

EDUCATION FELLOWS AS THE PRIMARY TEACHING WORKFORCE

An analytical report & evidence from Government schools across Gilgit-Baltistan

Darvesh Karim, Project Manager, GBEF
AKU-IED/PDCN Gilgit.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Gilgit-Baltistan Education Fellows (GBEF) Project was initiated to strengthen educational quality while addressing acute teacher shortages in government schools across the region. While more than 1,254 Education Fellows have been deployed in over 600 government educational institutions, this analysis focuses on 108 strategically significant schools. These schools were purposively selected because Education Fellows constitute either the entire teaching workforce or the majority of teachers, making them highly dependent on the project's continued support.

These institutions represent some of the most educationally vulnerable schools in Gilgit-Baltistan, where continuity of teaching and learning is heavily dependent on the presence of Education Fellows. Collectively, these schools serve approximately 15,821 students and are supported by 343 Education Fellows, demonstrating the project's pivotal role in sustaining educational access and instructional quality in remote and underserved communities.

The findings indicate that the GBEF Project has evolved beyond a teacher deployment initiative. In many institutions, Education Fellows have become the primary instructional workforce, ensuring that schools remain functional, students continue learning, and subject-specific teaching, particularly in Science, Mathematics, Computer and English is maintained.

Key Evidence

- **108 government educational institutions** analyzed all ten districts.
- Approximately **15,821 students** are currently enrolled.
- **343 Education Fellows** serving as the primary teaching workforce.
- Numerous schools where Education Fellows comprise **100% or more than 75%** of the teaching staff.
- Several institutions, including colleges, where Education Fellows deliver most of the academic instruction.

At a glance	
Schools	Students
108	15,821
Education fellows	Districts
343	10
Total GBEF schools	Total fellows
600+	1,254

- A substantial proportion of Education Fellows possess **Science, Mathematics, Computer Science and English backgrounds**, addressing critical shortages in subject-specialist teaching.

Why it matters

The findings demonstrate that Education Fellows are not merely supplementing the regular workforce. In many schools, they are sustaining educational continuity, ensuring that students continue to receive instruction in core subjects, particularly Science, Mathematics, Computer Science and English where shortages of qualified teachers remain significant.

The analysis further illustrates that the project has strengthened institutional resilience, expanded access to quality teaching in remote communities, and enhanced the instructional capacity of government schools.

Strategic Message

“The Education Fellows Project has evolved from a teacher deployment initiative into a strategic investment in educational continuity, instructional quality, and system resilience. The experience of these 108 schools demonstrates how targeted deployment of qualified teachers can sustain learning opportunities for thousands of students in some of Gilgit-Baltistan’s most underserved communities”.

BACKGROUND

Teacher shortages remain one of the most persistent challenges confronting public education in Gilgit-Baltistan, particularly in geographically isolated and difficult-to-reach communities. In many schools, shortages are not only numerical but also subject-specific, with a limited availability of teachers qualified to teach Science, Mathematics, Computer Science and English.

The GBEF Project addressed this challenge by recruiting and deploying highly qualified graduates across all ten districts. This analytical report specifically examines schools where Education Fellows constitute the predominant teaching workforce, thereby providing evidence of the project’s contribution to educational continuity and system resilience.



This analysis does not represent all project schools. Rather, it intentionally focuses on schools with high dependence on Education Fellows, making them particularly important for understanding the project's strategic contribution.

The analysis is based on administrative deployment records maintained by the GBEF Project, including school-level information on Education Fellow deployment, regular teaching staff, and student enrolment.

KEY FINDINGS

Education Fellows Have Become the Primary Teaching Workforce

The most significant finding is that many schools now rely predominantly on Education Fellows to sustain daily teaching and learning activities.

- Schools where all teachers are Education Fellows.
- Schools where Education Fellows constitute more than 75% of the teaching staff.
- Institutions where only one regular teacher remains while the remaining teaching positions are filled by Education Fellows.
- Degree colleges where, apart from the principal, nearly all lecturers are Education Fellows.

These findings illustrate that the project is not merely supplementing the existing workforce; in many schools, it has become the primary instructional mechanism sustaining institutional functionality and educational continuity.

Sustaining Learning for More Than Fifteen Thousand Students

The 108 schools included in this analysis collectively enroll approximately 15,821 students. The deployment of 343 Education Fellows in these institutions has ensured uninterrupted classroom teaching, curriculum implementation, student assessment, and academic support.

Without this intervention, many of these schools would likely experience severe instructional disruption, reduced teaching capacity, and diminished learning opportunities.

Strengthening Subject-Specific Teaching Capacity

A particularly significant contribution of the project lies in strengthening Science education. While many regular government teachers in these schools possess non-Science academic backgrounds, a substantial proportion of Education Fellows were recruited from Science, mathematics and computer and English disciplines.

Consequently, Education Fellows have assumed responsibility for teaching Science, Mathematics, computer Science and English in many institutions, ensuring that students continue to receive subject-specialist instruction.

This contribution extends beyond filling vacant positions; it enhances the quality of STEM education and expands future educational and career opportunities for students.

Educational Continuity in Remote Communities

The findings demonstrate that the GBEF Project has played a critical role in maintaining educational continuity across remote and underserved areas of Gilgit-Baltistan. Education Fellows have enabled schools to:

- Maintain regular classroom instruction.
- Reduce disruption caused by teacher shortages.
- Strengthen student attendance and engagement.
- Improve learning environments.
- Expand access to quality teaching in geographically isolated communities.

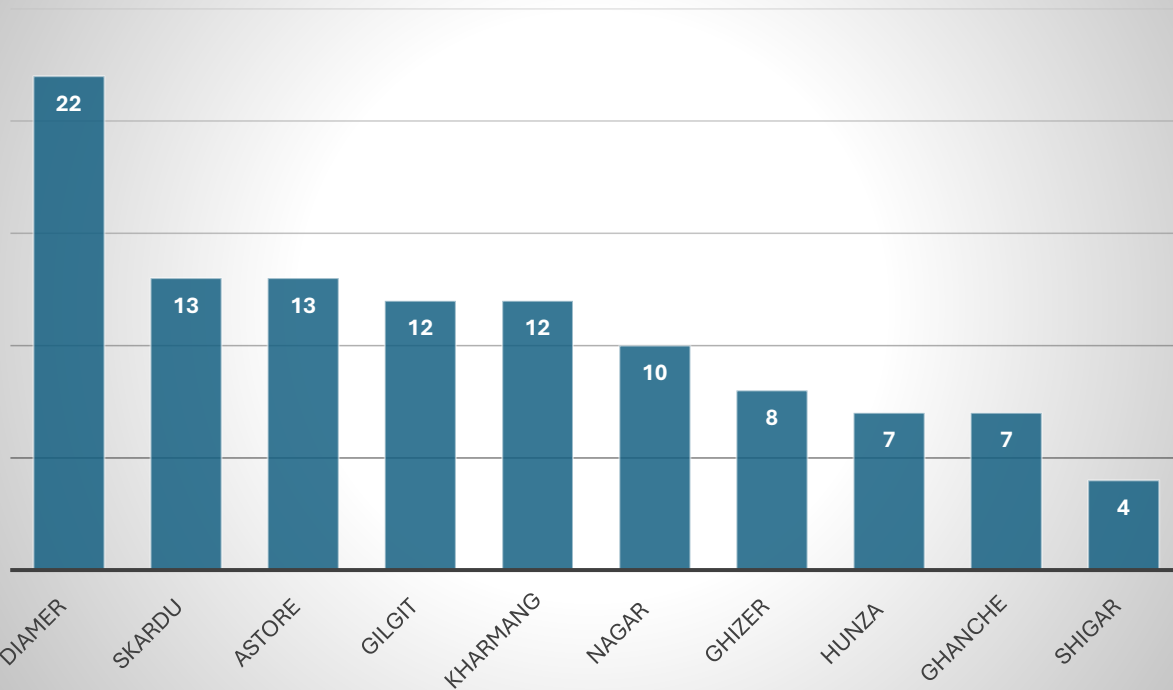
The project has therefore contributed not only to teacher availability but also to greater educational equity.

DISTRICT-LEVEL ANALYSIS

The analysis indicates varying levels of dependence across districts.

S.No	District	Schools	Students	Education Fellows	Average Students per EF
1	Diamer	22	2,616	53	49
2	Skardu	13	3,215	45	71
3	Astore	13	1,590	32	50
4	Gilgit	12	2,617	45	58
5	Kharmang	12	745	27	28
6	Nagar	10	1,938	48	40
7	Ghizer	8	1,717	46	37
8	Hunza	7	637	21	30
9	Ghanche	7	457	21	22
10	Shigar	4	289	5	58
	Total:	108	15821	343	46

Schools Dependency on Education Fellows



The data reveals that reliance on Education Fellows is widespread, although the scale and intensity vary across districts according to local staffing patterns and institutional needs.

Across these 108 schools, an average of approximately three Education Fellows are serving each institution, highlighting the extent to which many schools rely on project-supported teachers to sustain classroom instruction.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this analysis extend beyond teacher deployment and offer important insights for educational planning, workforce management, and policy development in Gilgit-Baltistan. The concentration of Education Fellows in a relatively small number of high-dependence schools demonstrates that the project has become an essential component of educational service delivery in many underserved communities.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The deployment of Education Fellows has significantly strengthened educational continuity by ensuring uninterrupted classroom instruction in schools facing persistent teacher shortages. Beyond addressing numerical gaps, the project has enhanced instructional quality through the placement of highly qualified graduates, particularly in Science, Mathematics, Computer Science, and English. In many institutions, Education Fellows have

become the principal providers of subject-specialist teaching, thereby improving learning opportunities and supporting better student engagement and achievement.

WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

The analysis reveals that teacher shortages in Gilgit-Baltistan are not merely quantitative but also subject-specific. Many regular government teachers in these schools have non-Science academic backgrounds, while a substantial proportion of Education Fellows possess qualifications in Science and related disciplines. Consequently, the project has strengthened the system's instructional capacity by providing expertise where it is most needed. The findings highlight the importance of strategic workforce planning that prioritizes both equitable teacher deployment and subject-specialist recruitment.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The analysis also highlights the need for long-term planning to sustain the educational gains achieved through the GBEF Project. In many of the 108 schools analyzed, Education Fellows constitute the majority; or, in some cases, the entire teaching workforce. Any abrupt reduction in their deployment could significantly affect classroom instruction, particularly in Science and Mathematics, and compromise educational continuity for thousands of students. These findings underscore the importance of a phased transition strategy, continued investment in teacher development, and institutionalization of successful Public–Private Partnership models to ensure that the progress achieved is sustained over the long term.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Sustain Education Fellow deployment in schools demonstrating high dependency until adequate government staffing is available.
2. Prioritize recruitment of Science, Mathematics, Computer Science and English teachers within government workforce planning.
3. Institutionalize the successful Public–Private Partnership model as an effective strategy for addressing teacher shortages in underserved regions.
4. Continue strengthening GBEF team and Professional Development Teachers, recognizing their critical role in monitoring and mentoring Education Fellows and maintaining instructional quality.
5. Develop a phased transition strategy to preserve educational gains while progressively strengthening the regular government teaching workforce.
6. Use this analysis to inform future teacher deployment policies, ensuring equitable distribution of subject-specialist teachers across Gilgit-Baltistan.

CONCLUSION

This analysis demonstrates that the Gilgit-Baltistan Education Fellows Project has progressed far beyond a teacher deployment initiative. In many government schools, Education Fellows have become the primary instructional workforce, sustaining educational continuity for thousands of students in geographically remote and underserved communities.

Perhaps most significantly, the project has strengthened subject-specific instructional capacity, particularly in Science education, where many regular teaching positions are occupied by non-Science graduates. Through the deployment of highly qualified Education Fellows, continuous monitoring, mentoring, and strong institutional partnerships, the project has helped ensure that students continue to receive quality education despite longstanding workforce challenges.

The experience of these schools demonstrates that strategically deploying qualified teachers to underserved communities can strengthen not only school functionality but also instructional quality, subject-specialist teaching, and educational resilience. The GBEF model therefore offers valuable lessons for workforce planning, teacher deployment, and public-private partnerships in remote educational contexts.

“This analysis demonstrates that the value of the GBEF Project lies not only in the number of teachers deployed, but in placing qualified subject specialists where the education system needs them most”.