

Press Release

World Teachers Day 2009 Celebrated Across Pakistan – Dialogues on Implementing National Professional Standards for Teachers –challenges and opportunities

To celebrate the World Teachers' Day 2009 in a meaningful manner Idara Taleem-o-Aagahi(ITA) organized a series of social dialogues and surveys in more than 10 districts across the country from October 5 – 21, 2009. The focus of the effort is to engage educators, faculty, students and teachers with the newly finalized National Professional Standards for Teachers by the Ministry of Education (MoE). These National Standards were arrived at consultatively with many teacher training institutions nationwide by the Ministry and UNESCO through USAID support.

In Islamabad WTD 2009 a social dialogue was held at the Federal College of Education (FCE) attended by over 50 lively participants. Speaking on the occasion, the Director of the college Professor Talat Khursheed said that these standards are not new to the institution as FCE was a partner organization whilst they were being designed and now FCE is at the forefront of their implementation. The National Professional Standards are embedded in the National Education Policy 2009. He was pleased that FCE was practically involved in their implementation and the WTD 2009 dialogue organized by ITA was most relevant in mobilizing many active partners for promoting awareness of standards and their practice. The recommendations provided by the participants were very poignant and will be passed on to the relevant policy makers. These ranged from, government ensuring support systems at local levels so that teachers eager to implement them can be provided with guidance and encouragement. A good knowledge about the 10 standards and practical use with easily recognizable indicators, minimum standards for pupil teacher ratio so that the number of students is manageable for providing them care and attention. A major challenge is 'changing attitudes' towards core concepts of diversity, respect for each other, democratic participation and decision making, recognizing differences in students. Each participant was provided a copy of the NPS for reference and use.

Each year October 5th is a day to celebrate teachers world wide and the central role they play in guiding children, youths & adults through the life-long learning process. It is a day to remind us all of the 1966 and 1997 Recommendations on the Status of Teachers by UNESCO – and ILO which still need urgent actions.

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) has been leading social dialogues on WTD since 2004 in Pakistan along with a survey to influence policy makers at all levels through focused recommendations. Each WTD is a focus on a special theme and in 2009 it was National Professional Standards, since the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2009 carries STANDARDS as a central quality concern and wants to set up a National Authority for Standards over the coming years. ITA hopes that this year too it shall be able to come up with concrete recommendations to move towards professionalization of teachers and upgradation of their status. Each of the 10 standards are a challenge to fully engage with and practically implement during the phases of teacher preparation, reflection and action. The ten standards are : (please add if you cannot see them\)

Source: www.moe.gov.pk / www.itacec.org .

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aaghi (ITA) in collaboration with Dubai Cares/ OXFAM, the Pakistan Coalition for Education (P|C|E) and many partner institutions is celebrating World Teachers' Day on October, 5th 2009 starting from Rahim Yar Khan. The dialogues have been held in many districts of Punjab and selected districts of Sindh, NWFP, Balochistan & Islamabad Capital Territory from October 5, to 21, 2009 co-hosted by ITA's partner organizations. The WTD dialogues have been technically facilitated by ITA teams.

In the tradition of 2008 ITA also launched the prestigious Anita Ghulam Ali World World Teachers' Day Award 2009 on the theme of Early Childhood Education. This is a nationwide award which is granted purely on merit and it is truly a civil society initiative. The prize money is Rs. 100,000 Rs. 50,000 Rs25,000 to Rs. 15000 in the categories of first to consolation The deadline for the submission according to the given criteria is November 15, 2009. (details at www.itacec.org)

The social dialogue for World Teachers' Day 2009 was celebrated in a befitting manner by urging young and old participants to learn the art of discourse and clear the way towards implementation of the newly approved National Education Policy. The participants in Islamabad were a cross section of lively educators, students, faculty, teachers from FCE, Federal Directorate of Education, Institute for Professional Learning, Non-Formal Education centres and NGOs such as SAHIL, OXFAM, ABES, CHIP and ITA.

In Rahim Yar Khan, Multan, |Chiniot, Faislaabad, Sheikhpura, Rawalpindi Karachi, this was held at the respective teacher training institutions (GCETs) AKU-|IED, or District Teacher Support Centres for teachers, whilst in Lahore this was held at the |IER University of \Punjab. |NPS have been hailed as a major milestone in the history of education in Pakistan and the proof now lies in their implementation.

Many of the participants, particularly student teachers had an opportunity for the first time to raise important questions, challenges and suggest excellent recommendations to make National Professional Standards implementable. Their voices were truly very precious for practitioners and policy makers alike.