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ALTERNATIVES

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION

EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTAN

[RESEARCH BRIEF]

Public Private Partnerships in education offer a set of powerful tools for involving the non-state sector for triggering improvements in state schools. [...] In many ways the presence of the adopters pushes the school sideways out of the hierarchy of bureaucratized control, to create spaces where experimentation and innovation can take place.

Can Partnerships For Management Improve Outcomes In State-Run Schools?

Pakistan faces major challenges in the areas of access, quality, and governance.

A significant number of children – 6.5 million of primary school age – are out of school. A majority of these are girls and children from low-income households. Those that are in school are not learning. Low learning outcomes, particularly in state schools, are linked with persistent challenges of low teacher effort, inadequate levels of teacher knowledge, and prevalence of pedagogical practices that are not conducive to promoting learning. The challenges are too great for the State to address on its own. Both access and quality deficits are outcomes of and interlinked with governance issues faced at multiple levels within the education system, most significantly at the school and district level.

PPPs in education offer a set of powerful tools for involving the non-state sector for triggering improvements in state schools.

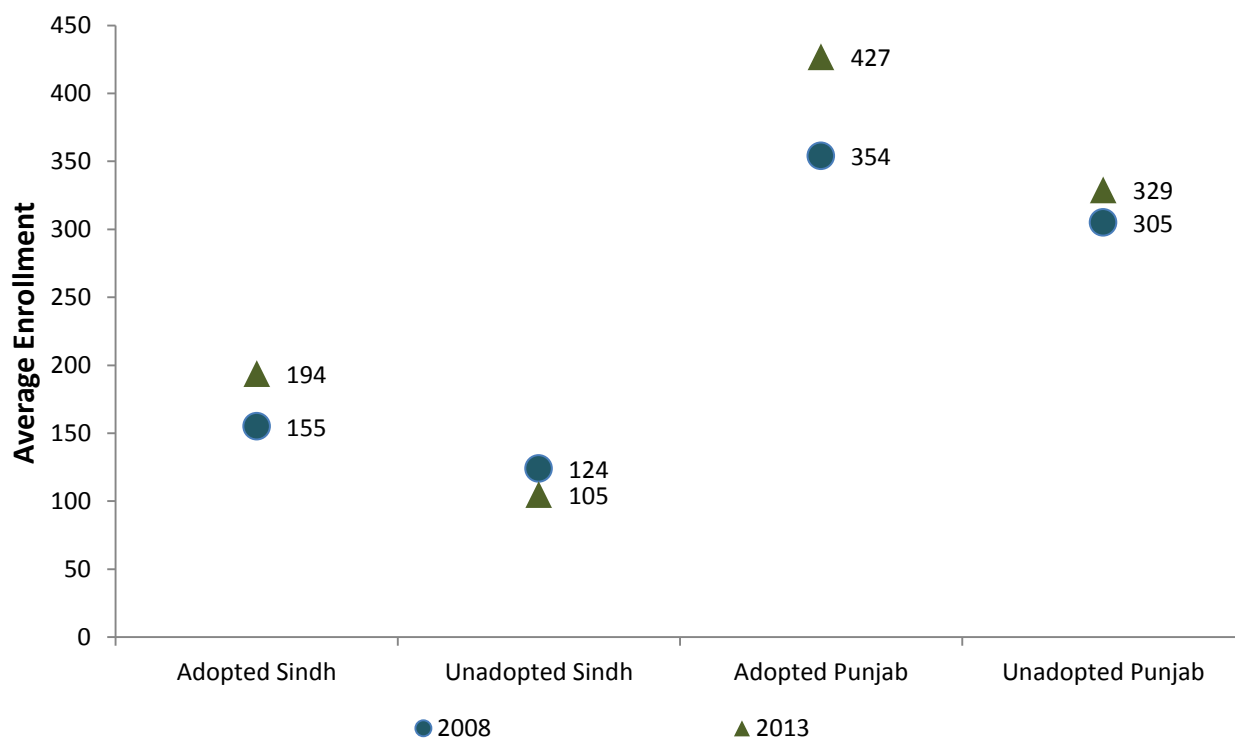
Partnerships for Management (PfMs) are mechanisms whereby education authorities directly contract non-state actors to operate public schools or certain aspects of public school operations. While these schools are privately managed, they remain publicly owned and publicly funded. Non-state actors contribute towards infrastructural enhancement and upkeep, human resource development, and management of state schools. The PfM mechanism operating in Pakistan since the mid-nineties is termed the Adopt-a-School Model. There are close to 600 adopted schools in Punjab, and 500 in Sindh.

Despite the potential of partnerships to generate insights for education sector reform, there is little or no systematic evidence available for Pakistan to inform policy debate about the relative merits of alternative service delivery mechanisms. **A year-long mixed-methods study was undertaken to assess the contribution of the PfM mechanism towards addressing access, quality and governance challenges. We ask if PfMs can improve outcomes for state sector schools.** Primary and secondary data sources were used to track and compare indicators for access, quality and governance over time between comparable sets of adopted and un-adopted schools. **Findings suggest considerable improvements in access, quality and governance indicators in PfM schools also referred to as adopted schools.**

The rate of increase of enrollments in PfM schools is higher than in un-adopted schools in Punjab and Sindh.

In Sindh, during the period between 2008-2013, enrollments in adopted schools rose by 24% while those in un-adopted schools fell by 15.8%. In Punjab, enrollments in adopted schools rose by 27% and those in un-adopted schools increased by 16%. Punjab data also show that longer periods of adoption are associated with higher increases in enrollments.

FIG 1: ENROLLMENT TRENDS IN ADOPTED AND UN-ADOPTED SCHOOLS IN PUNJAB AND SINDH



The state of basic facilities and infrastructure provision is significantly better in adopted schools. Adopted schools rank higher than un-adopted schools on a composite index of basic facilities and infrastructural provision. Provision of electricity, drinking water, boundary walls is better in adopted schools. These schools have a higher number of class rooms, and they are in a better condition. Data also show that the state of infrastructure in adopted schools has improved over time, more than in un-adopted schools.

A higher number of teachers on average in adopted schools. In Sindh, there are on average 7 teachers per adopted school, compared with a lower average of 4 teachers in un-adopted schools. The pattern holds for Punjab as well. Over time, the number of teachers in adopted schools has increased. One of the first interventions made on taking over schools is contracting teachers to address

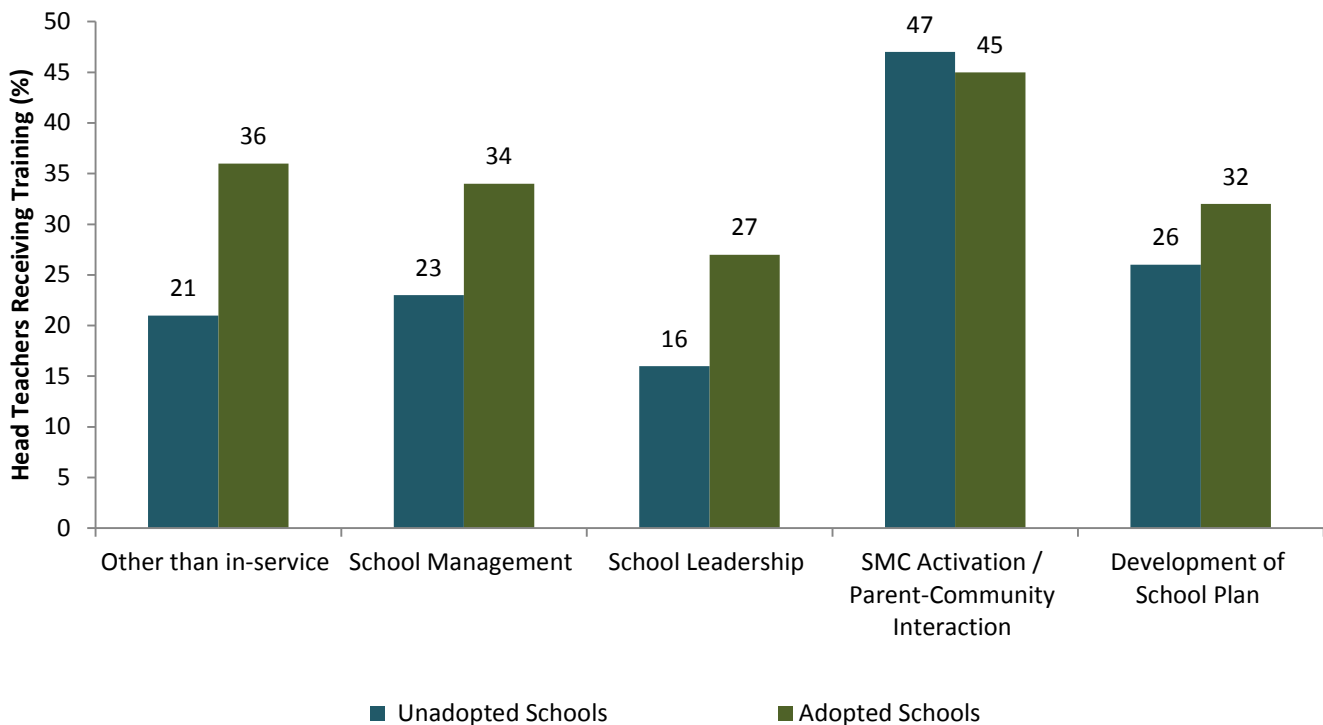
capacity shortages in these schools. The higher numbers are attributable to these teachers. Furthermore, the number of teachers in adopted schools has gone up over time.

Learning outcomes in adopted schools in Punjab show significant improvement over time. Punjab has longer and more reliable data on learning outcomes. A comparison reveals that adopted schools are associated with better learning outcomes in Math and English scores in particular. Furthermore, the increase in learning outcomes is higher over time. This indicator of quality improvements takes the longest in many ways to manifest and is a strong signal for considerable improvements in a number of ingredients of a well-functioning school, including better teaching and a school environment more conducive to learning.

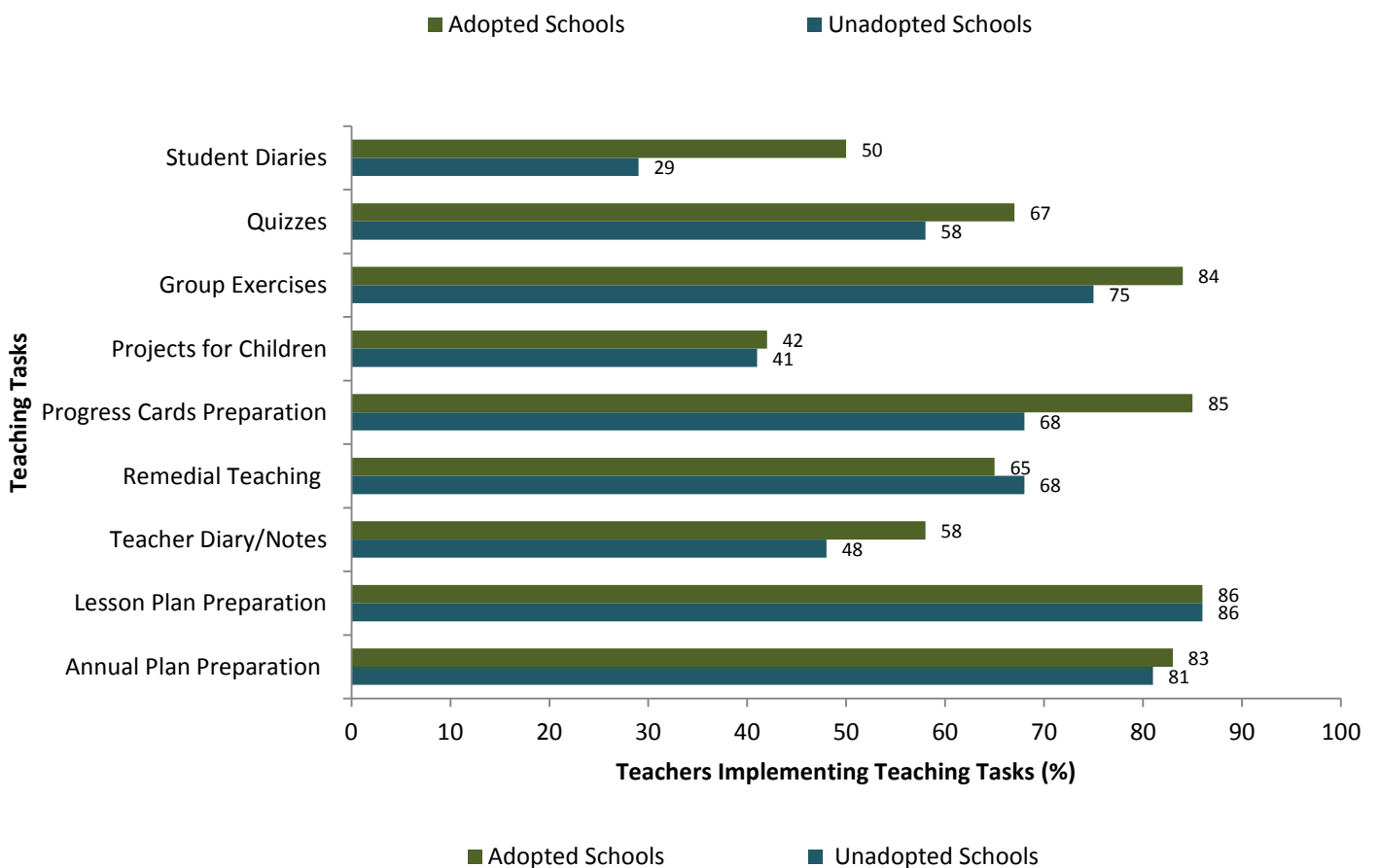
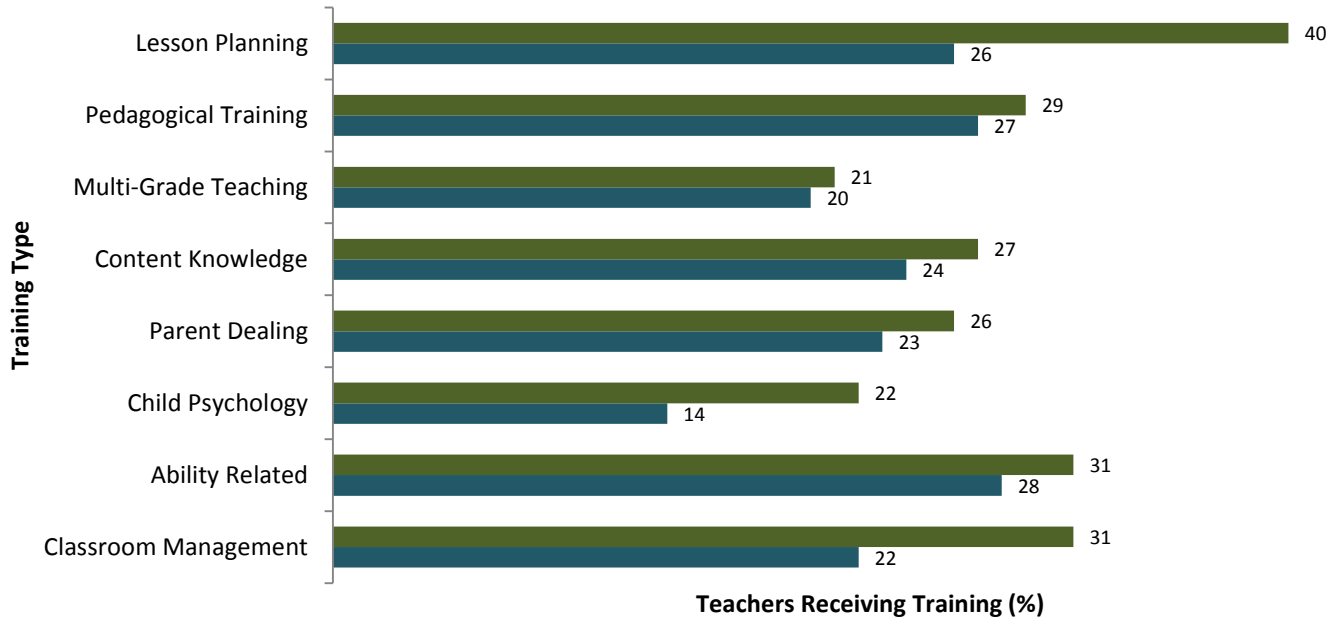
Head-teachers in adopted schools receive more support for School Management than their counter-parts in un-adopted schools. Survey data from Sindh reveal that head-teachers in adopted schools are 17.4 percentage points more likely to dismiss teachers as compared to head teachers in un-adopted schools. Furthermore, they

receive more support in formulating the school development plan, for decisions regarding allocation of funds, disciplining teachers, and in decisions regarding school construction.

FIG 2: CAPACITY BUILDING SUPPORT FOR HEAD-TEACHERS IN ADOPTED AND UN-ADOPTED SCHOOLS



A higher proportion of teachers in adopted schools report receiving more training in key areas, and a higher proportion are implementing pedagogical best practices in classrooms

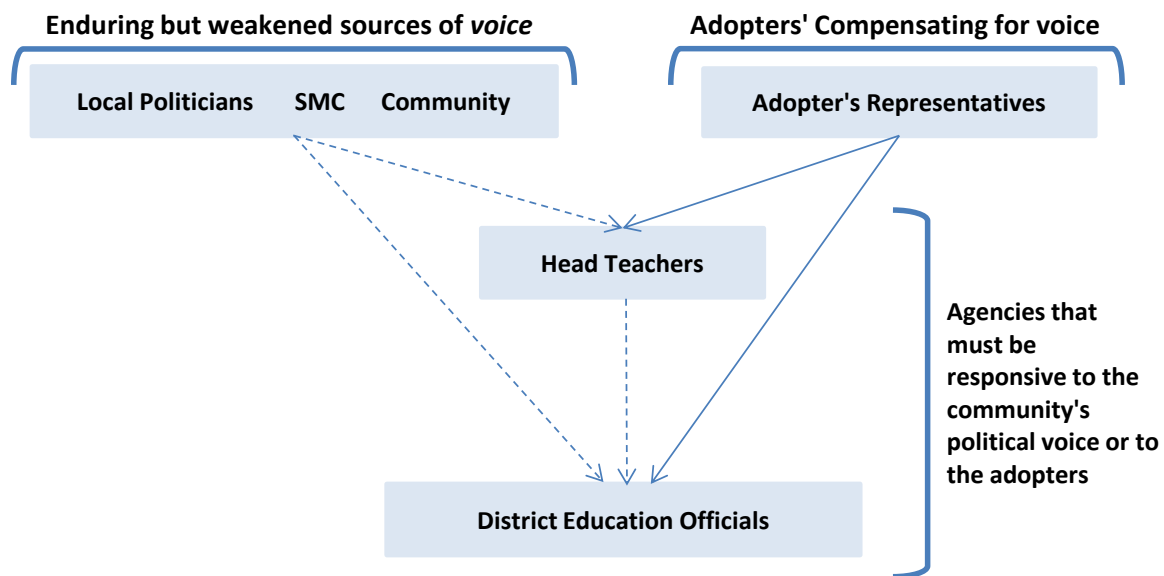


Adopters are amplifying voice of schools within education departments

In addition to infrastructural enhancements and human resource development, engaging non-state actors in state schools is serving two purposes: i) amplifying the voice of the school within the overall structure of the bureaucracy; ii) monitoring the school and building operations capacity at the school level.

Adopters serve as the strong stakeholder with political capital to raise demands of schools within the local education departments. Political voice for school related demands through the designated community involvement channels, including SMCs and citizens voice, is weak. Adopters are compensating for the absence of this political voice.

FIG 3: SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF ADOPTER'S ROLE IN AMPLIFYING VOICE OF SCHOOL WITHIN EDUCATION DEPTS.



Note: The broken lines from such potential sources of voice as local politicians, SMCs, and community at large depict the current weakness in the use of voice option by these sources. When adopters' increasingly interact with the district agencies and with the school-based leadership they are, in effect, compensating for the absence of voice from more enduring, but weaker, sources within the local communities.

In many ways the presence of the adopters pushes the school sideways out of the hierarchy of bureaucratized control, to create spaces where experimentation and innovation can take place.

Partnerships For Management Have The Potential To Contribute Significantly To Education Sector Reform, And Require an Enabling Policy Environment To Realize This Potential.



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