

INTER-PROVINCIAL COORDINATION CONFERENCE:

REFORMING SCHOOL EDUCATION IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA AND PUNJAB

CONTEXT

GOAL Bridging Technical Assistance for Governments (B-TAG) organised a two-day *Inter-Provincial Coordination Conference* at Islamabad on the 4th and 5th of October, 2023. The UK Government has invested in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa education reforms for over a decade. The investments have contributed to several high-level education policy reforms, interventions and innovations, directly improving equitable access to quality education in both provinces. There are a number of successes, improved practices, and lessons learnt in each of the provinces. Two major avenues of investment during the last decade were the Punjab Education Sector Program (PESP) and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Sector Program (KESP), both of which were separate and distinct from one another. As FCDO's engagement in the education sector of Pakistan has evolved into GOAL, which places within its purview both the provinces, it is important that a forum be created by which the unique learnings and successes of both PESP and KESP are exchanged and communicated.

The interprovincial sharing of the designing, implementing and learning from these reforms through this Inter-Provincial not only contributed towards consolidation of FCDO's previous investments in education but was also instrumental in informing the future investment of the UK in education in these two provinces, particularly under GOAL.

While underscoring the UK Government's support for education reforms in Pakistan with a particular focus on Girls' Education and learnings from the "*Decade of Learning*", the Interprovincial Conference facilitated the exchange of insights, successes, and challenges which emerged during the decade of reforms. While this period was marked by extraordinary advancements in educational policies and practices, nonetheless interprovincial exchange and learning in a formal environment remained missing from the education policy landscape. B-TAG's organised Interprovincial directly addressed this and facilitated establishing an inter-governmental learning forum on education reforms.

GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP: Given the need and significance of the Interprovincial Conference, the Elementary and Secondary Education Department of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa officially hosted the event in Islamabad at the KP House. Furthermore, the importance of such a forum has also been recognised by the School Education Department Punjab, which has agreed to host the next conference. Each successive interprovincial is envisioned to be hosted in an alternative manner by the two departments. This substantial buy-in from both departments further underscores the need for interprovincial dialogue and communication.

OBJECTIVES

The Interprovincial Conference on Education Policy and Reforms was strategically designed to achieve a set of comprehensive objectives, which included:

- Engaging government leadership by providing a space for high-level policy dialogue from both provincial departments to help bridge the gap between policy and practice, ensuring
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that discussions are grounded in evidence from the field and opportunities emerging from their respective experiences.

- Ensuring ongoing commitment to supporting and owning the UK’s support for education reforms and translating into concrete actions resulting in high impact.
- Fostering a community of practice by bringing together education department officials from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

PARTICIPANTS

The conference was a closed official meeting with education department officials from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These included the Secretaries of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Departments, Special Secretaries, and heads of attached departments. The presence of key decision-makers ensured that insights, suggestions, and learnings would inform the decision-making in both provinces and translate into actionable outcomes.