

**Consultation Meeting on the
National Education Policy 2016 - AJK
Voices of Citizens and Youth
September 21st, 2015
Muzaffarabad**

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
EFA	Education for All
EYAs	Education Youth Ambassadors
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
GB	Gilgit-Baltistan
ICT	Islamabad Capital Territory
ICTs	Information and Communication Technology
IPEMC	Inter Provincial Education Ministries Conference
ITA	Idara-e-Taleem-o- Agaahi
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LMTF	Learning Metrics Task Force
MoE&PT	Ministry of Education and Professional Training
NEP	National Education Policy
NFE	Non Formal Education
PAIS	Pakistan Alliance of Independent Schools
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
RTE	Right to Education
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training

Acknowledgements

On September 21st, 2015 a consultation sessions on the National Education Policy 2016 was held in Muzaffarabad, AJK. The ITA team facilitated the consultation sessions and successfully engaged both students/youth and teachers/faculty in contributing to the policy revision process.

The bold decision by the citizens of Pakistan to engage with the NEP 2016 policy and reforms process is matched by the same vigor and robustness as seen in the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) data collection on learning, making the invisible visible through a citizen led effort. Recognizing the critical urgency of article 25 A – right to education and its implementation; the education sector plans and targets, and the upcoming Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – especially goal 4 and its accompanying 10 targets – it was essential to find a platform in collaboration with federal and provincial governments for citizens', especially youth, to voice their concerns regarding the current education scenario in Pakistan. After all, youth comprise 31 % of our population and they form the active ranks of students, teachers, entrepreneurs, and young parents, who rarely get an opportunity to voice their opinions.

Seeing as the NEP 2016 will affect their lives for the next 10 or 15 years, it was imperative to find a space for articulation and expression, not just in the mainstream capital cities, but also across the provinces, so as to give as many people as possible the opportunity to be heard and to make valuable contributions in the form of recommendations that will be included in the upcoming education policy.

This exercise would not have been possible without the active engagement and support of;

Abdul Majeed Banday, District Education Officer, AJK

CEO Hamza Development Foundation, Sheikh Muhammad Mushtaq

UNDP – Pakistan who has supported the effort to mobilize voices for SDGs and Jawan Pakistan

Dubai Cares as part of its ongoing nationwide advocacy through ITA on policy and Right to Education

Teams from:

- Pakistan Alliance for Independent Schools (PAIS) Mr. Mohammad Jamil Najam and other founding members
- Education Youth Ambassadors (EYAs) and Right to Education (RTE)
- ASER Pakistan
- Idara-a-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) public trust National and Provincial teams

Background and Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2009 is part of a series of education policies dating back to the very inception of Pakistan. In August 2015, the Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoE&PT) completed the first round of review of the implementation status of the NEP 2009 and acknowledged the process at the Inter Provincial Education Ministers Conference (IPEMC) – the highest inter provincial education body of the country, a forum of all federating units comprising Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, four provinces (Sindh, Baluchistan, Punjab & Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and four Areas (FATA, GB, AJK and ICT). Further guidelines on review and updating of the NEP 2009 were issued with timelines to all units. Civil society working on cutting edge evidence based reforms stepped in to consult and include citizens' voices particularly the youth, as students, teachers, head teachers, edu-preneurs, and CSOs at the district level across the country with support from the departments of education and their focal persons for NEP 2009 review from each province.

National Education Policy 2009

<http://unesco.org.pk/education/teachereducation/files/National%20Education%20Policy.pdf>

The 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan was passed shortly after the NEP 2009 was formally passed by the cabinet (September 2009) on 19th April 2010. This amendment led to major shifts in entitlements, decision making, and responsibilities across the federation, necessitating review of the national education policy 2009. However, this review was put off through an agreement across Provinces and the Federal Government in September 2011 to honor NEP 2009 and the National Curriculum 2006/7. Since subjects on which earlier both federal and provincial governments could make laws were devolved completely to the provinces, the NEP 2009, particularly its assumptions on governance and financing became increasingly difficult to sustain.

18th Amendment-- New Fundamental Rights and Key Shifts

19A. Rights to information- every citizen shall have the right to have access to information in all matters of public importance subject to regulation and reasonable restrictions imposed by law

In the Constitution, after Article 25, the following new article shall be inserted, namely:

“25A Right to education – the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age five to sixteen year in such manner as may be determined by law.”

Abolishing the concurrent list transferring the residuary powers to provinces for 47 subjects including Education and Health

Full text on the 18th amendment at <http://pakistanconstitutionlaw.com/4thschedule-legislative-lists/>

Furthermore, in light of Article 25-A, the conclusion of MDGs in December 2015 and the recently endorsed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 – especially Goal 4 and its 7 accompanying targets and 3 strategies, on education, the need for a review of the 2009 Policy became even more pressing.

Article 25 A

“The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may bedetermined by law.”

Well known for its work with youth across Pakistan, especially for the citizen led country wide initiative ASER with 10,000 youth volunteers, its work with Education Youth Ambassadors (EYAs) program, and its close engagement with the SDGs post 2015 agenda, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) was naturally inclined to take the NEP 2016 consultations forward and upon the request of the MoE&PT provided technical assistance with the NEP 2016 revisions process. ITA set up a website dedicated to the review effort (<http://itacec.org/nep.php>) ensuring all relevant reference documents at the provincial, national and global levels are at one place.

ITA along with ASER, Right to Education Teams (RTE) and PAIS conducted 14 consultative meetings across Pakistan in order to mobilize public opinion and to provide inputs to revise National Education Policy. The aim of the consultation was to provide the Pakistani youth (teachers, associations, students, education youth ambassadors /activists, young entrepreneurs in education and learning), civil society, and experts with a platform to give their input on the upcoming new National Education Policy 2016, a policy that will undoubtedly have an impact on their lives for years to come.

More specifically, the broader objective of the NEP 2016 exercise is ***to engage with focused constituencies, especially youth through consultations, face to face and through social media for the NEP 2016 ensuring links with 25 A and the Sustainable Development Goal No 4 for voice and recommendations.***

The reports/recommendations of each consultation will be formally signed off by the provinces and federal government representatives, such that the recommendations are integrated within specific segments of the NEP 2016.



Consultation Meeting in AJK- Muzaffarabad

Consultation

For this process to be an effective one, ITA developed a sector wide analysis on the education sector and its sub-sectors. For each sub-sector, the analysis included national commitments (NEP 2009 policy actions), provincial commitments (education sector plans), international commitments (SDGs and EFA etc.), current baseline on key indicators pertinent to the sector and the challenges that need to be overcome. By providing the participants with critical reference documents including sector plans from each province, ITA was able to engage in and receive meaningful recommendations. Furthermore, a number of additional tools were used to make the exercise a successful and meaningful one.

The meeting was attended by 55 participants. Table 1 in the Appendix shows the number of participants from each district across Pakistan.

During the session, Education District Office Mr. Abdul Majeed Bandey, also present at the meeting, applauded the initiative of involving important stakeholders in the policy review process. He urged the participants to remain vocal and assist with the monitoring and evaluation process and said “if you see a fault in the system, or if you see an official not performing their duties effectively, then you must inform the relevant authorities. If we don’t know there is a problem, we can’t fix it”. Additionally he made his own recommendations for the new policy as well, stating that “on the job training and professional development programs are the need of the hour. The new policy must touch upon continuous professional development of teachers and other educational staff”.

Also present at the session, Mr. Sheikh Muhammad Mushtaq a social activist and CEO of Hamza Development Foundation said that credit must be given where it is due and even though AJK isn’t performing at optimal level, the education sector has definitely seen some improvements. He recommended SMCs should be allocated a budget so they can become even more active and effective.

In order to mobilize the maximum number to people and make this exercise as visible as possible, the ITA team posted NEP sessions on the official ITA Facebook page and live Tweeted the proceedings as well.



Additionally, ITA created an interactive forum where likeminded individuals could start conversations and have discussions with fellow stakeholders regarding the policy. The discussion forum and blog posts can be found here http://itacec.org/nep_discussion_forum.php?pgid=6.

The NEP consultations also received extensive media coverage across Pakistan. Clipping and articles can be found online here http://itacec.org/nep_media_news.php?pgid=4.

Recommendations

Early Childhood Education (ECE)

During the breakout session, this group started its discussion by first talking about what ECE is and what its benefits are. They then moved on to discuss the ideal school environment in which the child can thrive and how parents can be involved in creating better learning environments at home. ECE experts in the group emphasized the importance of activity based learning and the need for well-equipped classrooms.

SDG Goal 4 target 4.2

By 2030 ensure all girls and boys have **access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education** so they are ready for primary education (Early Childhood Education)

They presented the following recommendations:

- ECE should also be made free and mandatory

- A formal roadmap should be designed for ECE to ensure goals and targets are being achieved
- Information technology should be incorporated when teaching at ECE levels
- To encourage growth – both physical and mental – teaching should be activity based
- ECE specialists should be involved in the policy making process
- Government officials and parents should be briefed and educated regarding the ECE processes so they are aware of the needs and requirements of the sub-sector
- First aid training is essential for teacher and the government must ensure that teachers are prepared for emergency situation

Primary Education

In AJK in particular, participants focused a lot of teacher training, certifications, and monitoring. They discussed the need for in and pre service trainings and discussed ways in which the concept of rote learning can be replaced with creative and hand-on learning.

SDG Goal 4 Target 4.a

Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

Below are the recommendations presented:

- Focus on ensuring school building are fully equipped and functional
- What constitutes as free education needs to be clarified – uniforms, transportation costs, books and stationery costs etc must also be included in “free education”
- Teachers must be fully qualified and certified and must also receive pre and in-service trainings
- Measures must be taken to ensure corporal punishment is eliminated
- Effective teacher monitoring systems need to be introduced to tackle the issues of teacher absenteeism and ghost teachers
- Creative learning and elimination of rote learning should be ensured
- Student teacher ratio should be monitored and classroom sizes should remain small – approximately 25 students per class
- Different committees should be appointed for keeping an eye on the education and academic system

Secondary Education

This group focused on how education at secondary level can be improved. They also talked about the importance of bridging the gap between primary and secondary education and also ensuring that students graduating from secondary level are fully prepared for the next steps in their educational journey.

Participants pointed out that at the moment there is no proper system of evaluation in place, and no way to hold teachers accountable for their poor performance.

SDGs Goal 4 Target 4.1

By 2030 ensure all **girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education** leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes (Right to Education)

Recommendations presented are as follows:

- All stakeholder must be on board during the policy making process and the final policy must be shared with the masses so they are aware of what their rights are
- Education administrations must pay regular visits to schools within their districts/territory
- An accountability criterion must be defined and implemented. PPPs can prove to be helpful in this regard
- School facilities need to be upgraded
- Financial and other progress reports must be made public for a more transparent system
- SMCs should be mobilized
- Teacher must be hired on the basis of their merit and not personal recommendations

Non-Formal Education (NFE) and Adult Literacy

There was a lot of debate on making people aware of adult literacy opportunities above all else. It was noted that the masses weren't aware of what NFE or adult literacy even is and the group participants pointed out that unless people are aware that such a thing exists, we can't meet our literacy goals.

SDG Goal 4 Target 4.6

By 2030, ensure that all youth and at least [x] per cent of adults, **both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy**

- Mass community awareness via the media and other means so stakeholders they are fully aware of the different opportunities available
- Use existing facilities /faculty after hours for NFE
- Mobilize the media to create awareness regarding NFE
- NFE should be provided in local/regional languages
- Special attention should be given to ensure women and girls are equally aware of NFE opportunities and are taking advantage of it
- Essential to have monitoring bodies in place to ensure proper funds allocation etc. and a need to strengthen the management capacity

Technical and Vocational Training (TVET)

This group focused its discussion on the importance of practical knowledge so individuals can earn a living. They addressed important questions such as how the government what can be done to create an environment more conducive to learning and make vocational training more practical and relevant. They also talked about the need for more vocational training centers and trained teachers to impart vocational training.

SDG Goal 4 Target 4.3 and 4.4

By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to **affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education**, including university

By 2030, increase by [x] per cent the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including **technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship**

The recommendations are as follows:

- Number of vocational centers are limited and it is not easy for everyone to access them, therefore the number of vocational training centers must be increased
- Vocational facilities need to be created especially for girls who are unable to finish their education/schooling
- A need to create an awareness and a shift in mindsets regarding TVET
- Vocational training should also include IT and computer trainings
- Skilled/qualified teachers and trainer are essential
- Access to first aid in these centers or emergency protocol in case of accidents

Governance and Financing

The group discussed severe lags in implementation of existing rules and policies and attributed the shortcomings of the current state of education in AJK to lack of effective monitoring and evaluation tools. They discussed how school councils can be activated and how public private partnerships can be used to the public sectors advantage.

SDG Goal 4 Target 4.7

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire **the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development**, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

The recommendations that were presented included:

- Increasing the funds allocated to AJK as the number of schools and the problem of missing facilities is still under addressed.
- Giving the AJK government a greater say/role in the hiring process
- Getting rid of administrative barriers and only hiring on the basis of merit
- There is a need to create child protection services in AJK, a body that can ensure that all children are getting their rights
- The medium of instruction should be a mix of English and Urdu
- All teachers should be hired on a contractual basis, and the contract should only be renewed if teacher performance has been up to par. Furthermore, the teacher selection criteria needs to be revised and implemented effectively

Appendix

Table 1: Number of participants from each district

Sr.No	Province	District	No. of Participants
1	Punjab	Lahore	88
2		Bahawalpur	84
3		Rawalpindi- University	73
4		Lahore- University	53
5	Sindh	Hyderabad	45
6		Mithi	46
7		Sukkur	60
8	ICT	Islamabad	28
9		Islamabad-University	67
10	Baluchistan	Quetta	50
11		Lasbela	62
12	KP	Peshawar	44

13		Mardan- University	51
14	AJK	Muzaffarabad	55

Annex A: Guidelines for Breakout Session and Discussions

National Education Policy 2016 Consultative Meetings

Guidelines for Breakout Sessions/ Group Work (All by sub-sectors and governance/financing)

- **What are the gaps and challenges in Quality/Access/Governance?**
- **Which Policy Actions from NEP 2009 remain unaddressed? What was left out in NEP 2009?**
- **Where does the sector fit in given provisions of provincial legislation under 25-A?**
- **What is reported, and what must be the official age group for each sub-sector to be reported in indicators? (25 A/ NEP 2009/SDG No. 4)**
- **Issues of Quality and learning in the sub-sector:**
 - Teacher adequacy in sector/recruitment systems(lack of head teachers primary/elementary levels)
 - Teacher Education (pre-service)and training systems(in-service);
 - Assessment systems /Boards: reliability; regularity, access & end use to improve learning
 - Textbooks: relevance, diversity, alignment to National Curriculum/new versions SLOs etc.
 - Integration of Inclusive education; Life Skills Based Education (LSBE); Climate Change; Environment. Child & Human Rights; Protection; Tolerance/peace; heritage; demographics/population.
 - Role of and space for supplementary materials in the ‘official teaching time’
 - *Role of, and support to technology enabled learning solutions and innovations*
- **Issues of access across each thematic area? (public sector and private sector share)**
 - Provincial Sector Plans to address access/gender, geography, class to reach unreached;
 - Role of private sector on its own resources/support through the education foundation
 - Facilities and norms in schools e.g. Number of rooms by level; need for inclusive spaces; library/resource room; ECE rooms; kitchen/store in low lying areas near rivers where emergency shelters are needed. Etc.
- **Governance :**
 - How can we activate school councils; ensure participation of students (grade 5 onwards); capability to spend large funds e.g. Non-Salary budgets (NSBs) *fact sheet on NSB?* How to ensure capacity for community engagement both VOICE & timely actions?
 - *Official role and scope of public private partnerships in public sector administrative and financing systems*
 - What are some ways of promoting Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in education – learning, monitoring and accountability?
 - Child/youth Protection/Life Skills: Importance of Life-Skills based education(LSBE) how can we ensure these in teacher education/training and in schools equipping students/ SCs with essential LSBE?: *Emergencies, preparedness systems & budgets mainstreamed.*

- **Financing: Is the financing adequate for the sub-sector? Releases are on time?** What are some innovative ways to tap resources for enhancing financing of education?
- Recommendations and way forward

Annex B: Template for group discussions and recommendations

Recommendation from Group Discussion:

For each group select a Chair (moderating/time management/reference to key docs); a Note Taker & agree on who will read the recommendations from this group. Each group should have access to reference documents. Please take 10 minutes to review documents in your folders.

Note: Please reference any additional documents used (internet sources/journals/books/news articles etc.)

Group Title: _____

Name of Group Chair/Moderator: _____

Name of Presenter: _____

Name of Note taker: _____

Group Members:

Please provide objectives of the sub-sector assigned:

Target audience and Key stakeholders:

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RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD:

