

News Baela Raza Jamil, Coordinator SAFED and Chairperson ITA India Visit – March 18-22, 2009.

The visit on March 18, 2009 to Bluebells International School N. Delhi, the partner school to Sanjan Nagar Public Education Trust's Higher Secondary School in Lahore led to many engagements for SAFED's coordinator Baela R. Jamil.

Ms. Suman Kumar Principal Bluebells International immediately requested Baela to give a lecture to Grade XII students on March 19th at 8:00 am. This was an opportunity to speak to almost 200 or so young students of the graduating class. It was an exciting encounter triggered by a very incisive question: *"Amidst rising talibanisation is there any space for curriculum of tolerance and peace in Pakistan? How do these matters get addressed in this scenario?"* This question became the basis for a talk that lasted 2 hours with many more interesting questions and students willing to visit Pakistan with their teachers at the earliest opportunity.

Baela Raza Jamil attended the workshop on **Schools as Nurseries for Peace** organized by the Blue bells International School New Delhi in collaboration with Pravah held from March 20-21st 2009.

The workshop was an interactive program interspersed with eminent speakers such as the historian Professor Mirdualla Mukherjee, interactive resource persons from the theatre, pedagogy and Ms. Meenu **Venkateswaran CEO** Pravah.

Baela shared perspectives on peace and citizenship education in Pakistan on March 21st 2009:

She elaborated on :

1. **South Africa: Valuable learning 'totkas' /best practices:** ITA team's exposure visit to South Africa in 2005 was most useful in understanding School Improvement Programs in different urban and rural contexts in 4 districts. ITA's team learnt many good practices but the technique of 'morning news' for early years was an excellent pedagogical strategy. This informed the children about their own constructed 'news' on a daily basis, respect for diversity amongst themselves and creating a weekly newspaper about important events that mattered to them. It covered skills and content such as observing the weather; the days and dates of the week and calendar; the art of hearing each other out; articulation skills; applause for valuable and happy information, sharing sadness with others on news items which were sad giving a sense of emotional bonding. This technique was replicated in the programs for the most vulnerable in Pakistan by ITA and is also used in early year grades.
2. The empowerment of girls at Sanjan Nagar Higher Secondary School who decided to change the school's motto from 'Enabling the deprived' to 'Enabling our Future' and also inviting the first batch of graduates and university bound alumni of the school to join the SNPET Board. Sanjan Nagar is the partner school to Blue Bells International running the Tagore and Iqbal clubs.
3. The 'inside out' learning technique practiced during the youth program on ' .. " with secondary school children across Paksitan and their teachers from both public and private/ urdu and English medium and elite and non-elite schools which experimented with learning about diversity and living cultural heritage through a day of filed visits. The day was the International Day of Tolerance on November 16th 2008. The city was Lahore. The children began their day attending a Sunday Church service in Lahore's oldest Church "the Cathedral" built in the 19th century (for all but three it was the first encounter with a Christian service). After the church visit they went to the historical quadrangle of Lahore with the help of a very accomplished guide working with UNESCO. They visited the Ranjit Singh Samadhi; the mausoleum of Allama Iqbal; the Badshahi Mosque, followed by the Hindu temple inside the Lahore Fort and culminating

with the tour of the Lahore Fort. The visit was then followed by a talk on the urgency of citizenship and diversity education by a well known expert in citizenship Dr. Bernadette Dean, now principal of Kinnaird College for Women and an interactive session by a theatre group with the students and the teachers to reflect on the day and its key learnings.

4. The fourth sharing was about the campaign carried out by students, teachers, media, civil society groups and elected member of the National /Provincial Assembly through weekly collection of signatures and peaceful protest demonstrations in many cities across Pakistan against the closure of girls schools in Swat on January 15th 2009. The campaign led by ITA as member of the Child Rights Movement and Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) was undertaken extensively through networks for 5 weeks until the ban was lifted. However, it is partial for only girls' education up to primary level and hence the citizens' action must continue against talibanisation and extremism that excludes women and girls from public space and education.

It was an opportunity to share perspectives from India and Pakistan and also network with many schools and organizations who wish to interact with Pakistan through school connections as well as collaborative projects.

Pravah Meeting:

A brief meeting was held on March 21st, with the CEO **PRAVAH, Meenu Venkateswaran** on possibilities of cross country links and sharing of materials on peace and citizenship education.

Interview with PRAJNYA : March 22, 2009

An Interview with Anupama of Education for Peace Prajnaya in Chennai, India March 22, 2009

Baela Raza Jamil as part of the SAFED initiative spent over two hours with Ms. Anupama of Prajnaya, a Chennai based organization as part of her research on organizations engaged in Citizenship and Peace education in South Asia.

Lady Sri Ram College - March 18th, 2009.

Accessing B.El Ed (Bachelors of Elementary Education) a four year program at the Lady Sri Ram College for Women in Delhi March 18th, 2009 The meeting was held with Dr. Jayshree of B.El Ed. and with Meenakhshi Gopinath. They shared valuable materials on the program and held discussion on areas that need to be revisited in the program.

Dr. Gopinath requested Baela to help revive the Kinnaird (Sister college) connection at the earliest possible as part of the SAFED work. Baela promised an urgent response from Dr. Bernadette Dean, the principal of Kinnaird college.

Jamia Millia Islamia University : March 19th 2009

Attending a conference session at the Jamia Millia Islamia University at the conference on 'Indigenisation of Afghan Reconstruction: Challenges and Opportunities March 18-19, 2009.

The session was on education entitled " Mitigating War Effects through Development Interventions"

Professor Alef Zadrán; A.K Rashid and Abdul Rahman Ulfat Mahmoodi gave presentations

Baela Raza Jamil participated through appropriate interventions.

A meeting was held with Dr. Janaki of the Jamia Millia Islamia University. She requested SAFED to participate in the upcoming conference on **“Women of SAARC: Partners in Development on March 30-31 2009**. Baela Raza Jamil has gladly accepted the invitation and sent the profiles as requested to Dr. Janaki . This will promote SAFED with participants attending from South Asia.

Pratham Books for Pakistan (Urdu and English)

Pratham Books Orders for Pakistan were placed for the Whole School Improvement Program and also for the Sanjan Nagar School . Ms. Sampurna of Read India at Pratham promptly supported the request.