

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) or the “Centre of Education and Consciousness” Public Trust, was established in 2000 as a citizens' response to the multiple crises of education. With humble beginnings in Lahore, ITA has expanded programs in service delivery, capacity building, research and advocacy across the country. Its Vision is “To Promote education as a comprehensive process for human and social transformation” ITA's programs range from Early Childhood Development-ECD (0-8); school improvement (5-16); non-formal catch up programs for the most vulnerable (4-14) to technical vocational (15-30); college and tertiary level (17+) embedded in health hygiene, environmental responsibility, heritage and learning for understanding. Programs are preferred within geographical clusters through seamless linkages across all age groups for sustainable development and human happiness. Each initiative is underpinned by gender activism, public private partnerships, alliance building and CSR mobilization.

Drop-in Centres is one such platform as a bridging program for the most vulnerable children and youth of Pakistan. Drop in Centres in Korangi have been opened in collaboration with the Karachi Youth Initiative (KYI) for inclusion and social integration of youth and children through meaningful activities and skills. Korangi is a sprawling congested urban area known for its ultra-poor migrant communities both from Pakistan and beyond borders. KYI and ITA are working through an innovative program for age groups 5-25/30 for addressing the needs of highly exploited children and youth. The two age groups comprise of: out of school children (5-12) who can be mainstreamed in schools after a bridging program and for (13-30) through a functional literacy and skill development program for livelihoods and entitlements. For all age groups creativity and expression is at the heart of the program to provide relief on the one hand for child /youth labor and also help them with life skills to cope with life more confidently and on better terms for their well-being.

Karachi Youth Initiative is a grant-awarding organization aimed towards providing positive opportunities for the youth of Karachi so as to reduce the attractiveness for the youth to engage in counterproductive activities. KYI works across five thematic areas- Education and Leadership, Vocational Training and Skill Development, Recreational and Benign activities, Community Engagement- to pilot and test short-term projects focused on youth through its implementing partners. KYI has so far implemented over 215 different projects in Korangi, Lyari, Sultanabad/Hijrat Colony and other areas of Karachi.

We have engaged with a variety of partners, authors and artists to help the children /youth become aware of their heritage, identity, aspirations and potential. The program began in February 2014 and will continue for 12 months. In this period until August 2014, we have managed to address the catch up learning needs of 1700 children through the bridge program; Through support from JICA and their life skills NFE materials; and technical vocational skills through STEVTA in existing school places/labs for 716 Youth in the trades of IT and beautician It is truly an inclusive and program for 5-30 and one where the community feels comforted that their young are being cared for through substantial programs. The stories and encounters with transformation run rampant; each child/youth has aspirations that find some resonance – or baazgasht within their being through the interventions designed in essentially borrowed public sector schools.

VIEWS OF ABDUL KALAM

Name: Abdul Kalam

Mr. Abdul Kalam is the voluntarily caretaker of the Government School, Bengali Para

Purpose of Life: To make education more accessible he intends to assist the public and create awareness regarding the right to education.

He is committed to the initiative as an awareness program for children who are poor and live a severe hand to mouth existence. *'8 children of my family are being educated here, for which I am really grateful'.*

Views about Program: Apart from education, children are being taught about cleanliness, positive behavior and good citizenship values. Upon returning home children share with us about all that they learnt during that day – each day is something new and exciting!

Message: By expressing my gratitude towards this initiative 'I would like to convey my message, that education, education and education is our only NEED ; please continue to support us'.

COURAGEOUS MOTHER

Salma is a widow of Noor Muhammad; her husband died seven years ago leaving her to take care of six daughters and two sons. She spent her life with wisdom; she got her children enrolled in a Government school to help them overcome social and economic barriers. One of her daughters, Samina assists her family members through her income which she earns through stitching and the other two daughters Sana and Mahnoor provide home tuitions to children in order to help their siblings and mother. Salma was worried as to how her children could avail the education of modern technology. One day Sana, brought it to her mother's knowledge about the offering in the neighborhood of a "Skill Center" in the Government school where free computer knowledge is being imparted. Despite, facing so many hardships Salma resolved to provide computer education to her daughter, and she too got herself enrolled in the IT program to learn the skill herself so that she too can remain abreast of the 21st century!



GROUP DISCUSSION OF MOTHER'S DURING KATCHERI

Every month, for the welfare and prosperity of their children a meeting is organized at the drop in centres between parents and teachers called 'Maon ki Katcheri'- (mothers' court). It is a lively opportunity to discuss local issues and find a support group to resolve them both for the DIC and also for themselves.



JOURNEY FROM BEING A TAILOR TOWARDS EDUCATION

Abdullah has been working at a tailor's shop since 3 years. He is 11 years of age having 8 brothers and 1 sister and he himself being the 5th one of the siblings. His father doesn't earn a living therefore all brothers are working in order to earn something to share the family's burdens. Abdullah has a weekly income of Rs.100. Abdullah's one and only sister Mehmooda is a student at the Government school. When she found out about the drop in centre (DIC) located in her school, she shared this information with her brother. Abdullah was keen to be educated. He then discussed this with his master tailor; however he flatly refused and Abdullah was very disappointed. When this came into the knowledge of the DIC teacher, she went over to talk to the tailor. She explained the master, that during the 2 hour of load shedding it would be feasible for him to grant Abdullah, his apprentice, some time to study at the DIC. The master had no choice as during that time when there is no light. The master tailor insisted that during this time Abdullah's responsibility is to work on button-tucking and that is a very important task as well. The teacher at the DIC was very concerned and asked the Project Coordinator to help with some solution for Abdullah so that he too could have a bright future. The proposal made to the master tailor was to that Abdullah's daily share of button-tucking would be done by the DIC teachers- two extremely dedicated and humane citizens. This solution left the master tailor embarrassed leaving him no other option but to grant permission to Abdullah to educate himself at the DIC. Abdullah's parents were delighted knowing that their son is an active student at the drop in centre! Abdullah's dream had come true.



ART GALLERY



RETURN TO SCHOOL

Naseem knew well about fighting for rights and especially right to education. Since she was 10 years old she had been supported through a bridge program in Akbar Shah Goth centre. She was not only a good student but also an active participant in all extracurricular activities and aced them too! When she turned 12, she was pressurized according to family traditions to stay at home and behind a veil. She was withdrawn from the centre by her parents who were insistent that her space is now behind the four walls of their humble home; education had to take a back seat to traditions and what the community thought was appropriate for girls her age. The only exception they made was that she could go to the local Madrassa for religious education. The active teachers at the DIC realizing this context and eager to reintegrated Naseem in learning options visited Nasreen's mother to find out why Nasreen had suddenly decided to quit the DIC. The mother narrated the entire situation to her saying that girls did not have the permission to get school education after puberty. The DIC teachers tried her best and convinced both parents to get her enrolled in DIC again and also promised to enroll her in the vocational training courses in the evening so that she could also support her family financially . At the end of May, 2014, not only did Naseem availed education at the DIC but also convinced her friends in the neighborhood, who too had been undergoing the same barriers to learning to join the centre. Now Naseem and her friends are all enrolled at the DIC with the help of an enthusiastic teacher and Naseem as the ultimate mobilizer.



Message from Project Coordinator

The drop in centres are a home away from home for me. I love the children and youth. Each one has a unique story to tell; they want to change their lives and those of their families through learning, livelihoods and laughter. My team and myself are excited each day when we witness the transformation due to this program and we want to see them all prosper with flying colors. I am really thankful to my team and collaborators, the Sindh Education & Literacy Department; Directorate of Education Karachi, the principals of each school where we have located the DICs and above all KYI who have provided this opportunity to make this program so meaningful and empowering for many.