

## The good news from Pakistan

How a revolutionary new approach to education reform in Punjab shows the way forward for Pakistan and development aid everywhere

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Sir Michael Barber

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March 2013



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## Reform

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## **The author**

Sir Michael Barber is the Department for International Development's (DfID) (unpaid) Special Representative on Education in Pakistan and Chief Education Advisor at Pearson. He is one of the world's leading education reformers, and from 2001 to 2005 was Chief Advisor on Delivery to Prime Minister Tony Blair.

From 2005 to 2011 at McKinsey, he founded its Global Education Practice and was a leader of its public sector work. Sir Michael is the author or co-author of a number of influential reports, including *How the World's Best Performing School Systems Come Out on Top*, *How the World's Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better* and *Oceans of Innovation*. His book on working for the Blair administration, *Instruction to Deliver: Fighting to Transform Britain's Public Services*, was described by *The Financial Times* as "one of the best books about British government for many years."

Sir Michael is a visiting Professor at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, a Visiting Scholar at the Graduate School of Education in Harvard and an Honorary Doctor of the University of Exeter. He has worked on education reform and public service reform in 49 countries.

He can be followed on Twitter: @MichaelBarber9

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## **Acknowledgments**

This essay has been written in a personal capacity. I am deeply grateful to the Department for International Development (DfID) for the opportunity to serve in an unpaid capacity as their Special Representative on Education in Pakistan, but it is important to make clear that the views expressed here are my own and should not be taken to represent the views of the DfID or any other organisation.

I would like to thank a number of people who read all or part of the text in draft and made helpful comments. These include Katelyn Donnelly, Rachel Eisenberg, Andrew Haldenby, Taimur Khan, Tanya Kreisky, Mark Lowcock, Esme Packett, Debbie Palmer, Saad Rizvi and Fenton Whelan. Any errors of fact or judgement that remain are my responsibility.

## Foreword

I am delighted for several reasons to write a foreword for *The good news from Pakistan*, Sir Michael Barber's essay about education reform in Punjab. First of all, Pakistan is an important country for the World Bank Group and the global community. Its success, whether in generating economic growth or strengthening its security, depends significantly on improving its education system.

Second, this story is one of hope. Education outcomes are being improved by teachers, schools and parents, all motivated through bold government reforms that many partners are supporting. These reforms are improving access, raising learning levels and enhancing the governance and accountability of the delivery system. I am happy to see results emerging. We will all need to continue to work with the Government and ensure that the momentum continues in the years ahead.

Third, it is great to see the leadership and commitment of the Government of Punjab in improving education results and how Sir Michael and his team at Britain's Department for International Development (DfID) are supporting this effort, building also on assistance from the World Bank. Two tangible outcomes of this have been the creation of the Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit and the Punjab Education Foundation, both of which are now functioning well. The way in which these important new institutions have been incorporated into an overall strategy for improvement of the whole system is exemplary. It is also great to see the World Bank and the DfID collaborating effectively in support of the Government of Punjab.

Fourth, a few months ago I urged that those interested in strengthening development around the world should work with me and the World Bank to help create what I called "a science of delivery". Sir Michael's account of the Punjab education reform represents a significant new contribution. His books, *Instruction to Deliver* and *Deliverology 101*, based on his experience of driving delivery in Britain and elsewhere, have already made major contributions to the global literature on the subject.<sup>1,2</sup> What this new paper does is show that sustained commitment from the highest level of government is critical to the successful implementation of reforms. Equally important, however, is that it also shows how building capacity from the ground up is vital to ensuring that effective and sustainable implementation happens across a large system. Perhaps most importantly it shows how, even in the challenging circumstances of Pakistan, a combination of ambition and routines that ensure a consistent focus of delivery can deliver impressive results in a relatively short space of time. This valuable account, therefore, adds to the growing evidence base on the science of delivery. This evidence is relevant for governments everywhere and the partners who are supporting them.

I hope this essay will be widely read and debated and that as a result we shall all be able to take another step towards that science of delivery which I believe to be fundamental to global development.

**Dr Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank Group**

March 2013

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1 Barber, M. (2008), *Instruction to Deliver: Fighting to transform Britain's public services*.

2 Barber, M. et al (2010), *Deliverology 101*.

## **Preface**

I am absolutely delighted that Sir Michael Barber has put into the public domain the story of his work, and that of his UK and Pakistani colleagues, in reforming Pakistani education. Pakistan needs friends and Michael has been a true friend of Pakistan over the past three years.

When I started this initiative in 2009, I was aware that while many people cited statistics about Pakistani education, few actually did something about it. Yet what could be more crucial to the future of Pakistan, and therefore the whole of South Asia, than the education of its burgeoning young population? Since I had become convinced in the course of many visits to Pakistan that Western engagement with that country was unbalanced, it seemed to me that it was time for a new dynamic. The fact that our aid programme would be rising fast – never mind the country’s interdependence with neighbouring and war torn Afghanistan – only added to my sense of urgency.

Michael’s visit to my office in the summer of 2009 and his description of his work, reminded me of the laser-like focus and unyielding commitment to rigour and excellence that had typified the work we started together in the English education system in the 1990s. Where better to apply those skills and values than Pakistan’s education system?

I saw for myself last year some of the ground-level staff putting Michael’s ideas into practice. As he says in this report, there is a long way to go but a serious start has been made. I hope this report is read by people interested in public administration – what Michael calls “deliverology” – but also by those concerned with development and foreign policy. This is smart power in action.

**Rt Hon David Miliband MP, former UK Foreign Secretary**

March 2013



## **Preface**

Pakistan matters. It matters to its 180 million population whose prospects depend on a more stable and prosperous future. It matters for the stability and prosperity of its region. And it matters to Britain given our historical, cultural, business and people-to-people connections. Britain is committed to Pakistan's success.

The story Sir Michael Barber tells here is important.

It is exactly the kind of story that, as Secretary of State for International Development, I want to see highlighted, so that all of us involved in development around the world can understand and learn from the impact that investing in development can have.

Through a combination of ambitious goal-setting, structured collaboration, international experience, use of evidence and sheer persistence, the Punjab Education Reform Roadmap has begun to achieve notable results in a short time. As I saw for myself in January 2013, the Chief Minister and his senior administrators have used the Roadmap to drive change and improvements through 60,000 government schools. The progress and momentum to date are a tribute to the Government of Punjab, to the DfID team on the ground, and to the World Bank team with whom we have collaborated throughout.

Whilst we will not know the full impact for some time – and much will depend on the leadership that will emerge following Punjab's forthcoming election and their commitment to continue reform – the power of the Roadmap approach is evident. It offers useful lessons for our future engagement in education and other areas.

I would like to pay tribute to Sir Michael for the commitment, vision and leadership he has brought to our joint education work in Pakistan.

I commend *The good news from Pakistan* to everyone interested in education, development and the future success of Pakistan.

**Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for International Development**

March 2013

**“Thank you for your belief that Pakistan should stand up proudly among the nations.”**

A Punjab district official sums up the purpose of the education reform known as the Punjab School Reforms Roadmap.

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# Prologue: Pakistan's future

**“This time it's going to be different.”**  
Sir Michael Barber

Bruce Riedel, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington (writing in *The Daily Beast* on 29 December 2012) describes 2013 this way:

“[It] will be a pivotal year for Pakistan. National elections, turnover at the top military position, and the denouement in the war in Afghanistan all promise to make 2013 a crucial year for a country that is both under siege by terrorism and the center of the global jihadist movement...

Pakistan is a country in the midst of a long and painful crisis. Since 2001, according to the government, 45,000 Pakistanis have died in terrorist-related violence, including 7,000 security personnel. Suicide bombings were unheard of before the 9/11 attacks; there have been 300 since then. The country's biggest city, Karachi, is a battlefield. One measure of Pakistan's instability is that the country now has between 300 and 500 private security firms, employing 300,000 armed guards... The American intelligence community's new global estimate rates Pakistan among the most likely states in the world to fail by 2030.

Pakistan also remains a state sponsor of terror. Three of the five most wanted on America's counterterrorism list live in Pakistan... [It] also has the fastest-growing nuclear arsenal in the world, bigger than Great Britain's...

Whoever wins [the 2013 elections] will inherit an economy and government that is in deep trouble. Two thirds of the 185 million Pakistanis are under 30; 40 million of 70 million aged 5 to 19 years old are not in school. Fewer than one million Pakistanis paid taxes last year. Power blackouts are endemic. Clean water is increasingly scarce, even as catastrophic floods are more common. Growth is 3 per cent, too little to keep up with population demand.”<sup>3</sup>

In addition, Pakistan has a severe education problem. In an interview with the *Times Education Supplement* in 2010, early in my involvement with Pakistan's education system, I called the country “the biggest education reform challenge on the planet.” Andrew Mitchell, as Secretary of State for International Development, described the situation as “an education emergency”.

**“Early in my involvement with Pakistan's education system, I called the country “the biggest education reform challenge on the planet.”**

It does not require many statistics to make the point. In 2011, depending on which data you put most store by, about 40 per cent of Pakistan's school-age children were not in school; only 53 per cent of Grade 3 children in Punjab could read a sentence in Urdu; and as many as a third were unable to do single-digit subtraction. Worse still, there were no signs of learning gains across the previous decade.<sup>4</sup> The school buildings across much of Pakistan were a disgrace; over 20 per cent of teachers didn't turn up on an average day, those who did often lacked basic skills, and textbooks, where they were present, were tattered, torn and out of date.

This broad picture remains true today, although in Punjab, as we shall see, there has been significant progress.

It is hard to argue with any of Riedel's assertions in his devastating article. Or to dispute this harsh analysis of the country's education problems. Yet, while I accept the facts, I refuse to believe the implications. Part of this is stubborn (and perhaps naïve) optimism. Having visited Pakistan around 30 times in just over three years as DfID's Special Representative on Education in Pakistan, and having come to know and love the talented, warm and genuine people who live there, I simply refuse to believe that Pakistan's decline and fall is inevitable or that its people cannot grasp success. I believe this time it's going to be different. I can envision a Pakistan, say 20 years from now, that is a thriving democratic and Islamic Republic with a well-educated population contributing to sustained economic growth in the country and the region. To put it more personally, I can imagine a Pakistan that my grandson, currently aged seven, will choose as the destination of choice for his honeymoon.

3 Riedel, B. (2012), “Pakistan's Impossible Year: Elections, Army Intrigue, and More”, *The Daily Beast*, December 29.

4 LEAPS, *Learning and Educational Achievement in Punjab Schools Report 2003, 2007, 2011*.

After all, Pakistan at its best is a paradise. Listen to this description of part of north-western Pakistan in 1848:

“The rudest and idlest agriculture is overpav'd with corn, sugar, turmeric and almost all the Indian grains in abundance. In spring it is a vegetable emerald; and in winter its many-coloured harvests look as if Ceres had stumbled against the great Salt Range, and spilt half her cornucopia in the favoured vale. As if to make the landscape perfect, a graceful variety of the shee-shum tree, whose boughs droop like the willow, is found here and here alone; while along the streams and round the villages, the thick mulberry, festooned with wild vine, throws a fragrant shade...”<sup>5</sup>

There is no reason why, in the very different context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Pakistan should not be famed once again for its beauty and richness. That depends above all on the education of its people.

Part of my optimism is anything but naïve; it is based in hard-headed reality. Over the three years that I have been visiting Pakistan, the province of Punjab has embarked on a dramatic reform of its school system – as large, rapid and ambitious a reform as I've ever seen – and it is beginning to deliver significant results. We've seen the seeds of improvement become shoots sprouting through that, if nurtured and cared-for over the years ahead, can become a rich, diverse, thriving forest.

Punjab is important partly because it is Pakistan's biggest province, home to around half the country's population which is over 180 million, and partly because it tends to be the trendsetter. In spite of provincial resentment of Punjab due to its relative power in the land, what Punjab does, the other provinces tend to follow. Thus, if we could make the schools work there, we'd have a chance of making schools work nationwide too.

This essay tells the story of the Punjab education reform called the Punjab Schools Reform Roadmap. Potentially it is a story of redemption for Pakistan. I am publishing it now, ahead of Pakistan's elections, because it sets an agenda which any party or government could adopt and pursue after an election. Potentially, too, it is a story about how aid programmes can be so successful that they won't be needed any more.

As I write this, I'm conscious of the risk of hyperbole in what I'm saying. I could claim much less, and I'm conscious every waking moment that what we've embarked upon in Punjab could fail or fall apart. It still depends on the willpower of a handful of people, of whom I am one. It also depends on Punjab's and Pakistan's political leaders across the spectrum. I hope every Pakistan leader, regardless of party, will get behind the agenda set out here and avoid the temptation to make education a political football.

I've chosen to risk hyperbole on purpose though, because solving Pakistan's problems is urgent and because I believe they can only be overcome if we – all of us abroad and in Pakistan who care about its people and its future – believe, really believe, that Pakistan doesn't have to be the way it is; that it really could be different; that a successful future depends more than anything on believing it is possible. Punjab's educators have proved in the past year that it is possible. It really is.

**Sir Michael Barber**

March 2013

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5 Herbert Edwardes, quoted in Allen, C. (2000), *Soldier Sahibis: The Men Who Made the North-West Frontier*.

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# 1

## The outcomes

**“I am of the opinion that the boldest measures are the safest.”**  
Lord Nelson on the eve of the Battle of Copenhagen

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Student attendance	14
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**“After January 2013 there are approaching one and a half million extra children aged 5-16 enrolled in school.”**

In December 2010, Mian Shahbaz Sharif, the Chief Minister of Punjab, signed up to what became the Punjab Schools Reform Roadmap. It was a bold plan, based on the global evidence of what works in school system reform, and one which has been systematically taken forward for two years now. Two conclusions can be drawn from the experience so far and summarised as follows:

1. It's working
2. This is only the beginning

This first section summarises the progress that has been made, using the graphs and maps that are shown regularly to the Chief Minister. It also draws on the independent evaluations of the Roadmap so far and on the independent Nielsen surveys of enrolment which now happen every six months.

Section 2 then looks at the origins of the Roadmap; Section 3 at the elements of the strategy; Section 4 at the processes that drive it forward; and finally, Section 5 looks at the lessons learnt for education reform elsewhere and indeed for development policy generally.

\* \* \*

On 22 November 2012, my team and I reported to the Chief Minister on the progress that had been made in the two years since he approved the Roadmap.

We had suggested to him in November 2010 that: “In two years, Punjab can make a ‘quantum leap’ in educational outcomes, as similar systems have.” We showed him the progress that Minas Gerais had made in Brazil between 2006 and 2008 and promised he could do something similar. By November 2012, through the Roadmap, he had done exactly that. As of January 2013, on a conservative estimate, there are approaching one and a half million extra children enrolled in school. In addition, student attendance daily is now over 90 per cent, 81,000 new teachers have been hired on merit and more than 35,000 more teachers are present at school every day than two years ago. Over 90 per cent of schools now have basic facilities in place as opposed to less than 70 per cent two years ago. Importantly, across all the indicators there has been a narrowing of the gender gap, although there is more to do, especially in the south of Punjab.

Districts are now led by officials (Executive District Officers, or EDOs) appointed purely on merit and trained for the role. They are rigorously held accountable for their performance. Teacher guides with lesson plans for each day in the basic subjects have been distributed to all 60,000 government schools (and taken up by many others) and almost 200,000 primary teachers have been trained to use them. The percentage of schools visited each month by administrators has increased from 22 per cent to 97 per cent.

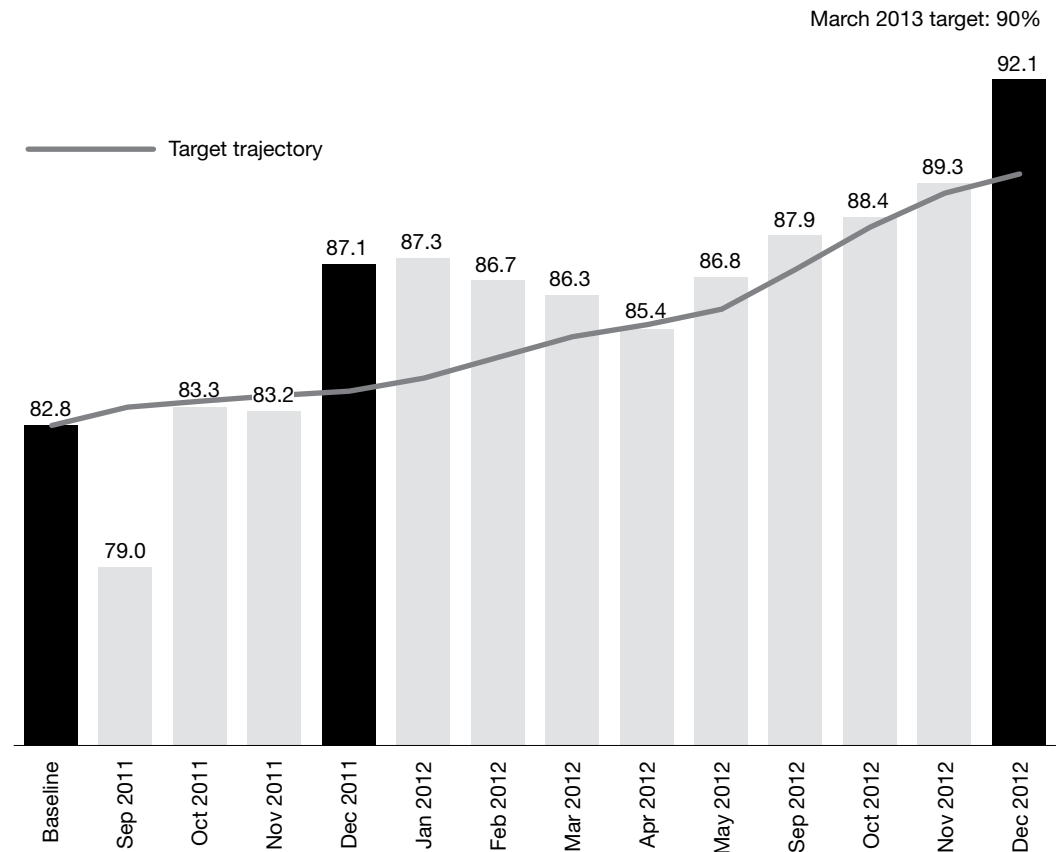
Striking progress, but very much only the beginning; there is much more to do both on these indicators and, above all, on teacher quality. And while they have already begun to improve, student outcomes – the acid test – are only now taking centre stage in the strategy. Moreover, given the state of Punjab's education system (not to mention its economy and its wider social and security problems), although we have moved with breathtaking speed, it is not fast enough. To repeat: this is only the beginning.

The rest of this section summarises progress on key indicators, one by one. It is worth pointing out that the data below, collected by the Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU), were also checked by my own team who made random calls to schools and districts. The Department for International Development (DfID) also checks the data periodically to ensure reliability.

## Student attendance

**Figure 1: Students attending each day (per cent)**

Source: Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU)



Preparation for the Roadmap began formally in January 2011, with full-scale implementation in August 2011. Figure 1 shows the progress made over the 14 months since implementation began. December 2012 represented a new peak. The target that was set in 2011 was exceeded for the first time. As the graph reveals, performance dropped at first; the Roadmap was new to many district officials and not yet seen as a major departure. To make matters worse, in September and October 2011, there was an outbreak of Dengue fever in Lahore and the surrounding regions which closed schools and affected thousands of students and teachers.

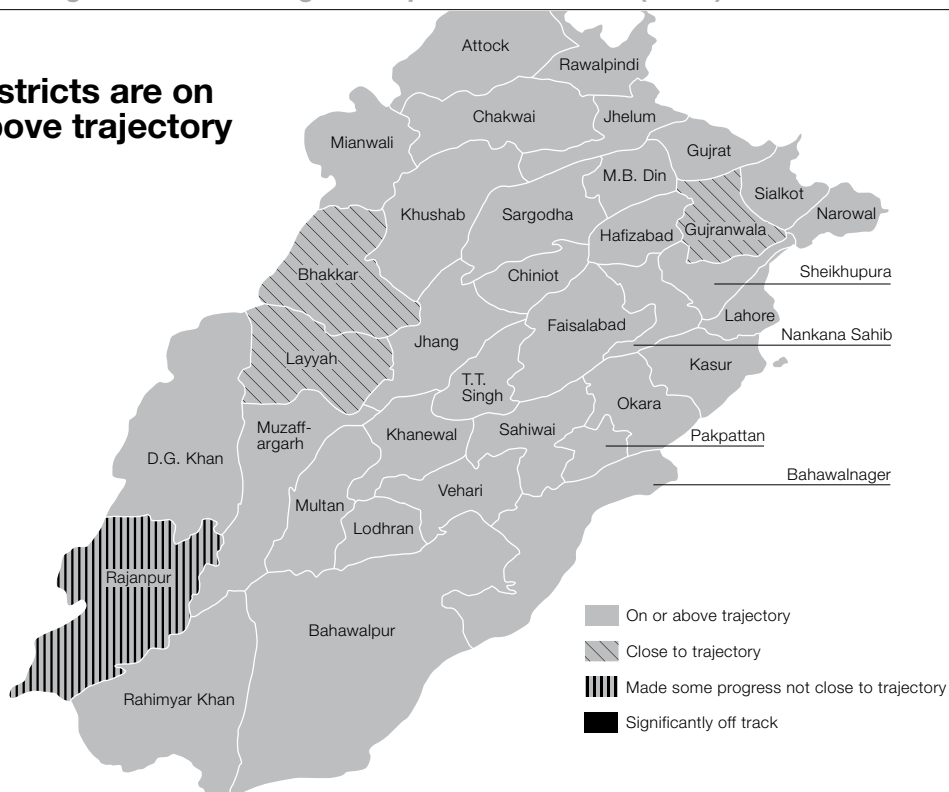
It is worth pointing out that these figures mean one million extra students are now attending school every day. This is not extra enrolment, which we'll come to later, but attendance of those enrolled.



**Figure 2: Student attendance against trajectories, December 2012 (per cent)**

Source: Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU)

**32 districts are on or above trajectory**



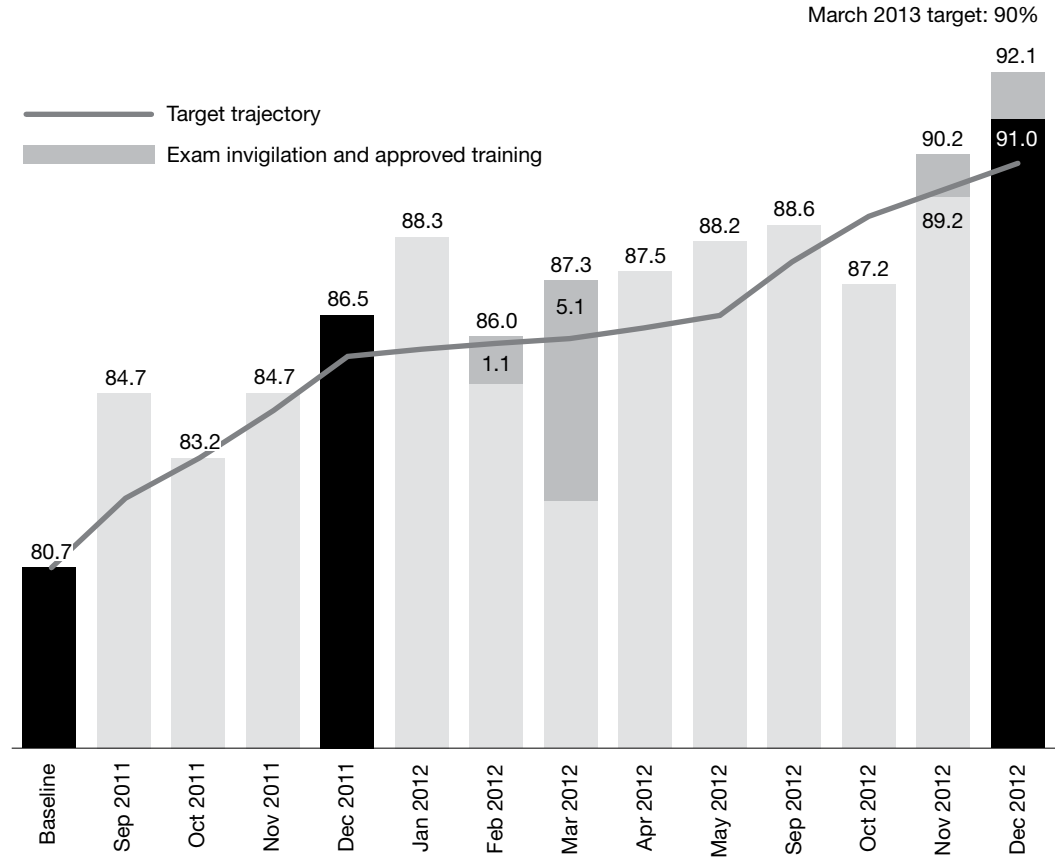
District	Performance	Target	Delta
<b>Green (Grey)</b>			
Nankana Sahib	92.0	86.3	5.8
Bahawalnagar	94.7	90	4.7
Gujrat	94.5	90	4.5
Jhelum	94.4	90	4.4
Sargodha	94.4	90	4.4
Faisalabad	94.4	90	4.4
Pakpattan	90.4	86.2	4.2
T.T. Singh	95.1	90.9	4.2
D.G. Khan	85.5	81.4	4.0
Jhang	93.9	90	3.9
Rawalpindi	93.9	90	3.9
Mandi Bahauddin	93.7	90	3.7
Sheikhupura	93.6	90	3.6
Lahore	93.4	90	3.4
Khushab	93.2	90	3.2
Okara	94.8	92	2.8
Multan	92.5	89.7	2.7
Sialkot	92.6	90	2.6
Khanewal	93.0	90.4	2.6
Attock	92.4	90	2.4
Bahawalpur	92.3	90.2	2.1
Chakwal	93.8	91.8	2.0
Chiniot	91.8	90	1.8
Vehari	91.7	90	1.7
Hafizabad	91.7	90	1.7
Lodhran	91.7	90	1.7
Sahiwal	92.3	90.7	1.6
Muzaffargarh	88.3	87.1	1.2
Kasur	91.2	90	1.2
Rahimyar Khan	88.5	87.6	0.9
Narowal	89.7	88.9	0.8
Mianwali	89.7	89.4	0.3
<b>Amber Green (Diagonal Lines)</b>			
Gujranwala	89.4	90	-0.6
Layyah	88.6	89.3	-0.8
Bhakkar	89.1	90	-0.9
<b>Amber Red (Vertical Lines)</b>			
Rajanpur	78.5	84.3	-5.8

The heat map on page 14 shows the variation by district. Performance is up everywhere; the red or amber-red indicates variation from a planned trajectory rather than absolute performance.

### Teacher presence

**Figure 3: Teachers present at time of inspection (per cent)**

Source: Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU)



**“This level of teacher presence is far higher than elsewhere in Pakistan... It is now higher in Punjab than it is in any of the other 22 countries supported by the DfID.”**

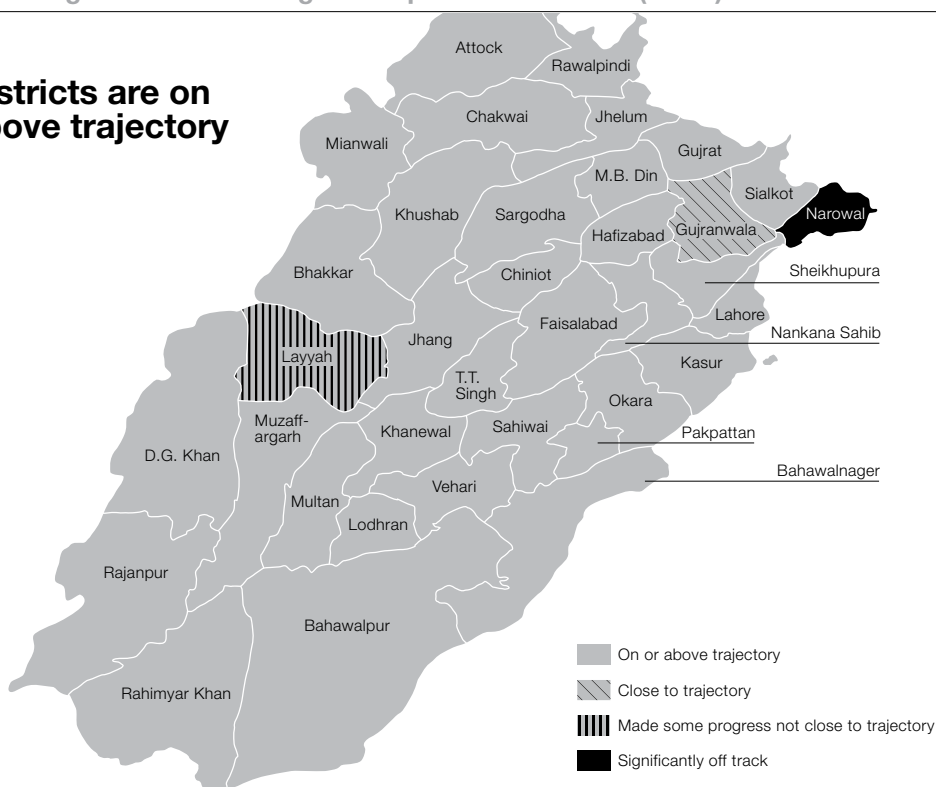
Teacher presence has risen steadily since the blip in October 2011 which was in part a result of the Dengue fever outbreak. February and March are when the Punjab Education Commission (PEC) exams are administered, which results in teachers being redeployed from teaching to invigilation and marking. December 2012 again represented a new peak of over 90 per cent presence. This level of teacher presence is far higher than elsewhere in Pakistan and, incidentally, than in most of India and Bangladesh. In fact, it is now higher in Punjab than it is in any of the other 22 countries supported by the DfID.

These improvements are largely a result of much-improved management and particularly from squeezing unauthorised absence to below 1 per cent.

**Figure 4: Teacher presence against trajectories, December 2012 (per cent)**

Source: Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU) December 2012

**33 districts are on or above trajectory**



District	Performance	Target	Delta
<b>Green (Grey)</b>			
Gujrat	93.9	86.7	7.2
Jhang	96.0	90.0	6.0
Rawalpindi	95.1	90.0	5.1
Okara	94.7	90.0	4.7
Faisalabad	95.8	91.2	4.5
Nankana Sahib	92.6	88.2	4.4
Chiniot	94.0	90.0	4.0
Lodhran	94.3	90.5	3.7
T.T. Singh	94.0	90.2	3.7
Chakwal	93.4	90.0	3.4
Khanewal	93.1	90.0	3.1
Jhelum	93.0	90.0	3.0
Sargodha	93.0	90.0	3.0
Bahawalnager	92.9	90.0	2.9
D.G. Khan	92.3	90.0	2.3
Multan	92.2	90.0	2.2
Vehari	92.1	90.0	2.1
Rahimyar Khan	92.1	90.0	2.1
Bhakkar	92.1	90.0	2.1
Hafizabad	91.7	90.0	1.7
Bahawalpur	91.6	90.0	1.6
Sheikhupura	91.2	90.0	1.2
Sialkot	91.2	90.0	1.2
Lahore	91.2	90.0	1.2
Attock	90.9	90.0	0.9
Muzaffargarh	90.9	90.0	0.9
Kasur	90.2	89.5	0.7
Khushab	90.7	90.0	0.7
Sahiwal	91.9	91.3	0.6
Mianwali	90.5	90.0	0.5
Pakpattan	90.4	90.0	0.4
Rajanpur	83.9	83.6	0.3
Mandi Bahauddin	89.9	90.0	-0.1
<b>Diagonal lines</b>			
Gujranwala	86.7	88.0	-1.4
<b>Vertical lines</b>			
Layyah	86.6	89.8	-3.2
<b>Black</b>			
Narowal	86.8	90.0	-3.2

**“Every district is now performing above the provincial average of 2 years ago and 31 districts now have 90 per cent attendance. None did in September 2011.”**

As with student attendance, the heat map shows which districts are on trajectory and which have more to do. All have improved significantly. Remarkably, every single district is now above the provincial average when the baseline was set two years ago and 31 districts now have 90 per cent attendance. None did in September 2011. This means 35,000 extra teachers are at schools each day and 800,000 more students have a teacher to teach them.

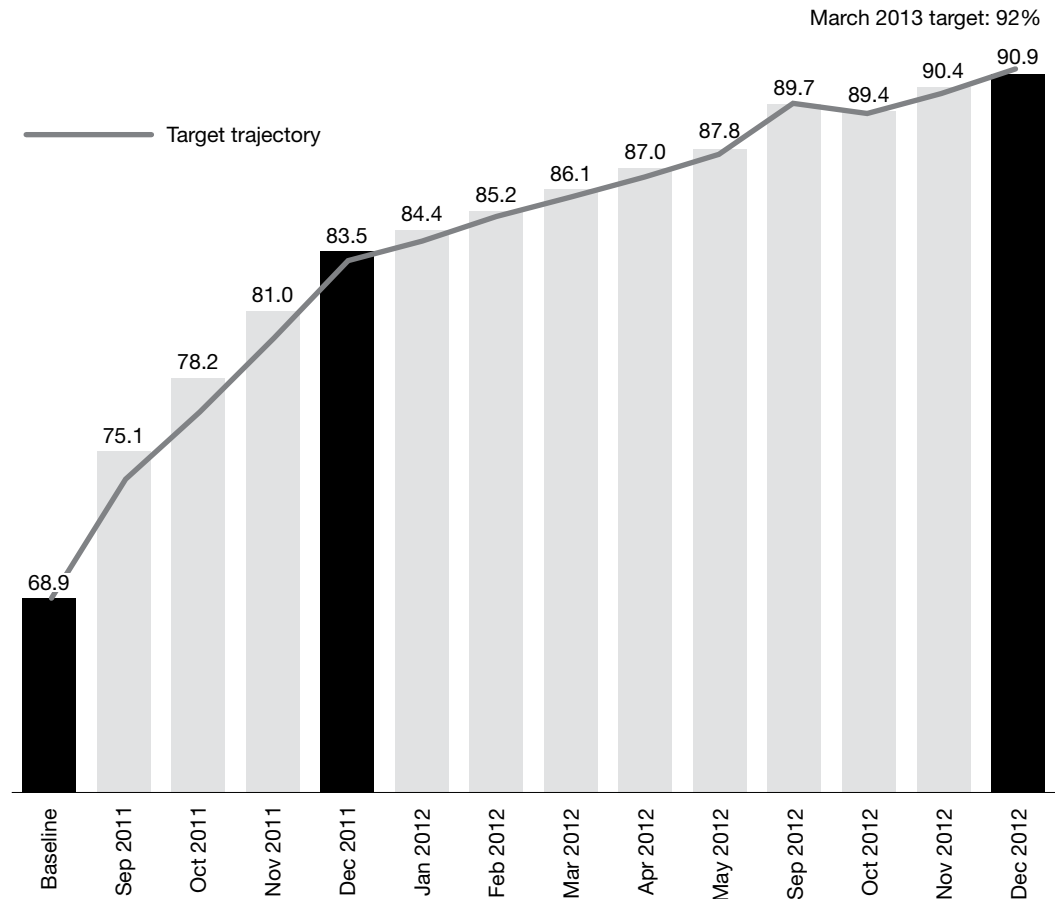
### Available and functioning facilities

The provision of functioning facilities rose rapidly in the first few months of the Roadmap. The combination of funding at school level and the pressure of accountability made it a straightforward target to address in the first phase. As performance moved towards 90 per cent it inevitably became more difficult to maintain the rate of progress. Even so, in December 2012, the indicator passed the 90 per cent mark for the first time, falling only 1.1 per cent short of the 2013 target.

The additional funding for facilities in the south of the province (where the challenge is greatest), released in December 2012, should enable further progress to be made in the first quarter of 2013. There is still much to do, especially in the South Western districts such as Rajanpur. Even so, it is worth pointing out that even Rajanpur now exceeds the province-wide average of two years ago.

**Figure 5: Facilities with functioning electricity, drinking water, toilet and boundary walls (per cent)**

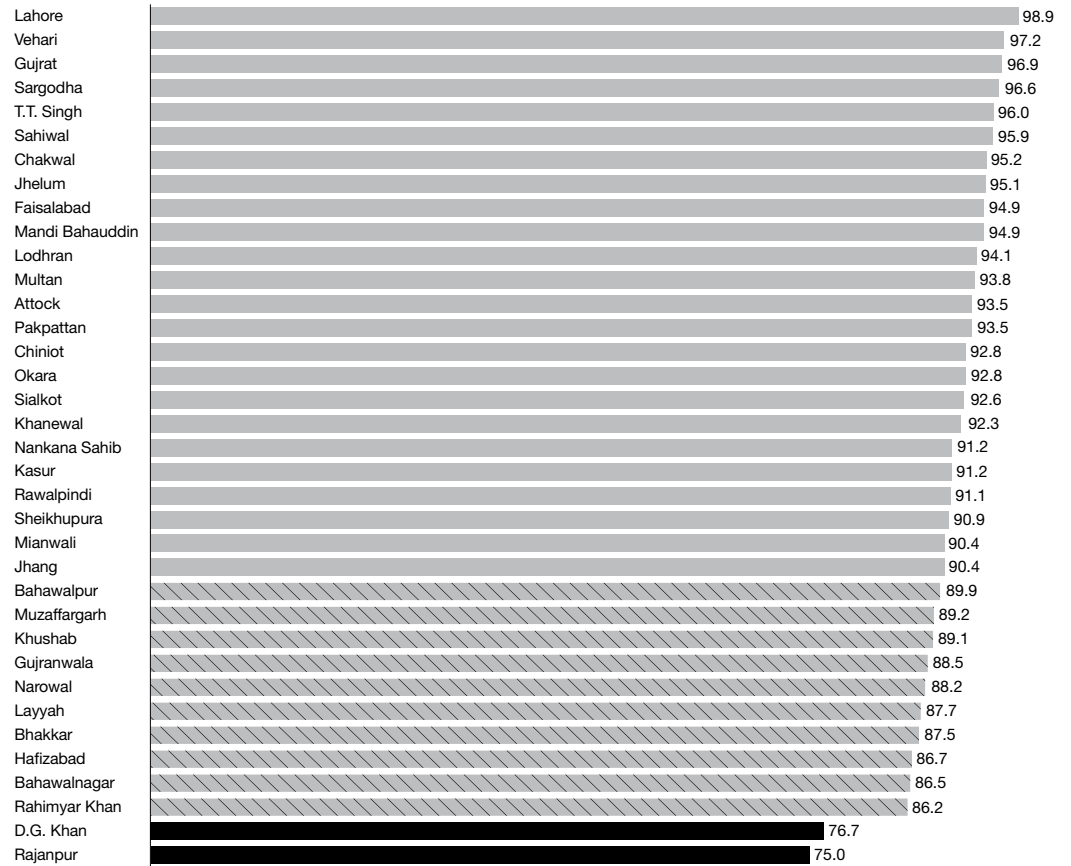
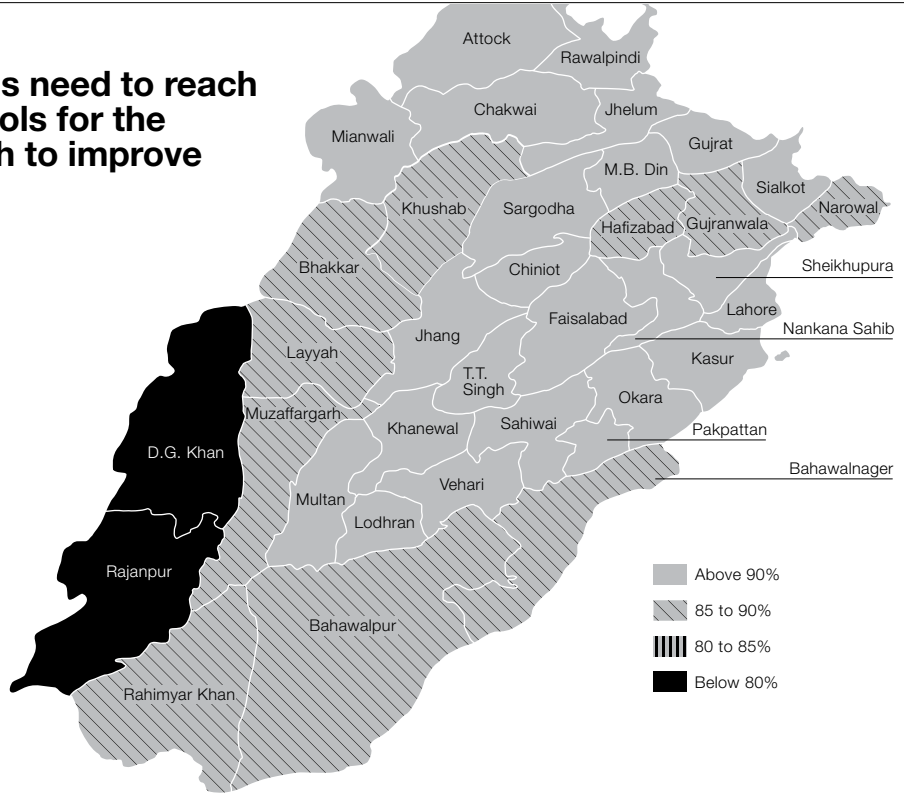
Source: Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU)



**Figure 6: Functioning of school facilities by state, December 2012 (per cent)**

Source: Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU) December 2012

**Funds need to reach schools for the South to improve**

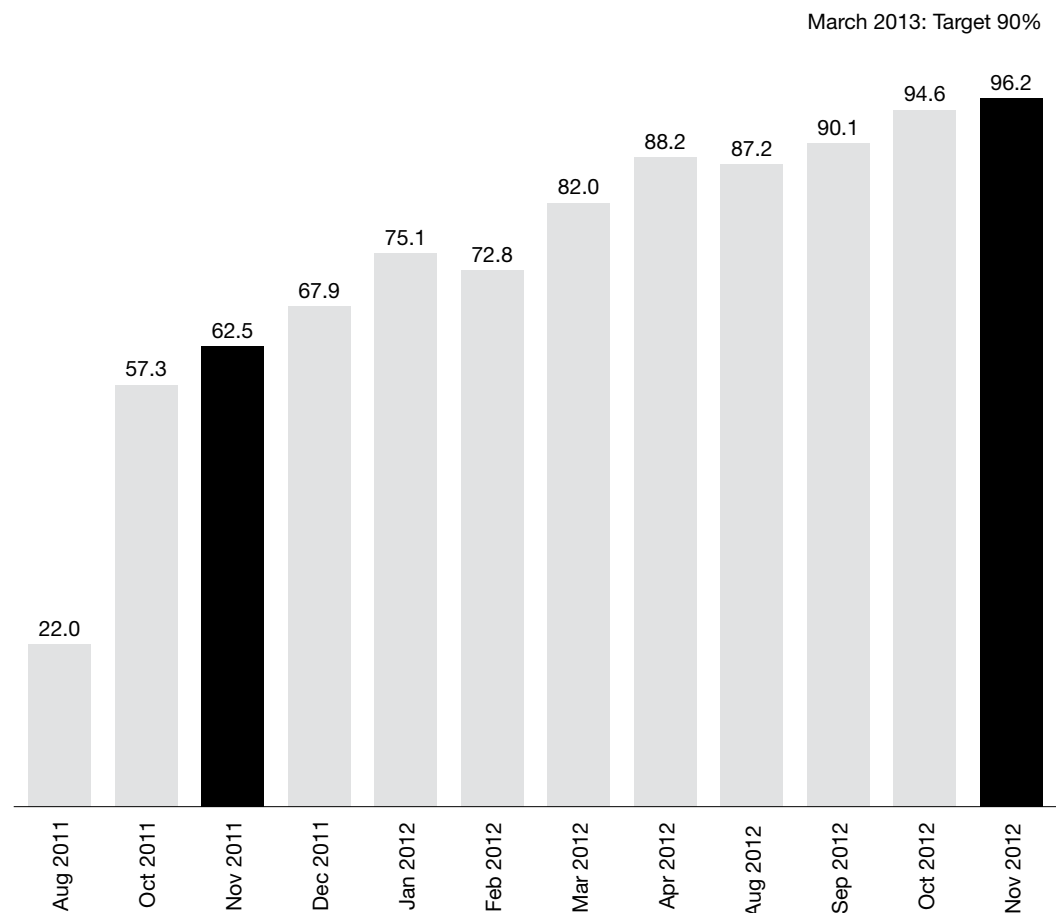


## Administrator visits

From a very low base – just 22 per cent of schools being visited each month – there has been rapid and steady improvement in the percentage of schools visited each month by administrators, as Figure 7 below shows.

**Figure 7: Schools visited by district administrators (per cent)**

Source: Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU)



**“To put it in the simplest possible terms, prior to the Roadmap, most schools were barely managed or held accountable at all; now they are.”**

This is the bedrock of delivering the Roadmap goals. To put it in the simplest possible terms, prior to the Roadmap, most schools were barely managed or held accountable at all; now they are.

## Expansion of the Punjab Education Foundation

A key part of the Roadmap has been the funding channelled through the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) which enables poor children to attend low cost private schools: free at the point of use. The most radical element of this part of the strategy is the voucher scheme which provides PKR500 (US \$15) per child to the out-of-school children of poor families. As Table 1 below shows, the voucher scheme expanded rapidly in 2011-12 and is now enabling over 140,000 largely out of school children to attend low-cost private schools. Since the data shows that these schools on the whole achieve better outcomes for less cost, the programme has significant implications for the future. Table 1 shows the number of pupils being educated under the voucher scheme (EVS); the New Schools Programme (NSP), which funds non-state providers to open schools in areas where government provision is weak or lacking, and the Foundation Assisted Programme (FAS), which funds all the places in registered low-cost private schools so that school is free at point of use for students.

**Table 1: Number of pupils admitted under Punjab Education Foundation schemes (August 2011 – June 2012)**

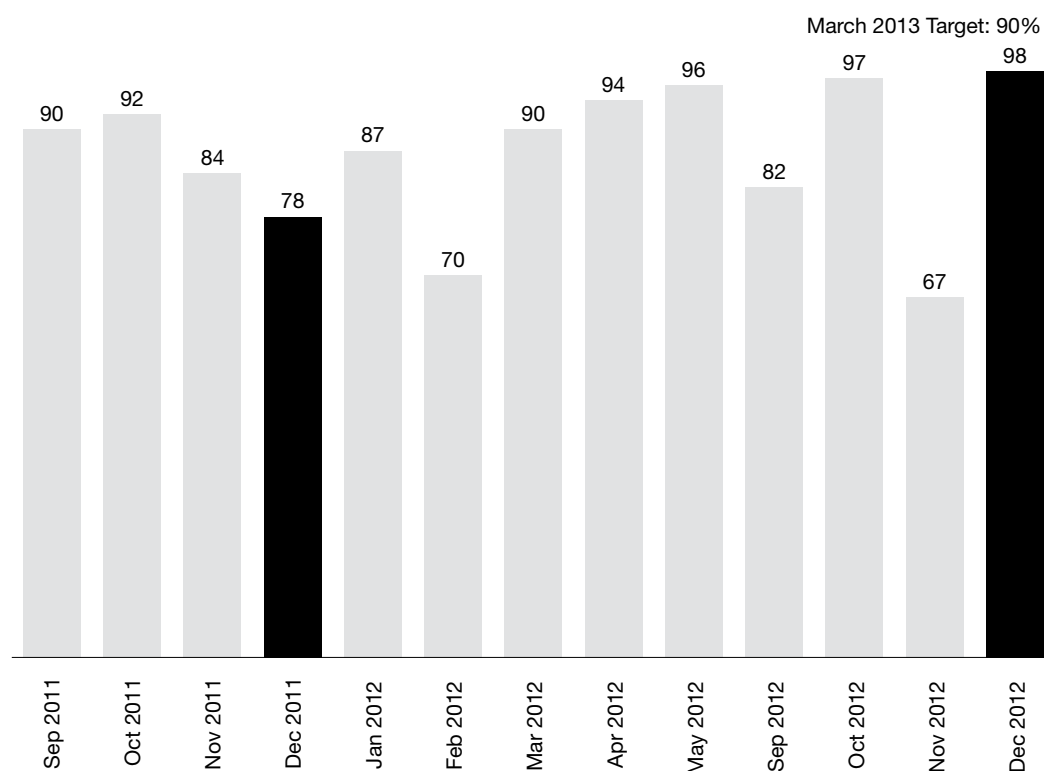
	Aug '11	Mar '12	End of Apr '12	End of Jun '12	Total
Number of children admitted under EVS	40,000	40,000	60,000		140,000
Number of children admitted under NSP	30,000	-	10,000		40,000
Number of children admitted under FAS	1,100,000	-	-	100,000	1,200,000

## Monitoring visits

The collection of the monitoring data on which all these graphs are based has been a vital part of the Roadmap since the beginning. The data is collected not by the administrators, who would have an incentive to manipulate it, but by an entirely separate cadre of 900 District Monitoring Officers (DMOs), most of them ex-army. Between them they visit almost all the 60,000 government schools every month.

**Figure 8: Schools visited by Monitoring Officers for data collection (per cent)**

Source: Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU)



The expected performance of DMOs has been at or around the target level from the outset. The drop in February 2012 seemed to be as a result of complacency – perhaps some officers felt that data collection during the month of the PEC exams was not as

important. This has been corrected. The drops in September and November 2012 were due to strikes among some of the monitoring officers. Even in these months, data collection was sufficient to provide valid samples. The issues involved in the strikes appear to have been resolved.

The Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit, which is responsible for data collection and its analysis, answers to the Secretary for Schools but otherwise has an entirely separate line of accountability from those responsible for delivering the outcomes. The data it collects is analysed with the help of my team and, where there are anomalies, questions are asked and checks are made. In a small number of cases where data has been evidently falsified, officials have been moved on.

This data is therefore certainly good enough to rely on for management purposes, but on its own is never going to be wholly convincing to a sceptical public, either in Pakistan or elsewhere. The good news is that all the independent evidence we have reinforces the positive picture the Punjab data paints.

## Enrolment

A key indicator, both for the citizens of Punjab and the global community waiting to see whether the 2015 Millennium Development Goals will be delivered, is enrolment. For this we did not want to rely on self-reporting, so in 2011 we commissioned Nielsen to conduct an independent survey every six months. The survey is of a sufficient scale to give us a representative sample in each district as well as in the province as a whole. It has now been completed on three occasions: December 2011, June 2012 and December 2012.

In summary, the results show that, on a cautious estimate of the pre-Nielsen baseline, approaching a million and a half extra students aged 5 to 16 have been enrolled in either public or private schools in Punjab in the past two years.<sup>6</sup> There has been progress in every quarter of the province, in urban and rural areas and among both boys and girls. The private sector plays a significant part in ensuring enrolment, providing for around 40 per cent of students in the province, while the other 60 per cent are in the government sector.

The following charts show the progress for five to nine year olds, district by district, across the province in each of the three Nielsen surveys. We are making incremental progress but, as the charts reveal, we have much more to do in a number of districts in the south and west of Punjab.

<sup>6</sup> Putting a precise number to enrolment outcomes is fraught with difficulty, not because Nielsen are in any way unreliable; their samples are good and their percentages reliable. The problem is that no one is sure exactly how many school age children there are in Punjab. Estimates vary from 25 million at the low end to 32 million at the high end. It is worth pointing out that the difference between these estimates is equal to the total number of students in school in England.



**Figure 9: Enrolment of 5-9 year olds (per cent)**

Source: Nielsen Household Survey December 2012; November 2011

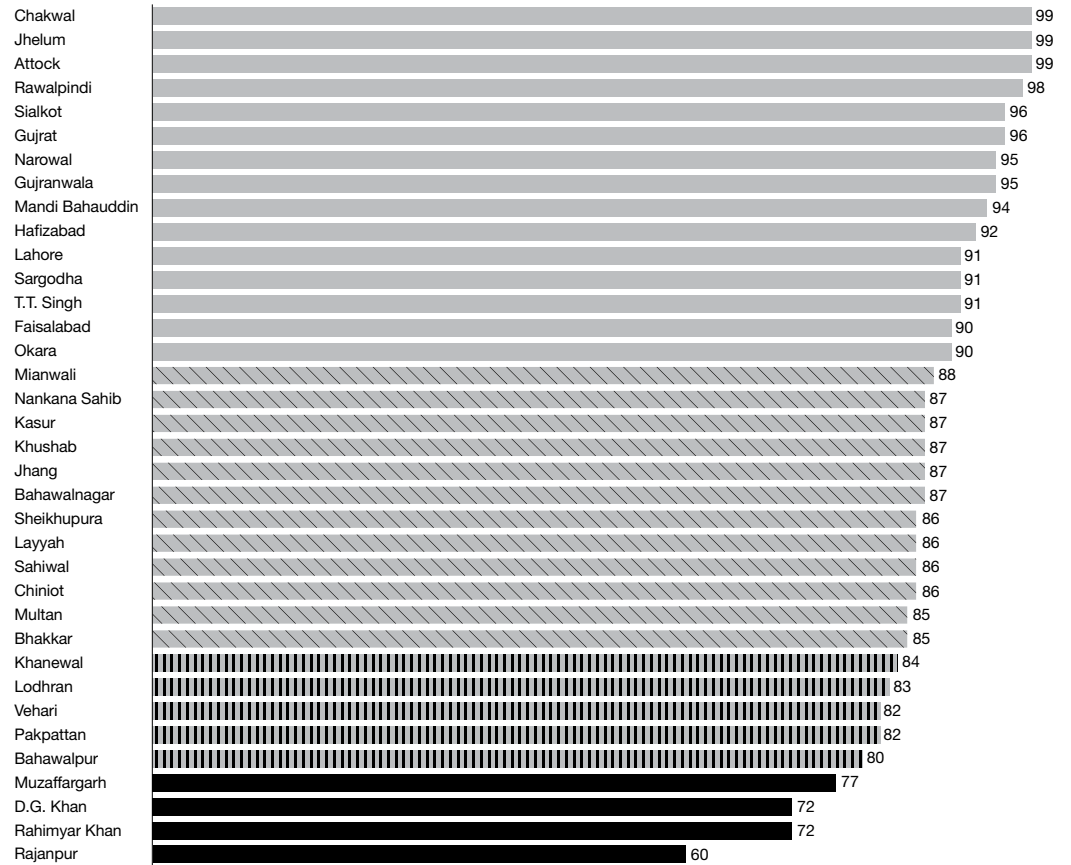
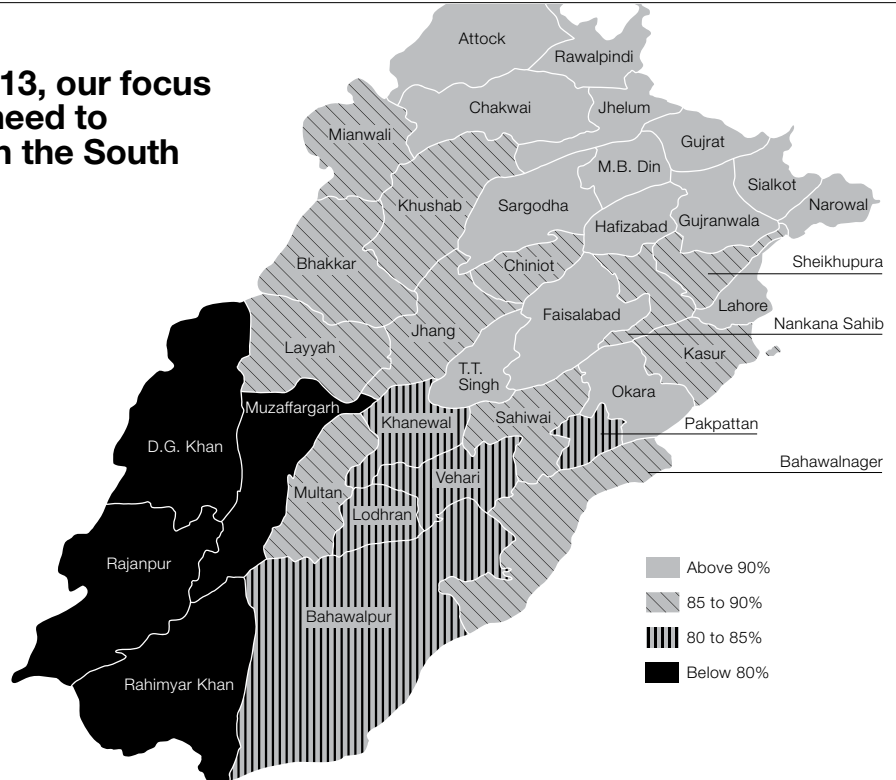
**29 of 36 districts showed improvement over the year**

	Enrolment of 5-9 year-olds, Dec 2012, %	Change since November 2011, %
Chakwal	99	3
Jhelum	99	2
Attock	99	4
Rawalpindi	98	4
Sialkot	96	0
Gujrat	96	2
Narowal	95	0
Gujranwala	95	0
Mandi Bahauddin	94	3
Hafizabad	92	1
Lahore	91	-1
Sargodha	91	6
T.T. Singh	91	1
Faisalabad	90	1
Okara	90	3
Mianwali	88	4
Nankana Sahib	87	0
Kasur	87	-2
Khushab	87	0
Jhang	87	0
Bahawalnagar	87	7
Sheikhupura	86	1
Layyah	86	6
Sahiwal	86	5
Chiniot	86	4
Multan	85	4
Bhakkar	85	2
Khanewal	84	2
Lodhran	83	11
Vehari	82	2
Pakpattan	82	2
Bahawalpur	80	4
Muzaffargarh	77	0
D.G. Khan	72	-1
Rahimyar Khan	72	5
Rajanpur	60	0

**Figure 10: Enrolment of 5-9 year olds, December 2012 (per cent)**

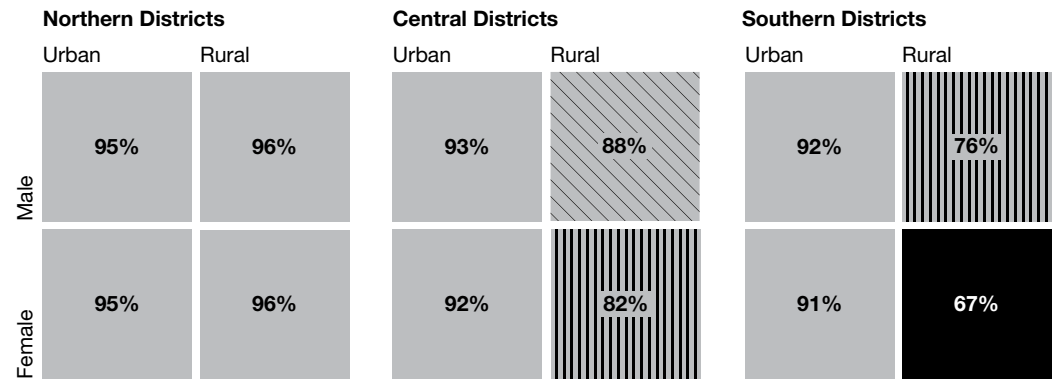
Source: Nielsen Household Survey, December 2012

**In 2013, our focus will need to be on the South**



**Figure 11: Enrolment of 5-9 year olds by district, December 2012 (per cent)**

Source: Nielsen Household Survey, December 2012

**We need to focus on rural areas, and girls in particular**

We are grinding out increments, but there remain significant challenges. Even as we approach 90 per cent enrolment across the five to nine age range, we see the importance and urgency of accelerating now if the Millennium Development Goal, set for 2015, is to be achieved. Moreover, much of the additional enrolment of primary age children is of six year olds into Kaachi (or kindergarten) classes. We have much more to do to increase enrolment across the entire six to 11 age group, where progress over the past year has been insufficient. And of course, primary enrolment is not enough.

Moreover, with the remorseless growth of Punjab's population, 100 per cent enrolment is a moving target. As the Secretary-Schools commented, not entirely joking, "Unless I can be Secretary-Population as well as Secretary-Schools, we will always struggle."

**Independent evaluations**

In addition to the internal management data and the Nielsen surveys, there have been two independent evaluations of the Roadmap so far.

The first of these was conducted by a team acting on behalf of the Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI) which examined not just the Roadmap but DfID's education work as a whole.

The ICAI was set up by the newly-elected Coalition Government in the UK in 2010 with a remit to rigorously evaluate the impact of aid expenditure. The Government was determined to have an independent and respected group examining the increased aid expenditure to which it had committed itself. The ICAI has been a hard taskmaster, fully justifying its existence, as those responsible for the DfID's programmes in East Africa, Afghanistan and Nigeria, for example, will testify. The ICAI bluntly remarked on the DfID's education programmes in East Africa that, "a rapid expansion in enrolment has led to a decline in quality ... little attention was paid to sequencing and trade-off..."<sup>7</sup> The ICAI uses a four-point traffic light scale, and the education work in Punjab was the first to receive Amber-Green as opposed to Amber-Red or Red. This is what the ICAI had to say about the Roadmap:

<sup>7</sup> Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI) (2012), *DfID's Education Programme in Three East African Countries*.

**“The Punjab Education Reform Roadmap is an excellent example of how a well-designed monitoring system can be integral to the design of a reform programme.”**

“[The DfID education programme in Pakistan is] sophisticated, multi-dimensional and innovative, with a balanced approach to access, equity and quality... [The Roadmap is] an innovative monitoring tool which has proved to be a very good platform for policy dialogue... [there are] some promising early results, including improving education quality. We welcome experiments in working with the low-cost private sector as a potentially cost-effective way of reaching out-of-school children. It is too early to assess whether the results are sustainable and scalable.”

The ICAI goes on to say:

“The Punjab Education Reform Roadmap is an excellent example of how a well-designed monitoring system can be integral to the design of a reform programme. A team led by Sir Michael Barber ... facilitates a stocktake every two months ... One of the outputs of the stocktake is a ‘heat map’ of school performance by district. ... This provides the Chief Minister of the Punjab with a real-time picture of the performance of the education system across the province.

Breaking down the results by district has a number of advantages. It draws attention to the continued underperformance of schools in the rural south – a result of inequitable patterns of resource allocation as well as more challenging social conditions... By highlighting stronger and weaker districts, it helps the programme to highlight problems ... and promising innovations... We would like to see the programme undertaking more qualitative analysis of the reasons underlying performance variations across the districts.”<sup>8</sup>

In its summary of the aid programme in Pakistan, it gives the education programme a high rating.

**Figure 12: Independent Commission on Aid Impact rating of the British aid programme in Pakistan**

Source: ICAI, May 2012

	Objectives	Delivery	Impact	Learning	Overall
Education					
Health					
Humanitarian/ Cash Transfers					
Overall					

The second independent evaluation was commissioned by the DfID from Semiotics. Its conclusions are currently subject to peer review and due to be published later, but their debrief for me was very positive. In addition, participants and those close to the Roadmap in Punjab are increasingly excited about the prospects. In January 2013, the Chief Minister of Punjab, who admittedly has as powerful an interest as any in this work, called it a “roaring success story”. Less directly involved, Rachid Benmassaoud who heads the World Bank Pakistan, called it “the best of the best”.

8 Independent Commission on Aid Impact (2012), *DfID’s Education Programme in Three East African Countries*, p.21.

Further independent confirmation of the impact of the Roadmap came in the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) results published on 28 January 2013, based on data gathered some months earlier and in rural areas only. The ASER confirmed:

- > “A significant rise in student attendance from 81 per cent to 86 per cent, and thus consistent with the PMIU data.
- > Dramatic improvement in provision of facilities (eg. over a year, the per centage of schools with toilets is up from 70 per cent to 87 per cent).
- > A reduction in teacher absence, though less than the PMIU data shows.”

In addition, ASER saw:

- > “Significant gains in learning outcomes, with increases of 5-10 per cent in the number of children achieving basic levels.”<sup>9</sup>

Only in relation to enrolment was there a discrepancy with our data. ASER showed no change over the year. Their sample is much smaller than Nielsen’s and their data was collected some months earlier, and on this theme may be less reliable, but we are investigating the discrepancy in any case.

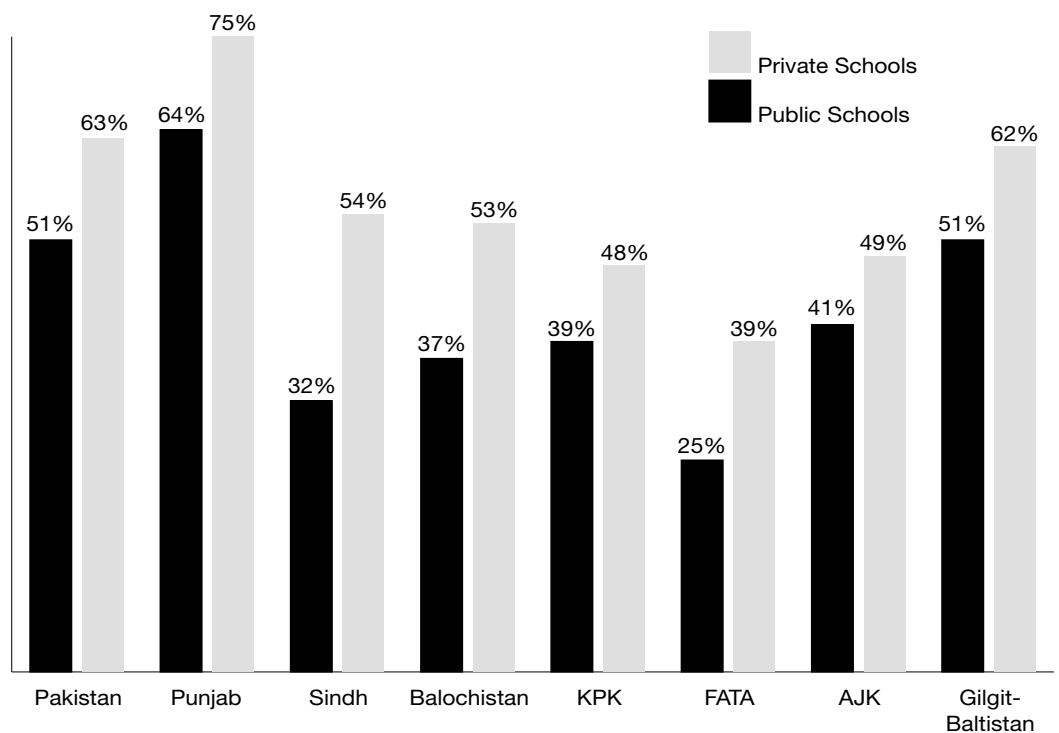
Interestingly, ASER also conducts a similar survey in India every year, which enables us to compare Punjab in Pakistan with Punjab in India, just across the border. In ASER’s 2011 surveys, undertaken just as the Roadmap went into implementation, the two Punjab had broadly similar results. A year later in 2012, Punjab in Pakistan is significantly ahead on most major key indicators.

Finally, the 2013 Next Generation Pakistan Survey of 18-29 year olds includes the following chart. It shows that, among this age group, the percentage who think schools have improved in Punjab far exceeds that in other provinces. On public schools alone, the positive percentage in Punjab is double that in the most comparable other province, Sindh.

**“Among this age group [18-29 year olds], the percentage that thinks schools have improved in Punjab far exceeds that in other provinces.”**

**Figure 13: 18-29 year olds that think schools have improved (per cent)**

Source: Next Generation Pakistan Survey 2013



Overall, therefore, all evidence so far points in the same direction. The Roadmap is working. This degree of progress at this speed across a province with 20 million school students, 60,000 government schools, 35,000 low-cost private schools and over 300,000 teachers is remarkable and may indeed be unprecedented.

However, as we know, it is only the beginning. There are two major hurdles to overcome before the Roadmap can be considered transformative. First, we will soon need convincing evidence soon of improvement in student outcomes. This is because, as Erik Hanushek argued in 1995, “the continued expansion of low-quality schools – often thought to be a step on the path to ... high quality schools – may actually be a self-defeating strategy.”<sup>10</sup> The evidence we do have is promising and points in the right direction, but it is also flawed. The PEC exam results in 2012 showed significant progress, but there are questions about their reliability and also about corruption. The internal evidence collected by the Department of Staff Development (DSD) in Lahore also shows significant improvement. This has been helpful in management terms but it is generally accepted that the collection of this data lacks rigour.

The plan is that, in 2013, we will put in place a valid and reliable test of a province-wide sample which we can repeat every six months. We may go further in time and ensure a sample big enough to give us district-by-district results as well as provincial results. This new monitoring would go hand in hand with the new approach to teacher quality due to be in place from April 2013.

**“Irreversibility means not being satisfied merely with an improvement in outcomes, but asking whether the structures and culture are in place that will guarantee the right trajectory of results for the foreseeable future.”**

The second major issue is summed up in the question I most often get asked, which is “Is it sustainable?” The answer to that on one level is as simple as the question: of course it’s not sustainable yet; whether it continues or not depends on what the leaders involved decide to do.

However, it’s worth going deeper here. Part of the problem with this question is that in development circles the word “sustainability” has become so hollowed-out as to become almost meaningless. At its worst, it has become a means of questioning ambition and boldness: “Don’t try that, it may not be sustainable!” In this sense, it has turned into a means of defending the status quo or at best promoting incrementalism.

The truth is, at this moment, I don’t know whether the Roadmap will turn out to be sustainable. What I do know is that the status quo in Pakistan – in education and more generally – is absolutely not sustainable. It is frankly dangerous. I also know that incremental change is not enough for a country in dire straits. Pakistan is a country that simply cannot afford to write off another generation.

Therefore on the balance of risk, bold and urgent action at scale looks like much the better option to me. As Horatio Nelson, the great Admiral, said on the eve of battle at Copenhagen, “I am of the opinion that the boldest measures are the safest.”<sup>11</sup> This sums up perfectly how I see the state of affairs in Pakistan. The “sustainability” crowd can speak for themselves; in any case, the word has become such a distraction that I prefer to avoid it altogether. We should aim for irreversibility, which has a very specific meaning.

“Irreversibility means not being satisfied merely with an improvement in outcomes, but asking whether the structures and culture are in place that will guarantee the right trajectory of results for the foreseeable future. How can the changes be made to stick?”<sup>12</sup>

This is a tough test and on this measure it is clear that the Roadmap is still far from irreversible. If the Chief Minister and I stopped paying attention, if my team were to be disbanded, if the normal musical chairs among officials began again, it would rapidly

<sup>10</sup> Hanushek E, *Interpreting recent trends on schooling in developing countries*, World Bank Observer, vol. 10, no. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Sugden, J. (2012), *Nelson: The Sword of Albion*, p. 418.

<sup>12</sup> Barber, M. et al (2010), *Deliverology 101*, p. 33.

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**“In short, for Punjab the goal should be irreversibility. We’ll know that we’ve achieved it when the structures and incentives are changed to ensure its continuation, when the culture has changed and everyone involved expects continued success.”**

unravel. To emphasise this point, at one stocktake in 2012 we told the Chief Minister the cautionary tale of Madhya Pradesh in India. When we first proposed a Roadmap in November 2010, Madhya Pradesh was “Exhibit A”: serious progress in a big Indian state between 2006 and 2008. However, with a change of Chief Minister and change of policy, the results changed too. By 2011, results in Madhya Pradesh were below where they had been at the start of its improvement journey five years earlier.

In short, for Punjab the goal should be irreversibility, and that is a minimum of two to three years away. We’ll know we’ve achieved it when the structures and incentives are changed to ensure its continuation, when the culture has changed and everyone involved expects continued success, when the results have changed so completely that the public has confidence, and when the citizens of Punjab (and their political leaders) can see and feel the change for themselves and would protest any attempt to turn the clock back.

At that point, many of those currently on the sidelines, criticising or waiting to see, will not just say it was the right thing to do and it was easy; they’ll claim it was their idea. So be it. In the meantime, the leaders of the Roadmap need the courage to keep doing exactly what they are doing now. We’re on track to irreversibility. Resolute determination is the key. This time it’s going to be different.

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# 2

## The origins

**“Did the flood make your schools better?”**

The author to Pakistan’s leaders

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**“Pakistan had 62 years of reports and experts, sector plans and political promises. What Pakistan lacked was the capacity or even the serious intent to implement the plan.”**

## Political origins

I first visited Pakistan on 13-14 August 2009. The country was celebrating its National Day, 62 years after independence. I flew to Islamabad from New Orleans via Houston and Dubai, reading about Pakistan (and sleeping a lot) on the long journey. I promised myself that I would not be one of those experts who flew in, summed up the situation and flew out again. In a two-day whirl of activity, including meeting the Prime Minister and a host of officials, donors and representatives of business and civil society, I learnt a lot. When the final meeting with my Department for International Development (DfID) hosts came round and they asked me what was needed, contrary to my promise to myself I knew exactly how to sum up the situation. The problem was, in a single word, “implementation”. Pakistan had 62 years of reports and experts, sector plans and political promises. There had even been published, a month or so earlier, a National Education Plan supported by all the provinces and the Federal Government. It was a sound plan. What Pakistan lacked was the capacity or even the serious intent to implement the plan. As with the previous 25 Education Plans in Pakistan’s history, this plan would remain just words. Everyone I spoke to agreed with me – the problem was implementation, or more precisely the lack of it. And implementation, or delivery, was what I specialised in. It was what I had been responsible for in the Blair administration and had worked on since in places as diverse as Louisiana and Malaysia.

A few weeks earlier, Pakistan had not even remotely been on my radar. I had dropped in to see a former colleague from No.10, David Miliband, then Foreign Secretary, more socially than otherwise. In the course of our conversation, he asked me what I thought about Pakistan. “The most dangerous place on the planet,” I said, on the basis of a weekly read of *The Economist*. The mix of conflict – that year the Taliban had captured the Swat valley, less than 100 kilometres from Islamabad – with poverty, poor governance, bad international relations and a nuclear arsenal, made for a dangerous cocktail.

David’s much more informed analysis had led him to the same conclusion. No Foreign Secretary had ever given Pakistan more attention than he had; the West could keep trying to tackle Pakistan’s security situation, but unless some of the basic institutions of the state – the education system included – changed, the problems would recur. The State in Pakistan had not failed completely, but in many respects it was failing. At which point, prompted by his advisor, Ravi Gurumurthy, David asked whether I would be willing to assist Pakistan with its education problem. Perhaps, he suggested, he could formally invite me to write a report on its education system?

A year or so earlier, outside the Quaker Meeting House in Washington DC, I had read a poster that asked, “What do you do in your life to remove the causes of war?” It was a very a very tough question. Here was a possible answer for me. So I leapt at the opportunity to contribute if I could to solving one part of one of the world’s most intractable problems, and also to work with David again. I was sceptical about writing a report though, and was wondering in the back of my mind whether I would ever be able to find the time. I agreed to make one visit to assess the state of affairs and report back to him. The report back a few weeks later was simple. To misquote a phrase attributed to Bill Clinton: “It’s the implementation, stupid!”

From this, the Pakistan Education Task Force was born and announced later in 2009 by Gordon Brown, the British Prime Minister, and President Zardari of Pakistan. It would be co-Chaired by Shahnaz Wazir Ali, the impressive Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on the Social Sector, and me. The wheels of bureaucracy turned in both countries. Membership of the Task Force was agreed, along with Terms of Reference and DfID

support. I made a second visit in December 2009 and a third a month later to chair the Task Force for the first time. At the time, I coined the phrase “this time it’s going to be different” and repeated it constantly over my monthly visits thereafter. I was determined it would be different; I just wasn’t sure how.

Looking back, those visits between December 2009 and July 2010, though formally to chair the Task Force, were really about learning and understanding. With the single word “implementation” and a catchphrase, “this time it’s going to be different”, I was most definitely onto something, but my ignorance was vast. So I met people, visited schools all over the country and built relationships with leading Pakistanis and members of the donor community. I read books – lots of them. I talked regularly with my colleague Fenton Whelan who, during 2010, was my person in the Task Force Secretariat and a powerful intellectual force who has made a major commitment to Pakistan ever since. Above all, I listened and learnt. Some of the learning was in observing small details: on one occasion, passing a half-darkened room next to where the Task Force was meeting in Islamabad, I noticed four civil servants asleep at their desks.

**“The task I had come to do was still to be done. Pakistan’s education emergency was, in economic terms, the equivalent of a permanent flood.”**

If David Miliband was the first politician who can be credited as a founding father of the Roadmap, credit also needs to go to two others. Andrew Mitchell became Secretary of State for International Development in the UK’s new Coalition Government in April 2010. I had arranged to meet him before the Election, when he was still in Opposition, to explain the work of the Task Force and the vision I had for transforming education in Pakistan. By then he had become a passionate advocate of, and true expert on, international development, having held the brief in Opposition for several years. His office was so piled high with books on the subject, it made me feel inadequate. He listened and said, “If you do that, I’ll make it the biggest thing in the DfID’s portfolio... make it your life’s work.” He was true to his word and proved to be an effective Secretary of State who had powerful backing from the Prime Minister. His visit to Pakistan in April 2012 catalysed activity on the Roadmap. As always in Whitehall, explicit support from a strong Secretary of State provides a lead which officials follow. Andrew’s successor (appointed in September 2012), Justine Greening, has built on what he achieved. She immediately grasped both the importance of Pakistan’s development and the impact and potential of the Roadmap, reinforcing both in her visit to Pakistan in January 2013.

That summer of 2010 was the summer of the flood, the vast flood of Old Testament proportions, as the mighty Indus and its tributaries overflowed, devastating vast areas of Pakistan. It would have covered the whole of England, and affected an area far larger than the UK. I cancelled my August visit – I would just have got in the way. I made my September visit but found the country and its leaders utterly overwhelmed. Everyone was telling me school reform would be impossible now. A psychologist would have called it Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Before the flood. After the flood. They were very different times. I knew, but I insisted that one thing hadn’t changed at all. The school system had been bad before the flood and was still bad after it. The task I had come to do was still to be done. “Did the flood make the schools better?” I kept asking brutally. “If not, we still have a task to do.” Also, we did a calculation to bring home the point. Pakistan’s education emergency was, in economic terms, the equivalent of a permanent flood.

It was while the country was emerging from this trauma that the third, and ultimately most important, politician became a founding father of the Roadmap. I had met Shahbaz Sharif, Chief Minister of Punjab, as part of a formal deputation of the Task Force to Lahore early in 2010, but little more than formalities were exchanged. I had no

way of knowing what kind of impression we or I had made on the man everyone said was the most powerful and executive-minded politician in the country.

Shahbaz Sharif is the younger brother of Nawaz Sharif, leader of PML-N (Pakistan Muslim League-N) and former Prime Minister of Pakistan. When the latter was overthrown by the Musharraf coup in 1999, Shahbaz, until then Chief Minister of Punjab, joined him in exile. With the return of democracy after the elections in February 2008, Shahbaz Sharif once again became Chief Minister of Punjab, a post he has held ever since.

He is the dominant political force in Pakistan's biggest province. He runs a centralised administration with everything important running through his office. He is impatient, determined and demanding, surrounded as he is by immense problems. He is quick to criticise incompetence or inefficiency and seizes on positive news or good ideas. He inspires both respect and fear among those who work for him. As with many politicians, he has plenty of detractors who pick out points to criticise in his long career. He sees his task as making a difference. He would not be happy, in the famous words of Norman Lamont, to be in office but not in power. He is also a Pakistani patriot, desperate to see the country thrive and to be globally respected. He recognises that improving relations with India is vital to that goal, an objective which the Federal government – of a different political complexion – has been pursuing. Above all, he believes that education is the key to Pakistan's future; that there is no resolution to its economic problems without education or to its security problems, as he constantly reminds those around him. As he said recently in a private meeting, “[The Roadmap] will defeat comprehensively terrorism and militancy... the day will come.”

In October 2010, with the help of Fenton Whelan and Javed Ahmed Malik of the DfID, I was able to meet Shahbaz Sharif to set out my view of Punjab's progress, or lack of it, on education. We had worked hard on the presentation. The main graph showed just how far off track Punjab was from achieving the Millennium Development Goal on enrolment. We had arranged for two Pakistani colleagues from the Task Force Secretariat to go “mystery shopping” in schools in Punjab. Their photographs were even more hard-hitting than the graph. The most devastating contrasted a classroom full of children sitting on the floor with another in which desks and chairs were piled up, unused. The caption said simply, “Children without facilities. Facilities without children.” It was the most eloquent statement possible that the main barrier to progress was poor management.



“Is this true?” the Chief Minister asked the row of officials on his right. There was silence, disrupted only slightly by a shuffling of feet. It seemed like a long silence. “It is true,” I said eventually, “The issue is what we do about it.”

I pointed out that in other parts of the world – Madhya Pradesh in India or Minas Gerais in Brazil, for example – provinces or states with similarities to Punjab had made significant progress in two or three years. Perhaps, I suggested, we could come back in a month and explain how they had done it. Shahbaz leapt at the suggestion.

On the way out of the meeting, several officials thanked me warmly. They were relieved that finally the Chief Minister was apprised of the brutal facts. One official differed. “You should not tell people what they don’t want to hear,” he said, neatly encapsulating the problem we had.

The meeting had consequences outside Punjab among the donor community but, to their credit, the DfID took the heat and High Commissioner Adam Thomson, an outstanding diplomat, was deft and consistently supportive.

The following month, we made the promised presentation to Shahbaz Sharif. When we had told the story of Minas Gerais, the Chief Minister commented simply, “I want to do that.” A month later again we came back with the proposal for the Roadmap, based on Madhya Pradesh and Minas Gerais, but adapted for Punjab. In spite of the obvious scepticism of some of the officials, he boldly chose to adopt it and asked Fenton and me to start working right away with his officials to put it into practice. It had not been easy to get to this point. Fenton and I faced opposition from a range of stakeholders whose responses varied from scepticism and disbelief to outright opposition – but we held our nerve. We agreed with the Chief Minister that the first stocktake would be in January 2011 and I would join him monthly from then on to review progress. We were on our way.

## Historical origins

The historical origins need not detain us long but they do need setting out. Since independence in 1947, Pakistan has had a chequered history as corrupt democratic regimes have been periodically overthrown by equally corrupt military dictatorships. Commitments from governments of all kinds come and go but the vast majority of Pakistan’s population treats them with scepticism or contempt. They expect government to fail to deliver and mostly it meets their expectations.

Meanwhile, the reality has been that a relatively small elite – feudal landlords in the rural areas, some businesspeople in the cities – have controlled Pakistan’s resources and behaved “extractively”. They have looked after their own, ensuring, for example, that their children go to the Pakistani equivalent of a top British private school, such as Aitchison College in Lahore with its glorious facilities, four swimming pools, several cricket fields to die for and more horses (so pupils can learn how to play polo) than it has scholarships for poor children. After graduating from schools such as this, these fortunate young people more often than not attend university in Britain or America. Healthcare for the family can also be found abroad, and a weekend in Dubai provides access to whatever the family wants that is not available in Pakistan.

While within this elite there are many noble and committed individuals, collectively over the 65 years since independence, they have woefully neglected the mass of the population. Promises made as long ago as the 1950s to provide universal primary education, for example, have never been delivered.

Meanwhile, the State itself and its bureaucracy have become mired in corruption. When honesty, hard work, competence and merit cease to be the basis of reward and promotion, the possibility of significant reform inevitably dwindles. As a result, the best an ambitious, honest and competent politician can do is design separate, individual initiatives attached to a handful of competent officials who then shine like beacons in the gloom.

Prior to the Roadmap, Shahbaz Sharif, former Prime Minister of Pakistan's, major education initiative had been his Daanish Schools, which continue to be important to his vision of the future of Punjab. The idea is that these schools should provide for poor children and orphans, especially in rural, southern Punjab, an education similar to the one Aitchison College provides for the elite. I have visited one of these remarkable schools, at Chistian, with the Chief Minister. They will be truly transformative for the children who are lucky enough to get in. In development circles they have been sneered at as expensive and elitist. My view is different. Political leaders are entitled to projects such as this, especially if they symbolically represent the change the leader advocates. With his Daanish Schools, Shahbaz Sharif is demonstrating in practice his belief that leadership in Pakistan should be based on merit rather than on wealth. Call it a commitment to social mobility. It is then his choice to make the resource allocation and justify it.

However, until the Roadmap, the Daanish Schools were the only major initiative and education for the masses was barely improving, if at all. The new, emerging combination of the Roadmap with Daanish Schools makes a good deal of sense because it addresses the many as well as the few. The Chief Minister saw this possibility and seized it.

The other angle on the historical origins of the Roadmap is the history of development assistance in relation to education in the province. Both DfID and the World Bank had made significant commitments to education in Punjab prior to the Roadmap and some, albeit incremental, progress had been made. There had been some significant progress on girls' enrolment in the decade before the return of democracy. Those involved, understandably perhaps, talked it up, but it wasn't making enough difference fast enough, in my view. And clearly not in the Chief Minister's view either, which is why he seized on the Roadmap in December 2010 and went on to call it "the best development assistance I've ever received."

It is worth examining briefly how the previous arrangements worked in order to contrast them with the Roadmap approach. The donors, led in Punjab by the World Bank and DfID but also including, for example, Canadian and German agencies, agreed (through lengthy negotiation with the Planning and Development Department and the Education Department) an Education Sector Plan. This set out actions and milestones and in return the donors provided money – either loans or grants – and technical assistance contracted from a range of companies who specialised in the field. Donor co-ordination meetings were held from time to time to ensure "buy-in" and appropriate collaboration. Similarly, the donors periodically met with the relevant officials to discuss progress and seek to remove barriers. Occasionally, perhaps at the time of a dignitary's visit, there would be a meeting with the Chief Minister, but he was not integrally involved. Indeed, the overt intention was to keep politics at arm's length.

There was a rationale behind each element of this process but, in practice, at least in Pakistan, its effectiveness was limited. First of all, the Education Sector Plan did not necessarily add up to the comprehensive whole-system reform that somewhere like Punjab undoubtedly requires. Instead, it was a compilation of actions broadly related to, but not driving towards, the delivery of milestones and outcomes.

Second, the incentives all round led to a lack of ambition. Officials wanted the donor money without any demanding strings attached. Representatives of the donors on the ground wanted to be sure they could achieve the outcomes because that would enable them to convince headquarters that they were doing good work. Meanwhile, the contracted technical assistance providers knew they were taking on a challenge, so the more they could lower expectations the better. I think of this as the development assistance doomloop; it explains why one representative of a donor accused me of developing a Roadmap that was “too ambitious” and “too urgent”. I was happy to plead guilty. My constant reply to such accusations, given the crisis in Pakistan is, “How long do you think we’ve got?”

**“The Education Sector Plan provided no systematic set of routines to drive implementation, to ensure that progress was on track and, where it was not on track, to remove the barriers.”**

Thirdly, the donors had been reluctant to address directly the binding constraints: political appointments, corruption and gross incompetence. They talked about these things amongst themselves of course, but feared that if they were too direct in raising them, feathers would be ruffled. And in any case they had to be addressed at the political, as well as official, level. So there had been a tiptoeing around these constraints which inevitably continued to corrode the prospect of progress. Worse still, failing to put them squarely on the agenda guaranteed that the dialogue was less than honest, which undermined mutual respect.

Furthermore, the Education Sector Plan provided for no systematic set of routines to drive implementation, to ensure that progress was on track and, where it was not on track, to remove the barriers. Finally, the processes that it had put in place did not sufficiently take account of where power lay. Everyone knew that getting something big done in Punjab meant engaging Shahbaz Sharif and ensuring he drove it forward. This had not happened.

With this history (which, incidentally, closely parallels with many other aid programmes), it was hardly a surprise that, in spite of goodwill all round, progress on education in Punjab was disappointing. It also explains why the Chief Minister grasped the opportunity of the Roadmap with both hands.

## Conceptual origins

The elements and processes that make up the Roadmap are set out in the next two sections of this paper. Briefly, the origins of the elements – set out in Section 3 – are to be found in the report published by McKinsey (and co-authored by Mona Mourshed, Chinezi Chijioki and myself) entitled *How the World’s Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better*.<sup>13</sup> It was published in December 2010, just as the Roadmap was being adopted, but the research had been completed earlier and Fenton Whelan and I used it to prepare the crucial presentations to Shahbaz Sharif in October, November and December 2010.

That report drew on extensive research by the team into systems which had improved significantly from a variety of starting points. Crucially, it was the first report globally which created a single overarching framework for the improvement of education systems in both the developing and the developed world. Building on a framework I had developed (within the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit) for the public services in Britain in the first half of the previous decade, the McKinsey Report set out four “Improvement Journeys” – poor to fair, fair to good, good to great and great to excellent. It then identified the combination of policies that appeared to work for each of the four journeys. The Punjab Roadmap was based firmly on the “poor to fair” journey and drew,

<sup>13</sup> Barber, M. (2010), *How the World’s Most Improved School Systems Keep Getting Better*.

**“Conceptually the Roadmap is simple; the difficulty is that it requires great discipline and rigour to keep the process on track.”**

as we have seen, on the examples in the report of Miras Gerais in Brazil and Madhya Pradesh in India.

While the report provided us with an architect’s sketch of what was needed, detailed drawings, of course, needed to be added. We also had to take account of the specific landscape of Punjab. In addition, to press the metaphor further, once we were on site and creating the new design, we needed a means of checking that we were on track and solving the problems that arose. Hence the second major conceptual basis, which underpins the processes set out in Section 4.

During my work in the Blair administration as founder and head of the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit between 2001 and 2005, we developed a systematic approach to delivering improved results in public services such as health and education. After I left, I worked with governments elsewhere – Ontario, Malaysia and Louisiana to name a few – to refine and adapt this approach to quite different and varied political and cultural circumstances. Broadly speaking, as long as the leadership was in place and the approach was sustained, it worked again and again. Not perfectly, of course, but sufficiently well in each of the cases mentioned to deliver much-enhanced outcomes.

The approach is described in two books, *Instruction to Deliver* (which tells the story of reforming the public services under Blair) and *Deliverology 101* (which is a manual or field guide for those engaged day to day in implementation of reform) and there is no need to repeat it here.<sup>14</sup> The question in the case of the Roadmap was whether we could take that “technology” and apply it in the circumstances of the education system in Punjab. This meant stripping “deliverology” to its bare essentials, which can be summarised in the five questions we in the Delivery Unit used to ask officials in Whitehall.

**Table 2: Five questions of “deliverology”**

<b>1. What are you trying to do?</b>	Clear priorities Specific, measurable goals
<b>2. How are you trying to do it?</b>	Clear, practical plans which are used regularly and updated
<b>3. How, at any given moment, will you know whether you are on track?</b>	Good, steady, close to real-time data on key indicators Monitoring routines (such as stocktake meetings) with all key players involved
<b>4. If you are not on track, what are you going to do about it?</b>	Agreed actions, followed up, tested in practice and refined if necessary Always try something. Never neglect a problem once identified
<b>5. Can we help?</b>	Constant ambition, refusal to give up Focus on the goals, no distractions Maintaining the routines Analysis and problem-solving where required Bringing to bear lessons from elsewhere

<sup>14</sup> Barber, M. (2008), *Instruction to Deliver: Fighting to transform Britain’s public services*; Barber, M. et al (2010), *Deliverology 101*.

In the case of Punjab, my team, with the support of the DfID and increasingly in collaboration with Punjabi officials, has played the role implied by question 5.

How this worked in practice in Punjab is set out in Section 4. Suffice to say for the moment, conceptually, the Roadmap is simple; the difficulty is that it requires great discipline and rigour to keep the process on track month after month, in spite of the many distractions that the unsettled world of Pakistan throws up. In any event, when he adopted it, the Chief Minister could not have known it would work. He was taking a big gamble (against the advice of officials and some donors) on a radical new approach and on me, actually. He had taken the trouble to check out what David Miliband, whom he knew, thought about me, but even so he couldn't have known I would keep coming back. I hardly knew myself at the time how Pakistan, and especially Punjab, would become a matter of my heart and soul as well as my head.



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# 3

## The elements

**“We have pain in every bone in our bodies from working so hard, but want the Roadmap to continue because... it is nation-building.”**  
An Executive District Officer (EDO), to the author

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**“Now that there are signs of progress, the intention is to unlock this latent demand and create pressure for progress.”**

The Punjab Roadmap is the centrepiece and cutting edge of a much wider DfID education programme in Pakistan, and this wider context helps to reinforce the Roadmap. After Punjab, the DfID’s biggest investment is in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the old North West Frontier Province. Here there has been an education sector plan for a while. In the past year we have begun to introduce a Roadmap approach, based explicitly on the Punjab work. The idea is to put in place the building blocks, such as provincial targets, monthly data collection and merit-based appointments – ahead of the election due in summer 2013 – and then work with the new Government to implement the full approach. KP’s basic institutions are less developed than Punjab’s, which is why the setup takes longer, but so far the signs support the belief that we can replicate the progress in Punjab so long as, after the election, the political will is there as it has been before.

Meanwhile, in Sindh province it has not proved possible to work with the Government for essentially practical reasons: they have changed their Education Secretary so often – at a rate of three or four times a year – that it simply makes it impossible to develop a coherent approach. Instead, and because Karachi is one of the least educated megacities on the planet, with over two million out-of-school children aged 5 to 16 – and a powder keg, constantly on the brink of explosion – the DfID has created the Education Fund for Sindh in collaboration with Pakistan’s senior business leaders. This will draw on the experience of the Punjab Education Foundation and purchase places in the low-cost private and voluntary sectors through vouchers and other means. It is a major innovation, applicable to places where direct collaboration with government proves challenging.

For the whole country, an Innovation Fund has been set up by DfID to support innovations that might have the potential to accelerate educational progress at scale in the future. The idea is that as the big system reforms advance, it may be possible to introduce proven innovations that will enable Pakistan to make more rapid strides to catch up with the educational performance of the developed world, as Korea or Singapore managed in the past 50 years. To draw momentarily on education theory, Pakistan is combining whole-system reform (as in Punjab or KP) with systemic innovation, as advocated in my recent publication (with colleagues), *Oceans of Innovation*.

Above and beyond all this activity on improving the supply of education, there has also been a major drive to strengthen demand. While every survey shows that parents, whatever their circumstances, want education for their children, many had given up demanding it because the failed system seemed impervious to change. Now that there are signs of progress, the intention is to unlock this latent demand and create pressure for progress. The Mir Khalil Ur Rahman Foundation, in collaboration with Geo, the country’s largest media organisation; Pakistan Television (PTV); and other regional channels, has led this campaign, which has reached 107 million Pakistanis so far. It has used a combination of religious advocacy – the Quran places great weight on education – compelling facts and outstanding cases to build its momentum. This wider context undoubtedly helps to create the conditions in which the Punjab Roadmap might succeed.

The ultimate goals of the Roadmap itself were clear from the start: get children enrolled in school, reduce the likelihood of their dropping out and ensure they learn the basics. For this to happen, it required other important objectives too: teachers who were present not absent. Basic facilities such as water and toilets. Unless these objectives were met, the ultimate goals could not be achieved.

## Data and targets

Between February and April of 2011, the team, under my direction, took these objectives and turned them into hard numbers. On each of the key indicators, there would be a provincial target for 2013 and also a target for each of the 36 districts. Using the patchy and uneven data available, Katelyn Donnelly, working with the relevant officials in the Education Department, calculated for each district not just a target, but a trajectory from the present through to the achievement of the target in 2013. This required analytical capability of the highest order and deep insight as well as immense commitment. The plan was that the EDO – the official in charge of education in each district – would then be held to account for progress against these trajectories. The Secretary-Schools, Aslam Kamboh, built on this idea and produced a district ranking every quarter which revealed both the top performers against these trajectories – who could be rewarded – and the poor performers who, if necessary, could be removed.

Management theory might suggest that the EDOs should have been consulted about these targets and trajectories. We judged otherwise. Pakistan had an education emergency. Progress had been minimal over recent years. The Chief Minister was impatient and I personally wanted to demonstrate, as fast as we could, that the Roadmap would make a difference. Too often the pursuit of “buy-in” from “key stakeholders” becomes an excuse for slower, shallower action and sometimes for inaction. We decided boldly that we would prioritise changing the facts on the ground and let “buy-in” take care of itself.

In April 2011, the EDOs were summoned to an event in Lahore at which the Secretary and I shared their targets and trajectories with them. Saad Rizvi and Katelyn Donnelly from my team had literally stayed up all night printing individual data packs for every EDO so that each would know precisely what their targets were for 2013 and what the trajectory would be for each of the targets. Katelyn remembers the smell of the printer and the endless stoppages. At one point, Saad found himself repairing the photocopier in order to deliver on time. By contrast, all I had to do was describe the mission and the Roadmap approach before the Secretary explained the ranking system, accompanied by some tough messages issued in passionate Urdu (Saad and Katelyn sat in the front row suppressing yawns.)

There was some bewilderment. Few at that point knew what the Roadmap was; fewer still believed that any attempt at reform would work. As Secretary Kamboh told me later, up to that point even he – never mind the EDOs – simply believed that this was yet another donor initiative which would be here today and gone tomorrow.

Nevertheless, the priorities were now clear, and administrators across Punjab knew their marching orders. It was up to us to prove that this time, it was going to be different. The combination of the Chief Minister’s political leadership, my refusal to countenance anything else and the Secretary’s growing understanding that this could enhance his impact ensured that indeed it was.

First though, we had to put a data collection system in place that would be fast, universal and reliable. The World Bank had enabled the Punjab government to build itself an important asset – the Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU). Its role was to gather data on key indicators so that the province could check that implementation was occurring. An excellent idea in theory; in practice the data collection process was uneven and often slow. In calculating the targets and trajectories, Katelyn had to rely on just two separate months of data because in most

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**“Using the data available, Katelyn Donnelly calculated for each district not just a target, but a trajectory from the present through to the achievement of the target in 2013. The Executive District Officer would then be held to account for progress against these trajectories.”**

**“All future appointments of EDOs would be made on merit; second, they would be trained to deliver the Roadmap goals; and third, as we have seen, they would be held accountable for progress against trajectories and indeed ranked one against another.”**

months insufficient data had been collected and, even when it had been, still more months had passed before it was analysed.

Fundamental to making the Roadmap work was taking the ramshackle PMIU machine and ensuring it became well-oiled and reliable. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that this was the linchpin of the entire Roadmap. Led by Dr Farrah Masood, its new and talented head, and Sohail Raza who had designed the concept and with Katelyn’s persistent support the Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit became an outstanding organisation, collecting data on all the key indicators from all 60,000 government schools in Punjab every month. It did so by recruiting around 900 ex-army men who were given a list of schools to visit each week on a motorbike. To minimise the risk of corruption, they never visited the same school twice within a six-month period.

Once the data was collected, we then accelerated the analysis so that by the middle of one month the previous month’s data had been analysed. In October of 2011, we introduced a further improvement. Fenton designed a computer programme which spat out rapidly, for each district, a monthly datapack showing how that district compared to every other district in Punjab on each key indicator. It even listed the names of schools and headteachers who were off-track. There was no longer any excuse for not managing. It became routine that the data on, say, February, was in by 10 March, analysed by 15 March and back out in districts by 20 March. Very powerful.

Meanwhile, at provincial level, we could track progress against each of the trajectories and prepare the “heat maps” (see Section 1) which became a quick and easy way for the Chief Minister, the Secretary and me to see which districts were on track and which were not.

### **District administration**

Needless to say, none of the targets could be met unless competent officials were appointed as EDOs. Tradition in large parts of India as well as Pakistan has it that EDO appointments are political – pieces of influential patronage – because EDOs are responsible for teacher transfers and teachers are often influential at election time. As we have seen though, the Roadmap had been explicitly designed to challenge these unacceptable norms, what George Turkington, Head of the DfID Mission in Pakistan, called “the binding constraints”.

The Roadmap therefore included three key reforms to strengthen district administration. First, all future appointments of EDOs would be made on merit; second, they would be trained to deliver the Roadmap goals; and third, as we have seen, they would be held accountable for progress against trajectories and indeed ranked one against another.

A Selection Committee was established, overseen by the Secretary-Schools, in the first half of 2011, and from then, on all EDO appointments were made on the basis of their record by this totally non-political Committee. The Chief Minister made it clear that this was what he wanted and took the necessary political heat behind the scenes. Within a few months, over half of the EDOs had been replaced. The Roadmap also proposed that once good EDOs were in place, they should not be moved for three years. This was to counter the constant musical chairs which bedevilled much of Pakistan’s bureaucracy at all levels. (During 2010, for example, I met four different Secretaries of Education in the neighbouring Sindh province.) This aspect of the Roadmap proved harder to implement over the first year because there was no clear definition of good, and the new accountability measures forced the Secretary to make further changes. Indeed, only in the last few months of 2012 did we begin to approach the necessary stability.

The training for EDOs differed both from what they were used to experiencing in Pakistan bureaucracy and from what had previously been provided by donors. The former tended to be information-giving sessions dominated by long lectures, some of them fierce and unrelenting. (We saw the Secretary berate the EDOs for well over an hour once in an uncompromising mixture of Urdu and English.) The latter tended to be generic “capacity-building”, such as leadership training, provided by contractors of variable quality. Officials told us that they sometimes had to go to such sessions for fear of offending a major donor, but found them patronising and lacking in value.

We were determined to do much better than this. Using a combination of my team on the ground, some DfID officials and two former colleagues of mine, Simon Day and Simon Rea, experts in both facilitation and public service delivery who in Pakistan became known as the Simon brothers, we designed and implemented, in summer 2011, a two-day, highly interactive introduction to delivery and implementation focused specifically on achieving the Roadmap outcomes.

It took place in desperate July heat in a large room in which the air-conditioning kept failing. We realised after the first hour or so that, given the strange British accents of some of us, it would be necessary for interpreters to translate all the key inputs – and we made sure that at each of the tables there was an Urdu-speaking facilitator who could explain the various exercises. Saad Rizvi, from the team, became a favourite among the EDOs not least thanks to his poetic mastery of Urdu.

In between sending out messages requesting much-needed bottles of water, we were able to explain and then enable each of the participants to use the key concepts such as trajectories, delivery plans, delivery chains and routine means of tracking progress. We also learnt steadily from the EDOs what they saw as some of the barriers to progress, including political interference with teacher transfers, lack of transport, especially for female Assistant Executive Officers (AEOs), who needed to be mobile to check up on the schools, and the constant demands of petty bureaucracy. For the EDOs, our style, energy and movement made us interesting – items of curiosity I guess – but they were still understandably sceptical about whether the Roadmap was something new and significant or just another donor-induced flavour of the month. We gained great credibility on the second morning because the Chief Minister – briefed in advance by us – specifically addressed some of the barriers they had mentioned to us the day before. Moreover, he listened carefully while they presented to him what they had arrived at the evening before as the characteristics of a good EDO.

**Table 3: New Executive District Officer roles under the Roadmap**

### The Chief Minister's Roadmap sets a bold vision for EDO roles and requires new behaviours to achieve it

New EDO Role	Behaviours needed to achieve it
<b>1. Efficient manager of human resources</b> > Coordinator and motivator > Master trainer > Selector and administrator of his team	> <b>Competent</b> and professional > <b>Motivational</b> and democratic > <b>Dutiful</b> and respectful > <b>Problem solver</b> , not creator > <b>Empathetic</b> but practical
<b>2. Evaluator of entire district</b> > Inspector of schools > Monitor of targets > Assessor of districts	> <b>Bold</b> like a tiger > <b>Vigilant</b> > <b>Analytical</b> > <b>Honest</b> and impartial > <b>Transparent</b> and fair
<b>3. Planner and change agent</b> > Implementer of rules > Financial manager	> <b>Dedicated</b> and hardworking > <b>Defeater of all challenges</b> > <b>Law abiding</b>

Moreover, the final afternoon of the training was devoted to each of the EDOs (and the colleague he or she had brought from their district) preparing for themselves a blow-by-blow 100-day plan, starting from 1 August 2011, for implementation of the Roadmap.

In various plenary interventions – and especially at the beginning and end of each day – I sought to provide both the rationale and the motivation. I tried to paint a picture of a successful Pakistan in 10 or 20 years with a well-educated young population ensuring a thriving economy and a government providing leadership which would help solve problems domestically and internationally. I tried to persuade them to believe that we could do great things together, as follows:

“I want you to imagine that you have retired at the end of your long career. And I want you to imagine that your grandchild comes to talk to you and she says, in your career what did you do? And you will be able to answer, I was there when we transformed education in Punjab ...

You know much better than I do that the history of education in Pakistan is a history of actions proposed but not implemented. You know that it's a history of commitment offered but not fulfilled, you know that it's a history of promises made but not delivered. The Roadmap is not like that, this time because of your commitment, the Chief Minister's commitment, the leaders of this system's commitment, the Minister of Education's commitment. This time it's going to be different, this time it is going to be implemented in full, thoroughly, so that it affects every child, every classroom, every family in the province...

I said to the EDOs in the room yesterday, in England we have no great rivers, we have small rivers. In Punjab you have five wonderful, huge rivers. Sometimes those rivers

threaten the land, but most of the time they bring life to Punjab. You know because you have five great rivers in Punjab and your Province is named after those five rivers, you know that the water in a river always, always finds its way to the sea. There's no barrier that can stop a river, no mountain, no rock, no man-made dam. In the end the water makes its way through, under, over or round. It always gets to the sea, and that my friends is what we need to do with the problems when they arise ...

As it's implemented and problems arise, we will solve them, as the barriers arise we will overcome them. As the challenges stand before us we will rise to them. I want to salute the courage of the Chief Minister personally and all his colleagues at the province level for taking on this agenda. I want to acknowledge the commitment and skill of all the people in this room that I've heard and learnt about over the last few weeks. And I look forward to seeing the success of the Roadmap in the coming months and years. For a better future of this province and for this country, this time, I promise it's going to be different."

I'm not sure whether the audience was convinced, but they certainly acknowledged my passion and sincerity.

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**"All the evidence suggests that improving teacher quality is not just the most important aspect of any system reform, but also the most difficult to shift."**

We have repeated training sessions of this kind roughly every six months ever since. We became more skilled and knowledgeable about their challenges and how to run the sessions; they became more motivated, and once it became clear that the Roadmap was here to stay and that it helped them do their job more effectively, the EDOs themselves provided increasing insight and leadership during the sessions. Rather than simply teaching them, we were providing an opportunity for them to learn from each other and for us to learn from them. For example, one EDO explained to me that the key to enrolment in the rural south of Punjab was to secure the support of the Imam to provide crucial religious influence, the district nurse who talked to the women in the houses, and the barber who could whisper in men's ears while trimming their beards.

By August of 2011, the EDOs knew what the Roadmap goals were and what part their district had to play in achieving them; they had been appointed on merit and trained for the task of delivering. They were also becoming motivated by the broader mission: nation-building. One of them said to me, in December 2011 after another training session, "Thank you for your belief that Pakistan should stand up proudly among the nations."

It seemed reasonable, therefore, that, as the Roadmap began in August 2011, the EDOs should be held to account for delivering results. It was a classic combination of pressure to deliver and the support to make it possible.

The ranking system, described earlier, came into force. The Secretary-Schools, Aslam Kamboh, has firmly believed throughout that the rankings are the key to the progress we've made. In addition to the financial rewards available for top performers and the risks of demotion for poor performers, I sought to persuade the Chief Minister to provide recognition too. An invitation for tea with the Chief Minister – a great honour in Punjab – became a feature of the Roadmap thereafter. On one occasion, we took photos of the successful EDOs with the Chief Minister and had them framed for them. On another occasion, when I was pointing to the success of a particular EDO during one of our stocktake meetings, the Chief Minister asked his staff to track this man down and get him on the phone during the meeting. When he came through, the Chief Minister congratulated him vociferously in front of us all, a marvellous symbolic moment. I often wonder what this EDO was nervously thinking would happen in the few minutes between the Chief Minister's staff contacting him and hearing the voice of the man himself coming down the line.

## Teacher quality

There is no point enrolling children, ensuring teachers attend, and fixing school facilities unless the teachers have the tools and skills they need to teach so that the children learn. Teacher quality was, from the outset, therefore, central to the Roadmap. All the evidence from both the developed and the developing world suggests that improving teacher quality is not just the most important aspect of any system reform, but also the most difficult to shift. Teachers, like other professional groups, develop ingrained habits and cultural norms which are very hard to change.

In Pakistan, as in much of the Indian subcontinent, many of these habits and norms were detrimental to progress. Take absence, for example: 20 per cent or more teacher absence had become the norm. A discretionary allowance of up to 25 days off a year (in addition to holidays) to cover weddings, funerals and other family concerns had become an entitlement. The teachers who did turn up were largely dependent on the textbooks, and the textbooks themselves were out of date. Teachers' own mastery of the subject matter was often lacking, and their pedagogical skill very limited, generally confined to the most basic rote learning with no attempt to ensure the whole class was engaged. To be fair to the teachers, some of the classes were very large and the classrooms themselves singularly ill-equipped. Moreover, such training as was available to teachers was at training centres distant from the school and tended to involve the teachers themselves being lectured – it was information-giving rather than skill-building.

By the time the implementation of the Roadmap began, I had seen all this with my own eyes on school visits in Karachi, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore. As the Roadmap got underway, occasionally I was able to escape the security circus and visit schools unannounced. Usually on such visits I could see the impact of the Roadmap, admittedly from a low base. Sometimes, though, there was a periodic reality check – a visit, for example, to a far-flung corner of Kasur district, out by the Indian border, where I saw a row of small boys sitting on a bench in the sunlight, half-scrabbling through dilapidated, dog-eared textbooks, ignored by the teacher. The classrooms were full of military equipment, presumably for the border post nearby. In the same remote village, the girls' school was suspiciously closed. The teachers, we were told, were on "World Bank training", which presumably they hoped sounded like a plausible excuse.

In these circumstances, the approach to teacher quality needed to be phased and sustained over years. In the initial stages – in accordance with the evidence from elsewhere – we focused on the basics: ensuring the teachers were in school and providing them with simple, easy-to-use lesson plans for each of Maths, English and Science for Grades 1-5. So, for example, a primary teacher of a Grade 2 class would get 150 lesson plans for each year for each subject. Each lesson plan had a learning outcome, a way of introducing it, an activity or two, and a conclusion.

In a remarkable whirl of activity, in the first few months of 2011 these lesson plans were written by a team at the Department of Staff Development (led by the excellent Nadeem Kayani), reviewed by experts (some of them recommended by me), printed and distributed. Quite apart from the content, the logistics were mind-boggling. Around 2,250 lesson plans (150 for each grade from 1 to 5 for each subject) had to be written. They then had to be printed and distributed to over 60,000 schools and 200,000 teachers. In February 2011, there was not a single lesson plan; by the end of August, the entire task was almost completed.



On top of this, the 200,000 teachers were summoned to training in June, July and August and introduced to the lesson plans by 4,000 trainers who themselves had been trained first. The Department of Staff Development (DSD) drew on donors very effectively to achieve these outcomes – a good example incidentally of how if the bureaucracy injects the ambition, it can make the most of donor funding.

From August 2011, we monitored the presence in classrooms of the teacher guides which contained the lesson plans. By February of 2012 they were available everywhere, a fact which we were able to confirm with unannounced school visits. Ensuring they were used and really made a difference was a different matter altogether.

Occasionally on a visit I would see a teacher explicitly using the lesson plans, and one teacher disarmingly clutched the teacher guide to his chest and told me it was close to his heart, but more often the teacher guides were piled on the teacher's desk but not evidently in use.

Teacher quality was monitored by the 4,000 District Teacher Educators (DTEs) who visited schools and randomly tested classes of children on the basics of the three R's. The head of the DSD, Nadeem Kayani, had embarked on building this field force prior to the Roadmap and, after initial scepticism, deployed it in support of Roadmap implementation. He admitted that not all of the DTEs were of top quality, but we all agreed they were much better than nothing. Their evidence suggested that around 30 per cent of teachers actually used the guides. I argued for a blitz in October 2011 when we would redirect not just the DTEs but also other administrators at district level and perhaps even student teachers, to check that teacher guides were in use in the aftermath of the training but, for whatever reason – perhaps it was unrealistic – this didn't happen.

There were other problems too. The lesson plans were written in alignment with the "new" National Curriculum for Pakistan which had been established in 2006. This was obviously right, but the problem was that in Punjab (as in the other provinces), the updated textbooks incorporating the new National Curriculum had not yet been written, printed or distributed. This meant the teachers were still dependent on the old textbooks based on the pre-2006 National Curriculum, and therefore the textbooks and lesson plans did not match up.

We had known this would happen from the outset, but a key part of my philosophy was to focus on action and not let the endless series of reasons for delay prevent us from getting started. After all, if we had agreed in early 2011 that new lesson plans should wait for the new textbook, it would have meant not even getting started on teacher quality for two years, perhaps longer. Instead, we got the lesson plans done and then turned to the textbooks. In Pakistan, as in many other countries, it is not just inefficiency that prevents progress with textbooks – it is corruption. The contracts for writing, printing and distributing them are big business. In the Yeltsin days in Russia, textbook wars had involved publishers being gunned down in Moscow.

The fact that under the Roadmap we had prepared and distributed lesson plans within a few months showed it could be done, so we turned up the heat on the textbook board. In the summer of 2011, I chaired a meeting of all the key stakeholders to set the ball rolling. Ali Abid Hussein from my team became the driving force. Some months (and three Chairmen of the Punjab Textbook Board) later, we were able to show the Chief Minister the new textbooks at a stocktake meeting. All the new textbooks will be in all the schools for the start of the new school year in April 2013, seven years after the new curriculum theoretically came into force. Without the pressure of the Roadmap, which had massively accelerated production, the schools would still be waiting, as indeed they are in every other province of Pakistan.

**“By April 2013, teachers will have revised and much improved textbooks aligned to lesson plans and a monthly coaching session with a trained DTE. This lays the foundation for the continuous improvement in teaching quality which has previously eluded not just Punjab, but many similar places across the world.”**

The evidence from the DTE visits suggested that, even with all the problems, teacher quality began to improve during 2012 as a result of the Roadmap, albeit incrementally. The results of the Punjab Examination Commission (PEC) exams for Grades 5 and 8 also suggested improvement, but we set little store by these results owing to questions of reliability and, in places, corruption.

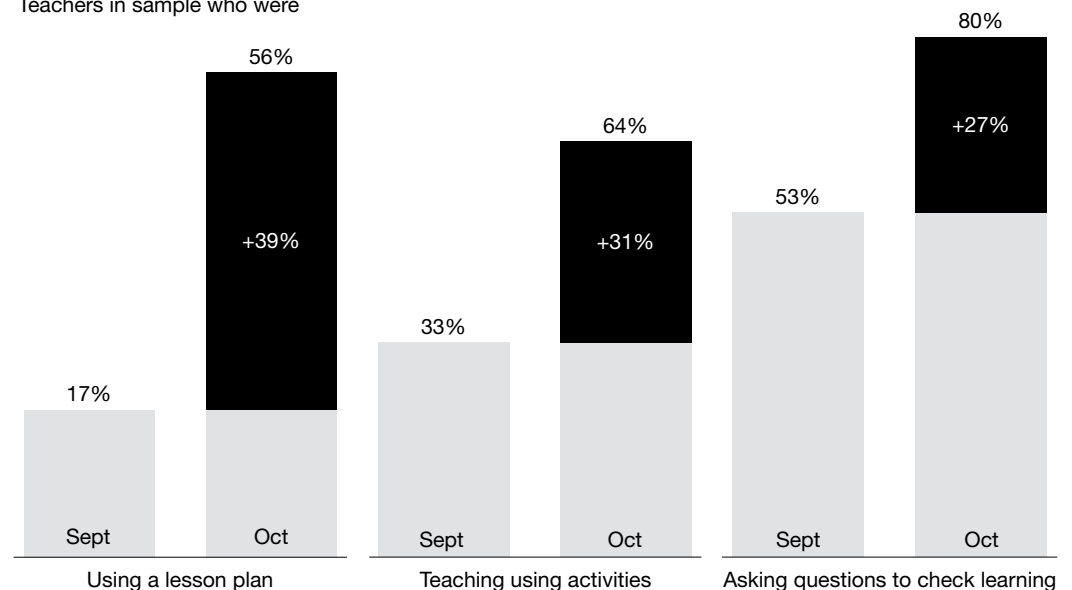
It was clear, therefore, that we needed an approach to teacher quality that was stronger and more systematic and could build on the start we had made. Between April and September of 2012, we designed the next phase. Central to this was a redesign of the role of the DTEs. Instead of being purely monitors of teacher quality, making transactional visits to test children, we worked with the DSD to redesign their role as teacher coaches. They would visit classrooms, watch teachers teach, give them some simple, practical feedback and come back a month later to check the feedback had been noted and built on. In theory, this would create a process of continuous teacher development and potentially transform the DSD’s entire model of teacher development.

In practice, this demanded significant change. In collaboration with the DSD, we prepared lesson observation materials which defined simply and clearly what good teaching looked like. We rethought the role of the DTEs and the way they used their time; and we introduced checks on DTEs themselves, as it turned out that more often than not they were failing to carry out their monthly school visits anyway.

Then, from September 2012, we piloted the new approach in two districts: Kasur in the north and Layyah in the south. The DTEs in these districts were introduced to the new materials and trained in how to use them. Then they started on the school visits, focusing on coaching rather than monitoring. A month later there was further follow-up training for them. Within three months we had hard evidence from the pilots that they were making a significant difference to DTEs and, more importantly, to teachers themselves.

**Figure 14: Teacher quality**

Teachers in sample who were



NOTE: The above are just three of the twelve indicators used to evaluate and mentor teachers during the pilot

In November 2012, we reported this progress to the Chief Minister at a stocktake meeting, during which he approved the expansion of the pilot to seven further districts

from January 2013, and to universal rollout across all 36 districts from mid-2013 if the pilots continued to work. Having seen the impact of the two pilots, Nadeem Kayani, head of the DSD, having been understandably cautious about how rapidly this rollout could occur, has become an enthusiast for rapid expansion.

Thus, by April 2013, teachers will have revised and much improved textbooks aligned to lesson plans (which are being refined to match the new textbooks) and a monthly coaching session with a trained DTE. This lays the foundation for the continuous improvement in teaching quality which has previously eluded not just Punjab, but many similar places across the world. Teacher quality will become the centrepiece of the Roadmap from the middle of 2013 onwards. All that will be required then is sustained focus.

Two other developments need to be mentioned in this context. The first is that, since 2010, all new teacher appointments have been made on merit – they are no longer subject to patronage. This means that 81,000 new teachers have joined the Punjab teaching profession on a much sounder footing than their predecessors. The combination of these new entrants with the new approach to teacher quality has immense potential.

The last remaining – but absolutely vital – part of the teacher quality jigsaw is to make sure the improvement in teacher quality translates into improved student outcomes. Neither the DSD informal tests of students in classrooms nor the PEC exam results provide the kind of reliable and consistent evidence we urgently need. We are currently in the process of exploring the development of a province-wide sample test that, like the independent Nielsen survey of enrolment, could be administered every six months. There are a number of potential independent providers and there are a number of different approaches we could take – the most limited would be a province-wide sampling; the next would be a sample big enough to enable us to benchmark the 36 districts (as we do with enrolment); the most extensive would be a universal test which would give us the best data but, given there are over 10 million students in government schools, would also be a huge logistical challenge, as well as being expensive.

This last point is not to be ignored. The teacher quality strategy so far has not required extra resources and, if we want to ensure it becomes irreversible, we need to make sure it is affordable in a future without donor money.

## The Punjab Education Foundation

Prior to the establishment of the Roadmap, the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) had been set up under the leadership of Shahid Kardar (later a Governor of the Bank of Pakistan and member of the Pakistan Education Task Force) to create an alternative to the public sector which, until then, had proved so impervious to change. Shahid's idea was that government money could be channelled through a Foundation with a credible and independent board, to the low-cost private sector of schools to enable them to provide education, free at the point of use, for the children of poor families. Because the PEF was outside the formal bureaucracy, it would not be hidebound by the civil service and other regulations. It could easily bring in private sector skills and act with vigour and speed. In the UK, we would have called it a quango. It was chaired by the highly-respected Raja Anwar, and its Chief Executive was a hardworking and committed bureaucrat, Ambreen Raza, a relatively rare example of a woman in a leadership role in Pakistan.

Underlying the thinking behind the PEF was another profound factor. Maybe the competition effect of the private sector of schools would spur the government sector to reform itself. Certainly this was the case Secretary Kamboh made.

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**“Underlying the thinking behind the PEF was another profound factor. Maybe the competition effect of the private sector of schools would spur the government sector to reform itself.”**

The low-cost private sector had, after all, expanded dramatically over the previous 15 years. By 2012, around 40 per cent of all children in Punjab were in private schools, the vast majority of them low-cost; in Lahore it was an astonishing 70 per cent. In effect, what had happened was that millions of poor parents, who understood viscerally that a good education was the only route out of poverty for their children, had looked at the government sector, seen how dire its performance was, seen too that its problems appeared intractable and voted with their feet. The data supported their instincts. The evidence suggests that generally in Pakistan, low-cost private sector schools outperform government schools, although this does not mean they are good. As a result, in Punjab (and incidentally numerous other places in the developing world), there is no means of achieving universal high-quality education without taking the private sector into account. By setting up the PEF and responding to the new circumstances, Punjab, inspired by Shahid Kardar, had embarked on a major innovation.

In designing the Roadmap we recognised the opportunity that the PEF offered and therefore proposed, alongside the drive to improve government schools already described, an expansion of opportunity for the children of poor families in low-cost private schools. The choice already available to every reasonably well-off family in Punjab would be made available to poor families too.

The PEF's main programme at the time the Roadmap began was the Foundation Assisted Scheme (FAS). Under it, private schools could register with the PEF which then bought all the places in the school and provided them free to children from poor families. In return, to stay in the scheme, the school had to test the children twice a year and demonstrate they were making progress. By the time the Roadmap began, 800,000 children were benefitting from the FAS. These children tended to do better than children at government schools, not least because the teachers were present every day and the schools were accountable. Moreover, since a place in a private school cost the PEF around PKR 6,000 (US \$60) a year while a place in a government school cost around PKR 15,000 (US \$150), the productivity gain was substantial.

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**“The three PEF programmes combined are educating more children than, for example, Denmark.”**

However, the scheme had its drawbacks; one was that it was relatively untargeted; another was that often these schools were simply recruiting existing students from government schools (which clearly had benefits for those children) or from other private schools, in which case, parents were simply saving money. What it did not do was ensure that children in remote locations without access to schools at all were able to go to school. Nor was it sufficiently targeted at the poorest children.

The PEF had two other very small programmes at the time, which the Roadmap seized upon and expanded. One was the New Schools Programme (NSP), which invited non-government and private providers to set up new schools where government provision was absent or inadequate. The second was a voucher scheme which gave PKR500 per month to a poor family with which they could purchase a place at any registered private school. In return for accepting even one child on a voucher, the school had to agree to test all the children to demonstrate progress.

These programmes enabled remote locations and especially the south of Punjab, where government provision was weakest, to be targeted. In the first year of the Roadmap, the number of children in NSP schools was increased to 40,000, and by the middle of 2012, there was at least one school under this programme in every one of the 36 districts. In future, the plan is to prioritise the southern districts where enrolment is lowest.

Meanwhile, the voucher scheme has expanded from under 20,000 students to over 140,000 students in the course of 2011-12, a major logistical challenge which put the

PEF's capacity under immense pressure. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests it has been successful. My biggest fear was that the scheme would become corrupt, but the vigilance of the PEF which included, for example, building security features such as watermarks into the vouchers themselves, ensured this did not happen. An independent review of the scheme late in 2012 reaffirmed this. It also helpfully pointed out that while the children of poor families were benefitting and the scheme was increasing enrolment, it was sometimes missing the poorest of the poor. Accurately targeting funding in a country with such inadequate data (no census has been published since the late 1990s and an attempt at a census in 2011 appears to have failed or become mired in controversy) is not easy. The PEF has done well, but can clearly improve.

In 2013, the plan is for the PEF to consolidate its achievements. Building its capacity is a major priority for the Roadmap as I write. The intention is that from 2013-14 it can expand rapidly again. Its achievements under the Roadmap so far should not be underestimated. The US, after over 20 years of experimenting with vouchers, has around 160,000 children benefitting from them. Punjab already has 140,000 and will add another 50,000-80,000 children to the scheme over the next 18 months. Moreover, the three PEF programmes combined are educating more children than, for example, Denmark. The beneficiaries are not just the children on the PEF programmes; the whole of Punjab benefits because of the competition effect.

### **Additional supporting programmes**

In addition to the four main strands of the Roadmap, a series of supporting actions were planned from the outset. Often these were actions which the Secretary-Schools had already put in train; he hoped by adding them into the Roadmap they would be monitored more effectively and achieve greater priority.

One of the most important of these was the programme of school consolidations. Punjab, like other provinces in Pakistan, had built too many very small schools, often under pressure from local politicians who wanted to claim to have built schools for each locality. In addition, religious sensibilities also often led the province to set up two completely separate schools, one for girls and one for boys, close by each other. The result was a grossly inefficient and expensive pattern of over-provision of buildings and under-provision of management. Thus, some schools had too many children and not enough teachers or facilities, while others had plenty of teachers and facilities but hardly any children. In some villages, school buildings had become grain stores or cattle shelters. By consolidating small schools, and at primary ages bringing separate girls' and boys' schools onto one site, the Secretary could improve teacher presence and the provision of facilities and release resources to fund expansion.

The task, however, was hugely sensitive politically. Anyone who has managed a school system anywhere in the world knows how hard it is to close schools, even bad ones, without provoking popular anger and political opposition. In Pakistan, religious sensibilities add a further incendiary factor. The Secretary and his officials worked away at this crucial process quietly and behind the scenes. The Chief Minister provided the necessary political cover.

The most important action of all, though, has been the drive to improve the provision of facilities. It was a sad state of affairs – not to say scandalous – that in 2010, 63 years after independence, Pakistan, not just Punjab, had such poor school buildings. It was another sign – the most visible if not the most important – that the Pakistan elite had not just failed to prioritise education for the masses, it had consciously neglected it.

The problem had often been compounded by donor or NGO programmes which – with good intentions – focused on building or repairing schools, without tackling the abysmal management and corruption that surround these infrastructure developments. The result has been lack of provision in some places and empty school buildings, not needed or not used, in others: ghost schools.

Meanwhile, many of the schools that were in use lacked basic facilities. With its emphasis on the practical, the Roadmap committed the Punjab government to ensuring that every school had four basic facilities in addition to classrooms: a boundary wall (to provide security), running water (essential for children at school all day, especially in the heat of a Punjab summer), toilets (crucial, especially for girl students) and electricity. Much of the money for putting these in place was devolved to School Councils, thus bypassing layers of bureaucracy and potential corruption. Then, on the monthly PMIU, visits the provision of these four facilities was checked. From the outset we saw steady progress, and a year into implementation they were in place in 90 per cent of cases. By then the two main barriers to 100 per cent success were a handful of southern districts, often with tribal areas, where the writ of government runs weakly and where, in spite of progress, the infrastructure challenges to providing electricity were beyond the control of the school system and harder to unravel. Nevertheless, on my unannounced visits to schools in the remote corners of Kasur and Bahawalnagar I was encouraged to find visible evidence that these facilities had been recently put in place. From a very low base the Roadmap was clearly bringing practical benefits.

### The enrolment drive

**“What mattered was that children enrolled in school. It didn’t matter whether that was in a government school or a low-cost private school. The enrolment drive could therefore be a collaborative venture at local level involving both sectors.”**

Enrolling 100 per cent of primary age children had been a goal of the Roadmap since its inception. The fact that Punjab was not on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goal had shocked the Chief Minister in my first substantial meeting with him in October 2010 because until then, those around him, both in his bureaucracy and among donors, had not been willing or able to tell him the brutal truth. From the beginning, therefore, we knew we had to improve significantly on what had gone before. Moreover, we knew that internationally, enrolment was the measure that would be used more than any other to judge our success. The school year in Punjab begins in April; then in June the system shuts down for the hottest part of the year, and reopens in mid to late August. Enrolment drives therefore tended to run in April and May with reinforcement in September and October. In practical terms, an enrolment drive involved a fanfare of publicity at provincial and often local level, along with district-level officials chasing up enrolment at the level of the school and subdistrict (the markaz or tehsil). There were substantial flaws to this practice though. First, it depended on the energy and commitment of local officials, which was at best variable. Second, they depended on outdated and often totally inadequate records of how many children lived in their district, where they lived and whether they went to school. Third, success depended on self-reporting.

Our enrolment drive in 2012 needed to address these flaws. In addition, the December 2011 Nielsen survey gave us vital new information and insight. The good news was that it suggested that the promotion of the Roadmap goals and the sharper management it had brought in during 2011 meant that numerous additional children had been enrolled during 2011, certainly hundreds of thousands, perhaps close to a million; accuracy was hard because the baseline data were suspect. It also showed that much of this extra enrolment – missed altogether by the traditional official approach to enrolment – was in the low-cost private sector which, under the Roadmap, had become an integral part of the strategy.

In addition, it revealed district by district where the biggest challenges were. It became clear that it was the south and west of Punjab – in the tribal areas close to the Indus River, for example – which had the biggest enrolment challenge. While many of the northern and central districts had enrolment levels in excess of 90 per cent, some southern districts fell far below this. Moreover, it was here that there was a visible gap in enrolment between girls and boys. In addition, we saw that while a minority of children never enrolled, a bigger problem was the children who enrolled for a year or two and then dropped out. Since the traditional enrolment drive focused on four and five year olds just becoming of school age, these dropouts were missed altogether.

As we prepared in the early months of 2012 for a new-look enrolment drive for that April and May, we distilled the key messages from this analysis. First, we should declare “It’s a new day”: as a result of the Roadmap, schools had better facilities, improved teacher presence and, through the lesson plans, improved teacher quality. Parents who wanted their children educated – that is, virtually all parents – but who had given up on the government system because it was moribund, should take a fresh look, especially if their child had dropped out.

Second, what mattered was that children enrolled in school. It didn’t matter whether that was in a government school or a low-cost private school. The enrolment drive could therefore be a collaborative venture at local level involving both sectors. Third, the enrolment drive should address children of primary age in general, not just four and five year olds. We should try to get the dropouts back. Fourth, the measure of success would be the independent Nielsen survey, not self-reporting. This greatly sharpened the accountability pressure. In addition, as we have seen, Pakistan’s broadcasters began a television advertising campaign in the summer of 2012 encouraging parents to commit to education. Jawad Ahmed and Shehzad Roy, Pakistan’s leading rock stars, contributed too.

In preparation for this enrolment drive, we strengthened my team, adding three talented young Pakistanis who had graduated from the excellent Lahore University of Management Sciences and worked tirelessly for the cause. We focused our energy on the districts in the south where the problem was greatest. By then, the team were making regular district visits in any case to assist with and check up on Roadmap implementation. The day after the March stocktake, where the new enrolment strategy had been approved, we spent half a day with all 36 EDOs and their monitoring officers, helping them prepare. As with all our training sessions, the intention was that they should learn from each other as much as from us. By the end of the session, they each had a personal implementation plan for the enrolment drive over the next six weeks.

The team focused its assistance on the districts in the south. On my mid-April visit, the Chief Minister and I met the EDOs from the south in Chistian, deep in south-eastern Punjab. The aim of the meeting was for the Chief Minister to congratulate them on the efforts they had made to prepare for the enrolment drive. I had briefed him accordingly, but clearly he had a different idea in his head. He berated them for poor performance and told them he wouldn’t tolerate it any more, mostly in Urdu which was translated for me later. Management theory would surely say he made a mistake in this case. I was embarrassed because we had briefed the EDOs to expect something different and much more pleasant. However, there are times when culture trumps planning and I was very conscious of being an outsider. The Chief Minister made a deliberate choice and in the June Nielsen survey the results in these districts were much improved. Who am I to say there was no causal relationship?

**“Needless to say we will make mistakes on the way; the key is that we have in place a set of processes or routines through which we can learn quickly what is working and what is not, and adjust the strategy accordingly.”**

In the August two-day training for EDOs, again enrolment featured significantly and we applied the lessons we had learnt during April and May. We knew from the June survey that we had added another 150,000 or so children to school rolls and that the gains had been most marked among girls and in the south. Now we wanted the EDOs to update their creaking records of local populations and refocus on mobilising communities. One of the EDOs told me during this training what they thought about the Roadmap: “We have pain in every bone in our bodies from working so hard, but we want the Roadmap to continue because it is not really a Roadmap, it is nation-building.”

We as a team were slow to follow up this August training and there were some signs of drift in September. My fault – pressures of work elsewhere and a visit to the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Conference) summit in (of all places) Vladivostok distracted me. However, from October onwards, armed with new insight from team visits to the south to interview parents and teachers, we refocused again. Parents told us that they would be unlikely to send a child, especially a girl, to a school more than two miles away. They said that the quality of the school mattered. And they said that if the school were distant or inadequate they’d prefer to send their children for half a day to the local mosque, which was never much further away than the street corner.

In terms of action, the key, we realised, was to unlock teachers as recruiting sergeants; they needed to get out into the communities and bring the children in. With teacher presence up and quality improved, there was a real opportunity.

The December 2012 Nielsen data shows that we made further progress and are well set to build on this progress during 2013. Delivering improved enrolment, it turns out, is only partly about exhortation; the real gains are all in the details. In 2013, EDOs will have a better strategy, better tactics and better records: foundations for further progress. This, along with teacher quality, will be at the heart of the Roadmap in 2013.

## **Funding the Roadmap**

The Roadmap actions influence the entire system of Punjab. They are by no means all an additional cost. In fact, the vast bulk of the actions are means of improving quality and efficiency without adding to expenditure.

The overwhelming majority of the funding for the Roadmap comes from the Punjab government. The donor funding from the UK Department for International Development (DfID) and the World Bank – which combined makes up less than 5 per cent of Punjab’s education budget – nevertheless provided significant leverage at the margin. Whereas much of the Punjab budget is inevitably tied up in salaries, the donor money is flexible. It plays a significant part in the expansion of the PEF, for example, and enabled us to act more quickly than would otherwise have been the case when the Chief Minister decided in a stocktake to focus money for extra missing facilities on the neglected southern part of the province.

It should be emphasised, though, that the Roadmap is not mainly about donor funding or programmes. It is a set of actions based on international best practice in what works in countries such as Pakistan, and a process to ensure that actions are implemented so that the facts on the ground are changed. It would make a huge difference without any donor money at all.

Of course in the long run, Pakistan needs to spend more on education than it currently does. It spends only around 2 per cent of GDP on education when the regional norm is 4 per cent and many developed countries spend 7 per cent. By providing donor money,



the DfID and World Bank are able to keep the pressure on Punjab and Pakistan in general to maintain or increase current levels. Major increases, even to the 4 per cent President Zardari has repeatedly committed to for the country as a whole, depend on addressing two other major structural problems: the failure to raise sufficient funds through taxes (Pakistan's tax take in total is around just 10 per cent of GDP and fewer than 1 million of over 180 million Pakistanis pay tax) and the perceived need to spend as much as 25 per cent of the funds that are raised on the military.

One of the longstanding challenges in Pakistan is that because it has so many major problems, all of them interlinked, its leaders have been paralysed, not knowing where to begin. There is a poem by AA Milne which expresses the state of affairs perfectly:

“There was once an old sailor my grandfather knew  
Who had so many things which he wanted to do  
That whenever he thought it was time to begin  
He couldn't because of the state he was in.”

The Roadmap takes the opposite view. Pakistan's education problem is profound – it's an emergency, in fact – and that means getting started and then driving forward. Needless to say this means we will make mistakes on the way; the key is that we have in place a set of processes or routines through which we can learn quickly what is working and what is not, and adjust the strategy accordingly.

To those who say it's all about extra funding, I say of course more money is needed, but that is not a reason for delay. We should start to improve things right away with the money we have. Moreover, our case for extra funding will be stronger if we use what we have well. Most importantly of all, in the meantime many children (who are only young once) can get a much better education than they otherwise would. In a state of affairs such as the one which Pakistan's education system found itself in in 2010, the only sensible way forward was to prove as soon as possible that success was achievable. The Roadmap has begun to do that, not least thanks to the routines it has put in place to ensure progress. These are the subject of the next section.

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# 4

## The routines

**“Government is driven by crises and events but it’s routines that deliver results.”**

Instruction to Deliver<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Barber, M. (2008), *Instruction to Deliver: Fighting to transform Britain’s public services*.

Government the world over is beset by crises and deflected from its course by events. Indeed, many leading politicians spend almost their entire time in office fighting fires and trying to hold things together, only to reach the end of their term exhausted and frustrated, wondering why they achieved so little. Former British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan's famous lament, "Events! Dear boy! Events!" is emblematic of the problem, but former Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's more laconic statement – "We tried to do better but everything turned out as usual" – captures the sense of failure better.

In Pakistan, where crises are more common and more devastating than in most countries, this tendency to distraction and failure is inevitably more marked than elsewhere. It is a major reason why high-flown rhetoric and well-crafted White Papers have so often been like wheat chaff in the wind. The facts on the ground prove stubbornly hard to change. As 2012 closed and 2013 began, Pakistan has a debt crisis, a population crisis, a water crisis, an energy crisis, an economic crisis and a security crisis – as well as the education emergency that is the subject of this paper. And on top of these crises there are the periodic disasters – plane crashes, outbreaks of Dengue fever, factory fires, assassinations and regular bouts of violent lawlessness, especially in Karachi – which seem much more common in Pakistan than elsewhere. Add to that the on-going tensions not just between rival political parties, but between the organs of government – legislature, executive, judiciary and military – which result in repeated political crises. (One week I was there, there was one Prime Minister at the start of the week, another proposed in the middle of the week and a third one in place by the end of the week, and none of them untainted by alleged corruption.)

In these circumstances, governing effectively would test the most talented politicians. What makes matters worse is that these crises don't just demand attention and distract from the tedious but essential task of delivering results; they actually provide an excuse for not doing it. This was brought home to me vividly by the response of Pakistan's leaders to the terrible flood of August 2010. With areas of the country greater than the size of England under water, and such terrible devastation, of course they had to devote every waking hour to managing and then recovering from it (which they did with varying degrees of skill). What worried me was the psychological effect. On my visit the following month, I discovered that most education officials had been redeployed to deal with the flood and its aftermath which, though an obvious setback educationally, seemed sensible. What seemed unacceptable to me was senior government representatives saying, in effect, "we can no longer do education reform because we've had this terrible flood". I'm ruthless, I know, but also completely focused on delivering results; my response was: "Did the flood make the schools better?" If not, the education emergency we had before is if anything a little more profound and a little more urgent than it was before the flood. In any case, I was determined to stay the course, flood or no flood. For me, this was the emotional low point of my three years of involvement in Pakistan – I had the sense that everyone, including donors incidentally, was going to give up on education reform before we'd begun. A few months later, after a meeting at the DfID which had been less than successful, I had a similar feeling. I emerged into Buckingham Palace Road to see that there was exhibition in the Queen's Gallery of photos of Scott's expedition to the Antarctic, entitled *The Heart of the Great Alone*. It captured how I felt. Again it seemed an immense act of will on my part was required.

**“Once this central routine with the powerful political leader was established, the entire system could be driven forward to meet the monthly deadline of the stocktake. This is the first critical step any government needs to take to move from crisis management to delivering results.”**

### **Chief Minister’s commitment**

It was soon after this incident that the Chief Minister in Punjab first made his commitment to the Roadmap. The willpower at last was forthcoming. I promised him there and then that I would come every month to sit with him and check implementation was on track. I promised I would not ask for much of his time, but I said that attendance at these regular monthly meetings, which we rapidly came to call stocktakes, was essential. He made the commitment and has stuck to it ever since. And so have I. (We shifted to a stocktake every two months at my request in the second year of the Roadmap.) I insisted on this routine precisely because I knew that crises would otherwise intervene.

The details of how stocktakes take place are dealt with later in this section. The key point here is that once this central routine with the powerful political leader was established, the entire system could be driven forward to meet the monthly deadline of the stocktake. In other words, this single critical and high-profile routine ensures a series of other supporting routines are put in place to ensure its success. This is the first critical step any government needs to take to move from crisis management to delivering results. I had seen it done successfully in Blair’s Britain, Dalton McGuinty’s Ontario, Najib Razzak’s Malaysia and a number of other places. Now we would see whether, in perhaps the most crisis-ridden country on the planet, routines that would drive progress could be put in place and work.

### **The team on the ground**

A vital part of establishing the routines was my team on the ground, provided by McKinsey on contract to the DfID. The team consisted of three talented, hardworking young people who were totally focused on delivering the Roadmap. Through 2010 while the Roadmap was designed this had been led by Fenton Whelan, but for the first half of 2011 he had been reassigned elsewhere, and the team of three consisted of Hiran Embuldeniya, Saad Rizvi and Katelyn Donnelly. Their task, acquitted brilliantly, was to build the necessary relationships with education officials in Lahore and demonstrate what my expectations were in terms of data collection and analysis, presentation of material, and action to solve problems. Their persistence in the face of adversity was little short of miraculous. The Punjabi officials came to love them. I called from England to speak to my team the day Osama Bin Laden was killed, to encourage them to get out of Pakistan. They refused and simply got on with the job.

The officials, as they have since told me openly, were frankly sceptical about the Roadmap, seeing it as another donor-driven initiative which would distract them from their mission. They might have chosen to resist it actively had not the Chief Minister, right from the start, been in favour of it and shown a strong personal commitment to me. So instead they accommodated us, reluctantly at first, and then from March or April 2011, when they could see the opportunity it provided, became strong supporters and have remained so ever since. Part of what turned them round was the intrinsic merit of the Roadmap’s elements and its processes when they saw them for themselves; part was due to my team on the ground, who conveyed a very different, much more positive impression to the officials than normal contractors. They worked hard, put in the hours, collaborated and gave credit to the officials rather than claiming it themselves. Saad, himself a Pakistani citizen committed to the future of his country, also helped build social relationships between the team and officials. In time, the bonds between us all collectively as we pursued a common mission became very strong. We

weren't just following the Chief Minister's lead; we were embarking on the transformation of Punjab.

For the DfID this was an experiment too. Javed Ahmed Malik, the (Punjabi) DfID official on the ground had always been supportive and played a continuing part. The DfID leadership in Islamabad and further away in London was also supportive, at first without quite knowing what they had let themselves in for. Also the DfID Mission in Pakistan was expanding rapidly during 2011 under the thoughtful and determined leadership of George Turkington; he and his colleagues had a great deal on their plate.

Throughout 2011, in addition to my regular monthly visits, the team and I were in constant email contact and had a weekly call. This enabled us to solve the various challenges that arose from time to time while for me they provided the opportunity to set strategy and expectations – a key objective in those early stages was to be clear that we would not compromise our judgement on what was and wasn't working in order to avoid tension.

### The Roadmap actions

As my monthly visit and therefore stocktake with the Chief Minister approached, the pace of activity among the officials quickened. The team and I had designed a simple checklist of Roadmap Actions (under the five headings in the previous section of this paper) which was updated after each stocktake. The checklist set out in plain language the action that was required, the people responsible and the deadline for completion. It also included a final column in which we reached a judgement – ultimately my judgement – about whether the action had been completed successfully or was on track to successful completion; Green if it was; and then Amber-Green, Amber-Red and Red in descending order depending on how far off track it was. In the week before my visit, the team made its assessment, using these colours, of each Roadmap Action and then debated them with the officials. There was almost endless back-and-forth in this phase between my team and two dedicated officials, Mushtaq Ahmad Sial and Mahmood Hasan, whose persistence and good humour ensured that, even as they negotiated hard, we became firm friends. Everyone knew that the following week these traffic light judgements would be put in front of the Chief Minister and no official wanted to risk a Red (of any shade) if it could be avoided. A debate therefore ensued between the officials and the team, with the officials arguing that the Red judgements were unfair and the team replying that if the action were completed successfully before the stocktake then, and only then, could the colour change. Their fall-back was that in the end either they or the officials would have to persuade me.

The result of this was that in the week before my visits many of the actions were taken or moved forward and bureaucratic blockages removed. The routines were beginning to work. Once I arrived in Lahore, the team and I would go through the Roadmap actions and the judgements in preparation for a day spent in a series of meetings with the officials responsible.

This day has become one of the central routines of the Roadmap and I look forward to it more than any other. I think it's because the discussion of the various traffic light judgements has become a genuine exploration of what has been achieved and what has not, what enables progress and what gets in the way, and above all what will bring about success in the future. For the first few times these meetings were genuinely edgy, especially for the officials. Of course they did not know then that the Roadmap would deliver results; nor that I would keep coming month after month, nor that the Chief

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**“The discussion of the various traffic light judgements has become a genuine exploration of what has been achieved and what has not, what enables progress and what gets in the way, and above all what will bring about success in the future.”**

Minister's commitment to the Roadmap would remain absolute. They did know that the Chief Minister would react vigorously, perhaps angrily, against any sign of red in the stocktake presentation and they knew that would be unpleasant at best and career-threatening at worst. On one occasion, for example, the Chief Minister with a wave of the arm, in a moment of frustration, urged in relation to an official, "Throw him in the Arabian Sea!" The idea of course was not serious, but the sentiment most certainly was.

I was genuinely sympathetic to the officials in these circumstances, but I also knew that it was central to our success that the process had integrity; that Green had to mean Green and Red, Red; that whatever else happened, we – I – had to be plain-speaking. It was a question of trust. I also realised right away that this was something that, uniquely, I could do. The worst that could happen to me as a bearer of bad tidings would be a request never to come back. (Given the travel and security challenges in getting to and from Pakistan, there were moments, I confess, when that would have been a relief.) Moreover, I was a single-issue fanatic, focused purely on the Roadmap goals with no competing priorities.

This was not true for any of the other participants. The officials had duties and relationships beyond the Roadmap. They had careers to manage, theirs and others, and they had grown up in a deferential society and a sometimes corrupt bureaucracy – neither of these circumstances were conducive to speaking plainly. Indeed, the subtleties of operating in this context are a stock-in-trade for a Pakistan bureaucrat, especially for an honest one who must regularly face ethical dilemmas. When the Secretary-Schools, an outstanding official incidentally, praised a colleague he would call them "honest and hardworking", which by implication condemned many others.

Nor do the donors necessarily have an incentive to tell it how it is. Indeed, at its worst donors and recipients collude in convincing themselves that all is well, even when it is not; the recipients because they want the money, the donors because they want to convince their masters in London, Washington or wherever that their programmes are working. Moreover, unlocking this fatal embrace causes immense friction and can spill over into wider diplomatic tension... a quiet life is often much the easier choice.

Given this context, I determined right from the start to tell it how I saw it. To any plea that a Red should be made Green because the Chief Minister would react against it, I insisted that the only way to change colour was to make sure the action had been taken successfully. I insisted too that where my team or the DfID had failed to take an action, that too should plainly be recorded Red. So too should any failure on the part of the Chief Minister himself.

To further soften the blow of any Red, I made a point in stocktakes of drawing attention to the proportions of Green and Red (there was always more Green, even at the beginning) and of framing the report to the Chief Minister in non-inflammatory words and, even more importantly, constantly pointing out that a Red did not necessarily mean poor performance (though it might); it might simply imply that there was just too much to do or that an unexpected blockage had occurred. I consistently emphasised that the first task with Red is not to allocate blame but to solve the problem.

By the end of the day spent with officials I was thoroughly briefed on the agenda, where our successes were and what our problems were. The officials meanwhile knew where they stood and what would be reported to the Chief Minister. The team and I would finalise the Powerpoint presentation for the stocktake. Sometimes we took calls in the evening from an official making the case one last time for a Red to be turned Green. Occasionally there was indeed new hard evidence of progress which made this

possible. In fact, the officials began quite rapidly to see how the process could benefit them. For example, if an action had not happened because approval from the Ministry of Finance had not been forthcoming, they explained to officials there that this would be reported to the Chief Minister at the stocktake the following day. This threat sometimes prompted the Finance Ministry to act at the last minute.

## The stocktake

Over time, preparation for the stocktake also came to include meetings with the Secretary-Finance, the Chairman-Planning and Development, and the Chief Secretary as well as the Education Department officials. This enabled us to remove resource or civil service/personnel barriers as well as educational ones.

The result of all this activity was that we were all well-prepared when the stocktake, the central Roadmap routine, came round. At first, each time I was uncertain whether the Chief Minister would in fact give time to it. I feared the meeting would be cancelled and my visit wasted. With the help of Saif Hameed in his office, we would seek an appointment, but it was often not until the evening before or the day of the stocktake itself that we'd find out when the meeting would take place. I assumed this was for security reasons. Either way, I waited anxiously each time because I knew that if the stocktakes didn't happen, the entire process would begin to unravel. After a while though, I realised that the Chief Minister was completely committed and would always come through. I imagine at first he was asking himself similar questions about the degree to which I was committed – after all, a foreign expert who promised much and then vanished from the scene would have been par for the course. But he also soon realised that I was in this for the long haul. When Andrew Mitchell had said I should make this my life's work I had not disagreed. I think the moment Shahbaz Sharif understood the degree of commitment fully was when I turned up in Lahore in early October 2011 in the midst of the outbreak of Dengue fever and the first month of my new job at Pearson. He expressed amazement. "Try keeping me away," I replied.

The location of the stocktake was often a mystery until the last minute too – a variety of official residences or offices were available. Once (in May 2012), the stocktake took place in a large tent in a park where the Chief Minister had decamped for several weeks to protest against the federal government's energy policy which he believed discriminated against Punjab. The point was though that however bizarre the circumstances, the stocktake happened.

The meetings themselves soon took on a pattern. I would show a Powerpoint presentation and take the Chief Minister through the Roadmap actions; we'd pause on the Reds and I would try to explain why it was Red and what we planned to do about it. The Chief Minister would challenge the officials, most often the Secretary-Schools, to explain. It could become quite heated. I was always impressed by the Secretary's calm persistence under fire. At the end of each debate, I would sum up what had been agreed and we would move on.

Once the Roadmap went into implementation (from August 2011), we were able to report progress against the trajectory on each key indicator: student attendance, teacher presence, teacher guide availability (until this reached 100 per cent) and facilities. We standardised the graphs to make them instantly recognisable from one stocktake to the next. We also had the data district-by-district as well as at province level, so from October 2011 we introduced the "heat maps" which showed the Chief Minister which districts were on track and which weren't. This gave us new insights and

new problems to solve. We often now had a discussion of why a particular district was lagging and what could be done about it. The heat maps also laid bare the relative neglect and greater challenge of delivering in southern Punjab. As a result, in the summer of 2012 we developed an additional strand of the Roadmap to target the south in particular. The Chief Minister loved the heat maps: “I shall sleep with these under my pillow,” he said.

In addition to reviewing progress and the Roadmap actions, in most stocktakes we would add a specific strategic theme – perhaps southern Punjab, perhaps the planned strategy for teacher quality. Also, twice a year (June and December), we had the independent Nielsen survey of enrolment which gave us multiple insights into what was working and where we needed to focus attention.

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**“Between September 2011 and March 2012, the team visited each district at least twice and some more often. In addition to the monitoring role, this also became a major advance in capacity-building because the team could share insights from around the province with individual EDOs.”**

As the Chief Minister told me, the stocktakes soon became his favourite meeting. Why? Because he knew he’d have an honest conversation about progress and be able to make decisions with all the relevant people in the room about what to do next. Also education really was his priority and at last he had a means to change the facts on the ground. He repeatedly reminded us in stocktakes that only through education could Punjab solve its economic, social and security problems. He constantly pointed out that without education and without jobs, young men would be prey to the extremists bent on destroying Pakistan. He reminded us that Jinnah himself had spoken up for education at the founding of Pakistan but successive leaders had not lived up to that vision; now at last we were beginning to do so. In short, the Roadmap processes and the stocktake had two attributes missing from much of the rest of the Chief Minister’s daily experience, namely the capacity to turn plans into change on the ground and, equally importantly, integrity. In a stocktake, the Chief Minister knew he would get the plain truth.

As the Roadmap progressed, the stocktakes took on additional status. The Secretary-Finance, and the Chairman – Planning and Development, found it worthwhile to be there. The DfID sent increasingly senior representation. (The Secretary of State, Andrew Mitchell came on one occasion, and his successor Justine Greening on another.) Other donors – CIDA, the Canadian aid organisation, and the World Bank – began to attend. The debates became increasingly sophisticated as the forum became trusted. Instead of a dialogue between the Chief Minister and me, punctuated by heated exchanges between him and officials, we had rounded debates. We also began to use the meetings to gain recognition for hard-working, committed officials such as Dr Farrah, whose PMIU had made such a good job of collecting and analysing the monthly data. When working at 10 Downing Street I had come to the view that while government is dominated by crises and events it is routines that deliver results. The infinitely more challenging context of Punjab has proved this point.

I’m old-fashioned enough to set significant store by the minutes of a meeting. I always encouraged one of the team to write and circulate (via the Chief Minister’s office) the minutes of a stocktake as soon as possible, having cleared them first with me. I felt it was essential in a traditional bureaucratic culture to have the stocktake decisions formally recorded. All key actions agreed were listed against the name of the person responsible. It has to be said that while the relevant team members always responded to my prompting with alacrity, the mastery among talented twenty-somethings of reported speech – the key tense for all good minutes – leaves a lot to be desired.



## The evolving teams

Between stocktakes, progress depends on the interaction of three teams; first and foremost the Punjab government officials, second the DfID team on the ground in Islamabad and sometimes Lahore; and third my team, contracted by the DfID, in Lahore.

The three have learnt together and evolved together. During the phase of preparation for Roadmap implementation (roughly January to August 2011), my team worked closely with the Punjab officials in Lahore to build the necessary trust and collaboration. It was a phase in which a great deal of thankless work, which underpinned the entire effort that followed, was completed. The different targets and trajectories for each of the 36 districts, taking account of their different starting points would be a case in point. PEF's preparation for the rollout of the expanded voucher scheme would be another. During this phase, the DfID kept a watching brief but its senior officials were not actively involved in Lahore.

From September 2011, with the focus now firmly on implementation at district level across the province, the priority for my team, with different members and Fenton Whelan back on the scene, shifted to the districts. Increasingly they spent time out with the EDOs and their teams, especially in those districts where implementation, for whatever reason, was proving more difficult. When a district appeared Red on the heat maps in a stocktake, the Chief Minister had a tendency to urge the suspension of the EDO. The Secretary-Schools was not unwilling to shuffle his pack if he needed to, but was understandably reluctant to shift EDOs in the light of a single month's data. Our increasing presence in the districts meant we were able to explain the circumstances in a particular district or investigate them more deeply. Between September 2011 and March 2012, the team, impressively led by Taimur Khan, visited each district at least twice and some more often. In addition to the monitoring role, this also became a major advance in capacity-building because the team could share insights from around the province with individual EDOs and discuss how they might be applied in the specific circumstances of that district. Much of what development-speak calls "capacity-building" is so generic and vague as to be almost meaningless. By contrast, the system we had developed, with regular interactive training focused on the tasks of the next few months and these follow-up visits, was practical, relevant and precise.

During this phase, the team inevitably became somewhat divorced from the officials in Lahore. From January 2012, with Debbie Palmer from the DfID on the case and the DfID's full engagement in Lahore, we were able for the first time to combine the full commitment of the DfID with the efforts of my team. Debbie joined the weekly calls which became a key tool in driving collaboration, setting priorities and solving problems.

By far the most significant player in the Roadmap game, though, was the School Department in Lahore. Once he had overcome his initial scepticism about the Roadmap, the Secretary, Aslam Kamboh, became its beating heart. He was hugely respected by his colleagues who were therefore happy to follow his lead. We were very fortunate that Kamboh and his dedicated team of six or eight key officials were kept in post throughout 2011 and 2012. It is important to point out how unusual this was in the context of Pakistan, where rapid turnover of officials in key positions is endemic. The Roadmap could not possibly have succeeded without the steady commitment of Kamboh and his colleagues.

It is also worth pointing out that Kamboh and his team are talented and hardworking. Having seen similar teams of civil servants in Britain and elsewhere, I can confidently

say that this group was as competent as any I have met and delivered remarkable results across a vast system in difficult circumstances. There were moments when I was frustrated with them, either for being slow or not acting on what was agreed, but I also knew that there were many aspects of what they had to do that I did not and could never understand (for example, the Secretary spends hours each week in court defending himself and the department in cases where incompetent or corrupt teachers and officials had been removed or suspended). I always sought to separate out those issues on which I could and should apply the pressure on behalf of the Chief Minister and those where I just had to accept that I was out of my depth. I tried to instil in my team a deep respect for the officials with whom we were working and urged them to avoid thinking that inevitably we knew best. As 2012 unfolded, I emphasised more and more the need to take a collaborative approach. The way in which we designed and implemented the teacher quality pilot represented the new way of working.

Meanwhile, the DfID's involvement in the Roadmap became steadily stronger as they saw its power to deliver results. They put increasing resources into the group in Lahore to support Javed who had shown his dedication to the work from the start. Debbie, and sometimes George Turkington, the Head of Mission, became involved in the stocktakes and the follow-up. By the second half of 2012, he took the view that the Roadmap was the most exciting programme he had seen in 30 years as a development specialist. Andrew Mitchell visited as Secretary of State in March 2012, and his successor Justine Greening visited in January 2013. For both, the centrepiece of the visit was a Roadmap stocktake.

The Foreign Office was also totally supportive. The High Commissioner, Adam Thomson, from the moment he set foot in Pakistan in early 2010 made an unshakable commitment to the education work. Once he said, "This is the most important work I do." He worked hard to create a favourable context for the Roadmap work not just in the present, but in future. He expressed enthusiasm for it in meetings with national politicians as well as with the Chief Minister of Punjab. With Punjab politicians from other parties and the country's leading politicians, both Adam and the DfID's leaders emphasised that although the Roadmap was driven by the Chief Minister, it was in no sense party political and its elements and processes could be adopted elsewhere. Indeed during 2012, Chief Minister Hoti of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa adopted a tailored version of the Roadmap for his province. Meanwhile, in the meetings with Pakistan's political leaders, Andrew Mitchell, top visiting DfID officials (such as Moazzam Malik) and I explained how the Roadmap worked and that the aid the British provided was designed to build a partnership for the development of Pakistan rather than to buy influence or create dependency. All the time at the highest levels, Adam Thomson ensured that all the arms of the Pakistan state, visible and less visible, were briefed and supportive.

By the end of 2012 therefore, we had effective processes in place at every level from the school on the frontline to the highest echelons of the state. The biggest threat to continued success, however, is the disruption that will inevitably occur before, during and after the election that is due in the first half of 2013.

Once an election is called in Pakistan, a caretaker Government takes over at national level and in each province while the politicians go on the campaign trail. In the caretaker phase it is quite possible that key officials will be moved around. Then, once the election result is clear, a new Government at national level and in each province will be formed, though often only after lengthy negotiations leading to a coalition. This creates inevitable uncertainty. Then, finally, once the new Government actually takes over, it is more than

likely that new officials will be appointed to key posts. Secretary Kamboh has already served longer than most of his predecessors and much longer than any of his peers in other provinces, and could well be moved.

We have spent a good deal of time in the second half of 2012 seeking to embed the Roadmap sufficiently deeply in the hearts and minds of both politicians and officials to ensure it will survive these transitions. Of course, it is not just a matter of commitment; it's also about competence. The Chief Minister, the Secretary-Schools and the team around him have been wonderful and any successors will find them hard to match. Indeed, while the vision that David Miliband had in 2009 when we first discussed Pakistan remains far from fully realised, thanks to them more than anyone, we have, without a doubt, made progress. And what we have achieved has lessons for other sectors in Pakistan and for aid policy in general.

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# 5

## The lessons

**“...we must lay the groundwork for a new kind of knowledge, what some have called a ‘science of delivery’, that countries will use to meet the demands of their people.”**

Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank

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In telling the story in the previous sections, many of the lessons learnt from the Roadmap will no doubt have become apparent. In this brief final section, the intention is to summarise them in order to make them accessible.

In addition to my books *Instruction to Deliver* and *Deliverology 101*, this is my contribution to what Jim Yong Kim's important recent plea called for: a "science of delivery". The implication is that the lessons below may be applicable not just to other education reforms in the developing world, but also to development in general. Already in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in extremely difficult circumstances, we are applying these lessons to the early stages of the second Roadmap and it is beginning to work.

### **Lesson 1: Be ambitious**

The world is changing fast and education systems, even in the best-run countries, find it difficult to rise to the ever-greater demands placed upon them. Ambition therefore is the order of the day everywhere.

How much more so, then, in a country such as Pakistan where the education system has been underperforming disastrously for decades. Moreover, to engage people in the difficult and demanding tasks of change in a moribund system where many of those involved have given up hope requires a bold, ambitious vision. Incrementalism isn't enough and even if it were, it isn't motivating.

And tackle the whole system! No point in a few boutique initiatives for a few hundred thousand children when, as in Punjab, there are 25-30 million children and young people who need a good education as fast as possible.

### **Lesson 2: Set clear goals**

Translate the vision into measurable outcomes. Make it real for people at every level in the system. They've heard high-flown rhetoric before. Often. They want to know what is expected of them and when. And they want to know whether they are on track.

Calling an outcome by a specific date a "target" for some reason makes it controversial. The word "target" isn't important. Being able to describe in practical terms what success looks like is.

That goes for the school and the district as well as the province.

### **Lesson 3: Prepare and plan and get on with it; you can refine it as you go**

Plans are important and so is planning, but both can be overdone. When there is an education emergency as in Pakistan, it is not sensible to spend a long time planning *before* acting, because it means giving up on millions more children. Yet when you talk to those involved in classic Education Sector Plans they have often taken many months and sometimes years to settle on. That refrain again: "How long have you got?"

With the Roadmap, it was different. Shahbaz Sharif asked us to prepare a plan in November 2010 and he approved it in December 2010. In January 2011 we began implementation. By August it was affecting what happened in 60,000 schools. If it can be done in Punjab, it can be done (almost) anywhere.

#### **Lesson 4: Establish routines that work**

“Government is driven by crises and events but it is routines that deliver results.” These are my words summarising what I learnt from eight years at the heart of Government in the UK.

The monthly (later bimonthly) stocktakes where I report progress to the Chief Minister, officials are held to account and we all contribute to solving problems, are central to the success of the Roadmap so far. The Chief Minister’s personal commitment makes all the difference. With all the key decision-makers around the table, issues that might take days or weeks to resolve – with memoranda being batted back and forth – can be resolved in a few minutes.

No Chief Minister or equivalent anywhere in the world who wants to drive through a major change should even think about trying to do so without stocktakes. If you want results, monotony trumps chaos every time.

#### **Lesson 5: The conversation must be honest**

There’s a Bob Dylan line: “Let us not talk falsely now, the hour is getting late.” That is exactly the sentiment required in Punjab and many places like it where millions of children are either not in school or are receiving an education of shockingly poor quality.

One of the reasons for the continuing failure in these situations is an unwillingness to confront the brutal facts. Failure needs to be named; and its causes need to be identified. If they include corruption, political interference or incompetence, there is no point avoiding the issue.

This is easy to say but hard to do. Someone has to have the courage to speak up and take the risk of being unpopular, perhaps even damaging their career. Once new norms are established and speaking plainly has become not just acceptable but expected it gets easier, but someone has to get the ball rolling. In Punjab that was my job. For me, it was a relatively low risk because the worst that could happen was that I’d be asked to stop coming.

#### **Lesson 6: Know what’s really happening**

Punjab is vast; around 100 million people. Everything from desert to sprawling cities. For the education reform to work, you have to know what’s happening across the province as near to now as possible. That way, if something isn’t working, you can address the problem immediately. If what you try first doesn’t work, you can try something different. The point is, you know and then you act. Commissioned evaluations don’t and can’t do this. They have a different and perfectly valid role, namely to bring an external perspective and to learn lessons reflectively for the future.

What I’m talking about requires a reasonably reliable data system that gets the data in, analyses it and gets it out round the system again in short order. The monthly data collection system in Punjab is a wonderful example of how this can be done in a low-tech but highly effective way. Without it the Roadmap would not work.

Knowing what’s happening also requires that those leading the reform get out to the frontline regularly. Spending time in meetings or in an office in Lahore may be necessary, but it is certainly not enough. This is why my team spends so much of its time out in the districts and why the Secretary, and indeed the Chief Minister, make a point of seeing for themselves what is happening and listening to the perspectives of those in the province’s far-flung corners.

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**“Failure needs to be named; and its causes need to be identified.”**

## Lesson 7: Refine constantly but don't compromise

With the routines, the honest conversation and regular data all in place, it becomes possible to refine the plan constantly and improve it in the light of the evidence and changing circumstances.

The big risk though, is that refinement becomes an excuse for compromise; that as the plan runs into difficulties, as good plans always do, it becomes an excuse for reducing the ambition, slipping the deadlines or negotiating the non-negotiables. That is the slippery slope from transformational to incremental change and it is all too easy to slide down it.

**“What I’m talking about requires a reasonably reliable data system that gets the data in, analyses it and gets it round the system again in short order.”**

Someone has to be the unreasonable one; the person, maybe people, who constantly remind everyone else of the ambition and why it matters. A successful strategy often has to be carried across an implementation dip. In any large system, there will be people who, given a choice, will choose a quiet life. To overcome these problems or temptations requires an act of will.

The Chief Minister has played this part well in Punjab. And I’ve always supported him when the question of ambition opens up. People have come to know I won’t compromise.

The vital point here is this: it is only when a compromise is ruled out that people become genuinely creative in seeking solutions.

## Lesson 8: Create momentum

Never stand still. Simple really. Changing a large or, in the case of Punjab, huge system requires movement. You only have to watch one of those immense goods trains like the one I watched trundle through Baton Rouge a couple of years ago – when it’s stopped, the energy required to get it moving again is immense; once it’s moving, it’s hard to stop.

It’s the same with an education reform; once you have progress, the momentum helps carry you. This is especially true in a place such as Punjab where there was so little progress for so long and where, even when you get started, most of those involved are expecting failure. They have to be taken through what you might call an emotional trajectory:

“Can’t think why we would even consider this.”

“It’s a bad idea, but if they insist.”

“I’ve seen worse.”

“You have to respect the way they’ve gone about it.”

“Maybe it’s beginning to work.”

“The results are promising.”

“We should have done this years ago.”

“I always said it was a good idea.”

“I’m glad I thought of it.”

And that requires momentum! With the Roadmap in Punjab, we have reached somewhere between stages 5 and 6.

## Lesson 9: Persist

The single word says it all. In Punjab, we're just embarking on year three. The results are impressive, but from a very low base, and an education system capable of providing high standards for every child remains years away. It hasn't been easy. It won't get any easier for a long time, but there is visible progress and persistence will be rewarded ultimately.

## Lesson 10: Build a guiding coalition and ever-widening circles of leadership – it beats “technical assistance” every time

What is needed to drive reform of a whole system is a guiding coalition of political, official and donor leaders who share the objectives, share a deep understanding of the strategy and share participation in the routines that drive delivery.

Now in a stocktake in Punjab, while of course we all know our different roles, we are in practice acting as a team overseeing the Roadmap. The discussion is strategic and about how to achieve the goals, not just each participant representing their organisation. This changes everything.

The “guiding coalition” is a concept from Harvard business professor John Kotter, which I have turned into a key element of thinking about delivery in public services.

“...seven [or so] people in key positions who agree profoundly about what they want to do and know how they want to do it can change the world...”<sup>16</sup>

From the guiding coalition outwards, the circles of leadership can be extended wider and wider.

In the crucial foundation stage of the Roadmap, between January and August 2011, while I was building the relationship with the Chief Minister, Saad Rizvi and Katelyn Donnelly were working tirelessly to build the relationships with officials on which the success that has followed was based. What they offered went far beyond technical assistance; they built trust, confidence and shared commitment. The credit for progress went to the officials, not my team. It was capacity-building of the highest order.

The officials came to realise that this was not another donor initiative; it was a way to help them do their jobs better and achieve the goals that everyone shared. Since then, through the interactive training, the EDOs have been brought on board. The Semiotics evaluation suggests that now the AEOs – middle-ranking officials in districts – are increasingly committed too. This is ever-widening circles of leadership in practice.

## Lesson 11: (For donors only) Focus on the change that is needed and what it will take to deliver it; work back from there to the money

Donors involved in a country like Pakistan need to be clear why they are there. The broad aim surely is for Pakistan to become a thriving democracy which doesn't need aid – and the sooner the better. In the case of the Roadmap, the aim is an education system of quality with the capacity to improve itself continuously, with outside help brought in at its own initiative and expense when it wants it.

Donors should constantly focus on doing what it takes to bring that about. What are the specific goals? What can the Government do for itself? What outside help does it want or need? What external funding if any does it need and how could that dependence on

**“What is needed to drive reform of a whole system is a guiding coalition of political, official and donor leaders who share the objectives, share a deep understanding of the strategy and share participation in the routines that drive delivery.”**

<sup>16</sup> Barber, M. et al (2010), *Deliverology 101*, p. 35.



external funding be reduced over time? In other words, the aid money is at the end of the argument, not the beginning. And the aim consistently should be to reduce it over time. It is because we have taken this approach with the Roadmap that the Chief Minister in Punjab calls it “a true partnership not an aid programme”. The difference is huge.

In the West, those interested in aid fall into two camps: those who want less of it because they think it is ineffective and creates dependency; and those who want more because they believe it is fundamental to global justice.

The visionary leaders among recipient countries don't hold either view. They want their province or country to succeed and ultimately to do so without any dependence on aid. In the meantime they want aid of the right kind but they don't want the entire (occasionally self-serving) aid industry that sometimes comes with it.

Personally I have always supported commitment to aid and salute the Blair, Brown and Cameron premierships which have consistently increased the amount and effectiveness of British aid.

But I also want aid to end. Not because it has been demonstrably ineffective, but because one day we'll all know that it has been demonstrably effective and everyone can see that it is no longer needed. To me, the promise of the Punjab Roadmap is not just that it can deliver a steadily improving education system to millions of children, important though that is; it is that it points the way to the ultimate end of aid. It would be wonderful if when the end of aid comes to pass we could look back and say, “That worked.” Rather than “That's over.” Or, worse still, “That was a waste of time.”

## **Optional Lesson 12: When all else fails in Pakistan you can always talk about cricket**

Obvious, perhaps, but an area where American foreign policy requires refinement.

**Table 3: The twelve lessons of the Punjab Roadmap summarised**

<b>To boldly go</b>	<b>The brutal facts</b>	<b>Never relent</b>
<b>Lesson 1</b> Be ambitious	<b>Lesson 5</b> The conversation must be honest	<b>Lesson 9</b> Persist
<b>Lesson 2</b> Set clear goals	<b>Lesson 6</b> Know what's really happening	<b>Lesson 10</b> Build a guiding coalition
<b>Lesson 3</b> Prepare, plan and get on with it: you can refine it as you go	<b>Lesson 7</b> Refine constantly but don't compromise	<b>Lesson 11</b> Focus on the change that's needed... Work back from there to the money
<b>Lesson 4</b> Establish routines that work	<b>Lesson 8</b> Create momentum	<b>Lesson 12</b> When all else fails in Pakistan, you can always talk about cricket

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# Postscript: Priorities for 2013 and beyond

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**“The routines, the data and above all the stocktakes enable us to learn as we go.”**

As I’ve kept saying throughout this account, for the Punjab Education Reform Roadmap, this is only the beginning. Irreversibility lies years in the future. We have a plan for 2013 and an outline of what might come thereafter. The story will need updating a year or so from now, but here is an outline of what lies ahead.

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## **1. Keep on keeping on**

The routines, the data and above all the stocktakes enable us to learn as we go. Although we finished 2012 on new record highs of performance in Punjab across almost all indicators, and indeed met the 2013 targets early, there is more to do across the board. To give just one example, 90 per cent enrolment is good (and the best ever), but it is not good enough.

It is so easy in a strategy such as this to leap at new initiatives, new ideas, new institutions or organisations and lose sight of what has driven the progress so far. The routines, rightly highlighted in the Independent Commission on Aid Impact (ICAI) Report, have been fundamental and need to continue. If we did nothing else, this alone would ensure further progress. I see it as my job, however boring it might seem, to keep emphasising this point.

## **2. A period of uncertainty**

There will be an election at national level and, more importantly from the Roadmap point of view, at provincial level. The campaign will be vigorous to say the least. Education may be an area of debate. There may be a change of political leadership in Punjab. Shahbaz Sharif is highly respected, but in Pakistani politics no one can be sure of the outcome. Moreover, there will be turnover in key official positions.

During this turmoil, which is about the survival of democracy in Pakistan and therefore fundamental, we need to keep the Roadmap on track, delivering for children and families. We need to ensure that top bureaucrats across Pakistan as well as Punjab are familiar with what has been done; and we need to build cross-party support for its continuation. We also need to ensure that key opinion-formers outside politics, in business or civil society, for example, understand what is at stake.

In the near future, this is where the biggest risk to the Roadmap lies. We have been hard at work on this agenda for six months now, but it will need continued attention, not just from those directly involved in the Roadmap, but also from the High Commissioner, visiting Ministers and other key players such as the World Bank.

## **3. A sustained enrolment drive**

We have learnt a lot in 2012, at the level of the school and the village as well as the district and the province, about how to increase enrolment. We need to combine the strands of that knowledge into a vigorous attempt to achieve the Millennium Development Goal, an ambitious thought at this late stage – and an achievable one if we attend to the frontline reality. To illustrate the point, my team is spending a lot of time in rural Punjab seeking to understand the challenge more deeply, literally home by home, village by village. In one village, where the local education official assured them there was 100 per cent enrolment, they found 73 children, previously unaccounted for, who were out of school. In another visit in late February 2013, they interviewed parents about their attitudes to schools and there and then enrolled 31 extra children.

## **4. The Impact of the Punjab Education Foundation**

The Punjab Education Foundation is a major innovation, gaining attention globally and already funding education for more than a million children through its various public-

private partnerships. From 2013 on, a major expansion of the scheme, which provides vouchers for the out-of-school children of poor families, is planned. So too is an expansion of the New Schools Programme, especially in Southern Punjab.

These are major developments and require the PEF to strengthen its capacity, its systems and its resilience. It performed excellently during the big expansion of 2011-12. Now it needs to prepare for a further big expansion because it is critical both to increasing enrolment and improving quality across the province.

## **5. Teacher quality and student outcomes**

Last but most definitely not least, during 2013 teacher quality and student outcomes will take centre stage. Our plans for this are described in Section 3.

The key point to make here is that in the past two years the Roadmap has changed the context – on teacher presence and facilities, for example – and thus made a drive for improved quality possible.

It has also laid the foundations for a teacher quality drive through ensuring new lesson plans, new textbooks and piloting a radical new classroom-focused approach to teachers' professional development. As a result, we are now ready to combine these elements in a teacher quality strategy for the entire province.

By the end of the year too, we will for the first time have a reliable means of monitoring the impact of the Roadmap on student performance.

\* \* \*

There will no doubt be ups and downs, crises and events, critics and detractors. The context is the most challenging in the world, after all. Even so, as long as the political will continues, there is every reason to believe that in future the Roadmap will bring more good news from Pakistan.

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# Appendix: Dramatis personae

## **Government of Pakistan**

- Asif Ali Zardari* President of Pakistan who launched the Pakistan Education Task Force and always supported the programme of work that resulted from it.
- Shahnaz Wazir Ali* Deeply committed educational thinker and reformer who has been advisor on Social Policy and an MNA. She co-chaired the Pakistan Education Task Force with me.

## **Punjab Government**

- Mian Shahbaz Sharif* Chief Minister of Punjab who made and firmly stuck to a strong commitment to improving education in his province. The lynchpin of the Roadmap he made a reliable commitment to the stocktake meetings which drove it forward.
- Nasir Khosa* Excellent Chief Secretary who put the full might of the Punjab Civil Service behind the Roadmap.
- Mian Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman* Education Minister. Consistent supporter of the Chief Minister and the Roadmap.
- Javed Aslam* Firm and decisive Chairman of Planning and Development and, from the outset, a supporter of the Roadmap.
- Aslam Kamboh* Secretary-Schools, Punjab. One of the most dedicated civil servants I have ever met anywhere in the world; initially cautious about the Roadmap, he has become the driving force behind it.
- Nadeem Kayani* Head of the Department of Staff Development, a thoughtful, principled, determined man who speaks his mind and a serious educational thinker who gets things done.
- Dr Farrah Masood* Head of the Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit, a hardworking and ambitious official whose confidence in her leadership grew as the Roadmap developed and whose data collection system became impressive and unique.
- Raja Anwar & Ambreen Raza* Respectively Chairman and Chief Executive of the Punjab Education Foundation, committed fighters for their organisation who rose to the challenge of implementing a rapid and substantial expansion of the PEF programmes including the voucher scheme.
- Mushtaq Ahmad Sial & Mahmood Hasan* Salt-of-the-earth officials, deeply loyal to their Secretary, committed to their country, who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to keep the Roadmap on track.
- Saif Hamid* Advisor to the Chief Minister until October 2012, who played a key role in liaising between my team and the Chief Minister's office and rapidly grasped the potential of the Roadmap.

## **Foreign and Commonwealth Office/ Department for International Development**

- Adam Thomson* The incomparable British High Commissioner in Pakistan who makes you proud to be British. Trusted by all of Pakistan's leaders, he ensured that in a country understandably suspicious of outside interference, the Roadmap was given a clear run.

<i>George Turkington</i>	Head of the DfID Mission in Pakistan, a deeply committed Scot determined to tackle, wherever he could, the “binding constraints”. He steadily increased his commitment to the Roadmap, describing it in October 2012 as the most exciting development he’d seen in a 30-year career at the DfID.
<i>Debbie Palmer</i>	Deputy Head of the DfID Mission, responsible, among other things, for the Roadmap. Hardworking, serious and a passionate advocate for the Punjab reform; after she took responsibility for the Roadmap at the start of 2012, the DfID’s support for it was outstanding. As a triathlete, she knows the importance of stamina.
<i>Moazzam Malik</i>	The DfID civil servant in London responsible for Pakistan and Afghanistan. From the outset he took a keen interest in the Roadmap and became an increasingly powerful advocate of it as it took off. He was my guide to the inner workings of the DfID and helped to unripple ruffled feathers there when necessary.
<i>Javed Ahmed Malik</i>	A Punjabi representative of the DfID who was totally committed to the Roadmap from its inception. Uniquely combined deep knowledge of Punjab, insider understanding of the DfID and a willingness to question orthodoxy.
<i>Vicky Collis</i>	The excellent Team Leader of the DfID’s Provincial Delivery Team who joined DfID Pakistan in mid-2012 and made a huge difference.
<i>Deidre Watson</i>	A well-informed DfID senior education advisor who led its analysis of educational outcomes and interventions in Afghanistan and Pakistan.
<i>Nighat un Nisa</i>	A dedicated and tireless DfID official.

## **British Politicians**

<i>Gordon Brown</i>	Prime Minister until April 2010, who with President Asif Zardari, announced the establishment of the Pakistan Education Task Force during 2009.
<i>David Miliband</i>	Strategically-aware Foreign Secretary until April 2010. Made a greater commitment to Pakistan than any of his predecessors because he could see its geopolitical importance. It was his initiative that put education in Pakistan so firmly on the agenda (and roped me in!).
<i>Douglas Alexander</i>	Secretary of State for International Development until June 2010. Supported David Miliband’s initiative.
<i>David Cameron</i>	Prime Minister from April 2010; strong supporter of the Roadmap work. Launched the UK’s aid programme in Pakistan in April 2011 (and visited a school in Islamabad with me). Consistently interested in the progress we have made.
<i>Andrew Mitchell</i>	Committed Secretary of State for International Development from June 2010 to September 2012. When I met him while he was in opposition to brief him, he told me he would make education in Pakistan the top priority in the DfID. He was true to his word.
<i>Justine Greening</i>	Andrew Mitchell’s successor. On her visit to Pakistan in January 2013, demonstrated her strong commitment to the Roadmap and her grasp of the innovation it represents.

## My Team

My team (both before and after I left McKinsey), was contracted by the DfID from McKinsey. Team membership changed every few months, which meant that numerous hardworking young people played a part. In McKinsey career terms, the Roadmap work was a bold and unusual commitment to make, and all who made a commitment to this work deserve credit (Ali Abid Hussain, Arthur Muller, Rebecca Yeoh, Ansaf Kareem, Haroon Sethi, Zainie Jamali, Mark Jenner, Kinley Salmon, Jennifer Lynch, Shoaib Kabani, Umair Chishti, Bilal Chaudhry). It was always my wish that the best of these young people would stay longer in Punjab, but I rarely got my way. A few made a long, more substantial commitment, and deserve individual recognition.

*Fenton Whelan* A talented young colleague from McKinsey, he joined me on my first visit to Pakistan in August 2009 and, apart from a nine-month break between January and September 2011, has been involved ever since. A key influence on all that has happened. Based in Dubai, he has made over 100 visits to Pakistan in the past three years and is deeply knowledgeable. Unlike most talented people under the age of 30, he also reads history books, to his eternal credit.

*Katelyn Donnelly* An exceptional talent, even by McKinsey standards, who joined my team in January 2011, just as Roadmap implementation was starting. As an American woman, during times when relations between Pakistan and America were strained, she made a remarkable commitment to the Roadmap, the Punjab officials who trusted her completely, and Pakistan. Having lived in Lahore for eight months, she joined me at Pearson as my Chief of Staff and stayed involved by helping me to prepare for and joining my regular visits to Lahore. She continues to contribute significantly to the development of the work. Endlessly creative.

*Saad Rizvi* Another McKinsey star who spent time in Lahore, led the team for a while and then joined me at Pearson. With a Pakistani upbringing (in Karachi), Saad brought not just talent and skill to the cause, but also a burning patriotism and a belief that one day Pakistan might be a different, more successful country. His mastery of Urdu was much appreciated by the Punjab officials and a great asset to the team too. Crucial to our credibility on the ground during the early implementation phase and a continuing adviser to me on Pakistan and much else.

*Taimur Khan* Led the team on the ground from September 2011 to March 2012 before being redeployed. Returned to the task in November 2012 for a further stint, which continues. As a native of Pakistan and powerful character, he showed great commitment and drive, and learnt fast. Responsible for shifting the focus of the team to district-level implementation.

Later in the process, we extended the team by including some recent graduates of the Lahore University of Management Sciences. This enabled us to strengthen our capacity out in the districts. These included Bilal Rao, Hashim Rashid and Ahmed Makki, all of whom made an excellent contribution.



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**“I hope this essay will be widely read and debated  
and that as a result we shall all be able to take  
another step towards that science of delivery which  
I believe to be fundamental to global development.”**

Dr Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank Group

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