



Pakistan Coalition for Education

Issue No.16, April, 2018



ABOUT US

Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) was formed in 2005 in order to provide a platform to civil society through which they can address key issues on policy advocacy and bridge the gap between policy makers and the civil society. The organization was formed for the development and implementation of policy in context of free and quality education for all. PCE is legally registered as the Society for Access to Quality Education (SAQE) in 2010. PCE is a strong advocate of evidence-based policy advocacy, community awareness and mobilization.

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All-Parties Roundtable Consultation

Hospitality Inn, Lahore – 9th Jan, 2018

Pakistan Coalition for Education in collaboration with Ghazali Education Trust (GET) organized a round table conference to stress on the need for all political parties to make time bound commitments with regards to education in their party manifestos. The platform was used to reflect on manifestos of 2013 and the progress made in line with the education agendas defined by the political parties, five years down the road. The event was attended by members of Standing Committee on Education from Punjab Assembly, representatives of political parties, academia, journalists and members of the civil society. The conference helped set a context for all political parties to make time bound pledges for the reform of education in their party manifestos and define a new strategy prior to the upcoming elections of 2018. In this regard, PCE presented a minimum 17 point draft agenda for debate and endorsement.

This document contains the detailed proceedings of the conference- which featured various education stakeholders- whereby a dialogue ensued on political party manifestos and how education strategies can be improved, prior to the election campaign for 2018.

The key discussion points stemming from PCE's minimum common agenda for education are detailed below:

- Substantially increase domestic financing for education by fulfilling the National Education



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Policy plan of spending 6% of GDP share and at least 20% of provincial budgets on education.

- The process of drafting National Education Policy needs to be more open, consultative and inclusive of all stakeholders including civil society members
- Commit funding to each of the 7 targets under SDG4 and funding the gap stemming from extending 9 years of free education to 12 years, so as to include early Childhood education and grade 12 (K-12).
- Institutionalize civil society participation in local and national budgeting process.
- Good governance stems from mutual accountability that can be

guaranteed through robust social accountability mechanisms

- Strengthening of public education system so as to ensure equality in access and quality of education
- Focus should be shifted from rote based learning to research and participatory modes of instruction
- Tax net base should be increased to ensure at least 20% public expenditure is spent on education. Progressive tax reforms must include strict regulations against tax evasion and tax fraud.
- Non-salaried budget should increase so as to ensure provision of basic amenities at public schools



Dr. Hallema Sadia (Head of Punjab Education Endowment Fund), Mr. Syed Amir (Executive Director, Ghazali Education Trust).

- Local monitoring systems for schools should capitalize human resources
- Strong checks and balances should be put in place for private schools along with regulatory bodies to ensure uniform curriculum and fee structure
- Access to national data and open information can facilitate participatory and transparent budgeting allocation and spending



Dr. Noshin Hamid, Member of Punjab Assembly, PTI

- Local system of education governance need to be strengthened with participation of communities, parents, teachers and other relevant stakeholders in citizen participatory mechanisms such

as budget making and social audits of the public services.

- Regularly collect and make publicly available data on private schools, their fees and social diversity amongst the pupils attending private and public schools, so as to be able to transparently identify and understand inequalities

- Establish life skills and vocational skills based learning



Habib Akram, Senior Analyst, Dunya News

systems where skills such as first aid, self-defence, agricultural knowledge and small industries skills should be an integral part of the curriculum

- Ensure that there is a uniform education system in which madrasas and other non-formal education systems are also standardized as dictated by minimum national standards
- Recommend that the curriculum be revised urgently to include human rights education, civic education, peace building and harmony in order to steer the goal of education towards making productive citizens of the country.



Bushra Anjum Butt, Member of Punjab Assembly, and Standing Committee on Education, PML-N

- Institute an appropriate regulatory and monitoring framework for monitoring the enforcement of Article 25-(A) of the Constitution and the fast-growing private schools operating in weak regulatory mechanisms. Take all necessary measures by immediately setting out a plan to effectively regulate and monitor private schools, to avoid any direct or indirect harmful impact of the private education sector on human rights, in particular ensuring that they do not contribute to discrimination or segregation, and to ensure that the private sector contributes to the fulfilment of the right to education for all in Pakistan.
- Develop funding approaches and formulae that target Out of School Children especially girls, and compensate for disadvantage through weighted funding. Review budget proposals and spending for differential impact on girls and other disadvantaged groups through gender audits and inclusion audits. As a result of

Strategic Alliance: PCE & PGGA join forces

January 11th, 2018



Ms. Tahira Ahmed, National Secretary PGGA, and Ms. Zehra Arshad, National Secretary PCE, signing a memorandum of understanding to promote girls' education in Pakistan.

Two leading national organizations working on girls' education formally joined hands for the common cause of advancement of girls' education in the country. A memorandum signing ceremony was organized between Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) and Pakistan Girl Guides Association (PGGA) on January 11th, 2018. The MoU was signed by National Secretary PGGA, Ms. Tahira Ahmed and Ms. Zehra Arshad, National Coordinator PCE at PGGA

head office in Islamabad. Both signatories agreed on aligning their efforts and activities towards ensuring the improvement of girls' education and raising awareness around gender specific issues. Ms. Tahira spoke of the role PGGA has been playing towards character building of young girls in far flung areas of the country. She added that PCE is well suited to complement their work by making concerted efforts towards our common goal of

providing greater opportunities and advocacy platforms to girls, so that they may contribute as productive citizens of the society. Ms. Zehra iterated the importance of activities such as self-defense training, disaster management and first aid in inculcating leadership qualities in young girls. Both parties outlined detailed agendas for collaboration and strategized future commitments to girls' education.



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Citizen-Led Grassroots Initiative

January, 2018



PCE strongly believes that communities are the key to identifying the various gaps in education system, especially at the grass root level. Civic engagement is at the heart of PCE's advocacy efforts. To engage communities in social accountability initiatives, PCE launched an intervention in selected in two districts of Sindh. The purpose was to capacitate communities in order to help them raise effective demands and help identify the challenges being faced by the communities with regards to education. Through this intervention, PCE sought to capacitate communities and equip them with the knowledge to mitigate issues at the local level.

For the scope of this intervention, four union councils were selected from Sindh for this intervention. Survey of seventy nine (79) schools was carried out in UC Shah Awais and Shalmani in District Jamshoro and UC Ghotki-1 and Ruk in District Ghotki. This survey focused on enrolment rates, dropout rates as well as new enrolments, various types of funds received by the school and its utilization, information related to SMCs and school facilities. A separate survey form was used to identify the five major challenges being faced in schools. These survey forms were used to develop a baseline report identifying the key issues faced in the school level in both the Districts. The baseline was also used as evidence to

develop training modules specific to these issues.

A total of ten (10) Focus Group Discussions were conducted in the districts to help identify the main issues being faced by communities with respect to education. Based on these findings, capacity building sessions were also organized for key stakeholders including local government officials, School Committee Members and Head Teachers. As a result of the capacity building training sessions and with technical support from PCE's member organization, School Improvement Plans (SIP) were developed for seven (7) schools of the District Ghotki. Specific format for these plans was developed which further enhanced the capabilities of SMC members in identifying the problems at the school level as well as drafting a plan to introduce a more conducive learning environment.

To form a coordination mechanism between the duty bearers and the right holders, PCE formed People's Action Group for Education (PAGE) on a volunteer basis in District Ghotki. The composition of PAGE includes a representative from local government and education department (district level), local influential figures, school head, civil society representatives, members of the media and SMC

member along with parents. PAGE was notified as the designated communication and coordination group on education for the whole district by the Social Welfare Department.

From the platform of PAGE, a media campaign was launched that highlighted the deteriorating condition of schools in the District Ghotki. Special News Reports were prepared that used the data from the school survey that was conducted in the District. These reports were aired on National Television that reached out to the whole country. Articles were also published in the local newspapers, highlighting the wide variety of issues schools are facing in the district.

PCE's intervention in District Jamshoro revealed deplorable condition of Education as well as the socio-economic status of the people. It was found that there is a case of corruption, lack of political will and extreme poverty that is contributing towards low enrolment at the government schools of the District.

To further assist the citizenry, PCE developed a Social Accountability Framework that identifies key entry points for holding government accountable in the current institutional framework.

People's Action Group for Education (PAGE): Changing Demands into Actions



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PCE has been tracking budget at the district level over the last three years. The tracking exercise entailed a series of district level consultations with local stakeholders that include legislators, major political parties, school administrators and local governments on education budgets to ensure equitable and inclusive access to quality education. Through these consultations it came to light that there is a communication and coordination gap between the School Management, community members and the district administration. To overcome this challenge, PCE along with its member organization HWA

Foundation, formed a People's Action Group for Education (PAGE) in District Ghotki. The sole purpose of this group was to work on volunteer basis to identify, prioritize and take action for pertinent education issues at the local level. Over the course of last few months, PAGE has been working effectively to achieve its goal and has produced tangible results. This case study documents the achievements and good practices of PAGE as well as aims to focus on the need to formalize and institutionalize such groups for other areas as well.

People's Action Group for Education (PAGE)

Composition: Members of the group were selected on volunteer basis through consultative meetings held at the district level. The group has representation from Local Government, District Education Department, School Management Committees, parents, Head Teachers and members of the Media.

Activities: Since its inception, PAGE has held numerous meetings in District Ghotki, supported by HWA Foundation who has provided them technical and logistical support. PCE conducted a school based survey of two selected UCs (Ghotki-1 and Ruk). The findings of the survey were shared with PAGE which helped the group in identifying key

issues at the school level. PAGE held an in-depth meeting to prioritize the highlighted issues and drafted a plan of action. Till date, PAGE has met four (4) times with the district education department and has become citizen's voice in the district.

Achievements: PAGE was able to accomplish tangible results in a very short period of time with great support from the community members. It worked tirelessly towards resolution of issues based on evidence and deliberation. Following are the key achievements of PAGE.

1. Through meetings with the district administration, PAGE successfully advocated to be recognized as the designated communication and coordination group for education in District Ghotki. The social welfare department issued an official notification in this regard.
2. PAGE, through its deliberations, highlighted the need to have School Improvement Plans (SIP) for the SMCs to effectively address needs of the schools. Working in close coordination with School Management Committees, PAGE helped in devising seven (7) SIPs.
3. The District Officer (Education) Primary was preparing a list of potential primary schools that need infrastructural repairs and has missing basic facilities. PAGE consulted community members to identify such schools. Two schools were selected that were on the official list. PAGE successfully



advocated for these schools to be added in the list.

4. Through active participation of Media representative in PAGE, seven (7) news reports were prepared and aired on ARY News highlighting the deplorable condition of schools in District Ghotki.

Future engagements: PAGE is currently holding meetings with the District Education Department to adopt a community-based school in Saeedo Chachar area of Ghotki. This community school has enrolment of over 60 students who do not have access to a government school in the vicinity. PAGE is in process of writing an official letter to the district administration for this purpose. It is also working with the local newspapers to publish stories about the school conditions in the district. With reference to SIPs, it is currently working with another five (5) schools to develop their SIPs as well. Furthermore, the group is collecting more information with regards to school condition and missing facilities which will be

further highlighted through more news reports, reaching out to a wider audience.

Conclusion and way forward

PAGE has been an effective advocacy group working at the district level highlighting and resolving education issues at the local level. It is a great case of citizen participation and shows great potential towards achieving the common goal of access to equitable and quality education. It has successfully bridged the gap between the communities and the district administration and has become citizen's voice in the area. Community members have also started to recognize the group and are using this platform to reach out to the higher authorities with their complaints and suggestions. Though the group works on a volunteer basis, it needs technical and logistical support from other civil society organizations. To sustain this initiative it needs to be institutionalized through the support of development partners and replicated in other districts with similar circumstances.

GPE Financing Conference

Dakar, Feb 1-2, 2018

As part of GPE 2018–2020 Replenishment Campaign, GPE held a historic Financing Conference in Dakar, Senegal seeking increased global education financing to meet Sustainable Development Goal 4 and Education 2030 Agenda. The event convened a diverse group of education stakeholders, including 10 heads of states, government ministers and education advocates from around the world making it unique and the highest level education financing event.

Prior to the conference, PCE initiated “Fund the Future: Education Now” campaign seeking increased domestic financing for education. Letters were disseminated to Provincial Chief Ministers, Finance Ministers and Education Ministers thereby taking all relevant stakeholders on board. The campaign was rigorously taken up on social media as well, seeking time bound and credible pledges from the Pakistan government regarding increased financing of education. In brief, campaign aimed to secure the following:

- Time bound and credible pledges to increase education spending to 4-6 % of GDP in line with SDG 4 and/or increase spending to 20% of total government expenditure on education by 2020
- Expand tax bases through tax reform and tax justice by challenging tax avoidance, tax



evasion and raising new earmarked taxes

- Ensure equity in education by prioritizing sensitive allocation and spending to support marginalized groups
- Improve data on education financing and ensure a pledging baseline to ensure that all pledges can be monitored, tracked and measured
- Transparency in budgeting and increasing scrutiny of education spending

The GPE Financing Conference saw pledges from both the donor and developing countries. More than fifty (50) developing countries pledged a \$110 billion to education for the duration of 2018 to 2020. Two-thirds of the developing countries that committed to increasing education spending to 20% of overall budget will have reached the goal by 2020. Donor countries also pledged a sizeable increase in funding from \$1.3 billion contributed over the last three years to \$2.3 billion for 2018-2020 period.

The United Arab Emirates, the first Arab and Middle Eastern donor to GPE, pledged US \$100 million.

Education stakeholders went on to highlight the importance of education prompting governments to work hand in hand with civil society and the private sector to strengthen education systems in low income countries.

“The lack of quality education is the greatest threat to my generation”, said Mohamed Sidibay, former child soldier and GPE Youth Advocate from Sierra Leone.

Macky Sall, President of Senegal, while addressing the conference said, “The struggle of education is the mother of all battles . If we lose that battle, we lose all battles.”

Peace Ayo, Malala Fund Youth Advocate, iterated the importance of educating girls. She went on to say “If we want a great nation, if we want a great world, we must educate the girls.”

“Education gives today's young people a pathway to fulfill their full potentials as adults,” said Henrietta Fore, Executive Director of Unicef.

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