



Global Action Week Report 2014

Pakistan Coalition for Education

List of Acronyms

ARF	Aas Research Foundation
AEO	Area Education Officer
CDNO	Community Development Network Organization
DEO	District Education Officer
FDO	Farmers Development Organization
GAW	Global Action Week
GCE	Global Campaign for Education
GULS-PK	Global Umbrella for Livelihood and Security in Pakistan
GWO	Gul Welfare Organization
KDA	Kainaat Development Association
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
NCHD	National Commission for Human Development
PCE	Pakistan Coalition for Education
PYL	Pakistan Youth League
PSF	Pakhtun Students Federation
RTE	Right to Education
RDO	Rural Development Organization
SPSD	Sabawoon for Peace and Sustainable Development
SDS	Sindh Development Society
SADO	Social Awareness and Development Organization
SEHLA	Society for Education, Health and Livelihood Actions
SADA	Special Ability and Development Association
SDO	Sustainable Development Organization
YAAD	Youth Activism for Advocacy and Development
YO	Youth Organization

Global Action Week report 2014: Equal Right, Equal opportunity: Education and Disability

Global Action Week (2014)

Global Action Week (GAW) is celebrated annually by the efforts of Global Campaign for Education (GCE). In this week a coalition of NGOs and teacher unions in over a hundred countries raise awareness against various themes related to education. This year's theme for Global Action Week was, 'Equal Right, Equal Opportunity: Education and Disability.'

As a member of Global Campaign for Education from Pakistan, Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE); being a network of diverse civil society members, actively supported the campaign by organizing child led peaceful protests in all provinces through its member organizations across Pakistan. The member organizations organized walks and arranged seminars in order to create a sense of awareness among the masses and all concerned stakeholders regarding education, especially inclusive education.

The Route to Special Education in Pakistan

In Pakistan, children and adults with disabilities were usually excluded from the regular school system. Teachers in regular schools did not have the expertise to handle children with special needs. They were not familiar with their learning needs and schools lacked the flexibility to make room for children with special needs.

The first time the government endorsed the education of children with special needs was in a report of the National Commission on Education in 1959. As a progressive step, the Education Policy 1972, for the first time in Pakistan allocated funds for special education services. The Directorate of Special Education was established in 1985, 26 years after its first endorsement. In 1986, National Policy for Rehabilitation of the Disabled was formulated, focusing on inclusive education. Soon after, the National Policy was revised in 1988 with a change in the title, 'National Policy for Education and Rehabilitation of the Disabled'; highlighting education. In 1998, National Policy of Special Education was formulated followed by a National Policy for Persons with Disabilities in 2002.

The private sector and NGOs have been working actively for the promotion of inclusive education of children with special needs. During a panel discussion titled, "Inclusive Education: Access to Quality Education of Children with Special Needs and Role of Teachers," held in Lahore in 2013, Mr. Asif Saeed Manais said, "Inclusive education is important but first we need to understand the disabilities. It is a challenge to bring 0.7 million people with disabilities to the

schools.” The number of individuals with disabilities is high indeed and it is extremely necessary to raise awareness regarding the importance of education for individuals with special needs.

Global Action Week Activities across Pakistan

Child-led peaceful protests were carried out all over Pakistan on May 07, 2014 in commemoration of Global Action Week 2014. The protests were followed by seminars, distribution of education material, awareness raising speeches and debate competitions in schools.

Balochistan

1. Gul Welfare Organization (Pishin)

A meeting with the heads of schools was conducted and students of various schools were then invited. Banners and Placards were provided to students and the walk planned included visits to various famous roads of Pishin city. Participants were to be served with lunch at the end of walk.

The objectives of the activity were to mobilize and motivate the community to send children to school, to raise awareness regarding education, information dissemination about education and to raise awareness regarding girls’ education.

A walk on education 2014 was conducted in Pishin City, 72 students and stakeholders participated in the walk. Field Workers and Volunteers of GWO facilitated the Walk. Banners and play cards were held by participants. Posters shared by Pakistan Coalition for education-PCE were also held by participants. Banners, placards and posters were exhibited along with chanting of slogans regarding the importance of education. During the walk various roads were visited, which helped attract thousands of citizens towards the slogans and awareness arose among them regarding importance of education. Many stake holders appreciated the walk and gave feedback regarding community conflicts on the education of one’s child, tribal customs which does not allow female

students to participate in walks, social hurdles faced in the joint walk of male and females and less income groups which cannot afford to send their



children to schools.

2. Sabawoon for Peace & Sustainable Development (SPSD) (Killa Safullah)

A rally was led by SPSPD on May 07, 2014 and people participated from different walks of life like social activists, lawyers, local political leaders and students. The event brought together these people and community members to take a stand and play their role in improving the quality of education service delivery in the district and province as a whole. The rally started from Main chock Killa Siafullah Bazar and passed through press club and main bazaars roads and back to main chuck for conclusion. The distance covered on foot was almost half a kilometer. The rally participants took banners and posters. The banners read impactful messages such as “To contribute to my nation I need Quality Education”, “Remember your promise: Article 25 A”, “My right to education Equal right, Equal Opportunity: Education and Disability.”

The speakers expressed that, “By providing poor quality education to our children we are not



only ruining their future potential but ruining the future of our country”. They further stated, “Stakeholders must stop pretending as we can see the poor quality that the majority of the districts and rural areas are getting and doing nothing about it. It’s time for us to take action and make right what has gone wrong with providing quality in the public education system for the future of our children by working together as foundation bodies. Civil society organizations and other education sectors can do best by demanding government to put in place

urgent measures to improve the quality of public education services as protest.”

3. Society for Education, Health & Livelihood Actions (SEHLA) (Layyah)

SEHLA organization first time celebrated Global Action Week at district Kharan with collaboration of Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) and supported by youth groups, SEHLA organization volunteers and education department.

SEHLA Organization planned to conduct a district based rally with the collaboration of Community stockholders, youth volunteer groups and the Education department. SEHLA organization invited various stakeholders for the rally by sending them invitation letters at the planning phase of this activity.

Venue for the rally was Government High School Kharan. The rally started at 10:00AM from Model High School to Press Club, Kharan by passing the main road of Quetta and the main market. Rally ended with remarks of DEO Mr. Syed Noor-ud-din Shah and Mr. Safiullah, Chairperson SEHLA Organization.

Mr. Syed Noor-ud-din Shah (District Education Officer) expressed that education plays a vital role for the development of societies and it makes individuals aware of their rights. Education is equally important for girls as well as boys. High dropout rates in rural areas are a very serious issue, we all should take action against such a serious issue by organizing complaints at village and city level. All stakeholders, who are present in this event should organize individual meetings with community representatives at village level and make them understand the importance of girls' education.

Mr. Safiullah (Chairperson SEHLA Organization) thanked all participants from the community; youth volunteer groups, school teachers, students and social organization members who gave their precious time to make this event successful.

4. Youth Organization (Quetta)

Youth Organization's staff carried out a children-led peaceful demonstration highlighting the Right to Education (RTE). The demonstration also focused on Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities.

This demonstration was carried out in the form of a rally, organized in Quetta and it started from the civil secretariat and ended at a private school in Quetta. The school management and Youth Organization's staff delivered brief speeches regarding the specific theme of the week.



The second rally/walk was arranged at a school in District Pishin in which the District Education Officer, DEO Female, other District Education staff and district council members along with Youth Organization's senior management participated. Besides this, the walk also included Parents teachers' management committees and local notables of the area.

The Executive Director of Youth Organization drew attention of the education department to issues like missing facilities at school level, lack of teachers' capacity, high dropout rate of students and lack of resources. Moreover, he highlighted the achievements of youth organization in the educational sector. Further, he explained the current activities of youth organization, which is now taking an initiative to rehabilitate and construct government schools and provide teachers with capacity building sessions.

Distribution of uniforms, school bags and stationery was also a part of this initiative.

Main objective and purpose of this activity was to create a sense of responsibility and ownership of the education department to have a dominant role in all school level activities, managing resources, updating, upgrading and provision of missing facilities and capacity building training sessions for teachers. NGOs may only work for a limited time but the real responsibility needs to be taken by the educational department.

In the end, the District Education officer explained the overall hurdles and problems the department of education has been facing from a long time and expressed his gratitude to the organization for such an initiative and achievements in the education sector.

5. Youth Activism for Advocacy and Development (YAAD) (Loralai)

A Seminar was conducted at Government High School Mirwise colony Loralai, on May 07, 2014. Thirty eight (38) participants including political and religious leaders, civil society organizations' representatives, education department officials, media persons, teachers, parents and children participated in the seminar. YAAD's President Mr. Ashraf Khan and other members also participated in the seminar.

The themes of the seminar were:

- I Need Quality Education.
- Remember your promise article 25-A.
- My Right to education.
- Equal Right, Equal Opportunity; Education and Disability.

The purpose of the celebration of Global Action Week is to highlight the importance of quality education, issues in the education department, missing facilities in schools, awareness through mass media, and involvement of parents, teachers, children, political and religious leaders, and government officials.

Addressing the participants of the Seminar, President Youth Activism for Advocacy and Development YAAD—Mr. Ashraf Khan, Professor Mr. Younas Khan Norzai, Principal Mr. Zahoor Khan, Senior Science Teacher Mr. Abdul Malik Nasar and District Member PashtoonKhwa Mili Awami Party Mr. Shams Humzazai, shared that education is the most important part of human life and free and quality education is the basic right of every child. After the 18th amendment provinces have a window of opportunity and authority to make necessary legislations and a mechanism for smooth implementation of article 25-A.

They also added that it is the responsibility of the education department to provide on-job trainings to teachers to ensure quality education and to provide basic facilities in schools for children especially for special children.

Afterwards the floor was declared opened and an interactive discussion was facilitated by the YAAD President. Participants of the workshop were made aware of various educational issues and they agreed and accepted that children and the youth are a major part of our society; builders of our future. Hence, the provision of free and quality education is the due right of children and it the responsibility of the state to ensure the provision of quality and free education to every child without any discrimination of race, caste and language.

Speakers requested all participants especially media persons to highlight this issue and forced government to implement article 25-A.

In the end Mr. Ashraf Khan (President YAAD) thanked all the political and religious leaders, civil society organizations' representatives, education department officials, media persons, teachers, parents and student for their participation in the workshop and giving their valuable time and insight.



6. Global Umbrella for Livelihood and Security in Pakistan (Guls Pk) (Duki ,District Loralai,)

The objectives of the activity were to promote a healthy environment for education, right to education, inclusion of children with special needs, raising awareness for the importance of education and promoting girls' education.

A walk for Global Action Week 2014 was conducted in Duki City, 101 students participated in the walk. The walk initiated from a local based school and included visits to various famous roads of Duki City. Mr. Akhtar Muhammad, Mr. Samiullah Khan, Mr. Abdul Hameed and Mr. Noor Muhammad were taking care of children and facilitated the walk. Some stakeholders also participated in the walk. Banners and placards were held by participants and posters produced by Pakistan Coalition for education (PCE) were also given to participants for the demonstration. In the end, Mr .Abdul Rasheed enlightened the importance of education in the following words, "Many stake holders appreciated the walk; political parties contacted GULS-PK office and assured that education especially female education will be their foremost priority."

7. Anjuman Itehaad Nojawana (Barkhan)

Children from Saeed Public Grammar High School Barkhan led a rally in the spirit of Global Action Week, holding banners, placards and posters and chanting slogans for the promotion of right to education and quality education.

The students led the way to Press Club Barkhan where a seminar regarding education and Global Action Week 2014 was held. District Education Officers, officials of Anjuman Itehaad Nojawana, media personnel, civil society, parents and students participated in the conference. They said that there are a large number of schools in the district which are not operations, these schools for girls and boys should be made functional as soon as possible so that all students in the district can get education. Government schools also lack basic facilities like clean drinking water, latrines and boundary walls; the government should work towards equipping these schools with full facilities. Moreover, admissions in schools should be based on merit alone so that no child is discriminated against. The main focus was on creating awareness regarding education being a basic right and the implementation of Article 25-A.

8. Pameer Development Society (Zhob)

A walk was held beginning from Islamia High School and ending at Press Club Zhob in which parents, students, teachers, educationists, media personnel and civil society participated.

The senior officials of Pameer Development Society and some participants expressed their views regarding education and the implementation of Article 25-A. They demanded the provision of free and quality education by the government and that the government should fulfil its duties in fulfilling the rights of the people.

They also highlighted the issue of out of school children and stated that 2.2 million children in Balochistan are unable to go to school mainly due to poverty. There is also an urgent need to build schools in Balochistan and equip existing schools with facilities. The current government increased the budget from 13% to 24% which is a positive step; however, the participants felt that there should be a larger increase in the budget for more improvements in the education sector.

Sindh

1. Sindh Development Society (SDS)

Sindh Development Society (SDS) in collaboration with Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) organized a walk from Model School to Hyderabad Press Club. The participants were holding placards stating slogans related to education.

Addressing the participants of the walk, General Manager (SDS) Ms.Asma Bibi stated that this walk was in connection to Global Action Week for education, under the theme “Education and Disability” and “Equal Right, Equal Opportunity.”

She said the current situation of schools in the province of Sindh is not good as they lack basic facilities like safe drinking water, latrines and compound wall. The minister for education agreed

that thousands of schools in Sindh are closed. She said it is everyone's responsibility to raise a voice for education.

Ms. Firdous Sangi, a women rights activist expressed that such activities help in raising a voice to inform the government and other high officials regarding the children of Sindh who need free and quality education. She further said every child has the right to get education and it is important to realize the persons with disability regarding their right to education.

2. Community Development Network Organization (CDNO) (Jacobabad)

The Global Action week launch meeting was held at the CDNO's head office on May, 05, 2014. Forty people including males and females participated in the meeting including people from the education department and CDNO officials. The meeting helped in finalizing the work plan which detailed the various activities to be carried out during the week.

The celebration of Global Action Week 2014 was initiated by an education awareness walk with slogans of Equal Right, Equal Opportunity – the theme of Global Action Week 2014. The walk started from Shaheed Allah Bux garden, passing through different routes of the city and ended at District Education Jacobabad.

Several children, civil society members and education officials participated in the walk. At the end, Mr. Muhammad Muslim (CDNO), Mr. Shah Zaman (Education Department), Mr. Muhammad Yusif Soomro (Education Department), Mr. Izhar Hussain (Press representative) and others, at the occasion said that it was important to run a campaign in order to encourage students to attend school and reduce the number of out of school children. During the walk, a huge number of journalists covered the activities for their respective news channels and newspapers.

In connection with Global Action Week, an event with special children was arranged at a special needs school in Jacobabad on May 08, 2014. The chief guest of the event Ms.Nasreen Chhargari said,“NGOs are playing a vital role in creating awareness at the community level.”

Furthermore, a village based enrolment campaign was carried out by active members of CDNO at village Muhammad Fazil Brohi and village Noor Muhammad Pathan on May 09, 2014. In the villages selected, two members of CDNO (male and female) spent a whole day with the community. They met and mobilized parents to enroll their children in schools. This activity was extremely beneficial as 44 children were enrolled in different schools on that particular day.

3. Aas Research Foundation (ARF) (Sukkur)

In the spirit of Global Action Week ARF organized a walk/demonstration outside Press Club Sukkur with the collaboration of PCE. This activity made a significant difference in the field of

education, created awareness in the community and aimed to develop a sense of responsibility in all the participants. GAW is celebrated to create awareness and enhance the system of education, particularly education for special children.

A meeting was arranged with the District Officer of Education, Sukkur, on May, 02, 2014. In this meeting, the schedule of the activities was discussed, finalized and it was suggested that students and teachers from IQRA Primary School would participate in the rally/demonstration along with officers from the education department. The rally was to start from Fawara Chowk till Press Club Sukkur. In this connection, politicians, media persons and civil society organizations were cordially invited to participation the event.

Aas Research Foundation (ARF) with the collaboration of Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) organized a rally/demonstration outside Press Club, Sukkur. The rally led by more than 110 people started from Fawara Chowk which was led by the CEO of Aas Research Foundation. The rally crossed from different roads and areas before reaching Press Club, Sukkur. A large number of social workers, politicians, journalists, education department officials, teachers, students, disabled students and others participated actively. Objective of the demonstrations was to create awareness regarding education and to include special children, particularly this year. Global Action Week is to give special children confidence and appreciation, because all human beings are equal, and their rights are equal.



Other speakers and participants expressed that education is a basic right, so we must educate our children and get enroll maximum children in the schools and institutions, because education is only way to development keeping in view the importance of education. We have to struggle for its promotion and development. Simultaneously, special children are also important part of our society that we must enroll them in schools as they are just like other children.

4. Allakh Welfare Association (Mirpur Mathelo, Ghotki)

Allakh Welfare Association Tahsil Mirpur Mathelo District Ghotki organized a Walk in the Jarwar city main area of District Ghotki. Allakh Welfare Association organizes different activities on the occasion of “Global Action Week for Education” annually with the partnership of Pakistan Coalition for Education.

Allakh Welfare Association organized a Walk from Roshan Tara School Jarwar to Baghat Kanwar Ram & Press Club Chowk, Jarwar. Mostly participants of the walk were students of Roshan Tara School, teachers, citizens, and media persons. Children participated in a banner activity and held posters provided by Pakistan Coalition for Education. Children displayed the posters during the Walk and demanded the Government open the schools in remote areas particularly schools for girls.

Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Sandilo (Field Officer, Allakh Welfare Association) that education is the right of every child. Mr. Kamal Bozdar, a teacher at Roshan Tara School said in his speech that education is a must for every child because education is the base for any kind of development. Then Mr. Mushtaque Ahmed Sandilo, social activist and teacher at Roshan Tara School, also expressed similar views and added that it is important to have schools in not only urban areas but rural areas as well. He urged the Government to allocate more budget for education institutions, particularly primary schools.

5. Kainaat Development Association (KDA) (Kandhot)

On May 07, 2014 a protest rally was organized by Kainaat Development Association (KDA) commemorating Global Action Week supported by Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE). In this protest, students from different schools participated whole heartedly along with educationists, journalists, scholars, social workers, civil society and people from different walks of life. In this protest students carried out banners in their hands in order to share their grievances regarding poor education in the country. The posters stated, “I Need Quality Education, Remember Your Promise: Article 25 A, My Right to Education, Equal Right, Equal Opportunity: Education and Disability,” and implementation of article 25-A which is a part of 18th amendment.

CEO of Kainaat Development Association shared his views on the current position of education and stated that the government is responsible for the provision of free and quality education. Journalists also highlighted the issue of educational institutions that most primary, middle and secondary schools are closed in the district and no proper movement and planning is seen. Regarding quality of education, people from the civil society said that recruitment in education institutions are made on political basis because of which the quality of



education is in a deplorable condition. Overall, participants of the rally demand from the government to implement Article 25-A of the constitution and to provide free and education from the age of 5 to 16 years.

6. Hwa Foundation (Ghotki)

Hwa Foundation annually celebrates Global action Week (GAW) at Ghotki. This year it celebrated with new slogans and renewed passion. With these slogans, Hwa foundation approached the education department, school management committees, media and other stakeholders. All of them co-operated and played their roles actively.

The rally started from Government: Main Primary School Ghotki and ended at District Press club, Ghotki. The participants of the rally exhibited the wall posters provided by Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE). The participants showed these to the media, School Management Committee members, education department and other stakeholders. The rally passed through the bazaar and gained the attention of civil society individuals and parents as well. The children said that it was their right to have quality education.

At district press club, Mr. Jamal Shah the educational expert said that they were paying taxes and all other dues but the government, especially the education department was intentionally being ignorant of their claims. There is shortage of teachers, lack of modern courses, curriculum is old and the infrastructure is extremely poor. He suggested that some refresher courses and trainings to be arranged for the teachers, also that the curriculum required more attention. It is necessary that textbooks should be revised as new editions are published in light of recent developments in the respective subjects. Mr. Abdul Hameed said that the budget allocation for education is very low. The supervisors and other education officials are incompetent. Education officials do pay surprise visits to schools, but their attitude and behavior towards the teachers is terrible. Mr. Ayaz Ahmed said that this district has eight feudal lords, literacy rate is very poor, poverty is everywhere and the constant Indus river flood and rains have made the communities psycho-socio patients. There are limited sources of income, agricultural inputs are expensive, the product output is very low due to the floods and rains, and thus, it has created a difficult situation for the communities. The Government is not sincere with the education sector. There are many



schools which have been closed and many teachers are regular absentees. In this situation only stakeholders can perform and stand for their rights. He invited all the stakeholders to come, contribute and encourage an increase in enrolment, especially of female students, make the teachers bound to come to school and perform their duties and to bind the educational officials to change their attitude towards the teachers.

Punjab

1. Farmers Development Organization (FDO) (Lodhran)

Demonstrations on Right to Education were planned to be conducted in two different sessions. These demonstration began from a transect walk including school-age children, special children, parents, Rescue 1122, participation from local NGOs and participants from District Press Club. In this walk, children, parents and participants from local NGOs raised their voices on a collective forum and used IEC materials including placards, banners and posters. Main objective of the walk was to capture the attention of the government and to promote article 25A in which the State is responsible for providing free and quality education to all children from the age of 5 to 16 years. After the demonstration, Farmers Development Organization (FDO) arranged a table talk and invited students, parents, representatives of local NGOs, representatives from District Press Club, Education Department and lawyers for making the event more successful.

During a discussion on Right to Education, Ms.Iffat Tahire Somro (District Women President PTI & Advocate) expressed her views that for making a fair and smooth school system, we have to strengthen School Management Committees and make them more active in the society. It wa stated that local representatives should promote education with the support and coordination of the Education Department. Moreover, it is important to include and promote technical education in our existing educational system.



Mr. Abdul Rasheed, President of Gulshon Village Organization stated that we should support the education department in the implementation of educational policies and in the efforts to increase the enrolment of students in school. It is the State's responsibility for providing school buildings with all kind of facilities.

Ghullam Meeran, President Press Club District Lodhran, stated that Quality Education is the basic right of each and every child and the State is responsible for providing quality education. NGOs are doing their best in educational sectors according to their capacity and limitations. There is a need to collectively address the root causes of the problems hindering the progress of the educational system.

Mr. A. B Khan, District President of Private Schools, said that NGOs are working efficiently at the field level and are playing their role in increasing enrolment in schools. However, the capacity of NGOs is very limited as compared to the Government's educational departments.

Moreover, it is important for the educational departments to make strong monitoring policies for bringing a positive difference in the educational sector.

Ms. Khadijah, DEO Educational Department District Lodhran stated that the education department is working hard to provide education to all. In addition, Ms. Khadijah shared some progressive figures and shed light on the future plans of the government in education sectors.

2. Al – Asar Development Organization (D.G.Khan)

The activities that were implemented by Al-Asar Development organization by the sponsorship of Pakistan Collation for Education Islamabad with respect to Global Action Week May, 07, 2014 on the subject of Global Campaign for Education included students' speeches and an awareness raising walk.



On May 07, 2014, Al-Asar Development Organization arranged speeches at model village school Talariwala, UC Burreywala, Tehsil Jampur district Rajanpur. The objective behind the celebration of global action week was to raise awareness regarding education for all. 7th and 8th grade students presented speeches on the importance of girls' education in the society. This was an interesting activity and all participants appreciated the efforts of the students.

After the speeches of the students on the importance of education (especially for girls), an awareness raising walk was held on Jampur, Dajal Road in which all the students and individuals present participated. The objective of the awareness raising walk was to spread an important message regarding the celebration and importance of global action week, and to develop interest of the community to participate in awareness raising campaigns.

3. Pakistan Youth League (Rahim Yar Khan)

In the spirit of Global Action Week 2014, Pakistan Youth League organized a speech competition in which students from different schools participated.



Students gave speeches on different themes, including 'my right to education; I need quality education, equal right to education and government responsibility to provide education to every child of the nation.' The speeches were assessed on content and delivery.

They stressed on the importance of girls' education so that the next generation can have educated mothers and that we need passion and commitment to education.

In the end, prizes were given to the position holder students. This was followed by a peaceful walk for the awareness of people to educate their children.

4. Sanjh Foundation (Layyah)

The walk for education was carried out by students in the light of Global Action Week 2014. The main purpose of this activity was to mobilize students to demand quality education and promote the right to education.

Issues pertaining to quality education in the district Layyah were discussed by educational experts and they appreciated the activity to demand quality education and right to education. The activity also highlighted the need to educate, engage and empower civil society individuals so that more children should be sent to school.

Moreover, government and civil societies should be sensitized along with the community about the importance of quality education. It was also pointed out that parents in rural areas are not familiar with the importance of girl's education so they do not let them go to school. There is need of behavioral changes in the society and it is time to take necessary steps to promote girls education.

5. Madni Women Development Organization (Muzaffargarh)

Madni Development Organization arranged a seminar at Jinnah Hall to address education issues. Education officials, experts, civil society members, media personnel, students and parents were present in this seminar. Ms. Rani Waheeda gave a briefing on Global Action Week 2014 and its theme of inclusive education.

The participants then highlighted that education institutions need reform and rather than making new institutions, there is a dire need to improve the conditions of the education institutions

present. Moreover, there should be a proper learning environment for students in schools so that they can learn and participate fully. A special focus was made on quality education so that the students do not drop out of school and no child loses out on education.

6. Noor Women Organization

Noor Women Organization carried out a walk and a seminar in the spirit of Global Action Week 2014. The child-led peaceful walk ended at Government Elementary School where a seminar was held to discuss education related problems.

The highlighted points of the seminar included the importance of education, the awareness and implementation of Article 25-A, the need to encourage girls' education and most importantly the facilitation and encouragement of students with disabilities.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

1. KhwendoKor (Dir Lower)

KhwendoKor was assigned the responsibility to organize Global Action Week for education in Dir Lower. Dir has very low educational and developmental indicators. Khwendo Kor jointly with another local partner organization, Dehi Ijtimai Taraqati Social Worker Council- DITSWC, completed the assignment. The planning was made for the event to be arranged in Press Club. Local schools and organizations were informed to participate at 10:30 am on May, 07, 2014 in Press Club.

KhwendoKor community based school Wara Banda, FC school Balambat and Air Foundation school students participated in the event. Students presented various items in the Press Club Hall. The audience included government officials, civil society organizations, media, teachers and others. The audience appreciated the students. Ms. Saira Nawaz KK School Officer briefed the audience on the situation of education in KP. During the briefing all the students and children



were holding the placards describing various slogans related to education and article 25–A of the constitution of Pakistan. There were also demands of increasing budgets and bringing equality in the educational system. A press release was also shared on this occasion.

A demonstration was organized outside the press club. Various organizations displayed banners and placards. The demonstration was led by the children including females and special people. The

organizations joining the demo included Khwendo Kor, FC School, Wara Banda KK Community School, Dehi Ijtimai Taraqiyati Social Worker Council- DITSWC, Rural Development Organization- RDO, Social Awareness and Development organization- (SADO), Special Ability and Development Association (SADA) and Pukhtun Students Federation (PSF).



2. Tanzeem Huqooq-ul-Ibad (Swabi)

School children participated enthusiastically in the rally by chanting slogans and holding placards for the promotion of education and Global Action Week 2014. This was followed by a seminar on the importance of education. The participants of the seminar focused on education being a basic right and the urgency to implement Article 25-A. They also discussed that education enables an individual to be aware of his/her rights. Moreover, education counters many ills in the society, especially an ill like poverty because it enables an individual to be self-sufficient and a civilized member of the society.

The problem of out of school children was also discussed and the need to educate parents regarding the importance of education was seen as a crucial step towards progress. In order to solve issues related to education, the participants suggested the collective effort and cooperation of all sections of the society.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir

1. Sustainable Development Organization (SDO) (Authmuqam)

SDO organized a walk and awareness event in Authmuqam, the District headquarter of Neelum, on May 07, 2014. A group of students led by boys from Govt. Boys Secondary School Authmuqam marched to main city area. While the other group led by girls from Govt. Girls Secondary School Authmuqam marched from Chakmuqam to Main Neelum Valley road. Civil Society members, District government officers, journalists and representatives of Civil Society Organizations were also a part of this peaceful demonstration. The boys displayed the hand written placards and posters demanding their right to education. In this context as per SDO's request various organizations such as "Read Foundation, National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) and Education department Neelum" fully participated with their slogans advocating right to education.

After the march, both groups got together at the main hall of Government Degree Girls College Authmuqam. Mr. Khurram Jamal Shahid said that a lack of focus on educating disabled children

is affecting the chances of fulfilling the international promise to achieve universal primary education – a globally-agreed target set out regarding Education for All and Millennium Development Goals. When a disabled child does get the opportunity to receive a quality education, it enables them to secure other rights throughout their life, enabling them better access to jobs, health and other services. For education to play this role as ‘an enabling right’, it must be of high quality, provide equally, built to tackle discrimination and allowing each child to flourish according to their own talents and interests. He demanded to create appropriate legislative frameworks and set out ambitious national plans for inclusion.

Global Action Week Activities – School visits (Islamabad and Rawalpindi)

In the spirit of the Global Action Week 2014 and its theme of Inclusive Education, representatives from Pakistan Coalition for Education went to ASAS International School F-8 and Chambeli Institute (Rawalpindi) to meet and interact with students with special needs.

Advocating Education and Disability: Special Needs Children

For the commemoration of GAW 2014, two representatives from Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) visited ASAS International School (F-8) on May 7, 2014. ASAS International is a mainstream school in Islamabad which caters to children from playgroup to A-levels. The school also has a Remedial Group which welcomes mentally challenged children to be a part of their school.



As PCE representatives, our focus was on the Remedial Group, its operation and the challenges faced by the school administration. Hence, we were lucky enough to get a chance to interview the Principal of ASAS, Mrs. Tabassum Nisar and one of the teachers of the Remedial Group, Ms. Faiza Inam. Mrs. Tabassum Nisar has been running this school since 2002 and has expanded the school since then. However, the initiative to start the Remedial Group was taken in 2010, when a parent with a special child came up to her and wanted the child to be a part of the school. 4 years down the line she has successfully sent four of the Remedial Group students to be a part of the mainstream classes. This is an excellent achievement for her school especially because of her own personal effort and dedication and cooperation of her staff, students and parents.

The Remedial Group today has 11 students catering to the needs of the children suffering from autism, dyslexia and hearing disability. They are taught four subjects (English, Mathematics, Urdu and Science) and are made to interact with the students from the mainstream school during music, computer and art classes and in the library as well. They are also made to participate



actively in sports along with all the other students in school. Moreover, in order to incorporate these students in the society and to enable them to adopt social behavior, the school arranges regular trips to parks and restaurants. These trips build their confidence; enhance their ability to interact, shape their personality and enable them to be an active member of the society. According to Mrs. Tabassum Nisar, *“We want to enable these children to be a part of the society; we want them*

to be independent with jobs in the future.”

We also got a chance to spend time with the mentally challenged/special kids and got some first-hand knowledge as to how they spend their day in school. We saw that the teachers have been able to settle these children into a routine which is a challenging task. The children were friendly and confident and interacted with us without any reluctance. Some of the students read words for us while some counted numbers perfectly. They were a happy lot of kids; painting, counting, coloring, writing and playing – just like kids from mainstream schools.

The kinds of challenges the school faces are related to the attitudes of parents, financial resources and unavailability of qualified staff. Mrs. Nisar expressed that as a society, we lack awareness regarding the difficulties that special children face. We need to be tolerant towards these children and rather than expressing pity, we need to learn how to accommodate these children so that they can operate normally in our society. Moreover, she said that some parents do not want their children to be labeled as ‘special’ and so they live in denial. These parents need to understand that their child requires special attention which can help them in their future. Hence, we need to focus on making people aware of the problems these children face and how we can help them. Furthermore, shortage of qualified staff to teach and groom special children is also a huge challenge. For a class of 11 students, there are three teachers and one helper at present. Qualified people are much needed so that more special children can be admitted in the school. The Principal also suggested that the government should look into this matter and provide funding to institutions, teachers and qualified personnel because special children require separate attention, apart from mainstream schools.

Ms. Faiza Inam who is a clinical psychologist and speech pathologist teaches the children of the Remedial Group. She gave a wonderful message for all of us as a step towards creating awareness, *“Every kid has a specialty, every kid has the capability to learn something and every kid has the potential to be something, to be contributive in this world. We just need to take them on the right path.”*

Advocating Education and Disability: Making Differences Ordinary

Chambeli Institute visit

Representatives from Pakistan Coalition for Education visited Chambeli Institute (Rawalpindi) on May 12, 2014. Chambeli Institute has been operating since the past 30 years; catering to the needs of mentally challenged children. At present the institution has 105 children enrolled aged 3-15 years, out of which 76-80 children are regular attendees. The enrolment criterion is based on a week-long assessment which involves the following characteristics:

1. Social interaction
2. Academic level
3. Physical fitness
4. Speech and language
5. Overall social behavior

The Principal, Ms. Sobia Qamar, has been heading the institute since March 2013. We were lucky to get a chance to speak to her directly regarding the problems she faced in the past year. First, she highlighted the problem of lack of awareness on part of the parents of the students. She showed concern towards those parents who send their child to school just to get five hours of free time. In her opinion, parents need to realize that their child not only needs attention at school, but he/she requires monitoring at home as well. She welcomes parents to discuss issues so that they can collectively address issues related to their child.



Secondly, she said that trained teachers and qualified personnel are urgently needed. There are only seven teachers in the institute who handle academics, behavioral conduct and vocational trainings. Being a speech and language pathologist, she has started a speech therapy department since out of 105 children, 70 require speech therapy. However, in order to impart speech therapy she requires help in the form of funding and qualified teachers.



As PCE representatives we not only spoke to the Principal, but we were fortunate enough to interact with the children and teachers present in school. We began by visiting the junior classes followed by the

senior ones. We distributed chart papers and color pencils to all the children who were enthusiastic and excited to draw flowers, apples, cartoons, buildings and various other things. In the junior classes we also rewarded and engaged them by face painting and distributing juice and biscuits to all the children. In the senior classes, the children majority of them who were boys were friendly and confident. One of them was highly talented as he drew cartoons perfectly from memory; another was good at singing while another was aspiring to be a doctor. The senior girls were involved in art work and showed us samples of embroidery, jute work and egg shell paintings.

We hope the best for the students who are eagerly gaining knowledge through art, academic learning and speech and language therapy in this institute. However, there is a dire need to qualified teachers, teacher trainings and workshops and cooperation from parents and the civil society.

Press clippings



Farmers Development Organization (FDO)



HWA Foundation



Sindh Development Society (SDS)



Aas Research Foundation (ARF)



Kainaat Development Association (KDA)



Youth Organization (YO)



Gul Welfare Organization (GWO)



Khwedokor