

ARTICLES OF 1998

NEW DIL PROJECT IN KHAIRPUR

Khairpur, a land of meticulously lined date palms and vast cotton fields boasts a majestic past. This former princely state is situated 450 km north of Karachi. Its southeastern portion is parched desert while the remainder of the district is afflicted with the acute menace of water-logging and salinity, making life for its rural inhabitants extremely difficult. It is in this deprived district of Khairpur that DIL has decided to fund the education of 1800 girls enrolled in sixty non-formal schools.



A class in session at a Khairpur Dil School

This project, known as the Pirbhat Girls Community School Project, was initiated by the Non-Government Organization Resource Center (NGORC), a highly respected support organization which aims to strengthen the NGO sector in Pakistan by empowering community based organization. To establish these schools, NGORC worked in collaboration with NOWA (Naz High School Old Boys Welfare Trust), a leading voluntary organization in the education sector in the district of Khairpur. The singular most notable accomplishment of this NGORC-NOWA partnership was that, for the first time in Pakistan, local community-based non-government organizations (CBNGOs) were mobilized to establish easily accessible schools for girls in remote villages. These CBNGOs successfully undertook the challenging task of identifying local teachers, motivating the communities to register students, hiring a room and taking on the direct responsibility of the day to day running of the schools.

Initially, this project was receiving funding for two years only by the Government of Pakistan under the Social Action Program, which ran out in August 1998. At that point, NGORC requested "DIL" to provide financial assistance to these schools for a period of at least three years or until they became self-sustaining. Recognizing the effort and dedication that had already gone into establishing these schools, and fully realizing that without continued monetary help these schools would abruptly cease to exist, DIL has agreed to fund this noble venture.



A class in session at a Khairpur Dil School

UPDATE ON DIL PROJECT MIANWALI

A year has passed since the inception of the DIL Mianwali schools, and it is time to reflect on what has transpired in this formative period. The first quarter, April to June in 1997 was devoted to opening of the forty schools: supervisory staff was employed; the project office and resource center was setup; teachers were selected and trained; students were enrolled, classrooms setup and Village Education Committees (VECs) were formed

and trained to manage their schools. During this period Dr. Tahir Andrabi made two visits to the project site accompanied by Mehnaz Akber and other monitoring staff. The team's evaluation of the project was very complimentary. They were particularly impressed by the quality of the local teachers.

The next two quarters were dedicated to improving the standard of education. Teachers were given regular and continuous training, and confidence of the students was boosted by making them participate in inter-school competitions. Interaction of the community with the schools was increased by adding more members to the VECs, which by now were holding regular monthly meetings in order to oversee the day to day running of the schools. Mehnaz Akber visited the schools again in November 1997, accompanied by Mrs. Peggy Simmons, wife of the Ambassador of USA to Pakistan and Mrs. Fiza Shah, chairperson of DIL.



Students participating in the Inter-School competition held in Mianwali

The last term was spent on community mobilization. All VECs organized school functions which were well attended. Annual exams were administered to 1272 students out of which 1133 passed, those who did not clear are receiving extra help to bring their grades up to acceptable levels. It is noteworthy that three of the advanced students from the DIL project, who appeared in the Class 5 exam held by the District Education Office, Mianwali, passed with distinction. The teachers also took a final evaluation test in addition to undergoing quarterly tests and all of them cleared, which is truly commendable. However, those who were found weak in science, mathematics and English are currently receiving special training to improve their standard in these subjects.

Dr. Andrabi and Mehnaz Akber visited Mianwali again in March 1998, and held extensive discussions with Lt. Col. Altaf E. Malik, President of MMBMT, on teacher training and the sustainability of schools beyond DIL Funding. They tried to identify weaknesses in the project and adopt measures to overcome them.

With the passage of time and the unified efforts that are going into enhancing the quality of education, we are confident that the DIL schools will continue to improve in every respect.

USTAINABILITY OF DIL SCHOOLS

By Professor Tahir Andrabi

What happens to our schools when the first phase of DIL funding is over and the first cohort of students clears primary school? Do we have a mechanism in place that ensures the sustainability of our efforts beyond the initial burst of enthusiasm and patriotism? These questions are



frequently (and legitimately) posed to the DIL board and myself. We need to address them squarely.

At DIL, we have always believed that our assistance is best viewed as seed funding. Our planned course of action has been to build local support in the community, convincing them to steadily bear more of the expenses of the school and build organizational capacity for eventually taking over completely the ownership and management of the schools.

There are two steps involved in the transfer of ownership to the village communities: The first step is to ensure that this transfer of ownership is legal, verifiable and recognized as legitimate by all parties. The key step in formally transferring legal rights to the community is to register the village community organization that exists around each school as a falahi tanzeem with the provincial social welfare board. In order to qualify for this registration, the village organization has to follow the prescribed rules of the social welfare board. It needs to develop its by-laws, elect office holders, open a bank account, hold regular meetings and keep records and minutes of its activities. Such a registered organization can have legal ownership of the school and run it as a non-profit enterprise. Registering an organization with the welfare board has added benefits as now the organization can start income generation schemes such as micro-credit, etc.



MMBMT has been very aggressive in following this model in Mianwali. Their community organizers meet regularly with the teachers and groups of parents to plan projects around the school and plan improvements in the schools. In the Khairpur project, that DIL is starting this month, all the schools already have functional village organizations registered with the Sindh Social Welfare Board. This tremendous accomplishment is in large measure due to the great hard work put in by the NGO Resource Center, our partner organization that is helping the village level organizations build management capacity.

The second step in the transfer of ownership is to ensure that community organizations be well organized, active and have strong and credible leadership. It is extremely important to keep factionalism and party-baazi out of such a decision. I have observed that the successful transfer invariably involve gradually passing on bigger management responsibilities to the teachers. There is considerable evidence that strong teachers are able to keep the school functional even when funding has stopped for an extended period.

In the DIL project, the most active teachers had been operating informal ad hoc schools in their vandhas (village hamlets) even before MMBMT recruited them for the DIL project. They currently have a strong sense of ownership of the schools, and have no doubt in their minds that they are the key players in this effort. Most teachers refer to the schools as hamara apna school.

DIL's strategy is quite clear here: Investing in the capacity of teachers is the key to ensuring that the schools stay afloat in long run.

I would like to end by giving you an example of how our design of the DIL intervention as a pilot project helps us develop serious insight on some key public policy issues.

Virtually all development analysts agree the lack of a functional, accountable organizations at the grassroots level has greatly contributed to the crisis in delivery of public services in health and education in Pakistan. For most of the years since independence, local bodies that traditionally would have been involved in such projects have not meaningfully existed. When they do exist, they are rife with political factionalism and patronage. In the past, sustainability of many local self-help initiatives has been seriously compromised because of manipulation and lack of transparency in the registration process.

As a result, there is a serious ongoing debate on the reform of the local bodies system going on in Pakistan currently. A prominent proposal would guarantee this system constitutional protection and transfer control of education to these elected bodies. As a participant in this debate, I feel that the lessons from the DIL experiment on sustainability and transfer of ownership-even though ours is a small- scale effort-shall tremendously impact the terms of this debate.

A DIL Fundraiser in Long Beach

On 28th March 1998 DIL Board Members hosted a dinner to update their donors about the activities, achievements and plans for further expansion of DIL. We are happy to report that the evening was a resounding success.



A pakistan bazaar scene at the DIL fund-raiser

The guests gathered in the lobby of the Marriott hotel in Long Beach, CA. Various adjoining rooms were tastefully decorated to depict Pakistani bazaar and village scenes, where people were entertained with typical Pakistani board games. Palmists and caricature artists were also on hand to amuse the guests. The schoolroom displayed the curriculum, books and teaching aids of the DIL project along with photographs of the individual schools in Mianwali.

Speeches were made by Mr. Safi Qureshy, a community activist and philanthropist, Dr. Tahir Andrabi, professor of economics at Pomona College, CA, and Mrs. Fiza Shah. Next, a video presentation filmed in Pakistan of the various DIL schools transported the audience of 350 to these remote locations. This candid footage of the children hard at work in the classrooms, and the grateful sentiments of the parents, tugged at the heartstrings of the guests.

After dinner, the guests were regaled to the melodious voice of Janice Miller, an American singer who sang Urdu and Punjabi songs.

The DIL Board is extremely grateful for the magnanimity of those who underwrote the cost of the evening as well as those who donated so generously for the benefit of DIL. Our well-wishers will be glad to know that an amount of \$32,617.00 was raised on the occasion.

OPEN HOUSE HELD TO LAUNCH DIL IN THE EAST COAST

An open house was held at the Sarwars' residence in Short Hills, New Jersey on Sept.13, 1998. Over 100 people, including Dr. Nafis Sadiq, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, and Mayor Elaine Becker of Millburn-Short Hills, were present on the occasion. The event started with musical renditions by harpist Allison Cheung from the Julliard School, pianists Glen Jacobson of Millburn High School and Omar Sarwar of Pingry School.



Mayor Eliane Becker of Millburn-short Hills, 3rd from right accompanied by the New Jersey DIL Volunteers

The Open House was organized by the Pakistani Americans of Northern New Jersey; Najmi and Malik Sarwar, Zamzam and Mansoor Hussain, Hina and Ghazali Inam, Amina and Javed Patel, Tasneem and Shaheryar Azher and Sarah Wasty.

Mrs. Fiza Shah, Chairperson of DIL, who flew in from Los Angeles for this occasion, made two presentations which were followed by question and answer sessions. The response, not only from the Pakistani expatriates, but also from the Americans who attended was very encouraging.

Over a dozen like-minded people have volunteered to broaden the base of DIL by working for the organization in New Jersey, New York and the Connecticut Tri-state area. Their efforts have already begun to make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate children in some of the most underdeveloped areas of Pakistan.

Financials

Developments in Literacy, Inc. Activity for Year Ended December 31, 1997

1. REVENUE:	
Sponsorship of Children	\$108,815.00
Fundraises and other Donations	\$7,411.34
Candy Sale	\$375.00
Interest and Dividends	\$2,350.49
Board Contribution for	\$4,595.00

Administrative Costs	
Total Revenue Received in 1997	\$123,546.83
2. EXPENSES:	
Education Expense	\$31,268.33
Endowment Account	\$10,549.00
Monitoring Expense	\$5,475.00
Printing Expense	\$2,870.49
Telephone Expense	\$243.02
Pakistan Day Booth	\$300.00
Merrill Lynch Online fee	\$25.00
Wire Transfer Expense	\$40.00
Total Expense in 1997	\$50,770.84
 *Net Cash in Bank	 \$72,775.99
*This reflects monies received from donors who have paid for the next four years educational cost in advance.	