

## ARTICLES OF 2002 – Summer

### DIL'S Annual Fundraiser

In a whirlwind North American tour of eight cities, Qawwal maestro Asif Ali Khan and Hamnawaz enthralled audiences with their performance at the fundraisers arranged by DIL.

The board members of DIL chapter-boards in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Washington and Houston worked endlessly for months preparing for their respective events. Apart from these spectacular and well-attended functions, friends and well wishers of DIL in Chicago, Houston and Las Vegas also put in their best efforts to hold successful fundraisers in their respective cities, the proceeds of which were donated to DIL.



A total amount of about \$300,000/- was raised, the details of which will be given in DIL's next financial statement.

While Asif, protégé of the legendary Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, and his group kept the guests mesmerized past midnight in every city, the real purpose was to raise funds to combat illiteracy in Pakistan.

The audience was informed about the work being done under the various DIL projects in Pakistan, and DIL's efforts to further improve the standard of its schools. Video presentations of DIL's work in Pakistan were made at each function, transporting the audiences to DIL schools functioning in some of the remotest regions of Pakistan, where students spoke candidly about their hopes and dreams for a better future.

### DIL Signs Contract With ABES

On May 1st 2002, DIL signed a three-year letter of agreement with the Adult Basic Education Society (ABES), with the objective of establishing 25 non-formal primary schools in rural Rawalpindi district.

ABES, a Pakistani NGO working in the education sector for the last thirty years, specializes in development of teaching methodologies, basic literacy primers, and training teachers. Its past accomplishments include the setting up of 85 community schools, and improving the quality of classroom teaching of 25 Federal Government primary schools. ABES presented literacy-teaching programs for seven years on national television in collaboration with Pakistan Television Corporation. To maximize its outreach, ABES also established 200 Community Viewing Centers, equipped with TV sets.



According to the aforementioned agreement students attending the DIL project must come from the local community, have no access to government schools, and should be unable to afford private education. The intent is to enroll girls, but some boys will also be able to attend, as the plan calls for a minimum of 80% female enrollment.

More than 85 villages were visited by the ABES team, out of which 25 were selected for setting up non- formal primary schools. A Community School Council (CSC) was established in each village. Each CSC provided a rent-free school building with at least two rooms. The communities themselves did minor repairs and whitewash to spruce up the schools.

Thirty-five teachers were selected who have attended an intensive 14-days teacher-training workshop. Enrollment has already reached 90% and the students are coming to school regularly despite the extremely hot weather. Furniture, painted in red, green, yellow and blue to make a colorful and cheerful working environment, is being provided to the schools.

As with all other DIL projects, complete financial transparency and strict auditing of the project will be maintained. DIL looks forward to a successful partnership with ABES for the furtherance of literacy in Pakistan.

### **DIL - CARE Partnership**

DIL has entered into an agreement with the Cooperation for Advancement, Rehabilitation and Education (CARE) to improve the quality of education currently being imparted to children attending five government schools in the Barki District of Punjab, which lies near the Indian border. Dropout rates are high in these schools while gross enrolment rates are dangerously low. Graduates leave school barely able to read or write. The schools are situated in densely populated poverty-stricken areas, inhabited mostly by poor tillers. In order to ward off starvation, children are forced to earn a living, thus falling prey to unscrupulous and exploitative employers.



CARE (no affiliation with the American NGO of the same name) began as a flood relief project in 1988 under the name of Welfare Trust. CARE established its own school network in the 1990's, which expanded when the Government of Punjab handed over 10 schools for adoption to them in 1998. CARE was given nine more schools in 2000, and its dedication has led to a significant increase in the Matriculation pass rates. Currently CARE educates 20,000 students in over 25 schools, and employs 450 teachers.

Significant improvements in both physical infrastructure and teaching quality are planned over the next three years. Teachers will undergo intensive teacher training programs to become better equipped to meet the required standards. The schools will also be provided adequate furniture, electricity, drinking water, fans, and toilets. Standardized examination

systems will be followed, and library and science labs will be established. The curriculum will include the teaching of English.

Necessary mechanisms will be put into place before the schools are handed back to the government to ensure continuity of quality education, even after the expiry of the three-year contract.

DIL looks forward to working with CARE on this new and interesting project.

### **The Khairpur Projects**

The last six months have been a trying time for the five new pilot schools comprised of classes 3, 4, 5 and 6 (class 7 and 8 will be added in the years 2003 and 2004). Unlike the Foundation schools, these schools are at a distance from most students' homes; therefore, it took a lot of convincing to get the parents to allow their daughters to use the transport facility provided by the Indus Recourse Center (IRC), DIL's partner NGO. It is noteworthy that all the students that were targeted are now attending school and virtually no dropouts have been reported during this period. Annual examinations were held in all the schools and the few that did not clear them will retake the exams after two months.



Resource Center

Teacher training has been ongoing and special emphasis has been laid on topics such as English, mathematics and record keeping. In addition, workshops have been held for designing of the syllabus and planning the academic calendar for the coming year.

Regular meetings have been held by the Village Education Committees (VECs), which have been set up to ensure that the needs of the schools are met in a timely manner. One important responsibility of the VECs is to ensure that only the poorest girls are admitted to these schools and, for this purpose, household surveys are conducted. As an example of community involvement, parents met with the Forestry Department and arranged to have 500 plants distributed to the Foundation and Pilot Schools.

The 24 Foundation Schools consisting of K.G, Class I and Class II, also being run by IRC, have shown substantial improvement as the teachers are now teaching only three grades. The teachers have been able to utilize the skills they have acquired through professional training with conspicuous results, and the students are also much more attentive in the new setting.

The second Khairpur 25 school project, where DIL is working in collaboration with Naz Old Boys Welfare Association (NOWA), is now in its 4th year. Five schools were added in May because the existing schools could not cope with the rapid increase in the number of students. The school at village A.H. Mungio was upgraded to class 6, on the same lines

as the IRC Pilot schools. The Society for Advancement of Education (SAHE) is currently providing additional training to these 25 NOWA schools.

The DIL team, Fiza Shah, Tauseef Hyat, Najmi Sarwar and Afia Aslam, visited both projects in March 2002 and were extremely pleased with the all-round progress they witnessed. They also attended the annual function, jointly organised by NOWA and IRC, in which teachers, students, parents and VEC members joined hands to organize a variety show, interspersed with speeches and followed by a prize distribution ceremony. The children performed different skits, tableaux and songs. The teachers and the VEC members spoke candidly about their very satisfying experience with the DIL program and their hopes and concerns for the future of the DIL schools.

## **Dir**

The DIL- Khwendo Kor (KK) project has successfully established 24 schools, 19 in Upper and 5 in Lower Dir. Despite the delay caused by the Afghan war, it is expected that all 40 schools will start functioning by the end of September 2002.

Representatives of DIL and NetAid, the organization funding the project, visited Dir in early March and held numerous meetings with the KK staff. Because of the very difficult mountainous terrain and lack of proper roads, DIL has allocated sufficient funds for purchase of a suitable vehicle for use by the DIL-KK staff.



Qadir Abad School

The first teacher- training program was held in June. The choice of the training organization had to be made carefully, keeping local conservative elements in mind. Only a female, Pushto-speaking trainer could go into Dir. In lower Dir the training workshops were organized in the KK-DIL project office. In upper Dir there was some trouble finding premises that would be acceptable to the local community. The teachers' families were not willing to let them attend training at a hotel, as this was considered an inappropriate place for women. The training was finally conducted at the local Government Higher Secondary School through courtesy of the NWFP Education Department. Education Resource and Information Center (ERIC) was hired to train the teachers.

KK is working constantly to mobilize government support for the DIL project. Meetings were held with the concerned officials to work out the modalities for the handing over of the DIL schools to the government after DIL support comes to an end.

For facilitating access to information on DIL schools, a computer database was set up at the KK office in Dir. Also, the first two Village Education Committees (VECs) were formed in June, one for men and one for women.

The students were seen to be very keen to learn and were progressing fast in terms of syllabus covered. The teachers too had tried to create as bright an environment as possible within their limited resources.

### **Orangi Project**

In May 2002 the Governor of Sindh, Mr. Mohammad Mian Soomro, paid a visit to the Orangi schools and was impressed by the good work being done by DIL and Faran Educational Society (FES). DIL board members Saeeda Fancy and Mehar Patel also visited the schools beginning of the year to see first hand how the schools were functioning.



Rozina

FES organized regular training programs for DIL teachers in various subjects including school management skills.

Greater emphasis is now being placed on imparting training to teachers in the English language. In April, a training workshop on accounting was held and, in May, three more training workshops were conducted on accounting and auditing. In June, when the schools closed down for three months summer vacations, a strict daily regimen of training was conducted for the teachers.

Aside from such formal training, FES staff visited the schools regularly to observe classroom activities, to check how successfully the teachers were implementing the teacher training techniques they had been taught, and to give the teachers on-the-job guidance. Visits were also made by the FES management team to check the schools' scholastic registers and documentation.

Regular community meetings were held during the last four months with school representatives, FES staff members and representatives of the Local School Management Committees. In March, twenty-two managers from DIL schools met and did some short-term planning. It was decided to draw and implement a unified scheme of studies in all DIL Schools, and to design and implement a unified pupils assessment system in the next academic year (2002 –2003). Another such meeting was held in May between teachers and managers; 94 participants from 25 schools attended that meeting.

### **Rozina**

Rozina, from Khairpur, is typical of the majority of DIL students who live in abject poverty. She was a few months old when her father died. Her mother raised her and her brother, in one cramped room, by making and selling bags and tending to their neighbours' cattle. The villagers helped them to survive by giving them food and clothes as best as they could.



The main reason why Rozina could attend a DIL school was because she was charged no fee. Her brother started working last year which has somewhat improved the family's financial condition. After completing DIL's primary school program, she is presently attending one of the five middle schools set up by IRC under DIL's new pilot project. According to her teacher, Rozina has gained in self-esteem and is now dreaming about serving her community by becoming a doctor and starting a clinic in her village, Waali Dino Shekh.

After years of hardship her mother has developed a serious heart condition, and wants to get her daughter married off as soon as possible. Rozina is aware of her precarious personal and financial situation, but continues to go to school because she knows it is her only hope for the future. She has learnt how to read, write, add and subtract. She sings and recites poetry and continues to cling to her dream of being able some day to make a difference to the well being of her community.

### **School on a Mountain**

Shabana lives in Ali Mast, a village in Upper Dir where there is no school for girls. She, with twenty other girls, covers a distance of four kilometers of steep and craggy mountainous terrain to reach the nearest school. This daily excursion sometimes leaves the soles of her feet lacerated. For this reason, she was unable to attend school the day this picture was taken and the above picture shows her at home nursing her wounded feet. But Shabana loves going to school and will go right back to her daily 8 km walk as soon as her feet have healed.



Shabana

DIL, in collaboration with Khwendo Kor, is planning to open a girls' school in this village within the next two months (a boys' school already exists). The community in Ali Mast village is willing to cooperate fully with DIL and KK in this endeavor and has already identified a couple of teachers for the school.

### **Update on DIL**

Despite the dangerous spill over effect on Pakistan of the war in neighboring Afghanistan and the tense border situation with India, DIL continued its work on all fronts. In fact, the recent events have reinforced DIL's determination to continue providing quality education to as many poor children as possible, as we believe that an educated citizenry is the best hope for Pakistan's future.

With DIL growing rapidly, our main priority is to continue improving our monitoring and evaluation procedures. The monitors will now be required to also report on areas such as school facilities, school environment, quality of service delivery, performance of teachers, confidence of children, level of community involvement and accounting procedures followed by partner NGOs.

In view of the heavy workload, a full time Accountant was hired for the DIL office in Islamabad. DIL also sent experienced accountants to all of its project offices in Pakistan to teach the local accountants how to maintain their books in accordance with the guidelines given by our Auditors. DIL is placing great emphasis on the quality of teaching. Follow up teacher-training sessions are regularly held by the Education Coordinators, and feedback from the monitoring reports helps us in the planning of future training programs. In addition, DIL encourages individual teachers to improve their qualifications by contributing towards their tuition fees and increments in their salary for each additional qualification.

In January 2002, DIL shifted to an office in Santa Ana, Orange County, provided free of cost for sixteen months by Mr. & Mrs. Attiazaz Din. A full-time secretary has also been hired for this office.

### **DIL Opens Chapter in Houston**

The Houston Chapter of DIL was launched with a successful fund-raiser on the 18th of May 2002. DIL was very well received by the community and the funds raised were beyond the expectations of the organizers.

This fund-raiser was followed by two enjoyable Qawwali evenings, one hosted by Dr. Shamsa Hassan at the Savoy Banquet Hall and the other by Mr. and Mrs. Feroz of Laziza Grill. Generous donations were contributed to DIL at both these functions as well.

A special thanks to all those who helped make this endeavor a success, particularly members of the Pakistani Students Association of the university of Houston, who sponsored and gave their whole-hearted