

Pakistan's Education Crisis:

The Real Story



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ASIA PROGRAM

by Nadia Naviwala



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Preface

Pakistan faces a multitude of challenges that go beyond terrorism, political instability, and other security-related problems that tend to attract the most attention in Washington. Pakistan suffers from public health dilemmas, energy woes, water shortages, and high levels of food insecurity, to name just a few.

It also suffers from an extensive education crisis. Millions of Pakistani children do not attend school, and those that do must deal with absent teachers and poor learning environments, among other things. What makes Pakistan's education crisis particularly troubling is that it exacerbates many of the country's other problems. The uneducated masses complicate efforts to groom qualified experts to effectively address Pakistan's many public policy challenges. Additionally, young people without sufficient education have trouble getting jobs and can become desirable recruitment targets for militant groups.

The Wilson Center's Asia Program, mindful of the serious nature of Pakistan's education crisis and the troubling implications it poses for the country, has addressed this issue numerous times over the last 11 years—culminating in products that included a book in 2005 and a major conference in 2014. Unfortunately, the same manifestations of the crisis highlighted in this earlier work remain present today, and the education crisis continues to rage. The need for more work and discussion on this critical topic continues to be strong.

One possible reason why Pakistan's education crisis doesn't ease is that it is so often misunderstood. There is a crying need for a clear and correct diagnosis of what truly ails Pakistan's education sector. To that end, the Wilson Center's Asia Program is pleased to publish "Pakistan's Education Crisis: The Real Story." This report, based on dozens of interviews with officials and experts across Pakistan, seeks to set the record straight. It reveals, for example, that contrary to popular narratives, Pakistan's education spending has increased significantly in recent years and is now nearly equivalent to the military budget. The report argues, however, that Pakistan must spend better, not simply spend more, in order to ease and ultimately solve its education crisis. The report also compares how foreign donors and local leaders have sought to transform education in Pakistan, with emphasis on the central challenge of very poor learning levels.

Nadia Naviwala, the report's author and a Wilson Center Public Policy Fellow during the summer of 2016, draws on her deep Pakistan-focused experience both in Islamabad and in Washington, and on her extensive work on development challenges in, and development assistance to, Pakistan. The result is a revelatory report that will hopefully serve as a useful resource for officials in Pakistan, and also for those in Washington involved in Pakistan policy. Above all, we hope it will spark some much-needed debate about a serious crisis that isn't going away in a country that can't be ignored.

Michael Kugelman

Senior Associate for South Asia, Woodrow Wilson Center
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AUTHOR'S NOTE

When my editor at Pakistan's *Dawn* newspaper asked me to look into education, I was immediately bored. Education is one of the most over-discussed topics in Pakistan. What could I possibly learn or say about it that would be new?

But in interviews in Lahore, Peshawar, Karachi, Islamabad, and a mountain village above Abbottabad, Pakistan, I was consistently fascinated by how much is happening that is not reflected in public and international debates. First, public education reforms are in full swing in the provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Monitors visit over 95 percent of schools each month and publish data online. Officials in both provinces claim that there are no ghost schools and no ghost teachers, while teacher absenteeism has plummeted. It has gone from 20 percent to 6 percent in Punjab since 2010, and 30 percent to 13 percent in KP since March 2015. However, the quality of learning is still abysmal, with less than half of third graders able to read a sentence in Urdu nationwide. No one knows exactly how to fix it; leaders are tackling the problem from many angles.

Most surprising is that the budget numbers tell a very different story from the popular narrative. First, Pakistan's education spending has multiplied since 2010 – it has nearly octupled in Sindh province – but enrollment has stagnated in every province except in KP, where it has increased by seven percentage points. Second, the education and military budgets are very close in size, at \$7.5 billion and \$8.2 billion respectively for fiscal year 2016. Third, Pakistan is at risk of overspending on education given its limited resources, due in great part to low tax collection rates. This year, the provinces are allocating 17 to 28 percent of their budgets to education, which exceeds UNESCO's recommendation that countries spend 15 to 20 percent of their budgets on education.

In dozens of interviews, experts and officials were unanimous: Pakistan's education crisis does not come down to *how much* the country spends, but *how* the money is spent. Pakistan needs to spend better, not simply spend more.

My biggest regret with this report is that Balochistan is not covered. Due to budgetary constraints and my own lack of familiarity and contacts, I was not able to go there for interviews. Suffice it to say, however, that Balochistan is at a nascent stage in reforms, and a core challenge is the uneven development between ethnic Pashtun and Baloch populations, due to an insurgency there. Still, there is optimism that Balochistan could get ahead of Sindh if sufficient political and bureaucratic effort is put into reforms.

Finally, civil society efforts have saved at least hundreds of thousands of lives through health and education services. For people around the world who want to help out kids in Pakistan, Pakistani-led philanthropic foundations and causes are the best investment. The Citizens Foundation – an organization that I have worked and volunteered for – is the most impressive. With over 1,200 schools in over one hundred of the most neglected locations in Pakistan, they are one of the largest philanthropically funded school networks in the world. They are worthy of support, and governments and donors can learn a lot by engaging with them sincerely.

All this said, civil society cannot make up for the failures of the public system. The scale of need is too big, and so is the scale of the problem. Pakistan faces the challenge of changing what over 600,000 teachers do in more than 140,000 schools every day. In many cases, these are teachers who are not even used to showing up to school. The public system *must* work if Pakistan is to be educated, but change will not be quick, easy, or painless.

In the mean time, a discussion on education in Pakistan is anemic without discussing private schooling. Almost 40 percent of Pakistani students are enrolled in low-cost private schools. These schools charge between \$3 and \$25 per month. Their per child cost is half of what the government spends, but they produce students who are two grades ahead of those in government schools. The mushrooming of private schools suggests that the public is not apathetic – demand for quality education is high.

I am grateful for the time and candor that people offered to me in interviews, particularly Ahmed Ali at the Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS), Haroon Sethi of McKinsey (Punjab), Ali Inam of LUMS Technology for the People (TPI), Umbreen Arif of the World Bank, Dr. Scherezad Latif of the World Bank, Barbara Payne of DFID, Najiullah Khattak of Adam Smith International (KP), Dr. Jishnu Das of the World Bank and Learning and Educational Achievement in Punjab Schools (LEAPS), Naheed Shah Durrani of the Sindh Education Foundation, Nadeem Hussain of the Sindh Reform Support Unit, Haris Gazdar of the Collective for Social Science Research, Dr. Faisal Bari of the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS), Skip Waskin, formerly of USAID, Muhammad Anwar of the Centre for Governance and Public Accountability (CGPA), Salman Naveed of Alif Ailaan, Neelam Hussain of Simorgh, Firuza Pastakia, Abbottabad District Education Officer Zia-ud-Din, Khalid Khattak of The News, Mosharraf Zaidi of Alif Ailaan, Shehzad Roy, and countless others who asked not to be named.

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[Nadia Naviwala](#)

Wilson Center Public Policy Fellow
July 2016



Image Source: The Citizens Foundation

INTRODUCTION: ELITES MATTER

Elites in Pakistan have created – either deliberately or through negligence – the public education system that the country has today.

Countries that have achieved universal public schooling have done so as part of larger elite projects to create national identity, sometimes in new nation-states or countries emerging from war.

According to Haris Gazdar, Senior Researcher at the Collective for Social Science Research:

“You can almost always trace it back to some political project of a political entity or an elite. It could be the state, a bureaucracy, a church, or a political group that has a project of a creating a particular type of society and socializing people into using common symbols, common languages, and acquiring common values.”¹

A study by Gazdar tries to relate Pakistan’s experience with that of Sweden, Turkey, and Israel.² They all achieved public schooling as part of a larger project to construct national identity.

Sweden achieved universal *literacy* because the church held parents responsible for making sure all children could read the Bible in Swedish. They achieved universal public *education* when the Parliament passed a law requiring parishes (churches at the community level) to set up schools.

In Turkey, elites set out to create a national “Turkish” identity, out of the ruins of the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious Ottoman Empire. Establishing a modern Turkish language was seen as key to this reform. Atatürk embarked on one of the most ambitious language reforms in history, converting Turkish from an Arabic to a Latin alphabet. For Turkey and many other countries, public schooling became a way for new nation-states to move on from colonialism.

Pakistan had a similar post-independence impulse but its leaders failed to construct an inclusive political vision. An education conference in 1947 broke down in a debate over which language to teach in schools. Some advocated for Urdu and Arabic while Sindhis and Bengalis preferred their mother tongue. The decision was postponed and has not been taken up again at the national level.³

The country eventually came upon a more exclusive vision for education that stressed religious ideology.⁴ The earliest education policy, formulated in 1959 by the “Sharif Commission” under Ayub Khan’s military government, stressed the need to create a homogenous national identity based on Islam.⁵ This document has had a sustained influence on Pakistan’s education system – a Magna Carta for Pakistan’s education policy. Successive governments became more ideological.

Increased Islamicization of the system in the 1980s coincided with the growth of private schooling and a preference for international high school qualifications through the Cambridge system over the national metric system.

According to Gazdar:

“The military and political elites have imposed an unviable model of the nation state. With every new cultural experiment, there is a wave of withdrawal from the system. The only agreement we have now is that everyone can do what they want. The Taliban is closing girls schools but they are also okay with people fleeing. Almost everyone is willing to let you go.”

When one group tries to impose their vision over another, we get violence: “Then, we didn’t blow up schools and shoot people over what they thought about education. Now, we do,” he finishes.

Faisal Bari, an education economist who teaches at LUMS and is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives, makes a similar argument, referencing the Meiji and Industrial Revolutions:

“It is always a self-interested project by elites. That’s true everywhere. Japan wanted to modernize, the US wanted to create something called a ‘citizen’ from a nation of immigrants, and European countries went into a race with each other on industrialization. Europe realized their workforces needed to be much better in order to keep up with each other and the rest of the world.”

But elites in Pakistan don’t really have an interest in public education. Unlike with the U.S., Europe, and Japan, where vested political interests expressed full, personal buy-in for their country’s development and progress, and were fully invested in their country’s future, Pakistani elites have the option to migrate out.

“Elites have too many escape routes. Many have dual citizenship, they move in and out of the country, and emigration to the West is always open. Other countries had a common future. But our society is too fractured. People are living in very sheltered, sequestered areas and don’t interact with each other. They don’t even feel like their children depend on each other for a common future. Instead, we’ve felt that our safety is tied to being a nuclear country with a strong army.”⁶

The solutions that Pakistan has experimented with in recent decades have been based on channeling public demand for education. These experiments have been: informal and nonformal education, public-private partnerships, school adoption, strengthening parent and community involvement through parent-teacher and school-management committees, and now low-cost private schooling.

But nowhere in the world has aggregating individual demand for education or mass movements led to universal schooling.⁷ The idea of “community participation” is also problematic because communities in Pakistan do not automatically have collective identities or interests.⁸

A number of assumptions are embedded in the demand-driven approach. First, it assumes that people vote based on issues, such as the performance of public institutions. Rather, Pakistani voters vote based on their patronage networks, such as for politicians who are likely to direct resources, especially jobs, to their constituencies. Second, if voters do vote based on issues, it is likely to be those that take priority over education, such as roads or electricity. This tendency is captured in the popular electioneering slogan from the 1970s: *roti, kapran, makan* (bread, clothing, house). The voter-politician relationship is not about performance, but jobs and resources. Finally, it airbrushes the reality that parents face when they put their kids in school: illiteracy after years in school and possible physical or sexual abuse.

The problem in Pakistan is not a lack of demand for quality education. The problem is a lack of supply. Citizens can make marginal differences in an education system where politicians hold bureaucrats responsible for delivering services, such as in Punjab and KP. But it is unrealistic to expect citizen demand to make up for a lack of elite interest in a political system that has ignored public needs for decades.



Thousands of schools in KP province like this one have been waiting for reconstruction since the 2005 earthquake, despite billions in international assistance.



Project to reconstruct a school destroyed by the 2005 earthquake that has been abandoned.

PART I: MYTH: MORE BUDGET IS THE SOLUTION TO PAKISTAN'S EDUCATION CRISIS

The discussion on education in Pakistan has focused on how much the country spends, with “double the budget” serving as the main talking point. In 2015, First Lady Michelle Obama secured a renewed commitment that Pakistan would double the country’s education spending by 2018. At the same time, she dedicated a new \$70 million to girls’ education.⁹

Many experts believe that the source of the country’s education challenge is underspending.¹⁰ Many Americans believe that their aid helps Pakistan finance its way out of this challenge.

But Pakistan actually spends a lot on education: 17 to 28 percent of provincial budgets this year.¹¹ Pakistan’s military budget is not much larger than its education budget. U.S. aid for education in Pakistan, under a large program that made Pakistan the second-largest beneficiary of U.S. assistance in the world, averaged in value a meager 2 percent of Pakistan’s education budget per year between 2010 and 2014.¹²

How Much Does Pakistan Spend?

Pakistan has budgeted a total of \$7.5 billion (790 billion Pakistani rupees) on education for fiscal year 2016.¹³ The figure is more than double the size of its \$3.5 billion (304 billion rupees) total education budget in fiscal year 2010.¹⁴ This is the combined value of the four provincial budgets (representing Pakistan’s four provinces) plus a small amount that is allocated at the federal level. The federal budget is for higher education (universities) and schools in the capital city of Islamabad.¹⁵

Education Budgets for Fiscal Year 2016 (in billions of dollars)¹⁶

	Current	Development	Total
Federal	.804	.237	1.04
Balochistan	.4075	.064	.471
KPK	1.158	.207	1.365
Punjab	2.387	.602	2.99
Sindh	1.51	.171	1.68
Total	6.27	1.28	7.5

Most provinces have more than doubled their budgets since 2010 – the year that authority over education and several other social sectors “devolved” from the federal government to the provinces. Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan, which border Afghanistan, have nearly tripled their budgets. Poorly governed Sindh has nearly octupled its rupee budget – from \$230 million to \$1.7 billion.¹⁷ Punjab, which has always had the largest allocation, has doubled its budget.¹⁸

Pakistan sets aside almost as much for education as it does for the military. The military budget for

fiscal year 2016 is \$8.2 billion (860 billion rupees), which is close to the \$7.5 billion (790 billion rupees) budgeted for education.¹⁹ The military budget represents 2.9 percent of Pakistan's GDP. The education budgets total 2.7 percent of GDP.

Military vs. Education Budgets in 2015 and 2016²⁰

	Military Budget	Education Budget	Military Budget as % of GDP	Education Budget as % of GDP ²¹
Fiscal Year 2016	860 billion rupees	790 billion rupees	2.9	2.7 ²²
Fiscal Year 2015	780 billion rupees	700 billion rupees ²³	2.8	2.5 ²⁴

*The military budget does not include military pensions, which have been allocated \$1.7 billion (178 billion rupees), or the cost of the nuclear program. It also does not include the cost of military operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which is offset by foreign aid receipts.²⁵

There are more government teachers in Pakistan than active duty personnel in the Pakistani military, at 730,131²⁶ and 643,800²⁷ respectively. The total number of teachers in Pakistan (including private schools) also exceeds the total strength of the Pakistani military (including reservists and paramilitary), at 1,461,744²⁸ and 1,460,800²⁹ respectively.

This is only teachers, and does not include non-teaching staff such as education department employees at the provincial, district, and sub-district levels, or other school staff like *chowkidhars* (gatekeepers) that schools are required to have.³⁰ According to one estimate, there is one non-teaching education sector employee for every four teachers.³¹

Fifty-five percent of government employees in KP belong to the education department.³² Fifty-two percent of Balochistan's government salaries go to education.³³

Provinces do not necessarily spend the amounts they budget. KP and Balochistan have spent almost 100 percent of the budgets since 2010. Punjab spends around 90 percent and Sindh is around 80 percent.

Percent of Total Education Budget Utilized by Provinces

	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014
Balochistan	97%	103%	111%	97%	95%
KP	97%	97%	98%	84%	96%
Punjab	89%	88%	87%	91%	82%
Sindh	62%	92%	88%	77%	79%

Only KP utilizes its full "development" budget, which is used for constructing or rehabilitating schools. The other provinces leave around half of it unused every year. Provincial governments make up for it by overspending on salaries.

Salary Expenditure as a Percent of Education Salary Budget

	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014
Balochistan	106%	108%	120%	124%	107%
KP	100%	100%	105%	102%	97%
Punjab	93%	91%	96%	92%	87%
Sindh	76%	131%	103%	92%	91%

A very tiny proportion of what Pakistan spends comes from foreign donors. DFID's largest program in the world today is in Pakistan. Their budget for education in Pakistan is \$150 million for fiscal year 2016, which is equivalent to 2% of Pakistan's education budget.³⁴ USAID spending on basic education in Pakistan in 2015 was \$65 million,³⁵ which is less than one percent of the budget.

World Bank programming is larger, but these are mostly loans that Pakistan will pay back. The World Bank estimates that 17 percent of Punjab's provincial budget over the past three years has come from the World Bank and other countries, namely Great Britain's DFID (not USAID).³⁶ Unlike many bilateral donors, World Bank personnel routinely reference how small their funds are next to Pakistan's budget.

Domestic resources for education also dwarf foreign aid in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2012, international aid per primary school child was \$12 compared to \$136 from domestic resources in that region.³⁷

International Standards for Education Spending: Percent of GDP vs. Percent of Budget

Pakistan spends a lot on education, relative to the resources it has. But when Pakistan's education budget is expressed as a percentage of its GDP, it does poorly. Pakistan has budgeted the equivalent of 2.7 percent of its GDP on education for fiscal year 2016.³⁸ The international minimum is 4 percent. Many countries are increasing spending to 6 percent. Pakistan is behind other South Asian and sub-Saharan countries when spending is expressed in these terms.

But this figure relates only to government expenditure and the 60 percent of students who go to government schools. Parents in Pakistan spend another \$8 billion on private education, which is more than state spending.³⁹ If one includes private spending, national expenditure on education doubles to at least \$15 billion, crossing the 4 percent of GDP mark.

Pakistan and Nigeria, which have the highest number out of school children in the world, are outliers among countries because so many students opt for low-cost private schools. Private expenditure is not included in international comparisons because it is difficult to track.⁴⁰

The GDP measure does not seem to be a good fit for Pakistan. It tells us more about how little the country collects in taxes, and therefore how little elasticity there is in the budget. According to the World Bank:

"A higher percentage of GDP spent on education shows a higher government priority for education, but also a higher capacity of the government to raise revenues for public spending, in relation to the size of the country's economy."⁴¹

Pakistan raises only 9 percent of its GDP in taxes. Dedicating 4 percent of that to education is a tall order, given other needs such as health, security, and roads. All of these things also help schools function properly and ensure that schoolchildren have a future.

Pakistan's economy is also growing faster than its tax collection rates. GDP is expected to grow by 5.5 percent per year over the next few years, so Pakistan will have to spend more each year in order to maintain parity at 4 percent.

But if the economy contracts, Pakistan will not be able to roll back spending since the majority of the budget goes into salaries for government employees. Introducing such a large new permanent liability, in the absence of new tax revenues, could be fiscal disaster for Pakistan and the state of social services.

According to the IMF, for countries to finance the Millenium Development Goals, they must raise 20 percent of their national income through taxes. Pakistan and Nigeria collect less than 10 percent of their national income through taxes. Wealthier nations only took on the responsibility for public education in the 20th century when their tax collection rates started improving.⁴²

Another way to look at education spending is as a percentage of the country's budget. UNESCO recommends that countries spend 15 to 20 percent of their budgets on education.⁴³ Through this lens, Pakistan appears to be over-spending. Pakistani provinces spend 17 to 28 percent of their budgets on education.⁴⁴ The global average in 2012 was 13.7 percent.⁴⁵

A 2002 World Bank report on education financing stresses that education expenditure must be adequate, sustainable, and efficient. It concludes:

“There is no theoretically optimum level of expenditure a country should devote to education. Under conditions of low system efficiency or high inequities or poor system organization, increasing spending may well prove to be the wrong medicine for the country's educational ailments.”⁴⁶

If Pakistan had met the 4 percent of GDP target in 2015, then provinces would have to spend the equivalent of 30 to 40 percent of their budgets on education.⁴⁷ The \$7.5 billion that Pakistan spends today would go up to \$11 billion. Anyone making that recommendation should be worried about where the sudden influx of cash will go.

Where Does the Money Go?

Those who want to fix Pakistan's education crisis must understand *how* the budget is spent, rather than *how much* is spent.

Pakistan's education challenge is not underspending. It is misspending. Without reforms, new money is likely to end up feeding cronyism and corruption, rather than making a difference that children can feel. Reducing the public discussion to budget numbers – and worse, expressed in a way that most people don't understand, as relative to GDP – distracts from a more relevant, qualitative discussion about where the budget for education goes.

A former education secretary for Sindh sums up the situation:

“The existing budget has huge leakages. The school construction and the repair and maintenance contracts, like other construction works contracts, are commission-based. Fixed commissions [kickbacks] to the engineer and government departments for construction work are as high as 40 percent. Contracts for construction schemes are largely influenced by political representatives.

The return you get on the huge salary budget is also very limited. Many of Sindh's 144,000 teachers remain absent a few days in a week or don't come to school for months. There are instances where they pay someone else to work in their place and they work elsewhere. The situation may have slightly improved after the introduction of the biometric [verification] system for teachers' attendances; however, the situation of the public education system remains weak on multiple fronts.

The budget will be impossible to rationalize without full political support from the top of the party.”⁴⁸

Absent Teachers

Seventy to eighty percent of budgets go into employee salaries, mostly for teachers.⁴⁹ But historically teachers have not had to show up to school or perform in order to receive their salaries. Teacher absenteeism rates have been very high: 20 percent in Punjab⁵⁰ and 30 percent in KP.^{51,52}

Pakistan has had a ghost school problem because of its large population of ghost and absent teachers.⁵³

Salary Expenditure as Percentage of Total Education Expenditure: 2010 vs. 2014⁵⁴

	FY 2010	FY 2014
Balochistan	83%	71%
Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa	77%	68%
Punjab	82%	82%
Sindh	48%	83%

Education officials have not been able to compel teachers to show up. A report by the Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE)⁵⁵ explains:

“Historically, politicians have used teacher recruitment as a form of political patronage.... Many teachers with a persistent record of absenteeism often have a politician as a patron. The latter block any serious disciplinary proceedings against them.”

The report explains the link between teachers and politicians. First, because teachers are educated, politicians tend to use them as political organizers in rural and semi-urban areas. Second, teachers are posted as polling staff on election days. Finally, teachers unions are associated with political parties – although they are so powerful that they don’t need the parties to exercise political clout.

Salman Naveed, a specialist at Alif Ailaan⁵⁶ points out with respect to Sindh:

“The biggest hinderances to reform are the political parties themselves. Teachers in Sindh are not really teachers, they are political workers. As a member of the provincial assembly, it’s important to me that my workers get paid. The moment they get fired, I worry about my political future. I’m more concerned about maintaining my patronage network rather than service delivery.”

Government teachers are also paid very well: five times what private schools teachers are paid.⁵⁷ From this salary, ghost teachers can pay off administrators to maintain their attendance record or to a relative to show up in their place. The teacher then lives in a larger, more comfortable city like Karachi, or even as far as Dubai or London, and has another full-time job.

Private schools by contrast pay teachers \$25 to \$50 per month⁵⁸, and that is about how much it costs a government teacher to hire a substitute. But in a private school, because of the direct accountability relationship between the school and the parents who are paying fees, the teacher is always present and makes an effort, resulting in higher learning outcomes.⁵⁹

There are also good reasons why the absenteeism rate is high among government teachers, besides weak accountability. Teachers who live farther from school are absent more, especially female teachers who do not have independent transport. The government also often assigns teachers to non-teaching duties:⁶⁰ helping with anti-polio and anti-dengue drives, elections, and administering government exams and surveys. A research report by Alif Ailaan and SAHE estimates that government teachers spend a quarter of the academic year on non-teaching activities.⁶¹ Another very common reason given for absenteeism is teacher training.⁶²

Many teachers also offer private tutoring after school. It has become a norm for students in Pakistan to go to after-school tutors. Teachers have an economic incentive to compel students to sign up for tuition in order to learn material, or teachers may simply have less energy for teaching in school if they are primarily concerned with their tuition classes.⁶³

LEAPS reports that parents described government school teachers as not “motivated,” do not “care about children,” or are “almost never there.”⁶⁴

The danger of doubling Pakistan’s budget without reforms is that the increase can go straight into the salary budget and be pocketed by non-performing teachers.

Sindh’s budget today is eight times higher than it was in 2010. The salary budget is more than twelve times higher.⁶⁵ But the surge in salaries does not mean that new teachers are showing up or performing.

There was zero improvement in the learning outcomes of 5th and 6th graders, measured by Sindh’s Standardized Assessment Test (SAT), between 2012 and 2014 despite a 27 percent increase in the salary budget.⁶⁶

Punjab’s salary budget has gone up by 74 percent since 2010 but there has only been a 7 percent increase in test scores.⁶⁷

The first step for reforms is making sure teachers are in school. Punjab and KP have achieved this. They have largely removed ghost teachers from the payrolls and reduced absenteeism to 6 percent⁶⁸ and 13 percent respectively.⁶⁹ According to Khalid Khattak, an investigator reporter on education for The News who runs DataStories.pk:

“Punjab doesn’t have a ghost teacher problem like it used to. It’s because of the monitoring system that the government has put in place. They are also taking disciplinary action against teachers who do not show up. Punjab has fired many teachers. We keep hearing complaints from teachers’ associations.”⁷⁰

According to data he obtained through the Right to Information law, in 2015 alone Punjab took disciplinary action against 22,972 teachers and removed 1,615 from service.⁷¹

But without reform-minded and determined party leaders, “more budget” risks exacerbating the tendency of education departments in Pakistan to act like employment agencies.

Non-Salary Budget

The salary budget eats into the budget for operating and maintaining schools. The underfunding and underutilization of this budget explains why schools in Pakistan are often in poor, even dangerous, conditions. Children are expected to clean the school. The non-salary budget (NSB) funds the maintenance of school facilities, basic equipment and furniture like desks, minor building repairs and improvements, textbooks and teacher supplies, electricity bills, and fuel costs for district education officials conducting oversight visits.

According to a World Bank publication, *Achieving Universal Primary Education by 2015: A Chance for Every Child*:

“Relatively abundant research indicates that books and other learning materials are highly cost-effective complementary inputs in the learning process. Although less extensively researched, teacher development and supervision, system management, student learning assessment, school maintenance, and other items clearly are also important elements in quality education systems. Yet most countries find that the pressure of teacher salaries means the budget for these other items is constantly squeezed.”⁷²

Around 10 percent or less of budgets now go into the NSB, next to a global standard of 15 to 25 percent.⁷³ More interesting, provinces are now putting schools – through parent-teacher councils – in charge of

spending these funds. In Punjab, the schools are then held accountable for maintaining cleanliness and supplying and repairing furniture.⁷⁴

Non-Salary Expenditure as Percent of Total Education Expenditure: 2010 vs. 2014

	FY 2010	FY 2014
Balochistan	13%	9%
Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa	3%	7%
Punjab	10%	10%
Sindh	42%	11%

Development Budget

The “development” budget is the most interesting budget category for foreign donors because it is intended for building and rehabilitating new schools – an activity that aid and philanthropy like to finance. Despite the need for new schools, provinces often spend only half of their budgets allocated for that purpose. But they accept millions in foreign aid for the same purpose. The expenditure rate varies widely each year.

Development Budget Utilization Rate

	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015
Balochistan	43%	78%	82%	52%	64%	107%
KP	88%	93%	72%	50%	97%	78%
Punjab	58%	85%	23%	89%	46%	45%
Sindh	36%	6%	41%	33%	58%	90%

The broken budget process makes it so that funds in this category do not meet needs and, instead, provide plenty of opportunities for misallocation by politicians who want to reward supporters and allies.

The development budget is not allocated based on planning. For example, in the United States, the Department of Education prepares a budget request based on specific, planned needs. In Pakistan, finance ministries tend to allocate the budget in bulk each year, such as for fifty schools without a specific justification. Over the course of the year, the Chief Minister trades these funds for political cooperation from treasury-related MPAs and to get support from independent MPAs.⁷⁵

School-building contracts, like all infrastructure work, generate profits for both contractor and the MPA involved, besides creating teaching jobs that the MPA can fill. Najiullah Khan, adviser on media and communications to KP’s Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED), whose contract is paid for by DFID, explains: “For the past 60 years, schools have not been built based on need but to provide jobs. It’s purely on a political basis.”

But others stress the problems that occur in the contracting process. According to the SAHE report:

“In Balochistan funds provided to Members of the provincial assembly [MPA] are mostly used in the construction of education institutions whose feasibility has not been evaluated. Mostly the incentive is to give the contract to a favorite.”⁷⁶

Muhammad Anwar, who once worked in USAID’s KP/FATA office in Islamabad and now heads the Centre for Governance and Public Accountability, further explains:

“Legislators influence the tendering process and contractors know whose projects they are bidding on. Provincial assembly members can say contractors are corrupt to get them out of the bid or threaten to audit if they don’t cooperate later. There are lots of opportunities for corruption and embezzlement.”

As a result, there are more schools in areas represented by senior politicians while other populations are neglected. There are five universities being built in Nowshera right now, the district of KP’s Chief Minister.⁷⁷ Meanwhile, in Tor Ghar, which was a tribal area until 2011 and is the smallest district in Pakistan, there is not a single girls’ high school because no powerful MPA is from there.⁷⁸ Similarly, in Sindh, some villages have several schools while others have none.⁷⁹

But the budget is ultimately underspent because the provinces get the money too late in the year. According to Naveed: “Underutilization is not just because they don’t know how to spend it, but also because the provinces never get the money. The federal government always overpromises and underfunds.”⁸⁰

The Budget Process: A Political Problem

A big part of the problem is a broken budget process.

The entire budget debate in Pakistan takes 14 days, perhaps the shortest in the world. Members of parliament do not have staff, are handed large budget books, and pick out things at random to participate in the debate.⁸¹ By contrast, the budget debate in the United States goes on year-round and has resulted in Congress shutting down the government eighteen times. Pakistani parliament members are also more concerned with spending the budget – which is the education ministry’s job – rather than policy or oversight.⁸²

Of course many donors, with experience from their own democracies, have tried to fix the budgeting process through “capacity-building” trainings and manuals. But this is not a problem of skills or knowledge. There are political interests involved that affect electability. Politicians believe that they will lose their jobs if they cannot dole out jobs and contracts, not if schools don’t function.⁸³

It takes the head of the party – today, that includes Shahbaz Sharif, Imran Khan, and Asif Zardari or Bilawal Bhutto – to decide that there will be a zero tolerance for political interference in education. According to Naveed:

“It’s more political than anything else. If you want to spend money on something and have to do it in 6 months, you’ll find a way to do it, if there’s political will. If you don’t want to do it, then we call it a capacity problem.”⁸⁴

PART II: THE ART OF REFORM

The good and most interesting news is that reforms are underway. The first step in the reform process has been striking ghost teachers from the payrolls and making sure teachers are in school. The other major effort has been making sure that school buildings are functional and safe for children, and may have other features like computer labs and playgrounds.

But fixing infrastructure and getting teachers to show up are the low-hanging fruit of Pakistan's education crisis.⁸⁵ With reforms ongoing in Punjab since 2003, the province has learned that they cannot assume that children will learn once teachers, students, and schools buildings are in place.

Salar Khattak, a member of a teachers' union in KP, points out that teachers do not have the motivation, capabilities, or tools to teach:

*"You can use a stick and threaten a teacher to show up. He'll go on time and show up. But how do you get the teacher to deliver to the student? In Pakistan, when you can't become anything, you become a teacher. And if you can't become a teacher, you become a *maulana* (priest)."*⁸⁶

Today, less than half of third graders in Pakistan can read a simple sentence in Urdu, and the numbers might be even lower if they were asked to write a sentence.

Many donors and experts working on reforms today have come to believe that the poor quality of learning is linked to low enrollments and dropouts. Improving quality of learning is now a key indicator of the success of reforms, next to enrollments. It is also the toughest challenge to solve, despite comprehensive and even some creative efforts in the provinces.

All four provinces are implementing or wanting to implement a similar model of reforms, building on Punjab's example, detailed below. The reforms are managed by some version of a "service delivery unit," an office staffed by experts, monitors, and data analysts that sits between a chief executive and his/her education bureaucracy and monitors the achievement of reform targets.⁸⁷ As the province makes progress, the World Bank and/or DFID, depending on the province, disburse budget support against line items that are, theoretically, exhausted by the reform agenda. But the results of this process vary, not just due to variation in political will, but also differences in provincial leadership and management styles.

Punjab

Punjab was an early mover in education reforms. The province's "Schools Reform Roadmap" attracted international attention thanks to the involvement of Sir Michael Barber, a British educationist at McKinsey who later became DFID's Education Envoy for Pakistan. He published "The Good News From Pakistan: How a Revolutionary New Approach to Education Reform in Punjab Shows the Way Forward for Pakistan and Development Aid Everywhere" in 2013.⁸⁸

However, Punjab's education reforms actually started in 2003 under former President General Pervez Musharraf, with support from the World Bank. The high frequency of ghost schools and ghost teachers was uncovered around that time. Musharraf once said that "there are between 30 and 40,000 ghost schools, amounting to 20 percent of all schools."⁸⁹

In 2010, power over education devolved from the federal government to the provinces. At the same time, DFID entered Punjab, for its own reasons. In London, DFID re-organized its global programming to focus on countries (1) that were the most poor and (2) where DFID had the best opportunity for impact. This basis for engagement was a departure from the way most aid agencies, and especially USAID, operate, which is to achieve diplomatic or security goals, although DFID has since shifted back to directing aid to conflict contexts.

By 2011, when Shabaz Sharif announced the Roadmap and DFID initiated their program, the teacher absenteeism rate was 20 percent. Within one year, the teacher absenteeism rate was reduced to 9 percent.⁹⁰ Today it is approaching 6 percent.⁹¹

The education program in Punjab became DFID's largest program in the world. Pakistan is also now the largest recipient of DFID funding in the world. Ethiopia is in the number two spot. (For most bilateral donors including USAID, until recently, Afghanistan was the largest program and Pakistan the second-largest.) Today, the United Kingdom has displaced the United States as Pakistan's largest bilateral donor.

Deliverology

Thanks to Barber, the reform program started by the World Bank got high level and personal backing from Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif in 2010. Barber, author of the recent book *How to Run a Government so that Citizens Benefit and Taxpayers don't Go Crazy* is the architect of the "service delivery unit," which he piloted in the UK under former Prime Minister Tony Blair. It has been replicated in dozens of countries.

Service delivery units are designed to sit between a chief executive (typically Prime Minister or President) and his/her ministers and secretaries. They are responsible for making sure that the bureaucracies achieve the chief's highest priorities. Their function and reason for existing is similar to the National Security Council in the United States, except that service delivery units have concrete, tangible goals, mimic standards of private sector efficiency, and avoid the type of abstract jargon that has bogged down the achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals.

Sharif was a good personality fit for Barber's theory of "deliverology," the philosophy that drives service delivery units. According to this philosophy, government bureaucracies can be made to perform if given narrow and specific goals, intensive monitoring, and rewards and consequences based on performance.

Under the reform program in Punjab today, 94 to 96 percent of schools are visited by monitors each month who record data on an iPad about whether the teacher is present, how many students are in class, the condition of the school, and whether a local administrator has visited the school that month. The data is available publicly online. According to the World Bank and DFID staff, Punjab's education system is one of the most over-monitored in the world. In theory, the reforms are driven by data.

Although the Punjab government did not actually develop the reform program and goals, Sharif "owns" it. The World Bank and DFID work in tandem to support it through long-term programming. The World Bank's second four-year program will expire in December 2016, and they will soon introduce a third. DFID is in the second year of a six-year program that will end in 2019.

DFID and the World Bank release sector budget support to the Punjab government as it achieves reform targets. This means that they put money directly into Punjab's education budget against line items that are being exhausted by the reforms. The money is fungible, with one analyst joking that it could be going into the "Orange Line Metro," one of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's signature mass transportation projects.

Unlike USAID, DFID does not “follow their dollar,” in other words, track how the Punjab government actually spends its money.⁹² DFID accepts the risk that it could be diverted.

DFID also finances expert teams – from McKinsey and Adam Smith International – to staff and troubleshoot the reforms. World Bank funds are loans that the government can also use to staff its monitoring unit. While the value of these donor funds is relatively small next to the government’s own spending – a fact that World Bank staff routinely stress even though their loans are several times the size of DFID and USAID grants – it does provide the extra cash that the government needs to finance reforms since its own budget is tied up in salaries.

But while Punjab’s reforms appear to be successful, they face tough internal criticism. According to a recently released World Bank assessment:

“Despite over a decade of focused support to large scale education programs and what some have termed ‘cutting edge’ reforms, education outcomes, including enrollment rates and learning outcomes, in ... Punjab are only marginally better than those in the rest of the country. Gains made over the last decade have stagnated, despite increased sector financing by the [government of] Punjab and support to the sector by the World Bank and other Development Partners (DPs).”⁹³

The World Bank and DFID spar over whether the reform program has had any result *at all* since 2010 when DFID entered the province. The key performance metric has been increase in enrollments. DFID claims that there has been a nearly six percent increase since 2011 based on data collected by its contractor, Nielsen.⁹⁴ The World Bank points to the Pakistan government’s official statistics, which show a one percent increase since 2007-08.⁹⁵ Instead, the World Bank argues, also based on official statistics, that a major spike in enrollment occurred between 2003 and 2007-08, before DFID entered the province.⁹⁶

Regime of Fear

The most serious critique of the program is that the pressure for results from Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif is so intense that it is backfiring. Officials from various agencies and offices working on Punjab education reforms were consistent in their criticism. One senior official who asked to not be named described it as a “regime of fear.” According to another: “Sharif has a ‘heads will roll’ approach. The idea is if you put people under enough pressure, they will deliver. A district education official under that much pressure is bound to invent some numbers.”

An adviser who has worked on the reforms for several years commented:

“Shahbaz Sharif is operating almost solely on a deliverology model, which is ‘I will humiliate, yell, beat, ridicule, or fire you if you don’t perform. The system reacts like headless chickens, doing whatever it takes to placate him. But Sharif doesn’t understand the nuances, and no one can stand up to him.”⁹⁷

The problem with excessive pressure on an enormous education bureaucracy that is not built to cope with it is that it translates into a perverse pressure to fudge numbers. These fudged numbers show up most clearly in the government’s monthly monitoring of student learning outcomes.

The monitors who visit schools every month recently started administering an iPad-based, four question test to third-graders on Urdu, English, and math ability. Punjab’s 36 districts are color-coded based on their average score. Officials in charge of the highest- and lowest-performing districts must answer directly to Shahbaz Sharif at “stocktakes” that take place every two to three months. The color-coded maps and stocktake meetings come directly from Barber’s books, which are manuals in how to implement deliverology.

Between October 2015 and November 2015, there was an average 4 percent improvement in students' average scores across subjects. The data also shows that two of the three lowest performing districts in Punjab in April and May 2015 – Rajanpur and Rawalpindi – became the highest performers in math within four months. The third, Sialkot, has remained at the bottom.⁹⁸

According to Faisal Bari, an economist and head of Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS), "It's ridiculous the pressure that's put on district officials to show progress every month. Things don't change every month."

But in Punjab, clearly, they can.

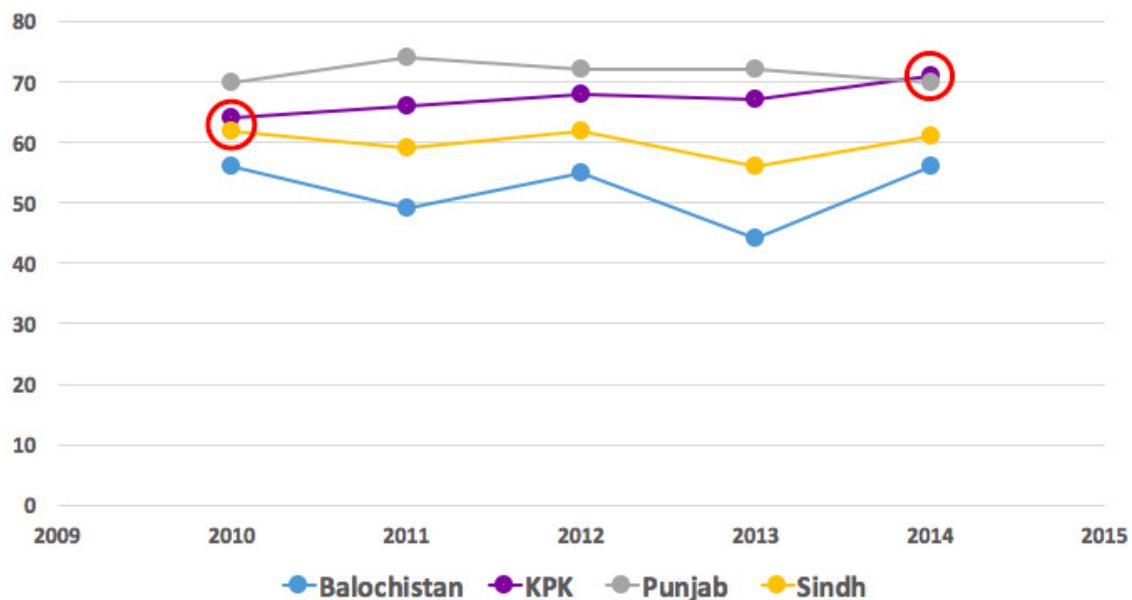
According to Ali Inam, a consultant on Punjab's reforms:

"While Punjab is ahead of Sindh and KP in terms of education reforms, there are still concerns on validity of data used for policy analysis. There is a high incentive to fake progress due to quarterly review led directly by the Chief Minister. KP's numbers are more realistic, so in a few years they may get ahead because they actually figured out how to solve problems."⁹⁹

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Officials and consultants working on the Punjab program are more confident in KP's approach to reforms, to the point of predicting that KP could get ahead of Punjab in a few years time. According to primary net enrollment rates, it already is. Since 2010, all provinces have stagnated in enrollment *except* KP, which has grown by seven percentage points, moving from a position near Sindh to surpassing Punjab.¹⁰⁰

Net Primary Enrollment (Ages 6-10) from FY 2010-14



KP's reform program is much younger than Punjab's – it started in earnest with the PTI government in 2013. According to a DFID official, the program existed but had atrophied by 2013. DFID was on the verge of scrapping it. Today, KP's program is primarily supported by DFID. The KP government has so far refused to accept World Bank loans.

Change in Primary Net Enrollment Rates for 6-10 Year Olds Since 2010

	2010/11	2014/15	Change
Balochistan	56%	56%	0
KP	64%	71%	7% increase
Punjab	70%	70%	0
Sindh	62%	61%	1% decrease

KP's program is also based on intensive monitoring and data-driven reforms. They started monitoring schools in March 2014. Today, a field force of five hundred monitors visits over 90 percent of schools every month and uploads the data in a central database.¹⁰¹ The data recently became public.

I tested the system by asking for data on an off-road mountain school I had recently hiked to. The school building was destroyed in the 2005 earthquake. School was held inside a mosque instead. Officials in Peshawar pulled up their monitor's photo of the school and teacher taken the previous month that was identical to mine.



There are several critical differences between the Punjab and KP programs that lead experts to have more confidence in KP's program. First, KP actually "owns" their agenda because they developed it. After elections in 2013, DFID offered but KP refused help in developing their education plan, but they invited DFID to support them once it was developed.

According to a senior DFID official, "KP doesn't want foreign help. They're much more 'we can sort out our own problems.' And they're doing it."

Comparing KP and Punjab suggests that political will and agenda ownership are not sufficient conditions for reform. We need to pay attention to what 'political will' translates into, and management style matters just as much. Sharif is ostensibly committed, perhaps over-committed, to the reforms because he is personally involved and expends political influence on it. It's unusual for a chief minister to personally monitor school performance at the district level. But his attention is backfiring since it relies on coercion to produce results, rather than a nuanced understanding of the challenges and a calibrated response. According to an adviser, if Sharif were truly invested, he would have appointed strong individuals to manage social sector portfolios as he has done for sectors that are close to him, such as finance. So

despite Sharif's personal involvement, Punjab's program is still described as "donor-driven."

Second, KP's reform plan looks beyond elections. Elections are expected in 2018, but KP is currently developing their second five-year plan. Punjab's reform plan, by contrast, is set to be achieved by 2017. Timing reforms to elections can make sense since governments may change, but in this case the decision-making is backwards. KP's government is more likely to change given that PTI is a new party and the province tends to elect new leaders, whereas PML-N is secure in Punjab.

Finally, and most importantly, KP's reforms have taken on the frustrating task of working through the bureaucracy, although with high level political backing from Imran Khan, the head of the party. The reforms are led by an understated education minister who is close to Khan and the education secretary. By contrast, in Punjab, the chief minister who is also the head of the party leads reforms himself. The net effect of Sharif's top down pressure and a service delivery unit, staffed by young, energetic, highly qualified and highly capable staff, has been the disempowering of the education bureaucracy.

According to a consultant on Punjab's reform program:

"Between Michael Barber, who sits with Shahbaz Sharif, and all the PhDs at the World Bank, the department itself feels really incapacitated to contribute to the discussion. The education department has become an implementer of the agenda defined by the donors."

But there are also reasons to be skeptical. Ultimately, working through a bureaucracy is slow and difficult. According to Faisal Bari, "The education minister is trying to stop nepotism and corruption to the extent that he can but it's not much," says Bari, "Underneath him there is a huge bureaucracy."

KP also faces greater challenges in the form of militancy, floods, and earthquakes that destroy thousands of schools at a time. The problem of shelterless schools is so big that the province has acknowledged that there are limits to what can be done about it. One district education official told me, "A school is not a building, and a building is not a school," when I quizzed him about the thousands¹⁰² of 2005 earthquake school reconstruction projects that were abandoned by the federal government or contractors.¹⁰³

KP also has more schools in mountain areas that are off-road and only accessible on foot. Globally, far-flung and hard-to-reach schools face greater challenges because they are difficult to monitor.

Most concerning is the PTI's vision for education. In order to keep the right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami within their coalition government, the PTI has agreed to delete curriculum content related to Pakistan's non-Muslim history and photos of women with their heads uncovered, and instead include 'relevant' verses of the Quran in science lessons.

Sindh

Sindh is Pakistan's most patronage-racked province where corruption is a part of every transaction, from securing a teaching appointment to getting an authorization letter to form a parent teacher committee. Rural areas suffer from feudalism, intense poverty, and active criminal gangs in certain parts.¹⁰⁴ The current education secretary has said that 40 percent of the teachers in the province are ghosts and 40 percent of schools are closed.¹⁰⁵ A district official doing an informal survey of a sample of schools one morning in Jacobabad district in Northern Sindh reported 70 percent of schools to be closed.

The political challenges to fixing education are so high that the province is struggling to follow in Punjab and KP's footsteps. The World Bank is the lead donor alongside EU and USAID. DFID decided not to work with the provincial government in 2012 because they questioned the political sincerity of the government in pursuing reform:

"Given political uncertainties about the depth of the government's commitment to reform

and the lack of a comprehensive plan for the education sector, we do not believe it is feasible to fund the government directly.... Nor are we confident that we can achieve sufficiently rapid impact for Sindh's out-of-school children through the provision of additional funding."¹⁰⁶

The reform program is led by Education Secretary Fazlullah Pechuho whose survival in office for 3 years is an anomaly. In the first three years of the reform program from 2008 to 2011, the education secretary changed nine times.¹⁰⁷ Short terms in the post can mean a lack of accountability, discontinuity of reforms,¹⁰⁸ and a disproportionate focus on profiteering.¹⁰⁹ Unlike the rest, Pechuho may have lasted because he comes from a powerful family. He is the brother-in-law of former President Asif Ali Zardari.

Sindh is counting on technology to solve tough political problems. Pechuho is described by staffers as "old but techie"¹¹⁰ and wanting "to create an education system he can control from his iPad."¹¹¹ Technical staff with experience in education referred to his vision as simplistic,¹¹² although the technology has some automatic benefits.

Sindh is at a nascent stage and struggling to hold teachers accountable. Over the past year, they have been working to establish a clean, digital record of teachers¹¹³ because the provincial payroll included thousands of people who were not employed by the ministry, had illegal promotions (through clerical actions), or were ghosts living far away and with other full-time jobs, such as actors and lawyers. The aim is to get the provincial payroll to match the ministry's employment records and disburse salaries electronically.

In the past, one employment letter could be copied and used to hire ten people. Now, the letters have a bar code so they cannot be duplicated.

Sindh demonstrates how reforms can save provinces millions of dollars a month, rivaling the value of foreign aid when the value of efficiencies are aggregated. In the process of digitization, the province has so far stopped the salaries of three thousand teachers who did not show up to verify their employment over the course of months. Failure to show up and verify suggests these were false records or ghost teachers. At salaries that range from about \$150 to \$1,000 per month,¹¹⁴ this is significant saving for Sindh.

Three thousand teachers is far lower than the secretary's own estimate that 40 percent of all teachers are ghosts. One staffer estimated that there are still 30,000 to 40,000 ghost teachers in the system, and that most of them protected themselves from termination by using political connections or bribes.¹¹⁵

If digitization is completed, and accountability measures are put in place to address closed schools and ghost employees, Sindh's savings in one year could equal what USAID has set aside for the Sindh education department over five years.

Teachers violently oppose switching from paper to digital records. In May 2015 teachers were asked to come to data centers across Sindh with their files and to record their fingerprints. In Larkana, they responded by destroying all the computers and servers in the data center.¹¹⁶ The exercise was re-started, but with the servers in Karachi. A protest over teachers' salaries in Karachi in May 2016 ended with water-cannons, teargas, and a police baton-charge.¹¹⁷

Some "teachers" who wanted to protect their pocket money from the government flew from Dubai or the UK to record their fingerprints. In Sindh, it is common practice for teachers to sub-contract a relative to show up in their place or to pay off administrators to maintain their attendance records.

The next step is to make sure that teachers show up to school. Sindh is doing this through spot checks by youth monitors. The monitors will record teachers' fingerprints through devices attached to Android phones. The attendance system is based on biometric verification.

Two hundred and twenty-five monitors have been hired for fifteen districts and a recruitment process is ongoing for one hundred and seventy more monitors for the remaining districts. Each monitor will be given a motorcycle, android device, and biometric device to monitor schools.

Technology is seen as a way to short-circuit the collusion and corruption that is hard-wired into schooling system, but the true test is if teachers and administrators face consequences. Sindh so far is stopping salaries, but not firing missing teachers. Attempts to fire teachers are often reversed by the Chief Minister who can come under pressure from MPAs.

They also get held up in litigation, with courts ruling in favor of protecting jobs. According to Umbreen Arif, the World Bank official in charge of Sindh and Balochistan:

“Teachers are rarely dismissed from service, mostly due to political pressures or protection from the courts. The courts challenge dismissals and block proceedings through stay orders.

There is a Supreme Court ruling that salaries should not be stopped till disciplinary proceedings are complete because the family of the employee should not suffer. District education officials have told me that they rarely stop the salary of an absentee teacher because of the ruling.

This enables absent teachers to receive paychecks comfortably. The ultimate sufferer in this case is always the child in the school!

The problem is not just politics but also culture. Pakistan is considered a welfare state when it comes to government salaries. Once you have the job you will continue to get the monthly “stipend” whether you perform or not.

Teachers are supposed to be nation builders. Instead, we are destroying a nation.”¹¹⁸

Sindh also faces an impossible political challenge when it comes to “rationalizing” the distribution of teachers. Urban centers tend to have too many teachers while rural areas show severe shortages. Rationalizing simply means transferring surplus teachers to areas where there is a shortage. By one estimate, a union council¹¹⁹ in Hyderabad has 119 extra teachers in the primary schools.¹²⁰ But teachers, especially females, will resist the transfers and the move to other schools even if they fall within the same *taluka*.¹²¹

Sindh is most at risk of deploying technology without the political software to back it up. Some suggested that Pechuho is “playing the same patronage games behind the [technology] contracts.” While observers are easily impressed by technology, the situation in Sindh demonstrates that governance reform must go deeper.

USAID

USAID’s \$7.5 billion, five-year aid package for Pakistan was intended as an experiment in government-to-government aid. Education and other programs that were initiated under the aid package, known for its congressional sponsors “Kerry-Lugar-Berman,” continue today even though the five-year period ended in 2014. USAID’s “strategic approach” to education emphasizes: building schools, training teachers, and providing scholarships for underprivileged students to access higher education within Pakistan.

USAID could learn from DFID and World Bank education programming in Pakistan. In early years, they tried, acknowledging that DFID’s programming was much stronger. But much of that learning would be

impracticable because of restrictions on USAID imposed by the State Department and Congress – and the fact that USAID does not push back against them. For example, USAID cannot directly support the reform programs because many members of Congress want U.S. dollars in Pakistan to be carefully tracked and are wary of providing budget support.¹²² Education evolved as the second to last of five “priority sectors” that USAID engaged in under KLB.

Former U.S. ambassador to Pakistan Cameron Munter wrote in a blog for The Brookings Institution:

“It’s one thing to define a task, quite another to apply it to a country where security considerations prevented most USAID workers from visiting projects. Thus, in education, we did what we knew how to do—build schools—but often the schools were never used. Teachers weren’t trained, and curriculum reform stalled. USAID officials oversaw budgets rather than projects. We measured our commitment to Pakistan by how much we spent rather than assessing our impact.”¹²³

But the U.S. government never could have had the transformative impact they envisioned by relying on dollars alone. The money was too small, dwarfed by Pakistan’s own budget. Considering that Pakistan now spends \$7.5 billion in one year on education, KLB’s \$1.5 billion a year distributed across five sectors was a relatively tiny pot next to the government’s own resources. Over the five-year lifetime of KLB, USAID spent \$400 on education,¹²⁴ averaging \$80 million per year.

It helps to contextualize USAID’s stated achievements in the sector. In Sindh, the site of USAID’s only government-to-government program, the agency will build 120 schools. Sindh has 46,000 schools. USAID has trained almost 19,000 teachers in Pakistan. The four provinces have over 600,000 teachers.

Even if we assume that they achieve everything they claim, the impact is small and hardly the transformation that Congress envisioned. Unlike DFID and the World Bank, USAID cannot aspire to shift province-wide indicators in education.

Our tools are wrong. Pakistan cannot be built up or trained out of its education crisis. USAID can build schools but they are at equal risk of being ghost schools if the teacher absenteeism problem isn’t solved. Similarly, teacher training won’t make teachers show up. In fact, teachers miss school in order to attend trainings and the same government teachers tend to be sent to trainings over and over again because of the financial incentives (per diems) they receive for attending.

Training, generally, is the “black hole” of development aid,¹²⁵ meaning a lot of money goes in and we’re not sure what comes out especially when the goal is behavior change. The research on the effect of teacher training is inconclusive, with some research finding that the teacher’s attitude and personality matter more.¹²⁶

At the government school I hiked to in Pehlwan, a small village in the mountains above Abbottabad, the teacher I met was trained to teach Urdu reading eight months prior under USAID’s Pakistan Reading Program. But her third graders did not know the first letter in “Pakistan” in any language. The other teacher – each government primary school in KP must have two teachers – was missing. She was in training.

In short, government teachers are over-trained but under-motivated to perform. A former Sindh Education Secretary explains the situation:

“Rarely will you see teachers with so many qualifications. Training is raised in every civil society discussion, but training is not the issue. The public school infrastructure is crumbling, the attitude of teachers is poor, and there is no accountability. There is no viable system of monitoring and regular accountability to ensure that the business of a school is happening on any given day. Despite extremely poor student achievement test results

there is no debate to institute even a marginal level of accountability for the education managers and the teaching cadre.”¹²⁷

Having a transformative impact and multiplying the impact of funding requires getting involved in the local politics of the sector. But USAID does not have the capacity to “get political: because it falls within the State Department, which is concerned with maintaining its security alliance with Pakistan. The State Department leads relationship management and public affairs. It reserves its political capital for diplomatic and security issues.

Significant academic literature on aid suggests that “selecting” the right partners, such as those who have a political will to reform, is key to ultimate success towards meeting development goals. USAID does not or is unable to select the best partners.¹²⁸ The most credible local governments do not want to work with USAID because of its high profile association with U.S. foreign policy goals. Punjab kicked USAID out of the province in 2011 following the raid that killed Osama bin Laden.¹²⁹

USAID then turned to Sindh, despite concerns about corruption. The Sindh government asked USAID not to route funds through them, suggesting instead that the Sindh government identify the tasks, like where to build schools. However, USAID routed \$80 million through the Sindh government despite the latter’s warnings, in order to meet internal targets for government-to-government spending.¹³⁰ Today, Sindh is USAID’s only government-to-government partner in education in Pakistan.

At the same time, DFID decided they would rather send their money back to London than work with the Sindh government. They ended up working with the private sector – channeling vouchers through a body set up by the Pakistan Business Council.¹³¹

As to why USAID does not work with the KP government, this is what the KP education minister surmised:

“Our main donor is DFID. The donors may have agreed between themselves that USAID will do Sindh and Balochistan, and DFID will do Punjab and KP. We welcome anyone who wants to help us. But maybe USAID has become too negative. If you say DFID, 99 percent of people won’t know what it is, seriously. But say ‘USAID’ and people will say, ‘Who knows what kind of *hamla* (attack) they want to do on us, and what they’re thinking of doing in schools.’ There isn’t such a negativity factor for USAID in Sindh or Balochistan.”¹³²

The Central Challenge: Kids Aren’t Learning Anything

Interventions in Pakistan have focused on increasing enrollment, since Pakistan has the second-highest number of out of school children in the world. But the central challenge is that kids in school are not learning anything, leading to dropouts and a high proportion of children making it through 5th grade illiterate.

The two problems appear to be linked. As the provinces struggle to increase enrollment, many experts and those working on the sector surmise that until schools become places where children learn, parents



Teacher’s manual for USAID’s Pakistan Reading Project

will not send their kids to school.¹³³ The decision ‘not to enroll’ is seen as a rational choice. If schools act as daycares, where children face the risk of sexual and physical abuse from adults, especially girls at the hands of male teachers,¹³⁴ then working or staying at home can make more sense.

Still, many parents do insist on sending their kids to school regardless of what may or may not be happening inside of them. The demand for education is high in Pakistan, reflected in the mushrooming of private schools. Poor families and especially those in cities see education as a passport to social mobility in an otherwise highly stratified, impenetrable, class-based social system. If a government school is open, you will find children in it, even if they are only being taught to sing songs and memorize words, rather than read them.

Learning levels are atrociously low. A 2003 study by LEAPS found that only 31 percent of third graders in Punjab could write a coherent and grammatically correct sentence using the word “school” in Urdu. Just 11 percent could complete the task in English. Only 65 percent could subtract single digits and 25 percent could read and write the time from a clock. For about half of Pakistani children, this is the maximum education they will ever get. Forty percent of girls and 50 percent of all boys either never go to school or drop out by the end of third grade.¹³⁵

The 2015 report of the independent Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), finds that 44 percent of third graders in rural schools (public and private) can read a sentence in Urdu. Of those who stay in school through fifth grade, 55 percent can read a story in Urdu. Although widely cited, however, ASER data is not reliable enough to make comparisons across years.¹³⁶

The design of the education system factors in that only the best will survive. Seventy to over 90 percent of schools are primary schools, depending on the province.

Province	% Primary
Balochistan	84%
KP	83%
Punjab	69%
Sindh	91%

Those who come out literate and numerate have a penchant for self-learning and are treated as “smart” by the teacher. Children can be doomed from a young age, especially if they do not come from Urdu-speaking families and appear to be stupid because they are not fluent in Urdu, the language of classroom instruction or books.¹³⁷ Still, students will be passed through the grades by teachers who do not want to report failure. By the time of the fifth grade board exams, many students will realize that it is pointless to continue.

Improving ‘student learning outcomes’ has become a key objective of reforms in Punjab and KP, but no one is exactly sure how to do it, especially given the scale of the problem.¹³⁸ The governments are tackling it from all angles.¹³⁹ Most notably, teacher recruitment has become merit-based, something that independent observers attest to.¹⁴⁰ Governments are also investing in teacher training, which is one of the most expensive aspects of reforms.¹⁴¹ Punjab has deployed a task force of District Teacher Educators (DTEs) who visit classrooms once a month to give teachers feedback on their methods, but this initiative has struggled due to the weak capability of DTEs. Punjab is revising their textbooks, while KP has developed detailed daily lesson plans for teachers of every subject in every grade so that teachers know what they have to do each day rather than making it up on a whim.¹⁴² They are also working on improving testing and minimizing the opportunity for cheating – notably teachers helping the students – and administering new tests to gauge student learning levels.

But there are two fundamental challenges: multigrade teaching and language. It is common to walk into a Pakistani government school consisting of one room and find one or two teachers responsible for

teaching a group of children who range from pre-primary to fifth grade at once. Changing this requires the construction of additional classrooms and more teachers, so that each grade has its own room and teacher. Ironically, the curriculum and training are usually designed and delivered on the assumption of single-grade teaching, which also renders them ineffective.

The biggest problem is which language should be used and taught in schools. This is an issue on which there has never been a national consensus.¹⁴³ In fact, provincial policies are schizophrenic. In 2015, the Sindh government announced that Chinese would be compulsory for grades six to ten within three years.¹⁴⁴

Children in Pakistani schools today are expected to be trilingual, but without proper instruction in any language. For over 90 percent, their mother tongue is something other than Urdu, such as Sindhi, Pashto, Punjabi, Seraiki, or Balochi.¹⁴⁵ Research has shown that children learn best in their mother tongue. But in school, children are faced with an Urdu language curriculum and textbooks, which is a major reason why children are not absorbing the material.¹⁴⁶

Some provinces are now trying to make government schools English-medium. In 2009, Punjab's chief minister announced that science and math would be taught in English for first through ninth grade. In 2013, KP announced that all schools would switch from Urdu to English starting with first grade and for each subsequent class.

English in Pakistan is the language of the elites, besides being the national language. The best schools are English-medium, producing children who have better English than Urdu and are competitive for foreign universities. Language abilities have intensified the stratification of Pakistani society.

The aspiration to have a public school system that turns out English-speaking children is justified, but it is completely mismatched with the capabilities of the system. In Punjab, a study by the British Council found that over 60 percent of teachers lack basic knowledge of English while most of the rest (30 percent) were at a beginners' level.¹⁴⁷ In switching to science and math textbooks that are in English, Punjab and KP are ensuring that kids learn nothing except how to copy problems and answers.

This is where rote learning comes in.¹⁴⁸ It is common to meet a child from a government school with a notebook full of word and math exercises. But if the child is asked to read the same word in another book or to answer a math problem a different way, he/she will be completely lost. It is easier to harness a child's aptitude to memorize forms rather than to understand concepts. Even in university, kids would rather memorize essays for tests rather than develop them. For this reason, at higher levels, plagiarism (from the internet) is a common practice.

Neelam Hussain, an educationist who advocates for mother tongue instruction, sums up the issue:

"We're taking kids who can't speak Urdu and cutting them off at the start by imposing new vocabulary and beating them up in the process.

Research shows that once you have a base in one language, you can learn others. We should let them learn in their mother tongue. They can learn other languages later.

Between rote learning and rigid examinations, where is the education? You show up, you learn by heart, you replicate, and you pass. You can have millions of schools and put all the kids in them, and you still will not have kids who are educated. "

The Reading Room Project is a small pilot in Karachi that has figured out a way to take an illiterate Urdu-speaking child through English literacy so that they can navigate online tools to self-learn. This approach circumvents weak teachers and could work in KP or Punjab, which are setting up hundreds of solar-powered IT labs, but it is still small and experimental.

PART III: MOVING TOWARDS PRIVATIZATION?

Pakistan’s civil society is active in trying to fill the gap left behind by the public sector. Whereas five years ago, there was a “brick wall” between the public, private, and non-governmental sectors, today, public-private partnerships (PPPs) are becoming a norm.

The most consequential PPPs harness the reach of the private sector and are run through provincial education foundations: Punjab Education Foundation, KP’s Elementary Education Foundation, Sindh Education Foundation, and Balochistan Education Foundation. These semi-autonomous foundations were set up by provincial governments. Today they manage voucher programs, help establish community schools or low-cost private schools, support private sector school adoption of government schools, and generally support a range of interventions that involve the private sector.

The provinces vary on their enthusiasm for privatization. Punjab is most systematically privatizing. They have handed over 1,000 schools to NGOs as a test for transferring another 2,500, despite stiff resistance from teachers.¹⁴⁹ In health, Punjab is outsourcing entire districts to private management – that may be where education is heading.

Over 45 percent of children in Punjab already go to low-cost private schools, which charge anywhere from \$3 to \$25 per month and turn out children who are two grades ahead of the government sector.

Percentage Enrollment in Primary Schools¹⁵⁰

	Percentage Private
Balochistan	16%
KPK	25%
Punjab	46%
Sindh	34%
Pakistan	38%

Punjab has stopped building new government schools. Instead, they are enrolling kids in private schools through a large school voucher program that pays \$7 per month per child – less than half the per child cost of government schools. In this way, Punjab is also utilizing existing school infrastructure. Half of Punjab’s publicly reported new enrollments in 2015 were in private schools.¹⁵¹

KP’s approach is the opposite. While they also have a large number of kids in private schools – 25 percent according to federal statistics – and run a voucher program through their provincial education foundation, the minister has almost nothing to say about private schools, even when asked.¹⁵² Instead, he emphasizes that his responsibility is to fix the public sector. According to him, 35,000 children have switched from private to public schools recently.¹⁵³

Sindh also has an education foundation that provides vouchers for kids to go to private schools.

In Sindh, where governance is especially weak, individuals and groups who form philanthropic foundations are also trying to step in and fill the gaps.

In the business hub of Karachi, philanthropy and management know-how run high. For that reason, citizens of Karachi have long been taking over government infrastructure and privately funding free services for the poor. There, philanthropic foundations and companies adopt government schools, hospitals, even police stations, in singular arrangements. Typically the foundation pays for rehabilitation, management, operations, and even services of government institutions.

The government may authorize these arrangements through an act of parliament. In at least one instance (that of a hospital), the Sindh government provides some annual funding but exempts itself from any management or oversight powers, knowing its own capacity to end up creating trouble for a privately managed government institution.¹⁵⁴

The Sindh government invites concerned individuals and groups to adopt schools under their Adopt-a-School program.¹⁵⁵

USAID has finally caught on to the trend of PPPs. One hundred and twenty schools that they are building in Sindh today will be handed over to private management, but under a new Sindh government policy for education PPPs that designates private organizations as Education Management Organizations (EMOs). It remains to be seen how this experiment will go, especially since it keeps the government in the lead management role.



When asked to identify a map of Pakistan from their textbooks, these kids were stumped. "Mountain?" one hazarded a guess.

PART IV: CONCLUSION

The scale of Pakistan's education crisis is enormous. Additionally, the chief tool to address it—the provincial education bureaucracy—is unwieldy and has evolved to respond to perverse incentives over the course of decades. Reforms are in progress, but they also need time and patience.

The scale of the problem is too big for one set of leaders to fix in one term. According to Atif Khan, KP's Minister for Education:

“You've destroyed schools over seventy years and you want me to fix them in three years. I've told [Imran] Khan, if there were 5 or 10 or 100 or 1000 schools, I could probably fix it in six months or a year. But there are 30,000 schools. The transformation will happen over five to ten years.”¹⁵⁶

Achieving quality education will be a slow and incremental process over generations, as one generation is educated and becomes a better teaching workforce for the next. Today, provinces are having trouble recruiting quality teachers, despite their qualifications on paper, because even government teacher training institutions have deteriorated.

Public awareness is necessary, to keep reforms on track. Interestingly, reforms in Punjab and KP today are supply-driven by the governments. A public debate – internationally and in domestic media – that is relevant to the state of play today will help keep reforms on course and overcome special interests like teachers unions that are resisting, especially in Sindh.

The “double the budget” mantra is overly simplistic, to the point of being misleading. It has probably gotten the education budget to increase to the current level of 17 percent to 28 percent of provincial budgets, but it is time now to focus on how the money is being used and misused.

The success of the slogan, however, suggests how effective international actors can be when they leverage their political influence towards achieving governance goals, especially when those goals coincide with domestic demand. This external pressure is more critical than aid – the value of which pales in comparison to Pakistan's own resources.

As for the United States, its tools are limited to financial ones. Washington is constantly framing development problems wrong and asking the wrong questions based on its capabilities. It either ignores political problems or frames them as “technical” issues that can be resolved with skills training or sensitivity sessions. Ultimately, little has been achieved, relative to the scale of congressional ambitions when Washington authorized the United States' second largest aid program in the world in Pakistan in 2010.

When aid is useful, it provides extra resources that can be used for reform expenses, such as revising curricula and hiring monitors, experts, and analysts. Equally, a small cut of hundreds of millions of dollars in aid is significant petty cash for an individual or institution. Unless donors distinguish between potential

partners based on their sincerity to implement reforms, donors may do more harm than good. Those who are sincerely motivated will find a way to reform with or without the resources. Pakistan would not need aid if it made its public sector more efficient and raised taxes – both become inevitabilities as reformers start quantifying and planning their needs, and realize that aid cannot fill the gap.

The center of international and domestic attention, therefore, should be *how* countries are spending their own resources rather than *how much* they are spending. Most parents in Pakistan have an intimate understanding of how public sector resources are misused and why social services fail. Elites and internationals, whose children do not go to Pakistani government schools, have distanced themselves from the politics that govern the education sector by relying on metrics that are oversimplified but unintelligible to the common man, namely the percent of its GDP that Pakistan dedicates to education.

Policy Recommendations

For the United States Government

- The State Department and USAID should identify an education policy objective to be used in high-level meetings besides “double the budget.”
 - This could be related to ensuring that development across the country is more even, especially Sindh and war-torn Balochistan and FATA.
 - Every province should have a strong and credible education minister who does *not* have a reputation for corruption or crime.
 - With Sindh’s PPP leadership, international actors should stress the need for teacher accountability. The top of the political party must support the education bureaucracy in holding teachers responsible for showing up to school and teaching. Ghost teachers must continue to be cleared out of the system, an effective monitoring system should be put in place, and the teacher absentee rate must be reduced. External pressure may empower internal reformers in Sindh.
 - Broadly, the United States should reinforce DFID and the World Bank in their efforts to support the provinces in increasing enrollments and retention, improving the quality of education, and improving school infrastructure.
- The United States should reinforce the provincial reform plans and work in tandem with DFID and the World Bank rather than acting in parallel.
- USAID should be allowed to “select” partners based on potential for development impact, including holding back funds if such potential is low. Currently, USAID operates under pressure to spend or what they call “burn” funding in countries that are strategically important to the United States. Such funds do more harm than good.
- Learn from DFID and decrease the public profile of aid, or separate what is done for public diplomacy and political objectives from the development program. This will enable more qualitative debate around aid’s achievements, rather than quantitative and monetary measures that are more appropriate for press releases.
- Reduce the emphasis on funding levels. The hype around programs that are monetarily large increases expectations, while making effective programming less likely.
- Congress needs to relax paper-based accountability processes because it has made working with USAID too slow and cumbersome for sincere actors – government and non-governmental - to bother with.
- Build a USAID that Congress and State can trust by reducing funding levels, empowering the agency to think politically about development problems, reducing micro-management and increasing autonomy. USAID’s postings also must be longer than one year in Pakistan and security restrictions must be relaxed, at least on a case-by-case basis. Individuals, even as diplomats, willing to take on discomfort and gain exposure in order to be effective, including as stewards of taxpayer money, should be allowed to do so.

For DFID, World Bank, and Other Donors

- There is a need for more study on how Pakistan's provincial governments are performing relative to one another, and lessons learned for why some are more successful than others. This can help the governments learn from each other and fine-tune the management of reforms.
- Help raise public awareness about the content and progress of reforms and how the education budget is used, rather than advocacy aimed at simply doubling the budget.
- Bridge the gap between think tanks and the public. Think tanks in Pakistan have done excellent analyses on education, but they have trouble communicating with the general public. The media, meanwhile, finds it difficult to come up with meaningful analyses on development issues, largely because they do not have the time or money for proper research and investigation. Donors may not be able to fund journalists directly, due to conflict of interest, but they can help think tanks communicate their work more effectively to the media.



Thousands of school reconstruction projects have been abandoned.

For the Pakistani Government

- Political party chiefs must put their strongest people in charge of education, as well as health and other social sectors, and remove officials that are known to be corrupt and ineffective.
- In Sindh and Balochistan, political party chiefs must be clear to education ministers and secretaries that they have full political backing to implement reforms, including a zero-tolerance policy for misallocation or inefficient allocation of resources (read corruption).
- Sindh needs more meaningful support from party leaders for the reform agenda.
- Punjab should reduce downward pressure, creating space for bottom-up feedback, and allow the education ministry and external experts to play a more meaningful role in suggesting solutions and the content of reforms.
- KP needs to protect its progress from the potential shock of a change in government. Greater public awareness of progress can help ensure pressure on the next government – if different – to continue the reforms. KP also needs stronger data collection tools that can be compared from year to year, especially related to quality of learning.
- The federal government must be held accountable for abandoning thousands of school reconstruction projects in the aftermath of the 2005 earthquake in KP. Either the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) or contractors abandoned these projects halfway through construction. The KP government is now rebuilding hundreds of schools that ERRA missed in its needs survey, but they are not taking on the projects that the federal government abandoned.

For Private Citizens & Foundations

- Support Pakistani foundations like The Citizens Foundation. Pakistani foundations focus on service delivery in education and health but tend to be overlooked by foreign donors of all kinds, because they are not well-known, people assume that local organizations are unreliable, or institutional donors prefer to support NGOs doing advocacy rather than service delivery. Because these organizations raise funds and survive thanks to local donors, who hold them accountable and see their work, they are the best way to help people, such as by putting kids in quality schools.

Endnotes

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- 2 Gazdar, Haris. 2007. "The Transition to Mass Literacy: Comparative Insights from Sweden and Pakistan." In *Global Perspectives on Gender Equality: Reversing the Gaze*, edited by Naila Kabeer and Agneta Stark with Edda Magnus, 19-39. Routledge.
- 3 Gazdar interview.
- 4 Neelam Hussain (Executive Director, Simorgh), in interview with author, November 2015.
- 5 The Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan. *Report of the Commission on National Education*. Karachi: Manager of Publications, 1960. See section "The Objectives of our Educational System," p. 10-11.
- 6 Faisal Bari (Chairman, Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives [IDEAS] Board of Directors; Associate Professor, Lahore University of Management Sciences; education economist, Open Society Foundation; Deputy Country Director, Central Eurasia Project), in interview with author, November 2015.
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- 10 Haider, Murtaza, "Do the Dare: Give education 4% of the GDP," *Dawn*, June 3, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1110128>.
- 11 Last year's figures were between 20 and 27 percent according to Alif Ailaan and I-SAPS. See: Alif Ailaan, Government Allocations For Education In Pakistan: The Road To Getting To 4% Of GDP (Islamabad: Alif Ailaan, 2015), http://www.alifailaan.pk/budget_allocation_2015.
Also see: I-SAPS. Public Financing Of Education In Pakistan: Analysis Of Federal, Provincial, And District Budgets, 2010-11 To 2015-16 (Islamabad: Institute of Social and Policy Sciences, 2016). http://i-saps.org/upload/report_publications/docs/1461768887.pdf.
- 12 Total U.S. assistance to education under the five-year aid program popularly referred to as KLB was \$400 million, according to budget information posted on the USAID website, averaging \$80 million per year over five years. Pakistan's budget doubled from 304 billion PKR (\$3.5 billion) in 2010 to 630 billion PKR (\$6.4 billion) in 2014 while U.S. assistance levels have tapered downwards.
- 13 Budget numbers for fiscal year 2016 are from federal and provincial budget documents. For historical figures (FY2015 and earlier) see budget charts in I-SAPS, p. 77-81. Dollar figures are given based on exchange rates for June 1 of the fiscal year cited, when budgets are passed.
- 14 Unless otherwise noted, budget numbers in this report for fiscal years 2010 to 2015 are derived from budget charts in I-SAPS Public Financing Of Education In Pakistan: Analysis Of Federal, Provincial, And District Budgets, 2010-11 To 2015-16, pages 77-81.
- 15 People often mistakenly cite the federal budget as representative of Pakistan's education budget. Since education devolved to the provinces in 2010, the bulk of spending on elementary and secondary schooling happens at the provincial level.
- 16 These numbers are collated from Annual Budget Statements for each province and the federal government. See Ministry of Finance website for each province and the federal government. To convert to dollars, the conversion rate is \$1/104.75 rupees for the fiscal year 2016 budget. The education budget consists of the current (recurring such as salaries) and development (generally for building and rehabilitating schools) budgets.
- 17 In Pakistani rupees, the increase was from 23 billion PKR to 176 billion PKR. The dollar figures given are converted according to exchange rates at the time of the budget release in June 2010 and June 2015, 85 PKR for \$1 and 98 PKR for \$1, respectively.
- 18 See I-SAPS budget charts.
- 19 Finance Division, *Federal Budget 2016-17: Budget in Brief* (Islamabad, 2016), p. 23, http://www.finance.gov.pk/budget/Budget_in_Brief_2016_17.pdf.
- 20 These figures are calculated based on the GDP at market price for the respective year, as reported by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The GDP for 2014-15 was about 27 trillion rupees. For 2015-16, it was nearly 30 trillion rupees. I use GDP reported in market rather than base prices because budget figures are also unadjusted.
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- 22 Alif Ailaan's estimate is 2.83 percent using GDP reported in base prices.
- 23 Alif Ailaan's figure is slightly higher at 734 billion rupees. See their report Government Allocations For Education In Pakistan: The Road To Getting To 4% Of GDP.
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- 25 See Syed.
- 26 *Pakistan Education Statistics 2014-15*, Government of Pakistan, February 2016, <http://library.aepam.edu.pk/Books/Pakistan%20Education%20Statistics%202014-15.pdf>, p. 109.
- 27 *The Military Balance 2016*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, Routledge.
- 28 *Ibid.*, Pakistan Education Statistics, p. 108.
- 29 *Ibid.*, The Military Balance.
- 30 Usually the person in the village who donates his land for the school is hired as a chowkidhar – and in turn receives a sizeable (for village standards) and secure government salary for life.
- 3 Analysis of sanctioned positions of teaching and non-teaching staff available from provincial and federal budget books and statement of filled and vacant posts.
- 32 Atif Khan (KP Education Minister), in interview with author, November 2015. The website for the KP Elementary & Secondary Education Department also cites this figure, <http://www.kpese.gov.pk/>.
- 33 Unpublished presentation on education in Balochistan, World Bank, March 2016.
- 34 According to DFID's online Development Tracker, 25 percent of DFID's £430 million aid budget for Pakistan in 2016/17 will go

to education, which is £107 or \$150 million.

- 35 According to the U.S. government's ForeignAssistance.gov, USAID's Basic Education spending in Pakistan was \$52 million in fiscal year 2015. Spending on Higher Education was \$13 million.
- 36 The World Bank, *Tracking the Flow of Public Money*. Punjab: Expenditure and Quantity of Service Delivery Survey (EQSDS) in Primary School Sector (2015). As detailed in the section on USAID, the agency was asked to leave Punjab in 2011.
- 37 *Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges*, UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015, UNESCO, p. 241, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232205e.pdf>.
- 38 See *Pakistan Economic Survey 2015-2016*. Alif Ailaan estimates the 2015-16 budget at 2.68 percent of GDP while the World Bank's data site estimates education spending in fiscal year 2014 at 2.5 percent.
- 39 I-SAPS estimates that 398 billion rupees are spent on private sector schooling and 431 billion rupees are spent on the "shadow" sector, referring to after-school "tuitions" (tutoring) or any unregistered and unregulated educational service that operates after 2 pm. These figures are in a presentation: I-SAPS, Technical Session -1: Resourcing Public Education, August 6, 2015.
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- 41 World Bank Data, "Government expenditure on education as % of GDP (%)," <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS>.
- 42 See UNESCO, *Education for All*, p. 242-243
- 43 See UNESCO, *Education for All*, p. 241. Also see: Ahmed, Amin, "Unesco wants 20pc of budget spent on education", *Dawn*, January 30, 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1083667>.
- 44 See I-SAPS' budget charts and Alif Ailaan's calculations in Government Allocations for Education in Pakistan.
- 45 See UNESCO, *Education for All*.
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In a Level One English class, Arifa ponders the answer to the question: "How old do you think the Wright Brothers were when they invented the airplane?" Image: The Reading Room Project

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Nadia Naviwala is a Public Policy Fellow at the Wilson Center. She is an independent American writer and researcher based in Islamabad. She investigates and writes about foreign aid, local philanthropy, civil society, and education in Pakistan.

Nadia moved to Islamabad in 2012 as Pakistan Country Representative for the United States Institute of Peace. At USIP, she started the Peace Innovations Fund to give small, flexible support to social startups. Previously, she served as a Pakistan Desk Officer at USAID and a National Security Aide in the U.S. Senate. She started the internship program at the Embassy of Pakistan in Washington, DC as a college student in 2002.

She taught U.S. foreign policy at the National Defense University in Islamabad in 2014.

Nadia taught English summer camp in a girls' school run by The Citizens Foundation in Minhala, a small village two hours outside of Lahore, in the summer of 2009. In Minhala, parents did not traditionally send their girls to school. Today thanks to TCF, they are becoming teachers.

Nadia holds a Masters in Public Policy degree from Harvard Kennedy School, where she was an International and Global Affairs Fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, a Public Service Fellow, and an associate with the Carr Center Program on State-Building and Human Rights in Afghanistan and Pakistan. She holds a B.S. in Foreign Service from Georgetown University.





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