

Education in Pakistan

What Works & Why

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CQE
Campaign for Quality Education
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65 – C, Garden Block,
New Garden Town, Lahore, Pakistan
Ph: + 92 – 42 – 5868115 & 6
Fax: + 92 – 42 – 5839816
Email: cqepak@gmail.com
Website: www.cqe.net.pk

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Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations	i
Acknowledgements	iii
1. Executive Summary	1
2. Introduction	4
3. Background	6
4. Why Study ‘What Works’?	9
5. Methodology	11
5.1 Putting the Process Together	11
5.2 Site & School Selection	11
5.3 Data Collection	12
5.4 Policy Dialogues	13
6. Findings	14
6.1 Leadership	14
6.2 Teaching, Curriculum & Assessment	17
6.3 Systemic Support	19
6.4 Community Support	21
6.5 Donor Support	23
7. Policy Recommendations	24
7.1 Retrieving and Developing Human Resource in the Public Sector	24
7.2 Incentivizing and Retaining Human Resource	24
7.3 Clustering Schools for Ongoing Support	25
7.4 Intrasectoral Linkage for Support	25
7.5 Establishing Nodal Centers of Excellence for Teacher Education	26
7.6 Establishing Quality Apex Institutions	26
7.7 Reviewing Organizational Framework for Community Engagement	26
Appendix A	27
Appendix B	28

List of Abbreviations

Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan	AKES,P
Aga Khan University - Institute for Educational Development	AKU-IED
Azad Jammu and Kashmir	AJK
Bureau of Curriculum	BoC
Campaign for Quality Education	CQE
Civil Society Organization	CSO
Dera Ghazi Khan	DG Khan
Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit	GTZ
Developments in Literacy	DIL
Directorate of Public Instruction	DPI
Directorate of Staff Development	DSD
Education For All	EFA
Education in Pakistan: What Works & Why	WWW
Education Sector Development Program	ESDP
Education Sector Reform	ESR
Education Sector Reforms Assistance	ESRA
Federally Administered Northern Area	FANA
Government Boys Primary School	GBPS
Government College of Education	GCE
Government Girls Primary School	GGPS
Government	Govt
Hira National Education Foundation	HNEF
Human Development Centre	HDC
Indus Resource Centre	IRC
International Financial Institutions	IFI
Lahore University of Management Sciences	LUMS
Local Government Ordinance	LGO
Millennium Development Goals	MDG
Ministry of Education	MoE
National Education Policy	NEP
Non-Government Organization	NGO
North West Frontier Province	NWFP
Open Society Institute	OSI
Pakistan People's Party	PPP
Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund	PPAF
Parent Teacher Association	PTA
Peace be Upon Him	pbuh
Professional Development Centre North	PDCN
Professional Development Program	PDP
Provincial Institute of Teacher Education	PITE

Punjab Education Foundation	PEF
Quaid-e-Azam University	QAU
Research Design Team	RDT
Rural Development Policy Institute	RDPI
School Council	SC
School Management Committee	SMC
Social Policy and Development Centre	SPDC
Society for Community Support for Primary Education in Balochistan	SCSPEB
Society for the Advancement of Education	SAHE
Sustainable Development Policy Institute	SDPI
Tanzeem-e-Asataza Pakistan	TAP
The Citizens Foundation	TCF
United Nations Children’s Fund	UNICEF
United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization	UNESCO
United States Agency for International Development	USAID
Universal Primary Education	UPE
Village Education Committee	VEC
West Pakistan College Teachers Association	WPCTA
Whole School Improvement Program	WSIP

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1. Executive Summary

Over the past two years or so, a diverse group of concerned educators in Pakistan have attempted to highlight the issues of quality education by studying some of the better schools and school systems catering to low-income groups. The central assumptions in this study, appropriately titled Education in Pakistan: *What Works and Why* (WWW) were: 1) that it was possible to find good schools in almost all districts of Pakistan, 2) that these schools existed in both public and private sectors, and 3) that it was possible to learn what worked and why from such schools. An important aspect of WWW was a shift in emphasis from an overwhelming number of doomsday descriptions for education in Pakistan toward a search for the positive that would connect with possibilities of reform. We were motivated by the hope that once these cases were discerned, documented, and disseminated to the general public, educators, and policy makers in Pakistan, they would have a view somewhat different and more hopeful than the one generated by their regular diet of dismal scenarios about education in Pakistan. In addition to this, we also hope that these cases will help inform policy-making by providing some actionable recommendations.

Framework and Process

WWW looked for five to six quality schools each at eight different sites across Pakistan (refer to appendix A). The schools were selected so as to cover a broad spectrum of organizational forms and support mechanisms in Pakistan, including:

- 1) Government unassisted schools
- 2) Government schools assisted by a program [GTZ's Technical Assistance, Aga Khan University - Institute for Educational

Development (AKU-IED) Whole School Improvement Program (WSIP), USAID's Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA), UNICEF's Child Friendly Schools]

- 3) Stand-alone private schools, as well as private schools which are part of a school system [The Citizens Foundation (TCF), Hira National Education Foundation (HNEF), and Indus Resource Centre (IRC)].

The schools were selected using a flexible notion of *quality-in-context*. This implied using student scores as a measure of quality but also going beyond these scores to take an in-depth look at the school. Based on student scores, fifteen top schools were identified at each site for in-depth visits for classroom observation and teacher interviews. A reasonable level of enrolment and availability of teachers as well as basic infrastructure and facilities were also considered. Not least, the school had to be willing to participate in the study.

A core Research Design Team (RDT), consisting of seven members drawn from academia and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) was set up to provide technical advice on research design, data collection and analysis, and writing of cases. Each member of the RDT worked closely with the data collection teams drawn from a local organization at each site.

Conceived as a multi-case study with individual schools as the unit cases, the study employed qualitative methods of inquiry. The data collection was also guided by local assumptions about what factors affect school quality. There was a primary emphasis on factors such as teacher professional development, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the school level and community participation, and a secondary emphasis on factors such as language, world view and gender. In order to validate the findings, the preliminary findings were taken back to the stakeholders including government

functionaries, donors and local grassroots organizations, through a series of policy dialogues conducted at a central location in three of the provinces and Islamabad. This report is based on the findings and recommendations refined after the feedback from these dialogues.

Findings and Recommendations

Investments in education in Pakistan in the past decade or so, both from government and donors, have been biased in favour of direct delivery of educational services such as teacher training, creation and training of school councils, supply of missing facilities, and financial and other incentives for students to attend schools. The policy cover for these investments has been provided by the international consensus on EFA and MDG. The World Bank assistance in Punjab, US\$ 100 million per year, for example, is built upon the assumption that access to quality education will be achieved by providing free books to children, improving infrastructure of the schools, and training teachers. Similarly, a major portion of USAID's assistance, US\$ 74.5 million, in Sindh and Balochistan from 2003 to 2007 has been focused on improving service delivery by training teachers and strengthening school councils and district bureaucracies. The findings of the WWW study suggest that these investments, many of which may be achieving worthwhile intermediate results, are not a sufficient condition for sustainable reform. What appears to be crucially missing from the equation is a strategy for identifying the human resource with the potential to take reform forward, and a focused effort to create or sustain selective apex institutions with real depth and capacity (as opposed to the many that are all form and no substance). This is substantiated by the fact that only where we found a combination of leadership and institutional support, did schools seem poised to achieve quality.

As such, WWW's specific recommendations for policy makers suggest investments in areas not adequately covered by existing interventions. They focus on identification and promotion of the promising human resources present within our schools, provision of a meaningful system of incentives to teachers and school leaders in improving the quality of schools, and reconceptualizing the current focus on the ability of schools councils to ensure community support to

schools. Below is the thrust of these recommendations:

- The right individuals are key to implementing reform. In every case school we find head teachers and teachers providing the needed leadership. In some cases this leadership is incidental and remains unsupported, while in others it is given recognition as well as support. Given the finding that leadership matters in achieving quality schools, we must work to retrieve potential school leaders, nurture their leadership skills, and provide them with opportunities to support reform. Meaningful and transparent criteria will need to be developed to create a leadership cadre.
- Even in successful schools, the need for a structure of teacher incentives was felt. Specific recommendations from WWW entail development of a system to provide recognition to achievements of teachers in improving their knowledge and skills. The incentive regime, if developed and implemented appropriately, will meet the twin purposes of *identifying and retrieving the right individuals to support schools and improve teaching*.
- Reforms need institutions to support them. Quality in some of the case schools was sustained by nodal and apex institutions such as in the case of WSIP. Even temporary arrangements such as ESRA seemed to be making a difference and teachers attempted to use innovative methods in their classroom teaching. Though in the latter case the very nature of a project mode indicates a lack of continuity. Sustained positive change in the quality of schooling will need quality apex institutions. The government must take steps in this direction by beginning small and developing only a few such institutions. Given what it takes to establish an institution with depth and capacity, even this will be a formidable effort, though, an absolutely essential one.
- The organizational form of the school council does not, in most cases, translate into effective community involvement. If anything, it often places the teachers and the school in an adversarial relationship with only lip service being paid to the community-school partnership that the school council is supposed to represent.

Given our findings, it would be more useful and potentially effective to capture community involvement through a more flexible less prescriptive approach. Consequently, before investing more funds in the enterprise of School Councils (SC) the form, purpose and nature of community support to schools needs to be reviewed by the government.

The recommendations emerging from this study will inform the future work of the Campaign for Quality Education (CQE) research team. The team is developing strategies for an in-depth study of each recommendation.

This work, we hope, will lead us to follow up these recommendations with detailed policy proposals.

WWW's focus on quality in education rests on the assumption that getting children into schools is not enough. We cannot retain and educate children in schools without a focus on quality. To attain quality, we will need to develop institutions, people, and the infrastructure of schools all at the same time. This is a daunting task but one that all societies in the quest for providing appropriate education need to address. Given the acute nature of the crisis in Pakistan's education system we certainly need to address it on an urgent basis. Let there be no doubt that it will take a lot more in terms of funds and a greater seriousness of purpose to accomplish this. But as someone has pointed out: *If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.*

2. Introduction

The state of Pakistan, bound by its constitution and numerous international commitments is responsible for ensuring access to quality education to each school-ready child living in the territories under its jurisdiction. To be able to educate each child, and educate her *well*, is not just about meeting Pakistan's obligations to the world and to its constitution. It is also a matter of life and death for this nation. What many of us do not realize is that while we may have 160 million subjects living in Pakistan, *we are far from having as many citizens*. Education is an essential requirement for producing citizenry.¹ As such we are a nation *in peril*, since only a very small fraction of this country's fortunate inhabitants will qualify going through a transformative educative experience in the early years of their life. Even with a greater realization of this profound internal vulnerability, the risk has continued to multiply and the goal of reaching all our children with quality education remains elusive.

Yet, Pakistan's education system is regularly decried as one of the most serious challenges confronted by our nation. A comparison within the South Asian region illustrates this challenge. At its 60th birthday, Pakistan lags behind in terms of literacy even in the South Asian context. According to UNESCO figures for 2005, the regional average for adult literacy (15+) was 59.7% whereas for Pakistan it was 49.7%.²

The values of educational indicators for Pakistan have remained dismal, registering only marginal increases and indicating a monumental failure of fifteen successive education policies of our nation since its inception 60 years ago. Several studies have been conducted, mostly sponsored by donors and independent non-governmental agencies, to provide empirical assessments of the scope and depth of the issues that confront our nation in the education sector. Two streams of such studies can be identified. The first investigates the reasons for failure in the public sector and seeks to identify the main causes of failure. The second provides us with analyses comparing the growing private sector with the public education sector.

The findings of the first stream of studies must be situated against a backdrop of the failure of a decade of reforms in the education sector. The supply side of educational services is faulted for this failure.³ Evidence provided by research also suggests that students are more likely to be retained if the quality of supply of educational services was improved.⁴ A more recent study has also indicated that while supply of educational services in the public education sector is bad, the demand also remains inadequately articulated.⁵

The second stream of studies have shown that learning achievements of children studying in private

¹ Citizens are usually defined in relationship to their rights and awareness of those rights by them. We contend that the process of nation building is the same as developing its citizens, and citizenship is not a natural endowment but is cultivated through education. In other words, nation building rests squarely on access to and the quality of education for all children. By school education we do not mean just the ability to read and write [literacy] but also the cultivation of core democratic values.

² See, UNESCO. 2007, "Statistics in Brief", Retrieved 08/28, 2007 (<http://stats.uis.unesco.org>).

³ Gazdar, Haris. 1999. "Universal Basic Education in Pakistan: A Commentary on Strategy and Results of a Survey." Sustainable Development Policy Institute: Islamabad.

⁴ Khan, Shahrukh Rafi. 1999. "An Overview of Basic Education under the Social Action Plan in Pakistan." SDPI: Islamabad.

⁵ Mitchell, Jonathan, Salman Humayun, and Irfan Muzaffar. 2005. "Education Sector Reforms in Pakistan: Demand Generation as an Alternative Recipe." in *Education Reform in Pakistan: Building for the Future*, edited by R. M. Hathaway. Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

schools catering to low income groups are significantly better than similar schools in the public sector.⁶ Similar results have been established when public schools are compared with not-for-profit non-government schools.⁷ More recently, a Punjab focused survey, on a sample of 4,880 teachers from 800 public and private schools in 112 villages, found that private schools are better able to adapt to local conditions and use local labour markets in a cost effective manner, allowing the savings to be passed on to parents through very low fees.⁸ In sum, then, as the public sector schools come under increasing and often justified criticism, the message 'private is better than public,' has gained currency.

While the studies cited here establish the better performance of the private sector, they also point to the below par-performance of a significant number of private sector schools. The private sector, then, has an important role to play but it cannot meet the educational needs of the entire population. Nearly two-thirds of the children going to school still go to government schools.⁹ This gives us some sense of the imperative of public sector reform.

The enormity of the challenge of educational justice for all, the enduring importance of the public sector to equal this challenge, the currently recognized dismal state of the public sector reflected in its performance over time, and the growing perceptions about privatization as a comprehensive remedy for the education crisis are the factors shaping the emphases in the WWW study. Accordingly, we began with an assumption that good schools of variable quality exist in both sectors, and we set out to find and study those schools at eight different sites across Pakistan (refer to

appendix A). Having identified these schools in both sectors across these sites, we employed qualitative case study methods to render a rich description of successful schools in both public and private sectors. What we found reaffirmed the findings of earlier studies pointing to the better performance of private schools. However, and even more significantly in our view, we found that there were relatively good schools in the public sector that were somehow managing despite the odds. Therefore, it made sense to make visible the potential for improvement and reform in the workings of both the private and public sector schools. Learning lessons from both sectors and making them available for educational reform on scale is a long-term process to which this study hopes to make a modest contribution.

The rest of this document is organized in five sections in the following order: 1) historical background, 2) WWW rationale and conceptual parameters, 3) brief description of research methods and process, 4) major findings of WWW, and 5) policy directions indicated by these findings. We hope that the recommendations at the end of this document can contribute meaningfully toward the National Education Policy (NEP) review process currently underway. While this brief provides anecdotal data from the field, the detailed case studies of the schools will be available in a forthcoming book based on the research summarized in this brief. Meanwhile, to facilitate action on some of the key recommendations of the brief, CQE also envisages researching teacher education institutions, as well as public and private sector experience of clustering and incentive systems.¹⁰

⁶ Kardar, Shahid Hafiz. 1998. "The Economics of Education." in *Education and the State*, edited by P. Hoodbhoy. Lahore: Oxford University Press.

⁷ Khan, Shahrukh Rafi, Sajid Kazmi, and Zainab Latif. 1999. "The State of Qualitative Education in Pakistan." SDPI: Islamabad.

⁸ Andrabi, Tahir, Jishnu Das, and Asim I. Khwaja. 2006. *A Dime a Day: The Possibilities and Limits of Private Schooling in*

Pakistan. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper #4066. World Bank: Washington, DC.

⁹ AEPAM. 2006. "National Education Census 2005." Federal Bureau of Statistics, MOE, Government of Pakistan: Islamabad.

¹⁰ *Clustering and Incentive systems* for teachers' professional development are discussed further in findings and recommendations.

3. Background

What Works and Why sets its sights on schools. This brief background will flag the major turns in the educational history of Pakistan that have brought the educational system¹¹ to its current state.

As matters stand, with some variations, the system of education in Pakistan is a large bureaucratic organization encompassing different levels from the Ministry and Departments of Education at the federal and provincial levels, down to the districts, and terminating at the Union Council and school level.

We would have expected this large system of support to the schools to do all of the following: ensure that qualified and properly trained teachers are made available for each classroom; teachers are paid their salary in a timely manner; head teachers and school councils get adequate support to keep the school infrastructure intact and safe for children; stipulated resources are provided to schools in time; children and parents get accurate information on schools and their performance; and that classroom processes of teaching and learning take place effectively. However, on all of these counts, with the exception of more or less ensuring that teachers get their salaries in time, the formal system seems to be

falling well short of expectations.

How did things come to be the way they are? This is not how Pakistan, as a nation, laid out the parameters of quality education for all at the time of its inception.

In his address to the National Education Conference in 1947 Pakistan's founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, had this to say: "...the importance of education and the *type* of education cannot be over-emphasized...there is no doubt that the future of our State will and must greatly depend upon the *type* of education we give to our children...."

¹² Clearly, for Jinnah, quality education was crucial for the future of Pakistan and no less important was the type of education imparted to children. However, in the years that followed, we fell short on both counts: in terms of universalizing

education as well as with regard to the type or quality of education made available. Providing each one of our nation's classrooms with qualified teachers, managing and supporting schools through an efficient support system, and bringing enough resources to fund educational improvements in public schools have been issues that we have perpetually sought to address in successive national policies.¹³ Below are some examples of the persistence with which these issues

"...the importance of education and the *type* of education cannot be over-emphasized...there is no doubt that the future of our State will and must greatly depend upon the *type* of education we give to our children...."

Muhammad Ali Jinnah

¹¹ We take the term educational system to mean an assemblage of inter-related elements comprising schools, union council, district, provincial, and federal level bureaucracies, etc. The system of education also includes the higher education institutions that provide general and professional education to potential teachers. All of these elements are combined together to facilitate the flow

of information and resources to support schools to do their jobs. The failure of schools can, in large part, be attributed to the failure of the system.

¹² Bengali, Kaiser. 1999. "History of Educational Policy Making and Planning in Pakistan." SDPI: Islamabad. p. 2

¹³ Ibid, p.3.

continue to recur over the past 60 years.

The Six Year Plan of Educational Development adopted for the period 1951-57, was one of the first attempts to address the constraints to expanding and improving the quality of education by highlighting the lack of trained teachers. It was estimated that the envisaged expansion would require over 86,000 additional teachers and the need for more training institutions was highlighted. Since then, we continue to find ourselves to be deficient in terms of competent teachers.

Beginning in the late 1960s, many saw educational reforms in terms of nationalization of the school system. However, with hindsight, we know that nationalization as carried out has only reinscribed failure in a larger education system. The drive for nationalizing education began first with the demands for nationalizing college education, emanating from Gordon College, Rawalpindi, in part as a consequence of the student riots that began there in November, 1968. Nur Khan's modified policy guidelines (under General Yahya's regime) in the summer of 1969 included a provision for nationalizing missionary institutions. In the 1970 election campaign, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) took up the nationalization issue and won the support of the West Pakistani College Teachers Association (WPCTA). Most private teachers were euphoric at the announcement of nationalization in March 1972. However, there was resistance from the original government teachers to the full integration of nationalized teachers.¹⁴

The politics of government service remained a key concern for teachers over these years reinforcing the tendency to ignore critical concerns such as professional development. In line with the stated equity framework, nationalization policy lowered tuition fees charged by colleges and announced the goal of doing away with school fees, to make access easier for low income families and enhance enrolment. As always, there were exceptions for privileged sections of society that were not prepared to negotiate on quality. Over 200 English-medium schools catering to upper-class families were exempted from the

process in 1974.¹⁵ 'English-medium' was eventually to become a synonym for quality in private schools, not always with justification. We now know that nationalization did not solve the problem of universalizing education in Pakistan. One important byproduct of this movement, however, was the growth in the size of education departments at various levels.

In a policy shift under the Zia government in 1979, the ban on private schools was lifted as the New Education Policy and Implementation Program was announced. Under the Sixth Five-Year Plan, the opening of new private schools was to be encouraged and nationalized schools were to be returned to their original owners as long as the quality of 'coverage' did not suffer.¹⁶ The government pointed to the cost of nationalization, and implicitly, to the need to pass on a share of the additional cost of education back to the private sector: "The nearly comprehensive nationalization of educational institutions and the accompanying policy of free education ten years ago had at least two casualties. An already impoverished government was landed with a large financial burden, which restricted it from expanding education. And many of the schools of high quality, some of them run by education conscious communities, lost their excellence under the public control. This, in both quantity and quality, was counter-productive."¹⁷

The PPP government sought to address the equity issue through nationalization and in the process of expanding access contributed to undermining quality. The Zia regime that followed sought to address the quality issue by encouraging the private sector to grow even as it remained unregulated for quality and promoted a self-serving brand of ideology in the education sector at the expense of merit. This was double jeopardy.

The net effect of all these historic shifts is a large educational bureaucracy. It is worth noting that the non-teaching to teaching staff ratio in Pakistan is one of the highest in the world. The functioning of the system is marred by outdated rules and regulations, obsolete and irrelevant ways of appraising the performance of teachers and head teachers, and lack

¹⁴ Jones, Dawn E. and Rodney W. Jones. Winter 1977-78. "Nationalizing Education in Pakistan: Teachers' Associations and the People's Party." *Pacific Affairs* 50:597.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 600.

¹⁶ Jimenez, Emmanuel E. and Tan, Jee Peng. 1987. "Decentralized and Private Education: The Case of Pakistan." *Comparative Education* 23:179.

¹⁷*Ibid*, pp. 318-319

of capacity to develop and implement policies and programs. In an overall sense, then, the performance of education departments is far from satisfactory when it comes to supporting and monitoring educational quality.

Another aspect of the system, worth noting as a context to this study, is an overly skewed emphasis on basic education and its effects. IFIs have justified their support to basic education on the premise of a greater 'rate of return' for basic education than for higher education. The efficiency proponents were unhappy with greater spending on higher education by the government in the 1980s. The criticism ignored the critical need for quality institutions delivering higher education. Only these can ensure that the realm of basic education will be fed on a sustained basis by those with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach well, to write quality textbooks and to develop appropriate assessment and management systems. All

of these tasks, of course, require specialized training but this can make a difference only where the building blocks of an adequate education are already in place. However, the argument here is not that basic education should be poorly funded. Obviously, EFA is a goal that remains critical to national development. But education is too important an area to be treated as a site for intra-sectoral trade-offs. The entire sector needs to be much better funded if Pakistan is to progress and survive in an increasingly challenging global environment.

The schools that we visited during the course of this study were experiencing the effects of government and donor choices: a large and dysfunctional bureaucracy, lack of resources, and teachers credentialed by a failing higher education system, thus lacking in content as well as pedagogical knowledge. So it is in this context, that we looked for schools that worked.

4. Why Study What Works?

This is a study of what works in education in Pakistan, and why. Before we embark on an analysis that helps us respond to this question, we need to respond to the following questions: What is the ‘what’ in this title? And what does ‘working’ mean? Why this study? And where does it lead us?

It is simple to answer the first question: we are studying 43 selected schools in 12 districts of Pakistan. But these schools are not randomly selected. We made the choice to identify and study schools that seemed to ‘work’. This immediately begs the second and the more difficult question, ‘How do we know which schools work?’ But this question entails a discussion on the problems of crafting an operational definition of quality in the context of developing countries.

Researchers and practitioners interested in understanding what makes schools effective have attempted to answer this in myriad ways. The perspectives on school quality differ widely depending on the times and places where they are offered. Moreover, the practices prevalent in a society have sometimes established quality schools in a manner that is different from the ways in which it is conceptualized by the academics. That is, we cannot identify an effective school among those that are not, if we have not clearly stated the goals that schools are striving to achieve. Quality in these terms can be conveniently defined as *doing what you said you would do*.¹⁸ While the goals of education may appear clear to some in the

industrialized world,¹⁹ such clarity cannot be assumed as universal. In fact it is now widely recognized that expected outcomes of schooling, “vary significantly between countries, communities, and individuals, not just in their wanting different outcomes, but also in the ways that similar looking goals can be interpreted and aimed at in the light of different cultural imperatives.”²⁰ So while parents want the schools to discipline their kids, the reformers expect the schools to develop kids into critical thinkers, reformers are certainly at odds with other elements in society. The problem of making claims about what works in developing contexts is illustrated by the following example:

The turnoff to the school was some sixty kilometres along a bad, untarred road. The turnoff was simply a gap between the two trees and unrecognizable to the untutored eye and the school was ten kilometres down a track in an area where the bush was a little less dense. The ‘school’ consisted of one small mud building with a corrugated roof, and one round thatched building made out of branches. The other teachers and the children did not know we would be arriving that day. As we arrived, clusters of children were being taught English and math under trees around the school area and rushed to greet their teachers. We watched part of a lesson where the children from nomadic ethnic groups showed off what they had learned in math. The teachers

¹⁸ For a discussion on this notion of quality education see, Fitz-Gibbon, Carol Taylor. 2004. *Monitoring Education*. London: Continuum.

¹⁹ Clarity on goals of education is elusive, and evolving, even in the so called developed world. Conflicts over the content and pedagogy for K-12 education are rampant in United States, for

example.

²⁰ Harber, Cliver and Lynn Davies. 2002. “School Management and Effectiveness in Developing Countries: The Post Bureaucratic School.” in *School Development*, edited by D. Hopkins and D. Reynolds. London: Continuum. p.40

were extremely poorly and unreliably paid, miles from any town and with no transport of their own. There seemed little incentive to do much at all. Yet, however basic, and despite the unpromising working conditions, education was taking place and the pupils seemed to be interested and to have learned something. The school seemed to be functioning reasonably effectively for its circumstances, but needed to be judged according to very different criteria from a school in Britain or America. That the school had managed to attract and hold children from nomadic groups traditionally hostile or indifferent to western education was, for example, a significant mark of success.²¹

The considerations mentioned above have guided us to look for *quality in context*, while at the same time preserving the idea that schools can always be improved to produce better achievers in school curriculum as well as better human beings. We cannot begin with a definition of what works that continues to trap us in failure. The idea of quality-in-context has been informed by local perceptions about the schools as being good or bad. The effort has been to investigate what aspects of these schools constitute their appeal as better schools within specific contexts. The research focused on identifying traits and ideas that could then be refined further through policy inputs and showcasing better practice. The research process and indicators will be discussed in the next section.

²¹ Ibid. p.24.

5. Methodology

5.1 Putting the Process Together

The process for conducting WWW was just as important as its findings. WWW could be simply commissioned as a research to be conducted, written up, and disseminated by a professional group of researchers. However, taking this approach would necessarily undermine our concern for putting civil society organizations at the centre of this process. As such, then, the process had to deal with the twin, and at times competing, challenges of designing research in the technical sense and making use of the process to forge partnerships with key civil society organizations in ways that would bring to the fore their potential role in advocacy and in a campaign for quality education in their local contexts.

To meet these challenges, the process brought together a team of academics and CSOs. The research professionals formed a core advisory team referred to as the RDT (refer to appendix A). RDT was made up of researchers who demonstrated research expertise and experience. They were also affiliated with leading institutions in the education sector.²² RDT provided technical advice on setting parameters of the case study, determination of methodological priorities, and schemes for data collection and analysis. The team saw this arrangement as a first step toward development of a research and advisory network consisting of individuals from the leading research institutions in the education sector and CSOs working at the grassroots level. The research teams drawn from local CSOs were carefully chosen on the basis of their

reputation, linkages, experience, and operational capacity. They conducted research in the selected districts and developed research findings with the guidance of an advisor from RDT.

5.2 Site & School Selection

Effective selection was a key step in the research due to a limited sample size and the desire to make general but not representative statements about the nature of the findings. Careful criteria and standard procedures were established for 'selection' throughout the research.

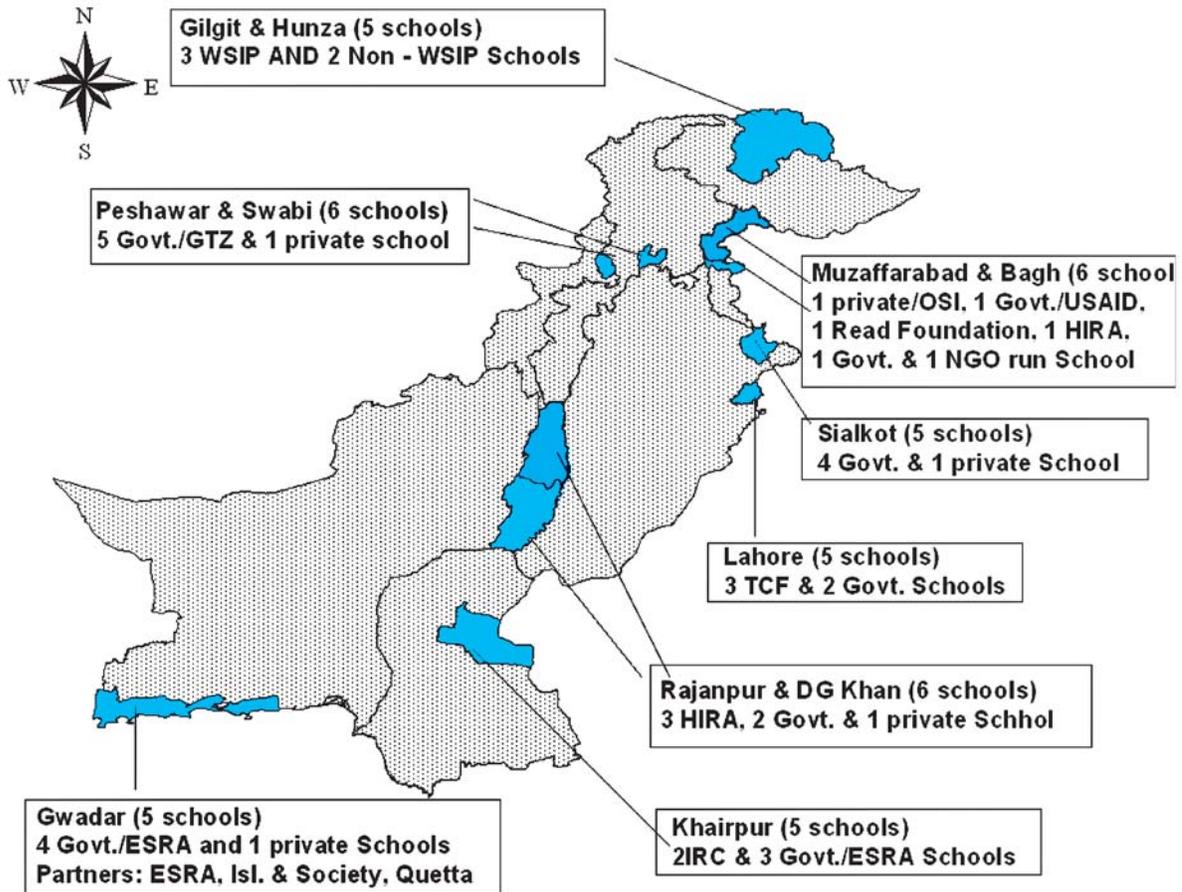
Eight research sites were selected to ensure a broad and balanced spread of regions, language groups and rural/urban settings in Pakistan (refer to Figure 1 for details). At each site reputable local CSOs were partnered with to ensure access to local institutions and stakeholders and greater advocacy.

Initially, 15 schools were shortlisted per site on the basis of quality indicators such as student performance and school reputation, as reported by government assessment reports and records maintained by private school systems. After in-depth visits to each school, 5-6 schools were selected per site, based on preliminary teacher interviews and classroom observation that indicated evidence of quality or innovation, a willingness to participate as well as the availability of basic infrastructure, enrolment and teachers. The final set of schools included representation of government and private (non-profit and low-cost for-profit), male and female, primary and secondary or high schools.

The schools selected represented a range of

²² The institutions included AKU-IED and Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS).

Figure 1: Research Site Locations and Schools



organizational forms and support mechanisms including government unassisted schools, stand-alone private schools, government schools assisted by a program (GTZ's Technical Assistance, AKU-IED's WSIP, USAID's ESRA, UNICEF's Child Friendly Schools) as well as private schools which are a part of a system (TCF, HNEF and IRC).

5.3 Data Collection

Conceived as a multi-case study with individual schools as the unit cases, the study employed qualitative methods of inquiry. The data collection was

guided by local assumptions about what factors affect school quality. These included a primary emphasis on factors such as teacher professional development, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the school level and community participation and a secondary emphasis on factors such as language, world view and gender. The data collection was also guided by community perceptions about school quality.

Data was collected through repeated visits to the field spanning a period that varied between 6-9 months. First, research began in the school including extensive interviews with the head teacher and teachers, focus group discussions with teachers and students, and classroom observation. Second, research

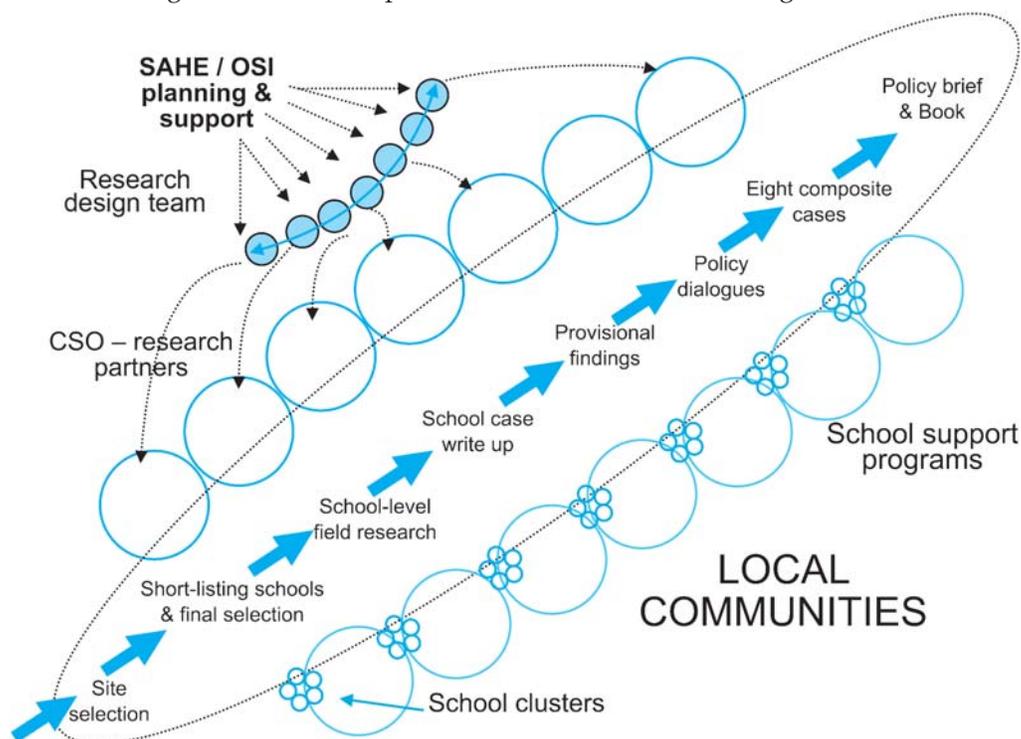
moved to the community including focus group discussions with parents and school committees. Finally, the system²³ in which the schools are embedded was studied through interviews with system officials focusing on issues such as teacher recruitment and promotion, curriculum, textbooks, assessment, infrastructure, the nature of accountability and incentive systems and the role of the community in school affairs.

5.4 Policy Dialogues

The preliminary findings based on data analysis from

all the cases were taken back to the field through policy dialogues. These dialogues aimed at validating findings and getting feedback from key stakeholders. Four policy dialogues were held in Peshawar, Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad during September 2006.²⁴ Each dialogue was hosted by a local research partner or another credible organization in that region. Policy dialogue participants included representatives from government (Provincial Education Departments, Bureaus of Curriculum, Elementary Colleges, Textbook Board, and District Education Officers), donors and civil society organizations. Feedback from these key stakeholders has been critical and was incorporated into this report.

Figure 2 : Partnerships in the Research and Monitoring Process



²³ The term system is used in this report loosely to mean a formal system only:

—In the case of public schools, it refers to government mechanisms—the education bureaucracy—which support and control the public schools at the district and sub-district level. The education departments hire and fire teachers, disburse salaries and provide and maintain school infrastructure. They are also supposed to provide regular inspection services to schools.

—In the case of not-for-profit private systems, it means the formal

support system these organizations have whose sole purpose is to support and monitor the individual schools run by them in accordance with given rules and regulations.

²⁴ The policy dialogue planned for Quetta had to be cancelled due to security issues in Balochistan at the time.

6. Findings

The 'what works' study took us deep into some of the better mainstream public and private schools in Pakistan, in all of its provinces, the Northern Areas and Kashmir. The team conducting this study found a complex mix of school and processes that supported the schools.

What works and why cases reveal a tapestry of processes, systems, networks, and individuals coming together in productive context-specific practices of schooling. The multi-case study has sought to simultaneously excavate the peculiar characteristics of each case as well as attempted to make general statements about the promise that these schools hold. Generally, we found that effective schools exist within both the public and private sectors in Pakistan.

6.1 Leadership

Leadership emerges as the central characteristic of schools that worked. Leadership thus appeared as a necessity with its peculiar forms varying across cases. At some school sites it appeared concentrated in individuals. When the school systems were more organized, as in the case of private not-for-profit school systems, the leadership function also appeared to go beyond the individual and was distributed and delegated across points in the system. Whichever the form, the existence of effective leadership in case schools cut across the provinces, districts, schools and school systems (refer to anecdotes 1, 2 & 3)

In all cases, leadership appeared to function to maintain 'regularity' at the level of each school, solve problems of an administrative and academic nature for both teachers and students, and provide linkages

between the school and its surrounding communities.

Leaders were often found to be dedicated individuals, with a certain kind of background: long standing experience, from an educated family, enjoying community support and respect, possessing an inclusive communicative style (such as collaboration, team building, delegation of authority), dynamism and clarity of vision.

What works and why cases reveal a tapestry of processes, systems, networks, and individuals coming together in productive context-specific practice of schooling.

6.1.1 Leadership within the school

In nearly all the selected schools, leadership mattered. It was reflected in the effect it had on the school, such as cleanliness of the school premises, regular attendance of teachers, emotional investment in the school by students and the community, school-community relations, and so on.

School principals cared about the schools' well being, kept a vigil in the school through most of the school day, and, in some cases, had a long term vision for their school (refer to anecdote 1).

Head teachers were often appreciative of the critical importance of professional development for teachers, knew what it entailed, and were positively inclined to support the change in teachers' practice based on the training.

The leadership style was often consultative rather than authoritarian. Inside schools, effective leaders made good use of the principle of delegation. In nearly all the cases, they delegated their duties to several teachers. In some cases, the leadership responsibilities were also distributed to senior students. Successful school leaders appeared to make considerable use of

complementary leadership within the school, community or the systemic context within which the school operated.

Leadership was instrumental in ensuring order in the school. However, to accomplish this, the actual measures taken were different in different contexts. Where it was concentrated in the school principals themselves, they appeared busy the whole day, in taking rounds and observing the various activities of the school (refer to anecdote 3). Most government schools in the study, with few exceptions, fit this category. Where it was not concentrated in the school – as in the case of private not-for-profit systems – the organizations provided a framework for rules, regulations and internal monitoring (refer to anecdote 2).

6.1.2 Leadership: engagement with the external environment

Schools with strong leadership showed greater capacity to absorb support provided by the government, donors, immediate community, professional and social networks, and others. They were also pro-active in seeking such support (refer to anecdote 6). The schools with stronger leadership identified their needs more clearly and could articulate them while seeking support. Sometimes, they also pushed back on donor agenda and negotiated with donors to change their priorities to respond to the real needs of the schools (refer to anecdote 1).

The exceptions involved schools where the leadership inside the school was directly exercised by

Anecdote 1: Government Girls Primary School (GGPS) Gwadar

The school appears in this head teacher's rhetoric as not just a place of work. It shows up as *her* school, signifying a strong sense of ownership. A deep and abiding interest in all aspects of the school's function characterizes Begum's work. This interest coincides with her belief that only a good education can ensure a great future for her community in these rapidly changing times for Gwadar. Her priorities may not be ideal, but her concerns are spot on: she is concerned about her students memorizing facts instead of comprehending them; she is uncomfortable with a lack of application of pedagogical skills that could help kids really learn; above all she is concerned about the lack of capacity in the department of education to address these issues. These, and a lot of other additional challenges, define her work.

During a typical school day, Begum is rarely found in her office. She spends most of her day hovering about the school, intermingling with her teachers and students. Being fully aware of the schedules and contents of the training programs being run for her teachers, she ensures that she visits them while they are training so as to evaluate and support their classroom practice later. She is also learning to support them as they become equipped with new methods of teaching their students better. Teachers cannot do well if not supported. Begum exemplifies the role that a school leader can play in supporting teachers to perform better.

Begum understands the needs of her school, which she follows up to address in a very spirited way. One example of this behaviour is the manner in which she dealt with a donor (USAID/ESRA) that wanted to provide support to the school on its own terms. They wanted to provide a cash grant to the school to buy two water coolers, however, Begum felt that water coolers were useless in their case as they depended on the supply of clean drinking water. She thought money would be better spent if used to buy a refrigerator. When the donor did not accept the solution offered by the school community, she announced that its money was not needed if it could not be used to address real needs of the school. Finally, the donor had to provide a cash grant to the school in accordance with the wishes of the school community.

As an effective school leader, Begum is many things at one time. When engaged in school improvement planning, she appears as a great planner, working out in detail what is best for her school in terms of producing a conducive learning environment in the classroom. As a collaborator, she plays a central role while working closely with the SMC to develop and implement school improvement plans. As a motivator, she works from a position of trust she has been able to generate in her students, teachers, and school community. As a fund raiser, she is able to raise funds from sources other than the government. Her judicious spending of funds is demonstrated by the transformation of the school from a two room primary school to a thriving secondary school in less than ten years. Begum's example is important because it destroys the myth of lack of resources being the sole underlying factor impeding school based reforms. It also helps us understand that it may be crucial for educational reformers to set their sights on head teachers and find ways of improving their performance.

forces outside of the school who found the opportunity to do so from the platform of School Management Committee (SMC). In one school of Khairpur, the SMC chairman was also the local political leader. In this school, the SMC became a lot more powerful than the school based leadership, encroaching on almost all aspects of the functioning of the school, while the jurisdiction of the school principal was pushed to the margins.

6.1.3 Enabling environments for leadership

The environment that enabled good leadership varied a great deal across the cases, particularly in

terms of the sources of support. In cases with systematic support, processes were put in place by a private school system or program that deliberately cultivated leadership (refer to anecdote 2). They appeared to spend considerable time in developing processes or systems for ensuring leadership, which included identification and selection criteria, training and support, promotion or career ladder, and accountability.

There was no evidence of active government support to head teachers from the government education departments. In such schools, most head teachers had been there for a long time, and merely allowing them to continue doing a good job without intervening was seen, interestingly enough, as a certain kind of support.

Anecdote 2: TCF Secondary School Lahore

Nuzhat Jan is the head teacher of the TCF Secondary School.²⁵ Nuzhat has been a teacher for over 20 years and has served as a head teacher for 3 years. These years of experience have helped shape her into the educator and dynamic leader that she is today.

“My basic (teaching) philosophy is to encourage students to raise questions, to think and to think both wisely and unwisely. I try to generate a certain level of curiosity among students, so that they learn to create knowledge on their own. This is the basic philosophy I follow and encourage my teachers to follow as well.” – Nuzhat

Nuzhat leads by example, developing shared ideas and behaviour within the school. Cooperation amongst teaching staff is the norm in this school. Teachers are given the opportunity to share in school management and decision making responsibilities. Even though not required by the system, she has devised a system of delegating responsibilities by assigning coordinators for different activities. Hamna, the primary school head teacher, echoes much of what Nuzhat says, emphasizing that communication is the key to building good relationships with teachers.

Nuzhat sees support as an integral part of the monitoring and evaluation process. The head teachers take classes so that teachers learn by example and they counsel teachers on their shortcomings whenever possible. Providing support is an ongoing process that she and Hamna continually work on. Nuzhat has an ‘open door’ policy encouraging teachers to seek support whenever they want. Shahena, a new teacher, happily notes how she ‘bothered’ Nuzhat until she understood how to make a lesson plan properly.

Monitoring, support, feedback are all seen in a positive light in TCF Secondary School, such practices are meant to be constructive and are seen as a means to learning and further improvement. Shahena explains, *“It helps us see if we’ve made changes or not. I’ve learned time management, I hadn’t learned it before, I needed to adjust myself.”*

In TCF, there is a deliberate strategy for cultivating leadership, which includes identification and selection of head teachers, providing roles and scope of work, specific training and support, and incentives and accountability. This mechanism ensures that the minimum level of leadership required for quality is present. It is supported by a system that provides clear cut guidelines for managing the school, monitoring and evaluation, and regular professional development.

²⁵ The Citizens Foundation is a not-for-profit private school system whose mission is to provide affordable high quality education to underprivileged children in urban slums and rural areas. It was established in 1995 by a group of six industrialists and

philanthropists. Starting with 5 schools in the slum areas of Karachi, today TCF has grown to 311 schools in 42 locations across the country with 38,000 students and 2,400 teachers and is well-known for providing quality education.

Anecdote 3: Government Boys Primary School (GBPS) Rajanpur

GBPS Rajanpur is a school that works despite adverse circumstances and minimal infrastructure. Two years ago, the school, with its 17 teachers and 900 students, was shifted from a large rental premises to a facility with only two rooms. With such a severe infrastructural constraint, this school could have become completely dysfunctional. Yet, to the utter surprise of our field team, the school remained popular with the community and managed to retain close to 700 students. The head teacher appears to employ rare leadership skills to keep the school together, his staff motivated and functioning, and students attending school regularly.

Attempting to create a positive learning environment under very difficult conditions is an unending task for the head teacher and his team of teachers. Flexibility and adjustment of space and time is the rule of game in this school. The head teacher has allocated every inch of space within the school premises. Even the outside walls of the latrines and the boundary walls of the schools are turned into use as makeshift blackboards. His own office is also a makeshift arrangement, using a small space in one corner of the veranda.

Under the severe infrastructural constraints imposed on the school, it is faced with shortages of all kinds. Since most of the students have to do their day's work in open space, they need some sun in the winters and shade during summers. Thus, the space, shade, sun, water, blackboard, so on and so forth, all become scarce resources to be shared. This classic situation of scarcity needs leadership and cooperation between the teachers. Teachers took turns shifting their classes to shady areas during summers and shared sun during the winters in a similar manner. Teachers often decided among themselves who will teach their class first, while the others close by assign reading to their students to keep the noise level under control.

In conservative communities, one indicator of the community's trust in a school is their willingness to send their daughters to attend it. GBPS Rajanpur certainly passes this test. Parents happily send their daughters, approximately 200 girls, to the school, even though there are two girls' schools in the neighbourhood.

6.2 Teaching, Curriculum & Assessment

These are three essential ingredients of any educative experience. Working on any one alone does not transform the educative experience. Also, lack of alignment between them undermines the potential positive impact. Attempts to improve any one of them in isolation do not work.

6.2.1 Professional development and teaching

Our study finds that teacher training as carried out at present is not working. Teachers in our case schools had been exposed to in-service training many times over, but with little by way of value added. This is understandable as the White Paper on National Education Policy issued by the Ministry of Education (MoE) also reports a large number of teachers, nearly 40,000, being trained annually by more than 203 teacher training institutes²⁶ in the public sector across the country. Donors run their own programs as well. At this point, we are not in a position to disentangle the numbers trained by donors from the number of

teachers trained independently of donor driven projects. But, we have found that even where such donor-driven projects deliver training of relative quality, the impact on the quality of teaching remained limited due to the lack of alignment with the related ingredients. Resources invested on teacher training, therefore, are more likely to be wasted in the absence of a systemic approach. This is not to say that teacher professional development is not desirable. We are only suggesting, based on our data, that professional development works better if there are systems in place that ensure continuity and alignment.

Teachers in many of our case schools, both public and private not-for-profit, had been exposed to in-service training many times over. The philosophy that underpinned these trainings was also reported as similar. In both types of schools, professional development promoted child-centred and activity-based approaches to teaching and learning. A crucial difference in the environment within which the training took place was the recognition of the need for field support. In the case of private not-for profit school systems, follow-up and classroom support formed an integral part. In the public sector schools, however,

²⁶ For example at the provincial level, institutions include the Bureau of Curriculum (BoC), Directorate of Staff Development (DSD),

Provincial Institutes of Teacher Education (PITE) and at the district level Government College of Education (GCE).

such support was scarce and dependent on external interventions.

Regardless of how it was provided, where the schoolteachers had an opportunity for ongoing support, they seemed to be making better use of professional development activities in their teaching practice. This support was available to teachers in WSIP²⁷ (refer to anecdote 5) and TCF schools. As mentioned above, in the case of public schools, such support was present in schools supported by donor funded projects such as GTZ²⁸ in the case of NWFP, and ESRA²⁹ in the case of Sindh and Balochistan (refer to anecdote 4).

Where ongoing support was available, teachers were beginning to align their practice with approaches promoted by professional development. Classrooms

in such schools appeared relatively more participatory, learner centred, and less didactic. Yet teaching practice was more a collage of methodologies. That is, while teachers were attempting new practices, they had not completely abandoned the traditional practices. As they were learning to manage children and classrooms differently, many still regarded traditional practices to be more culturally appropriate and useful in maintaining discipline in the classrooms.

6.2.2 Curriculum and assessment

We found that the contents of the official curriculum and assessment practices often worked against the attempts to reform instructional practices in the case schools. The curriculum and assessment requirements

Anecdote 4: GBPS Khairpur

For the students of GBPS Khairpur, going to school is something they eagerly look forward to every day. Their school has a pleasant environment with trees and greenery and classrooms decorated with their class work, colourful drawings and poetry. Teachers are friendly and approachable, as a student of class IV says, *“Our teachers play with us in break. If we don’t have money to buy the ball they give us money.”* And students enjoy their classes, particularly taking part in class-based activities.

Delving deeper we found that the ESRA, Professional Development Program (PDP) has brought about some of this positive impact. The teachers claim that they do not use corporal punishment anymore and have noticed a remarkable difference, higher interest and confidence, amongst the students. Teacher Farrakh Hamid attributes the success of the PDP in influencing the teaching style to the school support trainers who regularly visit classes, providing support and feedback to teachers.

The head teacher, Lakhani, notes how PDP has helped him understand his role as head teacher better. He has realized that the head teacher is more than a mere manager, s/he plays an important role in bringing about improvement in the teaching and learning process. He is now aware that he must be cooperative, providing both moral and professional support to his colleagues; and as a result of this approach, teachers feel included, appreciate their relationship with him and are quicker to assist in making the school a success.

At the same time, Lakhani is cognizant and candid about the limitations to implementing professional development. He says that system related issues such as lack of resources for teaching materials, insufficient monitoring, low motivation amongst teachers and syllabus and examination system requirements that limit use of activity based methods would have to be resolved in order to attain higher quality.

²⁷ WSIP is a whole school improvement program initiated by the AKU-IED which works with schools over the course of 3 years on six areas – quality of teaching and learning; leadership, management and administration; curriculum enrichment and staff development; building, resources and accommodation, health; hygiene and moral development of students; and community participation.

²⁸ GTZ has worked closely with the NWFP Department of Education over the past 10 years to reform inservice teacher training, the latest project being Education Sector Development Program (ESDP). It has provided technical assistance in training over 60,000 teachers in the government sector, developing training materials as well as skilled master trainers, working on textbook

reform in the province by developing textbook writers and monitoring teacher development. They have also assisted in developing cluster based teacher support through mentor teachers.

²⁹ ESRA program is a \$74.5 million initiative funded by the USAID in support of the Government of Pakistan’s ESR effort. USAID/ESRA operates across 6 technical areas (policy and planning, professional development, literacy, public-community partnerships, public-private partnerships, and information and communication technologies), 13 educational jurisdictions (9 districts, 2 provinces, the Islamabad Capital Territory, and the Federal Ministry of Education).

³⁰ Schools that are attempting to move away from traditional methods and authoritarian environments.

favoured rote memorization thus pushing even innovative schools³⁰ to resort to rote learning particularly by grade 4 or 5 just to get students through the government grade-5 exams.

Generally we found that there was a gap between the actual practice and the said practice when it came to language in the classroom. Teachers in most schools were seen to be frequently using mother tongue to aid comprehension in the classroom, even when they claimed that Urdu was a better language for instruction. The said practice informs the policy on the language of textbooks, which is Urdu in most cases, with the situation in Sindh being something of an exception. The place of the mother tongue in primary-level education was an area outside the scope of this study but our encounter with the issue over the course of the study certainly suggests it as a field for urgent further inquiry.

We found that schools often reinforce a culture of unquestioning acceptance, which renders promotion of a more open and inclusive world view difficult. The curriculum contents and assessment practices seemed to support such a culture. Teachers were not observed to go beyond the limits and biases in the textbooks. Many teachers, when asked, responded that they had not read anything outside the prescribed books for their subjects. They also did not appear to be aware of any biases in the textbooks.³¹

6.3 Systemic Support

Systemic support³² refers to supporting learning and teaching in the schools by bringing to bear all the resources of various components of the system in a concerted manner. It may be defined

Systemic support... may be defined as the alignment between aspects of quality such as teacher professional development, materials, resources, curricula, assessment as well as the linkages, information flows and regularity of feedback between the school and the system in which it is embedded.

as the alignment between aspects of quality such as teacher professional development, materials, resources, curricula, assessment as well as the linkages, information flows and regularity of feedback between the school and the system in which it is embedded.

On the basis of the findings from many cases we can claim that the level of support from formal systems varies tremendously between the schools run by private not-for-profit systems and the public schools. In this section we describe findings on systemic support from three different organizational mechanisms; the schools operating under WSIP in the northern areas, TCF and Hira private schools, and finally the public sector schools.

6.3.1 WSIP schools

The schools in the northern areas are operating within the context of linkages between an apex institution³³, a local professional development centre³⁴ and a WSIP³⁵. As far as ongoing professional development of teachers is concerned, it becomes operational through linkages with AKU-IED. As a result of training at AKU-IED, a critical mass of teachers and researchers has been developed over time, which can generate and sustain significant change in school clusters through a holistic approach and ongoing intervention. In part, this is accomplished through the creation of subsidiary institutions in the form of the Professional Development Centre, North (PDCN) in Gilgit (refer to anecdote 5).

³¹ Biases would include those against gender, religious minorities and so on.

³² The term systemic should be seen in opposition to piecemeal approaches to educational reform. As an example, we do not believe that teacher training alone will guarantee that our classrooms get quality instruction. Quality of teaching will depend on the ways in which the entire system will bring its pressure to bear on it. In this sense, then, systemic support implies the ways in which the entire system works to support quality teaching and learning at the classroom level

³³ AKU-IED is the premier institution for teacher professional development and pedagogical research in the country located in Karachi. It offers both degree as well as professional programs (Certificates in Education and Education Leadership & Management) and has established Professional Development Centres in Gilgit, Chitral, NWFP and Karachi as outposts for teacher professional development and linking teachers and schools with a larger network.

³⁴ PDCN in Gilgit setup by AKU-IED

Anecdote 5: Primary School Gilgit

Sitting proudly on top of a hill in the remote Northern Areas is the Primary School, Gilgit, an impressive example of quality. Over the years, a variety of inputs and support from WSIP (AKU-IED), the Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan (AKES,P) and the local community have contributed to making it into the remarkable school it is today.

At Primary School Gilgit, continuous professional development has become the norm. Under WSIP, teachers have not only received much needed support in developing their pedagogical and content knowledge but the school has also developed a deep appreciation for continuous professional development. Teachers now participate in monthly sessions for sharing knowledge and experience with each other, and whenever a teacher returns from a professional development course, s/he is expected to share his/her learning with others. More importantly, professional development continues to be one of the top priorities of the school development plan even though all teachers have been professionally trained.

The school head teacher has learned that his role is broader than that of managing the smooth operation of his school, rather it includes providing academic *leadership* to his teaching staff. Such leadership includes identifying the professional development needs of his teachers, and ensuring that these needs are fulfilled, monitoring school and classroom processes to ensure that the inputs are being appropriately utilized. Leadership in this school is not confined to formal positions; it is encompassing, distributed across roles and based on expertise and experience. Sheherzad, a dedicated teacher who is a source of inspiration for other teachers at the school, has been recognized as a teacher leader, receiving the Best Teacher Award for 2005 in Gilgit.

Apart from these inputs, there are two additional layers of support for monitoring and managing the daily affairs of the school. AKES,P provides professional support and monitoring to all teachers through observation and constructive feedback after the WSIP program ends, thus ensuring continuity of such support. The Village Education Committee (VEC) works *with* the school in a variety of ways, hiring teachers for vacant positions, keeping an eye on teacher regularity and punctuality, and acting as a bridge between school and community. The latter has now become a pillar of support for the school.

6.3.2 TCF and Hira schools

In TCF, schools are a part of a multi-tiered support system consisting of a head office, regional offices in each province headed by a Regional Manager, along with Area Managers and Education Managers for each sub-region, and finally head teachers at the school level. The head and regional offices provide clear guidelines for operating schools, teacher recruitment, teacher training, and monitoring and support. The regional office also maintains a close link with the school through frequent monitoring visits and monthly principals meetings. Head teachers provide support through continuous classroom observation and feedback. All monitoring information flows between the different support layers and is used to improve mechanisms such as teacher professional development.

TCF also places a premium on continuous teacher professional development. It has a dedicated teacher training centre in Karachi which is responsible for designing all training materials and maintaining a team

of master trainers. All teachers must undergo TCF training; for new teachers it includes six weeks of extensive pre-service training and for inservice teachers it consists of four weeks of annual refresher training.

The Hira Educational Project³⁶ initiated by the Tanzeem-e-Asatza Pakistan (TAP)³⁷ sought to educate students along modern lines while developing a religious outlook in them. The parents generally seemed pleased with this dual focus, as one parent put it, “they are preparing our children for this world as well as the next.” The Hira schools are the product of individual entrepreneurial initiatives supported by the TAP network.

So, the Hira project, among other things, represents a support network for ideologically aligned schools. This incorporates bureaucratic, social and political linkages derived from the fact of TAP members being, or having been, in government service as well as their closeness to a politico-religious party. This layered network constitutes a dynamic support complex for Hira schools.

³⁶ Hira Educational Project began in 1990 in Lahore. In 1997, its name was changed to Hira National Educational Foundation. The Foundation operates 215 institutions, including 4 colleges.

³⁷ TAP is a network of serving and retired public sector school teachers.

The study found such networks to perform important functions that range from capturing support, teacher training, monitoring, and providing access to resources. It also provides a sense of being connected to a larger ‘community with shared concerns.’

6.3.3 Public sector schools

Under the Local Government Ordinance (LGO) promulgated in Pakistan in 2001, the administration of education is devolved to districts. The district education department along with Education Monitoring Committees, constitutes the formal system of education governance at the district level. Under this arrangement the district education department has acquired the responsibility for recruiting, paying and managing teachers. In addition to this, the primary responsibility for earmarking and spending fiscal resources also rests with the district. The district government is also responsible for inspecting schools and for carrying out the annual evaluation of teachers and head teachers.

Viewed from the perspective of the schools, however, the formal system described above does not seem to be working very well. The system’s monitoring function, for example, was found to be more focused on inspecting mundane things such as attendance records, and so on. The schools, in general, did not perceive such monitoring to be useful in terms of improving their infrastructure, teaching or learning practice. Public sector monitoring, thus, appeared more like ‘inspections’ than part of a participatory monitoring and support system.

In general, public schools, even where they worked, were performing without enough support from the formal educational system. In most public schools, head teachers and teachers complained of a disconnect between the school and the education department. The provincial education departments, educational bureaucracy at the district level and formal school councils were not seen as useful. The case schools in

our study seemed to have developed informal support mechanisms that enabled them to compensate for the lack of adequate support from the government. To make up, school leaders functioned to generate a relationship of trust between the school and community. This relationship in turn appeared to help the schools work better.

6.4 Community Support

For practical purposes in this study, when we use the term community, it refers primarily to parents and notables³⁸ in the area in which the school is located. These are the people who determine whether or not

the school is a good school by deciding whether or not to send their children to the school. Secondly, it pertains to those, including parents, who are willing to actively support the school.

In some cases we found communities providing critical support to the school (refer to anecdotes 6 and 7). As mentioned before, communities were often mobilized by dynamic school leaders to compensate for the lack of a formal support system. Community

support was found to be more effective where it was school-led and restricted to school improvement related tasks. However, where it assumed a monitoring and inspection role, the relationship between community and school seemed strained.

School councils as formal structures were in place in nearly all public schools. However, we found that their mere existence did not guarantee community support. *Where community support was visible, it seemed not so much a function of the school council as of a relationship of trust between the community and the school.* One such example is the role of VECs in the northern areas of Pakistan (refer to anecdote 5). Where it was playing such a role, the head teacher or teachers have a relationship of trust with the broader community. They often had the confidence of the community, deriving from their efforts and perceived potential to improve the school.

Where community support was visible, it seemed not so much a function of the school council as of a relationship of trust between the community and the school.

³⁸ Individuals whose status rests on relative wealth or derives from current or previous association with government.

Anecdote 6: GBPS Sialkot

The case of GBPS Sialkot exemplifies how community support built on a relationship of trust between the community and school aided by internal leadership can help to radically transform a school.

For 17 years, GBPS Sialkot was a poorly performing school characterized by dilapidated infrastructure, inadequate teaching staff and teacher irregularity. In 1999, all this began to change. Community interaction with the school was prompted for the first time when a school council was set up. The keen interest of a few members ensured that the school council effectively utilized grant money to add on rooms, construct a boundary wall and purchase furniture. Immediately that year, there was a huge jump in enrolment from 25 to 150 students. The council then set its sights on increasing the teaching staff by lobbying with the department. Eventually the number of teachers was increased from three to five.

In 2002, the council took a bold step and forced the aged head teacher, with his traditionalist mind-set, to step down. As a replacement, they chose Mr. Zakir Hussein, a hardworking junior teacher who recognized the value of new teaching methodologies and had been actively engaged with the local community to improve the school.

This move quickly bore fruit. Upon becoming head teacher, Zakir began to involve teachers in planning and making key decisions. He created a system of delegation of duties so that important functions continued to be performed even when he himself or one of his teachers were not present in the school. Teachers responded to his efforts by regularly seeking guidance from him. After government declaration of a co-education policy, Zakir not only quickly opened the doors of his school to girls, but took immediate measures to create space for mothers by holding regular meetings for them.

Over the next two years, the school's reputation began to improve. The school received awards at the local level for best school and students received awards in extracurricular competitions. The school attracted another 100 students, including children from neighbouring villages and 40 girls. Parents were more willing to send their daughters to this boys' school located just outside the village rather than the girls' school inside the village, due to what they felt was an obvious difference in quality.

Motivated by the positive improvements within the school, the school council, along with Zakir, stepped up their efforts. They conducted extensive fundraising with local philanthropists and political representatives. They were able to raise 10,000 rupees from the local Nazim and deputy Nazims, and for school furniture needs, they were able to raise close to 38,000 rupees, ensuring that all students had chairs and desks.

Anecdote 7: Government Boys Middle School Bagh

The school stands as testimony to the resilience of the community in the face of the catastrophic earthquake of October 2005 which spared few in Kashmir. The symbiotic relationship between the community and school leadership demonstrated its strength in the aftermath of the disaster.

The head teacher leads his team by example. He has been teaching in this school for the last 24 years and as head teacher for the last 12. He does not avail even his due leave. Every day he reaches the school half an hour before the school time and leaves after the gatekeeper has locked all the rooms. This practice has continued even after the earthquake which took away many near and dear ones. As a result all teachers are punctual despite the trauma. The example of the head teacher is clearly making a difference within the school.

Before the earthquake, he had encouraged the community to form organized groups, to help the school in smooth functioning, though there is no formal provision for such school-related community participation in the territory of Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK). One was called, taleemi (educational) committee and the other, school management committee. The taleemi committee was assigned the job of keeping a check on student drop outs, co-curricular activities, helping teachers with availability of additional human resource, and interacting with the education department on behalf of the school. A number of times, during the past 24 years, the department had issued his transfer orders but the taleemi committee used to put pressure on the department for reversal of such orders and was successful. Complimentarily, the school management committee used to help in the infrastructure management, raising funds for the school, arranging annual functions and competitions in and with other schools. This functional approach towards school-community partnership, though initiated by the head teacher was a collective discourse of the whole team and its evolution stretched over a number of years. This made the school well known in the district.

After the cataclysmic earthquake, the committee members themselves badly affected, saw the children traumatized with some getting injured while chasing after relief helicopters and trucks. They discussed the issue with the head teacher and unanimously decided to revive the school as soon as possible. For this, a collective effort was launched by the two committees, teachers and the head teacher. A door-to-door campaign was launched, not only to convince parents to send their children to school but also to gather whatever material or financial support could be mustered. Exactly nine days after the disaster, on 17th October, the school was functioning again.

6.5 Donor Support

Donors appear to be permeating the system of education in Pakistan at nearly all levels including the schools. Nearly all public sector case schools had imprints of donor intervention. Some schools had received donor inputs, and some schools were currently being impacted by donor funded projects.

For example, all the public schools studied in Sindh and Balochistan were being targeted by the USAID supported ESRA project. The project was involved in training the head teachers and teachers. It was also working with SCs to develop, fund, and implement small scale school improvement projects. Those head teachers and teachers who obtained training under the

project were being networked through creation of centre or cluster schools that acted as resources centres for the teachers. Trainings are not, however, magic wands, and classroom practices do not change if teachers are not constantly supported and monitored in their efforts to change their practice. This constant support is visible. Yet, it will – as reported by most of those interviewed – not survive after the expiry of the project. The donor driven improvements, thus posed a dilemma characterized by fireworks both followed and preceded by darkness. Teachers need ongoing support as suggested by our findings. They seem to have it for now, as observed in those schools served by donors. But they know from historical trends on donor inputs, that such support will disappear as fast as the donor itself.

7. Policy Recommendations

In this section we will discuss the policy implications and recommendations based on WWW research findings.

7.1 Retrieving and Developing Human Resource in the Public Sector

Across the country, this study has found remarkable examples of school leadership in the public sector with good teachers or head teachers playing a key role. It is precisely this role that strongly indicates the need to retrieve the available human resource within the sector. We need to keep in mind that public sector teachers number over 500,000 and even if only 5%, let us say, have the necessary leadership qualities, teaching ability and knowledge base, the number would still be in excess of 25,000. These men and women would constitute the essential, school-based core of any effort for sustained improvement in the quality of education. As matters stand, who these individuals are, where they are located, and what they do has little relevance for policy. This must change. They need to be identified, given appropriate responsibilities, support and incentives, and placed at the heart of a long-term reform effort in public sector education.

The criteria for identification and selection of such human resource has to be meaningful and the process transparent. Some form of voluntary testing could be introduced to assess content as well as methodological knowledge. Experience of managing schools could be considered for those who have been head teachers.

Those identified could then be placed in high schools that are designated as cluster centres and given the primary responsibility for looking after the cluster schools. Those with an outstanding record who have recently retired could be taken back into service on a contract basis as well. Given the obvious issues of authority and power-sharing that are bound to arise as a consequence of setting up a parallel system of selection and appointment, it would be prudent to leave the structure intact in the short term with the

proviso that only those who had cleared a certain set of tests and a credible interview process would be eligible for appointments of a particular category in key high schools. The same should apply to leading teacher training institutions.

7.2 Incentivizing and Retaining Human Resource

Far greater policy attention needs to be paid to the human factor in education change. Leadership, particularly, should be promoted in the system through the provision of

carefully designed incentives. Civil society and donors could also consider interventions in this realm. The Punjab Education Foundation (PEF), an autonomous public sector organization, is already providing incentives to private sector schools as well as teachers and the initial results appear to be encouraging. It is necessary to develop career ladders that allow effective head teachers and teachers to move up through responsibility structures while staying in the teaching and training realm, as in the cases of WSIP and TCF. This is also something that the MoE White Paper strongly

We need to keep in mind that public sector teachers number over 500,000 and even if only 5%, let us say, have the necessary leadership qualities, teaching ability and knowledge base, the number would still be in excess of 25,000.

argues in recommending that teachers with the ability and potential should have the legitimate expectation for reaching Grade 21 while staying in the teaching cadre.

Determining merit through testing should ensure that the teacher goes on to a different pay scale or grade regardless of whether he or she chooses to stay in the primary section or move on. Incentivizing is important also in the context of clustering, as the absence of a meaningful incentive system seems to have been at least in part responsible for the failure of some early attempts at clustering schools.

7.3 Clustering Schools for Ongoing Support

Our study has found that potential for change has been greater wherever clustering is used as a device to keep teachers connected with each other and with their mentors. The best teachers can be made responsible for school clusters. The clustering approach, in some measure, has already been taken up by GTZ and ESRA as well as by AKU-IED in its mentoring program. If school leadership is central to the attainment of quality, then it is only through the clustering of small two or three-teacher government primary schools (the norm in most areas) that the possibility of significant improvement arises with leadership being made available at a proximate level.

Clustering can also lend more meaning to the task of monitoring and evaluation which is meant to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. The current system of multiple monitoring mechanisms to which government schools are subjected does little to improve the quality of education delivery. In many government schools, monitoring is usually seen as a bureaucratic and policing activity with a focus on administrative aspects and inputs. However, monitoring is viewed as a means of support, and processes and outcomes are emphasized in cases such as the TCF and WSIP. Apart from central cluster schools, it should be a part of the mandate of teacher training institutions in the

public sector to provide such support to schools in the area in accordance with a cluster approach.

A mechanism could include forming clusters around high schools on a relatively permanent basis. The schools as a whole could be deemed a resource centre for the cluster, thus sharing science, library and sports facilities. To ensure that both the high school and cluster gets the attention they need, the headmaster may be put in-charge of the school, while the deputy headmaster would have as his primary responsibility, supervision of the cluster. The

motivation for the cluster schools would come from an incentive mechanism that rewarded and perhaps placed in a special category, 3 to 5 schools in every tehsil each year. The mechanism would ensure that the school is rewarded as a whole, with the entire staff benefiting to some extent in order to avoid polarization within the school. Subsequently, outstanding teachers could be recognized individually, on the basis of school recommendations as well as through voluntary testing.

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7.4 Intrasectoral Linkage for Support

There is a need to link the education sector intrasectorally to ensure greater support for schools and clusters. We can learn from examples such as the WSIP and the kind of support cascade it benefits from. At the top there is an apex institution, the AKU-IED, which is engaged in research and development of contextually appropriate programs in education. This helps to set up professional development centres at a proximate level which provide training and support at the school level. It is not only clustering that is necessary for making optimal use of scarce resources, the public sector could also benefit greatly from a vertical linkage, within a contiguous group of districts, between universities, colleges and high schools with the latter, in turn, serving as a resource hub for primary and middle schools in the area. Again the deputy headmaster would be responsible for this upward link with the college or university in his area for the purpose of ongoing professional development of the school

staff, through content training, and so on.

7.5 Establishing Nodal Centres of Excellence for Teacher Education

Again, even if 5% to 10% of teacher training institutions with greater potential could be selected for serving as hubs for teacher training in a district cluster consisting of 4-5 districts, depending on the size, almost the entire country could be covered. Of course, these institutions should then be turned into centres of excellence with appropriate facilities and faculty. In order to ensure excellence, such institutions will need effective leadership. So, apart from deploying outstanding individuals effectively at the school level, another means of making appropriate use of this resource is to place them in leadership positions in teacher training institutions. The option of a golden handshake should be open to those not favourably inclined or suited to the new orientation of these institutions.

As matters stand, professional development has come to mean acquiring degrees. But teacher professional development should not simply be the accumulation of academic qualifications. The emphasis has to be on acquiring relevant knowledge to improve teaching in the classroom. The problem is that the government's grade structure places a premium on higher degrees regardless of the relevance or the substance these represent. This must give way to meaningful certification, by credible institutions, based on periodic assessment of content knowledge and pedagogical skills. Currently, most of the institutions from which degrees are obtained have serious problems in terms of quality.

7.6 Establishing Quality Apex Institutions

Sustainable improvement in school effectiveness and the quality of education is only possible when apex institutions with sufficient professional depth and capability provide support and address the task of research on educational issues of national significance and human resource development on a continuing basis. To start with, the government should think in terms of developing only very few such institutions, preferably combining a broader general education institution with a specialized institute for teacher education and training. We would strongly recommend that the numbers game be avoided when thinking of quality apex institutions. In light of this, some of the ambitious plans of the Higher Education Commission should also be reviewed.

7.7 Reviewing Organizational Framework for Community Engagement

While government and donor programs are fully cognizant of the importance of the community in promoting education, it seems that the organizational form of the school council does not in most cases translate into effective community involvement. If anything it often places the teachers and the school in an adversarial relationship with only lip service being paid to the community-school partnership that the school council is supposed to represent. Given our findings that suggest school performance or potential as a trigger for community involvement, it would be more useful and effective to capture community involvement through a more flexible and less prescriptive approach. Consequently, before investing more funds in the enterprise of school councils or Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), the form, purpose and nature of community support to schools needs to be reviewed by the government.

Appendix A

Table 1: Research Sites, Advisors & CSO Researchers

Research Site	Advisor	Lead Researcher
D.G. Khan & Rajanpur (Punjab)	Abbas Rashid, SAHE	Mohammad Ali, OSI Policy Fellow
Sialkot (Punjab)	Fareeha Zafar, SAHE	Mashallah, SAHE
Lahore (Punjab)	Ayesha Awan, SAHE	Haroon Hussain, SAHE
Gilgit & Hunza (Northern Areas)	Anjum Halai, AKU-IED	Mola Dad Shafa, PDCN
Gwadar (Balochistan)	Irfan Muzaffar, ESRA	Rukhsana Tasneem, SCSPEB
Khairpur (Sindh)	Irfan Muzaffar, ESRA	Irfan Khan, IRC
Peshawar & Swabi (NWFP)	Faisal Bari, LUMS/ HDC	Lubna Tajik, GTZ
Muzaffarabad & Bagh (AJK)	Umbreen Arif, PPAF	Khadim Hussain, RDPI

Appendix B

DG Khan & Rajanpur

School Name	Location	Type	No. Students	No. Teachers
Government Boys Primary School	Rajanpur	Government	686	17
Government Community Middle Model School	Rajanpur	Government (assisted)	232	5
Hira High School	Rajanpur	Private	300	15
Hira Primary School	DG Khan	Private	166	9
Hira Middle School	DG Khan	Private	350	18
New Garrison High	DG Khan	Private	211	7

The town of DG Khan was founded in 1469 by the ruler of the area, Haji Khan Mirrani, in the name of his son Ghazi Khan. The town of Rajanpur was founded by Makhdoom Shiekh Rajan Shah in 1731. Basically both districts comprise of one geographical area with shared history and culture. The districts lie between 69° - 53' to 70° - 54' east latitudes and 29° - 34' to 31° - 20' north longitudes. The total area of the districts is approximately 24240 sq. km.

Present day literacy ratio for DG Khan is 30.6%, enrolment ratio is 23%. For Rajanpur literacy ratio is 20.7% and enrolment ratio is 21.6%. These districts were chosen because both are low ranked in the province with regards to education and have the worst educational indicators in Punjab, in terms of overall

literacy rates, gender disparity in education, number of teachers available and school facilities.

Hira Taleemi Mansooba is the project of an association of government school teachers, TAP serving and retired, that seeks to bring like minded teachers together to pursue educational objectives in line with a religious emphasis that appears to draw on TAP's links with a politico-religious party. Given the prevailing environment of religiosity in Pakistan this is the kind of school that we may be seeing much more of in the future. While the religious factor is pronounced it is not, unlike in a madrassa, at the cost of a basic competence in secular subjects. The name derives from the Cave of Hira, the sanctum of the Prophet's (pbuh) meditations.

Gwadar

School Name	Location	Type	No. Students	No. Teachers
Government Girls Primary School	Gwadar	Government (assisted)	170	4
Government Community Middle Model School	Gwadar	Government (assisted)	367	14
Government Girls High School	Gwadar	Government (assisted)	530	41
Government Boys High School	Gwadar	Government (assisted)	551	25
Rozhan Fellowship School	Gwadar	Private	283	13

Gwadar is a district along the seaboard. Most of its area lies south of the Makran coast range. The coastline of Gwadar is about 600 km long. The district lies between 61 ° 37' to 65 ° 15' east longitude and 25°-01' to 25°-45' north longitudes. The area of the district is 12637 sq. km. The literacy ratio is 25.47% and enrolment ratio is 28.83%. Some years ago it was a small fishing town. In 2006, the year when the study was conducted, this town was on the verge of becoming a thriving trading hub in the region. Recognizing its strategic location between three increasingly important regions of the world—the oil rich Middle East, populous South Asia and economically emerging and resource rich Central Asia—Government of Pakistan decided to develop a deep sea port at Gwadar. The town is now to be linked

with the rest of the Pakistan and Central Asia through a network of modern highways.

Education for local dwellers, mostly informal, began and ended at sea, in the boat yards, and inside their homes. To turn them into competent members of the fishermen community, their parents taught them the craft of net making, rowing and building boats. By and large, this was seen as adequate by way of an education. A formal system of public schools was introduced only after Gwadar was ceded to Pakistan in 1958. Beginning with only 8 schools, the district of Gwadar now has 243 schools in the public sector.

The state-run schools in this district are being supported by ESRA, a USAID funded program. For a brief description of ESRA refer to footnote 29.

Gilgit & Hunza

School Name	Location	Type	No. Students	No. Teachers
Diamond Jubilee Middle School	Gilgit	Private	229	7
FG Girls High School	Gilgit	Government	870	15
FG Girls Middle School	Hunza	Government (assisted)	143	6
Al Abyn Model School	Hunza	Private	197	7
FG Boys High School	Hunza	Government	115	9

Gilgit is the capital city of the Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA) of Pakistan. Its ancient name was Sargin which later on came to be known as Gilit and it is still called Gilit or Sargin-Gilit by local people. The city is the head quarter of Gilgit District. Gilgit has an area of 38,021 sq. km. The region is significantly mountainous, lying on the foothills of the Karakoram Mountains, and has an average altitude of 5,000 ft. Gilgit was an important city on the Silk Road through which Buddhism spread from India to the rest of Asia. Hunza Valley is a mountainous valley near Gilgit in the FANA region of Pakistan. The Hunza valley is situated at an elevation of 7,999 feet. The territory of Hunza is about 7,900 sq. km.

For a brief description of WSIP refer to footnote 27.

Muzaffarabad & Bagh

School Name	Location	Type	No. Students	No. Teachers
Government Girls Higher Secondary School	Muzaffarabad	Government	222	7
Hira National Education Foundation High School	Muzaffarabad	Private	208	7
Child Welfare Academy	Muzaffarabad	Private	75	5
Government Boys Middle School	Bagh	Government	215	9
Read Foundation School	Bagh	Private	172	8
Community Primary School	Bagh	Private	94	7

Muzaffarabad is the capital of AJK which is the Pakistani-controlled part of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Muzaffarabad District is located on the banks of the Jhelum and Neelum rivers. Muzaffarabad is named after Sultan Muzaffar Khan, a former ruler of the Bomba dynasty. Muzaffarabad has always been one of the important cities of Kashmir. On October 8, 2005, the city was struck by an earthquake measuring a magnitude of 7.6 on the Richter scale. Bagh, another district of AJK was the worst hit by this earthquake, along with Muzaffarabad. The literacy ratio of AJK is 60% and enrolment ratio is 91%.

Initially, this relatively high literacy rate was the

reason for choosing this region for the study. But, the devastation caused by earthquake made it important for research also as a special case in the context of education by reference to disaster management. State run and low cost private schools were selected on the basis of their indicated quality before the earthquake, as well as their early revival in its aftermath.

Khairpur

School Name	Location	Type	No. Students	No. Teachers
Government Girls Primary School	Khairpur	Government (assisted)	202	11
Government Boys Primary School	Khairpur	Government (assisted)	421	11
Government Boys Primary School	Khairpur	Government (assisted)	95	4
Sojhro Model School	Khairpur	Private	81	4
Sojhro Model School	Khairpur	Private	97	4

The district derives its name from the headquarter town, Khairpur. At the time of independence, it was one of the states of Pakistan governed by a Mir, who was assisted by a council of ministers. The Mirs established their rule in 1783 over this area. Later the British captured it in 1842 after the Battle of Miani and restored it as a separate state under the Mirs. Later in the 1960s, the state was merged into Pakistan. A progressive, elected leadership at the helm of the district government affairs prompted selection of the district for the study. The district lies between 68° - 12' to 70° - 11' east longitudes and 26° - 11' to 27° - 44' north latitudes. The total area of the district is approximately 15910 sq. km. Literacy ratio is 35.50% and enrolment is 29.90%.

The state-run schools in this district are being

supported by ESRA, a USAID funded program. For a brief description of ESRA refer to footnote 29.

Lahore

School Name	Location	Type	No. Students	No. Teachers
TCF Primary School	Lahore	Private	304	14
TCF Primary School	Lahore	Private	136	8
TCF Secondary School	Lahore	Private	343	11
Government Boys Primary School	Lahore	Government	170	4
Government Girls Primary School	Lahore	Government	312	4

The origins of Lahore city go back as far as over 5,000 years ago. With this ancient heritage, Lahore is the second largest city of Pakistan and the provincial capital of Punjab. It is a city district. Given the centrality of Lahore district as provincial headquarter and education being a provincial subject, this district was chosen for research.

The district lies between 74° - 10' to 74° - 39' east longitudes and 31° - 15' to 31° - 43' north latitudes. The total area of the district is approximately 1772 sq. km. Present day literacy ratio is 64.7%, one of the highest in Punjab province. Enrolment ratio is 50.7%.

TCF was selected for its reputation for quality schools. For details on TCF schools refer to footnote 25.

Peshawar & Swabi

School Name	Location	Type	No. Students	No. Teachers
Government Boys Primary School	Peshawar	Government (assisted)	683	19
Government Boys Primary School	Peshawar	Government (assisted)	388	6
Government Boys Primary School	Swabi	Government (assisted)	350	8
Government Girls Primary School	Swabi	Government (assisted)	188	3
Government Girls Primary School	Swabi	Government (assisted)	189	4
Al Badar High School	Swabi	Private	503	11

Peshawar is the provincial capital of NWFP. It has long been known as a 'frontier town' standing right at the entrance of Khyber Pass. District Peshawar lies between 71° - 22' to 71° - 42' east latitudes and 33° - 44' to 34° - 15' north longitudes. District Swabi lies between 72° - 13' to 72° - 49' east latitudes and 33° - 55' to 34° - 23' north longitudes. The total area of the districts is approximately 2800 sq. km. The history of Peshawar as a city dates back to 400 AD, when Chinese traveller Fa-Hien wrote about it. The historical importance of the district lies in the fact that it is situated on one of the most ancient invasion route to India. Present day literacy ratio for Peshawar is 41.79% and enrolment ratio is 49.64%. For Swabi literacy ratio is 36% and enrolment

ratio is 30.6%.

Peshawar was chosen for being the provincial metropolis as well as provincial headquarters while Swabi's choice had to do with GTZ's effort strengthen the considerably weaker district. For details on GTZ refer to footnote 28.

Sialkot

School Name	Location	Type	No. Students	No. Teachers
Government Girls Primary School	Sialkot	Government	87	4
Government Boys Primary School	Sialkot	Government	240	6
Government Boys Elementary School	Sialkot	Government	645	19
Government Masjid Maktab	Sialkot	Government	193	4
Islamic Public High School	Sialkot	Private	315	14

The district takes its name from its headquarters, Sialkot city. It is one of the ancient cities of Punjab province. The city was founded by Raja Sul or Sala of Pandya dynasty (3rd Century BC). After the name of its founding father, the city was called Sulkot, which subsequently changed to Sialkot. According to Dr. Leitner there were 149 schools in 124 villages in the district before the British took over. During British rule it was maintained as a separate district. The district, especially the city, borrows its present day fame from its level of industrialization. Though diverse industries exist in the area, its current fame is due to sports goods manufacturing industry that is reputed for its quality products. There has also been some criticism from various agencies on the incidence of child labour in

these industries. In order to curb this trend the government in collaboration with donors initiated a Universal Primary Education (UPE) program in the district. Sialkot claimed UPE in 2001, the first district in the country to do so. This was a key reason for its selection.

The district lies between 74° - 13' to 74° - 57' east longitudes and 31° - 55' to 32° - 51' north latitudes. The total area of the district is approximately 3016 sq. km. Present day literacy ratio is 58.9%, one of the highest in the Punjab province. Enrolment ratio is 54.9%.



A quality education system is critical if Pakistan is to survive and prosper. However, if results are any indication of our intent then our educational policies in the past have turned out to be more rhetoric than action. There is awareness that our education system is in a dismal condition. But this is not enough, and as citizens it is time to press for action. We believe that there are elements still within this system that, if retrieved and mobilized, can help us move towards meaningful and sustainable reform.

With this approach in mind, a group of education researchers and practitioners took it upon themselves to find effective mainstream schools and narrate their stories in the hope that they would rekindle our faith in and commitment to educational justice for all children of Pakistan. We have sought to turn insights from these stories into ideas for intervention. The research brief in your hands is a summary of findings and policy recommendations based on these narratives.