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**Transforming Education through Community
based Governance :
Experiences from Pakistan**

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Transforming Education through Community based Governance : An Experience from Pakistan

I. Brief Context and Background

Pakistan has a diverse ethnic population of 142 million people. It is a federation with four provinces, four federally administered territories and 110 districts¹. In 54 years of independence it has experienced a sustained erosion of democratic institutions. In the enterprise of state survival, the military and bureaucracy have taken turns as major and minor partners (Siddiqui 2001). The colonial legacies of perpetuating conditions of unequal advantage between elites and non-elites persist in an unbroken continuity, accelerated by inefficient management of public resources and inadequate response to basic social needs. The prolonged legitimacy and fiscal crises are embedded in the history of the state, triggering the crises of democracy, participation and distribution (Ahmed, 1998). The current praetorian set up with substantial civil society membership is determined to put in place 'good governance'. There have been three broad responses to the multiple crises of the state, initiated by this government immediately after October 12, 1999. These are:

- 1) devolving decision making powers to local levels through the Local Government Plan 2000 to facilitate popular participation for greater accountability and transparency.
- 2) undertaking social sector reforms in the areas of, Health and Education, incorporated in the Interim- Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP)². An inclusive strategy has been designed for mobilizing civil society partners and the private sector. These are recognized for their robust and innovative presence in meeting excess and differentiated demand for merit goods; and
- 3) setting up of a National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and its provincial counterparts to reclaim dues owed to the state, and to eliminate corruption at the national and sub-regional levels.

The state of education provision has time and again been critiqued in studies, surveys and countless site reports reinforcing that, it is not demand which is short, but it is the quality and quantity of supply which is poor, irrational and sub-optimal (Kardar, 1995; Gazdar, 1999; Khan, et.al, 1999; and MSU 2001). The growth of civil society organizations to counter poor supply and influence policy is concrete evidence of decline in public sector provision.

From a completely nationalized and closed system of 1970s, the government has incrementally adopted a *laissez faire* approach towards private sector, NGOs and community initiatives, providing multiple spaces to civil society partners at all levels of

¹ Provinces: Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and NWFP. Federal Areas: Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Northern Areas (NA), Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

²) I-PRSP, although homegrown, is a pre-requisite to qualify for IMF's Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF), the replacement to Structural Adjustment.

the education spectrum. The CSOs³, working in non-profit capacity have proliferated in multiple capacities and unevenly across the country. According to Najam (2000), cooperation, confrontation, complementarity and co-optation can be associated with CSO's roles as the new policy entrepreneurs (Najam 2000). The inherent asymmetry in relationship between the government and CSOs suggests a degree of tension, the latter being conscious of their vulnerability to the former's changing positions. In 1996, ironically a democratic government introduced the NGO Bill to round up all NGOs currently registered under various legal instruments under one umbrella act (AKDN, 2000). This Bill is still pending with the Senate, albeit dissolved under the current set up. This created a great deal of uncertainty, and in 1998 the government isolated some reputable NGOs for political persecution. This trend has been curbed under the present regime. The stronger NGOs seek autonomy and financial independence in order to set and pursue their own agendas for designing alternative governance and learning experiences as a response to state failure. In spite of government's cognizance of the underlying tension, a set of incentives for 'inclusion' are under negotiation with relevant ministries for encouraging CSOs and private sector to expand outreach and quality in urban and rural areas. The rise of CSOs activities in light of government failure, is on account of a range of reasons, viz what the government refuses to do, does not do enough of, is incapable of doing, or is unable to do (Najam, 2000: 6).

The current policy and reform environment is conducive to many experiments which are underway for promoting public private partnerships in education and in transforming 'where', 'what', 'how' and 'why' of learning.

The paper has four sections. Section one will highlight the policy climate as encompassed in devolution or the new governance framework, ESR provisions for community based governance and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Section two will focus on categories of CSOs, whilst sections three and four will focus on two specific education experiments underway in Pakistan.

II. Section One

II.i Devolution and implications for the education sector at the district, provincial and federal levels :

The primary trigger and framework for decentralization and possibilities for local governance in education is the implementation of devolution. The devolution plan is a comprehensive attempt to counter excessive centralization and restore legitimacy to the state through a bottom up system of governance by mobilizing civil society through direct elections at the tier closest to civil society viz., the union council (a cluster of 5-7 villages) level. Key characteristics of devolution are contained in the Local Government Plan 2000 and its legal operational framework in the respective Provincial Local Government Ordinances 2001. It is conceived as a counterpoint to the colonial

³ Civil society organization (CSOs) include both private (for profit) and private (non-profit) organizations. However, in literature the citizen sector has been defined as comprising those organization which work for and are non-profit.

structures where bureaucracy and local governments were juxtaposed in an adversarial hierarchy, seeking control rather than participation.

The Local Government design is based on five fundamentals : Devolution of power, decentralization of administrative authority, deconcentration of management functions, diffusion of power-authority nexus, and distribution of resources to the district level. It is designed to ensure that the genuine interests of the people are served and their rights safeguarded(NRB, 2000: 1). A coherent integration of these principles and application in various sectors is a major challenge.

Under this set up the district rather than the province has become the operational tier of governance, supported by the sub-district (tehsil) and union council tiers. Division (a cluster of districts) and markaz (a cluster of union councils), legacies of the colonial system have been disbanded. At the village or neighbourhood level a Village or Neighbourhood Council and Citizen Community Boards (CCBs) have been provisioned for in the Devolution Plan to allow for citizen participation. These may create ad/or include PTAs, Village Education Committees or School Management Committees to ensure that planning, mobilizing, implementation and monitoring of development programs is undertaken by communities themselves and not imposed from above. This at least is the theory of the LGP. Phase I of the plan is currently under implementation after the formation of district governments on August 14, 2001 which can safely be called the transition and adjustment mode with the inevitable mess and time lags!

II.ii Education Sector Reforms: Action Plan 2001-2004

The Education Sector Reforms: Action Plan 2001-2004 (ESR) was approved by the President, with a primary focus on : 100 percent literacy and UPE through formal and non-formal means; quality across sectors and technical education at the secondary level. It is an action plan and not a new education policy, seeking to implement the National Education Policy 1998-2010. ESR is anchored in sector wide approach, public private partnerships (PPP) and poverty reduction through education entitlements. A powerful acknowledgement of civil society organizations has been made in the ESR, reinforcing that the government cannot be seen as the sole provider of education, with almost 25 percent of existing education provision being attributed to the private sector (FBS, 2001). The survey undertaken by the Federal Bureau of Statistics does not take into account unregistered non-formal programs or madrassahs (religious schools). There are seven thrust areas of the ESR (2002) viz.,

- Literacy (10 - 14 & 15 + years)
- Elementary Education including Early Childhood Education
- Mainstreaming Madrassahs
- Quality Assurance (Teacher training, curriculum reform and assessment systems)
- Technical Stream at Secondary Level
- Higher Education Reform
- Public Private Partnerships

In each of these CSOs are seen as a strategic partner to deliver access, improve quality and in some cases capacity building of PTAs/School Management Committees, support to low cost community based construction and repairs etc. Recognizing their potential and actual contribution to education promotion, an incentive package has been developed for private sector. This package includes, provision of land at concessional rates in rural areas; non-commercial utility rates; exemption of custom duties on import of educational equipment; and exemption of 50% income tax to private sector and NGO institutions for faculty, management, and support staff etc. Restructuring of the Education Foundations to attain maximum autonomy for private sector outreach is underway. Similarly, other incentives have been awarded to support private initiatives in public sector such as upgradation of public sector schools through community public partnerships (CPP); adopt a school programme; initiation of exam boards in the private sector; collaboration with private sector institutions for teacher training; and multiple textbooks through private publishers.

II.iii Interim – Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) 2001-2004

I-PRSP has been evolved through a dialogue with the provinces and districts. It takes a holistic approach to the understanding of poverty and its reduction strategies. These are multi-pronged. I-PRSP includes governance reforms, revival of the economy, asset creation, social safety nets improved human development and reducing vulnerability to shocks (2001). Its successful implementation relies on alliances with civil society organizations as well as rigorous monitoring of indicators across its strategic areas.

III. Section II

II.i Categories of CSOs

A large variety of CSOs have proliferated in Pakistan, in response to public demand for satisfying education. At a very rudimentary level it was a challenge to public sector's inability to provide 'enabling education or learning' which could improve people's well-being. Currently there is a conducive climate for community based responses. A word of caution on the concept of 'community' is an order. Communities may be naturally located within a specific geographical space, or when they share a faith or profession. These defining features are at best discrete and not sufficient for active mobilization. In a majority of cases, communities are constructed or come together over specific issues and needs for collective action. In many cases a mediator, who could be an insider or outsider, creates a community, by playing a catalyst's role. The community may comprise of both the affected or the core beneficiaries, as well as the mediator or the NGO, CSO or CBO.

Over the past three decades there has been a trend in public sector functionaries to create discontinuities by design between service institutions and beneficiaries/ communities, thereby making accountability and governance almost inaccessible. It is ironical, but perhaps logical that during the past fifteen years there have been a battery of experiments to rebuild that connectivity by setting up either alternative options in delivery systems or bringing back the community to improve public sector services. Whilst a few may be attributed to donor pressure to qualify for the Structural Adjustment

Credit etc., the majority have emerged spontaneously and consciously to counter poor service delivery. Real, and/ or surrogates for community based governance in education have led to an environment in Pakistan where CSOs have a legitimate formal place in exploring transformation of education. The radical have now become mainstream and the non-formal, formal, setting traditions of common sense logic for social development.

There are numerous categories of CSOs in Pakistan, and they play multiple roles. These may be that of : **innovators; donors; service providers; capacity building; critical thinkers; policy partners; advocates; social mobilizers and protestors.** Defining CSOs as ‘policy entrepreneurs’, Najam argues that they have multiple roles which can be further classified across **agenda setting, policy development and implementation as monitors, advocates, innovators and service providers** (2000). The four Cs of Government Third Sector Relations as suggested by Najam, are determined by the similarity or dissimilarity of goals pursued by government and CSOs.

Figure I : The Four Cs of Government NGO Relations

		GOALS (Ends)	
		Similar	Dissimilar
Preferred Strategies (Means)	Similar	Co-operation	Co-optation
	Dissimilar	Complimentarity	Confrontation

(Najam, 2000: 10)

Pakistan has a spectrum of CSOs, from international NGOs such as Aga Khan Foundation, to National, Provincial and Local NGOs/CBOs in the education sector. They are further supported by other mainstream groups and associations belonging to the private corporate sector, professional groups and trade unions. These may, in turn be working in the areas of health, population, environment, gender and human rights. Communities have been created and mobilized in the education sector innovations, service provision and advocacy to influence policy development and implementation.

Government has had to contend with the ascendancy of CSOs and their financial autonomy. Organizations that have emerged in response to a conscious position on social responsibility matched by focused giving, have demonstrated their commitment to creating quality alternatives in education. This activism in creating delivery alternatives for influencing policy is proliferating in Pakistan to demonstrate to the government a basis for education transformation. In a recent study on philanthropy in Pakistan, the Aga Khan Foundation estimates that Rs. 70 billion or 2.2% of GNP is contributed through public giving (2000) and volunteering accounts for 58 percent comparable to that of USA (ibid). The potential of resources from philanthropy needs to be harnessed to supplement government’s limited funds which are constrained due to their inefficient use. Programs in education managed through community based governance have been set up through various mechanisms, including pure philanthropy and also government

support through the Education foundations. The next section gives examples of two such programs, viz., the Sanjan Nagar Public Education Trust and the Fellowship Schools.

IV. Section III. Specific Country Experience

IV.i Sanjan Nagar⁴ Public Education Trust (SNPET) Girls High School – Enabling Education

The objective of the Trust is to cultivate creative potential in children of the poor for meaningful progress of the country and advancement of mankind. SNPET school for girls was established in 1996. A criteria was established for families eligible for the program and a social worker identified households who matched the profile. Since then the school is providing free education, including nutrition support to the under privileged girl students. Today the school has 9 classes from pre School to class VI. There are over 230 students, 16 teachers, and a community worker.

The first school has been set up in a working class industrial locality. The learning site was set up in a derelict factory which was refurbished to serve its function⁵. A dedicated head teacher was hired alongwith her team who wanted to travel on a road to discovery, excellence and transformation, working with children living in economic and social oppression. The parents cannot pay any fees according to the deed, but they may give funds to the trust, if they so wish. The school has three sections: a pre-primary section (ages 3-5); a primary section (K1 –K4) and a middle section (K5-K8). In seven years the first cohort has reached Class VI. New enrolment is taken only up to class III, as adjustment to the system is difficult after that level. The school is a journey towards self awareness, possibilities and change .Any one who comes into contact with this program has to undergo a reflection process, be it children, their parents, teachers or trustees

The curriculum is divided into Language, Maths, Science & Technology, Humanities and Aesthetics. The current course offerings include English, Urdu (Punjabi and Persian to be added in 2003), Maths, History, Geography, Science, Information Technology, Sports (including Self-Defence), Art, Music, Theatre, Values education and current affairs. The curriculum selection is eclectic adopting a mix of texts, field experiences and supporting materials to improve competencies towards ‘enabling education’. The students participate in competitions locally and regionally. In 2001 they won a regional art competition on child rights, giving them confidence in their skills and interpretation.

The methodology is based on interactive teaching and dialogue. Teachers undertake regular planning exercises led by the head teacher who has evolved into her role as a catalyst for change. She is a reflective practitioner and a role model for her team. The staff is supported by professional opportunities for improving and updating their skills. Integrated thematic Open Days for parents have been held at the school on themes such

⁴ ‘SanjanNagar’, a Sanskrit word, means the abode of consciousness

⁵ A purpose built building is now under construction with all the modern facilities attributed to enabling education.

as 'food' and 'homes'. Children conduct Open Days themselves, explaining the process and concepts to their parents, who have to adjust to new methodologies and initially demonstrate skepticism to these 'different' approaches to learning. Each child's file is maintained impeccably and holistically carrying medical records, household profile, assessments, regular parent teacher conferences and strategies for improving each child's experience at school .

The Trust was set up in 1995, **underscored by a Biblical refrain that the 'meek shall inherit the earth'**⁶. The primary motive underlying this Trust is to make a break with our existing culture and begin this process with children of the poor. **Creating social discontinuity was most desirable in disadvantaged families so that they could be liberated for a meaningful life where they could govern themselves rather than be governed by others.** It was surmised that the school would promote a culture of creative freedom and basic equality, geared to the flowing of human sensitivities and intellect as the pursuit of happiness.

Having set such a powerful agenda for social transformation, the founder of the trust decided to set aside a substantial endowment fund which could create a basis for an autonomous pursuit, dependent upon the beneficiaries but not on the government. The country's examination board was rejected at the outset as the deed explicitly stipulated that the program would adhere to O or A levels and be English medium and not follow the local curriculum. The school was officially registered with the education authorities (for purposes of being recognized for policy support) as a High School in 1999 after site inspection and examination by a committee from the Directorate of Secondary Education.

The Board is supported by three committees in which the Education Committee has a key role. The latter must ascertain milestones for unfolding of a vision for transformation as articulated by its founder. There is a Parents School Committee which meets regularly for consultation and inputs on the evolving program. In December 2001 the founder addressed the full school community, comprising the students, teachers, parents and Trustees, sharing his ideas on enabling education. Excerpts from his millenium lecture are reproduced below:

Life is about capabilities and the labour towards them is a dimension which is linked to how we use our .. minds. For this reason I left the Urdu medium path and opted for the English medium. ... When you decide to tread on that path of real progress you would not want to copy the West but instead become travelers of time, who undertake the responsibility of their own journey. Such people learn all the requirements of a journey and its responsibilities. .. My decision was to protect you from Urdu medium and give you options such as A'levels, O'levels, Senior Cambridge or Baccalaureate. ***These are only better than what we have but do not contain the basis for our progress .. our awakening. We need to go a step further.*** I want you to look around at the best practices but with a purpose that their are not ready made solutions that you can copy but mere

⁶ The use of Sanjan Nagar from sanskrit and the reference from the Bible by the Trust's founder who is a Muslim also demonstrates a conscious liberation from biases and natural affinity to knowledge, which must transcend religions and class.

referent points to nourish your own imagination and enable you to solve the problems for your own progress.

No irresponsible citizen can progress. Progress and responsibility go hand in hand. People who believe in this message, can in the next 3-5 years craft an education system and a methodology which is ahead of Europe and America.

The greatest agenda for the 21st century is to govern one self through one's mental faculties, and not govern others. This is not a formula about making careers. In this school...**the purpose is not money but happiness.** Today the purpose of a school is none other than a contract of paying fees and obtaining degrees like Intermediate and Bachelors, in exchange leading to a promise for career and jobs. *But this is only 'shop keeping and not education.* My desire is that children should become travelers on a journey whereby they will use the resources of the world towards the goal of holistic and responsible happiness (Kazim 2000).

This is a unique school, set up as a public trust. Its challenge is to create a doable alternative with a community of believers, so that it will become a compelling basis for influencing policy options in learning in Pakistan.

The school is an experiment in open subversion, having announced publicly that the current system of education is not suitable and there is need to search for better options, not in the context of third world or first world but in the context of human evolution any where. Teacher training institutes often visit this school for their teaching practice, and sending graduate students, who qualify for teaching. SNPET is open to any one who may come and examine what is underway in a school tucked away, off a main road in a factory...not the industrial factory, but one where the business of human enterprise is a serious one.

IV.ii The Fellowship⁷ Programme

The Fellowship program is an indigenously adapted innovative scheme, which has some elements of a voucher scheme, but with major variations. It has been mainly funded by the Government of Pakistan through its Education Foundations as a part of various large scale education initiatives, supported by donor loans and grants.

The Fellowship Program under the Sindh Education Foundation⁸ is committed to **“mobilising communities to empower parents to plan, implement, and own a quality education for their children”**

FP has two powerful premises;

- 1) ***Its primary principle is that ordinary people will undertake extra-ordinary tasks of becoming managers of their children's learning opportunities and options.***

⁷ Fellowship is a derivative of 'scholarship' – an incentive program for girls education.

⁸ Education Foundations were set up as autonomous bodies by the Government from 1991 –1996 to support private sector/NGO initiatives in education. The program is thus funded by government adhering to its role as a facilitator.

2) *The second premise is that the government's role is seen not as a provider but as a facilitator or arranger of education options.*

How the Program Works

The Fellowship Program (FP) is a low cost private sector education initiative which was originally crafted in Baluchistan under the aegis of the Primary Education Directorate to promote girls education in a province where female literacy in rural areas was merely one and half percent. The program has since been replicated in Sindh with adaptations for 120 communities in rural areas and urban slums. The FP encourages 100 percent participation of the communities in the site selection, operation and management of schools to provide quality education.

With the help of local Non-Government Organizations and outreach staff of the Education Foundation as mediators and technical backstoppers the schools are set up through communities brought together for promoting girls education. A closely monitored mobilization process spans almost four years of intermediation.

▪ **Locating Communities** A process of locating communities in disadvantaged areas begins from ground zero. There are 14 steps (annex I) involved in community mobilization where ordinary parents motivated for education of their daughters come together as a Parents Education Committee to perform the tasks of running a quality school. Where a community fulfills the basic criteria for the FP such as 200 girls (aged 4-12 years) who are not going to school (in urban areas) or 60 girls (aged 4-12 years) un-enrolled in rural areas and where the Government schools are either non-existent or non-functional, a FP can be established. The community is from a disadvantaged background, but not all belong to the poorest of the poor and certainly cannot be too well-off to be entitled. Preferably, this area should not be cantonment, commercial or a government colony and community can provide, or hire a facility for a school building in the centre of the area.

Subsidies & Savings: The students are provided four categories of subsidies on a declining scale over four years in the areas of:

- Facilities and Material Cost for school materials, equipment etc.
- Enrolment Subsidy to meet the cost of teachers' salaries, rent and supplies.
- Attendance Bonus is a monthly enrolment subsidy paid at the end of each quarter for girls who have had regular attendance of 24 days per month.
- Teacher Training Subsidy on a per child basis for Teacher development

These costs calculated on a per child basis, are given collectively through the Parents Education Committee to the school or the institution on a declining basis over 45 years, whilst modest user charges gradually increase as the quality of education improves. The subsidies are given on the premise, that the Parents Education Committee (PEC) will be committed to save over the same period of four years, enough to make the school sustainable after the subsidy has ended. The savings are from two specific sources, the Attendance Bonus subsidy and the user charges. This is agreed at the outset of the program, by the Parents Education Committee and the general body of parents mutually. Savings can also be generated through additional resource mobilisation programs,

selected by the PEC.

FP managed By PEC: The Fellowship Schools are managed by a **Parents Education Committee (PEC)**. The PECs are fundamentally, parents organizations comprising of parents of girls who are attending the FS.

▪ A parent is a person who has direct interest, makes decision and looks after the child. Could be a biological parent or a social guardian, Ideally the PEC should be 100 percent parents or 80 percent parents and 20 percent non-parents. No non-parent member shall hold the position of Chairperson or Treasurer. Mothers are to be encouraged to become PEC members.

The current indicators as stated in the strategy for the PEC are:

Capacity Indicators of PEC

- 1) Develop quarterly work plans and work accordingly
- 2) Preparing Quarterly and Annual Performance Reports
- 3) Preparing school policy and its annual review – a time for reflection and improvement and decisions on electing new PEC members.
- 4) Maintenance of financial, administrative and activities record
- 5) Making Decisions themselves at all levels
- 6) Monitoring the schools
- 7) Conducting community and staff meetings
- 8) Using information to access resources critically for school development
- 9) Undertaking institutional development.

The schools have been registered with the Department of Education, and after four years in operation the PECs are being registered under the Social Welfare Department as legal entities, or as NGOs.

Each school has its Policy Workshop to determine its rules, regulatory framework and also its curriculum options. The NGOs or Foundation mediators identify options on books available locally and present them to the PECs, who make a selection. Although PECs have challenged the duality of the education system in Pakistan, with different mediums of instruction, they are constrained by the prevalent local consensus on language. This may be Sindhi(provincial) or Urdu (national), but English is taught as a subject from Class I. However, the fellowship schools communities always work within the national curriculum framework to ensure that if the students and their families move to other locations their lateral transfers into government or even private schools can be accommodated. This, is an inhibiting factor in exploring transformation of contents within designated limits. In addition to these texts, schemes of studies in local languages to facilitate teachers and small libraries of about 150 books have been provided to all schools to encourage supplementary materials support. Teachers are trained twice annually with on-site support to manage school development, curriculum and assessment planning. Some of the head teachers have been selected for training at the prestigious Institute of Education Development at the Aga Khan University. *Increasingly the PECs*

members are demanding new skills so that they may have the capability to manage their schools and options for quality more effectively and intelligently.

The model fits the school based management paradigm, where teachers and parents can be trained for empowerment to make their own decisions about school development according to their needs at the school site.

To date 140 schools have been established with an enrolment of 13000 girls and 2500 boys. This program was set up when there were hardly any quality options for urban slums and rural areas, but only low quality public sector government or non-formal schools.

Fellowship schools have been adapted in Sindh, Northern Areas, Tribal Areas and North West Frontier Province (NWFP) through the Sindh, National and Frontier Education Foundations. There are variations on institutional subsidies for girls education which need to be looked at for design appropriateness and sustainability. The Balochistan experience at best remained one proto experiment which has been 'normalized' in its subsequent interpretations. In Sindh the adaptations have been consciously undertaken, where the process of reflection and change is an iterative one negotiated with local communities and mediating NGOs.

V. Section IV : Concluding Questions

Sustainability : The issue of sustainability is valid for both case studies. In the case of SNPET quality, research and development for an alternative education system carries substantial costs which need to be met through higher mobilization of funds. The dilemma of deviating from the Trust deed is encountered repeatedly. Over the years parents have managed to earn more and can afford to pay user charges, but are barred from doing so on account of the Trust deed. Many parents donate as and when they want to in cash or kind to the trust. However, a mechanism for voluntary mobilization needs to be established. The unit costs of the school are higher compared to government and private schools, as specialist teachers have been hired for many subjects to ensure children's competencies. This program is developing systems for an alternative education, called enabling learning for self-governance. In its current capacity it cannot be replicated and taken to scale. However, after five years it will be in a position to influence public and private sector, once its outcome is concretized.

Under the Sindh Education Foundation program, a feasibility has demonstrated that subsidies are required for five to six years instead of four as originally conceived as there is a short fall of 18 percent in urban and 23 percent in rural schools. This shortfall must be planned for by the SEF to ensure that Fellowship schools are not vulnerable.

Language : In SNPET children coming from homes speaking Punjabi, Urdu and Pashto have to adapt to English. This is challenged by many for creating undue pressure and giving a false sense of 'status' to the children who may feel alienated. The SNPET trustees response is that Pakistan has historically been multi-lingual and English is not the only, but an 'enabling' language, unless Urdu is upgraded. The parents have had no

problems with English medium but the local intelligentsia critiques the school for possible alienation of children from their families. The SNPET, takes an opposing position on the issue. The communities of the FP also demand English medium and in the interim period, a strong skill in English for students.

Rethinking Learning: For FP, rethinking education development with the communities is an exercise in vigilance. The challenge is not setting up a school, but to incorporate in this phenomenon of making ordinary parents into extra ordinary managers of enabling education for their daughters and sons. The transformation requires skills. CSOs in the two case studies above have been engaged in innovation, service delivery, influencing policy. In the case of SNPET the trust has chosen to guard its autonomy without any compromise, developing its own system with minimum interference. **Resources do matter for autonomy.** SNPET is challenging the government system, its basic premise being confrontation with public sector frameworks of learning.

Influencing content and curriculum : A note of caution is in order on the issue of curriculum. As citizens respond to a failing public sector system or even a stereo-typed private sector, they may just stop at improvements to counter the decline and not go beyond that towards transformation. Curriculum and content knowledge is difficult to change and requires information and special skills on curriculum protocols to influence policy and systems. These may not be available within communities which are challenging existing service delivery. Capacity needs to be built in specialized areas or alternatively professional alliances sought.

Building learning societies in the EFA framework is in a constant need of transformation and support. The notion that disparate groups created into communities, with CSO mediation may undertake this challenge, must be tempered by the realization that there are complex procedures required for influencing institutional requirements for curriculum development and change. This is a specialised area and must be managed by a different group of specialists. The communities must be consulted but not over-burdened, as they are already taking the responsibility of the government, for the latter's inability to deliver quality education.

The CSOs or the policy entrepreneurs, need to sharpen their skills and revisit their strategic role to influence cycles of agenda setting, policy design and implementation in an iterative manner.

It is important that public sector too shares the responsibility of addressing 'quality' and 'transformation' of learning for creating entitlements. As the role of the public sector is shifting from being a provider to a facilitator it should upgrade its work on quality support. The time has come when public sector must rethink its own role from being a mere financier to becoming a partner for quality.

Under the present framework of the ESR and its focus on public private partnerships, community based initiatives in education are being fully endorsed, even if they pose a challenge to public sector. The Education Foundations are being restructured to provide

more autonomy and flexibility to support innovative programs, without the red tape procedures which did not encourage transparency. The policy environment is an enabling one. Whilst the government is not fully active in adopting these programs itself, it is not blocking them either, and in both case studies shared, the government has been supportive institutionally, in registration and, in the case of the Fellowship schools, the government has financially supported the program.

There are many more programs in Pakistan which are working at community based alternatives such as the Adopt a School Program, the Community Public Partnership for school upgradation, The Citizen Foundation program for quality purpose built education for the disadvantaged, the Human Development Foundation⁹, and many other non-elite fee paying alternatives.

The Pakistani society is seeking education for transformation managed by communities, comprising both the included and the excluded as a joint venture for alternatives which are meaningful. This is not a fringe phenomenon. The target group is the socially excluded who must have a voice and choice in learning what, where, why and how they want to learn.

⁹ HDF has been recently launched on January 19,2001 with the support of expatriate Pakistanis. The President is the patron of the Foundation and its core areas of activities are education (literacy and non-formal education), health and livelihoods. It is firmly located as a CSO engaged in a spectrum of activities as a policy entrepreneur, an innovator and service delivery outfit and as an institutional broker between government and CSOs.

Annex I :

The fourteen step Process for Establishing Fellowship Schools

Steps in the Formation of a Fellowship School

General Visit
Area Demarcation
Area Scanning and “Sparks” Identification
Conduct Household Survey
Mini-group Meetings
PEC Formation and Meeting
PEC opens savings and current accounts
School Policy Workshop of PEC
Selection and Hiring of Principal & Teachers
Student Registration
Request for Mobilization Advance
Teacher Training
School Opens
Quarterly and Annual Performance Reviews

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Short Note : Ms. Baela Raza Jamil

Chairperson of Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (Centre for Education and Consciousness) and Technical Adviser Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan. Ms. Jamil has worked in the USA, UK and Hong Kong prior to her work in Pakistan, since 1991. She has worked in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh as well as, at the Federal level.

Through her NGO, she is engaged in public private partnerships in education. She has designed the indigenously crafted program entitled “Regenerating Schools : Regenerating Communities through the Adopt A School Program” in Pakistan. The Idara has seven schools in which school improvement is being undertaken through an integrated approach to change practices and influence policy.

As Adviser to the Ministry she is engaged in public policy work in education, participating in the design of a reform process, mobilization of stakeholders, and designing fiscal devolution instruments for financing the reforms at decentralized levels.

Interests are working at public policy level, decentralization, local governance of education, community based initiatives in education financing, child rights and gender as human rights, quality and school based management.