"We cannot achieve the MDGs without improving our infrastructure. However, we are making efforts to implement Article 25-A of the Constitution in letter and spirit by bringing all children into schools."



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Youth Voices



Muhammad Luqman Khan

Improving education requires infrastructure like toilets and boundary walls. The government must involve parents and civil society to help make funds disbursement and teacher recruitment more transparent. Public-private partnerships should be explored, as well. Finally, scholarships should be available to deserving students.



The government must build more girls' schools to address the issue of families who are concerned about sending their daughters to co-educational schools. Funds disbursement is prone to foul play and the government must check this. I think youth with higher education should run tuition centres in their localities to help poor children get the education they deserve.



Zahra Humayun



Shahana Khan

School facilities and teacher quality are pressing issues. The latter can be resolved by hiring young, qualified graduates, even for primary-level teaching. Private schools need regulation to help decrease the disconnect between English and Urdu medium systems. A lot can be done within limited financial resources, but fund misappropriation must be checked.



The responsibility for better student enrolment and retention falls to the government, parents and civil society. However, the government must ensure security and basic facilities. Funds should be disbursed directly to schools rather than through a long, corrupt bureaucracy. Young, qualified teachers who do not resort to capital punishment, are needed. Finally, public and private schools should follow the same curriculum.



Muhammad Fahad Khan



Mehnaz Aziz

Founding Director

Children's Global Network

Mehnaz Aziz is a recognized civil society leader, an active voice for women's education and economic rights and the Founding Director of the Children's Global Network-Pakistan. She served on the Prime Minister's Education Task Force, on the Punjab Compulsory Education Commission, and as advisor to the World Bank on the development and education needs of Balochistan

The Annual State of Education Report, 2013 released in January 2014 offers a grim picture of school education in Pakistan, but is only the proverbial tip of the iceberg. It shows there has been little change in Pakistan's schools since 2010, when the 18th Amendment enshrined education as a fundamental human right in the Constitution. Problems of access, quality, infrastructure and inequality of opportunity, remain endemic. These problems deserve the most urgent attention, but a holistic approach is required to see the overall problem for what it is.

The spectrum of Pakistan's education problems is much wider and deeper than just schooling. It affects all sectors of the education system, ranging from primary and secondary schooling to higher education and vocational training. Higher education remains ineffective in imparting appropriate skills to the large majority of Pakistani graduates who emerge from universities. As a result, most are unable to become productive contributors either in Pakistan, or on the global stage. Vocational education is neglected and its quality remains uneven. Over 75 percent of graduates have some foundational skills, but no marketable skills for employment. Higher and vocational education are primary departure points for Pakistani youth into Pakistan's economy and society. Under-preparation at these levels severely limits national development.

Pakistan does not have the luxury of waiting to reform the education system, nor can it afford to prioritize certain sectors over others. The need of the day

is a balance between resource allocation between sectors and tailoring reform plans to each sector's needs and constraints. For example, prioritizing primary education over the large number of young people in need of vocational training may put currently achievable goals out of reach in five years.

The creation of a priori blueprint for reforming the entire education system would be a complex and demanding task that can only be led by major stakeholders, including the government, political leaders and civil society. Stakeholder buy-in is crucial, because the process will require making serious choices about the level of resources to commit to each sector, and choosing what to reform and how. Nonetheless, the following guiding principles can be considered a good starting point.

First, any reform must be systemic, focusing on a defined set of areas for each sector and addressing them simultaneously. Focus areas may include governance, fiscal resources, human resources, curriculum and infrastructure. These areas are crucially interlinked and omitting one is likely to hamper meaningful and sustainable long-term change.

Second, institutions' standards of excellence must be tailored to purpose. A system is 'excellent' if it has a variety of fit-for-purpose institutions delivering what they are designed for, within their resource constraints. Aiming for system excellence must not impose uniform performance standards on all institutions.

Third, implementation resources must be carefully nurtured and protected. Implementation eventually comes down to people who possess the motivation, skill, experience and resolve to build and maintain reform efforts - promising reforms often fail when one or two key people exit. Therefore, it is important to recognize the dangers of replacing teams before the ground gained in reform has been secured. This is particularly important because of the difficulty in replacing talent in Pakistan and the high learning costs for new participants.

Moving from principles to actual reform blueprints requires serious, system-level reform rather than piecemeal initiatives. This is particularly difficult as the current government has taken notice of highly emotive and visible problems such as the economy, energy and security. Problems falling within these themes—inflation, slow economic growth, energy riots, sectarian violence—are daily news, and the political capital gained from addressing them is

far greater than the longer-term payoff from investing in education.

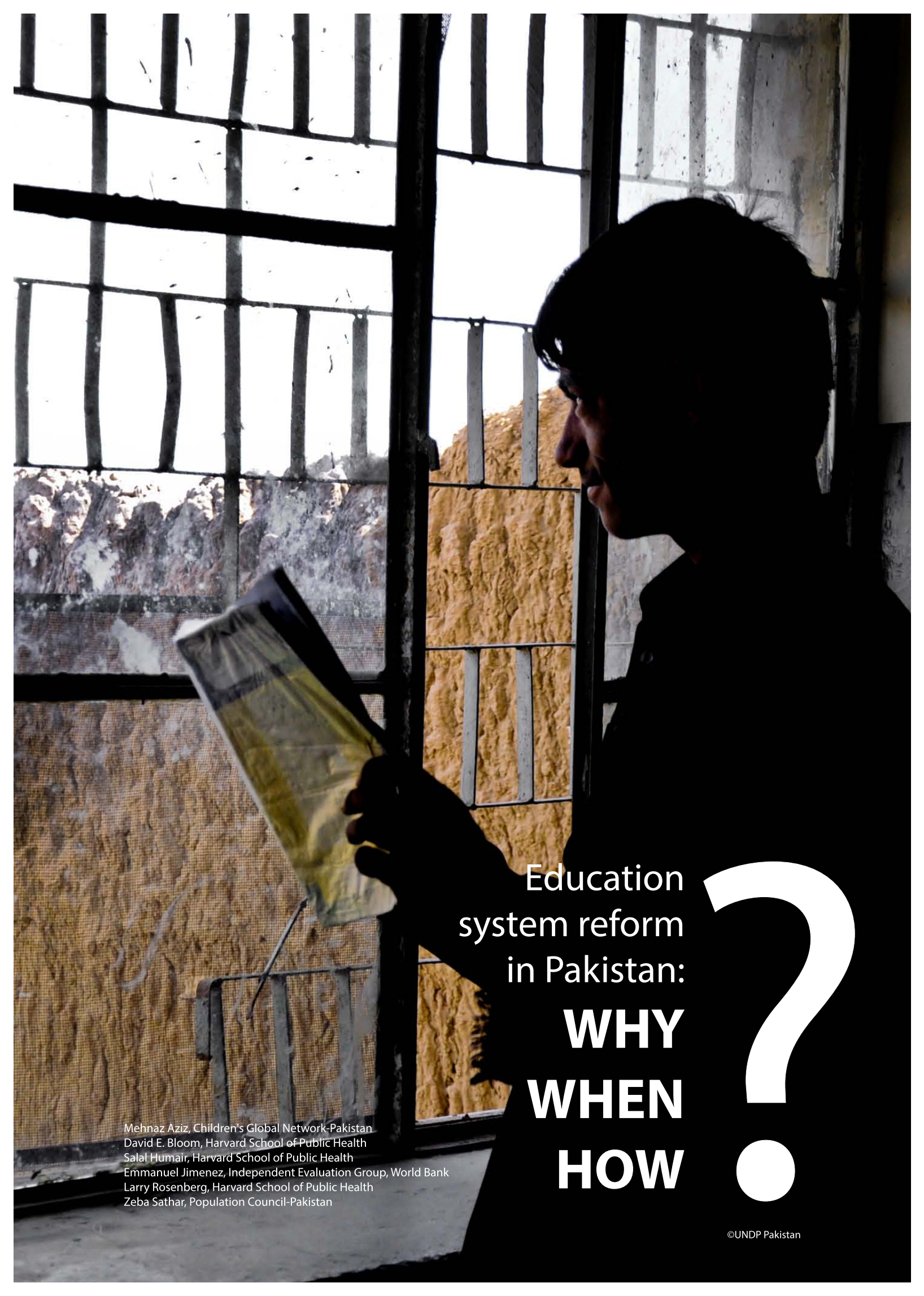
A second challenge to initiating reform will be the institutional impasse created by the 18th Amendment. It has left the government uncertain about responsibility, authority and accountability. Resolving this uncertainty is crucial because actors will be reluctant to relinquish political capital as long as it is unclear who can take credit for reform achievements. In the current inertia, it will be very challenging to mobilize communities around an agenda.

The biggest challenge of education reform in Pakistan will be implementation. The problem is not just deciding what needs to be done, but in resolving the Gordian knot of *who* will do it. Most observers will probably agree that the problem in past education reforms was implementation. Even with sincere government intent, the lack of implementation capacity will be a major challenge.

Evidence from other countries has shown that decentralization to local levels and involving communities through civil society can help push systematic reform *and* mitigate the implementation challenge—education outcomes can improve when parents participate actively in their children's education. Mechanisms to increase clients' power by increasing transparency allows civil society to organize and lobby and break the destructive nexus between public officials and public institutions, that creates dysfunction. Thus, even while changing the supply-side of the education system, increasing clients' power can contribute significantly to ensuring that reforms are sustained.

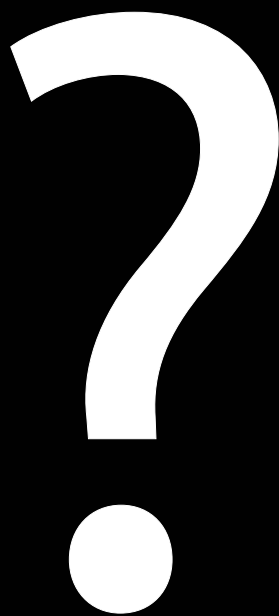
The key message for Pakistan is that it is imperative to initiate education system reform while a window of opportunity still exists to do so. But sectors are linked, and such reform must tackle *all* sectors in the system — primary/secondary schooling, higher education and vocational education—as Pakistan does not have the luxury of delaying reform in one sector until others improve. Furthermore, reform must be systemic; goals within each sector must be well-defined – piecemeal initiatives do not constitute 'reform'. Finally, the all-important Achilles' heel of reform is implementation, where Pakistan has chronically limited resources, and has often foundered. However, examples *do* exist that show success is achievable if government and civil society can gather the will to initiate and sustain reform.

¹ Mehnaz Aziz, David E. Bloom, Salal Humair, Emmanuel Jimenez, Larry Rosenberg and Zeba Sathar, "Education system reform in Pakistan: why, when, how?", in *Education and Skills 2.0: New Targets and Innovative Approaches*, David E. Bloom, Ayla Goksel, Jody Heymann, Yoko Ishikura, Brij Kothari, Patricia Milligan and Chip Paucek, eds. (Geneva, World Economic Forum, 2014). Complete publication available from <http://goo.gl/PIWc6N>.



Education
system reform
in Pakistan:

WHY
WHEN
HOW



Mehnaz Aziz, Children's Global Network-Pakistan
David E. Bloom, Harvard School of Public Health
Salal Humair, Harvard School of Public Health
Emmanuel Jimenez, Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank
Larry Rosenberg, Harvard School of Public Health
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