



**Knowledge hub**  
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**Collection of best practices**

**Summary of the best practice**

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) \*

Using data to transform girls' education in Balochistan

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented \*

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3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to \*

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) \*

European Commission - Directorate General for International Partnerships

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. \*

EMIS, Real Time School Monitoring; evidence-based education planning; gender responsive planning; gender disaggregated data; gender transformative; resource allocation; transparency; accountability; efficiency;

6. What makes it a best practice? \*

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## Description of the best practice

### 7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected?
- ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? \*

Balochistan, Pakistan's largest and poorest province, has few human or financial resources for education. Patronage, politics and corruption contribute to non-functioning schools and teacher absenteeism. Difficult terrain and lack of school access, harmful gender norms around employment, inheritance and marriage, and inter-generational educational poverty mean parents invest more in boys' education. Although the Balochistan Compulsory Education Act, 2014 makes education free and compulsory for all 5 to 16 year olds, 78% of girls are out of school. The primary net intake rate is 35% for girls, 66% for boys. Girls only attend school if there is one close to home. 26% of primary, 42% of lower secondary and 36% of upper secondary schools are for girls. A lack of water and sanitation contributes to girls' school dropout in puberty. BEMIS data from 2019 showed that only 15% of primary schools had drinking water, while 25% of primary boys' schools and 41% of primary girls' schools had sanitation facilities. According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2019, literacy for girls 5 – 16 in Urdu is 26% (boys' is 39%) and numeracy is 22% (boys' is 33%). These barriers to girls' education make it hard to recruit women with enough literacy and numeracy skills to become teachers, perpetuating a negative downward spiral for girls and women.

In response, the EU has worked in partnership with UNICEF and the Balochistan Secondary Education Department through the Balochistan Basic Education Programme (BBEP) and its continuation, Balochistan Education Support (BES II), to improve access to quality education for girls and boys and strengthen education management.

The combined programmes take a holistic approach to mainstreaming gender equality. Teaching and learning are strengthened through gender responsive teacher professional development for over 3,000 teachers (47% women), basic classroom materials, and new systems for learner assessment through the establishment of the Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission. School management is strengthened through gender balanced Parent-Teacher School Management Committees (PTSMCs) who have produced over 1,300 inclusive school development plans and received small grants for WASH repairs and conducted menstrual hygiene management training that has benefitted over 30,000 girls, 3,400 teachers and 4,200 mothers. A special drive has been added to enrol and return children not in school during the post Covid economic crisis which disproportionately affects girls.

But this best practice focuses on how Balochistan's Education Management Information System (BEMIS) and Real Time School Monitoring (RTSM), developed through BBEP and BES II, have used gender disaggregated data for evidence-based planning and resourcing for girls' basic education in an efficient, equitable, transparent, and accountable way.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation? \*

EU provided €8.04m to fund the Balochistan Basic Education Programme (BBEP), 2016 – 20 and €17.4m for its continuation, Balochistan Education Support (BES II), 2021 - 24 with UNICEF contributing a further €4.8m. Implementation for both projects is by UNICEF and the Department of Secondary Education in Balochistan.

EU and UNICEF support for an education management information system (EMIS) in Balochistan which enables real time school monitoring (RTSM), include the hardware, software and skills for developing reliable data design, collection, processing, and use for gender responsive planning, and accountability for gender equality in schools. Activities include:

- improving the scope and quality of the school census indicators, a web-interface which allows parents and communities to access school level information, and EMIS capacity to generate customised reports such as the Directorate of Education's finalisation of staff seniority lists which provided data on women leaders in education;
- training and deployment of 5,000 (40% women) teachers and education managers for data collection, processing and use through 100 school cluster EMIS cells, which the government are in the process of scaling up to all Balochistan public schools; training for school monitors and education managers on how to use the android application for RTSM;
- awareness raising for school, district and provincial level education managers on how to use data in statistical reports for gender responsive planning, to inform equity based allocation of school grants, to level up the number of girls' schools by diverting funds from ghost schools, and to compile holistic school improvement packages including, for example, improving toilets and boundary walls and gender balance on PTSMCs.

Real time school monitoring data is uploaded to a live dashboard and analysed through RTSM report cards and published gender-disaggregated statistical reports. Together, these tools support gender responsive planning, resource allocation, transparency and accountability.

RTSM was established by EU-UNICEF in 11 districts and then scaled up to all 22 districts through a GPE grant managed by the World Bank. It now provides data on nearly 15,000 schools, nearly 60,000 teachers and over 1 million students from 95% of public schools in Balochistan. RTSM supports education managers to prioritise the distribution of resources according to real needs informed by actual student enrolment and retention. It also increases accountability and reduces corruption in school spending and staff attendance. GIS data and photos of all schools are collected, along with data on student enrolment and attendance, staff attendance and continuing professional development (CPD), school facilities, resources, procurement and expenditure. This is done through a series of school visits by district level teams. The results are uploaded into the RTSM system where authorised education management users can immediately access them. (During BBEP, on average eight visits per school were conducted to get the required data and 120,806 monitoring reports were uploaded.)

RTSM report cards collate actionable evidence on procurement, refurbishment, and reopening of schools, as well as discipline and penalties for absent staff and ghost teachers. Monitoring reports at divisional level support the Performance Management System, budget planning and senior manager accountability to parliamentarians and the public. Education statistical reports compile gender disaggregated data for girls' education needs analysis and planning in terms of access to girls' schools, women teachers, and gender parity.

## 9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? \*

The EU Final Evaluation of BBEP in 2019, the UNICEF Final Progress and Utilization Report 2021, and the Balochistan Secondary Education Department publications assessed Balochistan's EMIS and justified its expansion in BES II.

As a result of BEMIS RSTM data, 50% of development grants are now allocated to girls' schools. Because RTSM provides both a baseline and a way of tracking progress for development grants, whole-school improvement packages informed by data can be designed, and this has improved efficiency in the school development process.

BEMIS RTSM has also improved efficiency and equitable redistribution of human resources. Nearly 8,000 teachers have been held accountable for absences, and more than 1,500 ghost teachers suspended. With the PKR 226 million saved, more than 500 'non-functional' schools for girls have been reopened. In addition, the number of schools reporting teacher absenteeism between 2016 and 2019 went down by 14 percentage points.

The first ever Secondary Education Department education statistics report for Balochistan, 2016-17, published 2018, provides gender disaggregated data on access in terms of resource monitoring and allocation, for example on students, teachers, class size, and WASH facilities by school, level, and district. The 2019-20 report, published 2022, updates access and participation data and adds data on girls' performance monitoring, including gender enrolment ratios, and gender parity in transition and achievement.

BEMIS data also helped develop the new Balochistan Education Sector Plan 2020-2025 which includes gender specific strategies for effective and equitable access, participation and quality education, especially girls.

Data-rich school profiles and monitoring reports can be accessed live by parents and communities through the BEMIS website. Since its introduction, various media centres have published stories based on this data, highlighting the problems of ghost teachers and ghost schools on the one hand and the lack of teachers, facilities and non-functional schools, especially for girls, on the other. Immediate access to education data is making education processes more transparent and service providers more accountable to the public.

The involvement of parents in PTSMCs, trained in understanding the data reported, also helps BES II tackle the cultural barriers and lack of political will that hold back gender responsive education planning. With support, PTSMCs are able to interpret the data, help raise parent awareness, and collaborate with school and education department leaders to improve the physical conditions of their schools and the quality of teaching and learning within them.

At Provincial level the holistic use of RTSM data extends to the assessment of staff seniority lists and vacancy statements, textbook distribution and curriculum development, and coordinating provincial and development partner inputs for upgrading shelter-less schools, new school construction, and so on.

On the political front, BES-II is engaging politicians and policy makers in policy dialogue on equity based, gender-responsive planning, using the RTSM report cards, tailor made EMIS generated reports, and the published education statistics reports to inform project coordination committees and education quality management groups about levelling up for girls' education.

## 10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? \*

The more fields of data collected on the school census, the more tailored the reports the EMIS can generate, and the more comprehensive school development planning and school management mechanisms can be. In this way, RTSM data reports have the capacity to assess root cause impediments to equal access both at school and system level. It is this kind of holistic potential that makes Balochistan's EMIS gender transformative.

At school level, RTSM is used to improve the quality of the built environment as well as the quality of the learning itself through assessment of infrastructure and procurement needs, teacher and student attendance and ratios, and teacher continuing professional development (CPD). At system level, RTSM is used to improve the quality of support from the wider school community through PTSMC and education department monitoring, extracurricular children's club activities, feeder – cluster school coordination, community engagement, Provincial coordination and harmonisation of donor inputs. Beyond education, the transparency-accountability of the EMIS website gives parents and communities voice (on occasions amplified by the media) and has the potential to help more women and girls as well as men and boys participate in decisions that affect inclusion, social justice and equitable, gender responsive resource allocation.

Through BBEP 100 EMIS units were established in cluster schools with equipment, internet connection and user training. A further 200 EMIS units have been established through the Education Department and 600 more to be funded by the government are in the pipeline. But because of the extreme remoteness of so many schools, the lack of electricity and internet, and the current post-Covid economic crisis, scalability and sustainability remain as challenges to this best practice. 80% of schools and school communities are without the required equipment, internet connection or training to make full use of the EMIS dashboard. They are not yet able to compare their school's status with the monitoring reports of other schools in their cluster or hold school leaders to account on matters of unequal procurement for example.

Recurring maintenance and school census data collection costs also need to be factored in to a sustainable funding mechanism for the system. And even with these inputs, the introduction of technology and innovation at the scale demonstrated by BBEP and BES II is new to Balochistan. The Secondary Education Department will require continued technical support and capacity building to sustain girls' education reforms through this impressive gender responsive data collection, processing and planning system.

## 11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a “best practice”. What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented “best practice” or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? \*

Conclusion (250 words) In gender equality education policy and practice, the use of gender disaggregated data features large. In reality, many development programme implementers feel they have met gender mainstreaming requirements by reporting that equal numbers of men and women, girls and boys attended or were involved in activities in a numerically balanced way. The use of EMIS in Balochistan however, through its school census data collection, real time school monitoring, online dashboard, report cards, published education statistics reports, and training in gender responsive planning and advocacy, is a duplicable best practice on how to really use gender disaggregated data. It shows how the data can trigger gender transformative results in resource allocation and levelling up for girls’ education. The extent of Balochistan’s achievement in setting up this holistic digital data solution is amplified by the fact that it has been carried out in such unforgiving, geographically and economically challenging conditions.

However, data alone will not win the fight against corruption in education systems nor boy preference bias. The stamina and resources required to maintain real time school monitoring reports in real time and to embed, at school, district and provincial level, the skills to input, analyse, report and act on results independently of international support puts sustainability to the test. Certainly, EMIS data collection and reporting is a game changer. Moving forward, what is needed is a capacity bridge between planning and implementing, with a focus on equal numbers of girls’ and boys’ schools, gender parity in school enrolment and achievement, and sufficient funds for this kind of levelling up.



## 12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. \*

Provide a list of references and source documents that give additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the population.

EU. 2019. Final evaluation of Balochistan Basic Education Programme

EU. Balochistan Basic Education Programme. Delegation of the European Union to Pakistan. 2021.

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