



**CONSENSUS STATEMENT AGREED TO BY ALL PARTICIPANTS
AT THE DIALOGUE ON EDUCATION REFORM IN PAKISTAN HELD AT HARVARD
UNIVERSITY, JULY 15-16, 2011.**

The Dialogue on Education Reform in Pakistan took place on July 15 and July 16, 2011 at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the United States. The Dialogue was sponsored by the Pakistan office and Education Support Programme (ESP) of the Open Society Foundations (OSF), South Asia Initiative (SAI) at Harvard University, Institute for Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS), Pakistan, and Center for Economic Research (CERP), Pakistan.

Education is a right and this right must be realized. Over thirty academics, civil servants, politicians, journalists, and representatives from civil society, private sector and donor agencies convened at the Dialogue on Education Reform in Pakistan to seek ways of operationalizing this right and to take advantage of a number of concurrent opportunities that civil society, business and the government have helped precipitate in recent months.

The 18th Amendment has enhanced provincial autonomy and added Article 25A to the Constitution of Pakistan, which makes the provision of education to Pakistani children a mandatory state responsibility. Business groups, like the Pakistan Business Council, are increasingly recognizing the centrality of education to Pakistan's economy and its ability to generate jobs. Civil society groups have proven that delivering quality education to underprivileged Pakistani children is possible—largely because the demand for education is high, across all income groups, all ethnicities and all communities.

Given these positive developments, the Dialogue sought to establish a consensus on defining core problems in education in Pakistan, and identifying tangible ways in which those problems could be addressed.

The overwhelming consensus was that the foremost goal for education in Pakistan must be that all Pakistani children must have a minimum standard of reading, writing and arithmetic.

Moreover education in Pakistan must facilitate social cohesion within the diverse social, economic, and political context in Pakistan.

In order to achieve this, the group unanimously agreed that:

- There must be standardized testing, measuring, and dissemination of learning achievements. This will also provide an objective outcome against which to measure reform progress.
- There must be recognition that teachers are central to education in Pakistan. They need to be supported and held accountable.
- There must be an acknowledgement that the private sector is an important ally in the quest to educate Pakistan. It needs to be facilitated, provided that it meets minimum education standards.

In addition, the group agreed that parental demand for quality education is high, across the spectrum of Pakistani society. Yet parents often operate in an information vacuum. This needs to change. Parents must be empowered with information, about school performance, about school and teacher accountability, and about learning achievements. Moreover, parents, children and other stakeholders need support for mobilizing to demand better and wider education provision.

To operationalize these goals and objectives, we need to draw upon social, political, institutional and financial resources. Society must work coherently to do so. The media must amplify demand for better education. Parents must organize more effectively to agitate for change. Politicians must lead the demand for change and must be put under persistent and sustained pressure to ensure that government is responsive. Finally, the government must establish new mechanisms for service delivery, primarily by dramatically reforming the financial and administrative structures currently used to deliver education. Provinces must come up with mechanisms to ensure that the education sector is localized and managed as close to the parent as possible. Government must mobilize additional resources, specifically for education and spend it more efficiently and deliver better outcomes.

Participant Name	Affiliation
Absar Alam	Foundation Open Society Institute Pakistan
Ahmed Salman Humayun	Institute of Social and Policy Sciences
Ali Cheema	Fulbright Scholar, Harvard Kennedy School of Government and SAI
Ali Hussain Malik	Additional Secretary Education (Schools) Punjab
Asim Ijaz Khwaja	Harvard Kennedy School of Government
Basit Zafar	Federal Reserve Bank, New York
Bushra Gohar	MNA Awami National Party
Charlotte Cole	Sesame Workshop
Deirdire Watson	Department for International Development
Eirini Gouleta	Department for International Development
Faisal Bari	Open Society Foundations
Farah Hamid Khan	Secretary Education KPK
Javaid Aslam	Chairman Planning and Development Board, Government of Punjab
Jo Bourne	Department for International Development
Khurram Dastgir	MNA Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz
Maggie Ronkin	Harvard Summer School
Mehnaz Aziz	Children's Global Network
Marvi Memon	Former MNA
Mir Ibrahim	GEO Media Group
Monazza Aslam	Oxford University
Mosharraf Ali Zaidi	Columnist
Nafisa Shah	MNA Pakistan Peoples Party
Nasreen Kasuri	Chairperson, Beaconhouse School System
Omar Masud	MIT
Reehana Raza	Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives
Romilla Karnati	Sesame Workshop
Saira Tarar	MNA Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz
Tahir Andrabi	Pomona College