REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT TECHNICAL ADVISORY PANEL (ITAP)

ASSESSMENT OF ENABLING FACTORS[1]

BALOCHISTAN | JULY 25, 2023

Background

In line with the GPE 2025 operating model, the government and partners have analyzed progress in the four enabling factor areas for system transformation. The *Contextualized Enabling Factors Analysis* completed by the local education group and supporting documentation were shared with the ITAP, tasked by the Board with providing an assessment of status against the enabling factors.

The ITAP assessment seeks to contribute to policy dialogue on the partnership compact. The ITAP considers the extent to which challenges in enabling factor areas act as bottlenecks to education system transformation goals. Based on this assessment, it classifies each area as a low, medium, or high priority for action. A designation of high indicates that identified challenges may act as significant bottlenecks to transformation goals.

The ITAP report is shared with the government and its partners to collectively review for any major factual errors that may have affected the ITAP assessment.

The ITAP report is ultimately shared with the Board and feeds into Board decision-making on the system transformation grant allocation, with special attention given to how challenges in the high priority enabling factors are resolved in the partnership compact.

[1] The ITAP operates as an independent advisory body to the GPE Board. The views expressed in this report are solely those of the ITAP country panel. Where ITAP reports lists any suggestions on how to address gaps identified, these should be regarded as illustrative only and there is no expectation from ITAP or GPE that countries follow these specific actions. ITAP country panel members for this report: Desmond Bermingham (Chair), Gustavo Arcia, Helen Craig, Michael Mambo.

Part A: Main Panel Conclusions

Data and Evidence

Pakistan Balochistan province has a functioning system for collecting data on education through several publications that provide information on the education sector. While the EMIS data is fairly comprehensive, there are gaps such as access, quality and efficiency indicators that are necessary for the complete monitoring of the education system. The EMIS also does not provide information on private schools and the Madrasah schools which are key participants in the education system. There are, however, other non-government sources that produce statistics on education that capture some of the information that is missing in the EMIS. Learning assessments comprising both internal and external examinations are conducted. These include school-level assessments and internal examinations at the primary and secondary levels. The international TIMSS was also conducted in 2019. The assessment and examination system faces several challenges such as absence of a framework for assessment, lack of consistency in the marking of the examinations and cheating, which all adversely affect the credibility of the assessment system. There are several sources of data and information that Balochistan can tap on for policy formulation, planning and decision making but these sources are not being optimally used for this purpose. This is due to the lack of a culture in research and utilization of data for decision-making which the LEG acknowledges.

Considering these challenges and noting that the Balochistan Education Sector Plan (BESP) (2020-25) has formulated strategies to address these challenges, ITAP agrees with the LEG that this enabling factor is a **MEDIUM priority**. Progress towards the achievement of the priority policy goal. This will be significantly delayed unless these strategies are implemented successfully.

Gender-Responsive Planning, Policy and Monitoring

The BESP (2020-2025) provides an organized education policy and planning framework to guide implementation and monitoring of sector program progress towards agreed targets. A number of organizational and governance system challenges that impact this planning, implementation and monitoring are identified in the BESP. The planned July 2023 Joint Education Sector Review provides a critical point to assess the functioning of these arrangements along with the progress towards the ambitious program targets. It would appear timely during this review to assess issues including the effectiveness of current accountability and governance mechanisms; use of data for targeted decision-making; alignment of planning with other ministries, especially finance; process to assess teaching/learning needs in classrooms; linking resource allocations directly to the goals of improved student learning and participation; and staff training and ongoing support, especially for classroom teaching and female staffing needs. The challenging physical environment to reach students in sparsely populated and remote locations,

along with deeply embedded societal patterns and social norms around gender roles make strong advocacy for the girl child and female teachers/female government officers even more compelling as strategic goals. While there appears to be an increasing awareness for gender-sensitive planning, and some related analyses and operational activities are taking place, developing more explicit actions both within the Ministry and in schools remains essential.

The ITAP agrees with the LEG rating and believes that this enabling factor, according to the GPE criteria, should be viewed as a **MEDIUM priority.** Foundations have been laid with further implementation and monitoring actions needed to ensure the achievement of one or more of the strategic goals. Failure to address the above issues could impede program implementation and significantly delay the achievement of key policy priorities.

Sector Coordination

Inclusive Sector Dialogue and Coordinated Action:

Balochistan has a well-established sector coordination mechanism in place at the provincial level. The LEG includes senior representatives from the main departments in the SED; other government departments including Social Welfare Department; development partners, local and international NGOs and CSOs, private schools and teacher associations. The Finance Department does not appear to be represented on the LEG. The ITAP noted that the JESR has not taken place for several years – although plans were in place to hold a review in July 2023. The 2018 *Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-level Support to Education in Sindh and Balochistan* found that the LEG contributed to a more participatory and inclusive dialogue on education priorities. However, the ITAP found limited evidence of the LEG discussing key gender issues which impact on the successful delivery of education to girls and young women throughout the education system. The Self Analysis provides an honest assessment of the constraints and challenges of coordination across such a large province, reaching very remote areas; notes the need to build a stronger link with the working group on education in emergencies; and to improve the quality of discussions on key policy areas. The ITAP would agree with this assessment. Considering the continuing challenges of ensuring effective coordination particularly in remote areas; working with other government departments especially finance; and improving the quality of policy discussions, the ITAP agrees with the LEG and assesses this enabling factor as a **MEDIUM priority.**

Coordinated Financing and Funding:

Total external financing commitments for the education sector in Balochistan was estimated at around US$89M over the period 2019 – 2025 with the largest external funders being the World Bank, GPE, EU, UNICEF and Education Cannot Wait. The majority of external funding programmes is aligned with the priority objectives and outcome

targets of the BESP. The Enabling Factors Self-Analysis states that there is a mechanism for harmonized and aligned funding through the Economics Affairs Department. However, most donors prefer to provide off-budget project support directly to the SED in order to accelerate implementation. The ITAP saw evidence in the minutes of the recent LEG meetings of dialogue on measures to improve aid effectiveness. The Self Analysis makes a strong case for increasing the use of pooled funding and budget support to increase predictability, transparency and improve effectiveness.

Given the concerns about the low utilization of coordinated and joint financing mechanisms due to lack of capacity in the SED, the ITAP agrees with the LEG assessment of this enabling factor as a **MEDIUM priority** as failure to address these issues could hamper the effective use of aid for the sector and significantly delay the achievement of key policy priorities.

Volume, Efficiency and Equity of Domestic Financing

The main challenge of domestic financing of education is improving budgetary efficiency within a context of systemic inefficiencies in governance and management, as identified by the latest Balochistan Education Sector Plan (BESP). In terms of governance, the education sector faces significant barriers: a large bureaucracy of 85 thousand employees working in 14 thousand schools under an outdated administration system affected by political interference in the deployment of teachers, and in the use of resources. Managerially, the system operates with an outdated management structure that needs a modernized approach to the use of information for decision-making, for coordination, and for field operations. Under current conditions of governance and management, budgetary efficiency and system accountability are difficult to develop and implement. The Government is well aware—in great detail—of the systemic problems affecting the education sector and has outlined a reform plan to improve sector performance, and with it, increase budget efficiency and student learning. However, implementing solutions to these problems will require sustained, long-term commitments on part of the authorities.

The volume of financing could be made more effective if the funds could be used more efficiently. The measures proposed by the BESP outlines many policies and measures that can be taken to improve budgetary efficiency. As for commitment, the government has shown clear commitment to education given the trend in prospective funding. However, there is a need to keep in mind the real rate of growth in budget allocations because of the high rates of inflation experienced since 2022.

In relation to financing, sector planning will have to start developing a culture of information for decision making, in which data should be used to develop sound policy, and where decisions on capital investments should also be made in parallel with clear approval of recurrent funding for teachers and operating costs, to avoid a situation

where new schools are empty because funds for teachers have not been approved. To ensure transparency in equity, Balochistan could develop/enforce formula funding to ensure that per student expenditures are fair in every district.

Given these challenges of improving efficiency, governance and management of domestic finance to the education sector, ITAP agrees with the LEG and rates this enabling factor as a **HIGH Priority** as it will not be possible to achieve the priority policy goal without making significant improvements in these areas.

Part B: Assessment of Enabling Factors

1. Data and Evidence

Education Management and Information Systems (EMIS)

Balochistan has several sources that provide data and information on the education sector. These include the Education Management Information System (BEMIS) established in 1990 and recently reformed to include complete profiles of students and teachers. It provides data disaggregated by district and level on: enrolments broken down by gender and level (primary, middle, high and higher secondary; teaching staff and non-teaching staff broken down by gender and qualification; number of schools with infrastructure and those without; and facilities such as electricity, computer laboratories, toilets, boundary walls and drinking water. It also provides enrolments of learners with disability and type of disability. Enrolments data show that about 68 percent of eligible children are out of school with more girls being out of school than boys. It captures data on quality indicators such as pupil teacher ratios, pupil classroom ratio, survival and transition rates. These show great variation across districts.

The inclusion of longitudinal data spanning over a 5-year period in the EMIS is positive and useful for monitoring trends and analysis of the education sector and provides pointers to areas that need attentions.

ITAP notes gaps in the EMIS data such as Gross Enrolment rates (GER) and Net Enrolment Rates (NER) which are critical for monitoring access given the low enrolments in the province and for measuring progress towards the SDG4 indicator. Other gaps are the pupil textbook ratios, completion rates, and dropout and its reasons which are key efficiency indicator. Additionally, the absence of data on private schools and the madrasah schools, which account for 14 percent of total enrolments, create a big gap in the information on the education sector. Complete data is essential for planning the expansion of the sector and increasing enrolments to meet the SDGs 2030 targets on access.

ITAP notes that some of the information missing from the EMIS is found in other sources such as the Annual Status Education Report (ASER) which shows that the private schools tend to have better facilities than government schools.

Another source of data is the 5-year full school census report which provides additional information every five years beyond what is captured in the EMIS, such as health and hygiene of students, Early Childhood Education (ECE), co-curricular activities, school safety, availability of quality inputs, and details of development work in the schools. A copy of the report was not provided so it was not possible to assess its comprehensiveness.

A significant addition to the data sources is the Real Time School Monitoring System (RTSM) which monitors attendance of both teachers (75.4%) and students (76.4%), and

which schools are operating, and schools found closed. This information is closely related to learning. It also provides information on the availability of drinking water, toilets, school furniture and matts and their usage. The data is disaggregated by district and gender as applicable. The data is collected in real time using android based tools and uploaded in real time onto the RTSM dashboard which is accessed in real time through the EMIS website. Used properly it identifies challenges that need immediate attention in real time and is also useful for strategic planning. It is accessible on the EMIS Website.

The Status of Girls Education in Balochistan publication provides information on the participation of girls in the education system. It shows that the Gender Parity Index for primary was 0.632 and 0.46 for secondary in 2022. This varies by district and decreases by level of education. Much of the data in this publication is available in the EMIS. It, however, provides additional information on out-of-school children by district and presents gender wise comparisons. ITAP observes that the value of this publication could be enhanced if it included data on learning outcomes with a focus on girls since this is an area that needs greater attention.

ITAP appreciates that the BESP (2020-25) contains strategies to strengthen the EMIS and a review of the current data frameworks, digitizing existing data that is outside the main database of EMIS and developing the capacity of EMIS and the Policy Planning and Implementation Unit (PPIU) to analyse data.

Learning Assessment Systems (LAS)

Learning Assessments in Balochistan are conducted at three levels. The first is the formative assessment conducted at the school level which is being reintroduced in the BESP (2020-2025) to improve teaching and learning practices. The second is the large-scale examinations for grades 5 and 8 conducted by the Balochistan Assessments and Examinations Commission (BAEC), designed to test learners' preparedness for secondary school and to identify learning challenges. The third are a set of external examinations for grade 9, 10, 11 and 12 conducted by the Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE).

The challenges to the system include absence of a framework for assessment, limitations of the current standards and lack of personnel and capacity of teachers to conduct formative assessments. The assessments promote rote learning and do not teach students analytical skills. Lack of uniformity in the marking of the examinations due to failure to adhere to established guidelines and cheating erodes the credibility of the examinations.

The National Education Assessment System (NEAS) conducts assessments in all provinces of Pakistan including Balochistan. The tests are conducted in both public and private schools and tests grade 4 mathematics, Urdu reading and Urdu writing and grade

8 science, English reading and English writing. Being national it contains comparative data. Balochistan performed below par (below 500 out of 1000) for both the grade 4 and grade 8 tests.

The BAEC conducted a large-scale diagnostic assessment in Grades 2 and 6 in English, Urdu and mathematics with the addition of science in Grade 6. The teachers were also assessed in these areas. The data is disaggregated by gender and location (urban/rural) with comparisons. Students failed to reach the pass mark and generally girls out-performed boys and rural students outperformed urban in some areas and not in others. Teachers performed poorly in the English assessments with urban teachers doing better than their rural counterpart.

In 2019 Pakistan participated in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) for the first time. The TIMSS is conducted every four years and assesses mathematics and science in grades 4 (9.5 years of age) and grade 8 (13.5 years of age. The results show that Pakistan performed lowly in all the areas of assessment which can be extrapolated to Balochistan.

The results of these assessments reveal learning weaknesses in the education system. This could be as a result of inadequate infrastructure and subject teachers, poor assessment framework and poor management as identified in the ESA (2019). ITAP notes that the BESP (2020-2025) aims to address these shortcomings in the assessments and examinations of students through building capacity in assessments at different levels and sensitization against cheating.

Evidence production and use

Balochistan has several sources of data and information that are available to it for decision-making. Some of the key documents include the Education Sector Analysis (ESA) of 2019 that is a key source in the development of the BESP (2020-2025). The ESA provides an in-depth analysis of the education sector, identifying the challenges in the sector and providing recommendations for improvement. Other sources of data include those already identified such as the EMIS publications; Status of Girls Education in Balochistan; the various internal and external learning assessment reports and examinations including the TMSS; the Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education results; Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission (BAEC) results, and Data from Pakistan Social and Living Measurement Surveys.

In spite of the increased use of data in the system noted in the ESA (2019), a large amount of data that is being produced is not being optimally utilized in planning, monitoring, systemic assessments and reforms. Several factors that account for this are: low research culture in government and society exacerbated by the limited research capacity within the departments; decisions tend to be based on political expediency, thereby creating

low incentives for the use data in planning and decision making; and the majority of government officers have never been trained in use of data for decision-making.

The BESP (2020-2025) acknowledges the importance of data and research in effective policy, planning and implementation and has strategies to address the current situation through mandating the use of data and research in the policies and plans. This will be done through sensitization of relevant stakeholders on the importance of using data in decision-making and building their capacity to do so. The ITAP observes that the generation of evidence and its use in policymaking and decision-making requires more attention.

Conclusion:

Considering the challenges facing this enabling factor in the areas of data and its limited use is decision making and weak internal and external assessments identified in the ESA 2019 and noting that the BESP (2020-25) has formulated the strategies to address these challenges, ITAP agrees with the LEG that this enabling factor is a **MEDIUM priority**. Progress towards the achievement of the priority policy goal will be significantly delayed unless these strategies are implemented successfully.

2. Gender-Responsive Sector Planning, Policy and Monitoring

Strategic planning frameworks and practices

The *Balochistan Education Sector Plan, 2020-2025* (BESP) provides an organized education policy and planning framework to guide implementation and monitoring of sector progress towards agreed targets. This endorsed BESP is based on an Education Sector Analysis conducted in 2019/2020. This included an essential study on gender issues, since among other issues, up to 76% of post-primary school-age girls are out of school (BESP). Processes to develop these analyses and BESP were consultative with members of government departments, developments partners, local civil society organizations, the teacher association, and academia. However, there appeared limited involvement of women and other under-represented groups in these discussions, particularly at the community level.

The BESP is underpinned by a legislative framework established in 2014 which recognizes the fundamental right to education for children. The Constitution supports goals for all students to complete one year of pre-primary education, followed by 10 years of compulsory education. Existing statutes and related policies are expected to be reviewed soon for better alignment with current ground realities and changed needs of the education sector. Planning processes are also aligned with the human rights declarations in the Sustainable Development Goals, including for vulnerable groups. This has helped identify needs and guide attention for overall child safety and welfare; marginalized groups (including children with disabilities; out-of-school children; and Afghan refugees/children in refugee camps) and gender-affected groups, especially female students and female staff.

There is some collaboration emerging with other ministries including the Ministry of Finance, the Health Department and the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, although greater planning alignment is needed. Planning also includes actions for some external risks, including public health and natural disasters, as evident by preparation of the *Response, Recovery and Resilience in Education Plan* during the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent *Balochistan Education Flood Emergency Response 2022*. The BESP recognizes that more specific resilience planning for the education sector is needed, including a better understanding of how girls are often more adversely affected in their ability to access such programs.

Challenges related to sufficient staff with relevant technical skills, a more inclusive workplace for women, and utilization of available data and complex analyses appear to limit ongoing assessments and subsequent formulation of more targeted policies, goals and activities. The ITAP acknowledges the difficult logistical challenges in Balochistan to reach more children, especially those in remote areas, along with the interruption and impact of COVID-19 and the recent floods to student learning and system functioning.

Operational Planning Instruments and Practices

Annual Operational Plans with implementation budgets are guided by the information in three core BESP matrices. These include a *Program Matrix*, which lays out recommended strategies, activities and targets for each programmatic or thematic area; an *Implementation Matrix* which outlines timelines, costs and implementation responsibilities for achieving targets; and a *Results Matrix* outlining indicators for monitoring implementation of the strategies and activities.

The ITAP concurs with the current direction to better link planning and resource allocation directly to the goals of improved student learning and participation. As noted in documentation, this will also require regular assessments of classroom needs which have been difficult to date. Responsible departments, funding needs and allocations linked to activities are indicated in the Annual Operational Plans. However, it was unclear how well these operational tools were actually functioning, including accountability mechanisms, and what progress had actually been made towards targets due to lack of monitoring data available to the ITAP. It is essential, that if not yet done, that a joint assessment of these operational, implementation and accountability processes is conducted soon, along with actual program progress against targets. This will enable timely course correction if needed, and/or additional support provided to schools, district levels and other technical and administrative groups to achieve intended results.

Budget Programming and Monitoring

The budget outlined in the BESP is based on projected public funds and those from development partners. Public funds in Balochistan are mostly received from the federal government through its share of the *National Finance Commission* award. Approximately 9% of the budget comes from provincial sources (BESP, p. 216). The *School Education Department* submits proposals to the *Planning and Development Department* for plans aligned to the BESP to be financed through the *Public Sector Development Program*.

The budget projections for BESP are based on a simulation model developed within the limitation of available data. No explicit information was provided to ITAP regarding how these align with the Ministry of Finance's medium-term sector finance projections. Total funding requirements, previous spending amounts, likely financing gaps and other challenges and assumptions for the five-year implementation period of BESP are all provided. Some issues of timeliness of release of funds, including from the federal level as well as to community level/schools were noted to impede implementation of some activities.

Sector/Implementation Monitoring Mechanisms

Annual Monitoring Plans aligned to the Annual Operational Plans have been developed using the key performance indicators in the Results matrix of the BESP. Monthly monitoring

is expected at the district level, along with progress monitoring by the Policy Planning and Implementation Unit and various partners at the quarterly Local Education Group (LEG) meetings. Respective tools for data collection are identified in the Results Matrix. No updates on how well these monitoring arrangements are working or the BESP indicators were available in the ITAP documentation, but the LEG Minutes show some welcomed discussion about program progress and issues in that forum. As noted in documentation, monitoring and support to scattered schools in remote areas has remained difficult in terms of costs, travel logistics and social norms adversely affecting the female workforce.

With the prioritization of gender-related issues under the BESP, there are monitoring instruments to capture progress towards expanding opportunities for females in formal schooling, non-formal programs and TVET. The program targets also include monitoring activities for marginalized groups including children with disabilities, and Afghan children in refugee camps.

BESP has provision for joint sector reviews of the program. However, this has not yet happened, reported largely due to COVID-19. If the Joint Education Sector Review takes place as planned in July 2023, it is expected that analyses be conducted not just on the key performance indicator results but also identifying implementation and monitoring challenges. Provision is also made under BESP for a High-level Committee to also review progress against operational plans and the annual review of results indicators provided in the Performance Assessment Framework.

Gender Mainstreaming Across the Policy Continuum

Improved gender sensitivity is reflected in more recent education policy, planning and monitoring documents. For example, in preparation for the BESP, a gender analysis was undertaken to help highlight specific needs since data show there are large gaps of access, participation and learning between male and female students in the province. As a result, specific strategies and activities were included with costings in the BESP to expand opportunities for girls in the formal, non-formal and TVET sectors. Activities include provision of transport for girls to schools in some localities, availability of WASH facilities in schools, awareness and support for menstruation health and hygiene management for adolescent girls, scholarships, and sports in girls' schools. The Government also has goals in the BESP to increase appointments of female teachers at the primary level to help improve access and participation rates of girls. Gender considerations are also provided for remote and low population density areas and Afghan refugee camps. The Pakistan Alliance for Girls also provided a summary "status of girls' education statistics" in 2021. The Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy 2020-2024 for the Government of Balochistan includes education and other sectors.

Despite these achievements, the ITAP notes that deeply entrenched societal patterns and social norms around restricted gender roles for females persist. Minutes from more recent

LEG meetings show important discussions are being held around some of these access, participation and learning issues, but no firm data accompanied these to show actual progress towards agreed targets. Gender-related barriers and gaps appear to persist. While some of these issues include early marriage, bullying and gender-based violence, many of the issues related to access to schooling, other child welfare matters and student classroom participation. Associated with these are needs around having more female teachers appointed and supported in female schools and classroom teaching/learning processes. At a wider system level, the employment of more females within the education sector in inclusive and respectful workspaces, including acceptance and encouragement for them to participate and provide leadership is a necessary part of this education system change process.

Conclusion:

The Government of Balochistan utilizes an organized education policy and planning framework to guide implementation and monitoring of sector progress towards agreed targets. While it was difficult to adequately assess the functioning of these organizational arrangements due to lack of monitoring and assessment data available at this time, some key issues for ongoing attention include the need for greater utilization of available data to inform more targeted policies, goals and activities; reviewing the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms; and regular assessments of classroom needs. Further effort to strengthen gender-responsive actions and monitoring are urgently needed especially for female students and females in the workplace. The ITAP agrees with the LEG rating and believes that this enabling factor, according to the GPE criteria, should be viewed as a **MEDIUM priority.** Failure to address the above issues could impede program implementation and significantly delay the achievement of key policy priorities.

3. Sector Coordination: Inclusive Sector Dialogue and Coordinated Action and Coordinated Financing and Funding

3.1 Inclusive Dialogue and Coordinated Action

Coordination functions and practices

Pakistan Balochistan province has a well-established sector coordination mechanism in place at the provincial level. The Local Education Group (LEG) meets quarterly and has held a total of twenty-four meetings since its formation in 2015. The LEG is chaired by the Secretary of the School Education Department (SED) with UNICEF as the Co-Chair. The LEG includes senior representatives from the main departments in the SED; other government departments including Social Welfare Department; development partners based in the province and Islamabad; local and international NGOs and CSOs; private schools and teacher associations. The Finance Department does not appear to be represented on the LEG. This is a gap which may impede effective coordination of funding for BESP. The ITAP also noted that the JESR had not taken place for several years – although plans were in place to hold a review in July 2023. This is due to the difficulties resulting from COVID, the remoteness of many communities as well as the fact that most development partners do not have a representative in the province.

The ITAP saw evidence of the LEG functioning effectively including reviewing progress in BESP; coordination of externally funded projects; discussion of key policy priorities; and response to emergency situations such as the 2022 floods. The 2018 *Summative Evaluation of GPE's Country-level Support to Education in Sindh and Balochistan* found that the LEGs contributed to a more participatory and inclusive dialogue on education priorities in both states. In particular, in Balochistan, the evaluation recorded positive feedback from most of the LEG participants and stated that the LEG had provided the 'first ever opportunity for actors in the education sector to work together.' This has continued during the current strategic planning period. However, the ITAP found limited evidence of the LEG discussing key gender issues which clearly impact on the successful delivery of education to girls and young women throughout the education system.

Capacities for coordination

The Self Analysis of the Enabling Factors provides an honest assessment of the constraints and challenges of coordination across such a large province, reaching very remote areas, often affected by natural disasters and conflict. The coordination capacity is strengthened by project implementation units within the SED, but this in itself brings risks. The self-analysis acknowledges that there are challenges due to lack of resources which makes it difficult to reach remote communities and ensure meaningful participation of communities and other key stakeholders. The LEG also notes the need to build a stronger

link with the working group on education in emergencies and to improve the quality of discussions on key policy areas. The ITAP would agree with this assessment.

Conclusion on 3.1:

Considering the continuing challenges of ensuring effective coordination particularly in remote areas; working with other government departments especially finance; and improving the quality of policy discussions, the ITAP agrees with the LEG and assesses this enabling factor as a **MEDIUM priority.**

3.2 Coordinated Financing and Funding

Availability of aid alignment and joint financing mechanisms

Total external financing commitments (loans and grants) for the education sector in Balochistan was estimated at around US$89M over the period 2019 – 2025. The largest external funders are the World Bank, GPE, EU, UNICEF and Education Cannot Wait. The majority of external funding programmes is aligned with the priority objectives and outcome targets of the BESP. The Enabling Factors Self-Analysis states that there is a mechanism for harmonized and aligned funding through the Economics Affairs Department as well as pooled funding arrangements. However, most donors prefer to provide off budget project support directly to the SED in order to accelerate implementation.

Accountability and dialogue around aid effectiveness

The ITAP saw evidence of mutual accountability and dialogue on measures to improve aid effectiveness, in particular in the minutes of the recent LEG meetings. The 2018 GPE Evaluation also reported that the LEG members provided feedback to development partners to avoid duplication and improve alignment. The Enabling Factors Self-Analysis makes a strong case for increasing the use of pooled funding mechanisms and budget support to increase transparency and improve effectiveness.

Commitment towards greater aid effectiveness practices

Overall, the ITAP felt that there was evidence of a commitment from both the government and their development partners to follow the principles of aid effectiveness. In particular, there was strong joint support for and alignment with the objectives of the BESP and planning was well advanced for a new JESR in 2023. This will provide a good opportunity to take stock of the continuing challenges and concerns especially with regards to coordination capacity and financial management.

Conclusion on 3.2:

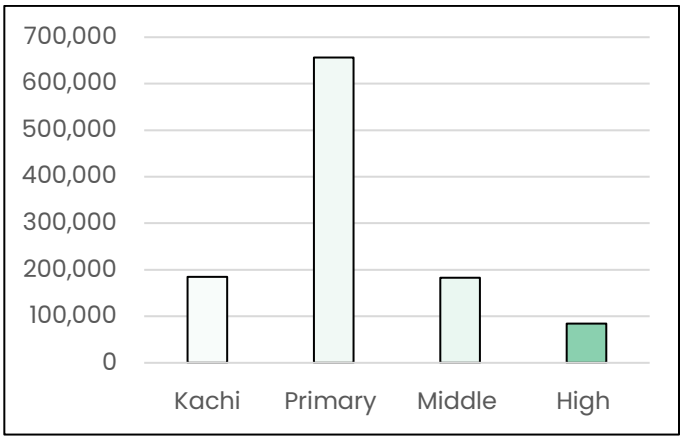
Given the concerns about the low utilization of coordinated and joint financing mechanisms due to lack of capacity in the SED, the ITAP agrees with the LEG assessment of this enabling factor as a **MEDIUM priority** as failure to address these issues could significantly delay the achievement of key policy priorities.

4. Volume, Equity, and Efficiency of Domestic Public Expenditure on Education

Overview

The main challenge of domestic financing of education is improving budgetary efficiency within a context of systemic inefficiencies in governance and management, as identified by the latest BESP. The Balochistan Secondary Education Department is the largest employer in the province, with 85,000 people. It operates in almost 14,000 schools with more than 1 million students (Fig. 1). Managing a system of this size is very complicated if the managerial structure is antiquated; if high-level managers do not use information systems for decision-making, and if technical decisions are undercut by political considerations that can affect education quality all the way down to classroom level.

Fig. 1. Distribution of Public Enrollment, 2022



Under these conditions, the inefficiencies produced by the imperfections in the managerial structures, the lack of use of data for decision making, and the interference of politics on system management, can lead to increased expenditures in education that will not produce increased learning, nor a significant reduction in out-of-school children. The Government is well aware—in great detail—of the systemic problems affecting the education sector and has outlined a reform plan to improve sector performance, and with it, increase budget efficiency and student learning.

Volume

The government has shown clear commitment to education given the trend in prospective funding. However, there is a need to keep in mind the real rate of growth in budget allocations because of the high rates of inflation experienced since 2022. Education funding comes mostly from the government, from parents, and donors. However, donor contributions may or may not be accounted for in the education budget, depending on the type of goods purchased with donor funds. Over the past five years

the Government has been able to maintain education expenditures above 20% of the provincial budget. During the 2020-2026 planning period, the Government is maintaining a commitment to fund education at about 22% of the provincial budget (Table 1). As for education as share of GDP, being a provincial government, Balochistan is not obligated to use the 4% threshold but, for comparison, the latest data available shows that that in 2020 and 2021, Balochistan's expenditure in education as share of regional GDP exceeded Pakistan's expenditures in education as share of national GDP by about 0.5 percent points. This simple comparison illustrates the degree of commitment of the government to education.

An issue worth mentioning for the short run is the rate of inflation, which went up to about 20% in 2023. This high rate of inflation may have a significant impact on real budget growth, which was about 2% per year prior to 2022. This is an issue that needs to be reviewed by the authorities.

Table 1: Share of education expenditure in GDP and in total government expenditure

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Education as per cent of GDP	2.9	2.9	2.8	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.2
Education as per cent of government expenditure (excluding debt service)	17.7	19.0	17.1	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.8
Recurrent education expenditure as per cent of public recurrent expenditure (excluding debt service)	21.2	22.6	21.3	22.8	22.8	22.8	22.8

Source: Computed from "Domestic financing matrix" completed by the country

Prior to 2023, most educational expenditures went to pay for salaries and operating costs, leaving between 12%-15% to capital expenditures. Current projections call for an increase in capital spending to 19% of total spending, to alleviate the precarious conditions of schools, to make them more attractive to teachers and students, especially girls (Fig. 2). For 2024, total education expenditures are budgeted at 113 billion PKR, of which about 68% will go to salaries, 12% to operating costs, and 19% to capital investment, such as buildings and durable goods (Fig.3). For the 2024-2026 period, Balochistan's education expenditures are expected to grow at a nominal rate of 10% between 2023 and 2024; 9.9% between 2024 and 2025, and 10% between 2025 and 2026. Between 2020 and 2021 the rate of inflation was lower than 10%, but since 2022 the inflation rate has increased rapidly, approaching 20% by mid 2023. If this trend continues, the planned increase in education expenditures will not translate into real gains in education funding.

Fig. 2. Balochistan. Capital Expenditures as Percent of Total Education Expenditures

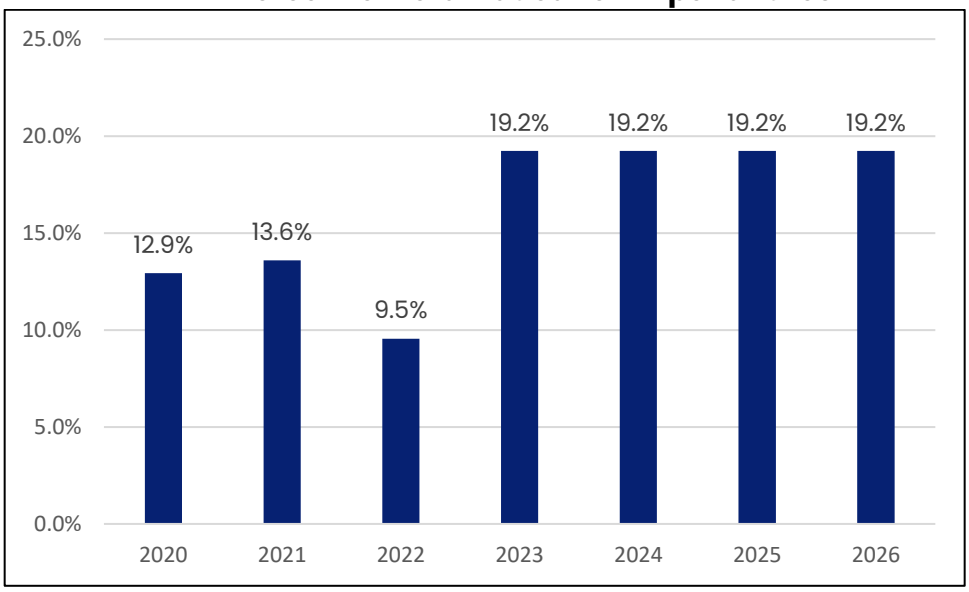
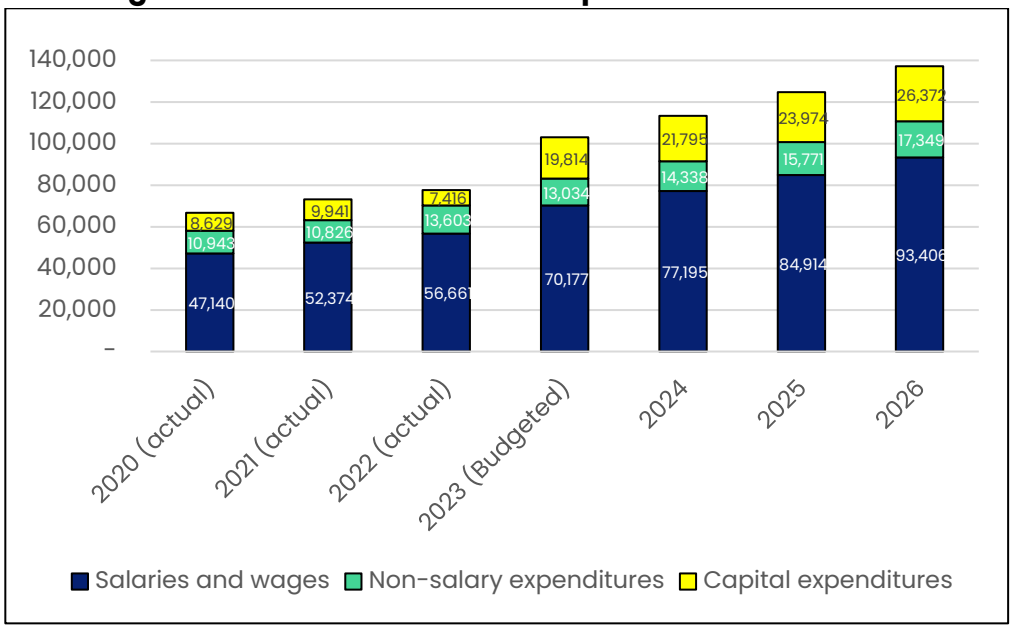


Fig. 3. Balochistan. Education Expenditures 2020-2026



Equity

There are significant differences in per student expenditures among the 32 districts in Balochistan. There is no clear formula for allocating funds to schools to allow for equity considerations, as salaries are paid directly, and the budget for non-salary expenditures is divided among districts on the basis of district enrollment. However, within districts, funds assigned to schools vary on the basis of school clusters, without clear rules about

the amount to be allocated per student. In general, schools with high enrollment and multigrade classrooms tend to have lower per student expenditures, where education quality tends to be lower. Schools with one teacher per grade tend to have higher per student cost but produce better results. In terms of location, more experienced senior teachers, who are paid better salaries, tend to be located in urban schools, resulting in higher per student expenditures but most likely better learning outcomes. The problem with these generalizations is that they tend to be inconsistent, because of the system inefficiencies. Hence, it is not clear what are the values of the systematic factors that explain the differences in per student expenditures.

Legally, the government is obligated to provide free education, which includes no school fees, free textbooks, school materials, transportation to and from school, and one school meal. However, current expenditures only allow for non-school fees and free textbooks, with parents paying for school materials, uniforms, transportation, and the school meal. Parents also have to pay for their children to take part in the examinations conducted by the Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE) and Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission (BAEC). This inconsistency in the application of the free education policy is also a factor of inequity that affects mostly poor families.

Efficiency

The BESP outlines many policies and measures that can be taken to improve budgetary *efficiency*. Teacher and staff salaries are paid directly by district offices, based on salary scales that take into account teacher seniority, location, and other personnel factors. The administration of the budget is decentralized at the district level, and the accounting for expenditures seem to be clear. Hence, if there is waste and corruption, it is because the issue is at the system level, as discussed previously. Any issues about budgetary efficiency would have to be dealt with through a rebuilding of system efficiency, including reforms to teacher contracting and deployment practices, the assignment and pricing of infrastructure contracts, overly bureaucratic arrangements due to a lack of automation, and all of the other managerial and governance issues identified in the BESP.

In terms of internal efficiency, the education system does not have repetition, and no statistical data are published on dropouts. Most statistical indicators refer to enrollment, survival ratios, and student/teacher ratios (Table 2). Also, there are published statistics on school characteristics, where some indicators show that, on average, schools tend to be small, with about 3 classrooms each, which reduce their economies of scale. Among the few published indicators, one of note is the survival rate to grade 5, which shows that girls have a significantly higher Grade 5 survival rate than boys. This indicator is very important, as it clearly shows that promoting girls' education is a great investment for the province.

Table 2. Balochistan. Selected indicators of Efficiency, 2022

Indicator	Boys	Girls	Co-Ed	Total
Student/Classroom Ratio	24.1	28.94	27.94	25.7
Classroom/School Ratio	2.84	3.2	1.56	2.89
Student/Teacher Ratio Primary School	30.8	25.3	26.6	29
Student/Teacher Ratio Middle School	17.4	20.2		18.5
Student/Teacher Ratio High School	20.2	21.6		20.8
	Boys	**Girls**	**Total**	**GPI**
Survival Rate to Grade 5	66.2%	72.9%	69.0%	1.1

Conclusion

The main conclusion from this review is that the BESP analysis is critical for the success of domestic financing. Making the necessary reforms in governance and management is absolutely crucial for advancing educational development and for improving learning. However, the process of reform is going to require a continuous and sustained commitment from part of government and donors, as the proposed reforms have to circumvent difficult issues of bureaucratic culture, and embedded issues of politics and yet unknown factors in the political economy of domestic financing. On the positive side, however, the BESP has it right, as it has correctly and meticulously identified all the significant problems of governance and management that need to be resolved in order to develop the education sector of Balochistan, which would make domestic financing efficient and effective. Given the importance of domestic finance to the education sector, ITAP rates it as a **HIGH Priority**.

Part C: High-Level Summary of Enabling Factors Assessed as High Priority

Enabling Factor	Challenges and Rationale for High Priority Rating
Volume, Equity, and Efficiency of Domestic Financing	**Challenge:** (i) Governance. The system suffers from weak policy, regulatory and legal frameworks, discretionary or centralized planning, politicized HR management decisions, lack of clarity over administrative mandates, low accountability, and lack of sustained political support. (ii) Management. The management system needs to be modernized. Its current structure cannot efficiently respond to the needs of a system of the existing scale with 1 million students and 14,000 schools. Decisions are made without the support of good school data, without coordination with the budget, and disconnected with policy. As a result, managerial decisions are not aligned with education quality nor with student learning. **Rationale for high priority**: Unless system governance improves, sector financing will continue to be ineffective for improving learning, as it will continue to be misallocated and/or inefficiently spent. Modernizing system management—including its restructuring and the modernization of its procedures to keep pace with the sheer size of the education system—and using data for decision-making, are essential for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of education financing.