Editorial

The second edition of Teachers VOICE continues to focus on many critical areas of interest to teachers across Pakistan and to our alumni and partners across Pakistan and USA. This edition carries the voices of alumni sharing their post PSU experiences, valuable selections from a practitioner about education for empowerment, research updates from alumni tracking of the previous Pakistan Education Leadership Institutes (2004-2006) undertaken by the class of 2007, reflections across USA and Pakistan, and of course updates about PELI 2008-2009!

Did you know, that out of a total of 245,682 institutions in Pakistan, 81,103 are conservatively working in the private sector (NEC 2005-06)? Did you know that other than primary level education, at each sub-sector of education: middle, secondary, higher secondary, technical education, madarrasahs, non-formal and universities the private sector has outstripped public sector education? (ibid.)

As a result of this finding, a more balanced approach for tapping secondary level educators has been adopted to diversify mobilization of educators for PELI 2008 from both state and non-state institutions. This will lead to a wider impact. So there are many more new partners and this year geographically FATA has been included as well, being literally a frontline zone.

Policy and curriculum reforms continue to deepen in Pakistan. They have taken place iteratively since 2001 with the launch of Education Sector Reforms Action Plan 2001-2005/6. The approach has consistently been sector wide thinking and planning, pushing the earlier myopic focus of primary education only to a more healthy one across all levels of education. In this sense PELI at PSU rightly targets secondary school teachers who have been in dire need of capacity building, as a hitherto left out group of critical educators. It is indeed very exciting for ITA to be playing a catalytic role where the educators upon return from PSU are managing to participate actively in these reforms. Some have been members of review committees, the new schemes of work for the National Curriculum, textbook writers and others as star trainers in the continuous professional development of teachers in primary and elementary levels of education and also across public and private sectors! This is no small achievement and we at ITA are confident that the multiplier effect from PELI/PSU alumni will continue to grow in the years to come.

PELI 2008 will focus on active citizenship, heritage preservation and environment. This could not have come at a more opportune time. Pakistan is bracing for the General Elections on February 18th 2008. The citizens of Pakistan seek to play a more active role in expressing their opinions, in governance and monitoring government performance; the citizens also have a keen desire to reconnect with 10,000 years of history and identity that is broader and deeper, more tolerant of diversity as a national strength, and citizens want to participate in improving their quality of life by engaging in and promoting education for sustainable development. The PELI 2008 participants will thus have a special role to perform upon their return to help citizens to define and promote targets with appropriate knowledge and a practical cutting edge.

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Improving the Most Deserving

Beena Raza
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Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)

Low performing public sector schools cannot redesign and upgrade teaching-learning processes without the active collaboration of key organizations and players in the local, national and international arena. Such linkages can lend critical expertise and support. Schools are more than just buildings, they are dynamic systems and such entities transcend physical space. Thus, fostering partnerships is imperative to transform public education in Pakistan so that all children, especially those underserved, have the opportunity to succeed in the 21st century and all the stakeholders become key levers of systemic change and where all come together to support inquiry-based learning and education reform.

Based on our (ITA) experience of the past four years of collaboration with Plymouth State’s Pakistani Project we have learnt how a 21st century partnership model can create the necessary value chain in teaching and learning processes that can bring about strategic change and innovation both for the learners and the educators.

Quoting, Project Director Blake Allen of the Pakistani Institute at Plymouth State, “With funding since 2003, the Pakistani Educational Leadership Institutes at Plymouth State University focus on effective collaborations between New Hampshire and Pakistan that represent the essence of educational and cultural diplomacy.”

It is a remarkable feat that this partnership has enabled educators and teacher trainers from diverse locations in Pakistan who have conducted more than 120 trainings within the country across different disciplines and the number of beneficiaries/trainees surpasses 115,000 at this point in time. The positive dimension of all this is that this is an ongoing activity and is continuing to create the multiplier effect ITA had envisioned.

Program Benefits
Driving Strategic Innovation and change have been the major outcomes of such a cross cultural and educational exchange. This program has changed the educators’ (Pakistanis and Americans) mind sets and the way they think as leaders, teachers, educational managers and most importantly as global entities with both cultural specific and universal norms and values. The program has armed them with the knowledge of how to influence their institutional culture, in some cases alter the way their organization responds to the challenge of innovation and, strengthened relationships with partners along the value chain of knowledge, attitude and skills.

The program knits together integrated learning approaches, cultural integration and exchange, learning, research methods, technology assessment, project execution, and talent management in an end-to-end roadmap for achieving maximum impact. The program has progressively gained the capability to position for the sustainable future growth of the participating institutions due to a dynamic and inclusive approach adopted to the design framework by both PSU and ITA lead design teams along with their respective strategic partners.

This intensive learning experience delivers long-term value to teachers, educational leaders and managers, students and institutions.

This contemporary partnership model builds interpersonal and collaborative skills by demonstrating teamwork and leadership; adapting to varied roles and responsibilities; working productively with others; exercising empathy and respecting diverse perspectives. It creates opportunities for 21st century educators as self-directed learners through monitoring their own understanding and learning needs, locating appropriate resources, and transferring learning from one domain to another.

Based on the review and feedback from the returning cohorts of successive Summer Institutes this model of professional development has been an evolving one keeping cultural contexts in perspective and each year PSU and ITA seek for a more improved model of delivery. Each year our challenge is to make a more balanced program where professional, pedagogical and cultural needs are taken into account.

The design of the courses on the whole is holistic and contextual to Pakistan’s educational system.

This collaborative cross cultural educational exchange has been critical in enabling teachers and children with new skills and knowledge. So far the net outcome has been enhanced learning outcomes, developing critical pedagogy, hands on learning in the classrooms and enhanced self esteem of both the teachers and the students.

Subsequently the project so far has truly been an enriching learning experience for all the partners and the synergies that have evolved out of it will hopefully go a long way in creating a meaningful impact against the Program’s overarching goals and objectives. The sharing of educational and cultural experiences across continents and culturally and religiously diverse groups has been a tremendous success story where socio-political barriers were never an obstacle during the four week program for all the different cohorts in the US, and in fact the participants returned home with a much broader world view and increased respect and tolerance for each other’s cultures. They were rather overwhelmed by the warmth and support they received from their instructors and colleagues in the US and look back fondly on their entire American experience.

ITA’s partnership model with Plymouth State in the past four years has no doubt been an exemplary model of collaboration as the common thread running through these two organizations has been their vision and commitment to Pakistani teachers/educators professional and human resource development.
Educational research and Curriculum is my special areas of interest. In July 2004, I went to attend the PSU Summer Institute for Pakistani Teachers in Plymouth State University, NH, USA which I really enjoyed and learnt so much from the exposure I got during this institute.

I worked on my First International research paper (Which was my first international Publication). As a researcher I focused mainly at two variables i.e.

- Schemes of Study
- Quality of Teaching

I am highly thankful to Dr. Dinnes (Vice President PSU, USA), Dr R. Fralic, Dr Ric and all other faculty members who helped me open heartedly and provided me all relevant and necessary documents.

After this institute I have been fortunate to be inducted in the Education and Curriculum Reforms at the national level. I was inducted in the review team for reviewing the old Curricula and developing new National Science Curriculum. I was working with a broader vision because of my work at the PSU and the findings of my research have greatly helped me.

This new Scheme of Studies/Curricula which is going to be implemented in the new academic Session 2007-2008 valid for the next ten years and under review after 5 years will use the scheme developed by our team. I am praying that God, society and educators will help in bringing about a drastic change for the betterment of twelve years of school education in my country.

Our problems are many including:
- Our System is based on diverse philosophies
- Financial Constraints
- Discontinuity of Policies and Planes
- Unstable Political System

Although these are all dreams of our team which are difficult to implement but I think they are not impossible.

In July 2007 I once again went to attend the PSU Summer Institute 2007. The time the institute was working with different objectives The focus of this institute was social research. I learned the new dimensions of social research and no doubt once again the same dorm, same Bayed Hall, Dinning Hall, Class rooms, Streets, Roads, Down Town, Wall Mart, Marshals and above all, once again the same wonderful Mam Blake. Oh, the whole experience was really exciting and enriching and I bring back with me to my country a truly memorable professional, personal and cultural experience.

Program Brief PELI 2008

“Active and Responsible Citizenship through education in stewardship of the environment and in cultural heritage preservation”

Plymouth State University in Plymouth, New Hampshire, USA, continuing its partnership with Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi, Public Trust has received funding for 2008-2009 from the United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, to design, implement and monitor a citizen’s exchange project. The 2008 Pakistan Education Leadership Institute (PELI) focuses on demonstrating Active and Responsible Citizenship through education in stewardship of the environment and in cultural heritage preservation.

The project goals:
- Transform institutional and individual understanding of environmental stewardship and cultural heritage preservation.
- Foster dialogue amongst diverse cultures found within both Pakistan and the United States related to environmental stewardship and cultural heritage preservation.

Share expertise amongst all the program participants, including Pakistani educational practitioners, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi staff, Plymouth State University faculty, New England educators, and community leaders from collaborating institutions, agencies and NGO's in Pakistan and the United States.
• Develop capacity for change at the community level in environmental stewardship and cultural heritage preservation through active and responsible citizenship.

The project focuses on assisting educators in implementing culturally appropriate, best pedagogical practices, in the two areas identified, with schools as delivery sites.

The Key Components:
• A four week Institute in July 2008 hosted by Plymouth State University.
• A one week Academy that will take place during the Institute to foster cultural exchange between Pakistani and New England educators.
• Development of Action Plans by the Institute and Academy participants to foster change in participants' home communities in the areas of environmental and cultural heritage preservation.
• Awarding of small project grants to support implementation of Action Plans to institute educational change in Pakistan.

Institutional Partners Signed for PELI 2008 the partnership grows for Teachers Without Frontiers: ITA's vision for teacher education in Pakistan!

University of Education, Lahore, Punjab
Directorate of Staff Development, Lahore, Punjab
Institute of Education and Research, Punjab University
World Wildlife Fund, Lahore, Punjab
Beacon House School System, Lahore, Punjab
Sanjan Nagar School, Lahore, Punjab
Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad
Federal Directorate of Education, Islamabad
Federal College of Education, Islamabad
Fatimiyah Education Network, Karachi, Sindh
Agha Khan University, Karachi, Sindh
Department of Education, NWFP/FATA
Department of Education, AJK

The curriculum and follow-on activities will incorporate a rigorous theory to practice model promoting the use of effective strategies for integrating policy, environmental stewardship, cultural heritage preservation, and community-based educational initiatives, with schools as delivery sites. The learning resources can be adapted for curricula inclusion, teacher training, and professional development.

The Plymouth State University Institute will consist of both educational and cultural activities.

Updates on PELI 2008: The first phase of the selection process of potential candidates and alternatives has been completed while its second phase is its documentation which is in process for the visa process to kick off.

Views of alumni 2006

Ms. Misbah Rani, Sanjan Nagar Public Education Trust
Girls High School, Lahore

"Their (Americans) educational system is much more flexible and easy to understand. They don't have a fixed curriculum and it allows flexibility according to the needs and requirements of the students”.

Dr. Zulfiqar Ali Saqib, Course Coordinator, DSD
During my stay at PSU-2006, I learnt a lot about cultural heritage and environmental issues at PSU in 2006 Summer Institute. I wish to work for the promotion of Environmental Sciences in the country. This is imperative for sustainability of life in the Biosphere to address mutual issues. A little has been done in this area. Our population is generating every kind of pollution. These pollutants are creating Biomagnifications in the environment. Every xenophobic directly or indirectly is entering into our food chain. This is an emerging challenge for humanity and further efforts including research are the need of hour. I strongly believe in a healthier environment for future generations and inclined to work in this field”.

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Websites
Curriculum development process:
www.morainevalley.edu/curriculumhandbook
Tips for teachers:
www.hellofriend.org/teaching/good_classroom
Teaching techniques:
www.fhinstitute.com/Weems/TTECHNIQUES
Learning & Teaching:
www.iml.uts.edu.au/learnteach/enhance/understand
Art Education links:
www.princetonol.com/groups/jad/lessons/middle/arted.htm