

COLLECTIVE

Sindh Education Foundation

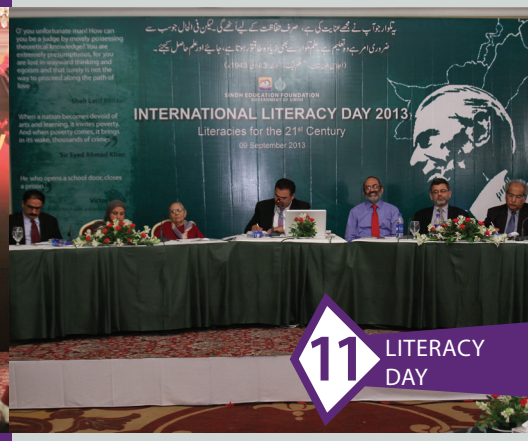
Government of Sindh



2 RBCS
REGULARIZED



10 WORLD TEACHER'S
DAY



11 LITERACY
DAY

RBCS Regularized by SEF

The Rural Based Community Schools (RBCS) Program is a natural extension of the Sindh Education Foundation's community based schooling initiatives and brings together the resources and development efforts of the public, community and private sectors.

Page 2

SEF Celebrates International Literacy Day 2013

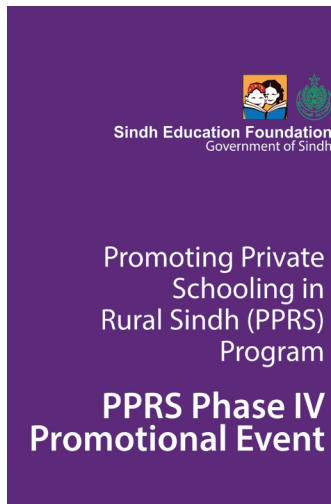
The Sindh Education Foundation celebrated 'International Literacy Day 2013' on the 9th of September to provide a platform to the stakeholders to share suggestions on how best to improve children's participation in education that will lead to an improved national literacy rate.

Page 11

SEF Celebrates World Teachers' Day 2013

There is no stronger foundation for lasting peace and sustainable development than a quality education provided by well trained, valued, supported and motivated teachers. In appreciation of those who give so much in educating and guiding the children, the future generation of the country, an event was held on World Teachers' Day at a local hotel.

Page 12



PPRS to open 608 New Schools in Phase IV

The 'Promoting Private Schooling in Rural Sindh (PPRS) Program' is one of Sindh Education Foundation's key public-private initiatives aimed at enhancing educational quality in the Sindh Province. The first 3 phases of the program saw 393 schools presently supported in 10 underserved districts of Sindh with the intention of increasing the total to a 1,000 schools in PPRS Phase IV. The program extends financial support on a regular basis through per-child subsidy in addition to professional development of teachers, entrepreneurs' capacity building, enrichment of the learning environment and school monitoring through its technical support facilitation.

With the success of the first 3 phases, the launch of PPRS Phase IV is underway with focus on opening 608 new schools in Sindh. Marketing and advocacy tools were utilized to enhance awareness about the program and increase the number of quality applications for the new schools. Print media in conjunction with BTL activities in the form of events were held at the regional level to highlight the PPRS vision and objectives. PPRS Phase IV application forms were provided at all regional and field offices as per plan in November, 2013. Afterwards, application forms were disseminated to

individuals as well as organizations. The collection of the filled-out forms was completed in the month of December, 2013.

During July to December 2013, subsidy for two quarters was released for all functional PPRS schools from the three phases. To help improve the child learning environment, physical infrastructure improvement is underway with work being implemented on the buildings and furniture, providing functioning washrooms and the provision of drinking water. Over 30,000 books in addition to learning material were also delivered to the regions by the program. Children, teachers and entrepreneurs profiling data was collected from the regions and forwarded for data entry to aid in the development of an electronic database. Once completed, the profiling database will help increase management efficiency by streamlining the information.

Assessment activity was conducted in 391 PPRS phase I, II & III schools in December, 2013 across 10 districts. A total of 30480 students (15295 of phase I, 8160 of Phase II & 7025 of phase III) took part in the assessment activity in which 4 subjects (Science, Math, Sindhi, & English) were assessed.



The Rural Based Community Schools (RBCS) Program is a natural extension of the Sindh Education Foundation's community based schooling initiatives and brings together the resources and development efforts of the public, community and private sectors. The initiative is being implemented with the support of district level NGO partners responsible for school establishment and operation at the grassroots level. The program operates 250 schools in 10 districts of Sindh and directly benefits 500 teachers, 250 support staff and more than 14,000 students.

The RBCS initiative completed its term in June, 2013 and has now been regularized, moving from the development side to the regular side and adopting the per child subsidy model. Post regularization, the RBCS Program has switched from the accelerated syllabus to the National Curriculum. The program will ensure the continuance of a merit

based accountability system to gauge school's performance, yearly student assessment and monitoring, teacher training support and regular school visits by SEF.

An assessment activity was held in the month of October in order to strategize RBCS program's future plan of action, promote effective school management and gauge the current standing in terms of functionality of and accessibility to RBCS Schools. The activity was designed based on the competencies as prescribed in the 'National Curriculum' for ECE 2007. Assessment papers covered the competencies of Grade I to III and subjects assessed were English, Sindhi, Mathematics and Science. The assessment will determine the learning standard of the students and their competency level in various subjects, which will help to place them in the appropriate grades post regularization (as program is now based on subsidy model).

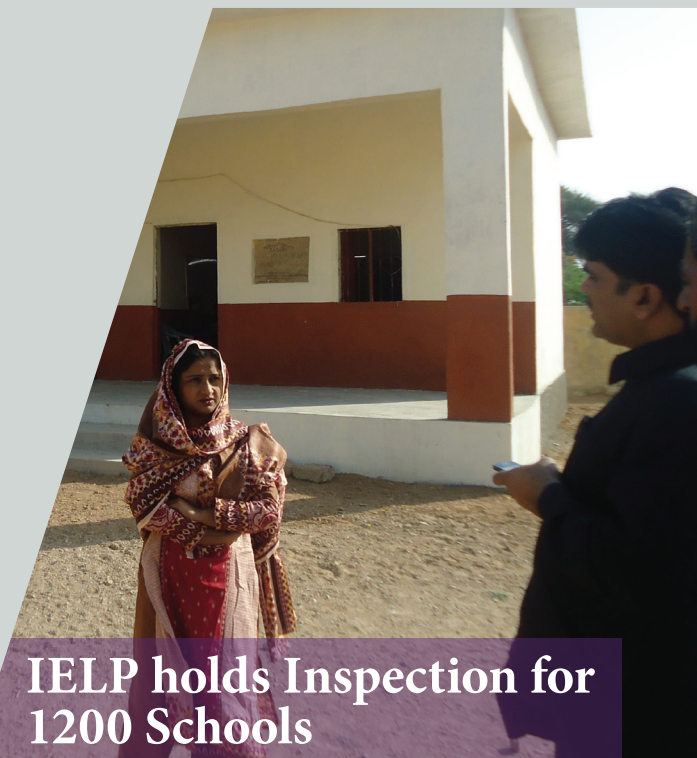
RBCS Regularized by SEF

A collaborative effort between the Government of Sindh and Sindh Education Foundation, the Integrated Education Learning Program (IELP) extends support to 1,300 new and existing private schools (primary, elementary and secondary) across Sindh. Through public-private partnerships IELP brings together the Government, NGOs, CBOs, trusts and individuals to increase access and improve the quality of education in the province.

Post regularization of the IELP Program by the Government of Sindh, an inspection survey was undertaken by the Sindh Education Foundation to gauge IELP schools on the basis of functionality as per criteria. The inspection survey was strategized to collect current data, verify the results and to subsequently carry out follow

ups. Visits were executed across 23 districts with a two tier inspection strategy; the regional staff visited all schools while the head office reviewed the schools based on a sample. Over 1,250 schools were inspected and information on relevant indicators was collected for analysis. The information verified by the inspection survey will provide the foundation for upcoming initiatives by the Program.

IELP School Contract Signing Activity was conducted in the month of June, 2013 in Karachi. Moreover, orientation on new contract agreement was given to school operators so as to instill strong understanding of the objectives of the new contract. The signing of school contracts will ensure financial and technical support to schools which were found functional during the school inspection visit.



IELP holds Inspection for 1200 Schools



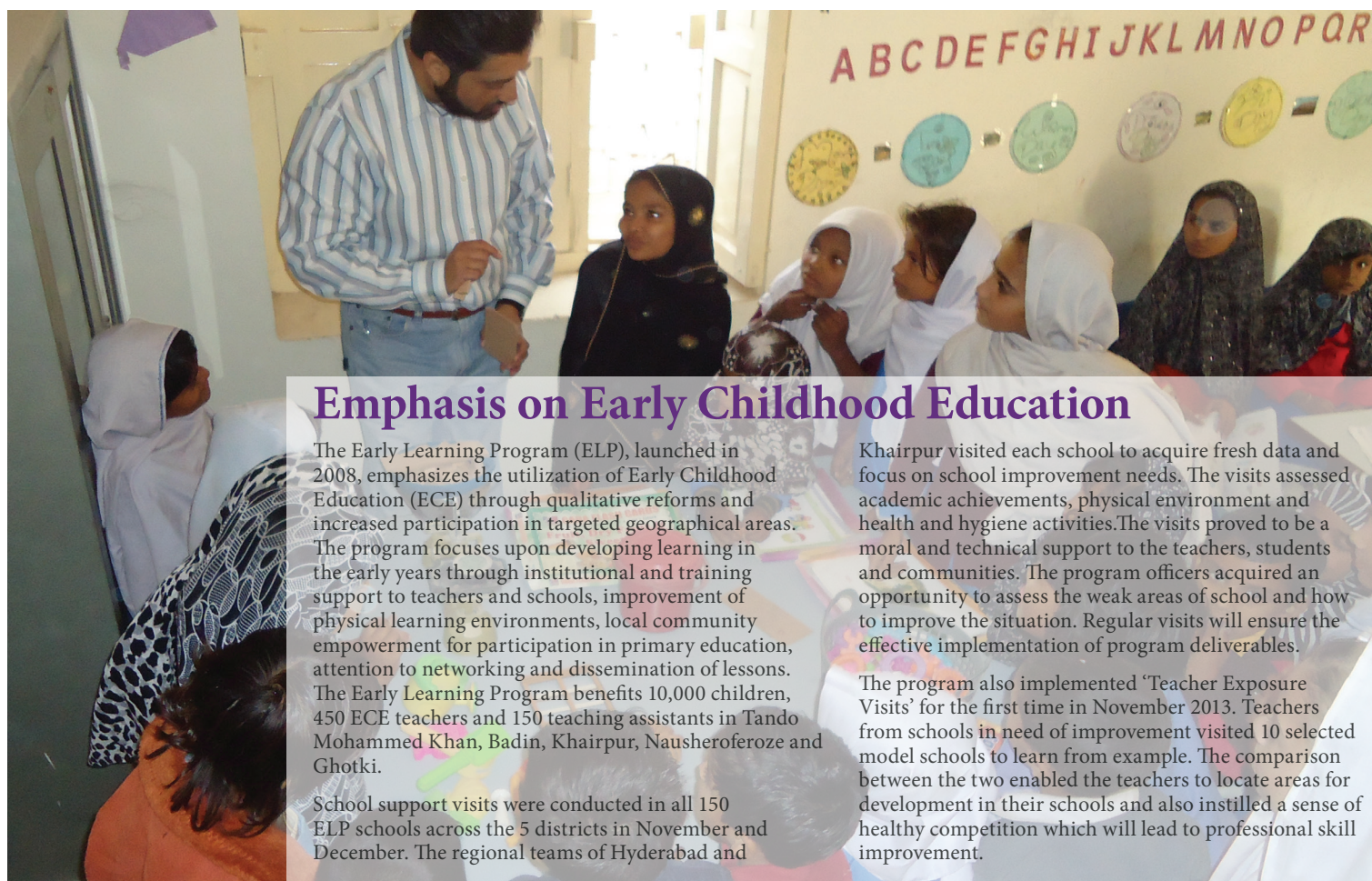
Educational Reforms in Government Schools

The Adopt a School Program, started in 1998, has been initiated by the Sindh Education Foundation to effectively engage the private sector and communities in government school revival. The program provides facilitation to the private sector and the civil society to adopt public or government run schools and implement educational reforms. The program has shown substantial and sustainable growth since its inception and is currently operating more than 165 schools with 1400 teachers and 35000 children.

SEF through AASP plays a facilitating role between the

school and the adopter, providing technical assistance and monitoring for school improvement. During the July-December period, AASP conducted surveys to assess school requirements, coordinated adopter and government functionary interaction, held stakeholder meetings and developed school improvement plans. The 6 school adoptions for the period are as follows:-

- 1 school in Karachi adopted by Rub Nawaz Malik of Human Rights Forum
- 5 schools in Thatta adopted by Jawed ulHaq of Rizq Foundation



Emphasis on Early Childhood Education

The Early Learning Program (ELP), launched in 2008, emphasizes the utilization of Early Childhood Education (ECE) through qualitative reforms and increased participation in targeted geographical areas. The program focuses upon developing learning in the early years through institutional and training support to teachers and schools, improvement of physical learning environments, local community empowerment for participation in primary education, attention to networking and dissemination of lessons. The Early Learning Program benefits 10,000 children, 450 ECE teachers and 150 teaching assistants in Tando Mohammed Khan, Badin, Khairpur, Nausheroferoze and Ghotki.

School support visits were conducted in all 150 ELP schools across the 5 districts in November and December. The regional teams of Hyderabad and

Khairpur visited each school to acquire fresh data and focus on school improvement needs. The visits assessed academic achievements, physical environment and health and hygiene activities. The visits proved to be a moral and technical support to the teachers, students and communities. The program officers acquired an opportunity to assess the weak areas of school and how to improve the situation. Regular visits will ensure the effective implementation of program deliverables.

The program also implemented 'Teacher Exposure Visits' for the first time in November 2013. Teachers from schools in need of improvement visited 10 selected model schools to learn from example. The comparison between the two enabled the teachers to locate areas for development in their schools and also instilled a sense of healthy competition which will lead to professional skill improvement.

Professional Development of PPRS Stakeholders

Keeping in view the importance of capacity building of teachers, a 9 consecutive days training was conducted for 348 PPRS teachers by the Learning Support Unit (LSU) in collaboration with PPRS in October. The activity was conducted in the districts of Badin (Thatta & Badin), Sanghar, Umerkot, Benazirabad, Larkana, Qamber, Shehdad Kot, Mithi, Khairpur Mirs and Dadu.

The training enabled teachers to share their previous experience of content teaching and teaching methodologies for the Get Ahead Book Series for respective levels. In addition, the activity oriented/reoriented the relevant teachers with the "Teacher's Guidebook" and how to comprehend the subject specific books in a more effective manner for teaching. The training provided an opportunity to the participants to demonstrate and reflect critically upon their teaching practices and discover areas for improvement. The workshops actively involved participants to maximize training effectiveness.

PPRS Program team along with the Assessment Unit (AU) conducted one day orientation session in the month of November with all PPRS Entrepreneurs of Phase I, II, & III round 1. This training session was conducted at four venues, Mirpur Khas, Hyderabad, Larkana and Khairpur. The main purpose of this activity was to orient school entrepreneurs with their roles and responsibilities in regards to school assessments. The activity was divided into two sessions.

The first session was conducted by the Assessment Unit and was based on the observations of the previous assessment cycles. As per agenda in the first session, Assessment team explained the tools, procedures, administrative requirements and mechanism of assessment activity. Entrepreneurs were guided to understand the importance and follow the standard assessment procedures. In the second session, schools results were shared district wise, and weak areas were highlighted so as to improve in the future assessment activity. In the end questions and answers floor was opened for participants for their further understanding and clarification.



Capacity Building for ECE Teachers

A 6 days teachers training for 150 Grade I government teachers was held by LSU trainers in July in the 5 ELP districts (Tando Mohammed Khan, Badin, Khairpur, Naushero Feroze and Ghotki). The training focused on orienting the participants with the National Curriculum and familiarizing them with the competencies mentioned for early learners in the curriculum. During the activity, teaching strategies were identified and the teachers' capacity for activity based teaching in language, numeracy and health was developed.

ELP in collaboration with LSU organized a 9 day training program for 150 ECD (Assistant teachers) in five targeted districts simultaneously in the August-September 2013 period. The training and refresher emphasized on the utilization of learning kits and how teachers can use these materials with different styles and improve the learning of a child. The training demonstrated how to improve the learning environment within the class and stressed upon the importance of acquiring and implementing pedagogical skills for kachi learners. Special focus and attention was given to teachers who were less responsive and not performing well in ELP schools.

An additional 9 day training was held for 150 Grade I ELP teachers in the month of September. The training was based on three parts:



Motivational, Structural and Functional. The motivational included the definition of child, the learning environment and teaching styles. The structural part included the elements of language such as the alphabet and basic functions, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. The functional included elements of listening skills, effective speaking, reading and writing skills, lesson planning and different class room support activities.

Prior to the trainings, a 6 day activity was arranged for the LSU trainers in August 2013 in which trainers from Karachi, Sehwan and Larkana participated. The mock training served to familiarize the participants with the content to be utilized in the training, the objectives and goals of the activity and the training methodology for the ECD and Grade-I teachers.

Highlights



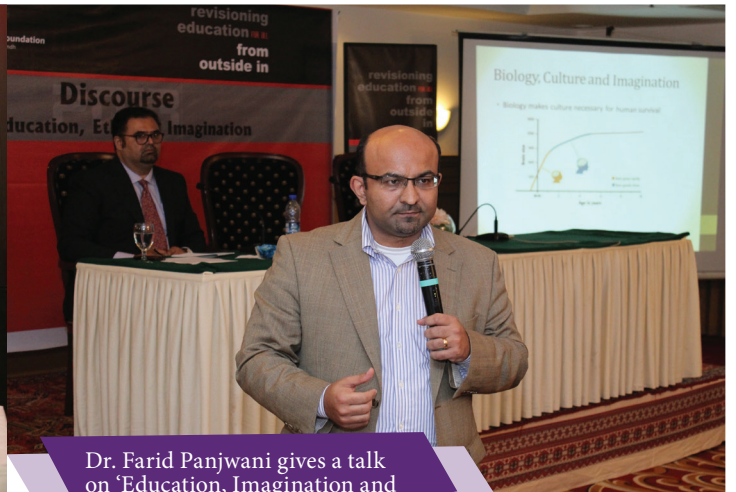
A session on 'Devotion to Persian Language' with Karim Aman and Dr. Faiza Zehra Mirza.



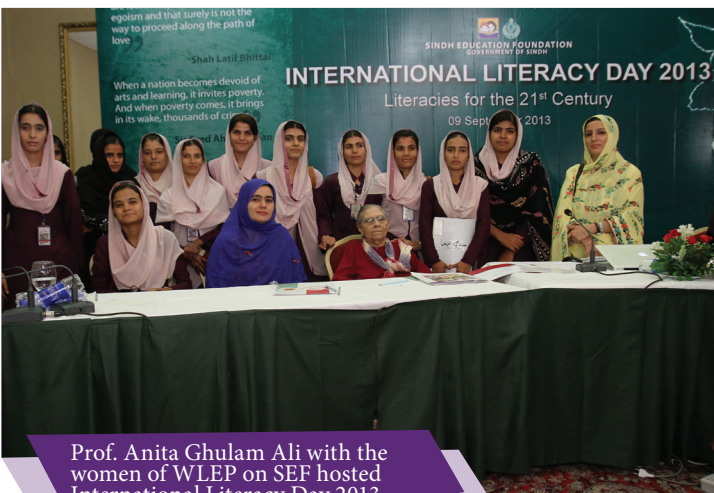
Discourse with Qazi Abdul Jaleel on 'Education and Awareness'.



Sindh Senior Minister for Education Nisar Ahmed Khuhro presides at an SEF event.



Dr. Farid Panjwani gives a talk on 'Education, Imagination and Ethics'.



Prof. Anita Ghulam Ali with the women of WLEP on SEF hosted International Literacy Day 2013.



Director Aziz Kabani speaks at the PPRS Entrepreneurs Appreciation Event held by the Sindh Education Foundation.

Providing Support for Working Children

The Child Labor Education Program (CLEP) was established by SEF in 2001 to provide opportunities for working children to acquire an education. The program's Child Development Center (CDC), operating in Karachi's industrial area Shershah, offers working children educational prospects to help improve the quality of their lives and that of their families. It does this without interfering with their income-generating routines that support their homes. The program offers its services to over 300 children who attend classes at flexible timings which allow them to fulfill their other work related commitments.

Final assessment was conducted in September and results were prepared on the basis of both daily performance and written tests. 263 out of 321 children appeared in the exam, where 171 students were promoted to the next grade, 92 students were found to be in need of attention and 58 were absent on the day. The absent children's promotions will be based on daily performance and they will be given an opportunity to appear for examinations at a later date.

A health session was also held at CDC in the month of December 2013. 33 mothers from the community, 3 members from AAHUNG, Principal CDC and Classroom Support Officer CDC participated in the session. A doctor from AAHUNG facilitated the session and addressed three diseases: Constipation, Hepatitis and Sugar. The doctor gave easy to understand and basic instructions on how to avoid these diseases. At the end of session community members took opinions from the doctor individually and shared their medical reports.

Investing in Women's Learning and Empowerment

The Sindh Education Foundation established the Women Literacy and Empowerment Program (WLEP) to aid and empower marginalized women through providing literacy, marketable skills, awareness and community engagement opportunities. Presently, the program operates through 13 Women's Literacy and Empowerment Centers (WLECs) in underserved areas of Karachi (Malir), Jamshoro (Sehwan), providing learning facilities to more than 399 women. The educational and self-development opportunities being offered by the program benefit not only the women but their families and the community on the whole. The WLEC curriculum includes primary health service, early childhood education, and women's economic empowerment through teaching and vocational skills.

WLEP team conducted center support and follow up visits to all WLECs in Sehwan and Karachi. During these particular visits the WLEP team observed the learning environment and teaching methodologies and evaluated the WLEC facilitator's comprehension of the curriculum content. Furthermore, the WLEP team, learning facilitators and GNACD/AGNACD members conducted awareness-raising sessions on different community and health issues.

The WLEP team conducted pre-assessment activity of all WLECs in September 2013. Learners' basic and functional literacy capabilities were assessed through different tools such as multiple response questions, picture comprehensions, fill in the blanks, matching, true/false, short responses and reading. 233 learners attempted the exam out of a total of 399 enrolled learners. The assessment allowed the team to gain a clear picture of WLEP progress and will aid in the planning of future interventions at the centers.



Training of Adult Educators

A First Aid Training session was organized by SEF in collaboration with Aga Khan University-Department of Emergency Medicine in August, 2013. 16 WLEP personnel including program team members, supervisors and learning facilitators attended the training led by a qualified doctor. In a full day session the participants were trained in the delivery of CPR and first aid to aid them in treating and responding to injuries and medical emergencies at schools and centers. The training was replicated in the WLEC centers where almost 250 participants benefitted from the sessions.

WLEP team replicate to at field level attended was WLEP stakeholders, Learners and community members. WLEP in Sehwan and Karachi in November/December 2013. A total of 16 participants in Sehwan and 21 in Karachi attended the sessions.

The objective of the workshop was to enable the participants to develop learning/resource material that could enhance the reading/writing as well as interpersonal skills of the learners in the least possible time period. A learner from each of the 13 WLEP center was also invited to attend the workshop so that they could assist the learning facilitator during the learning sessions. These resources were based on the skills of basic literacy, numeracy and functional literacy. The participants also developed resource kits for future reference.

Discourse

Discourse

Learning Sessions for Staff

The Foundation is a strong advocate of building capacity and professional development and thus always encourages an environment of continuous learning for the growth and development of its employees and stakeholders.

Over the last 6 months, experts from diverse fields were invited by the Foundation for learning sessions on a variety of subjects and proved to be a source of great learning for the SEF staff.

In the month of September, Karim Aman and Dr. Faizeh Zehra Mirza, both educationists of repute, discussed in detail the Persian language and its role in literature and poetry. The speakers talked about the impact of the Persian civilization in the history of the world and its vast social influence in all different societies including the west. Mr. Karim and Dr. Faizeh related the Persian Language to spiritualism in the context of Islam and discussed at length the influence of the Persian language on world famous poets such as Rumi, Sheikh Sadi and Allama Iqbal.

In a discourse held in October, Dr. Farid Panjwani, Senior Lecturer University of London, discussed the importance of 'Education, Imagination and Ethics'.

Dr. Panjwani said that in education, imagination has generally been reduced to the arts whereas it is important in all fields of life. He stated that imagination is not something that should be bound and the way to guide its consequences is to develop a symbiotic relationship between imagination and ethics. Dr. Panjwani suggested that education should be viewed as a process of creating a dialogue between the aesthetic imagination and ethical imagination.

In order to enhance knowledge and exposure regarding the components of curriculum and its development, a learning session was held in December with Mr. Amar Jaleel, fiction writer and columnist, who spoke on the topic of "Education and Awareness". Mr. Jaleel explored the time of partition and the way it is reflected in the textbooks in the form of hardships and adversities faced by the Muslims of the subcontinent. He pointed out that the Hindus and Sikhs were equally hurt and offended but the curriculum fails to address the issue which leads to infinite feelings of abhorrence and hatred in the hearts of the people. He also shed light on the fact that the Urdu language was deeply affected by the partition.

The sessions are a source of continuous capacity building and provide a deeply enriching learning experience that is highly appreciated by the SEF staff.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The Sindh Education Foundation conducts Monitoring and Evaluation routinely across its programs and schools to study school performance, students' progress and efficiency of implemented initiatives to advise areas of improvement in programs. The details are as follows:

During July 2013, a Situation Analysis for the RBCS program was designed and conducted by the Monitoring Unit in collaboration with the RBCS team and the Administration Department. The activity was undertaken in all 10 RBCS partner districts of Sindh (Karachi, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Larkana, Dadu, Qambershahdaddkot, Khairpur&Sukkur). The activity focused on the profiling of schools, effectiveness of Parents Management Body (PMB) and gathering feedback via parents' interviews. The purpose of the activity was to gauge the current status, feasibility for enhancement, school requirements/needs and to study living patterns of the targeted community. During the field visit, data was collected from 245 RBCS sites and forwarded for cleaning and consolidation. The consolidated information was entered into the database for analysis. Upon finalization, the RBCS Situation Analysis report and presentation was submitted to Director POR in November.

Furthermore, the Monitoring Unit held a capacity building session and tool designing activity for the Women Literacy and Empowerment Program (WLEP) in August 2013. The sessions covered the designing of the data collection tool as well as the various methods of data collection at the school and program team level. The data collection tools were finalized for the monthly performance report and the field support visits to the WLECs.

The RM&E Unit conducted a field activity for the validation of the IELP inspection data to Mirpurkhas, Badin and Jamshoro in December. The management plan was finalized and the collection tool was designed for the data validation activity. In Round-1, validation of 117 schools in the three districts has been completed. Round-2 will commence

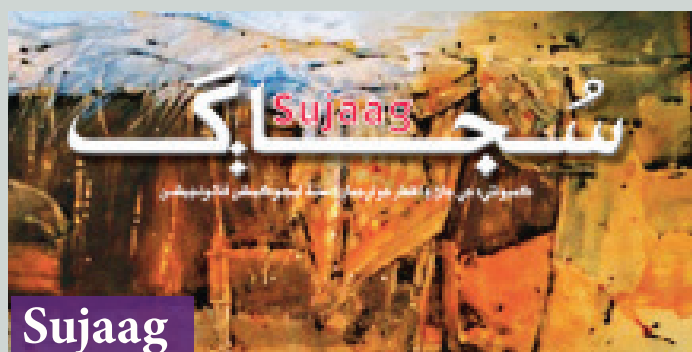


from January 2014. Data gathered during the activity was cleaned and consolidated and submitted for entry at the Karachi sub-office. A flash report was presented to the Director POR of the results.

A 5 days Monitoring and Evaluation workshop of the revised monitoring framework and annual planning of M&E activities was also held in the regional office at Hyderabad in November. During the activity the team was given an orientation on the revised M&E framework, process monitoring, data validation, concept paper and flash report format and tool designing.

A proposal on "Assessing the effectiveness of Oxford University Press textbooks in PPRS schools" was submitted to competent authority for research study in PPRS schools. Extensive literature on textbooks and curriculum was reviewed for this process. The study will provide important insight into the current curriculum and textbooks used in the PPRS program and discover any areas of improvement for educational quality enhancement.

Publications



'Sujaag' is a Sindhi language publication, developed by the Sindh Education Foundation, focusing specifically towards communities at the grassroots level to facilitate free exchange of local ideas and information. The magazine aims to enhance the local knowledge base on educational and developmental issues, challenges and best practices. The publication also makes available a platform for the people to share their opinions and concerns over common societal issues and provide feedback

on educational intervention effectiveness in their community. The fifth issue of Sujaag will be on issues relating to teachers and the learning environment to spread awareness on the educative process. The magazine will also cover areas of health awareness to provide important information on prevention and cure for the society. Sujaag serves as a key SEF publication that deals with real people needs and local community concerns in efforts to encourage ground level development.



Annual Report SEF Annual Report

The SEF Annual Report highlights the progress and accomplishments the Foundation has achieved during the preceding year. It provides a snapshot of the Organization and gives stakeholders and other interested people information about the company's activities and financial performance. The 2011-2012 annual report has been finalized and is ready to go into print.



SEF to open 608 schools in PPRS Phase IV

The Sindh Education Foundation held promotional events at Mithi, Thatta and Sijawal Districts in December for the upcoming launch of Phase IV of its Promoting Private Schooling in Rural Sindh (PPRS) Program. During Phase IV, the Foundation aims to open 608 new schools in the 10 districts of PPRS for the benefit of the marginalized children of Sindh.

The events saw more than 300 participants each, which included educationists, policy makers, government officials and representatives from the media gather at a local hotel to discuss the state of education and the need for more schools in the province. The Sindh Education Foundation took this opportunity to present program details on its key Public-Private initiative, the PPRS Program, which currently supports 392 functional schools across 10 program districts in Sindh. SEF stated that the application process for the new schools has started and application forms can be acquired from the SEF offices in different districts. Furthermore, the PPRS team gave an informative video demonstration on how to fill the forms in the

correct manner to ensure minimal errors in the application process.

Notable personalities such as Dr. Mahesh Malani (MPA, President PPP District Tharparkar), Rehana Laghari (MPA PPP), Humaira Alvaani (MPA PPP) and Faqeer Sher Muhammad Bilalani (MNA PPP) attended the events as Chief Guest along with the upper SEF management including M. Abdullah Abbassi (Director HR), Nisar Banbhan (Deputy Director, Marketing & Advocacy), Rustam Samejo (Deputy Director, Regions), Mukhar Chandio (Assistant Director, PPRS), Imambux Arisar (Assistant Director, Region), Abdul Fatah Jokhio (Assistant Director) and Dolat Ram (District Officer Education department).

The events were highly appreciated by those attending and SEF's initiatives in Public-Private Partnerships were lauded by the Chief Guests. The Chief Guests stated that they will continue to wholeheartedly support SEF in their noble endeavors to improve access to education and enhancing educational quality.





SEF lauds PPRS Entrepreneurs' Efforts

The Sindh Education Foundation held an Appreciation Event for the 'Promoting Private Schooling in Rural Sindh' (PPRS) Project entrepreneurs to acknowledge the dedication and commitment they have towards forwarding the cause of education in the province. Entrepreneurs, educationists, policy makers, NGOs and representatives from the media gathered at a local hotel in Karachi on the 2nd of July for the occasion.

The event also hosted esteemed personalities such as Prof. Anita Ghulam Ali (Managing Director, SEF), Nazia Rabani (President Women Wing, PTI), Prof. Dr. Bernadette Dean (Principal, St. Joseph's College), Sohail Muhammad Ali (Consultant & Trainer), Elahi Bux Baloch (Regional Head, Strengthening Participatory Organization) and Aziz Kabani (Director, SEF).

The Foundation held the ceremony to express appreciation and acknowledge the labors of the entrepreneurs who have worked

tirelessly towards the promotion of literacy across Sindh. It urged the entrepreneurs to maintain their efforts of improving educational quality and access in the province. SEF took the opportunity to highlight the critical role of Public-Private Partnerships in education and showcase the achievements the PPRS Project has attained at the local stage. Furthermore, the event focused upon what can be done to improve the ground level realities through discussions on innovative school management and administration practices.

O'you unfortunate man! How can you be a judge by merely possessing theoretical knowledge? You are extremely presumptuous, for you are lost in wayward thinking and egoism and that surely is not the way to proceed along the path of love

Shah Latif Bhittai

When a nation becomes devoid of arts and learning, it invites poverty. And when poverty comes, it brings in its wake, thousands of crimes

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan

He who opens a school door, closes a prison.

Victor Hugo

یہ تلوار جو آپ نے مجھے عنایت کی ہے، صرف حفاظت کے لیے اٹھی گی۔ لیکن فی الحال جو سب سے ضروری امر ہے وہ تعلیم ہے۔ علم تلوار سے بھی زیادہ طاقتور ہوتا ہے، جائے اور علم حاصل کیجئے۔

(اجلاس بلوچستان، مسلم لیگ، کوئٹہ 3 جولائی 1943ء)



SINDH EDUCATION FOUNDATION
GOVERNMENT OF SINDH

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY 2013

Literacies for the 21st Century

09 September 2013



SEF Celebrates International Literacy Day 2013

The Sindh Education Foundation celebrated 'International Literacy Day 2013' on the 9th of September to provide a platform to the stakeholders to share suggestions on how best to improve children's participation in education that will lead to an improved national literacy rate. More than 100 participants, including government officials, social workers, university students and professionals from the public and private sectors, discussed aspects affecting school participation and the ways to retain students so that the dropout crisis could be curtailed.

The panel of experts present at the forum comprised notable personalities such as Prof. Anita Ghulam Ali (Sindh Education Foundation), Dr. Muhammad Memon (Aga Khan University - Institute for Educational Development), Dr. Ahson Rabbani (Aman Foundation), Mr. Jami Chandio (Centre for Peace & Civil Society), Mr. Naveed Ahmed Shaikh (Reform Support Unit), Mr. Wali Zahid (Skill City) and Mrs. Bushra Afzal (The Citizens' Foundation).

The panel stated that education is a basic right of every child and it is the state's responsibility to provide this facility to the children. They said literacy is essential in life because it can broaden one's outlook and help one appreciate the world around. The panel highlighted that literacy enables one to think constructively, work productively, and develop effective and efficient decisions making skills. By developing the ability to read, write and communicate an individual is made capable as a fully functional, socially responsible and financially independent person. The panel felt that even though literacy in Pakistan was far below the mark, there are isles of excellence present in the country and people working hard to improve the field of education. They said that it is imperative that the Government does its utmost to increase the current literacy rate and improve the education sector to enhance the country's standing at the world forum.

SEF Celebrates World Teachers' Day 2013

There is no stronger foundation for lasting peace and sustainable development than a quality education provided by well trained, valued, supported and motivated teachers. In appreciation of those who give so much in educating and guiding the children, the future generation of the country, an event was held on World Teachers' Day at a local hotel.

The Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) organized an event titled 'A Call for Teachers' on World Teachers' Day 2013 in Karachi on October 5th, to appreciate and encourage the hard work and commitment teachers put in on a daily basis to bring the light of education to the children. The event served to provide a platform to hold constructive debate amongst stakeholders and experts on how best to solve the issues pertaining to teachers and consequently improve the state of the educational sector. Over 300 people who included major stakeholders belonging to the field of academics, practitioners working in the field of education and representatives from the Government and media personnel attended the event.

Mr. NisarKhorro, Education Minister, graced the event with his presence. The seminar also hosted a panel of experts which included Ms. Saba Mahmood (Chief Program Manager, Reform Support Unit), Dr. Kaiser Bengali (Economist), Prof. Dr. Bernadette Dean (Principal, St. Joseph's College), Mr. WajihAkhtar (Media Development Practitioner), Prof. Anita Ghulam Ali (S.I.) (Managing Director, Sindh Education Foundation) and Mr. Aziz Kabani (Director, Sindh Education Foundation)

Mr. NisarKhorro said that being a teacher is a highly respected profession and that teachers have more of a responsibility at times towards the development of children than even the parents. Mr. Khoro said that teachers shall be recognized and appreciated even more than before as they so deserve.

The panel stated that teacher absenteeism was a major issue plaguing the education sector and it is a matter that needs to be resolved urgently. It was suggested that to reduce teacher absenteeism, Government school principals should have the authority to hire and fire teachers and be held responsible for the institute's performance. The panel emphasized on the fact that recruitment of teachers is very important. They said that looking at a teachers' qualification on paper is not enough and we need to ensure that the candidates also possess the knowledge and skills required to teach. The panel added that there should also be consistent professional development of teachers to ensure they are up to date with the latest teaching methods and approaches. It was stressed that the issue needs to be resolved on a systemic level to resolve the problems faced in regards to teachers.



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