

Developments in Literacy, Inc.

A Not for Profit Organization

Summer 2005

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DIL Highlights for 2005

Khairpur It is with great pride that we report the graduation of the first group of DIL students from the eighth grade. DIL does not plan to add class 9 at this stage as the current number of students is not sufficient to justify the expenditure. Instead, all 33 students of the DIL-IRC schools have been enrolled into the nearest private and government schools, and DIL has awarded them scholarships to cover their school and transportation cost; parents also will contribute a small amount.

The other good news is that there was not a single dropout this year from the DIL schools. This is an amazing achievement, considering the dropout rate for schools in Pakistan is 50 percent. Student and teacher attendance in the DIL-IRC schools is also excellent. It is now an established fact that the DIL students perform much better in exams and are more confident and better read than the government school students.

A Story from the Field

Reaz Hussain attended the annual prize distribution ceremony at the DIL-IRC Junior School in the village Mungio where his nephews are enrolled. His nephews are poor; they attend the DIL-IRC School, where the fee is only Rs. 10. Hussain, who is relatively better off, was sending his daughter Fazeela to the Evergreen Public School, which charges a monthly fee of Rs. 200. After seeing the quality of education and the performances of the children at the school ceremony, Hussain, who is a teacher at a government school, took his daughter out of the public school and admitted her in the IRC-DIL School.

Rural Rawalpindi The first cohort of 337 students graduated from the DIL-ABES primary schools in March 2005. These students appeared for the primary standard examination held by the Education Department and the pass rate was 97 percent. All the students completed their primary education in three years and eight months.

DIL has signed a new agreement with ABES, its local partner, to establish seven secondary schools for the graduates of



This year, there were no dropouts from the DIL schools in Khairpur.

the fifth grade. These schools will start admitting students in August of this year and will serve 13 villages. Approximately 150 DIL graduates are expected to enroll in class 6 while the remaining students have joined government schools.

Baluchistan Unsatisfied with the low enrollment last year at the 10 middle

schools in Pashin, Mustung and Ziarat, due to the remote nature of the project, lack of affordable transportation and parents' reluctance to allow their daughters to walk to a DIL school in a nearby village, DIL decided to provide transportation to students in three schools to begin with. The experiment has proven very successful, with 150 additional students enrolled for the new school year.

To meet the additional demand, 10 new teachers were hired who, along with the regular teachers, underwent training during the summer break to prepare them for the new year.

What Dir Communities are Saying about DIL Schools

Kaki Khan, a resident of village Misyalor, informed the DIL team that before the establishment of the DIL school in his village, there was just one girl who had completed her middle school education. Now, 95 percent of girls are attending the DIL Primary School.

In village Sundrai, a majority of the mothers want to admit their boys to the DIL school, which they say is providing quality education to their daughters.

In village Qazi Abad, the members of a women's organization said, "The DIL School's quality is better than the government boys' school."

The DIL team also reported that a total of 140 students from 19 government schools and two DIL schools (Budh Qila and Kaladerai) sat for class 5 government examinations. When results were announced, three students of DIL School Budh Qila placed first, second and third.

Developments in Literacy News

DIL Hosts an Innovative Training Workshop

DIL arranged a six-day English immersion workshop in Islamabad for a selected group of project coordinators from its Khairpur, Dir and Rawalpindi projects. While grammar and writing were the main focus, plenty of time was dedicated to conversation and debate.

The idea of the workshop emerged out of the realization that some innovative methods needed to be implemented to further improve the English standard of the project coordinators and teachers who do not get enough exposure to spoken and written English. Anita Harris, a Ph.D. student from Kent State University, along with DIL staff members and volunteers, organized the training workshop. One of the major reasons for success was the low trainer-participant ratio (1:3). Also, participants could only converse in English during the entire length of the workshop.

Although a lot of hard work and

preparation went into planning the workshop, room was left for adjustments so that the needs of all participants could be easily met. The program included a visit to the Islamabad Heritage Museum, which provided a refreshing break from the intensive classroom atmosphere. The participants also viewed an English documentary *Swara*, which portrays the custom of giving a girl to the aggrieved party to settle a dispute between two groups of men. This is still practiced in some regions of the NWFP, including Dir. A lengthy discussion on the topic ensued in English.

At the end of the six days, the participants felt quite confident about



Teacher training is a crucial component of DIL's mission.

their written and spoken English skills. As a follow-up to the training, participants will be submitting written assignments on a regular basis to the DIL office. "If we have managed to motivate them toward self-learning and improvement, we will consider this program a resounding success," said Tauseef Hyat, DIL's executive director.

DIL Students Enjoy Aladin Amusement Park

Nearly 2,000 students from 25 Orangi school visited the Aladin Amusement Park in Karachi in April for a day of fun and learning. The park has a mini zoo, an aquarium and rides. Aladin Park management offered complimentary admissions to the students of DIL schools.

It was heartening to see the kids disembarking from 23 buses; the students were overjoyed to have the opportunity to leave their surroundings and experience the world around them. For some, it was their first visit outside Orangi. The children's joy and excitement were contagious. Soon their laughter filled the park, as they ran around trying to absorb as much as they could of their trip.

The teachers brought ample food for a picnic, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all the participants. Pak Beverages provided complimentary soft drinks.

DIL teaching staff was very grateful that this opportunity was provided to them and their students, and hope that field trips will become an annual affair for DIL schools.

Submitted By Talat Chaudhry



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DIL Calendar of Events

For a list of all upcoming DIL events, please visit www.4dil.org.

Sisters Overcome Disabilities with Help of Instructor

“It was a strange experience for me; I was not expecting such results,” explained Rizwana Kausar, teacher of DIL-Dhoke Hafeezullah School, Rawalpindi, regarding the success of her deaf and dumb students, Anjam Javeed, 11, and Rabia Javeed, 13.

The girls’ parents desperately wanted their daughters to attend school like normal children, so they sent them to a private school four years ago, only to be returned home by the teacher who found them to be inattentive and difficult to teach.

When a DIL school was established in their village in 2002, both sisters enrolled. Initially, the girls used sign language to communicate with the teachers and students, but as they learned to read and write, the blackboard became their basis of communication. Questions were written on the blackboard and the sisters would scribble their responses in their notebooks.

“No doubt, there were many frustrations along the way, but through perseverance and love, we overcame them,” Kausar said. “Both girls are extremely bright and creative, and love drawing flowers. They have made many friends and even come to visit me after school.”



The Javeed sisters succeeded despite the odds thanks to their teacher.

Both sisters sat in May of this year for the primary standard examination conducted by the education department and did very well. Anjam obtained the highest marks in her class in Urdu and the second highest in English. Having received certificates from the Education Department, the sisters have enrolled in a government middle school, which is at quite a distance from their village—such is their thirst for education.

Young Girl Realizes Dream of Attending School

Reshman, 12, (*right, above*) recently graduated from a DIL-NOWA Primary School in Unnar Colony, Khairpur. She is the second youngest of four sisters and three brothers. Her father is a laborer and returns home very late in the evening. Here, she shares her story.

“When we first moved to Unnar Colony, I would longingly watch the neighborhood girls scurry off to school each morning. Whenever I broached the subject of attending school with my parents, my father would absolutely refuse to yield. One day the teacher visited my mother and coaxed her into sending me to school. My mother laid one condition: my father must never find out. So I attended school regularly except for the days when father was at home. This is how I joined school—it was the happiest moment of my life.

“My father, however, did not object to my brothers attending school—he actually encouraged it. One of my brothers is in class 6 and the other in class 2. I would help both of them with their studies when my father was not around. When my older brother passed the fifth grade exam, my father was delighted and asked him how he had managed. Unwittingly, my brother spilled the beans. My father was horrified to learn the truth and got very upset with my mother. But my mother, with the help of some family members and, of course, my endless pleading, convinced my father to visit the school. That was the day he allowed me to continue my studies.

“I have two cousins (*right, below*) who are currently studying

at my school without their father’s knowledge. It is because of this injustice that I want to become a teacher. I don’t want anyone telling the girls of my village that they are uneducated and illiterate.

“The only sad thing is that my school does not go beyond class 5 and I need to enroll in class 6.”



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Youth Outreach Branch of DIL Succeeds in New York

Twelve young professionals and students met at the New York City home of Najmi Sarwar, DIL past president, in January 2005 for what would become the founding of YOUR DIL (Youth Outreach, Developments in Literacy). Six months later, we have grown to 35 volunteers, created a web site (www.yourdil.org), held three events, and raised more than \$10,000.

Our mission is simple. We aim to raise money through fundraisers and activity-based events, and to lend outreach support to other organizations. We keep our activities low-cost in an effort to attract as diverse a following as possible. We hope that as our patrons age, and their incomes grow, DIL will remain their charity of choice. We have also made an effort to create an environment at our events that would be comfortable and fun for both Pakistanis and non-

Pakistanis.

Our successful events to date:

Discover YOUR DIL, April 21 at a popular lounge in Manhattan. We raised about \$4,500 in door fees and collected another \$5,000 in pledges.

YOUR DIL Summer Grill and Soiree, July 16 at the home of one of our volunteers. We raised approximately \$1,250.

YOUR DIL Paintball Tournament on July 23. Over half of those who participated were non-Pakistani and including pledges, we raised close to \$600.

Our upcoming "Cabaret Night" will feature the singing talent of one of our volunteers. We also plan to hold a gala on



Nov. 18 at a beautiful 10,000-square-foot loft in Manhattan.

We encourage other young people interested in the DIL cause to work with us to establish their own YOUR DIL chapter in their respective cities. Please contact us at yourdil@dil.org or call (917) 887-9788.