

Winter 2007

Visit DIL on the Web at www.dil.org

A Letter from Executive Director A.H. Nayyar

It is a great pleasure for me to have become a part of the DIL team. In my first report to DIL supporters, I want to briefly introduce myself and share some of my initial impressions.

I have been involved with Pakistan's education system in several ways. I studied in Pakistani schools and universities, as did my two children. I was a research physicist and teacher at Islamabad's Quaid-i-Azam University for more than 30 years. For almost as long, I have been working with other scholars, activists and concerned citizens to engage in the public debate about how to improve our education system, and in particular how to reform our national school curriculum and textbooks and provide access to good education, especially for poor children. Now, thanks to DIL, I find myself working at the grassroots level to actually provide a better education to some of the most needy children.

Since joining DIL in early October 2006, I have started to travel around the country to see our projects firsthand. I have visited the private schools we run in Orangi, our community schools in Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab, and our adopted



Students at a DIL school in Baga Sheikhan, Rawalpindi.

government schools in Sheikhpura and Gujranwala. My goal was to meet with the NGOs we work with, and to hear from teachers and students about what DIL is doing and what we can do better.

The most amazing experience so far was the visit to our schools in the remote areas of Ziarat, Pishin and Mastung in Balochistan. In these very conservative, scattered communities, we now see parents willing to let their girls attend school, even though it often means traveling very long distances. This is a remarkable achievement. It is a testament both to the hard work by local activists

who convinced these communities to educate their girl children and to the parents in these villages who see the value in educating all their children.

We have a long way to go. DIL focuses on improving both access to education and the quality of teaching and learning. Building new schools and improving facilities at existing ones are vital but costly tasks. I have seen the eagerness with which local communities await the construction of a school building.

The real challenge is what happens in the classroom. Here, teachers are the key. DIL invests heavily in paying and training teachers. Our teachers, many of whom are young women from the local community without any formal teaching experience, depend upon DIL to help them become better teachers. They value the teaching materials we provide. We could do so much more if we had more resources.

In my short time at DIL, I have been struck by the passion for education among parents, students, teachers and those who give so generously to help DIL and other organizations that try to provide access to a good education for all.

Middle Schools for Girls Open in Upper Dir

A ceremony on Dec. 2, 2006, marked the opening of five girls' middle schools in Upper and Lower Dir districts for students graduating from DIL primary schools from the respective regions. The two schools in Upper Dir, villages Daskorh and Qadir Abad, are the only middle schools for girls in the entire district, while in Lower Dir, DIL and Khwendo Kor (partner organization) opened three schools in villages



Misyalorh, Buth Qila and Zargeb, increasing the total number of girls' middle schools in the district to five.

Chief guest Ahmad Hassan Khan, Nazim Lower Dir, urged the teachers of these schools to impart quality education to students to enable them to meet future challenges. Students of various DIL community schools took part in Naatkhwani and debate competitions at this well-attended event.

Developments in Literacy News

Khinger Khurd Students Top in Government Primary School Examination

Before DIL and ABES opened a school in Khinger Khurd village in 2002, there was only one government school for girls and no boys' school. A room was given by the community for the first batch of 25 kindergarten and class one students to begin their schooling at a DIL School.

In four years, the enrollment has increased to 104, and the school now has seven classrooms. More recently, the community donated land and a school construction plan is underway. This amazing community



also initiated a savings plan for the school and has raised Rs. 90,000.

The first cohort of students for the government primary school examination had a 100 percent pass rate. And this year, fifth grade students who took the exam topped in the entire area. The community celebrated with prizes distributed at a ceremony to mark this occasion. The next batch of class five students is getting ready to outshine the senior class.

School and Student Updates

Sidra (pictured below) is a fifth grade student at DIL-IRC Sobho Dero School. In an emotional class essay, she writes that her father earns a salary of Rs. 1,000 per month (approximately \$17) working as a watchman and her mother cleans house so



DIL schools understand that extracurricular activities play a vital role in child development. Students from Pind Malkan and Chak Kamdan, Sihala, enjoyed a field trip to the Japanese park and the zoo (below). Pepsi provided drinks for the children.

they can support three of their six children (three older daughters are married). Her diabetic father has bad health and turns to the local homeopathic doctor for medication as he cannot afford to go to a regular doctor. "In the afternoon, we do not cook food because my mother gets two roties (Pakistani bread) from each house she works at. I am very grateful as I get free education at my school...I wish to become a doctor when I grow up."



Fouzia (above right), whose story was featured in our last newsletter, now has her own wheelchair, thanks to the generosity of a DIL supporter. Her schoolmates push her back and forth to school.

A Year of Successful Fundraising Events

New York

DIL New York held its fourth sold out fund raiser, "Once upon a Raj..." in November at the famous Cipriani's on 42nd Street. This elegant event with more than 530 guests honored Mr. Ted Turner, Chairman UN Foundation, for his generous support of



DIL and girls' education. A beautiful collage made by the DIL students was presented to an obviously delighted Mr. Turner. The children also made colorful hand-painted cards for each guest that were presented as part of the place settings.

The event raised more than \$450,000, with an auction conducted by a Sotheby's auctioneer that raised \$87,000. In attendance were Dr. Nafis Sadik, DIL patron, Ambassador Robin Duke, Catherine Crier, and representatives of several Fortune 500 companies.

San Diego

The San Diego DIL fund raiser was held in September at the private residence of Dr. Nusrat and Hai Rajput in Fairbanks Ranch.

Keynote speaker Dr. Shazia Jamil is an assistant professor at UC San Diego School of Medicine and Scripps. As a medical student, she was involved in conducting research on the socioeconomic and literacy of Chitrali residents and on maternal literacy in the squatter settlements of Karachi. In her presentation, Dr. Jamil made a forceful point of the literacy crisis in the world today, with special emphasis on Pakistan.

This year, the San Diego chapter of DIL brought in more than \$60,000, which included a generous pledge made by Drs. Parveen and Khalid Ahmed of Whittier.

Washington, D.C.

DIL Washington D.C., held its fifth annual fundraiser in October at the McLean Hilton. The keynote speaker was Ambassador Shirin Tahir-Kheli. After an elegant sit-down dinner, the internationally renowned British bhangra group,

RGB, entertained a full house. There was a live and silent auction. The evening was a great success, and the amount raised in donations surpassed previous years.

Los Angeles

Imagine an evening filled with classical music, an elaborately presented gourmet Italian meal served under the stars, and more than \$250,000 raised to support DIL schools throughout Pakistan. This describes the DIL Los Angeles chapter annual gala in July held in Anaheim Hills.

More than 100 guests were treated to a memorable evening hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Farooq Vakil, Ms. Rehana Vakil and Mr. Imran Vakil. Every dollar raised will go directly to help the underprivileged in Pakistan.

YOUR DIL

The youth chapters of DIL capped off a successful year with events in four cities. New York City held its fall gala in September, raising more than \$20,000 toward the project in Mansehra. Themed "A Night on the Indus," volunteers dressed up a loft as a Pakistani village, complete with street vendors, henna artists, and a hookah lounge.

Chicago (below) held its launch at Reza's Restaurant over Labor Day weekend, where 80 attendees enjoyed dinner followed by a short stand-up performance by Imrana Zaman.



The Washington, D.C., launch took place at Tabaq restaurant in September. In December, YOUR DIL held a fashion show and holiday party at lounge Andalu. Adding to the festive atmosphere was music by DJ Amer Sultan and a henna artist. Two designers showcased their clothes, with one donating a portion of the proceeds to YOUR DIL.

Los Angeles' event at Lucky Strike Lanes in November (see photo on page 4) helped to raise more than \$8,000 for the YOUR DIL projects. Four very generous patrons agreed to match dollar for dollar all the proceeds from the night, making this the most successful YOUR DIL chapter event in 2006.

Our newest chapter, Boston, is planning its first meeting

Developments in Literacy News



for 2007. Also, our first retreat is planned for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day weekend in South Beach, Fla. More than 20 volunteers and board members will attend to plan strategy for the new year. We're currently supporting the YOUR DIL Nation School in Orangi, have committed to building and supporting a new model school in Mansehra, and hope to add more projects in the new year.

Target Awards DIL Grant for Computer Labs

Target Foundation awarded DIL a grant last month to provide computer labs to 12 DIL schools in the slum areas of Orangi Township. This is the third consecutive grant DIL has received from the Foundation; previous grants were for computer labs in Sheikhpura schools and to establish small libraries in 140 DIL schools throughout Pakistan.

Yes, I want to help DIL to promote literacy.

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

Contact DIL at (714) 895-5345

I would like to sponsor ____ child/children at \$50 per child per year.

\$_____ to be paid annually for five years.

I would like to sponsor ____ computer lab(s) at \$1,500 per lab.

\$_____ (one-time computer lab donation).

I would like to sponsor ____ classroom(s) at \$1,250 per room.

\$_____ to be paid annually for five years.

I would like to make a donation of \$_____ for the earthquake-affected students' project.

I would like to make a one-time donation of \$_____.

Please make checks payable to DIL:

8001 E. Roper Street, Long Beach, CA 90808

