

# PTAN Newsletter

*PTAN... A forum for teachers professional development!*

January 2005

Volume 2

Dear Readers

*PTAN proudly presents its second annual newsletter. This volume gives information on PTAN achievements since the first issue, i.e., the establishment of HEALTH association, the first PTAN conference, the launch of PTAN website, conduction of 68 one-day workshops and three Olympiads, and collaboration and networking done by individual associations.*

*I would like to thank all the contributors for sharing their articles and experiences with us to make this volume the network's voice.*

*PTAN now comprises seven voluntary associations who have worked hard to achieve their respective goals and strived to create a strong network between them. They have also worked hard to create linkages with national associations and organizations.*

*I wish all the associations a successful future and all the readers a happy reading.*

Parveen

## PTAN Conference

“Learning through networking – Celebrating the teaching profession”

The first PTAN conference on “Learning through networking – Celebrating the teaching profession” was held on Saturday, February 14, 2004. The conference aimed to provide a platform for all PTAN associations where they could interact with each other by sharing their teaching and voluntary experiences and learning from this interaction.

One of the aims of the conference was to communicate to the teaching fraternity the services that PTAN's associations have provided during the past years. But, by the end of the conference, PTAN was able to achieve more than it had planned for. The conference not only proved to be a successful networking experience but it also created a benchmark in the networking activities of these associations.



The success of the conference could be measured by the overwhelming response of more than 350 teachers and institutions. Moreover, the enthusiastic participation of teachers from Karachi, Quetta, Hyderabad, Shahdampur, Khairpur, Nasirabad, East Africa, AKU-IED faculty and facilitators from the associations was a very encouraging sign for the network. (Cont. on pg 2)

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The conference started with an official welcome given by Dr Sadrudin Pardhan, Director Outreach at AKU-IED and Chairperson PTAN. Dr Pardhan not only welcomed the participants but also shared with them the establishment and growth of PTAN.



Two keynote speeches were made. Dr Gordon Mac Leod (Director AKU-IED) spoke on “Professionalism”, and Ms Fatima Shahabuddin (President SPELT) talked about “Facilitating growth through networking”. Dr Bernadette Dean gave a presentation on the network’s activities, its current membership status, the website and the future plans of PTAN.

The associations played their part by conducting concurrent sessions.



- SAP and MAP conducted two combined sessions on ‘Mathematical Calculations in Light, and ‘Handling Data in Biology’ (facilitated by MAP and SAP executive committee members)
- HEALTH and PAIE conducted two sessions on ‘Children who learn together, learn to live together -Increasing child participation to build happy healthy schools’, (facilitated by Health and PAIE members)



- SHADE presented two papers on ‘Moving towards Empowerment’ (presented by Sakina Abbas/ Aliya Abbasi) and ‘School Improvement Initiatives: Perspective of three schools’ (presented by Bilquees Nasir)



- APT conducted one session on ‘To Teach, to Learn, to help others to Learn and Teach’, facilitated by *Atiya Hussain and Anisa Wali Muhammad.*



- *ASSET presented* ‘Environmental issues’ in its session (facilitated by ASSET executive committee)

With a large turnover, teachers spoke at length about PTAN’s development as a network and its contribution towards teachers’ professional development.

### Collaborative Sessions

**Including children with Hearing Impairment in Mainstream Schools: Approaches and Strategies**  
20<sup>th</sup> March 2004

#### Feedback shared by some of the participants

“I enjoyed the community feeling of the workshop, listening to different viewpoints and approaches. The workshop covered many aspects of awareness raising. It aimed and provided maximum opportunities for the hearing impaired.

“In my opinion PAIE organized a good workshop to make people aware about The Hearing Impaired children; I feel that these types of workshops must be held regularly.”

“It was a very interesting and informative session.”

#### SAP’s participation at M.S.B. Educational Institute

SAP was invited to a Science exhibition organized by M.S.B. Educational Institute formerly known as Al-Madrasa Safiyatus Burhaniah. Five schools participated in it. SAP was also requested to judge the projects prepared by their students in various categories. Ms Farah Huma, Ms Rehana Batool and Mr Shahid Pervaiz represented SAP. Ms Huma introduced SAP, its aims and objectives. Later, Mr. Pervaiz and Ms Batool judged the various projects displayed in the science exhibition. The management of MSB Educational Institute showed keen interest in SAP’s activities. They expressed their desire of participating in future activities.

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## PTAN Summer Session 2004

The associations of PTAN conducted 'Summer Session 2004', from July 1 to July 31, 2004. These sessions were attended by **180 teachers**.

**Mathematics Association of Pakistan (MAP)** MAP conducted a five-day session on '*Linear and Quadratic Equations in Business Applications*' held from June 28 to July 2, 2004. The session was attended by 30 teachers and was facilitated by Abid Sohail (College of Economics and Social Development, IoBM); Razia Shaheen (NED University of Engineering and Technology); Fuazia Awan (Fazaia College, PAF Base Masroor); Nida Nazir, Kehkshan Afzal (Gulistan-e-Shah Latif School, PECHS Society); Humara Khizar (College of Economics and Social Development IoBM).



Summer workshop of MAP has been one of the continuous thread where mathematics teachers of various grades come together and work on their preferred areas of interest.

This workshop started focusing on clarifying various concepts related to Basic Algebra and Coordinate Geometry and ended with case studies of three business firms.

The evaluation by the participants suggested that they enjoyed the workshop and were pleased with the opportunities that were created for them to reflect on each session. Contrary to previous summer workshops, this time a single topic was dealt in detail. The participants also suggested various topics for the next summer workshop.

At the end of the workshop participants were awarded certificate of Participation. MAP acknowledges the cooperation of Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) and particularly PTAN office for making this workshop a success.

*(Reported by Abid Sohail, Coordinator MAP)*

**Association for Social Studies Teachers and Educators (ASSET)** conducted a three day summer session on '*Planning, Designing and executing Creative Study Tours*' from July 8 to 10 2004. As a part of the session, ASSET was able to arrange two successful field trips for 22 of its participants to Edhi Home and Karachi Museum. The session was

conducted by Sadiq Merchant, Huma Ghaffar and Hawa Haji Mohammad.



At the end of the session the participants were able to:

- recognize the importance of study tours
- successfully plan and organize a study tour
- effectively use it for the enhancement of what has been learned in the classroom
- design activities for an effective study tour
- prepare tasks according to the class level
- use study tours for the enhancement of student's socialization and citizenship skills.

**Science Association of Pakistan (SAP)** conducted a five-day session on various topics from July 12 to 16, 2004. Overall participation of SAP summer session was 26 science teachers and the session was conducted by Ms Suraiya Yousufi and Ms Mehnaz Fatima.

SAP has been regularly organizing programmes for improving the quality of science teaching and learning through professional development of teachers. This year topics like Inquiry approach, Problem solving, Concept mapping and resource development were included in the summer sessions. The most interesting aspect of the summer course was a workshop conducted by British Council on 'Teaching Science through English.'

### **British Council**

British Council conducted a day workshop as part of SAP's summer based short course that was well received by participants. Sixty participants were registered in the session on 'Teaching science through English', facilitated by Ateeq-e-Erum and Sadia Siraj. A very important aspect of the session was 'Writing poems and prose using various scientific concepts' during which innovative ideas were shared with participants which would certainly enable them to teach science in more interesting ways in classrooms. Furthermore, numerous websites were shared as an added resource for teaching and learning. At the end of the session, Charlie Walker, Director British Council, handed over certificates to the participants.

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**Pakistan Association for Inclusive Education (PAIE) and Health Education Association for Learners, Teachers, Health workers (HEALTH)** conducted two back to back collaborative summer sessions on 'Including the Excluded' from July 19 to July 23, 2004, which was attended by more than 35 teachers and conducted by Dr. Shabnam Ahmed and Ms Talat Azad at AKU-IED, and a second session at PDCN Gilgit from July 27 to July 31, 2004, which was conducted by Zohra Nisar and Talat Azad and attended by 27 teachers.

The aims and objectives of the sessions were to enable the participants to understand the definition and different aspects of health, learn about the link between health and education, and to understand the importance of Health Education in an academic setting with a focus on Inclusion. It also enabled them to create an effective health topic plan that caters to all children in class.

The sessions were highly interactive. The participants were enthusiastic to learn and expressed their desire to implement the learned strategies in their own contexts.

**Association for Primary Teacher (APT)** conducted its collaborative one-day summer session with Montessori Training Centre (Institute for Educators) on 'Teaching through Music & Movement in Pre-primary & Primary classes' July 17, 2004. The session was conducted by Ms Shakara Mana and was attended by 40 participants.



[www.ptan.org](http://www.ptan.org)

The PTAN website is finally up and running. The features of the website are:

- A link to AKU-IED website
- Individual association pages (background, aims and objective, list of contact persons, individual association email addresses)
- Details of the upcoming workshops (topic, date, venue, facilitator's name, registration details)
- Discussion forum
- Online membership forms
- Latest publications
- Picture gallery
- A brief report of the PTAN conference and summer session 2004
- Hit counter
- Previous posting records
- Archives of previous months

- PTAN contact addresses and email address ([info@ptan.org](mailto:info@ptan.org)) and registration Email address [registration@ptan.org](mailto:registration@ptan.org)
- Comment option: viewers can give their comments.

Through this website, PTAN has been able to reach out to an audience it had never reached before. We hope that the latest feature, i.e. the discussion forum, would enable an international networking of teachers, headteachers and educators.

### PTAN Book Exhibition

PTAN organized a book exhibition for teachers, headteachers, educators and learners on October 9, 2004. Seven publishers exhibited their books and resources at the exhibition. The main purpose of the exhibition was to identify books and resources for PTAN resource cell.

The exhibitors were:

- ⇒ Afro Asian Book Company
- ⇒ Danesh Publications
- ⇒ Pak Book Cooperation
- ⇒ Progressive International Agencies (Pvt) Limited
- ⇒ Royal Books
- ⇒ Thomas & Thomas
- ⇒ Vanguard

The AKU-IED faculty and associations' executive committee members helped PTAN identify books and resources for its resource cell, which will be in operational from June 2005.

The purpose of this cell would be to provide workshop facilitators materials with and resources to effectively prepare their sessions.

### First HEALTH and ASSET Newsletters

HEALTH published its first newsletter in October 2004. The important features of the newsletter were an interview with Dr Tashmin Khamis, reflections of a government school head teacher on impacts of health education on a government school, children's anecdotes and drawings, a picture story on TB and HEALTH sessions.

ASSET published its first newsletter in July 2004. ASSET intends to publish a newsletter annually and provide its readers and members a complete update of its activities.

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## The establishment of HEALTH

### Background

Health and education are not only recognized as key indicators of a country's development but there is a clear link between the two. In countries like Pakistan that have been constantly low on both these indicators introducing health education in primary schools and using children as vehicles to spread health messages in the community could be very effective in promoting health. As an institution concerned with teacher development, school improvement, and with improving the life chances of children in the region, the Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) has taken initiatives in this area. A Health Action Schools pilot project was initiated by IED and funded by Save the Children UK and the Child-to-Child Trust UK in 1998 to promote quality health education in primary schools through an approach that empowers children to disseminate health messages to the community and at home. The successful experience of the Health Action Schools Project and other school health promotion activities since 1998 has built capacity in the areas of action research, teacher education and materials development both at AKU-IED and among the teachers and heads of the health promoting schools. The Health Action Schools (HAS) team has participated in a wide range of activities including providing trainings to primary school teachers in Health Education based on the Child-to-Child (CtC) approach, designing school health education materials and action research since 1998. Furthermore, the project introduced the CtC for the first time in Pakistan.

Based on the lessons learned from this action research project, the health education team felt a need to reach out to as many teachers as possible in order to make them aware of the importance of health education and introduce the programme in their schools. Therefore, the health education team identified the need for the establishment of an association to serve as a forum for teachers from different schools and even different areas to meet regularly to share their experiences of becoming health-promoting schools.

Finally, HEALTH (Health Education Association for learners, teachers and health workers) was established on December 20, 2003, with an aim to promote health education in primary schools in order to improve the quality of education and health of Pakistani children, their families and communities. The objectives of HEALTH include the following:

- To develop awareness among students, teachers and community members about the advantages of health education and promotion in schools

- To provide a forum for teachers of schools already involved in health education and promotion in their schools to share their experiences.
- To provide a platform for AKU-IED to give support to health promoting schools and to learn from their experiences and the impact of the programme to guide future directions in health promotion and education.

**Beneficiaries and participation:** The participants comprise mainly of teachers from Karachi-based schools. However, through networking activities like newsletters and other publications, the participation is extended to a larger number of teachers from all parts of the country, especially remote areas like Northern Pakistan, which were already part of the HAS pilot project.

- The primary beneficiaries are the teachers associated with Health Action Schools and NGOs associated with health promoting schools in Pakistan.
- The children and communities of the schools where these teachers are working are therefore the ultimate beneficiary of this association.
- It is also foreseen that Professional Development Teachers working in Professional Development Centers could also benefit by learning from the experiences of other participants through networking. They could then develop the means to start health programmes in their PDCs for the professional development of teachers in health education.

This association is envisaged to play a vital role in furthering future health education initiatives at AKU-IED, particularly in the marketing and dissemination of the health materials that have been developed by the team and the Child-to-Child Trust and also for advocacy of health education in primary schools of Pakistan.

*Abstracted from "Association for School Health Promoters-PROPOSAL by Shabnam Ahmed, October 10, 2003)*

### Health Celebrates World Heart Day

In connection with World Heart Day celebrated by WHO on September 26, 2004, a session on "How to Protect Your Heart?" was planned by HEALTH in order to enhance the knowledge of participants about the working of heart, enable them to identify activities which helps them keep their heart healthy and ones which are damaging for their heart and develop an activity for the world heart day. This session was held on September 18, 2004 at AKU-IED where children and teachers from member schools participated. Dr. Khawar Kazmi, A cardiologist of AKU, was specially invited for the session.

A follow-up workshop with teachers and children on "Developing Lesson Plans and Materials on How to protect your Heart?" was arranged by HEALTH on October 30, 2004, where lesson plans were developed to be used by member schools.

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## How to Hold Effective Parent-Teacher Meetings

By *Qamar Safdar*

*Senior Instructor, AKU-IED & General Secretary, SHADE*

The School Headteachers' Association for Development of Education (SHADE, Pakistan) organized a professional dialogue at the Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development on 'how to hold effective parent-teacher meetings'. The topic had relevance to many head teachers and the turnout was good in spite of the fact that it was the first day of Ramazan. The purpose of the workshop was to understand what are the objectives and assumptions to hold parent-teacher meetings, what are the problems, and which are the best solutions.

It was not easy but everyone felt committed and concerned to achieve the goal of parent teacher meetings identified as 'for betterment of the child.' True, all parent teacher meetings are 'for the betterment of the child' but are we clear what we mean by 'betterment'. To some betterment of the child meant 'excellent results' to others strict discipline', still many understood betterment as 'doing what you are told' or excelling in some other skills and discipline. It was an eye opener that we were here, all gathered together as educational leaders, heads of schools but unable to come to a consensus or a shared understanding about what we mean by 'betterment of the child'.

Secondly, our objectives when brainstormed did not match our assumptions. If our objective was to 'orient parents regarding the school', 'furnish information regarding students' academic achievement or non achievement, inform parents about their child's misdemeanors from a high pedestal, the common assumption was that we from the school were the experts, "here is what we will do in the year, take it or leave it". Parent/teacher meetings follow a familiar pattern in their scheduling, normally kept after an examination or special meetings regarding a problematic child either in academics or behaviour or sometimes in both.

As a result, we have parents' very apprehensive, scared and lacking trust in their wards' school authorities and, a natural reaction, become defensive with the school authorities leading to a lack of trust and communication.

If we look at the parent-teacher relationship in Pakistan and its significance in the education of children we find it is vaguely understood, with many misconceptions and apprehensions. There is a constant tug of war between the school and parents. At times the parents do not co-operate, feel unsatisfied, unwanted and quick to defend their point of view. Schools as a result have only allowed parents, in the

words of Bray (2003), to operate in two dimensions namely 'involvement' and 'participation' level but never at the 'partnership level'.

The common issue in parent-teacher meetings is 'parent absenteeism'.

What is exactly missing in this all important school parent relationship which is vital for a better understanding between the school and parents? The missing link in this all important relationship is building trust between school and parents. We need to reflect and respond to children's needs through parents by cultivating the habit of listening to parents and seeing the child through their eyes as well as ours. We only call parents to complain about their children's poor academic performance or their behaviour, never to understand them.

As one head teacher shared her view, "Why do we call them for these oft repeated reasons, why not just to share a cup of tea and get to know each other".

Another modestly shared her innovations in the Nursery and KG which were quite a success, "In my Nursery classes I invite grandparents to come and observe the classes and also participate by telling stories. They are told interesting stories and we have incorporated story telling in our curriculum".

A head teacher from a lower middle class locality said, "When a parent of a child did not attend the parent-teacher meeting, I went to his house and enquired. He was so overwhelmed and happy that in the succeeding meetings he was always present".

So we need to build bridges if we want to succeed.

A head teacher from a low income area shared her school innovations when they put parents in groups and gave them a questionnaire to answer and present as a group. The questions were, "What is your purpose in admitting your child in our school?" "What is your child's purpose in studying in this school?" So in a group the parents came to a shared understanding. Even the process of the parent-teacher meeting came under scrutiny and the normal five minute per parent was questioned with sympathies resting with both the parent and teacher. How can a school justify to a parent to discuss, clarify and solve his child's issue within the stipulated five minutes? And how much is the strain on the poor teacher who has to satisfy at least thirty five parents?

Another head teacher shared her experience of a school that had found innovative ways to surmount

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this difficulty. The school organized a parent-teacher meeting for one class only wherein the parents of that respective class came for the whole day, observed their child's class, gave suggestions, shared their wards' successes and challenges etc. volunteered ways in which they could assist. The principal of that respective school worked long hours and it was possible only due to the fact that a well known personality had donated his house within the school boundaries, for the use of the current head teacher in service. So the success of effective meetings does not rest with the school and parent alone but extends to the community.

### Disability is not Inability

PAIE's paper on internet by Talat Azad

[http://www.dpi.org/en/resources/documents/talatazad\\_casestudy.doc](http://www.dpi.org/en/resources/documents/talatazad_casestudy.doc)

Picture two men. Both in their early thirties. Both recently married. Both of these men are unable to walk on their own. One-uses crutches, the other crawls. What do you think their lives are like? Well one is a successful accountant and the other begs to make a living. What happened? What led these men to be where they are now! What was their childhood like? What were their educational experiences? What were their social experiences? These were the questions that came to my mind and I sought answers to them.

I joined an NGO in Karachi, Pakistan, for the deaf fourteen years ago, for the simple reason that I wanted to work with and learn from them so as to bring about a difference in their lives, to enable them to use their true potential, to empower them to make their own decisions and stand up for their rights. There have been times of frustration, moments of joy and accomplishments throughout. But all of these have strengthened my stance that people with disabilities when given the required opportunities, as people without disabilities are granted, and if the societal pressures are minimized, change in attitudes from pity to equality, inclusion in the true sense at all levels exercised, than it does bear fruit.

In order to facilitate the development and struggle for empowerment of people with disabilities, I undertook this study to investigate the similarities and differences in experiences and the kind of successes and challenges faced by:

- (a) **Waqar**, 36-year-old male, born in the province of Sindh, Pakistan. He contracted polio in childhood. Did his Bachelor in Commerce and works as an accountant? Married to an able-bodied female and is the father of a baby boy.
- (b) **Ali**, 33-year-old male, born in the North West Frontier province of Pakistan, contracted polio when he was 8 months old. Studied till eight grade

At the end of the workshop we all left the place with renewed hope to make a success of our parent-teacher meetings, make them more meaningful and never lose sight of our goal, that is, the betterment of the child. We realized that parent teacher meetings can be successful only if we are clear in our objectives and take care not to assume that we are the 'experts' looking down on parents, dropping crumbs of our knowledge for them to bend and pick up, and be grateful to us. We do not lack in initiatives and together we can improve **our** children, not 'yours' and 'mine'.

is a shoemaker, salesman and presently is a beggar. Recently, he got married to his able-bodied cousin, and the wife is expecting their first child.

The undertaken study was in the form of interviews conducted separately with Waqar and Ali to ensure confidentiality and build a better rapport. The focus of the study is to identify barriers and successes that effected the lives of these two men. Issues of immunization, social constraints towards marriage, education, opportunities for employment, were found to be of most significance.

#### **Immunization:**

A lot of awareness has been created by international as well as local welfare and health organizations through the years about the benefits and importance of immunization and how timely immunization decreases the chances of disability in children. But, unfortunately, Pakistan is one of the few countries of the world where polio has not been eradicated yet (World Health Report, WHO-2004). Although extensive measures are being taken at the national and provincial levels to make it polio free, the eradication programme still faces a number of challenges and constraints that must be overcome to reach the final goal.... Both Ali and Waqar contracted Polio at a young age and have grievances about their situations. In both the cases the disability could have been avoided if the parents had been aware of the significance of immunization and how the absence of it could result in a physical disability.

#### **Social constraints towards marriage:**

In spite of the social constraints prevalent world over in the able-bodied society towards disability and especially towards marriage, both the interviewees are married to able-bodied females and had the support of their immediate families on the idea of marriage.

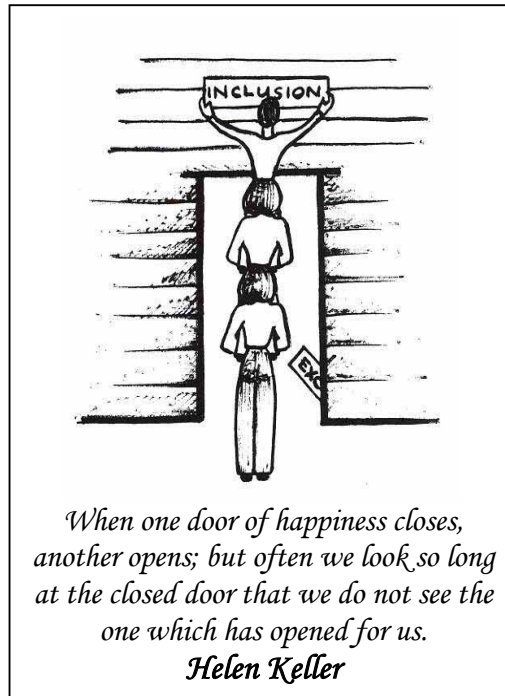
In both the cases marriage was thought to be possible by the immediate family and not by the extended family/society because disability is perceived as a taboo in our society, mostly seen as a curse or inability to do or take part in any activity and marriage being the epitome of all this. It would be unfair to say that this is intentionally carried out by the able-bodied society. The reason for this state of oblivion towards disability is the restricted state of thinking which does not see beyond the able-bodied world. Although I must add that the stance has started to shift, as people are being made aware through the fact that dis-ability should be taken as a different ability. Government, semi-government, NGOs and private organizations have undertaken a lot of hard work and efforts to create this change. It is an on-going process but has already started to show positive results.

### Education:

Both Waqar and Ali went to a mainstream government school in their districts. They firmly believe that all children with disabilities have a right to study with their non-disabled peers in a mainstream school setting regardless of their ability. Sharing their educational experiences, Waqar said, *"I went to a mainstream government school in my area. My school life was of total acceptance. One of my teachers was also physically handicapped, who used to ride a tricycle. I went to a national college and did my B.Com (Bachelor of Commerce) from there. Neither I nor people associated with me throughout my educational career faced any problem. One of the main reasons for my getting admission in school can be that Pakistan government's education policy is to admit all children regardless of the ability to learn. Sadly so, this is not the case with private institutions, but in my province at that time there were no private schools and I am glad I did not go to one as they have segregated policies and support segregation. I still feel just doing bachelors is not enough; I feel I should get more education, but at present my work hours and family responsibilities are such that I am unable to give time to studies. I do not understand why people with disabilities cannot be educated in the mainstream; they are not given a fair chance. I believe segregated settings are only for those who have severe developmental delays and cannot be catered to in a mainstream setting. I do not think that for people with physical disabilities there is a need of curriculum*

*modification. I strongly support that PWD can be educated in the mainstream"*

Ali's experience was also quite similar, *"I went to a government primary school of my district. No I did not face any problem because of my physical disability. Everybody' attitude was really good. I got the full support of my teachers and peers. In fact at times my tutor used to give me a ride on his motorcycle. I have studied eight grades. I could not pursue education as both my family and I felt education till eight grade was enough. PWD should be given an opportunity to study in mainstream. This way they have better chances and opportunities to grow and develop their skills and knowledge as any other able-bodied person does"*.



The Pakistan government's policy on granting admission to all proved to be beneficial in these two cases. Looking at these experiences, two significant factors, which made inclusion possible, have been highlighted. The first important aspect being positive attitude of the teachers and peers towards their disability. Secondly, no curriculum adaptation was required in the case of admitting students with physical disabilities, which says a lot in many cases of inclusive education. The above measures changed the whole scenario and made inclusion possible. If schools can just open their doors a

little bit so much can be achieved for children with disabilities. One cannot but agree that the attitudes of the so-called able-bodied inhabitants of mother earth are disabling the people with disabilities rather than working for their impairments.

### Opportunities for employment:

Discussing their professions and professional lives, some very interesting and thought provoking issues came to light. Waqar is working in the finance department of Pakistan Steel Mills. He got this job due to government's quota system and by exerting a lot of source and influence. On the other hand, Ali is a Peshawari chappal (sandal worn by people of his province) craftsman. He owned a shop of these sandals for sixteen years. Unfortunately, it was gutted during riots, and he was paid compensation by the government a meager ten thousand rupees. After that he was working as a salesman but that company also

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closed down. Then he used to sell stuff in weekly bazaars, but the meager wages were not enough to bear his living expenses. Since then, he has been compelled to beg on the streets. But his family does not know about this.

In Waqar's case he managed to get employment maybe not by giving a bribe but by using influence, exerted through people in position. On the other hand, Ali was not so lucky because of his socio-economic set-up; his grievances in this regard seem to be justified. The way he has been compelled to beg on the streets says a lot for the hypocritical able-bodied world we all live in. This goes to show that when given equal opportunities people with disabilities can also grow and develop at the same pace as others. Snatching these from them can have very negative results, as in Ali's case. Most of the time people with disabilities, due to circumstances, are left with no option but to the streets.

### **Outcomes of the study**

There have been several important outcomes of the study conducted with Waqar, an accountant and Ali, a beggar. They are as follows:

- Timely immunization can certainly reduce the chances of disability
- Marriage is a social right which cannot be denied to people with disabilities
- Positive attitude of the able-bodied towards people with disabilities can foster inclusion at all levels, be it education, employment, socialization.
- Granting of equal opportunities is the right of every human, regardless of the ability to perform.

A lot of work is being done in Pakistan both at the national and provincial levels to bring about change in attitudes, cultures and policies regarding disabilities. One of the biggest barriers towards changing the current scenario to a more welcoming one for people with disabilities is lack of integration between the government and private organizations.

Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development, where the researcher is working, is a private international university. It offers MEd, certificate and diploma programmes in teacher education. Inclusive education is being offered as an elective subject as well as being inducted and integrated into different programmes presented by the university. At the same time an association of teachers

of mainstream and special schools, and interested parents and individuals has been formed. It offers a platform to learn and share; what is inclusive education; how it can be introduced, practiced; what are the issues and what strategies can be used to make the schools inclusive. The main objective here is to create more awareness about inclusive education both at the government and private levels.

### **Recommendations**

In light of the above study and my years of experience of working with people with disabilities, I am putting forth some recommendations:

- The role of media, e.g., radio, television, newspapers, magazines etc in highlighting inclusion as of high importance. Through awareness raising programmes, articles, dramas, debates, seminars, open forums, awareness can be created about disabilities and how people with disabilities can be included in educational, professional and social set-up, which in turn would be helpful to minimize the barriers faced by people with disabilities and highlight the success stories.
- Focus should be on the rehabilitation of people with disabilities and they should be provided with opportunities to choose areas according to their own liking.
- Disempowerment of disabled to empowerment has to start within the community of the disabled. They should be facilitated on the road to development and be allowed to run their lives, organizations according to their needs and desires.
- Educational institutions can also contribute by holding awareness raising programmes about disabilities and can support people with disabilities into the mainstream schools, colleges and universities.
- Private educational institutions should also observe the same policy as the government and grant admission to all children with and without disabilities.

The study is just a little glimpse into what happens in the lives of people with disabilities when opportunities are granted or denied. The key element here is inclusion in schools does not produce the requisite results unless it is accompanied by support and recognition from all sections of society.

Talat Azad  
[talat.azad@aku.edu](mailto:talat.azad@aku.edu)  
April 2004

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## Olympiads

### Fifth MAP Olympiad

September 4, 2004

(By Abid Sohail- Coordinator MAP)

MAP is working to promote the culture of learning and doing mathematics in a meaningful way. MAP is also trying to create a synergy among different sectors for the betterment of mathematics education in Pakistan. To meet these goals, MAP is focusing on teachers, children and parents as well as on various other stakeholders. MAP Olympiad is one of MAP's most important events, which generates a lot of energy among students, teachers, parents and also for MAP itself.

This year, forty schools participated in the fifth MAP Olympiad. Seven participating schools were from outside of Karachi. Each school sent four students to participate in the various activities of the Olympiad. These students were distributed in groups so that no two students of same school would be in the same group.

The event started with the recitation of Holy Quran and Naat. Saima Maheen and Nida Nazir facilitated the event. During the introduction session children got a chance to know about their group members. Sardar Ahmed Khan, coordinator of MAP, presented a brief report on various activities of MAP. He also read out a message of Sikunder Ali Baber, Chairman of MAP. Then Abid Sohail, coordinator of MAP, declared the fifth Math Olympiad Open.

This event provided a chance to students to interact with each other in a cordial environment. They learnt from each other by working on different mathematical activities as a group. The way students were engaged in doing mathematics activities was very encouraging and motivating.

At the end of the event students and their teachers were asked to reflect on the event. Their reflections indicate that they all enjoyed the event and were of the view that such events have been conceived by creating a healthy environment for students and teachers. One of the senior teachers of a school was of the view that such events should be arranged more than once in a year.

Team members of the winning and runner up groups were awarded trophies and certificates. Dr Sadrudin Pardhan (Director of Outreach, AKU-IED and Chairman of PTAN) presented shields and certificates

to the winners. As a token of appreciation he distributed certificates of participation to all.

MAP is grateful to all members of the Olympiad planning committee, members of the jury, communicators and all participating schools for their effort, for making the event possible. MAP is also thankful to Dr Sadrudin Pardhan for his presence and valuable remarks, Parveen Al-Amin, Mr Farhan and Ms Shiroze of PTAN office, for their untiring efforts for making this event a success, and Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) and the support staff there for their valuable support the programme.

### SAP Olympiad

October 11, 2004

(By Rehan Batool)

SAP Science Olympiad was held on October 11, 2004, at AKU-IED. It consisted of activities for students and teachers.

### *Students' activity*

About 111 students representing 37 schools from Karachi and one school from Shahdardpur (interior of Sindh) participated in this event. One prominent feature of the Third SAP Science Olympiad was participation of primary as well as secondary students (Class IV and VIII). Overall, students of 12 institutions contested in the primary level while students of 25 institutions participated in secondary level. The Olympiad consisted of three levels of competition, which were mandatory for the participating teams. In the first level the students were given puzzles to solve. This was followed by a problem solving activity in which students were told to solve a scientific problem using appropriate materials. In the third level students constructed a working model from the provided material. These children contested with the other schools for three hours and were judged by subject specialist teachers from various schools. The children were assessed on both the process and product of their work. Dr Ejaz Ahmad, Director of WWF (World Wide Fund), was the chief guest. In his speech he appreciated SAP for organizing events like Olympiad and providing opportunity for healthy competition among the students. Later, he handed over certificates to all the contestants and awarded shields to the winning teams. He also presented mementoes to the members of SAP working committee and judges for their valuable contribution for making this event successful.

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**Winners of SAP Science Olympiad- 2004****Class IV**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Aga Khan Girls School , Kharadar
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Community Based School, Metroville
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Mama Parsi Girls School

**Class VIII**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Mama Parsi Girls School
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Habib Girls School
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Beaconhouse School System, N. Nazimabad

***Teachers' activity***

A three-hour workshop was organized to introduce the participants to the concept of 'Assessment for Learning', with a focus on strategies for self assessment. The participants appreciated the concepts presented in the workshop and particularly found the tools for self-assessment, rubrics and the linkages between the concept of metacognition and self-assessment relevant and interesting. They appreciated the notion of self-assessment and the rubrics in the facilitation of student learning.

However, they found the workshop to be a bit overwhelming and requested for longer duration workshops on such topics. They also felt that the concepts were modern and important that should be given adequate time. The participants also requested for offering the workshop in Urdu. The facilitator also felt stretched as most of the concepts were new and needed a thorough explanation. The participants also suggested holding a short course on the concepts of assessment for students learning during the summer vacation.

***SAP Science Olympiad: Creating Awareness***

Science Association of Pakistan (SAP) aims to enhance the standards of science education in the country which leads to impact in the science classroom where actual learning takes place. To achieve the goal, SAP organizes such activities / events where the science educators are acquainted with the most recent teaching / learning methodologies and research findings.

In 2002, SAP took an initiative of organizing a major event, Science Olympiad, for students as a part of SAP National Symposium to bring about changes in the existing science teaching/learning practices. The aim was to change the way science is perceived and taught. The major emphasis was on problem solving skills and hands-on/minds-on constructive learning approaches. Acknowledging the fact that these approaches may not be widely used in a real classroom situation, SAP organized concurrent sessions on these approaches to create awareness among the participants during the symposium.

To date SAP has organized three Science Olympiads for classes IV, VII and VIII. All the Olympiads have received an overwhelming response from schools. In 2002, approximately 100 students from 31 schools along with their teachers participated. In 2003, the number increased to 132 students from 44 schools. This time SAP was able to motivate schools from distant places too. For the first time one school from Shahdadpur (interior of Sindh) participated in it. A team comprising 30 students and teachers represented the school. The purpose was not only to participate but also to observe the entire process to learn, how students can be involved in a learning process and to increase their repertoire of various science teaching and learning approaches.

In the first two Olympiads activities were offered only for classes VII and VIII. Considering the interest and enthusiasm of schools SAP extended its activities to the primary grades as well. Therefore, in the third Olympiad 2004, SAP organized the event for two classes, i.e. IV and VIII. About 111 students from 37 schools, including the school from shahdadpur, participated in the event.

The entire process of planning, implementation and evaluation of the three Olympiads indicated a significant achievement SAP has made in the last three years, i.e., creating awareness regarding the use of innovative teaching and learning practices in a real classroom.

In the existing situation of science teaching/learning practices where science exhibition/display was the only science activity for students to present their scientific understanding through models, SAP Olympiad introduced hands-on/minds-on science activities where students compete in teams and exhibit their knowledge and skills in a variety of ways. Initially, the four categories of science teaching/learning that were introduced in Olympiad, i.e. puzzles, problem solving, construction tasks and science investigation, were not easily understood. Schools / participants showed a keen interest in knowing the science concepts that would be focused in the four categories. It showed that the science learning process is considered as an act of acquiring knowledge only.

While organizing the third Olympiad, however, a significant change was noticed in the understanding of schools / participants regarding the way science is taught. They have become more conscious in developing their students' knowledge as well as skills by providing them opportunities and experiences of various learning activities on a regular basis in a real classroom. It is evident by the several requests SAP

received to identify the resources and conduct some workshops on the innovative teaching methods/approaches.

### First ASSET Olympiad December 18, 2004

The First ASSET Olympiad was held on Saturday, December 18, 2004 on the theme 'Pakistan: The Journey, 1947 to date'. The topics of the competition were: Building relationship (SAARC), Achievement (Textile of Pakistan), and revisiting the vision (Jinnah's Address of August 11, 1947).

Mr Sadiq Merchant, Ms Huma, Mrs Kirmani, Mrs Munaf, Madam Tehseen, Mrs Yasmeen Bawa, Ms Tarannum, Ms Fatima, Mr. Shahid, Mr. Saleem and a team of volunteers facilitated the event. The chief guest of the event was Ms Bernadette Dean (founder member ASSET) and judges of the event were Ms Zaira Wahab (Faculty of Hamdard University), Ms Saeeda Wahab (Economics Institute) and Ms Fehmida Fehmi (Artist).

Fourteen schools participated in the Olympiad namely; Qamar-e- Bani Hashmi, Mohammadi Girls, Bahria College Karsaz, Sunbeam Grammer, Happy palace, Prince Aly Boys, Sadiq Merchant institute, Al Mutaza Boys, Al Murtaza Girls, Fatimiyah Girls, Fatimiyah Boys, City Prep Boys, Waris Ali Shah and SBM Quaid-Azam Public.

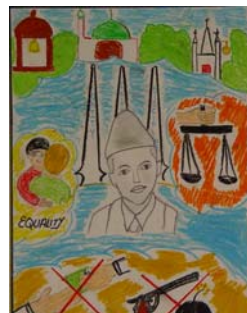
The objectives of the Olympiad were to:

- introduce a fresh approach to the study of Pakistan history
- develop students creative abilities
- provide students a platform to express themselves
- promote students comprehension and presentation skills
- discourage rote learning culture and stereo type quizzes
- promote spirit of collaborative effort among the students.

The best part of the event was that it started and ended on time, as a unique idea of grouping was also introduced. Fourteen teams were made with one teacher and three students included from different school.

The groups titles were based on the names of 14 non-political heroes of Pakistan such as Begum Shaista, Dr Fatima Shah, Dr Abdus Salam, Hakeem M Saeed, Abdul Sattar Edhi, Dr Abdul Qadir Khan, Ashfaq Ahmed, Ansar Berney, Nazeer Sabir, Jameel-ud-din

Aali, Sadquien, Guljee, Jahangir Khan and Imran Khan.



1<sup>st</sup> position ASSET Olympiad

An innovative idea of poster making and quiz competition was introduced. Each group had to prepare a poster on A3 size sheet along with accompanying test on another A3 size sheet, focusing on the article provided to them. One facilitator accompanied each group for their guidance. Students were provided with necessary stationery and work material.

For the quiz each group was asked questions from the material provided to them.

In the closing ceremony the Ms Dean and Ms. Wahab addressed the participants and encouraged and appreciated them for their participation in the event. The first position team comprised Sunita Aslam Valliyani from Sadiq Merchant Institute, Yusha Mehdi from Al Murtaza Girls and Anum Ali from Al Murtaza School. Second Position went to the team of Ghazal Zehra from Qamar-e-bani Hashim, Almas Rahim Baloch from SMB Quaid-e-Azam and Hira Shah from Mohammadi Girls and the third position went to team of Mussarat Zehra from Qamar-e-bani Hashim, Aiman Naved from Bahria College and Madiha Mehmood from Mohammadi Girls. An interesting outcome of the Olympiad was that Ms Dean decided to compile the marvelous posters made by students into a calendar for the current year.

## Contact

For further information please feel free to contact:

Parveen Al-Amin,  
Programme Officer, PTAN  
Email: [info@ptan.org](mailto:info@ptan.org)  
Contact: 6347611 Ext169

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Farhan Jiwani and Imran Sherali  
[registration@ptan.org](mailto:registration@ptan.org)  
Tel: 6347611-4 (Ext.: 177/174)

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PTAN c/o IED-PDC, 1-5/B-VII, F.B. Area  
Karimabad, P.O.Box 13688  
Karachi-75950 PAKISTAN  
Fax: 6347616

*Thank you readers!*  
*Watch out for out next volume to be*  
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