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Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA) Program

End-of-Project Report

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Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA) Program

End-of-Project Report

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RTI International
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Aga Khan Foundation–Aga Khan University (AKU)
American Institute for Research (AIR)
Balochistan Consortium for Professional Development (BCPD)
Education Development Center (EDC)
Indus Resource Center (IRC)
International Reading Association (IRA)
Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD) Pakistan
National Rural Support Programme (NRSP)
Participatory Approaches for Integrated Management and Needs (PAIMAN) Alumni
Association
Pakistan Center for Philanthropy
Save the Children Foundation–US (SC)
Society for Community Support for Primary Education in Balochistan (SCSPEB)
Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO)
The Asia Foundation (TAF)
United Education Initiative (UEI)
World Education (WE)

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Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEPAM	Academy for Educational Planning and Management
AIR	American Institute for Research
AKES	Aga Khan Education Service
AKU	Aga Khan University
AKU-IED	Aga Khan University-Institute for Education Development
ASC	Annual School Census
ASMC	Association of School Management Committees
AWP	Annual Work Plan
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
BCPD	Balochistan Consortium for Professional Development
BLCC	Bunyard Literacy Community Council
BoC	Bureau of Curriculum
BOCEC	Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Centers
CBO	community-based organization
CCB	citizen community board
CD-ROM	compact disc–read-only memory
CEF	Chaghi Education Forum
CRI	Children’s Resources International
CSN	civil society network
CSO	civil society organization
D-ASMC	District Association of School Management Committees
DEMIS	District Education Management Information System
DEP	District Education Plan
DIG	District Improvement Grant
DIP	District Improvement Plan
DLP	District Literacy Plan
DM	district manager
DOE	Department of Education
DTCE	Development Trust for Community Engagement
DVD	digital video disc
EC	Elementary Colleges
EDC	Education Development Center
EDO	Executive District Officer
EFA	Education For All
EFEE	Education Finance and Economics of Education
ELT	English language training

EMC	Education Monitoring Committee
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EOP	end-of-project
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESR	Education Sector Reform
ESRA	Education Sector Reform Assistance Program
EU	European Union
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Area
FDE	Federal Directorate of Education
FMIS	Financial Management Information System
FOG	fixed obligation grant
FRP	Family Reading Program
GCET	Government College Elementary Training
GDP	gross domestic product
GoB	Government of Balochistan
GoP	Government of Pakistan
GoS	Government of Sindh
ICT	information and communication technology
IDSP	Institute for Development Studies and Practices
ILM	Integrated Literacy Model
IPC	Interprovincial Conference
IR	Intermediate Result
IRA	International Reading Association
IRC	Indus Resource Center
IRI	Interactive Radio Instruction
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ISDN	Integrated Services Digital Network
ISP	Institute of Social Policies
LAFAM	Light of Awareness for Fair Advancement
LEAD	Leadership for Environment and Development
LGO	Local Government Ordinance
LRC	literary resource center
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCYAL	National Curriculum for Youth and Adult Literacy
NEMIS	National Education Management Information System
NEP	National Education Policy
NGO	nongovernmental organization
NICT	National Information and Communication Technology
NLC	National Literacy Curriculum
NLG	National Literacy Guidelines
NPR	National Policy Review

NRSP	National Rural Support Programme
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
P&P	Policy and Planning
PAIMAN	Participatory Approaches for Integrated Management and Needs
PBL	project-based learning
PCP	public-community partnership
PDF	professional development forum
PDI	professional development infrastructure
PEACE	Provincial Education Assessment Center
PITE	Provincial Institute of Teacher Education
PKR	Pakistan Rupee
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PPP	public-private partnership
PRT	Planning and Reporting Tool
PSO	project support officer
PSU	project support unit
PT/SMC	Parent Teacher School Management Committee
PTA	parent-teacher association
RC	resource center
RF	Results Framework
RSMAC	Region-Specific Modular Alternatives for Construction
RSO	Regional Security Officer
RSU	reform support unit
RTI	RTI International
SAP	Social Action Plan
SCSPEB	Society for Community Support for Primary Education in Balochistan
SC-US	Save the Children–US
SDS	Sindh Development Society
SDSSP	Sindh Devolved Social Services Program
SEMIS	Sindh Education Management Information System
SEP	School Enhancement Program
SIG	school improvement grant
SIP	school improvement plan
SIR	Sub-Intermediate Result
SMC	School Management Committee
SMT	senior management team
SO	Strategic Objective
SOP	standard operating procedure
SPELT	Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers

SPO	Strengthening Participatory Organization
SRSP	Sarhad Rural Support Programme
START	Student Teacher Appreciation and Recognition Token
T1	Tranche 1
T2	Tranche 2
TAF	The Asia Foundation
TEF	The Education Foundation
TQI	Teacher Quality Index
TRC	teacher resource center
UC	Union Council
UEI	United Education Initiative
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
VCD	video compact disc
WDI	Whole District Initiative
WE	World Education
WIDE	Wide-scale Interactive Development for Educators

The End-of-Project (EOP) Report

Herewith, RTI International presents to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Pakistan (GoP) the EOP Report for the USAID/Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA) program, November 2002–September 2007.

Background

With the advent of the Education Sector Reforms (ESR) Action Plan 2002–2006, Pakistan embarked upon an ambitious national education reform agenda, one that was linked to the Devolution and Local Government Plan 2000, the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2001–2004, Social Action Plan (SAP) II restructuring, and the National Commission on Human Development. The ESR Action Plan 2002–2006 outlined three goals for the country’s education sector: (i) to promote quality education, enabling all citizens to reach their maximum potential; (ii) to produce responsible, enlightened, and skilled citizens; and (iii) to integrate Pakistan into the global framework of human-centered economic development. It also outlined seven principal objectives:

1. to increase the national average literacy rate from 47 to 62 percent;
2. to provide Education for All (EFA);
3. to improve education quality through curriculum reform, teacher training, and reform of the examination/assessment process;
4. to improve vocational/technical education at the secondary level;
5. to strengthen the higher education system so as to double university enrollment;
6. to bring *madrastas* into the mainstream of Pakistan’s general education system; and
7. to expand public-private partnerships (PPPs) in support of the overall education reform effort.

ESRA was a USAID-funded program that supported five—numbers 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7—of the seven objectives of the ESR. ESRA activities unfolded along two dimensions. One dimension had ESRA working in five technical areas: (i) policy and planning, (ii) professional development of teachers and administrators, (iii) adult and youth literacy, (iv) public community and PPPs, and (v) innovative information and communication technology (ICT) in support of GoP education reforms. The other dimension had ESRA activities unfolding across a number of education jurisdictions: national, provincial (Balochistan and Sindh), in 12 districts within those two provinces, and one sector within the Islamabad Capital Territory.

Coordination and Integration

To ensure both project-wide coordination and the establishment of critical linkages—or integration—along and across each dimension, ESRA did the following. First, we put in place a number of management structures and processes—the Annual Work Plan (AWP) and the Results Framework (RF)—and closely monitored both. We also had weekly home office senior management meetings that allowed senior managers in Islamabad to exchange notes on progress and upcoming activities and to address internal coordination and integration issues as they arose. Additionally, ESRA had monthly senior management team (SMT) meetings attended by senior management from the head office in Islamabad and the two provincial offices in Balochistan and Sindh. ESRA also initiated a series of Interprovincial Conferences (IPCs). These conferences included key government stakeholders at the federal, provincial, and district levels; ESRA implementing partners; school communities; and representatives from USAID. Accordingly, the conferences helped to bring ESRA and our government counterparts closer together, to help embed much of what ESRA was doing into the fabric of the public education system; and yield greater coordination and integration of the program across all dimensions.

Finally, because almost everything ESRA did was directly, or indirectly, focused on school improvement, critical linkages between the intermediate results (IRs) were naturally forged. Accordingly, the schools/communities ESRA mobilized around school improvement also received school improvement grants (SIGs), their school management committees (SMCs) were strengthened, their teachers were trained, and their illiterate learners learned to read. Conversely, the work we did under Sub-IR 1.1 sought, and succeed in many instances, to create the policy space needed for much of what ESRA was doing to be sustained well beyond the life of the project.

Project Goals and Results

ESRA was organized around five IRs that corresponded to USAID’s education sector results framework (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

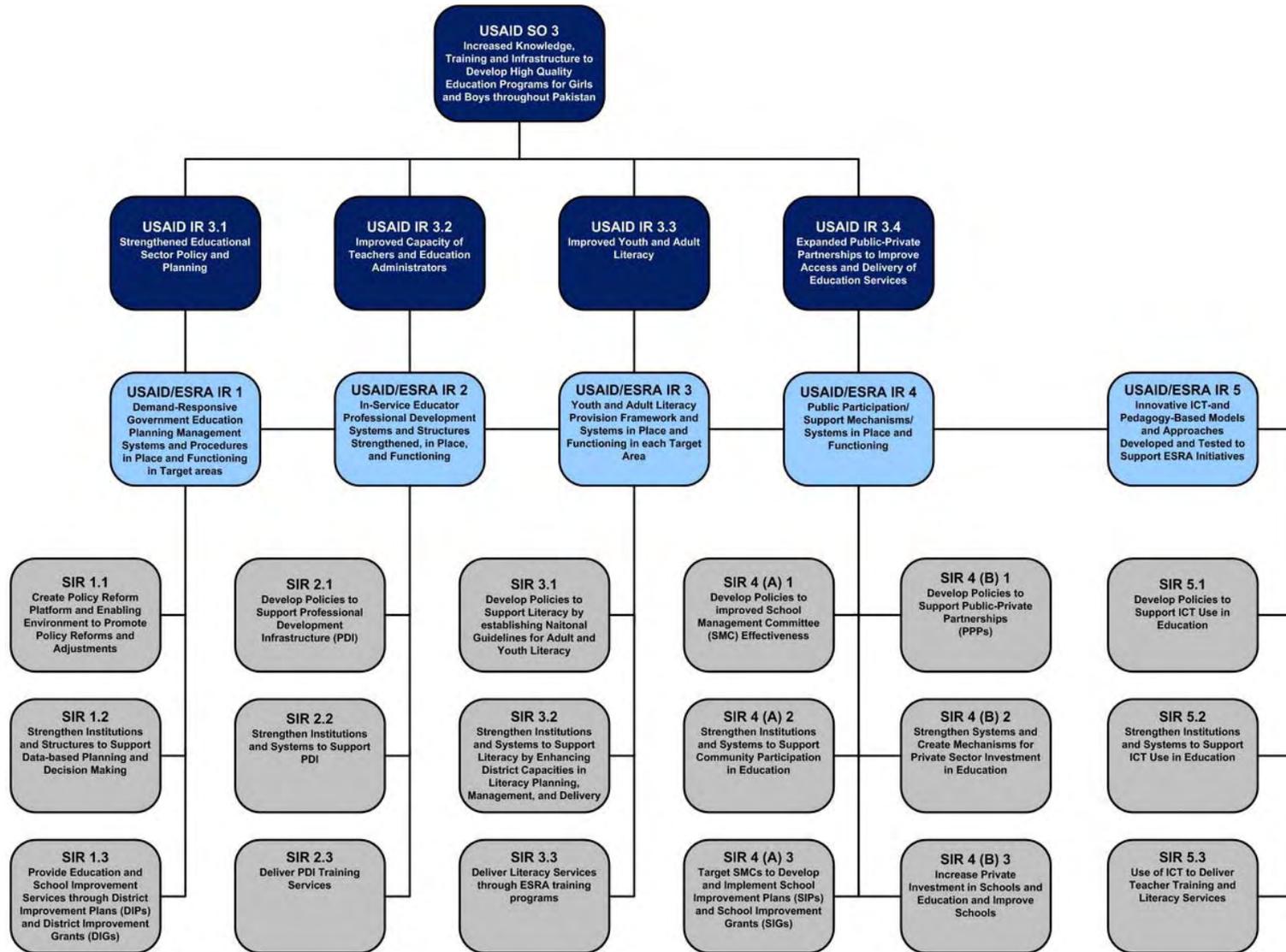
Table 1. The Correspondence of USAID’s and ESRA’s Intermediate Results

USAID	ESRA
IR 3.1 Strengthened education sector policy and planning	IR 1 Demand responsive government education planning, management systems, and procedures in place and functioning
IR 3.2 Improved capacity of teachers and administrators	IR 2 In-service education professional development systems and structures strengthened, in place, and functioning
IR 3.3 Improved youth and adult literacy	IR 3 Youth and adult literacy provision framework and systems in place and

USAID	ESRA
	functioning in each target area
IR 3.4 Expanded PPPs to improve the delivery of educational services	IR 4 Public participation/support mechanisms/systems in place and functioning
Strategic Objective (SO) 3 Increase knowledge, training, and infrastructure to develop high quality education programs for girls and boys throughout Pakistan.	IR 5 Innovative ICT- and pedagogy-based models and approaches developed and tested to support ESRA initiatives (ESRA Plus). ESRA Plus tested ESRA's strategy in rural and semiurban settings in 65 schools of Islamabad Capitol Territory.

Three sub-IRs (SIRs)—service delivery, system strengthening, and policy—advanced each of the ESRA IRs. Accordingly, the project did much more than train teachers/administrators, produce literates, generate school improvement plans (SIPs), and issue district improvement grants (DIG); it also strengthened the mechanisms/systems of the education system and created the policy space necessary to embed improved service delivery into the heart of the education system.

Figure 1. USAID and ESRA IR Framework



Summary of Subcontractors

A team of international and national partners implemented ESRA. Working as a team, every member was mutually strengthened, and, therefore, enabled to deliver at a level beyond what each alone could do.

International Partners:

- Education Development Center (EDC)
- American Institute for Research (AIR)
- World Education (WE)
- Save the Children–US (SC-US)
- The Asia Foundation (TAF)
- International Reading Association (IRA)
- University of Wisconsin–Green Bay

National Partners:

- Aga Khan Foundation–Aga Khan University (AKU)
- Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD) Pakistan
- Participatory Approaches for Integrated Management and Needs (PAIMAN) Alumni Association
- Pakistan Center for Philanthropy
- Institute of Social Policies (ISP)
- United Education Initiative (UEI)
- Balochistan Consortium for Professional Development (BCPD)
- Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO)
- National Rural Support Programme (NRSP)
- Society for Community Support for Primary Education in Balochistan (SCSPEB)
- Light of Awareness for Fair Advancement (LAFAM)
- The Education Foundation (TEF)
- Indus Resource Center (IRC)
- Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP)
- Institute for Development Studies and Practices (IDSP)
- Aga Khan Foundation–Aga Khan Education Services (AKES)
- Bunyad Literacy Community Council (BLCC)
- Hi-Vision Production & Advertisement
- Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers (SPELT)
- Jin Technologies
- Magic Notes
- Cavish

Figure 2 shows in which program areas each partner is working.

Figure 2. ESRA's Subcontractors

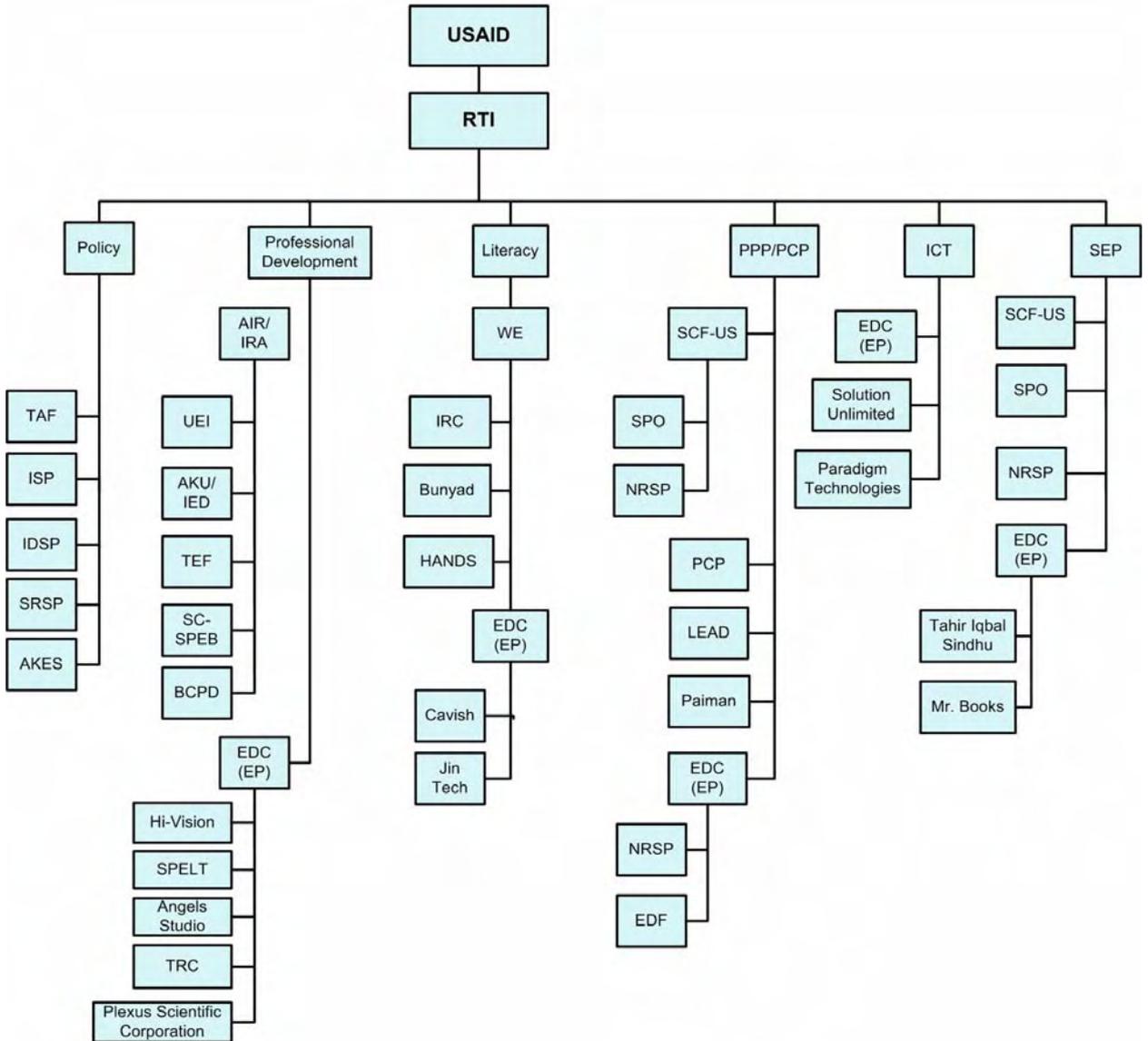


Figure 3. ESRA's Geographic Areas of Focus



Evolution of ESRA

When ESRA initially unfolded, it had a number of features that warrant discussion here: the Whole District Initiative (WDI), the grants program, and the School Enhancement Program (SEP). Figure 3 shows how ESRA's program covered the whole country through the grants issued during the early stage of the project. Ultimately the grants program was reduced and ESRA only worked in the provinces and districts approved by the GOP.

Whole District Initiative (WDI)

At the start of the project, ESRA was operating in four technical areas across a number of educational jurisdictions (national, provincial, and district) and, therefore, required an integration vector—coordinated activity that would ensure that all the work being carried out by ESRA would come together with a meaningful and lasting impact. Whole District Reform, later referred to as the Whole District Initiative (WDI) was put forth as that integration vector. The intent behind WDI was to direct the work being carried out in each component—policy and planning, professional development, adult and youth literacy, and public-community partnership (PCP)/PPP—toward what would ultimately become a fully functional district. However, over the course of ESRA’s first year, WDI proved to be an ineffective integration vector, largely because it was too ambitious and because it placed too much focus on the district within a political-economic environment that was not altogether enthusiastic about devolution (the provinces felt that devolution took away much of their power/authority).

Grants

The Phase I, II, and III grants program had ESRA offering competitive grants to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to develop projects to carry out almost any task that fell under ESRA’s broad technical umbrella (for example, there was a Phase II grant that allowed an NGO to develop a song about education), in any district around the country *except* those in which the rest of ESRA was working. The problem with this program was twofold. First, it became a dumping ground for any request made of USAID for educational assistance. Second, it worked against what USAID and ESRA were trying to achieve in our target districts: it channeled resources to activities that had very little impact on our key deliverables. The grant distribution across Pakistan is shown in figure 3 above.

School Enhancement Program (SEP)

The School Enhancement Program (SEP) was thrust upon ESRA by both the Ministry of Education (MOE) and USAID, with ultimate pressure coming from the United States Embassy. This program had ESRA building and/or refurbishing every school in one Union Council (UC) in each of our target districts. This was a labor-intensive construction effort; thus, most of ESRA’s attention was focused on SEP, not on what the project was intended to achieve.

After about a year of implementation, USAID asked RTI to restructure ESRA and to better align the project to USAID’s strategic objectives. School improvement replaced WDI as the integration vector: everything ESRA did, regardless of the technical area or the jurisdiction in which ESRA was working, was directed toward school improvement. This had a number of advantages over WDI. First, it was not as ambitious. Instead of trying to make districts fully functional, ESRA sought to direct key aspects of policy and planning, professional development, literacy, and PCP/PPP toward the improvement of schools. Second, by focusing on school improvement, as opposed to district improvement, ESRA staked out the moral high ground: regardless of how one might have felt about devolution, no one could complain about trying to improve the schools. Lastly, it gave ESRA a place to channel its grants money (SIGs).

The SEP program was discontinued. All the SEP work that had been initiated before ESRA was restructured was allowed to be completed. No new SEP work would be funded. Phases I and II of the SEP grants program were shut down. All the grants that had been awarded up until the time of the restructuring process were honored. The rest of the grant money would go into SIGs.

Executive Summary

ESRA sought to achieve school improvement across approximately 7,000 schools by directing its work in five technical areas—policy and planning, professional development, literacy, PCP/PPP, and ICT—toward:

- improved policy, better systems and structures, and direct service delivery such that
 - schools were actually improved and had the capacity to continue to do so;
 - districts were better equipped to support school improvement and had the capacity to continue to do so;
 - provinces were better equipped to support both districts and schools vis-à-vis school improvement and had the capacity to continue to do so; and
 - national institutions and organizations were better equipped to support provinces, districts, and schools vis-à-vis school improvement and had the capacity to continue to do so.

School/Community-level Activities

Approximately 7,600 schools were improved as a result of ESRA's work. Over the lifetime of the program, school communities received cash grants to construct, among other things, 3,660 new rooms, 2,088 new toilets, 1,678 new floors, 443 new roofs, and 704 new boundary walls. An additional 1,119 rooms, 1,513 toilets, 620 floors, and 706 roofs were repaired. In addition, 29,698 desks, 4,135 tables, 10,130 chairs, 3,897 benches, and 1,861 windows were purchased. Moreover, with the acquisition of 1,509 water coolers, 1,033 hand pumps, 730 electric motors, and 1,917 water tanks, a number of schools gained access to running water.

ESRA's achievement at the school level, however, did not rest in its capacity to provide much-needed improvements and equipment to impoverished schools, but in its success in getting SMCs and school communities to take charge of the overall process of school improvement. More than 7,500 SMCs were trained to work with their communities to assess school needs, develop visions of what an improved school looked like, create SIPs, and implement SIGs. Overall, 10,945 SIGs were successfully implemented, totaling more than US\$12.5 million. The communities themselves contributed more than US\$500,000 in cost share, a number that does not include the cost of in-kind labor.

From estimates made available by provincial data, more than 400,000 children now have access to better infrastructure and better quality of teaching.

Furthermore, 38,717 teachers were trained by a team of 1,099 master trainers and mentor teachers (all of whom were trained by ESRA), and 5,863 head teachers were trained as well. Finally, more than 100,000 illiterate community members from the surrounding communities graduated from various ESRA literacy programs. The number of students positively impacted by ESRA's interventions at the school/community level is estimated at more than 400,000.

District-level Activities

Empowering and enabling district education officers to support school improvement was a critical aspect of ESRA's portfolio of activities. While the schools/communities successfully implemented 10,945 school improvement grants, the district government, as a part ESRA's district-level project support unit (PSU), successfully reviewed, approved, monitored, and audited those grants. More than this, however, ESRA helped to improve the overall planning capacity of its target districts. Specifically, district officers were provided with technical assistance to prepare comprehensive, 5-year District Education Plans (DEPs) based upon an assessment of district needs that ESRA and our district counterparts conducted. Once complete, district officers were trained through two rounds of workshops, one in project planning and the other in project management. Equipped with this training, district officers were supported to develop 1-year District Improvement Plans (DIPs)—plans designed to help further their respective DEPs. To help implement these DIPs, ESRA provided districts with DIGs. Through three rounds of DIP/DIG development/implementation, ESRA assisted district officers to identify and prioritize areas for improvement, plan and implement improvement activities, and monitor their progress. During the DIP/DIG cycle, districts were provided and trained in particular DIG management systems to help them track DIG progress and in needs-based planning—training that focused on achieving minimum standards of provision for schools across the district (within a range of affordability). Overall, ESRA distributed more than US\$2.28 million in DIGs.¹

ESRA also assisted districts prepare professional development plans. These were the product of ESRA-initiated professional development forums (PDFs). Initially, these monthly meetings were meant to gather professional development actors throughout the district to discuss issues and share experiences vis-à-vis professional development. Over time, however, the PDFs evolved into government-notified institutions making serious input into the overall planning process. PDFs were officially notified by district education departments in each one of ESRA's target districts. Moreover, in four ESRA target districts, PDFs succeeded in obtaining funds for their professional development

¹ Some notable achievements through DIGs:

- ESRA's DIG to Hyderabad financed the salaries of 99 contract teachers. These teachers have now been regularized by the District Education Department. The grant to Hyderabad, therefore, has provided livelihood to 99 qualified teachers, and resulted in the reopening of 80 schools, where these teachers will now be teaching classes.
- ESRA's DIGs to Sukkur and Khairpur prompted the district governments to contribute PKR 4 million and PKR 6 million respectively to local DIG projects. This is the first time in the history of both districts that their governments have made such large contributions toward improving local education service delivery.
- DIG inputs were heavily debated by public representatives before being approved. The government contributed an additional PKR 4 million and PKR 6 million respectively to local DIG projects. An added benefit, therefore, has been that it has reinforced democratic practices at the district level.

plans. These PDFs proved to be of high utility, shown by the fact that a number of them were also formed at the *tehsil* level (government level below the district level) as well, providing an opportunity for subdistrict-level stakeholders to voice their professional development needs.

While the primary focus of ESRA’s district-level efforts was the district education office, critical work was undertaken outside that office as well. ESRA reconstituted and empowered the Education Monitoring Committees (EMCs)—a public oversight entity comprised of members of the district assembly—in each one of its target districts. ESRA’s success in this regard led to our training 75 UC-level EMCs. ESRA also prepared an EMC manual that was distributed to every district education office in Pakistan.

Additionally, ESRA spearheaded the creation of teacher resource centers (TRCs) and literacy resource centers (LRCs). The former offered teachers throughout the district access to both each other (and in so doing, allowed professional networks to be established) and also to much needed reference and resource materials. The latter enabled graduates of ESRA’s many literacy programs to build upon the skills they had previously acquired through the training.

Finally, ESRA pioneered a number of policy dialogue sessions that were specifically designed to engage traditionally “noneducation” actors—press clubs, chambers of commerce, bar associations, civil society organizations (CSOs), and public representatives—in the education development process. The success of this work is evidenced by the fact that civil society networks (CSNs) were formed, and that some successfully pressured district governments to channel more resources into the education sector.²

Provincial-level Activities

As a result of ESRA’s work at the provincial level, the Government of Balochistan (GoB) issued official notifications for both the post of District Officer (Literacy and Training) and the revised role of SMCs. Our work in Sindh led to the creation, official notification, and subsequent funding (Pakistan Rupees [PKR] 50 million) of a reform support unit (RSU). Since its inception, this ESRA-supported RSU worked to restructure the Sindh Education Management Information System (SEMIS), redefine the role of SMCs, and improve the distribution of textbooks across the province.

ESRA also held periodic policy dialogues at the provincial level. These advocacy sessions, conducted with public representatives from all political parties and other traditionally noneducation actors, focused on the role of SMCs, improving education management, and increasing the allocation of resources for professional development. As a result of the sessions that took place in Karachi, the provincial Minister for Education decided to strengthen SMCs across the Sindh province. In addition, participants agreed to create district-level education committees. These committees would consist of members of the senate, national assembly, provincial assembly, and the district government.

² Although the DIG achievements were put forth as successes attributable to the DIGs, it was the district advocacy and policy dialogue work of civil society groups that ultimately led to their realization.

ESRA's professional development infrastructures (PDIs) proved to be as innovative as they were successful. Comprised of legalized consortia of both government and nongovernment entities (such as Provincial Institutes of Teacher Education [PITEs], NGOs, and private universities), PDFs, TRCs, school clusters, master trainers, and mentors, these PDIs addressed the professional development needs of 38,717 teachers, 1,099 mentors, and 5,863 head teachers. ESRA also bolstered the capacity of Government Elementary Teachers Colleges, the Boards of Curriculum, and the Provincial Education Assessment Centers.

Federal-level Activities

Working closely with our MOE counterparts, ESRA succeeded in helping to improve the overall policy environment of the education sector. In particular, the following policies were formally approved: National Guidelines for Youth and Adult Literacy, the National Literacy Curriculum, the National Information and Communication Technology (NICT) Strategy, and the Operational Policy for PPPs.

In addition, ESRA and its MOE counterparts helped forge Vision 2025—a widely owned, well-informed, and affordable depiction of what the education system could look like and how it could function in the year 2025. With this in hand, ESRA then supported the MOE's National Education Policy (NEP) review process by offering the effort something against which to review and, ultimately, align key policies, such that they worked toward the realization of Vision 2025. With Vision 2025 embedded in the revised NEP, the policy space for everything that was put forth therein has been carved out. This would include performance standards, performance appraisal systems, accountability systems, and teacher career ladders tied to both performance and professional development.

ESRA also worked closely with the MOE to improve the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS). As a result of much policy dialogue work, ESRA succeeded in getting NEMIS “regularized”: it now has line item status in the GoP budget process, where before it was a temporary entity that had to apply for funds annually during the budget process.

ESRA assisted the Policy and Planning (P&P) Wing to strengthen NEMIS as a Standards and Certification Agency over the provinces and districts. Toward this end, ESRA helped develop a 3-year, midterm development strategy, one that called for NEMIS to (a) establish minimum standards for data collection, processing, analysis, and use at provincial and district levels; (b) evaluate progress in meeting minimum standards; (c) advise representatives on strategies to correct weaknesses in data management; and (d) certify the quality of data provided. ESRA also worked with the P&P Wing to revise the organizational structure and job descriptions for NEMIS. Assistance was also provided to NEMIS on developing guidelines for the data collection, verification, validation, and dissemination processes through a consultative process with the provincial governments. ESRA provided training to NEMIS technical staff in benchmarking and imputation techniques for missing data and in the use of simple data management tools, such as MS Excel for sample selection, hypothesis testing, and computation of descriptive statistics. Finally, ESRA assisted NEMIS in developing Computer Ethical Use Guidelines. These

guidelines were circulated to employees within the MOE and the provincial governments to train them on the guidelines for ethical use of electronic information resources within the education context.

In consultation with the MOE, ESRA designed and implemented a course for education managers titled Education Finance and Economics of Education (EFEE). The course was organized with the support of the Academy for Education Planning and Management (AEPAM) and the P&P Wing of the MOE. The EFEE course, held at AEPAM, was preceded by an accompanying 4-day, basic-to-intermediate-level course in MS Excel. Officers from the P&P Wings of the federal and provincial Departments of Education (DOEs) and PITEs, and Executive District Officers (EDOs) for Education from all provinces and select districts participated in the course.

ESRA Firsts

Although a large number of ESRA's interventions continued or contributed to existing GoP education reform efforts, the program's real strength was in helping the MOE set precedents and make innovations and contributions that were firsts in the history of Pakistan's education sector. They are:

- i. National Literacy Guidelines (NLG)
- ii. National Literacy Curriculum (NLC)
- iii. Operational Policy for PPPs
- iv. District Manual for PPPs
- v. PPPs/consortiums formed for professional development
- vi. An RSU formed to support the Sindh Provincial Department of Education
- vii. Pakistan's education sector: Vision 2025
- viii. A national strategy for the use of ICT in education
- ix. Design and cofacilitation (implementation) of an EFEE managers course
- x. Regularization of NEMIS
- xi. Creation of the post of District Officer (Literacy and Training) in Balochistan
- xii. Government-notified PDFs
- xiii. School communities, NGOs, and the district governments jointly contributing to school improvement through PCPs
- xiv. Policy dialogues held on education at the district, provincial, and national levels, attended by public representatives, government officials, CSOs, local bar associations, school communities, educationists, the media, and students
- xv. DOEs developing DIPs to help further DEPs
- xvi. SMCs and DOEs developing SIPs and implementing SIGs
- xvii. Needs-based planning at the district DOEs
- xviii. District Education Management Information System (DEMIS) piloted at the district level, the first time that illustrated school report cards, comparing school statistics to neighboring schools, were prepared.

ESRA Targets

Table 2 presents the specific ESRA indicators and achievements that were channeled into the USAID/Pakistan results framework. Specifically, Table 2 shows the indicator, the life-of-project target, what ESRA achieved, and an indication of how ESRA's achievement fared compared to the target, in percentage terms.

Table 2. Accomplishments and Performance Indicators

Indicator	Performance Value		
	Target	Achieved	Percent Over/Under Target
SO 3.a Number of USAID-sponsored policies developed at the national, provincial, or district levels	3	8	+166.67%
SO 3.b Annual percentage increase in student enrollment in target schools in target districts	10%	11.33%	+13.30%
SO 3.c Number of schools regularly developing and implementing SIPs in target districts	4,903	5,484 ³	+11.85%
IR 3.1.a Number of DIPs developed	26	29	+11.54%
IR 3.2.a Number of teachers and education administrators trained	34,000	38,717 teachers 1,099 mentors 5,863 head teachers 45,679 total	+34.35%
IR 3.2.b Percentage of teachers meeting improved performance standards	60%	Study in 2006: Sindh: 67.4% Balochistan: 44.8%	Study in 2006: Sindh: +12.33% Balochistan: -25.33%
		Study in 2007: Sindh: 50.4% Balochistan: 87.4%	Study in 2007: Sindh: -16.00% Balochistan: +45.67%
IR 3.2.c Improved student performance	10%	Study in 2006: Sindh: 16.4% Balochistan: 9.9%	Study in 2006: Sindh: +64.0% Balochistan: -1.0%

³ This number includes schools that either prepared SIPs for Student Teacher Appreciation and Recognition Tokens (STARTs) and SIG Tranche 1s (T1s); or SIG T1s and Tranche 2s (T2s); or STARTs, SIG T1s, and T2s.

Indicator	Performance Value		
	Target	Achieved	Percent Over/Under Target
		Study in 2007:	Study in 2007:
		Sindh:	Sindh:
		Mathematics:21.2%	Mathematics:+112.0%
		Urdu: 32%	Urdu: +220.0%
		Balochistan:	Balochistan:
		Mathematics: 17.7%	Mathematics:+77.0%
		Urdu: 17.9%	Urdu: +79.0%
IR 3.3.a Percentage of USAID-sponsored literacy program graduates who have retained basic literacy skills following program completion	65%	59.65%	-8.23% +24.81 ⁴
IR 3.3.b Number of people completing USAID-sponsored literacy programs	75,882	104,336	+37.50%
IR 3.4.a Amount of private sector investment in schooling	US\$66,957	US\$918,756 ⁵	+1272.17%
Baseline=US\$8,500			
IR 3.4.b Number of SMCs/parent-teacher associations (PTAs) functioning in target districts	7,654	7,596 ⁶	-0.76%
IR 3.4.c Number of agreements formalized between private sector entities and the public education sector	24	25	+4.17%
IR 3.4.d Number of assisted infrastructure facilities brought into use	-	SIG Tranche 1 (T1): 5,958 schools SIG Tranche 2 (T2): 4,579 schools DIGs: 51 schools SEP: 235 schools	

ESRA performed exceptionally well, exceeding agreed-upon targets in 15 of 20 indicators, more often than not, by sizable percentages. Moreover, while ESRA may have fallen short of its target for IR 3.3.a—percentage of USAID-sponsored literacy

⁴ Although in percentage terms ESRA may have fallen short of its goal, 65 percent of 75,882 (the target number of people completing USAID-sponsored literacy programs) is 49,323, while 59 percent of 104,336 (the achieved number of people completing USAID-sponsored literacy programs) is 61,558. In absolute terms, then, ESRA really *exceeded* its goal by 24.81 percent.

⁵ Thirteen new agreements were signed in June 2007, worth US\$277,687.

⁶ T1 + T2 or T1 + START: 5,484; T1 only: 653; START only: 1,294; ESRA Plus: 65; SRSP:100

program graduates that have retained their literacy skills following program completion—it should be noted that in absolute terms, ESRA really *exceeded* its goal by 24.81 percent (see footnote 4). This being the case, ESRA can claim to have exceeded its targets on 16 of 20 indicators.

ESRA Significant Impact

While ESRA successfully implemented a large number of activities and tasks, and yielded an equally large number of accomplishments (see Table 2), we highlight here those achievements for which we believe ESRA had a significant, or meaningful, impact.

IR 1 Demand-responsive government education planning management systems and procedures in place and functioning in target areas

USAID/ESRA Intermediate Results	Achievements	Impact
<p>SIR 1.1 Create policy reform platform and enabling environment to promote policy reforms and adjustment</p>	<p>A widely owned and well-informed vision of a high-performing and affordable education system that can provide quality education for all, delineated in the formal document, Vision 2025,⁷ and embedded in the just-reviewed NEP.</p>	<p>With Vision 2025⁸ embedded in the NEP, the policy space for a high-performing and affordable education system (and the elements that help make this happen, such as learning standards, performance standards, performance appraisal systems, accountability systems, and career ladders) that can provide high-quality education to all of Pakistan’s children has been created.</p> <p>Because Vision 2025 helped inform the NEP review process, relevant policies of the NEP now work toward the realization of Vision 2025—they have been aligned and, as such, there is now more policy coherence in the NEP.</p> <p>With Vision 2025 embedded into the NEP there is now a target toward which future policies, plans, and education reform efforts (including donor initiatives) can be directed. Accordingly, these interventions will have a greater chance of working with, and not against, each other, as they have done in the past.⁹</p>

⁷ These achievements respond to USAID Performance Management Plan (PMP) indicator SO 3.1.c *GoP adoption and implementation of long-term plan for education sector* (USAID PMP, p.17).

⁸ The Vision 2025 discussion document can be accessed on the MOE’s Web site at: <http://www.moe.gov.pk/Policies.htm>.

⁹ It is important to realize that our visioning work was as much about advocacy and policy dialogue as it was about constructing a vision. By way of example, district officers would decry the practice of nonmerit-based promotions. In so doing they opened the door for informed discussions (advocacy) around performance appraisal and accountability systems, both of which they heartily embraced (for teachers, at least). Also, many stakeholders lamented the poor quality of the existing teaching staff, opening the door for informed discussions (advocacy) about how to ensure that teachers “demand” professional development (career ladders) and that well-trained teachers actually utilize their training in day-to-day classroom instruction (accountability systems).

USAID/ESRA Intermediate Results	Achievements	Impact
SIR 1.2 Strengthen institutions and structures to support database planning and decision making	A 3-year, midterm development plan for NEMIS focusing on data quality, data use, and policy/institutional mandates, is now used as a road map within NEMIS—to align and coordinate various donor-initiated Education Management Information System (EMIS) activities.	This development plan is a critical step in the march toward restructuring NEMIS as a data standards and certification agency. In this role, NEMIS will be focusing on national and international reporting, while ensuring that educational data provided by the provinces and districts is done so in a timely manner (and therefore, can support national planning and reporting processes) and meets international standards for quality.
	Developed EMIS input for the National Policy Review (NPR).	EMIS now features centrally in the NEP, another major step in transforming the education sector from one where decisions are based largely on political considerations to one that is based on information.
	Because of ESRA's efforts through policy dialogue, the NEMIS has been regularized from project to budget status.	NEMIS had been operating in project mode ¹⁰ for the last 13 years. As such, its status as an organizational/institutional entity was both low and vulnerable. Accordingly, the work it was doing was not valued and many decisions were not information based. That NEMIS has been regularized—that it is now a line item on the budget—means that it has higher status, and that it and the work it does—information gathering, management, distribution, and data for decision making—will be taken a lot more seriously.
	A DEMIS was developed and piloted in Sukkur. Subsequently, this pilot was replicated in Hyderabad, Matiari, and Tando Mohammad Khan.	Before our work on DEMIS had begun, the DEMIS operating in Sindh or Balochistan were not effective or useful to education managers. ESRA's DEMIS pilot in Sukkur demonstrated to the Sindh DOE the utility of a DEMIS—one that is easy to use, supports district-level decision making, and produces various district, subdistrict, and school reports cards. The replication of DEMIS in other districts strongly suggests that the Sindh DOE will continue to take this effort to scale and will expand to all of its districts. DEMIS is critical for the success of education devolution.

¹⁰ In project mode, every year NEMIS's operating and capital requirements are put forth annually in a PC-1—they are not a part of the normal recurrent and capital budgeting processes.

USAID/ESRA Intermediate Results	Achievements	Impact
	An RSU established in the Sindh DOE.	Over the course of the project, ESRA strived to find ways of embedding its policy and planning work into the Pakistani education system. Much of the work ESRA did on the policy and planning front was reform support. For this reform support work to be taken beyond the life of the project required that reform support capacity be embedded within the system in the form of an RSU. Because of our efforts in this regard, the Sindh DOE was restructured around an RSU with formal approval of the Government of Sindh (GoS). ¹¹ Moreover, the GoS approved PKR 50 million in its recurrent budget to support it. The RSU in Sindh is improving SEMIS processes in the province, is strengthening SMCs, and has reformed the stipend and textbook distribution processes.
	EMCs formed and trained in all districts and in 75 UCs.	EMCs are “education sector oversight bodies,” elected and notified by the district government under the Local Government Ordinance (LGO) 2002. However, most EMCs in Pakistan have not been activated (they exist only in the statutes). Having been instrumental in activating EMCs in our target districts, we supported the GoP’s overall devolution process and brought more accountability into the education system. Once trained, these EMCs act as the eyes and ears of the district-level public representatives, thus strengthening the public oversight of education service delivery.
SIR 1.3 Provide education and school improvement services through DIPs and DIGs	<p>DIG 1 awarded to 8 districts</p> <p>DIG 2 awarded to 9 districts</p> <p>DIG 3 awarded to 12 districts.</p>	Through DIGs, districts are now operating with improved capacity to plan, implement, and monitor district education projects. ¹² ESRA’s contribution to district education planning was acknowledged by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and European Union (EU). The GoS adopted ESRA’s district planning model for all of their districts. The Sindh Education Plan developed by the Sindh government in collaboration with the EU specifically mentions ESRA Education Planning as a guide for developing sector plans in all districts of the province. ¹³ Thus, the initial work done by ESRA to support devolution within the context of education service delivery by the districts has had a large impact on the whole of Sindh (see Annex A on DIPs and DIGs).

¹¹ The Sindh RSU was formally launched by the Sindh Minister of Education, on March 15, 2006.

¹² These achievements respond to USAID PMP indicator IR 3.1.a *Number of District Improvement Plans prepared in the target districts* (USAID PMP, p.13).

¹³ Excerpt from USAID Evaluation Report, p.8.

IR 2 In-service educator professional development systems and structures strengthened, in place, and functioning

USAID/ESRA Intermediate Results	Achievements	Impact
SIR 2.1 Policy-(ies) developed to support PDI	District Officer (Literacy and Training) notified for Balochistan.	In its efforts to develop the professional development infrastructure for teachers at the district level, ESRA noticed an unevenness between the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan in the ways they had organized the district government to support professional development. Districts in Sindh had District Officers (Literacy and Training), the capacities of whom ESRA could enhance, while districts in Balochistan did not have these personnel. ESRA was able to work successfully with the GoB to institute this office in all of its districts through a notification. The office of District Officer (Literacy and Training) is now a functional position and is playing a crucial role in institutionalizing the PDI prepared by ESRA.
SIR 2.2 Institutions and systems strengthened to support professional development infrastructure	Two professional development consortia institutionalized, one—BCPD—officially notified.	Inasmuch as ESRA was interested in training teachers and head teachers, it was more interested in developing and institutionalizing the capacity within Pakistan to adequately address the ongoing professional development needs of the country’s education professionals. The PDI—the heart of which are these consortia—that ESRA developed in close collaboration with professional development stakeholders in the GoP, the NGO sector, and the private sector extends from the province to the district and all the way down to the cluster school level. The overall impact is the “institutional, organizational, and technical wherewithal” by which Pakistan can address the needs of its own teachers and head teachers. Any donor who wishes to train teachers in Balochistan and Sindh can now tap into this PDI.
	District-level PDFs created in all districts and notified by district education departments in nine districts. In four districts, PDFs have received GoP funding to implement annual professional development plans. <i>Tehsil</i> -level PDFs were also established in all target districts except Thatta.	PDFs were established to provide an institutionalized forum wherein district-level professional development stakeholders could share their ideas/concerns regarding professional development in their district, and bring those ideas/concerns to the district decision-making apparatus. The PDFs have been officially notified, meaning that they are now a permanent feature on the educational landscape of these districts. These PDFs are also being used as platforms to prepare district professional development plans and to leverage funding for plan implementation, representing an enhanced district capacity in these regards as well.

USAID/ESRA Intermediate Results	Achievements	Impact
SIR 2.3 Deliver PDI training services	38,717 teachers trained 5,863 head teachers trained 1,099 mentors and teacher educators trained.	The impact of 45,679 better-trained education professionals is obvious. The schools within which they work, and the students who attend those schools, have greatly benefited. Note: While the training of teachers is accounted for under the service delivery SIR, its impact on the system needs to be elucidated. Teacher training was conducted by mentors/master trainers trained by ESRA. By providing each UC with a Professional Development Resource Center and providing them with a trained mentor, ESRA has improved the professional development system by putting in place a model of ongoing professional development of teachers as well as a key element of the infrastructure needed to support ongoing professional development.

IR 3 Youth and adult literacy provision framework and systems in place and functioning in each target area

USAID/ESRA Intermediate Results	Achievements	Impact
SIR 3.1 Develop policies to support literacy by establishing National Literacy Guidelines for Youth and Adult Literacy	National Literacy Guidelines developed and approved.	Before the NLG were in place, the literacy situation in Pakistan was inchoate, if not chaotic, with NGOs offering literacy courses of varying quality, approaches, and duration. With the NLG in place, the GoP can now regulate literacy initiatives throughout Pakistan.
	National Curriculum for Youth and Adult Literacy (NCYAL) developed. ¹⁴	The NCYAL, once formally approved, will enable all literacy providers to conduct uniform literacy programs across the country, and will ensure that literates meet minimum quality standards.

¹⁴ The NCYAL should be formally adopted by the end of the 2007 calendar year.

USAID/ESRA Intermediate Results	Achievements	Impact
SIR 3.3 Deliver literacy services through ESRA's training programs	Produced 104,336 literacy graduates. ¹⁵	Having produced this many new literates, ESRA has contributed to the GoP's objective to increase the national literacy rate from 47 percent to 62 percent, as per the ESR.

IR 4(A) Public participation, support mechanisms, and systems in place and functioning

USAID/ESRA Intermediate Results	Achievements	Impact
SIR 4(A).1 Develop policies to improve SMC effectiveness	Parent Teacher School Management Committees (PT/SMC) reactivation notified for Balochistan.	PT/SMCs were inactive and dormant in ESRA's target districts when the project began. While ESRA could put together a group of interested and motivated individuals as a PT/SMC, such a group needed a legal legitimacy before it could be provided with SIGs. With the PT/SMC reactivation notification in place, PT/SMCs could be legally formed and made operational. As a result, devolution has been furthered and parental involvement realized.
SIR 4(A).2 Institutions and systems to support community participation in education strengthened	7,596 PT/SMCs strengthened.	<p>PT/SMCs were trained in the following core functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PT/SMC roles and responsibilities, • record keeping, • planning and implementation, • financial management, and • participatory monitoring and evaluation. <p>Evidence that the capacities of these PT/SMCs were developed is the fact that thousands of SIPs were successfully written and implemented (see below). The impact of this training is that SMCs</p>

¹⁵ These achievements respond to USAID PMP indicator IR 3.3 *Improved literacy in over-15 age group* (USAID PMP, p.10).

USAID/ESRA Intermediate Results	Achievements	Impact
		are now more capable of doing the job they were established to do. Accordingly, ESRA has not only contributed positively to education sector but has also aided the overall devolution process.
SIR 4(A).3 Target SMCs to develop and implement SIPs and SIGs	SIGs awarded to 6,207 schools, out of which 4,738 schools have received two SIGs, bringing the total amount of SIGs distributed to 10,945. ¹⁶	These cash grants were used to (i) provide missing facilities identified by SMCs to a large number of schools, (ii) train SMCs in project development and implementation, and (iii) engage district governments and SMCs in grant issuing and oversight. In doing so, ESRA created an effective model of community-driven school improvement that links up to the district. The RSU of the Sindh DOE has made SIPs the basis of all allocations to the SMCs in the province. Therefore, ESRA leaves behind an effective and tested model of community-driven school improvement. With this cash grant mechanism in place, other donors can easily support the SIP/SIG process. The total number of students positively impacted by these SIGs is nearly 530,000.

IR 4(B) Private participation, support mechanisms, and systems in place and functioning

USAID/ESRA Intermediate Results	Achievements	Impact
SIR 4(B).1 Develop policies to support PPPs	Operational Policy for PPP approved.	This policy encourages PPP formation. The impact is obvious: when more PPPs can be formed, more private sector resources will flow into the public education system.
SIR 4(B).2 Strengthening systems and creating mechanisms for private sector investment in education (at province and district levels)	District PPP Formation Guidelines for district government officials developed.	These guidelines have strengthened the district's capacity to form PPPs. District officials across the country have been oriented to these guidelines. As a result, more PPPs can be readily formed.

¹⁶ These achievements respond to USAID PMP indicator IR 3.4.c *Number of schools regularly developing and implementing School Improvement Plans (SIPs) in target districts* (USAID PMP, p.31) under USAID's IR 3.4 that seeks to improve access and delivery of education services. This number should continue to increase until the end of the project.

USAID/ESRA Intermediate Results	Achievements	Impact
SIR 4(B).3 Increase private sector investment in schools and education, and support schools	US\$918,756 committed by corporate partners through 25 agreements. ¹⁷	These funds were used to improve facilities and to train teachers in the 65 schools various corporate entities had adopted. The immediate impact of these partnerships is obvious, including infrastructure improvements, school furniture, and running water. The overall impact will be gauged in terms of the effect this successful model of philanthropic engagement will have on future PPPs at the level of school communities. With the enhanced policy environment and the improved capacity of all districts to form PPPs, that impact should prove to be quite large rather soon.

IR 5 Innovative ICT and pedagogy based models and approaches developed and tested to support ESRA initiatives

USAID/ESRA Intermediate Results	Achievements	Impact
SIR 5.1 Develop policies to support ICT use in education	National ICT strategy developed and adopted by the GoP.	This strategy outlines the use of a variety of ICTs in education—such as computers, the Internet, e-learning, mobile telephony, multimedia, radio, and video. With this strategy in place, the GoP can now optimize use of ICTs for education.

¹⁷ These achievements respond to the following USAID PMP indicators under USAID's IR 3.4: IR 3.4.a *Amount of private sector investments in schooling* (USAID PMP, p.28) and IR 3.4.b *Number of USAID- sponsored agreements formalized between private sector entities and public education sector* (USAID PMP, p.30).

ESRA Accomplishments

IR 1 Demand-responsive government education planning/management systems/procedures in place and functioning in target areas

SIR 1.1 Create a policy reform platform and enabling environment to promote policy formation and adjustments

Under this SIR, ESRA (a) conducted a number of reform support workshops, (b) commissioned papers, (c) carried out policy analysis, (d) conducted research, (e) designed and implemented surveys, (f) wrote policy documents, (g) held strategic meetings with high-level officials, (h) carried out countless advocacy sessions, (i) designed and conducted a number of strategic policy dialogue sessions, (j) drafted a number of newspaper articles, and (k) worked hand-in-hand with government counterparts at all levels of the system. As a result, ESRA achieved a number of accomplishments under the following headings:

- **Improved Policy:** Our work with MOE and ESRA improved the policy environment.
- **Policy Recommendations:** Although our efforts did not lead to actual improvements in the policy environment, significant efforts were made to do so, that may yet result in policy changes in the future.
- **Influenced Government Decision Making:** Although policies may not have been changed for the better, a lot of our work did influence key government decisions (for example, the decision to pay for 99 contract teachers).

Improved Policy: ESRA helped the MOE to articulate a well-informed and widely owned vision of Pakistan’s education system in the year 2025: Vision 2025. Vision 2025¹⁸ was the product of a workshop exercise that unfolded across the country, involving stakeholders from every district and province in Pakistan. The significance of Vision 2025 is multifold.

First, while education reform has been ongoing in Pakistan for the last 20–30 years with countless millions of dollars being channeled into it, Pakistan’s education system now ranks last among Asian countries. This can be attributed, in large part, to a lack of vision—little to no sense of where all of these reform efforts were taking the education sector. Pakistan’s education reform efforts had been “stepping” all over the place for the last 20–30 years, but not in any one particular direction. With Vision 2025 in place—officially adopted as a part of the NEP—reform efforts can now be directed toward the realization of Vision 2025.

Second, Vision 2025 played a critical role in the NEP review process. In particular, it gave many of the policies a baseline against which they could be reviewed—to what extent did relevant policies in the NEP work toward the realization of Vision 2025. In effect, Vision 2025 helped align relevant policies of the NEP and, in so doing, gave the NEP greater policy coherence.

¹⁸ See Annex B for the Vision 2025 document.

Third, Vision 2025 proved that education can be affordable over time, showing that it was not a pie-in-the-sky dream that could never be realized.¹⁹ Given very reasonable assumptions about the economy and the percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) that needs to be channeled into public education, Vision 2025 is a goal that can certainly be achieved.

Fourth, with Vision 2025 included as a chapter of the NEP, everything in Vision 2025 is now, formally, policy. Accordingly, policy space has been carved out for such critical system-improving measures as learning standards, performance standards, performance appraisal systems, accountability systems, and career ladders tied to professional development.

In addition to the role Vision 2025 played in improving the NEP, ESRA contributed to its improvement in other ways as well. Based on a lot of work done outside the Vision 2025 process, the notion of an Education Management Pool found its way into the NEP. Before this policy change was made, education officers from the level of Learning Coordinators (Grade 10/11) to EDOs for Education (Grade 19/20) belonged to a cadre of teachers. Most of them had little to no experience or training in education management, which led to the notion of an Education Management Pool. Teachers who wished to become eligible for education management positions would be required to take and pass a number of professional development courses that prepared them for the position they aspired to assume. They would then become a member of the Education Management Pool. Due to ESRA's work in this regard, the NEP now reads:

- An Education Management Pool shall be established at the federal level. A pool/cadre of education managers shall be created to efficiently run the education administration.
- With the Education Management Pool set up at federal and provincial levels, Education Management Pool personnel shall be separate from academicians and teachers.
- Education Management Pool personnel shall be selected through a competitive process from amongst employees of education departments at any tier of government, who have already rendered a minimum service of 5–10 years in any school, college, or university as a teacher or managerial staff.

ESRA also helped shape the NEP's treatment of EMIS and NEMIS. Due to an ESRA-commissioned green paper, the NEP now maintains that NEMIS should be provided with the legal and institutional authority for the collection, integration, and dissemination of educational data for all the educational institutions in the country (private, public, and religious). It calls for a regular status for all provincial and regional EMIS establishments with recurrent budget and regular staff. Moreover, it states that NEMIS should have the mandate and authority to identify and request that

¹⁹ A computerized model, PakMod, was used to project the cost implications of various Vision 2025 policy options. The model itself is available from Dr. Syed Fayyaz Ahmed, (jeappw@moe.gov.pk). The user's guide can be found in Annex C.

complementary data sources be integrated into the information system, and to set and monitor minimum standards for data accuracy and timeliness.

Apart from ESRA's impact on the NEP, we also succeeded in regularizing the NEMIS, which went from nonpermanent to permanent status when it was moved from project mode funding to a line item on the budget. The GoP has now committed permanent staff and annual funding to NEMIS, which means that education information, its collection, management, use in decision making, monitoring and evaluation, and accountability has been greatly enhanced. The Ministry of Finance (after approval by the government) allocated a recurrent amount of PKR 2 million to NEMIS for the 2006–2007 fiscal year. An additional PKR 3.5 million was provided from the development budget, reflected on the recurrent side from the 2007 fiscal year. The PKR 3.5 million was provided on the development side to cater to the salaries and allowances of the staff until they are regularized. The case to appoint NEMIS staff as regular government employees was also been taken up with the Establishment Division, with assistance from ESRA. All the current staff now has to be hired through the Federal Public Service Commission to make them regular government employees.

SIR 1.2 Institutions and systems strengthened to support planning and decision making

ESRA did much in the way of strengthening the policy/planning capacity of the education system. New structures/systems were developed, existing structures/systems were strengthened, civil society was activated, networks were established and activated, and people were trained. Overall, the system ESRA left behind was much stronger and more capable than the one it initially found when the project started.

National and Provincial RSUs Established

Much of the work that ESRA carried out under this intermediate result fell under the rubric of reform support.²⁰ In ESRA's efforts to embed its work into the fabric of the Pakistani educational system, we established, to varying degrees, RSUs in both, the federal MOE and the GoS's DOE. The basic purpose of an RSU is to identify the various obstacles standing in the way of reform, and deal with them in such a way that reform can proceed as unimpeded as possible; thus, the term reform support.

In Sindh, the notion of reform support, and that of an RSU, was introduced at the highest levels of the education establishment. The Sindh Minister of Education and her staff all agreed that one should be established. Soon thereafter, the RSU was established with the GoS committing PKR 50 million to the cause. ESRA provided training and ongoing technical support to RSU staff members nominated by the Sindh Government. The Sindh RSU has been completely functional for nearly 2 years now, during which it has accomplished the following:

- the completion of a school census that included teacher profiles;

²⁰ Reform support is an approach to education reform that was first introduced in 1997 through a 6-volume set of USAID-supported documents entitled *Education Reform Support*.

- the development of a cell, the Financial Management Information System (FMIS), to track education expenditure, and to support financial management and monitoring;
- the creation of transparent and effective linkages between the Sindh Textbook Board and district governments, resulting in 4.2 million children receiving their textbooks on time;²¹
- the streamlining of the system of stipend distribution to girl students;²² and
- the drafting of a policy for hiring contract teachers, with support from ESRA.²³

At the federal level, the RSU consisted of key people working within the P&P Wing. They were trained in the fundamentals of reform support and proved to be instrumental in supporting the work that led to Vision 2025. Efforts were made to hire additional people to the RSU at the level of a senior civil servant, but these efforts did not yield the caliber of people the MOE was seeking. Although the formal establishment of an RSU at the federal level is ongoing, the MOE is constructing a new floor to the P&P Wing of the MOE to house an RSU, and donor money has been assigned to further develop RSUs throughout Pakistan. Accordingly, ESRA was instrumental in adding this critical feature to the educational landscape of Pakistan.

EMIS

ESRA supported the MOE to improve data quality and use at the federal, provincial, and district levels to address the problems at each tier for improved planning and management of educational interventions. The objectives of ESRA's assistance was to improve the mutually reinforcing relationship between data quality and use, shifting the emphasis from data collection to data use, and changing the focus from a supply-driven to a demand-driven approach to education planning.

Federal Level

ESRA assisted the P&P Wing to strengthen NEMIS as a standards setting and coordination agency. Studies conducted by ESRA and other development partners highlighted a variety of factors that negatively influenced the quality of statistical information presented to national and international bodies. Among these factors, the most egregious were (i) incomplete coverage of all education institutions, most notably private and religious institutions; (ii) weak data collection strategies, including incomplete and inconsistently defined data requirements; (iii) weak data entry and processing procedures; and (iv) limited dissemination and use of analyzed data. To help move NEMIS in the direction of a standards setting and coordination agency, a 3-year, midterm development plan was developed.

²¹ Before the establishment of the RSU, textbooks were usually delivered to schools months after the beginning of the academic year.

²² Introducing a fundamental policy change, the RSU started distributing scholarships by mailing money orders to the residential address of each girl. A comprehensive profile of all the girls, including their names, classes, and fathers' names, along with identification card numbers, was collected by EDOs of Education of all the districts, and was verified through a third party. This change has increased transparency and reliability in distribution of stipends in the province.

²³ This policy envisages school-specific contractual recruitment where the eligible candidates will be graded based on scores assigned on the weight of residence and academic qualification, with no weight assigned to interviews. This policy change is designed to reduce political pressure for recruitment and transfers, and is expected to deal with governance issues in teacher management and ensure their presence in schools.

The plan focused on establishing NEMIS as a Standards and Certification Agency over the provinces and districts. In this capacity, NEMIS would have the mandate to (i) establish minimum standards for data collection, processing, analysis and use at the provincial and district levels; (ii) evaluate progress in meeting minimum standards; (iii) advise representatives on strategies to correct weaknesses in data management; and (iv) certify the quality of data provided.

The plan also focused on improving education data quality through technical support to the provinces and districts. This would be done by:

- providing technical guidance for redrafting school records to allow for easier compilation and extraction of data required by decision makers (i.e., providing transcription during census and regular reporting to reduce information required on an annual basis),
- providing technical guidance on software specifications for computerized data capture and retrieval systems,
- providing reporting modules as required and demanded by provinces and districts,
- developing software assessment tools that can be used by districts or provinces to establish requirements for implementing a computerized data capture and transmission system, and
- developing and providing training modules for provincial and district EMIS staff capacity development.

Finally, the plan focused on creating an enabling environment for quality data collection by establishing policies that define the mandates and authority of institutions at different levels of the federal system. Specific activities included:

- changing the status of NEMIS from a project to an administrative unit and clarifying its roles, responsibilities, and the extent of its authority in the process (including establishing authority of NEMIS as a standards agency);
- developing policy, legislation, and institution coordination strategies to ensure complete coverage of all education institutions in Pakistan; and
- ensuring that the newly revised NEP contained language relevant to the key aspects of education data collection and use, specifically as it relates to data certification and application of this certification when reviewing sector plans.

To further strengthen NEMIS as a standard-setting and coordination agency, ESRA worked with the P&P Wing to revise the organizational structure and job descriptions for NEMIS. Once the new organizational structure and job descriptions are notified by the government, NEMIS will no longer be a passive collector of information. Instead, the new organizational structure has geared NEMIS to become a proactive agent of change to improve data quality and use.

ESRA also worked with NEMIS to map the Pakistani education system according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) format and reviewed the existing data collection instruments for data gaps on international reporting, resulting in the modification of the data collection tool in coordination with the

provincial governments. The ISCED mapping improved the data collection and reporting formats for reporting.

Assistance was also provided to NEMIS on developing guidelines for data collection, verification, validation, and dissemination processes through a consultative process with the provincial governments. The guidelines are to be implemented at the federal and provincial levels to improve the quality and use of the reported information. These guidelines are meant to standardize data collection, verification, and dissemination processes at the provincial and regional levels, improving the accuracy of the data provided. Currently all provinces and regions are applying disparate systems for the data collection and verification processes.

ESRA provided training to the NEMIS technical staff in benchmarking and imputation techniques for missing data and in the use of simple data management tools such as MS Excel for sample selection, hypothesis testing, and computation of descriptive statistics. These trainings equipped the NEMIS staff to remove anomalies from the data provided by the provinces and regions.

ESRA assisted NEMIS in developing Computer Ethical Use Guidelines. These guidelines were circulated to the employees within the MOE and the provincial governments to train them on the guidelines for ethical use of electronic information resources within the education context.

The regularization of NEMIS as a government organization has given it the legal and administrative mandate and authority to act as a standard-setting and coordination agency, and will enable it to certify the standards set for the provincial/regional governments on handling the processes and the accuracy of the data sets received.

Provincial Level

At the provincial level, ESRA worked with the Sindh RSU to address data quality and use issues by modifying and adapting the Planning and Reporting Tool (PRT)²⁴ to the needs of provincial managers vis-à-vis improved planning and management. The PRT is now available to managers on the GoS intranet, allowing them to view reports that provide information on various indicators from their own terminals. The PRT also helps the RSU integrate data sets from around the province, and to report on indicators to monitor the general efficiency of the system. The RSU has prepared budgets and proposals for scaling up the PRT to all districts in the province. Once scaled up, the PRT will be available to all district managers in Sindh, allowing them to compare the various *tehsils*/UCs within their own districts, and their districts with others in the province on various indicators and plan accordingly to improve the general efficiency and equity of the system. Currently, the RSU can generate reports on many indicators from the annual school census. They have used the PRT for planning physical interventions and allocating resources throughout the province. The RSU technical team was trained to make modifications and to configure the PRT according to their requirements.

²⁴ The PRT was developed and piloted in District Sukkur. See “District Level (Sukkur)” section for a detailed account.

ESRA also assisted the RSU to field test the standard operating procedures (SOPs) developed by the NEMIS for data standards and develop the cost of implementing them at the provincial level. The assistance provided to the RSU at the provincial level had serious implications for the work done at the national and district levels. The provincial setup was used as a pilot to examine the SOPs at the district level and to work out the realistic costs of implementing these SOPs nationally. Similarly, pilots were run for the work done at the district level to develop indicators and reports for the provincial requirements. The RSU also provided support to the district government by putting in place the processes for data correction and reporting. The RSU now has the capacity to integrate data sets received from the districts into the PRT, and develop plans based on the information received.

District Level (Sukkur)

ESRA supported the district DOE, Sukkur, to strengthen its DEMIS as part of a larger initiative to improve the DOE's planning and management capacities through improved collection, dissemination, and use of data at all subdistrict tiers of the system within Sukkur. To assist data use and presentation, ESRA developed a PRT that presents simple indicator-based reports for school, subdistrict, and district use.

Initially developed to produce school report cards (see "School Report Card" section below) illustrated with analyzed information in graphs and charts for illiterate parents, SMCs, and local politicians, this tool provides school-specific data and compares school standing to UC, *tehsil*, and district averages. School report cards provide information on (i) enrollment by grade, (ii) pupil-teacher ratios, (iii) pupils per seat, (iv) school average test scores on local grade 5 and 8 exams, and (v) pupil/teacher attendance. The PRT also provides a variety of predeveloped reports and is easy to configure—new indicators can easily be added according to changing requirements/demands. Additional reports include enrollment, comparing schools within an administrative area, comparing a particular school to averages for administrative areas, comparing enrollment over time, and a series of indicator reports including pupil teacher ratios, gender ratios, facility availability, and transition rates.

The modifications to the tool at the provincial level were made at the request of the RSU to adapt it to their requirements. The modified tool caters effectively to the planning needs of both the provincial and district DOEs. In Sukkur, the school reports have been used by parents and SMCs to lobby for resources at the district level. The district management used the tool to plan interventions and formulate development budgets for the next financial year, rationalize teachers, and allocate physical facilities. The RSU used the tool to distribute PKR 100 million to each district in Sindh, as needed, to improve physical facilities in schools.

Three other districts, Hyderabad, Tando Allah Yar, and Matiari, have adopted the PRT through their own initiatives. Also, the Sindh DOE developed a proposal and budget for introducing the PRT in all the remaining districts of the province. It is seeking funds from the EU to help make this happen. The RSU has taken complete ownership of the tool and all changes to the tool, and the associated software is being made by the SEMIS technical team.

School Report Card

ESRA worked with the district DOE, Sukkur, to improve data quality and use at the school and community level by recording and analyzing information on expected class size, enrollment, bench seats available, overall test score for grades 5 and 8, and recording the information on school report cards. These report cards allow teachers, parents, and communities to monitor the progress of their own school and compare their school performance over the years to other schools in the UC, *tehsil*, and the district.

Communities used this information to improve their schools by taking various actions. For example, upon studying these report cards, some communities were able to approach the school administration and local politicians to improve planning for school enrollment, teacher rationalization, and physical facilities. In fact, school communities were able to point out faulty information and “force” head teachers to fill out school report card questionnaires correctly.

As part of this initiative, ESRA and the DOE conducted a series of 56 workshops in Sukkur to train head teachers, SMC members, and local politicians to interpret and use school report cards to improve conditions in their schools. Parents, teachers, community members, and local politicians demonstrated good knowledge on the contents of the report cards, including the respective position of their school to UC, *tehsil*, and district averages. They were able to identify priorities for their school and establish where SMCs would be able to address certain problems. They demonstrated keen interest to improve the situation in their respective schools by taking up the issues with the local and provincial administration. These local-level stakeholders said they had no idea how their school was performing before they saw these school report cards.

Education Monitoring Committees (EMCs)

The LGO 2001 envisaged monitoring committees as the primary mechanism of public oversight for local-level service delivery. As a mechanism of public feedback, these committees have immense potential to improve local-level service delivery and to infuse transparency and efficiency into government operations. With this in mind, ESRA supported the establishment and activation of EMCs in its target districts.

District-level EMCs were established in all the target districts while UC-level EMCs were also established in four districts. Members of all the EMCs were trained on the nature and scope of their work. During training, EMC members from all the districts (except Hyderabad) complained that they had neither the powers nor the operational resources for carrying out their jobs. ESRA trainers informed them about the concept of oversight by public representatives and asked them to create alliances at local levels to overcome the absence of operational resources. Participants were recommended to use their positions and influence to create budget line heads for their EMC operations by initially demanding very small amounts, and increasing the requested amount gradually over time. EMCs were also oriented to different sources of funds available to them through the LGO. In some districts, ESRA allocated funds from its DIG initiative to build the capacity of EMCs.

ESRA District Managers (DMs) facilitated EMC monitoring visits and assisted them to compile quarterly reports. The training proved useful in dispelling misconceptions about the scope of monitoring carried out by the EMCs. People came to understand that this monitoring was more of a public feedback than a command-and-control mechanism. Many members of the EMCs were able to appreciate the fact that their role as the eyes and ears of the executive head of the district was much more significant and dignified as compared with the inspection-and-action role exercised by the internal oversight cadres of the departments.

ESRA worked with the MOE to develop an EMC training manual in Urdu. The manual provides the necessary information vis-à-vis the scope of EMCs, the basic framework of EMCs, the composition and election of EMCs, the principles of monitoring, various monitoring mechanisms/processes, and guidelines for monitoring in the education sector. The manual was also translated into Sindhi on demand of the EMC members from that province. By supporting the activation of EMCs, ESRA did much in the way of strengthening the GoP's devolution agenda.

Capacitating Civil Society as a Key Player in the Education Reform Process

In order to create demand-responsive government education planning/management systems/procedures, ESRA and the DOE had to first generate the demand. ESRA and MOE chose to do so around key elements of civil society: press clubs, chambers of commerce, bar associations, NGOs, community-based organizations (CBOs), SMC members, retired teachers, civil society activists, EMCs, and public representatives. The project succeeded in generating that demand, in capacitating civil society to make demands on the system, and in linking this demand to the public arena—UCs, district assemblies, provincial assemblies, and the national parliament.

Before engaging with civil society, ESRA commissioned a study to (a) assess the level of demand among communities for quality education, (b) identify key entry points vis-à-vis demand generation, (c) assess the extent and quality of demand articulation for quality education, and (d) propose a sustainable, replicable, and cost-effective model for helping communities to articulate demands for quality education. The report revealed that the communities were generally unconcerned about education and that it did not factor into mainstream political and social discourse (unlike other socioeconomic issues such as drinking water, sanitation, and transportation). With this understanding in hand, ESRA designed a demand-generating civil society capacity-building program. The program aimed to equip civil society with knowledge on key issues regarding public sector education and corresponding state responsibilities, and provide them with the skills to engage meaningfully with the system. The program also emphasized the need to mobilize civil society for improving access to and quality of education in target districts.

ESRA structured the capacity-building program to unfold in three workshop sessions, followed by a number of targeted policy dialogues. The first session presented (a) basic information about education, (b) the role of the state vis-à-vis a public education system, and (c) various statistics regarding Pakistan's education system—how it looked across the provinces, selected districts, and UCs; and how it compared with other countries in the region.

The second session focused on the various ways and means by which public action vis-à-vis the state of education could take place: awareness raising, community mobilization, participation in SMCs and citizen community boards (CCBs), and advocacy. Participants were taken through the various steps involved in running advocacy campaigns (such as collecting and analyzing information, framing messages, and analyzing target audience). They were also informed of civil society's legal right to GoP information.

The third session highlighted a number of illustrative issues, such as rational use of human resources, procurement of material, recruitment and transfer of education managers, priorities in budgeting, insufficient budgets for monitoring, teacher training, rationalization of educational expenditures, and lobbying for education. Participants were encouraged to think about these issues against the backdrop of their own district/UC, determine which was most pressing, and to develop ways and means of advocating for that issue. Participants were also provided handouts on various advocacy tools. In total, 55 workshops/dialogues were held in target districts, through which ESRA was able to reach out to nearly 1,000 civil society activists.

Following these capacity-building workshops, a number of rounds of policy dialogues took place. The first round raised various policy issues related to professional development of teachers. Issues included postings and transfers of education staff and the use of the "public interest" clause for premature transfers in the public education sector, teacher rationalization, budgetary allocations for professional development, and ineffective training infrastructure. The dialogues were carefully designed to elicit public participation and inculcate the belief in the participants themselves that each one of them had the potential and the ability to advocate for improvements in education.

The second round of policy dialogues focused on educational planning and issues/problems related to education data. It was noted that district-level planning could be improved through involvement of elected representatives and the public. Reliable, timely, and comprehensive data was identified as a major requirement for democratic and equitable planning. The participants, particularly elected members of the district assemblies, acknowledged that needs-based planning could be used effectively for democratic and participatory planning processes.

The third round of policy dialogues focused on key policy issues pertaining to the functioning of SMCs. Members of civil society were presented with alternative ways of auditing SMC performance, one of which was based upon ESRA's experience of issuing school improvement grants as a fixed obligation grant.

Civil Society Networks (CSNs)

As a consequence of these dialogues, civil society entities came together to establish CSNs to advocate change in existing policies in order to improve access to and quality of education. Such CSNs were established in all target districts. Once established, they were encouraged to create provincial-level CSNs in both Sindh and Balochistan so that they could effectively address those education issues that could not be addressed at the district level.

The Chaghi Education Forum (CEF) was one of the earliest CSNs established. The CEF remains active and has organized a number of walks, seminars, discussions, and quiz programs, all in an effort to raise people's awareness about the importance of education. The CEF has independently started a regular publication, called *Ufaq-e-Sahar*. This publication is sent to district primary school teachers. It treats topics regarding classroom teaching, further education, and training opportunities and administrative issues. ESRA provided the CEF with key information about the sector and crucial access to the district leadership (i.e., district *nazim*, DCO, and EDO for Education). The CEF started a data collection and analysis exercise vis-à-vis the number of schools, teachers, and students in order demonstrate the need for teacher rationalization and recruitment, for the establishment of new schools through the generation of local funds, and for lobbying for increased allocation and prioritization of government resources by the district authorities.

The final round of policy dialogues was hosted by the CSNs. They first presented an education profile of the district. This included data on out-of-school children, the number of schools disaggregated by gender and level, and the primary to middle school and middle to secondary school ratios. In so doing, they brought home the point that there are invariably fewer girls' schools than boys' schools. Moreover, the primary to middle school ratio is alarmingly high, causing massive dropouts at the primary stage (because there is no reason to go to primary school if there are so few middle schools to which to advance). They also highlighted that schools have low enrollment and suggested the need for school consolidation wherever feasible.

After this presentation, needs-based planning was introduced to the CSNs as a means for the equitable distribution of resources. The final presentation familiarized them with various advocacy tools that the CSNs could use for effective lobbying and advocacy.

Linkages between Policy Dialogues with the Legislators and the Civil Society

In a democratic dispensation, the role of public representatives vis-à-vis education cuts across all three of their established functions: law making, representing constituents, and executive oversight. Public representatives can play a far-reaching role in improving public sector education by proposing and endorsing enabling policy and legislation, articulating the demands of education stakeholders, and keeping a check on educational bureaucracy to ensure administrative and financial efficiency. Additionally, public representatives, especially at the district level, have a direct role to play in education delivery to their constituents.

Whether public representatives are able to play their role effectively depends, in part, on the level of public action around education and demands emanating from civil society. Conversely, the seriousness with which public representatives take up education may reinforce its relevance or lack thereof to social activism and public debate. There is thus a symbiotic link between civil society activism and representative politics, and hence the need for simultaneous engagement with political bodies as well as civil society.

Acknowledging this symbiotic link, ESRA initiated a series of policy dialogues with the public representatives at the federal and provincial levels. Because of this engagement, education working groups of active legislators emerged in the Parliament, Sindh Assembly, and Balochistan Assembly. Ultimately, these networks were also linked with the CSNs at district and provincial levels. Clearly, this enhanced the public representatives' effectiveness to address policy and service delivery issues of the education sector because these networks have both horizontal and vertical linkages: they have broader participation from different spheres of society and have linkages with public representatives at district, provincial, and federal levels.

Members of all political parties participated in the policy dialogues with the public representatives. Because their parties were represented in the assemblies' education working groups, their participation in ESRA's dialogues helped in obtaining bipartisan political support for key policy issues in the education sector. Moreover, ESRA conducted policy dialogues with the parliamentarians and the civil society on technical areas in which ESRA was working. This brought into focus the policy issues identified as key concerns during our fieldwork and policy analysis. Accordingly, broad-based support was obtained for the following policy changes:

- allocating regular budgets for PITEs
- appointing sufficient staff in PITEs
- preparing calendar of training by PITEs
- increasing the number of learning coordinators
- raising the pool of qualified personnel for education management
- enhancing tenures of SMCs
- introducing performance-based audits of SMCs instead of financial audits
- preparing regular budgets for EMIS
- using data for educational planning.

Formal Capacity Building

ESRA conducted and/or organized a number of formal capacity-building sessions for education officials from all levels of the system.

- Six government officials and NGO leaders were selected to attend Harvard Graduate School of Education's summer course on Policy Planning and Analysis for Improving Quality in Education Systems (see: <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/ppe/international/index.html>).
- Nearly 30 school administrators participated in the Eastern Washington University/University of Wisconsin–Green Bay 8-week training program. The aim of this program was to equip educational administrators to better help and support teachers, provide administrators with strategies for improving the quality of public sector institutional support for teachers, and help create conditions for the development of sustainable structures for professional development at the district level.

- ESRA teamed up with P&P Wing of MOE and AEPAM to design and implement two EFEE courses. Prior to each one of the EFEE courses, participants were required to attend 4-day course in MS Excel, a course intended to bring the participants' Excel skills up to intermediate status. Officers from the P&P Wings of the federal and provincial education departments, PITEs, and EDOs for Education participated in the course. The EFEE course covered two broad areas: a general overview of the principles of education finance and economics of education, and analytical and budgeting practices related to education management in Pakistan. Each of these two areas had a theoretical component (consisting of lectures and discussions) and a practical component (consisting of computer-based practical applications involving the use of MS Excel). NEMIS was also linked to the course. The course was designed and cofacilitated by ESRA and AEPAM staff and an ESRA consultant. Thereafter, AEPAM professional staff would present the EFEE course as part of its education managers program. ESRA and AEPAM presented the course twice to reach as many senior education managers as possible.
- ESRA assigned a long-term EMIS specialist and a short-term consultant in NEMIS to provide both technical assistance and shoulder-to-shoulder training. The assistance/training focused on two main areas:
 1. Data utilization and dissemination, in particular by the federal MOE, were examined in detail, and a report titled *Data Utilization Strategies and Guidelines for the Education Sector* was produced. Much of the work focused on improving the structure of the MOE's statistical yearbook, on better use of Ministry of Finance data in the education planning cycle, on assessing an existing project to develop Web-based data dissemination, on the selection and calculation of appropriate education indicators, and on better use of the data to produce in-depth analyses of policy-relevant issues.
 2. The data collection procedures relating to the Annual School Census (ASC) were examined, partly through discussions with provincial and district officials, and a document titled *Data Collection Guidelines for the Annual School Census* was produced. The document is largely aimed at creating a common framework for the provinces and territories of the country, and defining key concepts such as data dictionary, audit sampling, data adjustment, and the data quality report, in line with best practice around the world. In addition, a document titled *ASC Data Integrity Standards* was produced to establish methods for assessing the data integrity and quality of specific ASC variables.
- Several officers from the MOE and the Sindh DOE participated in seminars designed to build their capacity as members of an RSU. These seminars were offered to give the participants a solid understanding of the conceptual underpinnings of reform support, and to expose them to a number of reform support tools and techniques. A select group of people in the MOE was trained

in the use of PakMod, the reform support tool that was used in support of Vision 2025. These same officials participated in the EFEE courses.

- ESRA conducted a series of district-level planning exercises using EMIS data that allowed education officials to interactively set objective prioritization criteria for the allocation of physical inputs to schools, framed to appeal to representatives in the district assembly. The resulting priority criteria, budgets, and resource allocation lists gave department officials the ability to quantify their needs, justify budgets, fend off political interference, and generate political backing for their proposals.

SIR 1.3 Education and school improvement service through district-level planning and district-level grants

In the early stages of the project, ESRA helped each of its target districts prepare long-term, 5-year, DEPs. These plans, and the collaborative/learning process through which they were developed, enabled district officers to establish a hierarchy of needs. The hierarchy of needs for each district was subsequently addressed through a series of DIPs that ESRA helped each district to develop, implement, and monitor. These DIPs were then funded, largely through ESRA-issued DIGs.

Toward the third and last round of DIPs and DIGs, there was a fair amount of cost sharing on behalf of the districts (a total of US\$187,134). Overall, US\$2,335,083 was issued in the form of DIGs, for all three rounds of funding. ESRA's contribution to district education planning was acknowledged by the ADB and EU; also, the GoS adopted ESRA's district planning model for other districts. Thus, the initial work done by ESRA to support devolution within the context of education service delivery by the districts is being sustained through other actors. A full account of all the DIPs and DIGs is presented in Annex A.

Apart from the experience/expertise district officials gained through collaboratively planning and implementing DIP/DIGs, and apart from the financial support obtained for improving education delivery, this exercise yielded other important benefits.

- ESRA's DIGs to Sukkur and Khairpur prompted the district governments to contribute PKR 4 million and PKR 6 million, respectively, to local DIG projects.
- In Thatta, the district government contributed PKR 800,000.
- ESRA's DIG to Hyderabad financed the salaries of 99 contract teachers. These teachers were subsequently regularized by the District Education Department. The grant to Hyderabad, therefore, has provided livelihood to 99 qualified teachers, and resulted in the reopening of 80 schools, where these teachers will now be teaching classes.

*"The Sindh Education Plan developed by Sindh government in collaboration with the European Union (EU) specifically mentions ESRA Education Planning as a guide for developing sector Plans in all districts of the province."
USAID Evaluation Report, p.8.*

- In Sukkur, DIG inputs were heavily debated by public representatives before being approved. An additional benefit of the DIG process, therefore, has been that it has reinforced democratic practices at the district level.

IR 2 In-service educator professional development systems and structures strengthened, in place, and functioning

SIR 2.1 Policies developed to support PDI

The work carried out under this SIR led to two government notifications and a number of policy recommendations.

Government Notifications

One official government notification was for the creation of the position of District Officer (Literacy and Training) in Balochistan. By successfully advocating for the creation of this position, districts now have an officer in place whose job it is to help develop, implement, coordinate, and monitor professional development activities in the district.

The other official government notification that resulted from ESRA's advocacy work was for the BCPD. In so doing, the Balochistan DOE formally recognized this rather innovative arrangement to help carry out professional development activities well beyond the life of the project.²⁵

Policy Recommendations

ESRA did much work to carve out some of the policy space needed to improve the overall situation of professional development in the education sector in Pakistan. In particular, a number of professional development policy issues related to education were researched, analyzed, dialogued, and, ultimately, put forth as formal policy recommendations. They are:

- creating incentives and incentive systems for education professional development;
- strengthening the supervisory system by mainstreaming trained mentors and master trainers;
- streamlining teachers' transfers and postings; and
- creating financial outlays for professional development at the provincial and district levels.

The intended outcome of these recommendations was to:

- provide teachers with career ladders that are dependent on their ongoing professional development, thus creating a demand for in-service professional development;
- improve the staffing structure so that the number of learning coordinators and supervisors for teachers is increased;

²⁵ The concept of consortium development is discussed in detail in the following section, "The Consortia," under SIR 2.2.

- increase financial outlays for professional development at the provincial and district level; and
- remove financial and personnel bottlenecks to professional development.

ESRA also engaged representatives from national and provincial assemblies, the MOE, and provincial DOEs in dialogues so that these recommendations could be discussed in detail and finalized for incorporation in future government action plans.

SIR 2.2 Institutions and systems strengthened to support PDI

ESRA broke new ground in the conceptualization, development, and operationalization of a PDI in both Balochistan and Sindh. While ESRA was charged with the task of addressing the professional development needs of 34,000 education professionals, our primary aim in this regard was to leave behind the institutional/organizational/technical wherewithal by which Pakistan could continue to address the ongoing professional development needs of its education professionals; thus, our focus on a PDI. The PDI is comprised of (a) consortia of public and private sector professional development entities operating at the provincial level, (b) PDFs operating at the district and *tehsil* levels, (c) TRCs, (d) school clusters, and (e) a cadre of highly trained mentors and master trainers.

The Consortia

The advantages of a consortium of public and private sector professional development entities, as opposed to the same public and private sector professional development entities working as separate entities, are twofold. First, there is the cross-fertilization of knowledge/ideas/experiences—the mutual learning—that comes from working in a consortium. Second, a consortium can do more than any one, or all, of the entities working alone: the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

The consortium in Sindh—the UEI—was (and still is) comprised of the Sindh Bureau of Curriculum and Extension Centers (BOCEC), the PITE Sindh, Sindh University, Notre Dame Institute of Education, Indus Resource Center, and Jamia Millia. With the exception of the BOCEC,²⁶ these organizations came together as the UEI in January 2004. The BCPD was (and still is) comprised of BOCEC Balochistan, PITE Balochistan, University of Balochistan, and SCSPEB. The money ESRA used to pay for consortia services (such as the training of mentors and master trainers) was issued to the consortia, not the individual members. Such an arrangement was a first in Pakistan. ESRA helped develop the consortia’s capacity by providing technical assistance and training in proposal writing, materials development, formation of monitoring and evaluation tools and systems, and various training techniques and approaches. The ESRA team also assisted the consortia in learning how to operate as a single entity.

Professional Development Forums (PDFs)

With the advent of education devolution, district DOEs are required to plan and manage various education interventions across their districts. One prominent activity

²⁶ The Sindh BOCEC became a member of the consortium in 2006.

that falls under the district's scope of work is the professional development of its staff. To help increase the district's capacity to plan and manage professional development, ESRA assisted each of its target districts to institutionalize PDFs. These monthly PDFs provide opportunities for teachers, professional development staff, and education managers to discuss issues related to professional development, share progress, as well as to plan. The overarching objective of these forums is to embed participatory planning for professional development in the districts' planning apparatus. To ensure the sustainability of district-operated training programs beyond the life of ESRA, district education officials were asked to coordinate the forums. The overall utility and widespread ownership of these PDFs is reflected in the fact that in all of ESRA's target districts, the PDFs have been formally notified by their respective district governments. Core cabinet committees were finalized and bylaws developed for the PDFs.

Against the backdrop of this success, provincial-level and *tehsil*-level PDFs were forged. The former allowed the core group of people responsible for conducting professional development activities in their districts to meet and review progress made toward developing a sustainable PDI. *Tehsil*-level PDFs have allowed teachers and other stakeholders of each *tehsil* to contribute toward the district education departments' professional development planning and decision making. With the exception of Thatta (where the district authorities are opposing the creation of *tehsil*-level PDFs), *tehsil*-based PDFs in all the districts were officially notified. With the notification of these PDFs and a core group of professional development professionals identified in each district to take this effort forward, these *tehsil*-based PDFs should evolve into consultative bodies for professional development that feed into the district's planning mechanism.

In each of ESRA's target districts, because of needs-assessment surveys conducted through PDFs, district professional development plans were developed. In Thatta, the EDO for Education allocated funds from the district budget to help pay for their plan's successful implementation.

Teacher Resource Centers (TRC)

Nine²⁷ district-level TRCs were equipped and strengthened with audiovisual aids, computers, and reference material/books. These district TRCs were staffed with graduates of the Advanced Diploma course who were trained to facilitate the use of these centers. In 2006–2007, ESRA established these centers at the subdistrict level; *tehsil*-based TRCs were created in all target districts. All told, 49 *tehsil* TRCs were created. The purpose of these centers is to provide an easily accessible resource base to teachers of each *tehsil* where they can use reference material and borrow books and teaching aids as well as interact casually with their peers from the *tehsil*.

To take the work of the TRCs further, more than 500 training venues/cluster centers operated by Aga Khan University-Institute for Education Development (AKU-IED), UEI, and BCPD in the ESRA districts were equipped so that they could serve as easily accessible resource centers for teachers of a particular cluster of schools

²⁷ Hyderabad, Thatta, Sukkur, Khairpur, Kech, Gwadar, Chaghi, Noshki, and Killa Saifullah.

(schools of close proximity). In addition to serving as a venue for cluster-based trainings, schools also housed learning resource centers in which trainees developed teaching/learning materials and audiovisual aids. These were developed under the supervision of mentors, who guided trainees to use these materials in activity-based teaching. Some cluster learning resource centers are continuing to function on a self-help basis, even after ESRA's training program had concluded in the cluster school, and are providing teachers with low-cost teaching and learning materials close to their schools.

Mentors and Master Trainers. One of the greatest achievements of the ESRA professional development program was the creation of a human resource pool comprised of 1,099 mentors and master trainers. Almost 90 percent of these master trainers and mentors work in the public sector. Such arrangements will increase the self-sufficiency of districts and reduce their dependency on outsiders to respond to their professional development needs. These master trainers and mentors have shown a willingness to act as facilitators for training activities that are part of the district's professional development plans; in Noshki a budget allocation has already been made for utilizing them, thereby demonstrating district ownership of this human resource base.

While the primary focus of the training program for master trainers/mentors was on pedagogical techniques, time was also allocated to providing refresher courses on basic content in mathematics, science, social studies, and languages. Following the cascade model of teaching, these trained mentors returned to their districts and offered training workshops to teachers at a cluster school. The cluster school was centrally located within a UC/area and teachers of surrounding schools (within a 0–6 kilometer radius) would attend trainings at this school. Organizing trainings at the cluster school ensured both affordability and accessibility to the trainee teachers. Moreover, these mentors also provided classroom-based support to each trainee teacher and visited schools to ensure that the trainee teacher was developing lesson plans and implementing the methods of teaching that were being imparted during the training sessions.

Capacity Building

A critical aspect of the PDI is the capacity of the people who comprise it. In addition to the expertise everyone gained from working as a member of the PDI, and the formal training for the mentors and master trainers, a number of other PDI capacity-building efforts were carried out by ESRA.

- ESRA provided training to 12 faculty members from the PITEs in Sindh and Balochistan (six faculty members each from both provinces) to build their capacity and strengthen the institutions they work for. Initially, training was provided to these faculty members to use empirical methods for assessing needs to design needs-based training programs for teachers. The next stage was a 6-day capacity-building workshop that focused on revising existing PITE courses in light of the needs-assessment survey report that PITE faculty members had prepared after assessing the needs of 1,200 teachers. During the workshop, discussion focused on English language learning theories, modeling

research-based strategies, and planning research-based English language instruction. The outcome of this series of workshops was the development of a revised program for English language instruction.

- ESRA also offered a 12-day training workshop for six faculty members from PITE, Sindh. The focus of this workshop was on educational leadership and management, designing an innovative teacher education model, and monitoring and evaluation techniques.
- Staff members from the Bureaus of Curriculum (BoCs) in Sindh and Balochistan as well as Elementary Colleges (ECs) received training in various areas, enabling them to contribute toward strengthening the capacity of their institutions in offering pre-service as well as in-service trainings. One hundred eighteen staff members (37 from Balochistan and 81 from Sindh) received training in areas of need identified by the BoCs. The primary focus of the ESRA workshops for the ECs was on planning needs-based training for their trainee teachers.
- In 2005, planning/consultative meetings were held with staff members from the BoCs and the ECs and, during 2006–2007, three interactions of 8 days each were planned for the 118 staff members at AKU-IED. The participants were also able to get some practical experience as they were assigned to train teachers at their institutions. These faculty members then revisited AKU-IED for a final interaction and shared the implementation strategy for the trainings they offered in their colleges, as well as the outcomes of their training.
- In addition to the above, 34 staff members from the BoCs and the ECs were trained in various courses such as an action research program, and a Harvard Wide-scale Interactive Development for Educators (WIDE) online training program, as well as a certificate in teacher education program, a Master in Education program, and an advanced diploma in teacher education at AKU-IED program.
- ESRA provided training to Provincial Education Assessment Center (PEACE) staff in areas such as data collection, data entry, data analysis, test construction, and test administration. Seven staff members from the PEACEs in Sindh and Balochistan attended a series of workshops over a period of 2 years designed to enhance the capacity of PEACE staff members to independently gather and assess teacher and student data. In addition, 27 staff members from the BoCs (20 from Sindh and 7 from Balochistan) were periodically involved in carrying out test administration of students and class observations of teachers in the districts. BOC/PEACE staffs were deployed by ESRA with the consent/nomination of the Directors of the two BoCs, and these trained staff members can now contribute toward strengthening assessment work at the national, provincial, and district levels.
- Efforts were made to build the capacity of district education officials so that they could independently plan, implement, and monitor professional development activities in their districts. At the outset of the project, ESRA held consultative meetings with the district DOEs to apprise them of the scope

of work of the professional development component of ESRA and seek their feedback and cooperation. This process continued during the course of the project when the District Officer (Academic and Training) was asked to act as the focal person for all ESRA professional development–related work and was involved in creating and conducting the district/*tehsil* professional development forums.

- In addition, a series of training workshops were held for the district education officials in order to equip them with the requisite skills to plan professional development activities at the district level. Twenty-three district functionaries from target districts attended these workshops. The focus of the training workshops was on management and planning skills, and specifically on the formulation of a district-wide professional development plan that could delineate the objectives, outcomes, and other relevant details of yearly professional development activities for the district. The professional development plans were prepared by district education officials of all districts with the assistance of PDF members. The district plans were prepared based on a needs-assessment exercise that was assigned to the district officials by the ESRA professional development team to gauge the training needs of teachers. The plans gave details of the needs-assessment exercise results, selection criteria for choosing teachers, program structure, and budgetary implications.

Materials Development

A complete set of resources was developed for mentors and teacher educators, head teachers and administrators, and teachers.

Relevant materials were distributed to every mentor and teacher educator, head teacher and administrator, and teacher in all of ESRA’s target areas. The content of these materials relate directly to the textbooks being used and the national curriculum being taught in schools. These guides provide background knowledge about the concepts in each lesson and suggest a variety of activities that the teachers can employ to stimulate higher-order thinking skills and discourage rote learning. In addition, the guides also provide assessment tests at the end of each unit and a bank of test items that the teachers can use to break away from standardized test items that are based on rote learning. Draft versions of these guides were shared with the provincial education departments and their feedback was incorporated in the final drafts, which were used in ESRA’s teacher training programs. A complete list of all manuals and guides is provided in the section on “Distribution of ESRA’s Publications.”

SIR 2.3 Deliver PDI training services

As noted in Table 2 under IR 3.2.a, over the life of the project, ESRA trained 38,717 teachers, 1,099 mentors, and 5,863 head teachers for a total of 45,679 education professionals. What follows is a description of the ESRA program that yielded these results.

Mentors/master trainers from UEI, BCPD, and AKU-IED conducted a 300-hour training program for primary school teachers in their districts to help the teachers become reflective practitioners who would be able to assess themselves, develop

classroom management skills, and develop and use low-cost resource material. The other aim of the training was to enhance each teacher's knowledge in the content areas of mathematics, science, social studies, and language. The training program also had a follow-up component where teachers were provided classroom support by the mentors. However, the follow-up component of the training proved to be a challenge for all three partners. While it seemed a good idea when the training program was being designed, it soon became apparent that geographic difficulties and budgetary constraints made it exceedingly difficult for the mentors to spend the required number of hours with each teacher. Each partner had innovative solutions to this problem: UEI engaged some of its master trainers (only responsible for classroom training) to support its field trainers and AKU-IED resorted to assigning work to complete in the classroom to some of the course participants who were more difficult to access.

During 2004–2006, 25,107 teachers were trained through UEI, BCPD, and AKU-IED. Furthermore, 2,040 teachers were trained through the English Language Training (ELT) program and an additional 781 were trained through SEP. The teachers trained through the ELT and SEP programs also received training from one of the three partners in the 300-hour training program.

For the extension period of the ESRA project (2006–2007), a target of 3,660 teachers (10 teachers from each UC in each of the 12 districts) was set. One hundred four mentors from the existing pool of master trainers/mentors were selected through a test that was administered for all master trainers and mentors by AKU-IED in the field. The top performing mentors/master trainers from each district returned to AKU-IED for 4 weeks of intensive training in the content areas and then returned to their districts to offer a 4-week training program to teachers who were nominated by the district education department. These teachers were provided advanced level training in four content areas—mathematics, science, social studies, and languages. Through this training program, 3,474 teachers have been trained.

Of the 1,788 teachers who were not trained in the initial phase, 336 teachers could not be accessed by any partner because they were from isolated schools and could not reach the cluster schools where trainings were arranged, and 476 teachers dropped out or did not complete training and, therefore, did not receive a certificate of completion. Some shortfalls in targets occurred due to discrepancies between the EMIS data and the data with the district education authority: in Sukkur, there was a difference of 566 teachers between the SEMIS data and the number of teachers that the district education department could physically verify, while in Hyderabad, there was a difference of 220 teachers. The remaining 190 teachers could not be trained due to various reasons such as refusal of teachers to attend trainings despite repeated nominations/efforts by the professional development partners. ESRA has documentation to support these shortfalls.

Training Effectiveness

To measure the effectiveness of the training, a longitudinal research study was conducted, one that had two aspects to it. The first measured the degree to which teacher behavior was changed by the training offered by ESRA. The second measured the degree to which student learning increased among students being taught by

ESRA-trained teachers. The evaluation used a pretest/posttest, intervention/control group design. Samples of teachers and students were selected from each cohort.

Teacher behavior was measured using a Teacher Quality Index (TQI) provided by USAID. In 2005–2006, the assessment study conducted on teachers in Sindh showed an improvement from 20.5 percent to 67.4 percent between pretraining and posttraining. In Balochistan, teacher behavior showed substantial gains from pretest (14 percent) to posttest (45 percent) in the percentage of teachers scoring at or above the passing score. In Balochistan, the intervention group did not meet the target of 60 percent passing on the posttest. One possible reason is that many of the teachers had not completed their training at the time of the posttest.

In 2006–2007, the assessment study conducted on teachers of Sindh showed that 51.3 percent of teachers assessed had reached the proficiency standard. Even though the teachers made progress during the year, the percentage who had reached the proficiency standard did not reach the measurement target from the TQI. In Balochistan, an assessment study was conducted for teachers of Chaghi (who could not previously be assessed because they were on strike). According to the results of this study, 67.3 percent of teachers from the intervention district reached the proficiency standard.

The impact of training of teachers on student performance was measured through subject tests in mathematics and Urdu that were administered to samples of fourth-grade students in Sindh and Balochistan before and after their teachers underwent training. Using items originally developed by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the instruments were adapted for use by the project and administered to students. For each cohort (or cycle), a maximum of 300 schools per province (600 total schools) were sampled. Initial instruments had 25 items (25 points). After evaluating the technical properties of the instruments, the project collaborated with the PEACE offices in Sindh and Balochistan to revise the instruments to include 30 items (30 points). The initial and revised instruments were statistically equated using advanced psychometrics provided by U.S.-based project consultants.

In 2005–2006, results of the assessment study conducted on students in Sindh indicated that slightly more than 1 in 20 students performed at or above the minimum level before their teachers were trained (pretest in 2004) and about 1 in 5 after (posttest in 2005). In terms of percentage, the gains shown were from 5.6 percent to 16.4 percent in mathematics and from 7.4 percent to 21.3 percent in Urdu. Student achievement in Balochistan in the same cycle of assessment showed improvement from the pretest to the posttest in both mathematics and Urdu. The percentage of students passing the mathematics posttest was close to the 10 percent target (9.9 percent); however, on the Urdu test, there was more of a gap (7.5 percent passing). Intervention students on both mathematics and Urdu performed higher on the posttest than the comparison students, even though both groups had similar passing percentages on the pretests.

In 2006–2007, a second cycle of assessment was conducted for students in Sindh and Balochistan. In Sindh, there was substantial improvement in the second cycle for students in both mathematics and Urdu. The intervention group had a higher passing percentage than the comparison group in both mathematics and Urdu. Intervention students exceeded the standard—the percentage of students who passed—in mathematics (39.3 percent) and in Urdu (48.8 percent). In Balochistan, the same cycle of assessment was conducted for students of trained teachers in Chaghi. Results showed that the intervention students met the standard in both Urdu (10.8 percent) and mathematics (10.4 percent), while only 8.3 percent of comparison students met the standard in Urdu and 4.3 percent in mathematics.

A final round of teacher and student assessments was carried out in Sindh and Balochistan, where 230 teachers and 2,114 students were assessed in the target districts, and 199 teachers and 1,685 students were assessed in the comparison districts. The objective of the follow-up study was to examine whether teachers had maintained their gains from the posttest assessment, and how a new cohort of students taught by those teachers performed on tests. In Balochistan, the teachers increased their performance, with 87.4 percent reaching proficiency on the follow-up observations, while only 64.0 percent of the comparison teachers were proficient. Student learning also increased, with 17.7 percent of intervention students passing in mathematics and 17.9 percent in Urdu. The comparison students performed at a similar level.

In Sindh, 50.4 percent of the intervention teachers reached proficiency, a slight decline from the posttest. Only 30.3 percent of the comparison teachers were judged as proficient. In mathematics, 21.2 percent of the Sindh students were proficient, against 16.3 percent in the comparison group. In Urdu, 32.0 percent of the intervention students were proficient, against 24.8 percent of the comparison students.

Support to the Government College Elementary Training (GCET) (Female), Jamrud Agency, Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA)

ESRA also provided scholarships for 39 Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students enrolled at the Government College of Education for Elementary Teachers (Female), Jamrud Khyber Agency, FATA. These scholarships of PKR 45,000 per student per quarter covered tuition and the cost of books. Recipients were nominated by the college and their scholarship was renewed every quarter based upon their attendance and performance in the previous quarter.

Based on the college and USAID requests, additional funding was provided for specific equipment and materials. During the demobilization phase of the project, the MOE and ESRA agreed to transfer additional office equipment and supplies to the college.

IR 3 Youth and adult literacy provision framework and systems in place and functioning in target areas

SIR 3.1 Policy(ies) developed to support literacy

The work carried out by ESRA under this SIR led to the MOE approval of the NLG and the National Literacy Program Curriculum.

National Literacy Guidelines (NLG)

When ESRA initiated its literacy program in Sindh and Balochistan, multiple literacy service providers were operating in Pakistan. These organizations were providing programs of varying duration using their own independent curricula: some included follow-up services for literates, while others discontinued contact with their graduates at the end of the program. Moreover, lesson delivery and assessment systems varied between literacy providers. Each claimed their method to be the most effective in providing and retaining literacy skills. It was chaos.

ESRA's literacy team and its GoP counterparts realized the need to bring some order into the literacy arena. That order took the form of the National Guidelines for Adult and Youth Literacy. The guidelines were developed through a series of workshops in all provinces and at the federal level. Workshop participants included government officers, literacy providers, academics, and educationists. They were first developed in draft form and distributed among all stakeholders for their comments. Upon receiving these comments, the guidelines were finalized and formally approved by the MOE.

With these guidelines in place, literacy providers now had a blueprint that helped them in designing content, lesson delivery, and course duration, and in ensuring that their programs met the minimum quality requirements for providing literacy services. These guidelines provided direction for curriculum development, teacher training, and material development. The guidelines also guaranteed that the education provided to enrollees was uniform, met minimum standards, and was compliant with government requirements. The requirements also gave prospective employers and education institutions the assurance that graduates met the standards expected from literacy program graduates. Moreover, the guidelines provided the basis for the development of the government's first National Literacy Curriculum, developed by the MOE in partnership with ESRA and UNESCO.

National Literacy Curriculum (NLC)

Before the creation of NLG, government and nongovernment literacy providers used their own literacy syllabi and learning material. Because there were often no identified minimum learning standards in the curricula being used, prevailing practices resulted in the use of a large variety of teaching and learning materials, few of which had any specific standards. This led to disjointed efforts, an absence of effective mechanisms for providing accreditation of literacy providers, poorly focused assessments of learner achievement, and little or no certification of the neo-literates. In order to fulfill the objectives of the NLG, it was necessary to develop an NLC.

ESRA and UNESCO agreed to assist the Curriculum Wing of the MOE to design the first NLC in the light of the National Guidelines for Adult and Youth Literacy. The NLC translates the NLG into detail, specifically on issues related to the practical application of guidelines to grassroots implementation. (In September 2007, when ESRA activities were closed down, the MOE was still carrying out advocacy meetings with provincial DOEs regarding the final acceptance of the NLC.)

The NLC can be used in a variety of ways. It enables the government to develop an accreditation regime for literacy service delivery. Literacy providers can be accredited according to their adherence to the NLG and NLC, giving them formal recognition. Even better, teachers can be certified and literacy programs and learners can be objectively assessed. Accordingly, graduates from these programs can also be certified—this, then, eases their transition into the formal education sector or helps them gain meaningful employment. Finally, the NLC provides guidance for professionals who want to develop adult learners' materials according to the NLC.

SIR 3.2 Institutions and systems strengthened to support literacy

ESRA's work under this SIR led to the development of an LRC within the MOE, a number of district LRCs, the Family Reading Program, and the creation of a cadre of literacy master trainers. ESRA also built up the capacity of a number of federal and provincial literacy stakeholders and helped district officials create literacy plans.

Literacy Resource Center within the Curriculum Wing (MOE)

To help strengthen the GoP's literacy service delivery capacity, ESRA worked closely with the MOE's Curriculum Wing to develop an LRC. The LRC serves as a center for collecting and sharing information and resources on both literacy and nonformal education programs. The LRC also provides reference materials and information for people working in the field of literacy (including training tools, curricula design, monitoring and evaluation material, and best practices). The materials provided to the center were categorized, reviewed, and catalogued. While developing the NLC, materials from this resource center were consulted and referred to many times.

District LRCs

More than 100,000 learners have graduated from ESRA-sponsored literacy classes throughout Sindh and Balochistan. While these graduates have expressed a strong interest in reading materials and requested continuous access to them, some reside in remote areas where books are a rarity and libraries are nonexistent. In response to this demand from graduates and their communities, ESRA established district-wide LRCs. These LRCs manifest an integrated approach, simultaneously allowing learners and communities to access reading material and professionals to access other facilities, including computers and photocopiers, provided at the center. To allow literacy graduates to use their newly acquired skills, the centers provide a variety of informative reading material. Every week, community members visit the LRCs. Visitors include literacy graduates, students from local primary and secondary schools, college students, parents with their children, and other community members interested in current literature.

In most cases, district governments provided resources toward the establishment of the LRC (such as venue, electricity, and learning materials), and local businesses and community members donated money, books, and other resources. Local NGOs provided technical assistance in the management of these centers, and staffed them with LRC coordinators. ESRA donated culturally appropriate books, learning materials, and skill development tools (newspapers, journals, computer, CD player, CDs, games, posters, and sewing machines).

The LRCs proved to be an important resource for communities to access different kinds of learning materials. By bringing the government, businesses, and community together to provide a public good for locals, it has proved to be a good example of an effective public-community partnership. This partnership also ensures the sustainability of the LRCs after ESRA because each LRC has developed a sustainability plan to ensure continuity after ESRA.

Not only do the LRCs provide learning and social platforms where community members can gather for informational lectures, seminars, or other functional literacy activities, they also allow distant villages to benefit from their services. For residents who cannot travel the distances to obtain LRC materials, LRCs provide a mobile library. Women are not encouraged to travel alone and this is often the greatest deterrence to them obtaining an education. The mobile library is especially beneficial for them. LRC coordinators also function as mobile librarians, disseminating reading materials door-to-door in distant villages, and keeping fresh reading material in circulation across the district. Other district and provincial governments have shown interest in replicating ESRA LRCs in their regions. The model is easily replicable, requiring nominal contribution from the government, local NGOs, and the community. The LRCs nurture the growth of a literate culture and exemplifies a productive, cost-efficient way for district governments, local NGOs, and ESRA to collaborate together to increase and sustain literacy levels.

An analysis was carried out to evaluate the impact of LRCs—each LRC coordinator's responsibility was to submit a report of their LRC by the fourth of every month. To assess the impact of LRCs, 5 months' worth of LRC-related data was compiled and analyzed. That data is presented in Figures 4 through 6 below.

Figure 4. Number of Visitors to LRCs Over a 5-month Period ($\Sigma=8,420$)

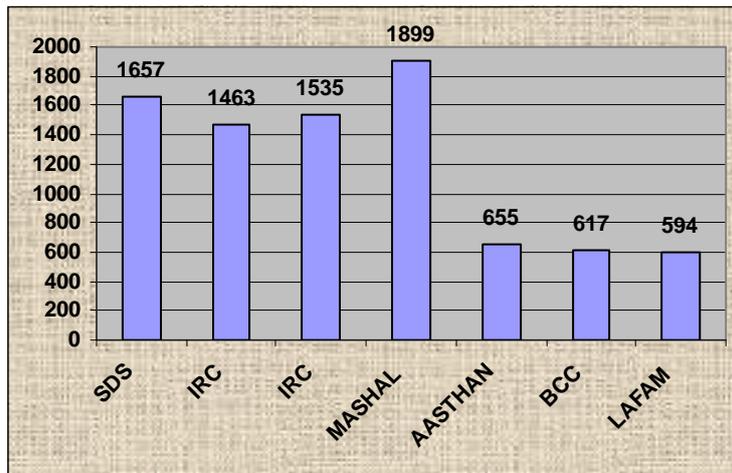


Figure 5. Number of Books Issued at LRCs Over a 5-month Period ($\Sigma=11,858$)

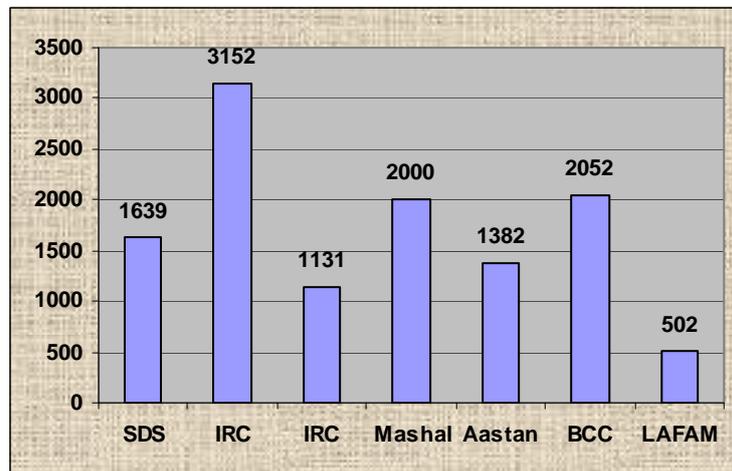
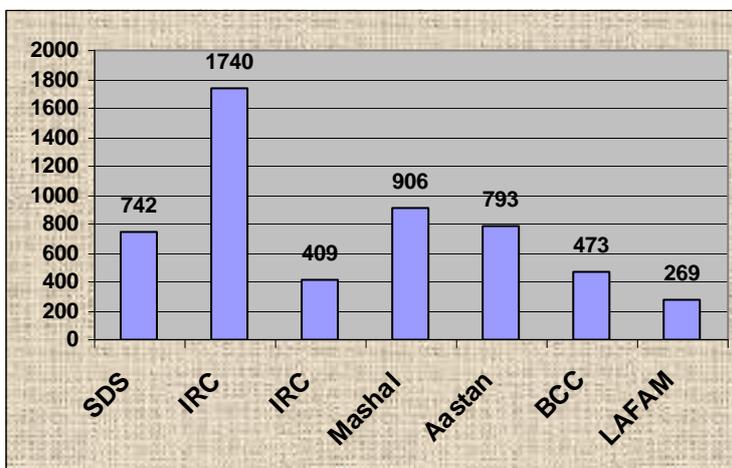


Figure 6. Number of Books Issued in Neighboring Villages from LRCs Over a 5-month Period ($\Sigma=5,332$)



Family Reading Program

ESRA's Family Reading Program (FRP) was a postliteracy initiative that fostered a reading and learning culture among families of recent literates. In particular, it

- engaged recently literate adults in reading activities to sustain their literacy skills;
- created a reading culture at home by assisting adults to read to their children;
- helped adults understand ways they can help their children learn to read;
- increased the self-esteem of new literates and encouraged their civic participation in their communities; and
- created awareness by exposing recent literates and their families to a variety of reading material.

Specific activities that took place under this initiative included:

- *Buddy System*—Each literacy learner enrolled as a reader in the FRP was expected to impart literacy skills to one other individual from their family or neighborhood. This unique aspect of the FRP ensured dissemination of knowledge and reinforced the learners' basic literacy skills.
- *FRP reading corners*—Readers created “reading corners” in their homes and set up a regular reading time to develop a reading culture in the home where children are familiar with and interested in literature. Participants read a minimum of 80 books a year in either Urdu or Sindhi.
- *Discussion*—FRP seminars with the community focused on social, environmental, and health issues.
- *Projects*—Each reader completed the following projects: (i) writing an autobiography; (ii) teaching at least five people how to write their names; (iii) conducting at least four surveys in their communities on various topics (such as hygiene, male-female employment ratio, the number of community members reading the newspaper, and number of literates in the community) and writing reports based on their findings; (iv) developing ideas for at least six story books; (v) developing a newsletter reporting creative activities; (vi) making three creative booklets; and (vii) composing draft letters to officials to solve local problems and making a booklet of these letters.

The FRP was implemented through local partner NGOs who trained FRP mentors to visit classes and monitor the program, procure and distribute packages to readers, and monitor and evaluate the program to maintain quality. By implementing the program through local organizations, ESRA also increased their capacity for literacy delivery.

Participants in the FRP have exhibited an increased sense of confidence and greater awareness of self and community. They have also displayed an increased interest toward learning. Parents can now understand their children's homework and are actively involved in their children's education.

To measure the success of the FRP, ESRA assessed the literacy retention of FRP participants—the assessment showed that 100 percent of FRP participants had

retained their literacy writing skills, whereas only 59.54 percent of graduates from the basic literacy program retained their skills. In mathematics, 97 percent of FRP participants had retained their basic skills as opposed 67.24 percent of graduates from the basic literacy program. FRP participants also exhibited better quality of retention.

Training of Literacy Master Trainers

To achieve their targets, all NGOs trained their teachers in literacy teaching methods. For this purpose, training modules and packages were developed that focused on teaching adults and out-of-school learners. A summary of trained master trainers is provided in Tables 3 and 4 below:

Table 3. Teachers Trained by Literacy NGOs

LARGE GRANTEES TEACHER TRAINED		SMALL GRANTEES TEACHER TRAINED	ILM (PILOT TESTING) TEACHER TRAINED	RFA I AND RFA II TEACHER TRAINED		TOTAL	USED ILM MODEL	DID NOT USE ILM MODEL
(USED INTEGRATED LITERACY MODEL [ILM])	(DID NOT USE ILM MODEL)			(USED ILM MODEL)	(DID NOT USE ILM MODEL)			
100	554	442	183	1,594	756	3,629	1,877	1,752

Table 4. Master Teachers Trained by Literacy NGOs

LARGE GRANTEES MASTER TEACHER TRAINED		SMALL GRANTEES MASTER TEACHER TRAINED	ILM (PILOT TESTING) MASTER TEACHER TRAINED	RFA I AND RFA II MASTER TEACHER TRAINED		TOTAL	USED ILM MODEL	DID NOT USE ILM MODEL
(USED ILM MODEL)	(DID NOT USE ILM MODEL)			(USED ILM MODEL)	(DID NOT USE ILM MODEL)			
6	22	25	24	76	48	201	106	95

Capacity Building of Federal and Provincial Education DOEs

In order to make the NLG and NLC development process truly stakeholder driven, workshops and technical seminars were held across all four ESRA provinces. In addition, technical meetings were also organized and attended by more than 500 government representatives, who used this process to gain experience in strategy formulation and planning for literacy initiatives.

Strengthening District Literacy Planning, Management, and Delivery Capacity

While delivering literacy courses in target districts, ESRA and district DOEs collectively realized the need for 5-year District Literacy Plans (DLPs). Two-day working seminars were organized in all target districts. These seminars kicked off the DLP development process. These plans are now being used by district DOEs to plan literacy initiatives across their districts.

SIR 3.3 Literacy services delivered by ESRA (training programs)

The work carried out under this SIR led to the development of the Integrated Literacy Model (ILM), a Literacy Awareness Campaign, 3,592 literacy centers, and 104,336 literacy program graduates.

Integrated Literacy Model (ILM)

When ESRA started its literacy work, the landscape was chaotic. Working in close collaboration with the Curriculum Wing of the MOE, we realized that we would have to create our own literacy model for its service delivery. To be a viable model, *one that would stand as the cornerstone of the National Literacy Guidelines*, it had to reflect both international and local best practices and it would have to assure that graduates could transition into the formal education sector or gain meaningful employment. Accordingly, ESRA developed an ILM as an all-inclusive literacy curriculum that would provide learners with core and functional literacy skills, enabling them to gain meaningful employment after acquiring literacy. The ILM was developed after a thorough review of existing literacy curricula in Pakistan and a series of consultative workshops with literacy experts across the country. Once finalized, ESRA's partner NGOs were gathered in a seminar where they were given the option of either adopting the ILM for their ESRA-funded literacy programs or using their own models. The ILM was Pakistan's first literacy curriculum to be tested, modified, reviewed, and then implemented, and the first model to be implemented along the NLG. The ILM Literacy Package consists of Urdu, Sindh, and English reading and writing material and mathematics material. In addition to these basic modules, the ILM also consists of an arts and crafts component, a physical education component, and a poetry component.

To assess learners' retention of ILM material, they were given monthly tests and quarterly and final exams. An end-of-program assessment also gauged their retention of the skills they had acquired.

Literacy Awareness Campaigns

In order to advocate literacy, ESRA carried out several activities that would reach potential learners across the country. The program sponsored a song on literacy by a prominent local singer, Jawad Ahmed. The song was aired on several TV channels throughout Pakistan.

ESRA also sponsored interactive theaters to promote awareness of the benefits of literacy. IRC and the Sindh Development Society (SDS) each organized 30 performances in villages where ESRA had difficulty enrolling students. Each performance was attended by 50 to 600 people. An audience member at an IRC theater is quoted in the box.

To promote enrollment in literacy classes, ESRA's

"I attended this interactive theater for the first time. I very strongly feel that we have to arrange more such theaters because this gives the answers of all issues and tells us how we can solve our problems. Very realistic and natural source of awareness. Here we do not have fear to speak the truth and make a deliberate effort to prove very good. Nothing is superficial. No fear of opposition, no threat of punishment but a place for Ahtisab (Urdu word) in a nonthreatening environment."

Compiled from IRC Theater report.

partner NGOs also held literacy fairs, involved local religious leaders, organized promotional walks, and used local media to endorse the benefits of literacy.

Establishment of Literacy Centers

Literacy classes were delivered in literacy centers spread across target districts. Table 5 below provides a breakdown of literacy centers across the project.

Table 5. Male and Female Literacy Centers

LARGE GRANTEES	MALE	FEMALE	MIX	TOTAL
	231	415	0	646
SMALL GRANTEES				512
ILM (PILOT TESTING)	20	152	0	172
RFA I	224	409	55	688
RFA II	415	1,031	128	1,574
GRAND TOTAL				3,592

Literacy Services Delivered

ESRA's overall literacy effort yielded 104,336 graduates.

Literacy Retention Assessed

A study was commissioned to assess the retention of literacy skills by literacy program graduates approximately 12 months after completing their course work. The study showed that on average, 59.65 percent of ESRA's literacy graduates had retained their literacy skills. In Sindh, the retention rate was 66.53 percent, while in Balochistan it was 49.89 percent. Overall, 57.36 percent of female learners retained their literacy skills. In Sindh, the retention rate for women was 64.07 percent, while in Balochistan female retention was 49.11 percent. As for the male learners, 66.04 percent retained their literacy skills. In Sindh, the male retention rate was 72.04 percent, while in Balochistan the male retention was 52.98 percent.

Overall, in the courses that used the ILM package, 67.15 percent of learners retained their literacy skills 12 months later. In Sindh, the retention rate was 71.30 percent, while in Balochistan it was 57.24 percent. Out of females using the ILM package, 66.11 percent of female learners retained their literacy skills. In Sindh, the female retention rate was 69.72 percent for female learners in ILM programs, while in Balochistan the female retention rate was 57.55 percent. Out of males using the ILM package, 69.62 percent male learners retained their literacy skills. In Sindh, the male retention rate was 75.07 percent, while in Balochistan the male retention rate was 56.49 percent.

Of those programs that did not use the ILM package, 45.58 percent of learners retained their literacy skills. In Sindh, the retention rate for the same group was 49.28 percent, while in Balochistan it was 43.45 percent. For the programs that did not use the ILM package, 42.77 percent of female learners retained their literacy skills. In Sindh, the female retention rate for the same group was 41.83 percent, while in Balochistan, the female retention rate was 43.17 percent. Overall, for the programs that did not use the ILM package, 56.41 percent of male learners retained their literacy skills. In Sindh, the male retention rate for the same group was 62.86 percent, while in Balochistan the male retention rate was 45.52 percent.

IR 4(A) Public participation, support mechanism, and systems in place and functioning

ESRA's PCP efforts were designed to mobilize communities around the notion of school improvement, facilitate their creation of a shared vision of what an improved school should look like, and support their development of school improvement plans—plans designed to help realize their shared visions, offer meaningful support to the successful implementation of those plans, and leave behind the wherewithal by which ongoing school improvement could take place beyond the life of ESRA. Central to this effort was enabling and empowering SMCs to be the engines of meaningful ongoing change.

SIR 4(A).1 Develop policies to improve SMC effectiveness

ESRA carved out some very important policy space under this SIR. In particular, only after working closely with the GoB in advocating for an SMC²⁸ notification and drafting an SMC notification, was the SMC notification formally issued. ESRA also worked closely with the GoS in making meaningful adjustments to their SMC notification. Finally, ESRA, through its work with the EDO of Education and in advocacy meetings, succeeded in changing the way in which SMCs are audited.

SMC Notification

ESRA's PCP program aimed to strengthen PCPs in education by empowering SMCs to participate effectively in school improvement. Because SMCs are government-notified bodies with assigned role and responsibilities, their effectiveness is associated with legal validity, and up-to-date and genuine nominations and capacity. Legally, SMCs in Balochistan ceased to exist in 2004 after the expiration of the notification issued by the GoB in 2001. In Sindh, SMCs existed, but their official notification needed adjustments.

Against this backdrop, ESRA commissioned a study of SMC notifications. This study presented a comparative analysis of the SMC notifications of the Sindh and Balochistan governments, with a review of ESRA's interventions for strengthening SMCs to engage them in school improvement activities. ESRA also commissioned a documentary film on the process and immediate results of its SIP/SIG initiative. This documentary highlighted potential outcomes of SMC involvement in school

²⁸ SMCs are called Parent Teacher School Management Committees (PT/SMCs) in Balochistan. For the sake of simplicity, we refer to them as SMCs in this report.

improvement activities, and provided insight into their effectiveness when provided with adequate training, and financial and technical support. The documentary was shown in civil society and advocacy functions hosted by ESRA and district officials.

After a number of policy dialogues using the above advocacy materials, ESRA succeeded in supporting the GoB in issuing a new and school improvement–relevant SMC notification, and supporting the GoS in adjusting their existing SMC notification such that it became oriented toward school improvement.

SIR 4(A).2 Strengthen institutions and systems to support community participation in education

Building the Capacity of SMCs

With the SMC notifications in place, ESRA immediately proceeded to build the capacity of SMCs. Through a consultative process with partner NGOs, and keeping in mind the roles and responsibilities put forth in the SMC notifications, ESRA delineated the core competencies of SMCs. Based on these, ESRA and its partner NGOs prepared five training modules to develop these competencies within SMCs:

1. Module One–Roles and Responsibilities of SMCs
2. Module Two–School Management Committees and Record Keeping
3. Module Three–Planning and Implementation
4. Module Four–Financial Management and Resource Mobilization
5. Module Five–Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation.

ESRA developed the capacity of 7,596 SMCs using these materials. SMCs were also provided extensive trainings as an integral part of the SIP/SIG development and implementation process (see the section on “The School Improvement Planning and Granting Mechanism” below).

The School Improvement Planning and Granting Mechanism

The school improvement planning and granting mechanism (SIP/SIG) that ESRA developed and successfully implemented over the course of the last two-and-a-half years of the project allowed for the effective and efficient use of project resources. The SIP/SIG process consists of a number of key elements: village assemblies, school improvement visions, SIP, SIG (in the form of fixed obligation grants), prototype construction, empowered and enabled SMCs, and PSUs.

The entire process was initiated when partner NGO community mobilizers entered a community and organized a village assembly wherein members of the community, not just the village elders and elites, were led through a series of structured discussions around education/schooling, the notion of school improvement, and the role communities could/should play in school improvement. Flowing out of these discussions, ultimately, was a shared vision of what an improved school looks like. With that vision in hand, the community was able to develop a SIP—that included a 3-page SIG application. The now-trained SMC would then sign off on the SIP.

A project support officer (PSO), someone with a construction/engineering background, would gather a cohort of 20–30 SIPs and review them. The SIPs that needed to be adjusted in some way were sent back to the originating school, community, or SMC with clear instructions on what should be modified for the SIPs to be acceptable. The adjusted SIP would be received by the PSO and reviewed again. Once a cohort of SIPs was reviewed (and adjusted), the PSO passed them along to the PSU.

The PSU was comprised of the EDO for Education, the ESRA DM, and the district head of ESRA's partner NGO. The PSU would receive a cohort of plans once every 2–3 weeks (during the height of this activity) and they, in turn, would review, approve, or defer them against a budgeted grant amount for payment (SIG dispersal).

Every school was budgeted to receive US\$2,100 worth of school grants. These grants were distributed via discrete mechanisms: the START kits, a T1 SIG, and a T2 SIG. If a school received a START kit (valued at US\$300 per school on average), then their T1 SIG would be US\$1,000 and their T2 SIG would be US\$800. For schools that did not receive START kits, their T1 SIG would be US\$1,000 and their T2 SIG would be US\$1,100. T1 SIGs were meant to pay for capital construction, while T2 SIGs were meant to pay for facilities and equipment.

ESRA soon realized that US\$1,000 was insufficient for capital construction, regardless of how much the community contributed to the cause. Accordingly, ESRA changed the value of all subsequent T1 SIGs to US\$1,300. Those schools that received START packages would now receive a T2 SIG of US\$500, while those that did not would receive a T2 SIG of US\$800.

As part of the signed agreement with the district governments that formally established the PSUs, the SIG account was to be maintained collectively by the EDO, the DM, and ESRA as an institutional framework of collaboration. The EDO and ESRA DM were cosignatories of the check that constituted the actual SIG. Once signed, the PSO would take a cohort of checks to the bank and deposit them in each respective SMC's bank account. The PSO would then convene another village assembly where a photocopy of both the signed check and the deposit slip were shown to all members of the community.

An important feature of the SIP/SIG mechanism was the use of prototype models for construction. From the start of ESRA's SIP/SIG program, it was decided that all construction would be based upon indigenous construction practices. This decision was made for a number of reasons:

- participating communities are knowledgeable about traditional construction practices;
- participating communities use local material that are readily available and inexpensive;
- local expertise is available and competent; and
- construction style is easily adapted for additional safety measures in the event of earthquakes or floods.

Before the end of the first phase of SIGs, an initial survey on Region-Specific Modular Alternatives for Construction (RSMAC) was completed in all ESRA districts. It focused on the weaknesses of local construction, potential local hazards, and different options for construction in different locations of the project area. It included complete information about construction items awarded under SIG and primarily emphasized some of the following examples:

- different types of construction adopted for the same item;
- environmental suitability;
- estimated cost;
- availability of local expertise;
- availability of local material; and
- local preferences.

ESRA organized an after-action review workshop in Karachi and invited all ESRA engineers and DMs to share their research/knowledge and devise prototype models for their own districts. The exercise aimed to ensure safety and aesthetics of all construction work carried out under the SIP/SIG initiative. Before finalizing the models, they were again shared with partner NGOs for their input. Finally, each ESRA intervention district came up with its own prototype(s) according to its specific local environmental conditions.

The prototypes suggested for different regions varied in construction type and architectural design, according to climate, local construction practices, availability of construction materials, and local expertise. This initiative was the first that considered environmental hazards such as earthquakes and floods in construction design.

Standardized design of different prototypes made it possible to provide drawings, specifications, accurate cost estimates, and summaries of construction material required by the SMCs for proper guidance and to avoid wastage that would otherwise not be possible when an activity is spread on such a large scale. The ensured demand of specific structural components provided an opportunity for markets to respond and provide all required materials.

Another important feature of the SIP/SIG mechanism was the use of fixed obligation grants (FOGs). Because SMCs are recipients of public funds, they must be subject to the GoP's public accountability mechanisms, which are stringent, at times Byzantine, and prone to corrupt practices. Accordingly, SMCs have been most reluctant to spend the public funds they receive. Recognizing this problem, the Government of Punjab went so far as to enact a policy that absolves SMCs from the audit process (a policy that needs to be closely followed over the course of its implementation). Being of the view, that as a basic tenet, public accountability must remain intact, while at the same time appreciating SMCs' reluctance to subject themselves to the present-day financial auditing "system," ESRA found an auditing *modus operandi*—FOG—that proved to be as effective as it was simple.

As noted earlier, a SIP was a simple 3-page SIG application form upon which a school/community/SMC designated either what capital construction it wanted to do or

what facilities and equipment it wanted to purchase. Given ESRA's prototype approach to construction, facilities, and equipment, SIPs could be easily evaluated by the PSO vis-à-vis specifications, costs, and available funds. When a SIP was funded, communities were required to construct facilities or purchase equipment as specified in the SIP. Auditing was a matter of the ESRA and EDO team determining if a school/community built and/or purchased what was in the SIP. Finally, the ability of a school/community/SMC to apply for a T2 SIG was predicated upon the successful completion of a school's T1 SIG. This mechanism proved to be successful, with a default rate of less than 1 percent.

This experience suggests that, in contrast to financial audits, output- or performance-based audit has not only resulted in efficient and effective use of funds, but it has also led to the empowerment of SMCs. Because they were not questioned about rupee-level details, they felt greater ownership over school improvement activities. The SMCs kept judicious records of their expenditures to demonstrate to the communities and education officials where the money was spent. This ownership was evidenced in SMCs matching ESRA grant funds with voluntary contributions in the form of cash, free labor, free material, and land. Although ESRA did not make it mandatory, in more than half of the initiatives, communities/SMCs contributed up to PKR 10,000 for the implementation of their SIPs. In a period of high inflation and increasing cost of construction materials, most SMCs managed to deliver against their FOGs. This is in remarkable contrast with the experience of giving grants to SMCs under a financial audit regime.

The success of the community-driven school improvement approach was appreciated by the government, NGOs, CSOs, and by donors working in the education sector. In particular, the NRSP, the SRSP, and the World Bank replicated this model in both Punjab and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). It was also been reproduced successfully in two *tehsils* of Khairpur district as a combined initiative of the ADB, the Sindh Devolved Social Services Program (SDSSP), LEAD Pakistan, and the district government.

Associations of SMC

“What would the educational landscape of Pakistan look like if the parents of poor school-age children were as politically powerful, organized, and adroit as the military?” The answer is obvious: Pakistan would have a vastly different (better) education system. This question (and the obvious answer to it) points to the need to give all citizens, the parents in particular, a voice, not just at the school level, but at all levels of the system; thus, the notion of associations of SMCs. If the SMCs of a UC could form a UC association of SMCs (ASMC) and elect representatives among themselves to serve as members of that UC-ASMC, the needs of all the schools within the UC could be heard at the UC level. If, on behalf of their constituent SMCs, the various members of the UC-ASMCs formed a district ASMC (D-ASMC) and elected representatives among themselves to serve as members of that D-ASMC, then the needs of all the schools within the district could be heard at the district level. The logic holds for provincial-level ASMCs and a national-level ASMC. With this in mind, ESRA experimented with the concept of ASMCs.

Two background studies were commissioned on possible modalities vis-à-vis the formation of ASMCs. The first looked at the history of similar associations in Pakistan, analyzed their pros and cons, and looked into the case for forming CCBs from groups of SMCs. The second study reviewed ESRA’s SMC strengthening activities, some of its initial work on SMC associations, and made recommendations for taking it forward. In the end, ESRA experimented with two kinds of models. The first model assisted SMCs to become CCBs, the second formed UC-level ASMCs.

CCBs were formed by the SMCs of two or more schools within a particular locality—schools that shared common objectives and issues. This effort was restricted to Districts Khairpur and Sukkur in Sindh. As per Table 6, the effort forged 353 CCBs from 836 SMCs—yielding an average of 2.3 SMCs per CCB.

Table 6. CCBs Formed in District Khairpur and Sukkur

District	Male SMCs Covered	Female SMCs Covered	Mixed SMCs Covered	Total SMCs Covered	CCBs Formed
Khairpur	222	101	254	577	234
Sukkur	104	51	104	259	119
Grand Total	326	152	358	836	353

All the members of these 836 SMCs were trained in both CCB registration and CCB operations. After training, ESRA ensured that each CCB became fully engaged with the District Community Development Department and the Development Trust for Community Engagement²⁹ (DTCE). At a functional level, these CCBs were in their infancy when ESRA ended, having only just begun the process of developing CCB proposals for GoP funds.

UC-level ASMCs were formed by clustering school-level SMCs according to geographical locations within the UCs. This effort was restricted to districts Gwadar and Kech in Balochistan. As shown in Table 7, this ESRA effort forged 18 UC-ASMCs out of 192 SMCs for an average of 10.67 SMCs per ASMC in Gwadar and 58 UC-ASMCs out of 476 SMCs for an average of 8.21 SMCs per ASMC in Kech.

Table 7. UC-ASMCs in Balochistan

	Gwadar	Kech	Total
UC-level ASMCs Formed	18	58	76
School-level SMCs Trained in UC-ASMC Training	192	476	668
Average number of SMCs per ASMC	10.67	8.21	8.79
Members in PT/SMC Associations	369	1,119	1,488
Members in PT/SMC Associations Trained	369	926	1,295

²⁹ See <http://www.dtce.org.pk/DTCE/index.htm>.

Prior to UC-ASMC formation, target SMCs were mobilized via 76 consultative workshops in 51 UCs. Once formed, UC-ASMCs raised funds for their respective schools, and facilitated SMCs in record keeping, fund utilization, and SIG implementation. These associations also helped staff in maintaining good working relationships with the teachers.

SIR 4(A).3 Target school SMCs develop and implement SIPs and SIGs

Under this SIR, ESRA mobilized schools/communities around the notion of school improvement, supported the development of local visions of school improvement, abetted the development of SIPs, and issued SIGs. A total of US\$13,032,237 was channeled to 7,596 schools in the form of SIGs. Detailed information on how that money was utilized by the school communities is found in Annex D.

Student Teacher Appreciation Resource Tokens (STARTs)

ESRA’s first SIG came in the form of Student Teacher Appreciation Resources Tokens, or START kits. Student kits contained schools bags filled with selected books and pencils, while teacher kits contained a guide for teaching, writing materials, and a calculator. Table 8 shows the number of school, student, and teach START kits that were distributed to each district.

Table 8. School START Kits, Student Kits, and Teacher Kits Data

District	Schools Receiving STARTS	Students Receiving Kits	Teachers Receiving Kits
Sindh			
Hyderabad	336	56,663	3,388
Matiari	387	29,113	1,339
Tando Allah Yar	468	40,867	2,283
Tando Mohammad Khan	0	0	0
Thatta	1,180	62,868	2,404
Sukkur	295	33,640	1,579
Khairpur	981	48,371	2,697
Total Sindh (A)	3,647	271,522	13,690
Balochistan			
Kech	108	15,985	616
Gwadar	85	10,428	253
Noshki			
Chaghi			

District	Schools Receiving STARTS	Students Receiving Kits	Teachers Receiving Kits
Noshki + Chaghi	192	10,233	8,181
Killa Saifullah	154	10,860	540
Total Balochistan (B)	539	47,506	9,590
Grand Total (A+B)	4,186	319,028	23,280

SIPs and SIGs

The SIP/SIG mechanism has been described earlier in this report. In Annex D, we present in detailed tabular form, what was accomplished as a result of the overall SIP/SIG effort. In addition to the detailed list of items constructed or purchased with SIG funds, Table 9 in Annex D—*SIP/SIG Project and Achievement Table by District*—compares project targets with accomplishments, which further demonstrates the success of this program.

IR 4(B) Public-private mechanism and systems in place and functioning

The overall goal of the work carried out under this IR was to harness the potential of corporate philanthropy for the improvement of public education service delivery (primary and middle schools in particular) for marginalized and underserved communities. Along with actually getting the private sector to contribute resources, including donations to improve education totaling US\$918,756, the program focused on creating the policy space necessary to encourage PPP formation, raise awareness within the business sector, and build capacity within the government.

SIR 4(B).1 Develop policies to support PPPs

In response to a request from the Federal Minister for Education, and with the objective of mainstreaming and institutionalizing PPPs, ESRA developed a draft Operational Policy for PPP formation in education. This document was shared with all the provincial DOEs and finalized after the incorporation of their feedback. The Operational Policy was approved in the Interprovincial Education Ministers meeting, held in Peshawar on June 10, 2006. The Operational Policy lays down the framework and identifies systems and mechanisms to promote private sector investment in the public education sector.

SIR 4(B).2 Strengthen systems and create mechanisms for private sector investment in education

Work carried out by ESRA under this SIR led to the development of the 3P Model, and the PPP District Manual (and with the latter, government strengthening).

The 3P Model

The 3P Model is an approach to PPP formation that strives to tether corporate resources to educational need by forging an equal partnership between schools/communities, corporate entities, and the government such that there is

widespread ownership of the intervention (all parties agree to what the money will be used for), rapid approval for the intervention on behalf of the government, and joint oversight over how the money is spent. A key element of the 3P Model is an intermediary organization—an NGO—whose role is to facilitate the overall process.

PPP District Manual

With the demonstrated success of the 3P Model (a total of US\$918,756 in PPP donations over the life of the project), it became incumbent upon ESRA to facilitate its expansion throughout Pakistan; thus, the development of the PPP District Manual—both a justification and explanation of the 3P Model, and a tool kit, inclusive of a variety of forms and templates, for facilitating the 3P Model. Thirteen PPP District Manual dissemination workshops were conducted. Stakeholders from surrounding districts were invited to the orientation workshops where the District Manual was distributed, explained, and discussed. Through these workshops, more than 1,000 members of the target audience, including government officials and corporate and NGO/CBO representatives, were oriented. This helped in raising the ownership and awareness of the PPP District Manual at the grassroots level. The tool kit was translated into Urdu and Sindhi to reach more members of the community

SIR 4(B).3 Increase private investment in schools and education and improve schools

As noted earlier, a total of US\$918,756 in PPP money was channeled to a number of needy schools. PPP relationships were forged with the following corporate entities:

- Petronas Carigali
- Tullow Pakistan (Developments) Limited
- Dewan Mushtaq Group
- Thatta Cement Company Limited
- Citygroup Foundation
- Huqooq-ul-Ibad Trust
- Arfeen Group
- Cargolux Limited
- Karam Ceramics and Marine Services Private Limited
- PGNiG–Polish Oil & Gas Company
- United Bank Limited
- Askari Bank
- PAKCOM (Instaphone) Ltd.
- BOC Pakistan Limited
- Unilever
- Pakistan Petroleum Limited
- English Biscuit Manufacturers.

IR 5 Innovative ICT and pedagogy-based models and approaches developed and tested to support ESRA activities³⁰

In November 2004, ESRA recognized the need to demonstrate district-level activities to a wider audience,³¹ while also serving as the test bed for innovations in education, in particular, the use of ICT to improve access to or quality of education. The Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), which manages schools in the Islamabad Capital Territory, is known for its successful incubation of model activities funded by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Children’s Resources International (CRI), and others, the results of which are replicated in the provinces and shared throughout the MOE. ESRA was charged with showcasing ESRA practices in 67 schools within one sector of the FDE. In December 2004, ESRA initiated the ESRA Plus Program.

ESRA Plus was designed to be results oriented and focused on activities that were demand driven, demonstrated improved learning outcomes, and changed attitudes and behaviors of those involved with the education process. To this end, its specific objectives were to:

- Showcase existing ESRA practices and products from the districts within the Islamabad Capital Territory (with appropriate adaptations to suit the needs of the FDE and its constituents); and
- Demonstrate innovative pedagogical practices and ICT-enabled education options for replication or adaptation within ESRA and across Pakistan.

ESRA Plus was designed on a “whole school improvement” model and aimed to combine ESRA best practices in the four ESRA areas with a series of innovations introduced through the integration of ICTs within all levels of the academic system. In this way, ESRA Plus facilitated the wider dissemination of ESRA’s tools, materials, and methodologies, while creating new products for adaptation and application within ESRA districts themselves and throughout Pakistan.

The ESRA Plus whole school improvement model began with a critical examination of the FDE school environment, the impact of various inputs, and the role of different actors, including parents and community members, teachers, administrators, and students. As a result of this assessment, eight core interventions were designed with the aim of:

- increasing participation, awareness, and ownership on the part of all stakeholders;
- improving efficiency and efficacy within the public administrative departments that oversee schools;
- ameliorating the classroom environment to positively impact enrollment, retention and, most importantly, the teaching/learning process;

³⁰ Applicable indicators under other IRs will also be reported on by ICT.

³¹ With the security situation being what it was in Pakistan, the Regional Security Officer (RSO) made it rather difficult for various United States Government (USG) representatives, including USAID representatives, to get into the field to see what ESRA was doing. Accordingly, it was decided that ESRA would also unfold in the Islamabad Capital Territories—a place where various USG representatives and U.S. dignitaries could visit with RSO approval. ESRA Plus was thus created.

- expanding the role and significance of a school within the surrounding community; and
- empowering stakeholders to identify and resolve ongoing obstacles that hindered them from reaching these goals.

ESRA Plus explored a range of technologies from low-tech options, such as radio, to more high-tech digital solutions, such as computers, to further support the school improvement objectives and to tie together the different activities. In ESRA Plus, ICT was used to reinforce the whole school improvement objectives, i.e., to:

- Expand educational opportunities for students
- Improve school administration through data-driven decision making
- Enhance teacher professional development
- Motivate stakeholders to become involved in the education process.

Finally, underlying ESRA Plus's multiple-media and multichannel strategy was the reality of ESRA's broader operations, i.e., that in each environment the appropriate delivery system and technological inputs must be matched to the learning environments and be well aligned with existing (and future) district- and local-level opportunities and priorities.

SIR 5.1 Develop policy(ies) to support ICT use in education

In December 2004, the MOE initiated the development of the NICT Strategy with support from ESRA. To create a sound strategy that would respond to the country's diverse needs, the MOE elected to engage leaders from all levels of the education system and across all provinces to share their knowledge and expertise, along with national and international ICT experts. Together, these leaders and experts formed an Advisory Board and a Steering Committee that represented a cross-section of public and private organizations.

Technical assistance from ESRA facilitated the overall process that took more than 18 months. As a first step, the MOE commissioned three background papers to guide the Advisory Board's efforts: *An Environmental Scan of Past and Present "ICT for Education" Activities in Pakistan*; *Information and Communication Technology for Education: Lessons from International Experiences*; and *A Review of Educational Reform Plans in Pakistan Relevant to ICT Integration*. The resulting NICT Strategy report contained six major elements:

1. Use ICT to extend the reach of educational opportunity: Use ICT creatively to assist teachers and students with a wide range of abilities and from varied socioeconomic backgrounds.
2. Apply ICT to strengthen the quality of teaching and educational management: Use ICT to maximize opportunities for educators' continuous learning and to help educators understand and effectively use ICT.
3. Employ ICT to enhance student learning: Integrate ICT into schools and learning centers to support students' self-paced learning and provide them with chances to explore, investigate, reflect, learn social skills (such as

collaboration, logical reasoning, and creative expression), and enhance self-esteem.

4. Develop complementary approaches to using ICT in education: Support students and teachers in developing key ICT competencies (including sophisticated problem-solving and critical-thinking skills) by treating ICT as a school subject, as well as a critical instructional aid.
5. Build on the current experiences of existing and successful ICT programs: Gather, organize, provide access to, share, and use for planning purposes national and international data on effective approaches to using ICT in education.
6. Develop capacity at the federal and provincial department of education levels: Form a new government office to represent the cause of ICT in education and advise the MOE.

The strategy was formally approved and adopted by the GoP.

SIR 5.2 Institutions and systems strengthened to support ICT use in education

Resource Centers

Resource centers (RCs) were established and operationalized to support school improvement and community learning. The Bhara Kau RCs are school-based facilities that provide a platform for professional development, learning resources, and community facilities, in addition to access to ICT services such as the Internet, printing, fax, computer, and phone amenities. All six Bhara Kau RCs contain a combination of the following:

- Learning resources: Books, videos, DVDs, audio cassettes, audio CDs, software CD-ROMs, newspapers, newsletters, and specially designed displays and learning activities that support teachers and students in Grades 1–5

Resource Center Statistics

Income generated: PKR 240,193 or US\$4,003

Total Users (Jan. 2005–Aug. 2007): 75,588

Resources Issues: 9,953

Guests Visited: 1,074

Average cost of establishing an RC:
PKR 550,000 or US\$9,167 (not including human resources costs)

Costs of Alternative Energy Models:
Sealed Gel: PKR 200,000 or US\$3,335
Solar Panel: PKR 1,182,720 or US\$19,712

Average Operating Costs: PKR 13,400 or US\$223
This includes:

- Salary for the Resource Center Supervisor
- Internet service provider
- Stationery and office supplies
- Mobile phone charges for supervisor

First-ever “Board” structure established comprising government and community members to oversee a “public” school resource.

22 percent of respondents surveyed visited an RC for more than 2 hours a week while 27 percent individuals reported that the presence of the RC had helped PTAs obtain additional funding for the school.

- Telecommunication services: Telephony, fax, e-mail, and Internet (via dialup or Integrated Services Digital Network [ISDN] high-speed telecommunications network)
- Office equipment: Computers, printers, photocopiers, and scanners
- Multimedia hardware and software: Radio, TV, video, CD-ROM, video compact discs (VCDs), and CD audio players
- Services: Meeting space for local business or community use (such as teacher training programs, literacy classes, PTA meetings, or other school-based events or celebrations).

The six RCs in the Bhara Kau sector serve a population comprising 67 schools, nearly 400 teachers, and more than 14,000 students in Grades 1–5, across six geographical clusters.

PTA Strengthening

When ESRA Plus initiated its activities in October 2004, it was obvious that the majority of PTA members, whether experienced or newly elected, had received no further training or follow up beyond the 2002 orientation when they were first formed by the FDE. Most of them had not read the PTA constitution, were not aware of their roles and responsibilities, and, aside from a few notable exceptions, had yet to come together as a unified team working to achieve school-based targets.³²

These issues were compounded by two factors: (i) unlike in other parts of Pakistan, the PTAs had no access to specific funds for their work and therefore had even less incentive to come together on behalf of school improvement issues, and (ii) because of potential involvement of political elements active in the area, the FDE felt that the PTAs warranted very close supervision, which further limited their scope.

Accordingly, ESRA Plus devised a strategy that would enable it to closely coordinate with the FDE at each step of its proposed PTA training and mobilization process, while creating an environment of trust based on achievements and results, which would increase the confidence of all stakeholders about the abilities of PTAs to contribute in a positive manner toward school improvement.

The strategy called for a three-phased approach: Phase I involved mobilizing all PTAs around a School Improvement Plan and Grant³³ process that focused on infrastructural enhancements, Phase II would be a matching grant scheme designed to spur high-performing PTAs toward qualitative improvements in the teaching-learning process at the classroom level, and Phase III would provide the PTAs with exposure to potential local and international groups for PPPs that could support PTA activities that might otherwise be beyond the ability of the FDE to provide. In addition to strengthening the PTAs, ESRA Plus strove to demonstrate and institutionalize through repeated

³² In the first group of 10 PTAs surveyed, 49 out of 88 PTA members had never attended any training; 7 out of 10 Finance Secretaries had not attended a single training; and 7 out of 10 General Secretaries had not attended a single training

³³ The SIP/SIG mechanism used here is the same as that which was described in the “SIPs and SIGs” section in SIR 4(A).3.

practice, a model of PTA-FDE interaction that could be easily sustained by the FDE (with or without the explicit allocation of funds) beyond the life of the ESRA project.

Project-based Learning Approach Developed and Tested

Any teacher professional development program must be mindful of the context in which the teachers and students operate. Therefore, because the focus of the ESRA Plus project-based learning (PBL) effort was to improve the teaching-learning practice in public schools, the interpretation and implementation of both the design of the PBL training and its subsequent practice was influenced by the environment of the schools, the existing capacity of teachers, and the students and resources available.

PBL was introduced to develop the process skills of teachers and students and to lay the foundations for a more comprehensive shift in focus from content-based teaching to skill-based training. We envisioned the PBL training to be the first of a broader teacher professional development program. As such, the training was designed to provide as much feedback as possible for trainers and teachers about the realities of the current situation, the practicalities of changing practice in-situ, and the necessary, incremental steps that would enable qualitative and quantitative improvements in pedagogical practice and student achievement. In other words, the PBL training was not an end in itself—but really the start of an institutionalized dialogue between teachers, trainers, and the designers of FDE professional development programs about current practice (what works and what doesn't), teacher/student needs around the current curriculum, and ways in which to successfully introduce innovations that help rather than hinder teaching/learning activities. The result was an organic and highly localized adaptation of PBL—that made sense within the existing context while introducing incremental improvements in classroom practice.

One of the most important lessons learned was that without adequate attention to ways of supporting and encouraging teachers on a continuous basis, new and innovative educational approaches cannot be widely adopted. All too often, trainings are developed and disseminated without sufficient appreciation for the complex amalgam of motivation levels, external (social and systemic) restraints, existing knowledge of students and teachers, new knowledge required by both groups to implement new programs, curriculum and achievement requirements, resource realities, parental opinions and support, and the broader government structures. Our experience with PBL in the FDE illustrated the importance of a simple, flexible, incremental, reinforced, and assistive approach to introducing lasting change in teacher practice. In as much as the training focused on project-based learning activities, the school-based visits and workshop follow ups addressed developing and sustaining a positive attitude to new ideas and thoughts, change management, critical thinking, and planning skills. Finally, others beyond the teachers needed to be kept abreast of the process, if the teachers were to succeed; principals, parents, and other education officials needed to understand, buy in, and support the effort in a positive manner.

As with other locations in Pakistan, FDE teachers differ greatly in their qualifications, exposure, training, and capacity to manage multigrade classrooms. Some lack background knowledge and training in process skills, fostering creativity, or creating

low-cost/no-cost teaching aids. This in turn, led to difficulties when adopting a “one-size-fits-all” training module for all participants and when expecting similar levels of project development from them. As a result, after an initial round of training, a different approach was adopted depending on the skill level of the cohort under training, and subsequent in-school visits provided even greater scope for customized coaching and mentoring. ESRA Plus trained 18 PBL master trainers and 200 teachers in PBL techniques.

SIR 5.2 Education services delivered using innovative ICT

Under this SIR, ESRA developed an English as a Second Language (ESL) program that was delivered via Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI) to first- and second-grade children in the ICT. Children listen to 70 IRI programs that are designed to enhance their ability to speak and understand English. The success of the IRI programs will be determined by comparing the English language performance of students who listen to the radio programs with the English language performance of students who are studying ESL through regularly provided instruction (i.e., instruction commonly provided to students enrolled in non-ESRA Plus schools).

IRI was carried out in 67 schools with nearly 400 teachers and more than 14,000 students in first and second grades participating in the program. Each school where the IRI program was implemented had a complete set of English language modules and a CD player to play the lessons. This program was considered a success by the teachers and school officials.

Grants

Apart from the grants provided to schools and district DOEs, ESRA distributed grants to NGOs working in the education sector with an aim to simultaneously contribute to their capacity building and improvements in education service delivery. These grants were distributed in two phases, with the first phase focusing on large grants and the second phase focusing on small grants. NGOs were required to submit proposals that met ESRA’s grant criteria; these proposals were evaluated and short listed. Below is a list of organizations that received large grants, with a synopsis of the activities they undertook with grant funds.

- i. *Faran Education Society* was awarded US\$500,000 (PKR 29,250,000) through the ESRA’s PCP program for a project that facilitated 500 public schools in Karachi and Rawalpindi in planning and management. The project empowered 500 SMCs and supported their registration as CCBs. It also provided fellowships to 10,000 students.
- ii. *The Alliance for Quality Education* was awarded US\$25,641 (PKR 1.5 million) for the professional development of teachers and administrators and to provide quality education to disadvantaged segments in Islamabad.
- iii. *The Education Foundation* was granted US\$253,482 (PKR 14,828,680) to enhance the capacity of teacher and administrative professionals in five UCs of Jamshed Town, Karachi.

- iv. *The Indus Resource Center* was granted US\$204,629 (almost PKR 12 million) to conduct a literacy program in district Dadu Sindh. The program focused on female literacy.
- v. *The Society for Community Support for Primary Education* was granted US\$427,350 (PKR 25 million) to provide professional development to 1,000 primary school teachers, 100 lead teachers, and 45 learning coordinators in Lasbella and Loralai districts in Balochistan.
- vi. *The SUN Development Foundation* was granted US\$427,350 (PKR 25 million) to implement a project focused on adult literacy and skills-based training for illiterate garment factory workers in Karachi, Lahore, and Faisalabad. Women comprised a large part of this project's target group.
- vii. *The Sarhad Rural Support Programme* was awarded a grant of US\$495,726 (PKR 29 million) to increase enrollment and quality of education in Upper Dir through the preparation and implementation of a District Education Plan.
- viii. *The Institute for Development Studies and Practices* was given a grant of US\$500,000 (PKR 29,250,000) to strengthen the capacity of local government structures, increase community participation, and enhance research-based knowledge and information. The project was aimed at eight districts in Balochistan and will centralize the issue of learning in policy dialogue, and analyze and develop local human resource in policy and planning. This grant has been awarded through the Policy and Planning Component.
- ix. *The Health and Nutrition Development Society* has been granted US\$256,410.26 (PKR 15 million) through ESRA's component for Youth and Adult Literacy to increase literacy in Sanghar by 10 percent, to strengthen SMCs, to establish adult education centers, and to improve the education system.
- x. *Aga Khan Education Services* has been granted US\$500,000 (PKR 29,250,000) through the Policy and Planning Component to build the capacity of public and private institutions, to develop capacity at the policy level, and to promote PPPs. The initiative will focus on three districts in Karachi.
- xi. *Bunyad Literacy Community Council* has been awarded US\$256,410.26 (PKR 15 million) through the Youth and Adult Literacy Component to spread literacy amongst 8 to 25 year olds in Sialkot and to develop an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- xii. The final recipient of an ESRA grant is the *Pakistan Village Development Program*. It has been awarded US\$105,334 (PKR 6,162,040) to promote a just and educated society to improve the quality of life in Swat and Kohistan. The project will place a special emphasis in promoting education amongst women.

Through its small grants program, ESRA distributed grants of US\$10,000 each to 51 smaller organizations or NGOs. The approved list of all Phase I and II grants is included in Annexes E and F. The list gives a synopsis of the activities undertaken by all grantees.

School Enhancement Program (SEP)

Toward the end of 2003, the U.S. Embassy requested that ESRA initiate a SEP to provide infrastructure and missing facilities to schools in target districts. Through the program, ESRA provided the following facilities to schools in eight UCs in Sindh and Balochistan:

- Classroom resources to 227 schools: Books for learning and recreation, learning aids, resources for teachers, art and craft kits, and furniture
- Playground equipment and sports kits to 142 schools: Swing sets, monkey bars, merry-go-rounds, slides, and sports equipment
- Additional classrooms to 60 schools
- Infrastructure enhancement to 235 schools
- Whitewash for 207 schools
- Construction of school buildings for 157 schools without shelters
- Set of eight manuals for teachers and head teachers.

In addition, ESRA also provided training to 550 primary school teachers in Sindh and 300 primary school teachers in Balochistan. SEP—implemented between January and June 2004—provided an improved learning environment to 16,498 students in Sindh and 9,650 students in Balochistan.

Two government schools near Islamabad were also provided with infrastructure enhancement and facilities: one in Nilore and one in Angoori.

As stated above the SEP was ended during the second year of the project to better align funded activities to USAID's strategic objectives and project goals.

Interprovincial Conferences (IPCs)

In January 2006, the MOE and ESRA initiated quarterly IPCs for consultative and structured dialogue on ESRA's reform support initiatives. These conferences were designed for all key ESRA partners and stakeholders to meet and share progress and achievements, and to discuss opportunities and challenges in program implementation. The IPCs quarterly brought together program implementers, program beneficiaries and government representatives to a single venue, providing them the opportunity to exchange experiences, share best practices and lessons, and improve program implementation.

The conferences also allowed provincial and district delegates, as well as NGO representatives, an opportunity for open dialogue with MOE senior management, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of State for Education. Only through the IPCs was this possible. During the first IPC, district education officials and *nazims* had an extended exchange with the Minister of Education. This discussion, created an expectation that, in subsequent IPCs, elected representatives and government officials would have further opportunities for frank and open discussions with the MOE.

The first IPC was held on January 23 and 24, 2006, at the AEPAM, in the MOE, in Islamabad. At the conference, participants took stock of ESRA's achievements and

presented challenges to program implementation in order to plan better. The conference delegations prepared a list of recommendations for ESRA and the MOE, which was reported on during the following IPC. At the second IPC, ESRA staff and district officials presented the results and actions taken based on the recommendations received. This further strengthened the MOE's ownership of ESRA and set the precedent for subsequent conferences.

The second conference was held on May 25, 2006, at the same location. Presentations demonstrated how ESRA's interventions converged at the school level to bring visible improvements in the learning environment. The theme of the third IPC, held on November 16 and 17, 2006, at the RSU, Education Department, GoS, was *Learning to Change: Improving Education Practices*. It focused on professional development. ESRA's fourth IPC, *Education and Devolution: Opportunities and Experiences*, was held on June 21, 2007, at AEPAM. The goal of the conference was to identify and discuss policy issues that needed to be addressed for better service delivery in the devolved education system.

Distribution of ESRA's Publications

During the course of the ESRA program, a large number of training manuals and policy documents were prepared, studies and reports were commissioned, and resource material was developed. The collection included policy recommendations and manuals for teachers and teacher educators, education planners and managers, literacy providers and organizations working to strengthen SMCs, and private sector philanthropists. The publications have been printed in different languages: 36 have been published in English, 18 have been published in Urdu, and 8 have been published in Sindhi. This material was used to inform and assist in program implementation. Toward the end of the program, ESRA and the MOE decided that it would be useful to distribute these publications among education offices at the federal, provincial, and district levels; NGOs; and professional development institutes. The publications were printed and distributed to government offices and organizations that would find them helpful. A list of the publications is provided below.

There were numerous other reports and documents prepared by ESRA staff, local and international consultants, and government officials commissioned over the life of the project. These were submitted to the MOE, provincial and district offices, USAID, and posted on the project's public Web site.

List of Publications

The following is a list of publications created during the life of the ESRA project.

- Policy and Planning:
 - Data Utilization Strategies and Guidelines for the Education Sector
 - Data Collection Guidelines for Annual School Census
 - Annual School Census–Data Integrity Standards
 - Computer Ethical Use Guidelines
 - Strengthening EMIS in Pakistan
 - EMIS Toolbox

- EMIS Toolbox–User and Technical Manual
- District Needs-based Education Planning Manual
- Training Manual for Education Monitoring Committees (Urdu and Sindhi)
- Professional Development:
 - Postings and Transfers of Teachers and Administrators: Effectiveness of Government Policies–A Case Study of the Sindh Province
 - Technology in the Classroom: A Resource for Mentors and Teacher Educators
 - Techniques for Reflective Practice: A Resource for Mentors and Teacher Educators
 - Mentoring Teachers: A Resource for Mentors and Teacher Educators
 - Instruction and Assessment in Mathematics: A Resource for Mentors and Teacher Educators
 - Instruction and Assessment in English: A Resource for Mentors and Teacher Educators
 - Instruction and Assessment in Social Studies: A Resource for Mentors and Teacher Educators
 - Instruction and Assessment in Science: A Resource for Mentors and Teacher Educators
 - Instruction and Assessment in Urdu: A Resource for Mentors and Teacher Educators
 - Monitoring and Evaluation: A Resource for Head Teachers and Administrators
 - Media in Education: A Resource for Head Teachers and Administrators
 - Role of Head Teachers and Administrators: A Resource for Head Teachers and Administrators
 - Mentoring and Peer Coaching: A Resource for Head Teachers and Administrators
 - Community Participation in Schools: A Resource for Head Teachers and Administrators
 - Curriculum Implementation and Structural Strengths: A Resource for Head Teachers and Administrators
 - Action Research: A Resource for Head Teachers and Administrators
 - Resource Management: A Resource for Head Teachers and Administrators
 - Teachers’ Guide to the Art of Teaching (Urdu and Sindhi)
 - Teachers’ Guide to Teaching Coordinated Curriculum (Urdu and Sindhi)
 - Teachers’ Guide to Mathematics (Grades 1–3—Urdu and Sindhi)
 - Teachers’ Guide to Mathematics (Grades 4–5—Urdu and Sindhi)
 - Teachers’ Guide to English (Grades 1–3)
 - Teachers’ Guide to English (Grades 4–5)
 - Teachers’ Guide to Science (Grades 4–5—Urdu and Sindhi)
 - Teachers’ Guide to Urdu (Grades 4–5)
 - Teachers’ Guide to Social Studies (Grades 4–5—Urdu and Sindhi)

- Teachers' Guide to Sindhi (Grades 4–5)
- Youth and Adult Literacy:
 - National Guidelines for Youth and Adult Literacy
 - Integrated Literacy Model (ILM) Curriculum for Adults
 - ESRA–Writing 1 (for Adult Learners)
 - ESRA–Writing 2 (for Adult Learners)
 - ESRA–English Book (for Adult Learners)
 - ESRA–Reading (for Adult Learners)
 - ESRA–Counting (for Adult Learners)
 - Teachers' Guide for Postliteracy Courses
- Public Community Partnerships:
 - A Study on School Management Committees
 - School Improvement
 - Working with District Governments
 - Manual for School Improvement through Community Participation
 - School Management Committees Training Manual
 - Guidelines for School Management Committees
- Public-Private Partnerships:
 - Public-Private Partnerships–Operational Policy (English)
 - Public-Private Partnerships–District Manual (English)
 - Public-Private Partnerships–Operational Policy (Urdu)
 - Public-Private Partnerships–District Manual (Urdu)
- Information and Communication Technology:
 - National Information and Communication Technology Strategy for Education in Pakistan.

Annual Work Plan

ESRA's AWP schedule (Figure 7) is developed in MS Project format, as are the Activity Completion Reports. They are organized by geographical location and ESRA's RF. Following this scheme, the reports are first divided into schedules of activities at Islamabad and the provincial headquarters of Sindh and Balochistan. These schedules are further divided into project management and program implementation schedules.

The AWP schedule is in Annex G, where all activities are listed as well as detailed notes for the activities. The figure below explains various elements of the schedule interface.

Figure 7. Activity Completion Report Interface

