



Pakistan's Primary Education Quality Improvement Program

Local partners work with rural communities to support high quality education for girls

by Zahid A. Afridi

This brochure describes the contributions made by the Primary Education Quality Improvement Program (1996–1999) to the broad goals of improved access, equity, and quality in girls' primary education in Pakistan. PEQIP was an integral part of the multi-donor-supported Balochistan Primary Education Project and Social Action Program. PEQIP was funded as grant assistance by the Royal Netherlands Embassy and was implemented by the Academy for Educational Development.

Zahid Afridi was executive officer of PEQIP for its three-year duration, working with a team of highly motivated field staff to promote high quality education through community mobilization in remote areas of Balochistan.


PEQIP is indebted to Maaïke van Vliet and Martijn Elgersma of the Royal Netherlands Embassy for their guidance and support. Brian Spicer of AED also contributed valuable guidance and technical support to the program. PEQIP's NGO partners and government counterpart officials, teachers, parents, and primary school children made important contributions to the successful implementation of this innovation in education.

PEQIP field staff and staff of the implementing NGOs provided photographs; AED staff members Eveline Norman, Georgia Green, and Dawn de Barros contributed background research; John Engels edited the text; Paula Gubbins coordinated the publication effort; and Natalie Buda designed the brochure.

Cover photo: Girl in a PEQIP "community support process" school presents her math work.

Opposite page: CSP school student uses *Big Book of Charts* to work with numbers.





In Balochistan, the largest but least developed province of Pakistan, an innovative approach to educational development was successfully implemented through the Primary Education Quality Improvement Program (PEQIP). With the assistance of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), villagers selected young, rural women to be trained as teachers. Parents then organized themselves into village education committees to support the new teacher and her school. Finally, NGOs helped establish partnerships between the government's education field officers and communities to promote the benefits of primary education.

As a result of these interventions, more girls now go to school, teachers' attendance has improved, and student-centered, high quality teaching is evident. PEQIP inspired—and also benefited from—many other projects and programs, including the Balochistan Primary Education Development Program and national and provincial Social Action Programs.

The Context

Balochistan's 6.5 million people live in an area of 347,000 square kilometers. The population is 84 percent rural. In 1995, the literacy rate was 22 percent, compared to 38 percent at the national level. Gender differences are striking: in 1999, the literacy rate was 32 percent for men and 12 percent for women, compared to 50 percent for men and 24 percent for women nationwide. In rural areas of Balochistan, the gender disparity was even more pronounced.

Of the more than 640,000 children enrolled in Balochistan's primary schools in the 1998–1999 school year, only 36 percent are girls. There are 7,206 primary schools for boys and only 2,416 for girls. Disparities exist within schools and regions as well. The pupil-teacher ratio is 32 for boys' schools and 44 for girls' schools. In 1999, 45 percent of urban boys (ages 6–10), and 47 percent of rural boys were enrolled, while the respective shares for girls were 35 and 20 percent. (These enrollment rates are only about 60 percent of the national average.)

Beginning in 1990, the provincial government launched the Primary Education Development Program, a comprehensive primary education initiative with broad goals of universal access, equity, and quality. Begun with funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development, it later became the Balochistan Primary Education Project (BPEP), a multidonor supported program financed by the World Bank, Unicef, and European and Japanese bilateral funding. It also became part of the country's Social Action Programs. Within five years, significant gains in access and equity for rural females were achieved through BPEP.

The Primary Education Quality Improvement Program (PEQIP)

The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Pakistan intended PEQIP to generate high quality education by encouraging a collaborative relationship between NGOs, communities, and the government. NGOs would facilitate cooperation among field teacher trainers, community education promoters, education field officers, and village education committees, with the hope that this community support process, or CSP, would then be integrated into the government system. PEQIP staff would further develop the community support process by bringing resources and oversight for quality education closer to the classroom. Thus, the most significant outcomes of the program would be an improved government education system and strengthened local capacity to support schools.

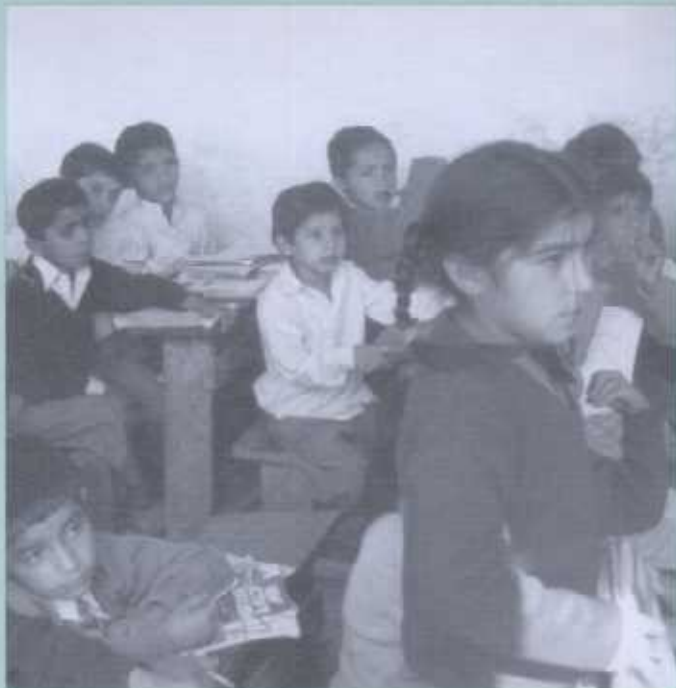
PEQIP focused on teachers and support groups associated with community-government schools. When the program began in 1996, there were 350 such schools. This number increased to more than 1,300 schools over the next three years through interventions by both BPEP and PEQIP. Approximately 1,800 female primary school teachers benefited directly from PEQIP services.

The Focus of PEQIP's Activities

- ✦ Increasing access to primary education for girls in remote areas through the establishment of CSP schools
- ✦ Strengthening the skills of teachers working in girls' primary CSP schools with preservice and inservice training and classroom support
- ✦ Providing supplementary materials to schools to enhance the quality of the learning environment
- ✦ Upgrading the educational qualifications of "middle-pass" (eighth-grade) teachers working in CSP schools, through the Open University's Women's Matriculation Program
- ✦ Strengthening the capacity of organizations and government staff (village education committees, education field officers, and local NGOs) to promote education at the community level

People used to say that our forefathers were only as poor as we are now. No change has come with time, and no change will be possible if we do not decide to educate our daughters. Change requires education, and schools need girl students. That is why we are sending our daughters to school, despite the fact that it increases our workload, as our daughters could share some of the work if they stayed home.

—Women's village education committee member



CSP classroom



Seventeen-year-old teacher shows students how to use crayons provided with Urdu phonics kit.



Preschool-level, activity-based learning

1

Increasing access to primary education for girls in remote areas through the establishment of CSP schools

From the early 1990s, Balochistan's provincial government determined that all new girls' primary schools in the province would be established with the involvement of the communities in the community support process. The government also agreed to establish 120 such schools annually beginning in 1993. The Society for Community Support for Primary Education in Balochistan (SCSPEB), a newly formed NGO, was contracted to establish 360 schools in rural and remote areas of the province. By mid-1996, the goal had been reached.

This initiative both created and increased demand for the opening of additional schools in communities that remained underserved. To meet the demand for new CSP schools, more funding was needed, more local and regional NGOs had to be identified and prepared to implement CSP, and the community support process itself had to be refined and improved.

As mentioned above, PEQIP supported the establishment of 360 additional schools to meet this new demand. Offering resources close to the areas in need, PEQIP contracted, in addition to SCSPEB, three local NGOs to establish the CSP girls' schools in their respective regions: Loralai Awami Falahi Markaz (LAFAM) in the Zhob region, the Society for Community Organization and Promotion of Education (SCOPE) in the Sibi/Nasirabad region, and the Rural Community Development Council (RCDC) in the Mekran region. PEQIP also trained the field-based community education promoters in the NGOs to establish schools through the CSP.

How CSP Schools are Created

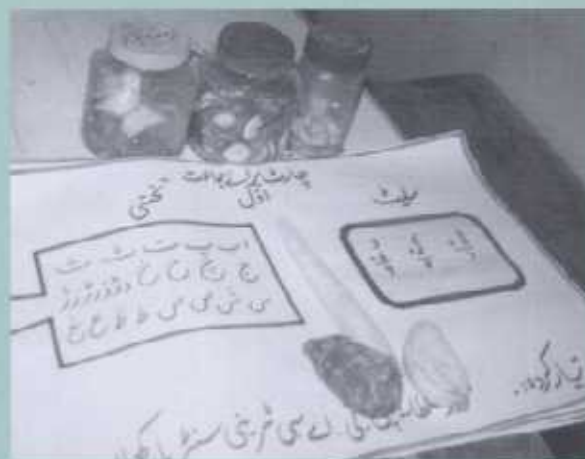
The process begins with the identification of a local middle-pass young woman who could be appointed as teacher. Because a certificate is no guarantee of her capabilities, she is tested in basic reading, writing, and mathematics. Then her certificates are verified. The community is then mobilized through the formation of parents' groups called village education committees, or VECs. (To ensure broad representation, care is taken to ensure that parents from different parts of the village become members.) After it is formed, the VEC locates space, procures basic teaching and learning materials, and ensures adequate enrollment for the school. Next, the VECs and teachers are trained and the status of the school is formalized. Finally, high quality teaching and the role of the VEC are ensured through additional teacher training, the provision of materials, and review of VEC activities.



CSP teachers receive training on the use of supplementary materials.

It is very difficult to educate girls in this area because you cannot set any criteria for starting the teaching/learning process. Variations among students are too great with reference to age, level of understanding, family background, etc. To cope with the situation, the teacher has to be a mother, community leader, teacher, even advisor. Only through this improvisation in the teacher's role, have we brought this group of 163 girls into this school.

—CSP teacher



Examples of low-cost and no-cost materials developed by CSP teachers during their three-month preservice training.



Sultana Baloch, front left, participates in training of field teacher trainers, Islamabad.

Strengthening the capacity of teachers working in CSP schools

Identifying and Training CSP Teachers

High quality primary education begins with having a well qualified and well trained teacher in the classroom. Structurally sound buildings, innovative learning materials, and even a supportive VEC cannot substitute for a teacher who possesses the necessary skills. If a teacher cannot manage her classroom and create a positive learning environment, her children's education will suffer.

In Balochistan, especially in the rural areas, it is difficult to find a woman with the basic academic qualifications and the appropriate training. Part of the problem is the historic absence of girls' schools. Even in the case of a young woman who has attained her matriculation (tenrh-grade pass), it is not always possible, due to cultural restrictions, for the prospective teacher to travel to a teacher training institution or other central location for training.

To overcome these problems and break the cycle of illiteracy among women, the government of Balochistan agreed to relax qualifications, age, and formal training requirements for teachers in CSP schools. Without these waivers, it would not have been possible to identify and train eligible women in the rural areas of Balochistan.

Most CSP teachers were underqualified (middle pass) and undertrained. Moreover, as members of rural and remotely located communities, these young women lacked the opportunities for professional development that were available to their colleagues serving in urban centers. Under these circumstances, PEQIP developed and delivered a series of progressively complex training programs corresponding with teachers' incremental needs and capacity to absorb new knowledge and skills. The training was geared toward providing CSP teachers with the necessary preservice and inservice training and followup support essential to their success.

Training of Teacher Trainers and Learning Coordinators

Two field teacher trainers (FTTs), paired as a male-female team, were assigned to each administrative division of the province. The FTTs were given intensive training before being deployed to the field offices of the government's "learning coordinators" and assistant district education officers that served girls' schools. The objective of the training was to enable

FTTs and learning coordinators to become master trainers for the new teachers, and to function as mentors, providing school-based support to teachers. The teaching and training skills the FTTs received included observation skills, child-centered and activity-based teaching models, use of no-cost local resources as teaching aids, multigrade teaching, effective communication, building a culture of quality through various activities, and peer learning approaches.

FTTs and learning coordinators were also oriented to the use of training packages, teaching kits, and other materials developed by other education programs in the province. During the second and third years of PEQIP, FTTs received intensive needs-based training through respected national institutions. Similar training was organized for the government's female learning coordinators working throughout the province.

Inservice Training and Classroom Support

Accompanying the government's learning coordinators, FTTs visited CSP schools in their divisions to assess the needs of the CSP teachers. Some of the characteristics of the CSP teachers they observed were:

- ✿ Shyness and lack of confidence
- ✿ Poor Urdu language skills
- ✿ Weak command of content, particularly in mathematics
- ✿ A preference for use of rote memorization
- ✿ Ineffective, teacher-centered teaching techniques
- ✿ Use of negative feedback and physical punishment
- ✿ Lack of awareness of assessment techniques
- ✿ Lack of responsibility for maintenance of school records
- ✿ Common health and hygiene problems
- ✿ Lack of monitoring, supervision, or followup support
- ✿ Unfamiliarity with multigrade teaching
- ✿ Unfamiliarity with the roles and responsibilities of government field officers in solving school problems and providing assistance

Following their preparation as trainers and mentors, the FTTs designed needs-based training packages in collaboration with their government counterparts and NGO representatives. After pilot-testing and finalizing the training packages, the FTTs began providing training at various cluster centers identified during school visits. Training plans were prepared and

implemented with the consultation and approval of the education field officers. Continuing throughout the program, training modules were developed in phases with increasing focus on teaching techniques, according to the needs and absorption capacity of CSP teachers.

Basic Training Package

The needs-based training package comprised the following modules:

Conducting assembly: Techniques and skills to conduct a school assembly

Classroom management: Techniques for multigrade timetable setting, activity-based grouping of students, creating a pleasant and friendly atmosphere, placement and use of instructional materials

Maintaining records: Starting with the first day of student enrollment, development and completion of registration forms, maintenance of records of student and teacher attendance, admission and discharge registers, and stock registers

Syllabus, timetable setting and daily teaching diary: Distribution of the syllabus on a quarterly, monthly, weekly, and daily basis; setting of the daily syllabus and writing a diary for multigrade teaching.

Mathematics and Urdu content and teaching methodologies: Steps in lesson planning, peer tutoring, group and activity-based learning, demonstrating lessons, trainees' group and individual lesson presentations, positive feedback, and open critiquing.

PEQIP reached almost 1,150 women primary teachers with the basic training modules in sessions varying from 6 to 10 days. (The government also asked PEQIP to offer the same training to about 650 non-CSP teachers as part of their three-month preservice training.) Following initial training, followup and classroom support were provided to CSP teachers. Training in the use of program-provided supplementary materials also remained an integral part of PEQIP.

Preservice Training

PEQIP FTTs served as master trainers in the government's Mobile Female Teacher Training Program, and assisted the government in revising the program. FTTs remained involved as observers and support for trainee teachers. Following training sessions, the FTTs' reports assisted in identifying problems, issues, and gaps in the training sessions.

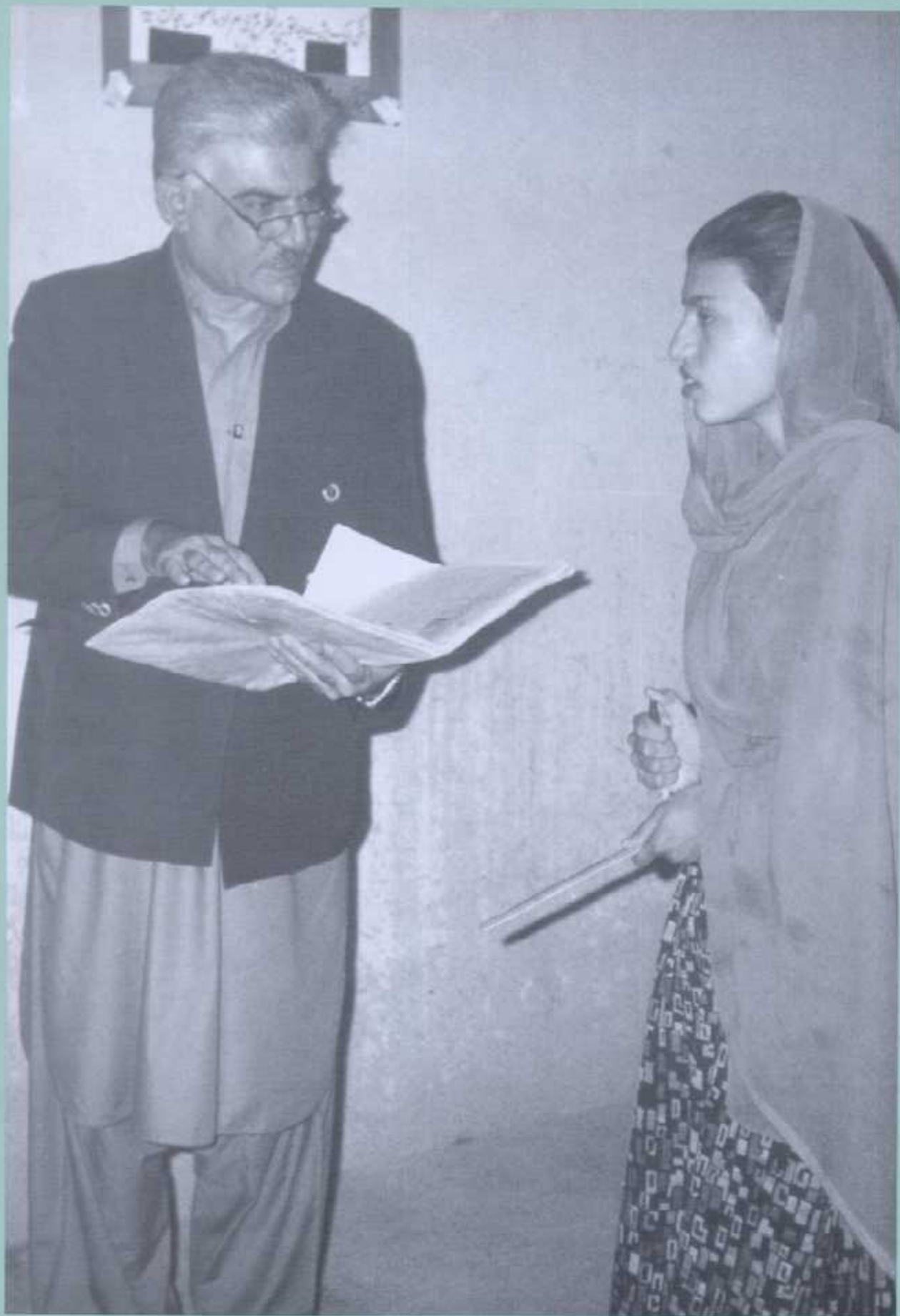
PEQIP collaborated with central education directorate personnel to revise the FTTs' training, addressing content, training procedures, and the examination system. A comprehensive review of the training content resulted in modifications of the modules suited to CSP teachers. Assessment and examination procedures were also amended and modified. FTTs played a vitally important role during subsequent government training cycles. At various centers, PEQIP FTTs became the lead trainers.

PEQIP set a standard of quality and competence in teacher training. Innovations in instructional methods were based on local needs and conditions, and the training met its goals of reaching girls, training teachers, and developing materials for classroom support.

Results of the Preservice Training

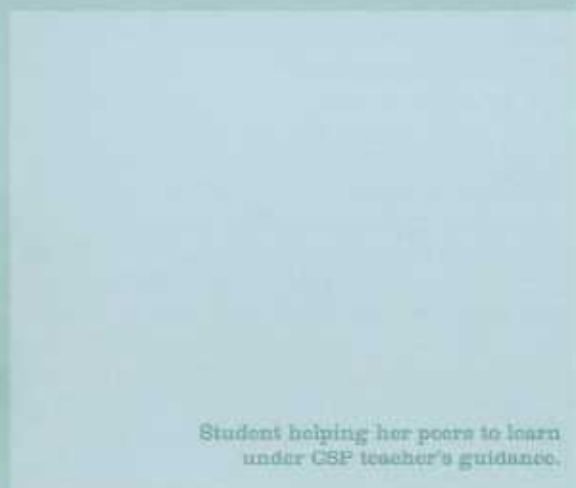
After three years, the positive change in teachers' behavior is evident. PEQIP transformed teachers: they are more confident in the classroom, are no longer reluctant to stand in front of a class demonstrating lessons, and are actively acquiring new teaching techniques. Teachers are also demonstrating better command of content knowledge and are successfully creating child-centered multigrade learning environments (up to six grades in one classroom), using effective and low-cost teaching aids made from local materials, and are maintaining school records on their own.

Teachers have also gained confidence in solving school problems, including those related to working with government education officials and VECs. For example, PEQIP-trained teachers arranged meetings with VECs to exchange views on school and student problems. The teachers informed parents about their children's progress based on their continuous assessment and final exam results. PEQIP interventions were reflected in the performance of CSP teachers, who were judged by the government education field officers as among the best in the province.





Students use the PEQIP math kit to learn counting.



Student helping her peers to learn under CSP teacher's guidance.



Outdoor learning is also activity-based.

Supplementary materials that PEQIP has purchased or developed for primary classes appear to play an important role in CSP classrooms. Not only are these charts, books, flash cards, and various kits an asset for the teachers who have little else to rely on, but we saw children using these materials to understand numbers and shapes, identify letters of the Urdu alphabet, and recite poems. The selection of fifty-seven books from a variety of sources all over Pakistan and the preparation of three booklets by FTTs as guides to the use of these books is highly commendable. The excellent quality of the math kit, the *Big Book* and other kits can also be a matter of pride for PEQIP.

—Review mission report

3

Providing supplementary materials to schools to enhance the quality of the learning environment

To produce a higher quality teaching and learning environment in all primary school classrooms and to support teachers, PEQIP provided supplementary reading and instructional support material, not only to CSP schools, but to all the remaining primary schools in the province as well.

For example, during PEQIP's first year, packages of fifty-seven poetry/story books, selected from various publishers, were provided to all girls' schools, while all boys' schools each received packages of eighteen books. In addition, the project developed and distributed three volumes of teachers' guides on the use of the books.

During its second year, PEQIP distributed a mathematics kit, *Maths While Playing*, an Urdu first-grade phonics kit, and the *Big Book of Charts* to all girls' primary schools. PEQIP helped distribute the government-developed preschool kit to all CSP schools. Sets of fifty-seven books were also provided to newly established schools.

In its final year, PEQIP selected a package of thirty-eight books in collaboration with the government for distribution to all girls' primary schools. PEQIP also produced and distributed a supplementary mathematics kit and sets of Urdu alphabet blocks to all girls' primary schools. Newly established girls' primary schools were provided with a package of fifty books, the *Maths While Playing* kit, and the *Big Book of Charts*. Urdu phonics kits were also replenished in all CSP schools. PEQIP NGOs helped distribute these supplementary materials.

One of PEQIP's objectives in developing the supplementary materials packages was to support a shift in classroom interactions from teacher-dominated to student-based, activity-centered learning. Indeed, these materials are being used successfully in classrooms, particularly in the many schools where textbooks and other instructional materials are not available.



Women prepare for matriculation at Women's Matriculation Program Centers in Chagai (top), Turbat (above), and Nasirahad (below).



4

Upgrading the educational qualifications of middle-pass teachers working in CSP schools

With the Netherlands-supported Women's Matriculation Program of the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), PEQIP helped teachers with the equivalent of an eighth-grade education attain their matriculation. Approximately 60 percent of teachers in CSP schools did not have the "matric" certificate, which was a double-edged problem. Without a matric-level education, the teacher lacked the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective. Furthermore, eighth-grade-pass young women were permitted to teach in rural girls' CSP schools only because there were no matric-level candidates. The waiver granted by the government had a condition to it: the teacher must get her matric within three years or lose her posting, and thus force the school to close. The problem was how to get these young women up to matriculation level.

The one program available, the AIOU's distance learning program, was not being effectively implemented in rural areas of Balochistan because there were very few supporting mentors or testing facilities available. The university reported that there were not enough young women available in rural areas to justify establishing additional support centers. This problem could be overcome if outreach functions available through the education directorate and PEQIP could assist in setting up a reasonable support system.

PEQIP reached an agreement with the university to provide outreach and identify young women to enroll. The agreement specified enrollment dates, materials to be used, and procedures for effecting field support. NGOs were then contracted to conduct surveys and screen CSP teachers to determine who might require the university's program to achieve matriculation. The first group of teachers and middle-pass young women were enrolled in PEQIP's first year, and a pilot support center established at Sohbatpur. Over the program's three years, twenty-three study centers were established in remote areas, which attained an overall enrollment of 315 middle-pass teachers. PEQIP covered the course fee, additional tutor fees, and travel where required. PEQIP and the university's directorate developed a monitoring and assessment system. In the pilot's second year, PEQIP appointed a full-time coordinator to monitor the study centers that had been established with program support. As a result of the intensive monitoring, it was found that seven centers had to be dropped. In all, 121 young women graduated from the program, twenty-five will complete the course in 1999, and seventy will take their final exams in 2000. Potentially, 216 middle-pass teachers will become fully qualified through the Women's Matriculation Program.



Field teacher trainer works with CSP teachers organized in cluster, Nastrabad.



NGO LAFAM's community education promoter in discussion with village education committee, Loralai.

Group discussion among NGO participants during training by Islamabad based training institute.



The Chhotai VEC in the Bolan district received training on building sustainable partnerships between community and government. Committee members resolved to provide further education to girls who had passed primary. They decided to discuss the matter with the district education officer, who was female. In a meeting with the DEO, they reached a solution: the DEO agreed to provide a bus for girls to reach a nearby town where a secondary school was located. On behalf of the parents, the committee decided to assume maintenance and recurring costs through regular fundraising. Not only the girls of Chhotai, but also girls from nearby villages are now benefiting from this initiative and are enrolled in secondary school.

Strengthening the capacity of organizations and government to promote education at the community level

PEQIP achieved a sustainable breakthrough in improving instructional quality in classrooms. The objective of improving teacher performance was achieved by building teachers' knowledge and skills through development and delivery of appropriate, needs-based, intensive, and focused training packages. The most important factor to PEQIP's sustainability was the capacity building that occurred through enabling organizations at the local level. These organizations continue to ensure that the innovative approaches developed and tested under PEQIP will be sustained in the government system. On the government side, education field officers at all levels are taking very seriously their responsibility for continuing to support, supervise, and build the capacity of CSP teachers. On the community side, VECs, local NGOs, and parents have remaining involved in and enthusiastic about their children's education.

Capacity Building of Education Field Officers

The government system assigns responsibility for education in a given area to district, subdivision, and local-level officers and learning coordinators. These officials are key to sustaining the community-government partnership and building local capacity for high quality education. However, the system also requires extensive administrative duties of this staff, and the time demands for these duties restrict their access to NGOs and the communities themselves. PEQIP's field teacher trainers and centralized teacher training specialists focused on breaking some of these system-imposed barriers by encouraging government field officers to assume the roles of mentor and monitor.

PEQIP emphasized needs-based support for teachers in place of the traditional approach of delivering uniform training packages throughout the province. PEQIP interventions focused on female learning coordinators and assistant district education officers as the field officers responsible for mentoring and building capacity among girls' primary school teachers.

One program PEQIP designed to meet the needs of these education officers was a one-month training similar to that received by the FFTs. Conducted during PEQIP's first year, the training included components on modern teaching methods, followup methods, and the provision of school-based support to teachers. Urdu, math, social studies, and science content teaching methods were also included, along with activity-based and child-centered teaching approaches.

Learning coordinators were trained in the use of the supplementary materials provided by PEQIP, and as master trainers for government preservice training programs. On-the-job training in mentoring and school-based support was provided during learning coordinators' visits to schools. As a result of PEQIP training, learning coordinators became more involved in field activities, accompanying FTTs on visits to schools, and becoming excellent master-trainers and providers of followup support for teachers.

Learning coordinators work at the subdivisional level in the province. The subdivisional education officers have traditionally assigned the learning coordinators office work—at the expense of field visits. One outcome of PEQIP training was that the education officers themselves began to involve their learning coordinators as trainees and trainers in the use of basic and supplementary materials. Cluster-based training, followup, and classroom support improved as a result.

Orientation of Education Field Officers

PEQIP made continual efforts to help education officers in the field understand the community support process. "Ownership" of the process was considered vitally important to the sustainability of CSP schools and the community-government partnership. Plans were developed, continuously reviewed, and needs-based strategies designed and implemented for orientation of education field officers to CSP.

PEQIP's objectives included developing in field officers an in-depth understanding of CSP and of their enhanced role as implementers of CSP. Using demonstrative, participatory learning, and active approaches, responsibilities for CSP support at various levels were defined and developed. Another insight PEQIP wanted to share with field officers is that community participation is, in essence, support for the community's own school management and monitoring activities. As resource constraints prevented field officers from effectively monitoring their institutions, they realized that key educational indicators such as dropout rates, retention rates, and increased participation could be improved through community mobilization.

In sum, PEQIP focused on strengthening the education field offices as enabling organizations at local levels by encouraging and supporting their role in the achievement of sustainable community-government partnerships.

Orientation of Local Administrative Officials

PEQIP took care to inform local officials outside the education sector about the effects of the program in their areas. Positive public opinion toward the program and general awareness about its objectives were

developed by informing politically and administratively influential officials of the area. Cultural traditions, taboos, and social sanctions vis-à-vis program objectives were addressed, which helped to increase political and social good will toward PEQIP.

Seminars and Awareness Campaigns

Some people say that Balochistan is quite sensitive about gender issues because of its social and ethnic makeup. The popular myth is that cultural values have led to opposition to formal schooling for girls. BPEP and PEQIP continuously challenged this perception. PEQIP organized mass awareness campaigns to build public support for girls' education. Moreover, PEQIP built into its contracts with NGOs the requirement to organize campaigns in areas where resistance seemed to be highest. Fifty such seminars and campaigns were organized at the district and local levels during the program.

All stakeholders, including administrators, local political leaders, community representatives, professionals from all sectors, and influential tribal chiefs participated. The initial impact was a positive change in attitudes towards girls' education and acceptance of the role of communities and NGOs in supporting regional development. During PEQIP's final year, regional seminars were organized to assess the impact of seminars organized earlier at the grassroots level.

Strengthening Village Education Committees

In Balochistan as in other parts of Pakistan, parents and communities have had little involvement in their children's education. Though some breakthroughs were achieved in recent years through policy changes with respect to establishment of girls' primary schools through the community support process, developing true community involvement in the establishment, management, and monitoring of schools had not been achieved.

Historically, the government controlled the education delivery system. Communities were not expected to contribute significantly to their children's education, which resulted not only in indifference among parents regarding standards, but in producing a "receiving" mentality among communities, one that sought resources from the government and depended solely on its functionaries to deliver education to children.

PEQIP formed village and women's education committees as enabling organizations supportive of education field offices. These committees were assisted to support local management, maintenance, and organization of schools, and to contribute to the resolution of issues such as schools with

no students, teacher absenteeism, dropouts, and maximizing persistence and participation rates.

Training of VECs and Women's VECs

PEQIP initiated phased training of village and women's education committees to create awareness of their respective roles, encourage them to take their responsibilities as partners with government seriously, and generally increase their confidence. VECs provided space, materials, and funds to visit their schools regularly and support teachers whenever requested. Initial training emphasized the responsibilities of the committees to:

- * Be a partner with government, providing school operation and management functions during the probation period when government support had not yet been obtained;
- * Help the community provide required resources including the school site, instructional materials, teaching resources, and seating for the children and teacher;
- * Work with parents to address dropout, irregular attendance, and to impart to them the importance of education and literacy; and
- * Contribute to high quality education by providing financial, material, and motivational support to teachers.

Strengthening Local NGOs

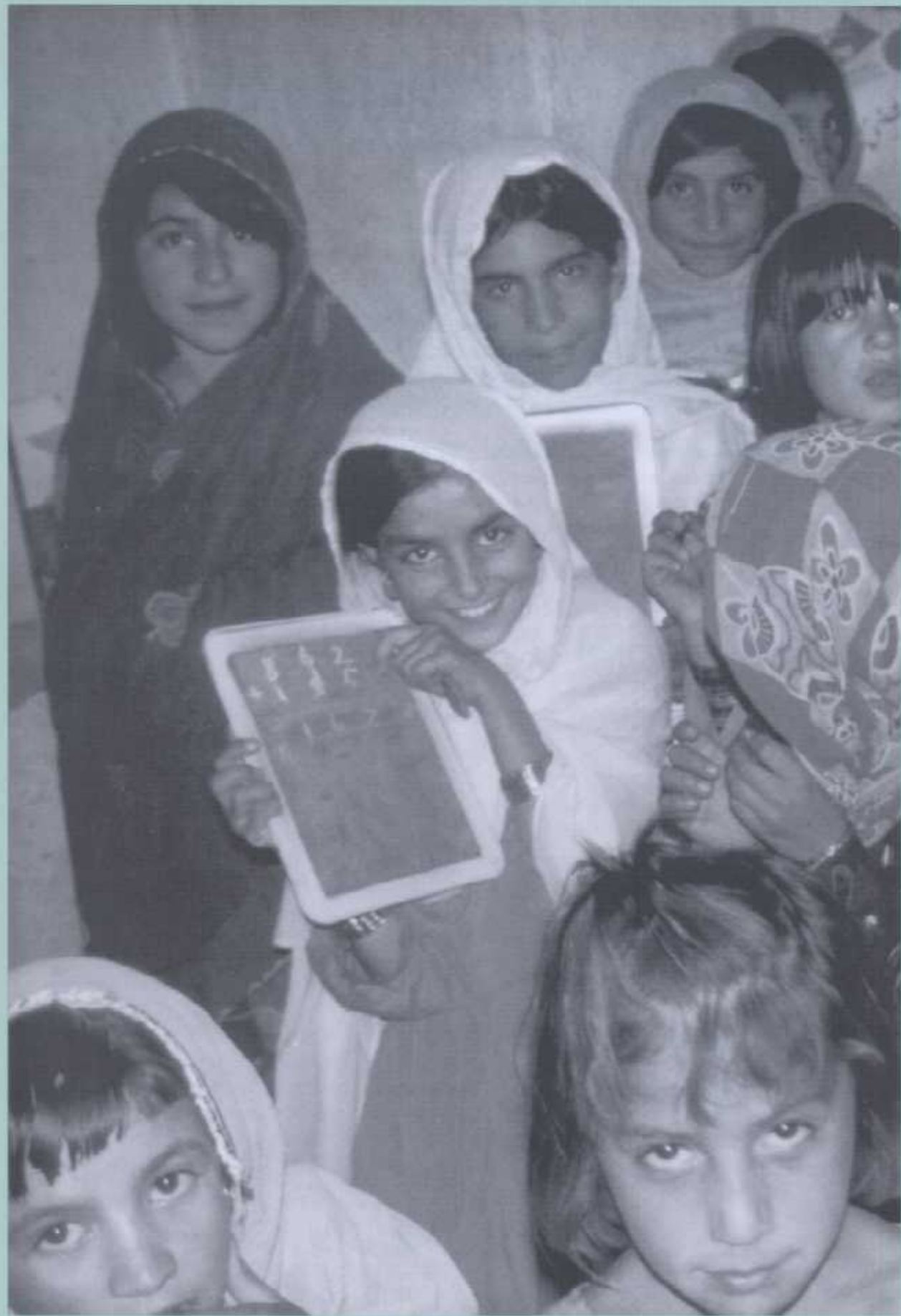
NGOs in Pakistan struggle to create identities for themselves and to make communities and government aware of their roles and services. PEQIP identified NGOs based in remote regions that had these problems as well as organizational issues. Working with NGOs required PEQIP to develop strategies to improve the organizations' management as well as guide them to become viable educational development organizations.

During PEQIP's first year, local NGOs were provided with office equipment and related training for planning and implementation of program plans. Equipment included computer workstations, photocopiers, fax machines, generators, and office furniture. Information officers from the local NGOs were provided computer hardware and software training at a central location. The NGOs' accounting officers also received training in bookkeeping.

PEQIP conducted needs assessments of the NGOs and proposed training interventions that would enable the NGOs to make their technical contributions to CSP schools.

By the second year, PEQIP concluded that NGOs had performed well in field-based activities but that their planning and management were seriously flawed at the organizational level. PEQIP learned that working to strengthen the NGOs' organizational management, while perhaps not as exciting as the technical work, was as essential for the successful implementation of the CSP model. PEQIP contracted resource people and training organizations and completed the NGO strengthening process with eighteen months of capacity building and staff development planning.

PEQIP was largely successful in meeting its objective to strengthen regional and local NGOs in remote districts to work with villages and the government in the establishment, maintenance, and monitoring of CSP schools. NGOs with limited organizational capabilities and traditional management styles were supported, trained, and monitored, and began to function effectively in the tasks contracted by PEQIP. The NGOs' community education promoters benefited from their involvement in the PEQIP by improving their technical skills and by learning how to establish documentation systems and practice good financial management.



Outcomes

In summary, the groups who benefited from the PEQIP program were both partners in the program and its intended beneficiaries. They included:

Rural Girls

PEQIP's primary target was, of course, rural girls. PEQIP successfully provided access to education for almost 15,000 rural girls aged 5–11 through the establishment of 360 rural CSP schools.

Rural Women

PEQIP helped to change the status of rural women through its emphasis on girls' education, involvement of mothers and community women in school affairs, and enabling of young women to earn livings as school teachers. Mothers contributed to reduced dropout rates and improved attendance and cleanliness of their children. They played a significant role in school management by extending valuable support to the teachers.

Rural Communities

The community support process is based on the community's participation in the education of its children. VECs and women's VECs were formed in all the schools established under PEQIP. The initial purpose was to represent the community in its efforts to establish a girls' school. The communities and committee members were eager to follow the community support process, recognized their obligation to support schools, assisted teachers, and interacted with the education directorate and local government to improve school performance and resolve other social development problems.

NGOs

CSP schools were established through four NGOs contracted by PEQIP. The implementation of CSP was decentralized by using three local NGOs: LAFAM in the Zhob region, SCOPE in the Sibi/Nasirabad region, and the RCDC in the Mekran region. These organizations were supported and strengthened through the provision of physical facilities and training. The SCSPEB, the leading NGO, was supported to become a training organization for other NGOs. PEQIP's goal was to help the NGOs themselves become educational development organizations working at all levels of education in their respective regions.

Women Teachers

Young women in rural areas, who had been unable to complete formal academic training to become teachers, gained formal government certification as teachers through PEQIP. The community support process provided training, monitoring, and continued support for CSP teacher candidates. The Open University's distance education program provided additional support to teachers who needed more structured academic training.

Summary

PEQIP made important contributions to Balochistan's stated goals of access, equity, quality, community participation, efficiency, and sustainability of primary education. Improving quality, the primary objective of PEQIP, was also the emphasis of the provincial Social Action Program during PEQIP's implementation.

PEQIP interventions were effective in introducing and successfully advocating community participation and involvement in primary education, with a special emphasis on creating an enabling environment in remote parts of the province.

NGOs were motivated, strengthened, and supported to play key roles as educational development organizations working at all levels of education in their respective regions. Teachers were selected, tested, and trained. Education field officers were encouraged, strengthened, and supported to play a dynamic and supportive role with teachers. In short, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, PEQIP exceeded the targets set at its inception.

In the words of the Dutch sponsors, "The PEQIP story is not the end of the story, but the beginning of a new period of more effective partnerships between government and communities. Major questions ahead are how to sustain community and parents' support to schooling for girls, and at the same time how to build government support to provide quality education. This is even more challenging in places where there are weak governments. After all, it remains the undeniable task for governments the world over to provide access to quality basic education for all."

Back cover (top):
Girls raise
national flag
before school
assembly.

Back cover
(bottom): School
girls gather
outside their
village.

The Netherlands Development Assistance of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs is committed to working toward poverty alleviation in developing countries. Education is considered the key to development and is, therefore, one of the main areas of support. In Pakistan, the Netherlands Embassy supports programs and projects in the education sector with a focus on primary education and an emphasis on girls' education, including teacher training, improved school curriculum, development of improved learning and teaching materials, education administration, innovative approaches in education, and women's empowerment. Together with other donors, the Netherlands supports the education program of the Pakistan government's Social Action Programs and three primary education projects in the provinces of NWFP and Balochistan. Currently, the Netherlands' bilateral development program in Pakistan is in the process of phasing out, and is therefore keen to disseminate lessons learned over the past years of its cooperation.

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