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Teacher capacity vs. system capacity: Lessons from scaling the Targeted Instruction Project (TIP) in Pakistan

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The Challenge

Core Challenge

Children are in school – but many are not acquiring foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

Context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

- **Third largest** province by population
- **~3 million** public primary school students
- **~27,000** government primary schools
- **~100,000** government primary school teachers

41:1

Student-Teacher Ratio

High workload per teacher across public primary schools

37%

Classroom Constraint

Primary schools have 2 or fewer classrooms

42%

Teacher Staffing Shortage

Primary schools have 2 or fewer teachers

(source: Schools Statistical Report 2024-25)

The Solution

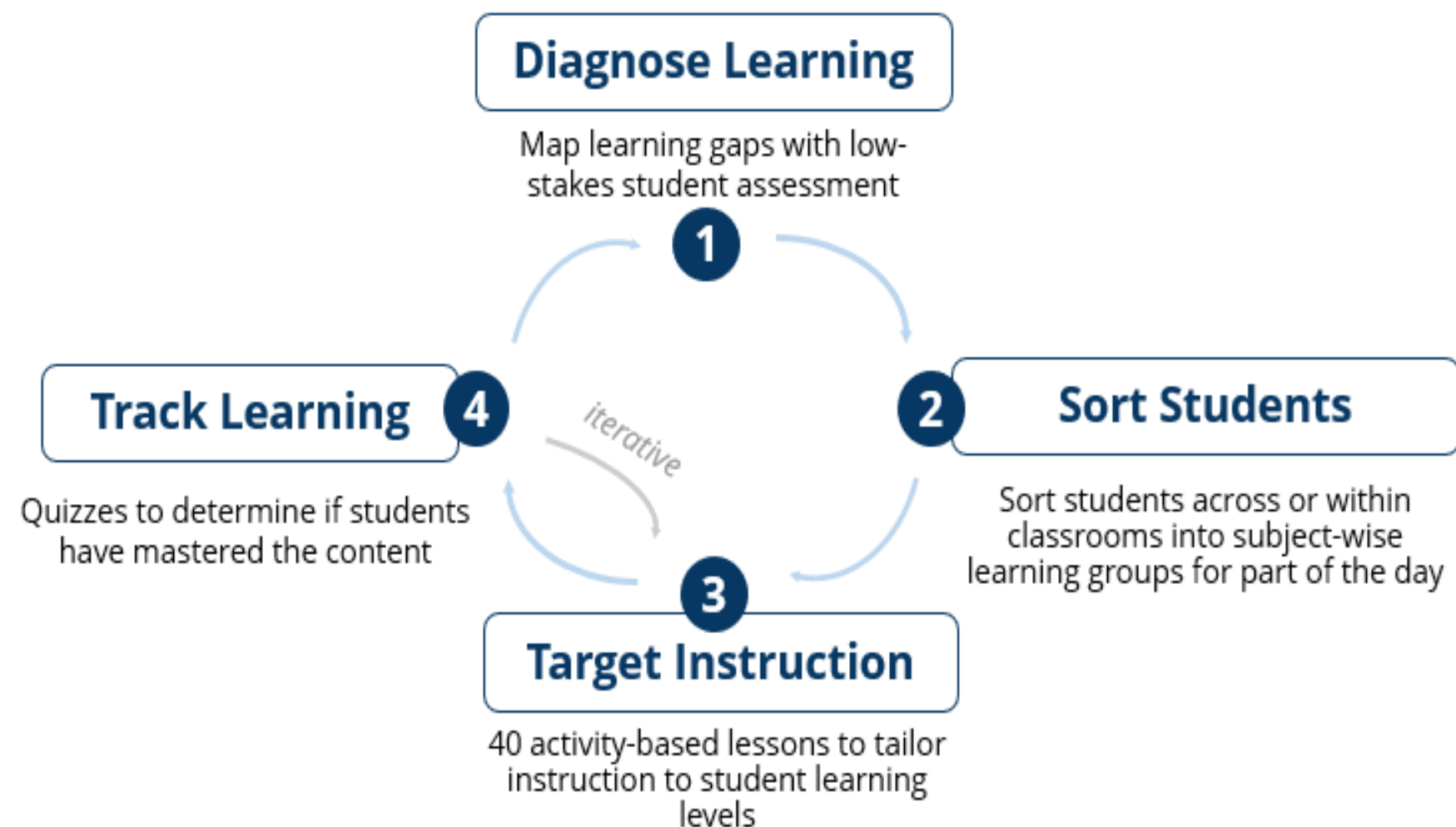
TIP (remediation, targeted instruction, structured pedagogy) showed that existing government teachers could improve foundational learning

~1,250 schools

0.12 SD learning gains

2.97 LAYS / \$100

4-Step Iterative Learning Cycle



Designed with & delivered through the government system

Curriculum & Materials including lesson plans, TLMs, assessments

Developed with Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education (DCTE)

Teacher Training

Delivered through Directorate of Professional Development (DPD) trainers

Implementation

Executed directly by existing government teachers

Delivery Schedule

Delivered during regular school hours

Small-scale evidence →  → System-wide delivery

Government Take-up

01

Need

Diagnostic data demonstrated substantial foundational learning gaps.

02

Effectiveness

Rigorous evaluation showed that TIP could improve learning at a low cost.

03

Feasibility & System Fit

Could be delivered by existing government teachers. Aligned with KP FLN Policy and CM's Good Governance Roadmap.

04

Government Commitment

- Signed meeting minutes containing endorsement.
- DCC approval of next phase activities.
- Notification to directorates for embedding TIP & scale-up.
- Engagement with middle-tier bureaucracy & front-line providers.

05

Institutionalisation

Embed delivery into routine government systems.

Phase I of Institutionalisation of TIP

Moving from a stand-alone program to routine government system

ac

Use existing government structures

Integrate TIP into the 8 professional development days across the academic year, rather than creating a parallel training program.

sy

Identifying and embedding core program components

Assess learning → identify gaps → provide targeted support / conduct revision lessons

m

Equip teachers with practical classroom resources

Short 2-4 page handouts covering “what, why, how” of key pedagogical practices and links to digital training resources, TLMs teachers can use directly in their classrooms.

for

Enable peer learning and problem-solving between PD days

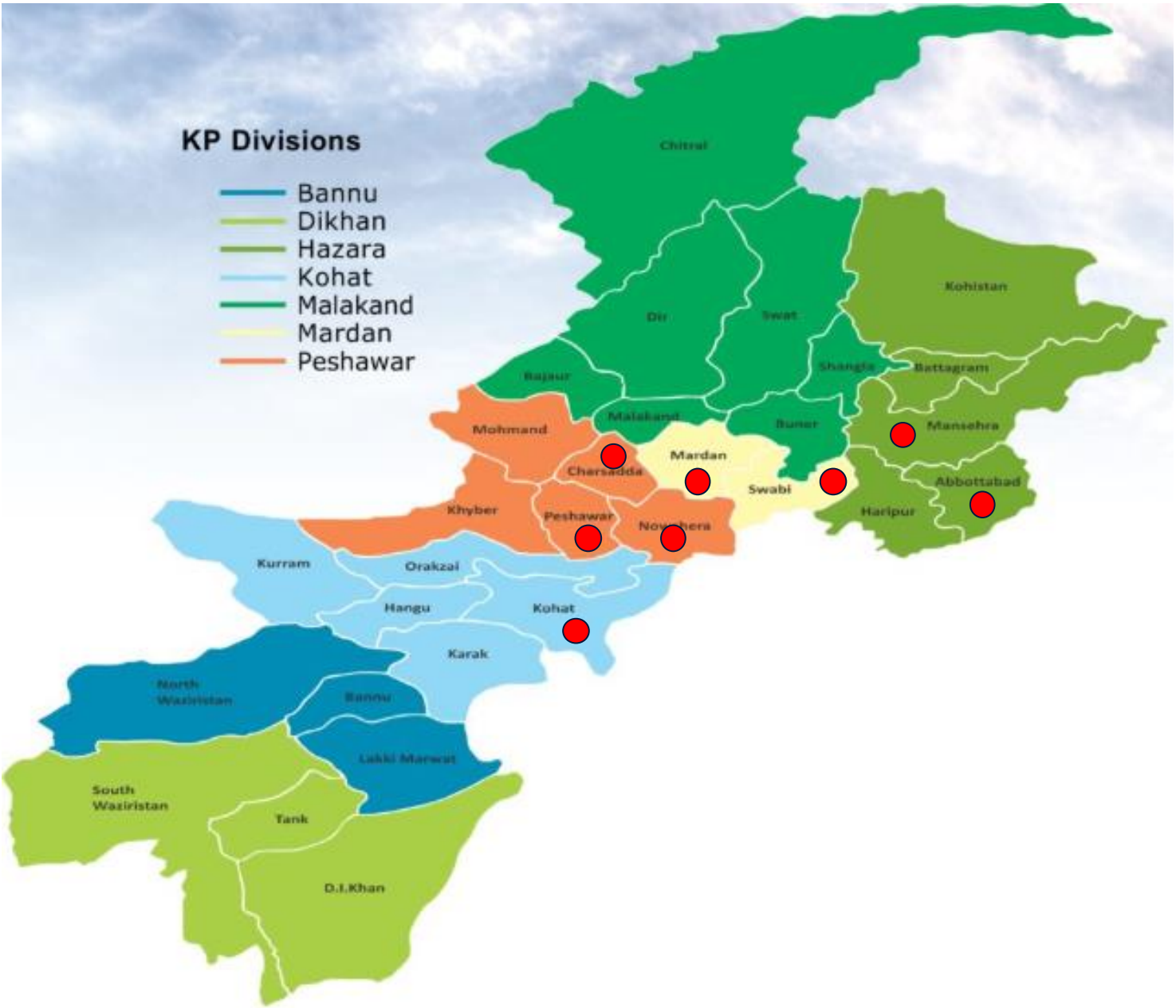
WhatsApp community of practice to maintain engagement and experience sharing/troubleshooting.

Further institutionalisation pathways being explored

1. Ongoing Academic Support through School Leaders
2. Protected remediation hour

Methodology & Data Sources

Design & Objective: Multi-method, multi-level qualitative design to examine early implementation processes and institutional conditions shaping scale-up.



TRAINING LEVEL DATA SOURCES

Cascade Tier 2

Training of Master Trainers Observation

Sample: n = 7

Cascade Tier 3

Training of PD Day Facilitators Observation

Sample: n = 7

Professional Development Day

Professional Development Day Observation

Sample: n = 17

PD Day Facilitators

PD Day Facilitators Interviews

Sample: n = 9

SCHOOL LEVEL DATA SOURCES

Teacher Interviews

In-depth Qualitative Interviews

Sample: n = 12

Classroom Observations

Structured Observations

Sample: n = 15

LOCATIONS (8 Districts across 4 Divisions): Mardan • Peshawar • Swabi • Kohat • Nowshera • Charsadda • Abbottabad • Mansehra

Findings

01. PEDAGOGY DEMAND AND CAPACITY

Teachers recognise and demand better pedagogy support, and contain instructional capacity

Teachers could identify learning gaps and valued approaches that helped them respond to different learning levels. Some teachers also demonstrated instructional excellence.

Next steps:

Better mapping of the structured pedagogy toolkit with curriculum

02. CASCADE DILUTION

Support weakens as it travels through the system

Training cascade dilutes content and teachers receive uneven levels of instructional support, often unresponsive to their local challenges.

Next steps:

Testing out a digital module in CPD

03 SYSTEM INCOHERENCE

System incentives, accountability mechanisms are not aligned with foundational learning

Teachers are expected to complete the syllabus; mastery-based instruction requires slowing down when children have not learned.

Next steps:

Curriculum reform, ASDEO/School Leader reform, protected time for remediation and targeted instruction

CORE TAKEAWAY

The binding constraint is not an absence of capacity. It is whether the system can make effective practice routine rather than dependent on individual teachers.

Special Thanks to Our Funders and Partners



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and Teacher Education

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