



## Revitalizing, Innovating, Strengthening Education (RISE)

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### Teacher Absenteeism Study Results of the May 2009 Observation

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## Executive Summary

The *Revitalizing, Innovating, Strengthening Education (RISE)* project, funded by USAID, operates in four earthquake-affected districts of northern Pakistan: Bagh, Muzaffarabad and Poonch districts of Azad, Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) and Mansehra district of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). RISE is a comprehensive, integrated program with the goal to strengthen the educational system in the four project districts. Teacher attendance is one of RISE's two key indicators of success for the project.

In 2007, RISE began a sample-based, longitudinal study on a biannual basis in Bagh and Mansehra districts to track RISE's progress in meeting this target. This document reports the results of the May 2009 data collection on teacher absenteeism in 422 schools in both districts. In the third week of May 2009, School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Councils (PTCs) recorded the attendance of 2,176 teachers for a total of six working days.

Results of the May 2009 follow up show improvement in teacher attendance in both districts, as compared to the baseline results in 2007. Overall, teacher attendance was greater than 85 percent. In Mansehra, teacher absenteeism decreased to 1 in 8 teachers (2009) as compared to 1 in 4 teachers (2007). Similarly, in Bagh, teacher absenteeism decreased to 1 in 7 teachers from 1 in 5 teachers.

Two key factors are associated with teacher absenteeism: the distance of teachers' residence from the schools and the sex of the teacher. While there was an overall reduction in absenteeism of both male and female non-local teachers, absenteeism is found to be consistently higher among non-local teachers than local teachers in both districts. Similarly, the rates of absenteeism of both male and female teachers declined while the disparity between male and female rates of absenteeism persisted. Male teachers were found to be present in schools at relatively higher rates than women. When the male and female teacher absenteeism data was disaggregated by distance from the school, the disparity between rates of absenteeism among male and female local teachers was only three percent. The disparity between male and female non-local teachers' rates of attendance was quite high, at 16 percent in Mansehra and 11 percent in Bagh.

RISE compared the rates of absenteeism of teachers by zone; training status; and day of the week. No difference was found in absenteeism between summer and winter zone schools in Bagh; Mansehra showed a slightly higher rate of absenteeism in winter zone schools. When the rates of absenteeism among teachers trained by RISE and those who did not participate in RISE trainings were compared, teacher attendance was found to be two percent higher among the teachers trained by RISE in both districts. This difference will be explored further in an upcoming report. No consistent pattern was found in absenteeism when the teachers' rates of absence were reported by day of the week.

## Introduction

The *Revitalizing, Innovating, Strengthening Education (RISE)* project, funded by USAID, operates in four earthquake-affected districts of northern Pakistan: Bagh, Muzaffarabad and Poonch districts of Azad, Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) and Mansehra district of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). RISE is a comprehensive, integrated program with the goal to strengthen the educational system in the four project districts. RISE's core interventions are capacity building of education managers; professional development of 10,000 primary, middle, and high school teachers; and training and support of 2,300 school management committees (AJ&K) and parent-teacher councils (Mansehra).

RISE's three core interventions are intended to contribute to an increase in the rate of teacher attendance. In 2007, RISE began a sample-based, longitudinal study on a biannual basis to assess frequencies and patterns in teacher absenteeism in two target districts: Bagh and Mansehra. This document reports the results of the fifth data collection for the study on teacher absenteeism.

## Data Collection

Data were collected from 422 schools: 171 schools in Bagh and 251 schools in Mansehra. Table 1 below presents detailed information on the number of schools in the sample. In 2008, RISE used SMCs/PTCs as data collectors. In May 2009, RISE used SMCs /PTCs again as data collectors as well as the data collection tools and methods that were introduced in 2008. SMC/PTC members documented teachers' attendance and absence in the sample schools for the entire work week in the third week of May 2009.

**Table 1: Number of Schools Visited in the Teacher Absenteeism Study**

District	Primary			Middle			High			Grand Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Bagh	52	40	92	20	23	43	18	18	36	171
Mansehra	145	42	187	25	17	42	15	7	22	251
<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>422</b>

SMCs/PTCs recorded the attendance of 2,176 teachers (1,076 in Bagh and 1,100 in Mansehra). The details are shown in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Number of Teachers Observed**

District	Male	Female	Total
Bagh	580	496	1,076
Mansehra	763	337	1,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,343</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>2,176</b>

Prior to data collection, RISE trained field staff as trainers of SMCs/PTCs in the use of the data collection tools. RISE district staff received a day-long training on the use of the data collection tools and the verification mechanism. After the training, RISE district staff oriented the

SMC/PTC members on data collection processes at their respective schools. During the SMC/PTC orientations, RISE staff trained SMC/PTC members on strategies to ensure reliability and validity of the data that they collect.

A data verification mechanism was used to check the accuracy and reliability of the data collection process by SMCs/PTCs. To verify the data collected by PTCs/SMCs, RISE staff independently recorded the teachers' attendance from the selected schools on at least two working days per school during the data collection week. The staff collected data from 131 schools: 52 schools in Bagh and 79 schools in Mansehra. RISE staff recorded the attendance of 464 and 358 teachers in Mansehra and Bagh districts respectively. Teacher attendance data collected by RISE staff were compared with the data collected by SMCs/PTCs using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). In Bagh, 91 percent of the attendance recorded by SMCs/PTCs matched the verification records; and in Mansehra, 93 percent of the teachers' attendance records matched.

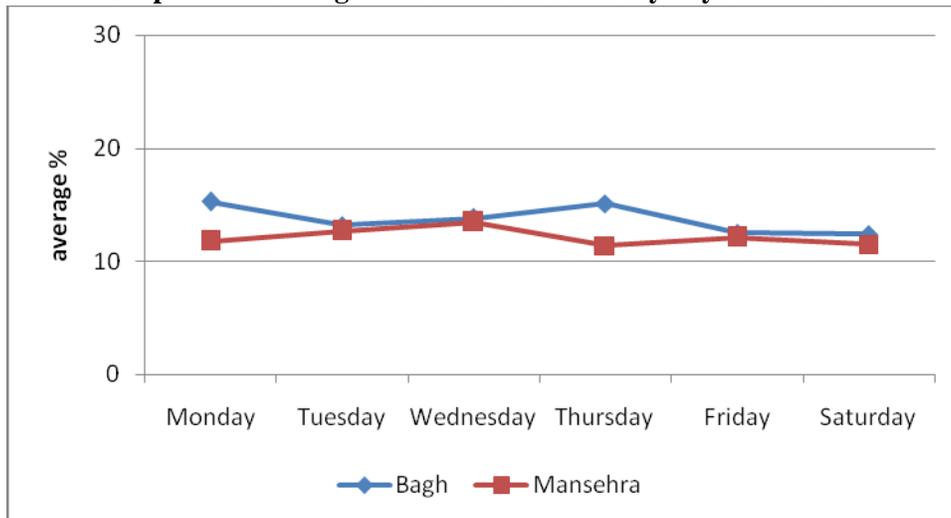
In May 2009, RISE introduced the use of brief personal interview questions to gain a better understanding of the head teachers' perspectives on factors related to teacher absenteeism. In the interviews, RISE elicited the perspectives of the head teachers on factors related to teachers' attendance in their schools. RISE staff interviewed the head teachers of the schools where verification data were collected. Interviews with the head teachers were conducted in 124 schools (53 in Bagh and 71 in Mansehra).

## **Findings**

On average, the percentage of teachers' who were absent on any given day of the data collection week was lower than 15% (see Graph 1). A considerable decrease in teacher absenteeism is noted in Mansehra; absenteeism decreased from 25% in the 2007 baseline to 12% in 2009. Similar findings are observed in Bagh, where absenteeism decreased from 20% in the baseline to 14% in 2009. The following paragraphs of this section of the document present disaggregated data on teacher absenteeism by day of the week; distance of the teachers' residence from the school; sex of the teacher; distance between teachers residence to school and sex of teachers; zone; and participation in RISE's professional development activities.

**Attendance rates by day of the week.** The results of the May 2009 follow up show that teacher absenteeism is slightly higher on Monday and Thursday in Bagh whereas in Mansehra absenteeism is consistent throughout the week. See Graph 1 for more detailed information.

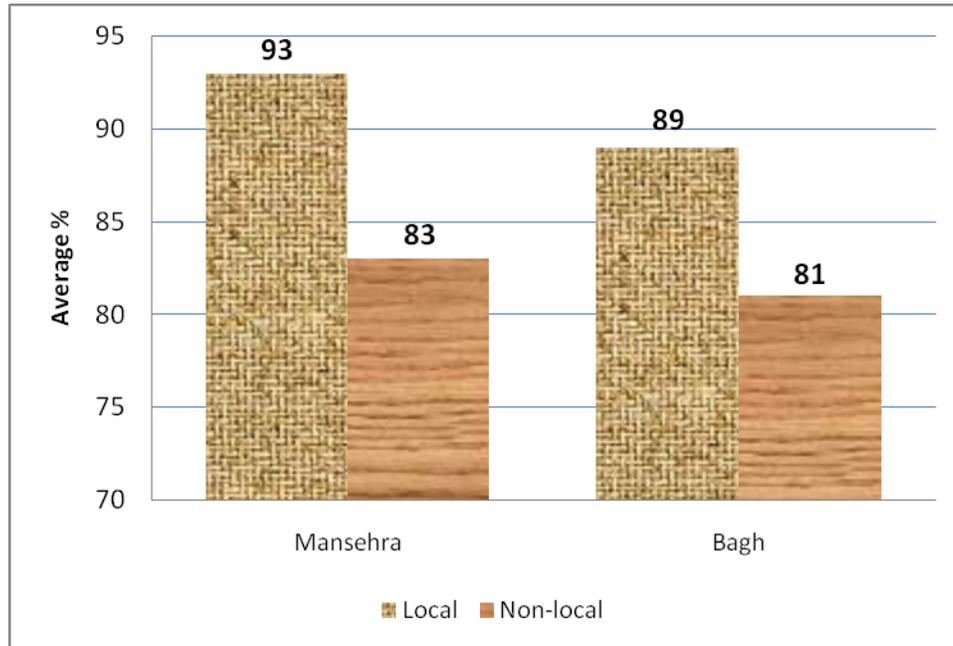
**Graph 1: Percentage of Teachers Absence by day of the week**



**Attendance rates by distance of the teachers' residence from the school.** In the study RISE differentiated between local and non-local teachers in the recording of teacher absenteeism. For the study, a local teacher is defined as a teacher who is from the same village or living in the vicinity of the school, and a non-local teacher is someone whose primary residence is located outside the vicinity of the school. In the 2007 baseline, RISE found that non-local teachers had higher rates of absenteeism than local teachers.

A comparison between the attendance of local and non-local teachers' attendance on the observation days in 2009 shows that distance of teachers' residence to the schools continues to play a role in teacher absenteeism. Although non-local teachers' rates of attendance increased overall from the baseline to 2009, local teachers continued to be present in comparatively higher numbers in both districts. In May 2009, on average 89% of the local teachers and 81% of the non-local teachers were found present in the sample schools in Bagh on the observation days. The November 2008 results for Bagh showed 83% for local teachers and 77% for non-local teachers. In Mansehra, the attendance rate of local teachers was 93%, and the attendance rate of non-local teachers was 83%. The November 2008 results for Mansehra showed 88% for local teachers and 81% for non-local teachers. The comparison between the percentages of local and non-local teachers who were present on the observation days is shown in Graph 2.

**Graph 2: Comparison of Local and Non-local Teachers' Attendance**



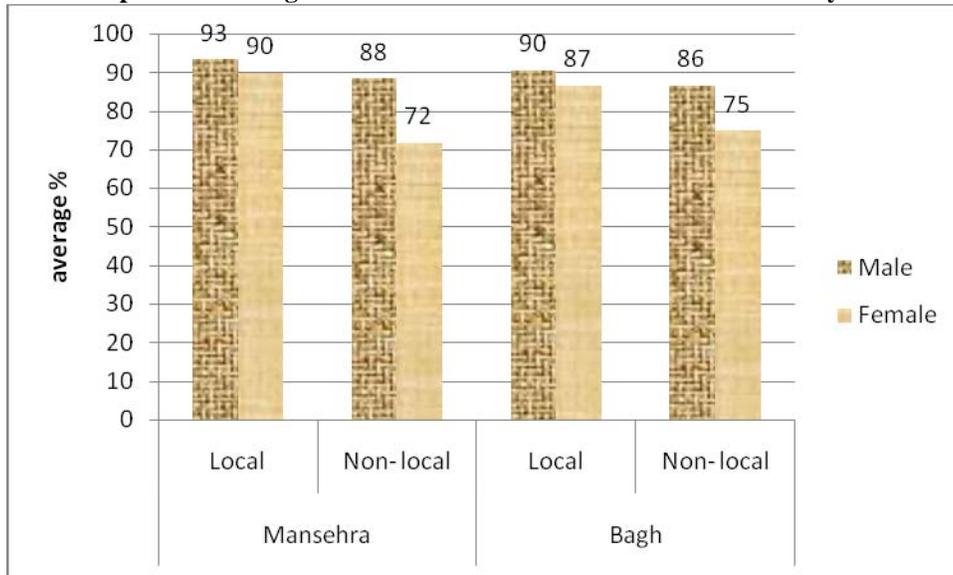
**Attendance rates by sex of teacher.** The May 2009 results show that there is a considerable improvement in teacher attendance among both male and females as compared to the 2008 results. However, the results from the May 2009 follow up show that a higher percentage of female teachers were absent on the observation days in both districts. This result is consistent with previous findings. A comparison between male and female teacher absenteeism is shown in Graph 3. In Mansehra, on average, 23% of the female teachers, as compared to 10% of the male teachers, were absent on the observation days in May 2009. The November 2008 results showed 25% of the female teachers were absent and 14% of the men. In Bagh, the 2009 results show that 17% of the female teachers were absent as compared to 11% of the male teachers. November 2008 results showed 22% among female teachers and 16% for men.

**Graph 3: Comparison of Male and Female Teacher Absenteeism**



**Absenteeism by distance and sex.** The 2009 results show that both distance from the teachers' residence to school and sex of the teacher influence attendance rates. When distance from the residence to school is taken into consideration in a comparison between rates of attendance of male and female teachers, the disparity between male and female attendance widens with the increased distance. There is only a three percent disparity between the attendance rates of the local male and female teachers. In comparison, the disparity between attendance rates of the non-local male and female teachers is quite high, at 16% for Mansehra and 11% for Bagh. These findings show that distance from the teachers' residence to school has a considerable affect on female teachers' attendance.

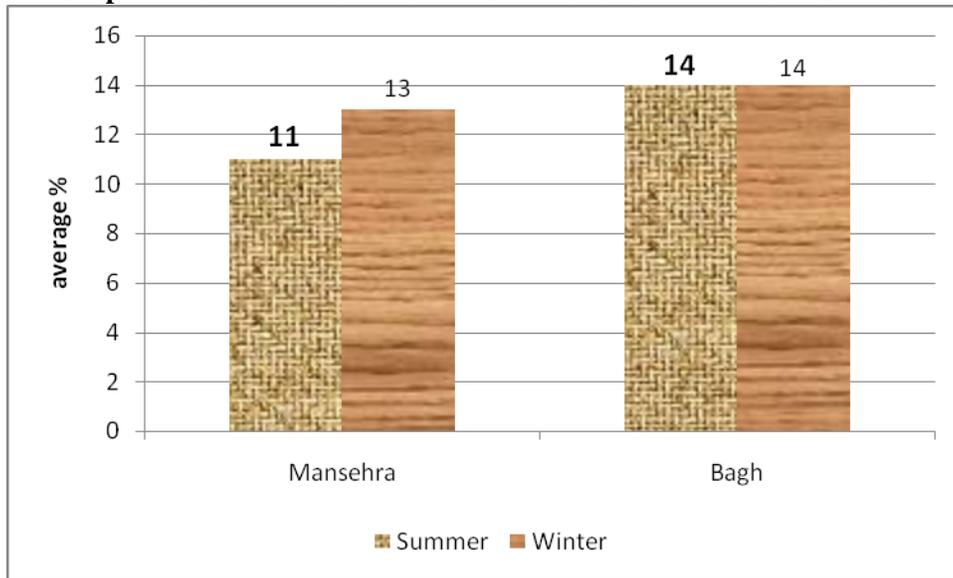
**Graph 4: Percentage of Attendance of Local/ Non-local Teachers by Sex.**



**Absenteeism by geographic zone.** Graph 5 shows a comparison between the percentage of teachers absent on the observation days in winter and summer zone schools in 2009. There is a little difference between the absenteeism rates of winter and summer zone school teachers. In Mansehra there is only a two percent difference between the rates whereas in Bagh there is essentially no difference in the rates of attendance.

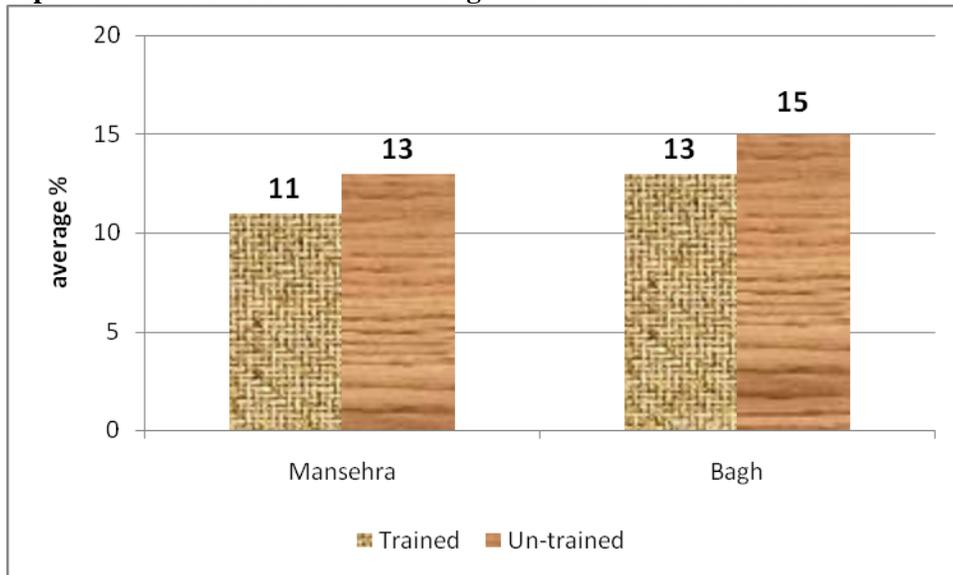
Results for the November 2008 follow up were significantly different in Bagh. There is a 7% difference between the 2008 and 2009 rates of teacher absenteeism in summer zone schools. Absenteeism among teachers in Bagh summer zone schools was 21% in November 2008 and 14% in 2009 whereas the 2008 and 2009 rate of absenteeism in Bagh's winter zone schools was 14%. This high absenteeism rate in 2008 in Bagh's summer zone schools most likely can be attributed to poor weather conditions at the time of the observation; a great number of the sample schools do not have shelters. In Mansehra, teacher absenteeism in May 2009 is slightly higher in winter zone schools as compared to summer zone schools.

**Graph 5: Teacher Absenteeism in Summer and Winter Zone Schools**



**Absenteeism by training status.** Graph 6 shows a comparison between absenteeism rates of teachers trained by RISE and those were not trained by RISE. A comparatively lower percentage of RISE-trained teachers were absent than teachers not trained by RISE on the observation days. In both districts, the difference in absenteeism between teachers trained by RISE and those who were not is 2 percent.

**Graph 6: Teachers Absenteeism Among RISE Trained and Un-trained Teachers**



**Head teachers' perspectives on factors related to teacher absenteeism.** RISE staff conducted brief personal interviews with head teachers as part of the data verification process. In the

interviews, RISE staff asked head teachers about their perspectives on the influence of SMCs/PTCs and RISE teacher training on teachers' absenteeism. The interviews also included questions concerning the frequency of visits by education managers to the schools and the kind of support that they provided during these visits.

Education managers, as part of their overall job responsibilities, engage in school supervision and instructional support; school visits is one mechanism to ensure the accountability of teachers to their schools. In the interviews, 72% of the head teachers in Bagh and 82% of head teachers in Mansehra reported visits by the education managers during the last year. In Bagh, 20% of the head teachers mentioned that they received academic support from the education officials while 18% of schools in Mansehra received this form of support. Head teachers did not report influence of teacher training on teacher absenteeism in their schools.

RISE works with SMCs and PTCs to strengthen their skills in school improvement and advocate for better education for their children. Head teachers in Bagh and Mansehra reported that these groups play a vital role in improving teacher attendance in their schools. In Bagh, 68% of the head teachers stated that SMCs have played a positive role in increasing teacher attendance while in Mansehra 75% of the head teachers mentioned the contributions of PTCs. The monitoring and support roles played by SMCs and PTCs were the contributions most often cited by head teachers.

## **Conclusion**

Overall teacher attendance improved in the sample schools. In both districts, the percentage of teachers at school on the days of observation was 85% percent. May 2009 results show an overall significant decrease in teacher absenteeism, as compared to the 2007 baseline results in both districts. In Mansehra, the percentage of teachers absent on the observation days decreased from 25% in the 2007 baseline to 12% in 2009. In Bagh, the percentage of teachers absent on the days observed for the study decreased from 20% in the baseline to 14% in 2007.

In RISE's baseline and follow up, two key factors were identified to be associated with teacher absenteeism: the distance of teachers' residence from the schools and the sex of the teacher. While there was an overall reduction in absenteeism of both male and female non-local teachers, absenteeism is found to be consistently higher among non-local teachers than local teachers in both districts. Similarly, the rates of absenteeism of both male and female teachers declined. However, the disparity between male and female rates of absenteeism persisted. Male teachers were found to be present in schools at relatively higher rates than women. When the male and female teacher absenteeism data was disaggregated by distance from the school, the disparity between rates of absenteeism among male and female local teachers was only three percent. The disparity between male and female non-local teachers' rates of attendance was quite high, at 16 percent in Mansehra and 11 percent in Bagh.

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