



Computer Labs on Wish List for 2004

The year 2003 was exciting for all of us at DIL. On a personal note, my family moved back to New York in August, after four restful years in Singapore ... and what a welcome we received upon our arrival: the longest blackout in 50 years! The ordeal was soon forgotten as I got caught up preparing for the New York chapter's first high-profile fundraiser in September. It was exhilarating to see the energy and devotion of all the wonderful people who made it a roaring success. Equally motivating was the fervor of the DIL chapter board members in Singapore, who enthusiastically embraced the responsibility of carrying DIL's work forward. Only through the dedication and commitment of our members and the magna-

nimity of our donors can we dare to dream of securing a future for the deserving, marginalized children of Pakistan.

At the dawn of 2004, we at DIL have a firm resolve to focus on improving the quality of our current schools, instead of adding new projects. To that end, I am keen to share one specific initiative. After establishing secondary schools last year, we added a computer lab at a school in Khairpur and are extremely encouraged by the results (see page 2). We plan to provide computers and resource software to all our projects, barring physical constraints such as lack of electricity.

To achieve this goal, I request all our patrons to please help us identify and

collect quality math and English language learning software. This year, we also will ask our donors to sponsor computer labs, which currently cost \$1,000 each.

These quality improvements translate into more fundraising, and all the chapter boards are already buzzing with talk of their upcoming efforts. Achieving our goals requires hard work and diligence; the rewards far outweigh the cost. All of us at DIL wish you a very happy new year and hope we can count on your continued and enhanced support through the coming year.

—President Najmi Sarwar

Contact DIL at: (714) 895-5345 (phone) or (714) 895-6345 (fax).

Winds of Change: DIL Focuses on School Improvement Plan

Having successfully established 176 schools in the four provinces of Pakistan, DIL decided in June 2003 to curtail expansion into new areas for two years and to work exclusively to improve the quality of its existing schools. To achieve its goal, DIL plans to work simultaneously on the following three fronts:

Teacher Training

From the very onset, teacher training has been an integral part of the DIL program. We can now evaluate the impact of the various training programs DIL teachers have undergone over the last seven years and choose the most effective course of action for future training. The Khairpur and Orangi projects are now ready for local teacher trainers who can spend more time working with individual teachers in the classroom setting. DIL has begun experimenting with a local training



Students at a DIL school in Orangi show off their newly received school supplies.

organization, DEVCON, in Khairpur, and is pleased with the feedback from teachers and management. Five schools have been selected, and the trainers are spending four days per month at each school. The individual attention given to each teacher is rapidly honing their abilities and addressing their particular needs and concerns.

Improving Infrastructure

As part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) implemented by DIL in April 2003, we are working with the communities in Khairpur to build new schools or add classrooms where enrollment has increased substantially. The communities will donate the land and provide labor free

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Developments in Literacy News

School-based Computer Lab A Huge Success



DIL opened a new computer lab in the Sojhero Model School in Khuhra, Khairpur. A first in DIL schools, the lab contains four refurbished systems and several educational CDs.

Initiated as a pilot program, the computer-assisted learning has been tremendously successful. Student and teacher English pronunciation and spelling have improved remarkably. DIL's executive director noted on a recent visit to the school, "The children just loved the computers. Teachers claim that the children cannot wait for the computer class to begin. Their learning has improved and they are picking up nursery rhymes and writing sentences in English, plus drawing on

the computer."

Our partner NGO also is training teachers to use primary science and math software. Encouraged by its success, DIL plans to expand the initiative to other projects where facilities are available.



New York gala organizers with Dr. Nafis Sadik, second from right.

NY Gala Benefit Nets More than \$200,000

The first New York DIL Gala Benefit, held on Sept. 20, 2003 at the Tavern on the Green, netted more than \$200,000 through ticket sales, an art auction, sponsorship and pledges. Three hundred and fifty guests enjoyed the dinner dance at this festive New York City landmark location and donated generously to DIL's mission. Guests included senior UN officials, Indian and American supporters, as well as members of the Pakistani communities in New York, Westchester, Long Island and New Jersey.

DIL's Executive Board honored Dr. Nafis Sadik, special advisor to the Secretary General of the United Nations, for her career-long work in the field of development and for the guidance she has provided our organization. The powerful words delivered by the evening's speakers, Dr. Sadik and Carol Bellamy, UNICEF executive director, stressed the significance of DIL's mission to eradicate illiteracy in Pakistan. They spoke stirringly about the importance of child literacy as a means of breaking the cycle of poverty and poor health that impairs human development in countries like Pakistan.

Under the impressive leadership of benefit committee co-chairs, Shaila Zameer and Shazad Dada, this sold-out debut benefit was an unprecedented success (see photo at left). A Jameel Naqsh painting, donated by the artist himself, raised \$14,000 and was the highlight of the auction.

The evening was made possible through the generous sponsorship of the UN Foundation, Citibank NRI, ABN-AMRO, UBS Investment Bank, PepsiCo, Northwestern Mutual, Jeffries, Merrill Lynch, Permal Asset Management and the Amanat family, among many others.

Yes, I want to help DIL to promote literacy.

Sponsor a child, sponsor a computer lab or make a one-time donation.

All donations are tax deductible Tax ID No. 33-0843213

Contact DIL at: (714) 895-5345

- I would like to sponsor ____ child/children at \$40 per child per year \$____ to be paid annually for five years
- I would like to sponsor ____ computer lab(s) at \$1,000 per lab per year \$____ with a five-year commitment
- I would like to make a one-time donation of \$ _____

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Tel _____

Please make checks payable to DIL: 895 Holly Glen Drive, Long Beach, CA 90815

Thank You to All DIL Sponsors, Donors

DIL extends a special thanks to GoodLot Ambassador and DIL patron, Dr. Nafis Sadik, who received \$10,000 from GoodLot to donate to the project of her choice (see photo at right). She selected DIL's project in Dir, NWFP.

The Target/AMC Foundation awarded DIL a grant to set up small libraries in DIL's Balochistan, Orangi and Sheikhpura projects.

The following foundations also

supported DIL's efforts in 2003: the Banky LaRocque Foundation, assisting DIL for the second consecutive year; the Irfan Kathwari Foundation; the Nathan Cummings Foundation and the United Kingdom-based All Pakistan Women's Association.

DIL recognizes our many private donors and the tireless fundraising efforts of all DIL chapter members.



Young Student's Dream to Attend School Comes True

A young girl named Yasmeen, very eager to get a primary education, visited the teacher at the Brigadier Bashir Ahmed Sojhro Junior School in village Wali Dino Shaikh, Khairpur. The girl's father and grandfather decided she could not attend school because they believed girls get spoilt after going to school and forget how to look after their homes and families. Yasmeen begged the teacher to speak to her family to convince them to send her to school.

The teacher and some VEC members met with Yasmeen's parents and convinced them that girls have just as much right to education as boys. Education gives a human being the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, they said, adding that the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) had directed all Muslims, regardless of gender, to receive an education. Yasmeen's parents allowed her

to attend school.

Yasmeen's first two years of education were spent at the school in her village. When she was in Class III, she joined the newly opened IRC-DIL Advanced School, the Sojhro Model School Khuhra, in which DIL has started the computer lab pilot project.

When she was in fifth grade, another daughter was born in Yasmeen's family. Because of the increased household work and expenditure, the young girl's mother asked Yasmeen to stay home to look after her baby sister.

When they heard about this, the IRC-DIL promoters immediately visited her home again and spoke to her mother, pleading with her that to pull Yasmeen out at this time would lay five years of hard work to waste. After an emergency meeting



among the villagers, it was decided that the young girl would indeed go back to school.

No one was happier than Yasmeen, who today gives thanks and blessings to IRC for helping her during a time of need and giving her the precious chance to realize her dream.

Students Make Paper to Sustain School

Making paper to help fund a school? The idea for the project arose when several ABES-DIL schools could not make a monthly contribution to the school sustainability fund. The parents believed in ABES's and DIL's commitment to bringing education opportunities to their doorstep, but were becoming demotivated as they could not

generate the amount of savings they had committed to.

To bring these communities into the mainstream of the project once again, the Bangan Shaikhan school in Rural Rawalpindi started an initiative to create handmade paper. The teacher and children used the colorful paper for their artwork, to make drawings, cards for parents,

notebooks, and even keychains and photo frames. Such an initiative, further refined, also could help schools with their regular need for paper.

To further strengthen this project and to generate a frequent flow of funds, ABES has suggested that this paper be sold and the amount deposited into the school's savings account.

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of cost, while DIL will provide funds for material. Many donors who have sponsored schools already have given generously toward this initiative.

A school with two classrooms, a verandah and a large courtyard has been built at Sadar Ji Bhatyun. Enrollment jumped beyond expectation, and parents are refusing to take 'no' for an answer. We hope to persuade the community to build an additional classroom. Another building was constructed in Village Bhanghoo and two are under construction in Villages Katohar and Jamro.

Hand pumps and latrines were provided to all the schools in Khairpur District. The community members of Unner Colony and DB Katohar used these funds to build two additional schoolrooms instead.

Classroom Improvement

DIL arranged for project managers and coordinators from Dir and Khairpur to



visit schools in Lahore and Islamabad in April 2003. DIL also worked with the teachers and field staff last year on hygiene. Furniture, educational materials, books and charts, cupboards, display boards, blackboards, sports equipment, and fans were provided to all schools in Khairpur.

Although the SIP began initially in Khairpur, where DIL has nearly 60 schools, including seven middle schools, it is gradually expanding to the other projects. For

example, Dir project received funding for furniture, tube lights, books and educational materials. The Orangi project recently received funding for school improvement along the same lines as Khairpur, and is busy implementing the program.

DIL's quality improvement policy also included new salary scales for teachers based on their credentials, years of experience and quality of teaching, which has resulted in a substantial raise for most teachers starting June 2003. Policy for school admissions, school holidays and the curriculum also were formulated. Children have received educational materials, and the schools encourage sports activities.

The initiative has had an amazing effect: teachers are highly motivated; children find the cheerful, well-decorated classes very inviting; children come to school regularly and neatly groomed. Because of less reliance on rote learning, the children's confidence is growing each day.