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The establishment of Aga Khan University-Institute for Educational Development

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CHAPTER 1

The Establishment of Aga Khan University – Institute for Educational Development

SADRUDIN PARDHAN & DENNIS THIESSEN

Introduction

The Institute for Educational Development at the Aga Khan University (AKU-IED) was established in July 1993 and is located in the school complex of the Sultan Mohamed Shah (SMS) [1], Aga Khan School in Karachi. The AKU-IED operates out of its own Professional Development Centre (PDC) [2], which was inaugurated in November 1994. Speaking on the occasion of the inauguration, His Highness the Aga Khan [3], said:

The Institute for Educational Development (IED) targets a very important, low status profession: teaching. The very creation of IED highlights the importance of teaching, and the programmes of IED are crafted to amplify that message. The technical work of the Institute is designed to raise the competence of teachers, both in their substantive areas of specialty and in their teaching skills, with the expectation that a truly excellent teacher can inspire others by example. Greater competence may not ensure higher status, but it will make it easier to achieve. Neither publicity nor good training is likely to make much difference, however, unless an environment is created in which good teachers can be more effective. IED is planning to devote much of its work to creating such an environment. By working with school heads, not just individual teachers, IED will try to build a new teaching environment. The leadership of school heads is essential to real reform.

Speaking on the same occasion the first Director of AKU-IED Dr Kazim Bacchus said:

AKU-IED courses focus on in-service training which, in most developing countries has been more effective than pre-service teacher education in raising students' academic performance. This is due to the poor quality of the latter training in these countries often being unrelated to local classroom realities.

Our programmes place great emphasis on school-based training so as to link theory and practice more effectively. This explains the location of this Professional Development Centre within the SMS school complex, thereby allowing our students to try out immediately any new ideas about teaching acquired from their classes or discussion groups.

School improvement is more effective when one works with entire schools – since each school has a culture of its own, which exerts an almost independent influence on the quality of its students' work. Therefore we shall be increasingly involved with key school-related groups to help develop in schools a culture that facilitates a high quality of academic performance.

In addition, our teachers are being prepared to be critically reflective inquirers into their own professional practice.

The above quotations summarize why AKU-IED was established and how it planned to operate. The institute's mission was to become a leader in educational reform and improvement in the developing world. Its focus was (and continues to be) on improvement in the performance of teachers and other stakeholders through professional development leading to overall school improvement. AKU-IED aims to achieve its goals through human resource development, institutional capacity building, research and dissemination and policy analysis and advocacy.

In developing all its programmes the Institute has worked closely with its overseas partners, the Faculty of Education, University of Toronto (and more recently the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education University of Toronto [OISE-UT]) and Oxford University Department of Educational Studies (OUDES).[4]

The remainder of this chapter gives a background to the development of AKU-IED and summarizes its evolution. Subsequent chapters will deal in more detail with its programmatic activities, research, outreach and associated challenges.

Genesis of the Institute for Educational Development

For a number of years, we have been grappling with the issue of declining trends in the quality of education in the countries where we operate schools. The problem is not confined to our schools, nor does it exist only in the developing countries. During the last decade, some alarming reports have come out describing the downwards trend in levels of knowledge, skills and

habits in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Declining quality of education has become an international problem.[5]

Concerned about the status of education in general but more specifically in areas where the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) [6] operates schools, His Highness the Aga Khan convened a Task Force in December 1988 to consider possible strategic interventions in the realm of teacher education and teacher motivation, curriculum development, school management and performance and educational research. While his primary concern was for the quality of education in AKDN schools, his overall vision was the development of models of high quality education which could impact national education systems.

In the course of its deliberations, the Task Force studied various reports from the UN agencies, UNESCO and UNDP, the World Bank and other Social Sector Organizations on the state of education in developing countries in general and more specifically in areas served by the AKDN. It reviewed educational activities of the Aga Khan Education Services (AKES) and the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), and discussed successful models of professional development and school improvement in both developed and developing countries. These included the teacher professional development work of the Pittsburgh School District Board at Schenley School in Pittsburgh, the Michigan State University Professional Development Schools model, the Oxford University Department of Educational Studies (OUDES) Internship Programme, and some of AKDN's school improvement programmes.

The western models cited above were based in real schools and involved teachers working with colleagues who were trained as Master Trainers and recognized as experts in contemporary aspects of teacher education. These models demonstrated that schools flourish when they are treated as individual entities and that the same inputs made in different schools do not yield the same results. School management plays a key role for the impact of the inputs and is critical to the reprofessionalization process of teachers in the school. They also suggested that teachers are critical in any school improvement effort and must be empowered and engaged in the process of change.

The Task Force also reviewed some small innovative grass-roots level school improvement programmes in the AKDN institutions in a number of countries in South Asia and East Africa. These included:

- (i) The School Improvement Programme (SIP) (1987-89) of the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES,P) which targeted the development of governance structures, school management, teachers and physical facilities in four large school complexes over a period of three years. This initiative followed denationalization of AKES,P schools in 1984-85 by the Government of Pakistan which had nationalized private schools in 1972.

- (ii) The Field Based Teacher Development Programme (FBTDP) in Northern Areas of Pakistan which was launched by AKES,P in partnership with the Government in the mid-1980s. This programme provided professional development opportunities for untrained practising teachers at their local primary school over a full academic year under the supervision of Master Trainers. Teachers were selected from a cluster of village schools within walking distance of the school chosen as the training centre. This was particularly beneficial to women teachers for cultural reasons as parents were reluctant to let their daughters (or daughters-in-law) go to larger urban centres to access teacher education and because the number of places available to women in teacher education institutions was limited.
- (iii) A School Improvement Programme of AKES, India, in Bombay, which aimed at improving school structures and curriculum content, teaching methodology and language skills of teachers. Increased community involvement was also addressed.
- (iv) The School Improvement Programme in Andhra Pradesh, India which aimed at curriculum enrichment, improving teaching methodology, school infrastructure and school management.
- (v) The School Improvement Programme of Aga Khan Mzizima Secondary School, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania during the mid- 1980s, which focused on the development of teaching and learning resources for specific subjects followed by developing teaching skills and teacher leadership.

All of the above initiatives – school improvement programmes – were focused on specific issues and were one-off time-bound activities. Several of these programmes had a very small professional base, were often dependent for their success on one or two outstanding individuals and were led by expatriates from contexts very different from the one in which the SIPs were launched. Moreover, there was little recognition and professional advancement for teachers undergoing in-service professional development through courses and classroom experiences. The AKDN SIP efforts also suggested that schools do not improve once and for all but need renewed efforts.

Based on their findings, the Task Force believed that a new and imaginative initiative was needed by the AKDN to institutionalize successful school improvement efforts of AKDN in developing countries. A credible base was required which could support ongoing school improvement efforts and which could recognize the efforts of the teachers undergoing professional development. The major contributors to any school improvement efforts were to be cadres of classroom teachers who could be trained to support colleagues and take leadership roles in the process of change. After much discussion the Task Force developed a profile of the teacher educator who would become an effective change agent by initiating school improvement activities. The person would be an exemplary teacher. As resident in-service teacher educator in a school he/she would attempt a variety of approaches

including demonstration lessons, opening up his/her classroom to visits by other teachers, offering formal in-service training to other teachers, helping younger inexperienced teachers overcome some of the initial hurdles which they were facing or likely to face in teaching. Mentoring, peer-coaching, reflective practice and other individual change strategies would be used by the teacher educator to help overcome teachers' resistance to the adoption of the new instructional approaches. The Task Force further envisaged that the teacher educator in collaboration with colleagues and faculty at AKU-IED would develop short intensive, eight-week courses at the IED for their fellow teachers in special areas of need such as the teaching of English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. It felt that developing persons with such a profile would require intensive professional development and envisaged that this could be achieved by identifying successful practising teachers who would participate in an extensive professional development programme lasting up to two academic years culminating in a Master's degree.

Pakistan was singled out by the Task Force as the most likely country for any intervention. Pakistan has a large AKDN presence including the largest Aga Khan Education Service in the network and is the site of the Aga Khan University.[7] As a country, Pakistan typifies the problems faced by developing countries in the delivery of education. It has some of the poorest indicators for education in the world, both for women and men, such as low public expenditure on education and very low literacy rates (as low as 4% in some rural areas). The mean years of schooling for females is an alarming 0.7 months with 2.9 years for males and 7 million children are out of primary school (Haq, 2000). There are gender and rural-urban imbalances in terms of access and quality. Curricula lack relevance and teaching and learning strategies are shaped by ineffective testing and examination systems. Schools are poorly resourced and educational institutions lack proper physical infrastructure and basic amenities, and are sub-optimally utilised. Exacerbating the problems is the underutilisation and mismanagement of resources, lack of accurate data available and the very low status accorded to teachers. Teacher performance is severely handicapped by an insufficient number of teachers to keep pace with a growing school population. The poor quality of teacher education; poor supervision with little attention to performance in the classroom and high teacher absenteeism are critical impediments to increasing community confidence in the value and relevance of education.

The Task Force recognized that addressing these issues would be a major challenge. But a beginning had to be made. It suggested an innovative intervention at the in-service level and made the following recommendations (AKU-IED, 1991):

- the Aga Khan University should found an institution to be called the Institute for Educational Development (IED);

- at the heart of the IED would be a Professional Development Centre (PDC). This should be based in a 'real' school providing regular education for a full range of school pupils from K-10 [8], thus providing a clinical 'teaching hospital' environment to which practising teachers would be brought to develop their skills in classroom settings under the supervision of clinical teachers.[9]
- in order to ensure high standards, AKU should establish a partnership with a few universities, perhaps three – one in North America, one in the United Kingdom and one in the developing world. The universities selected would have experience in the operation of field-based programmes and provide leadership in educational research, policy studies, evaluation and assessment; since AKU's experience so far had been only in the medical field.
- a Unit for Research and Policy Studies should be established to provide the intellectual linkage for the above project.

The First Years of AKU-IED

Recruitment of Schools and Teachers

The AKU-IED commenced operations in July 1993 in a temporary location in Karachi.[10] The faculty and administrative structure were quickly put into place and in January 1994, AKU-IED launched its initial M.Ed. course to prepare the first group of teacher educators. This first programme was designed to take place over 18 months. A majority of the participants in the first cohort were from Karachi, although taking into account possible future interventions in areas served by AKDN, representatives from Northern Pakistan, Central Asia, Bangladesh and East Africa were also selected to participate in the programme. Thus participants came from diverse cultures and school contexts.

Agreement with funding agencies [11], required that a specific number of candidates should be selected from schools in each of the sectors, i.e. Government, AKES, and private not-for-profit. Therefore, the programme was advertised to schools from the three sectors and detailed discussions were held with their managements. From the schools that expressed interest in participating in the programme, a small number were selected on the basis of their commitment to school improvement and their willingness to support teachers during the programme. Schools were expected to pay their teachers' salaries during the period of study at IED and to support the returning graduates in their role as change agents in the school. They also entered into an agreement to share 50% of the time of the returning graduates with IED over a period of up to five years. These selected schools were designated as *Collaborating Schools*.

A very large number of applications to participate in the M.Ed. programme were received from teachers of the selected schools and those who met the minimum selection criteria were short-listed. The IED faculty

visited each of the schools with potential candidates, observed candidates teaching in a real classroom and interviewed them, joined by a representative of the relevant sector.

The above selection process of first identifying schools as ‘collaborating schools’ and selecting individual teachers from these schools was pertinent to the AKU-IED approach to school improvement through institutional capacity building. Currently there are about 40 collaborating schools in Karachi. These schools work with AKU-IED to allow their teachers to participate in the Institute’s courses and they open their schools to the course participants to practise teaching approaches and methodologies studied in various modules. In areas outside Karachi the M.Ed. graduates work with the collaborating systems to conduct professional development courses for teachers of the systems.

The M.Ed. Programme

The programme began with a process of reflection and reconceptualization of existing practices as classroom teachers. The participants were provided with contemporary literature and the opportunity to discuss what constitutes meaningful teaching and learning. This process was integrated with visits to Karachi schools during which the participants observed lessons and wrote critical appraisals of those lessons. They spent a number of days in the school observing the school dynamics, talking to students, parents, staff and school management personnel to get an appreciation of the prevailing school culture.

Action research, journal writing and peer observation of classroom lessons were some of the activities embarked upon to inquire into practice. Throughout the programme the participants were encouraged to extend their reflection and inquiry into the interplay between education and extraneous events related to social, economic, cultural and political issues. In this way the participants were expected to relate classroom teaching to the real world.[12] These combined experiences of critical self-reflection and reflection on others’ teaching helped the teachers to appreciate the limitations of their own existing beliefs about the practices in teaching as well as those of others. They were encouraged to use these findings as bases to develop and articulate alternate and defensible personal visions about teaching.

In this first programme, 24 weeks were devoted to upgrading the subject knowledge of the course participants. Four subject areas were covered for this purpose. These were English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.[13] The process encouraged participants to reflect critically on their existing knowledge of the subjects and how these are taught and learned. The idea was to shift the teachers’ conceptions to a more critical perspective of subject learning and to develop pedagogical content knowledge of their respective subjects. They were introduced to innovative ways of subject teaching so that, as well as learning the content, their students can develop

skills and qualities which they need to be able to live and work in everyday contexts. Thus inquiry teaching, classroom discussions, concept building and cooperative learning strategies such as peer learning, pair work and cooperative group work were some of the innovative teaching methods embarked upon at the AKU-IED.[14] The participants were encouraged to develop skills to use the library, information technology and the world around them to locate and process information.

Collaboration and collegial relationships among the participants were encouraged through collaborative assignments, group problem-solving conferences and peer coaching activities. To prepare participants for their roles as mentors and educational change agents, seminars consisting of theoretical discussions on mentoring and managing educational change were held for periods of six weeks each, complemented by print and video materials. The seminars were interwoven with examples from participants' experiences from real classroom-related situations and teachers' needs. These were intended to give the participants some practical experiences of mentoring and implementing change as well as opportunities for reflection and action on issues emerging from their practical experiences.

Seminars were also held on issues related to curriculum, instruction and assessment, educational research and education in general in both the developed and developing countries. These seminars were meant to make the participants aware that classroom practice cannot be separated from research and curriculum issues.

Three additional features of the AKU-IED's programme played an important role in ensuring the success of the programme. These were the field-based component, the involvement of school heads and managers in the professional development of the participants and a research-based dissertation.

The field-based component was meant to address the problem of the divide between theory and practice, which pervades teacher education in both the developed and developing countries. To close this gap and to learn how the knowledge, attitudes and dispositions fostered by the AKU-IED play out in local contexts, the seminars offered at AKU-IED were often followed by classroom practice at some of the collaborating schools in Karachi.[15] Whenever specific needs arose, AKU-IED negotiated with the management of these schools to seek access. Thus whatever was learned in the seminars was tried out in actual classroom situations and its contextual relevance and appropriateness was reflected upon and alternatives were considered.

Change depends as much on the heads and managers of the schools where the change is to be implemented as on the teacher educators being prepared by the AKU-IED. Therefore, AKU-IED involved school heads and managers and other key decision-makers right from the beginning of its school improvement efforts. This involvement was mainly in the form of meetings, seminars and conferences concerning important decisions relating to school improvement where, among other things, the supportive role of the

school head and managers in the process of change and school improvement were discussed. While these activities were separate from the M.Ed. programme, whenever it was feasible the course participants of the M.Ed. Programme were invited to interact with their colleagues from the school management to share their experiences.

Learning to conduct research, to understand processes of data collection and analysis, and to become consumers of research was considered important in helping the course participants to inquire into processes and issues in learning and teaching. In the course of conducting research they gained insight into the nature of research and were able to get a first-hand experience of research design, implementation techniques, and the analysis and reporting of results. Every course participant wrote a dissertation (of about 18,000 words) on his or her classroom-based research.

All the participants in the first M.Ed. programme were given an opportunity to experience a western school culture through the two Partner Universities. One group was sent to Toronto in Canada and the other group to Oxford in the United Kingdom. During their nine-week residency, the participants explored different educational systems and school cultures, observed classroom practice modelled on current theories and studies and the concept and practicalities of school-based internships. In the subsequent M.Ed. programmes, this module has been replaced by an 'Alternate Exposure Module'. Through this module, the course participants get an opportunity to work in a rural setting (in an area of Pakistan) where an innovative education intervention is being carried out by local organizations. They become exposed to contextual realities of working in underprivileged areas. The course participants have found this experience rewarding in bringing them into contact with ideas and issues beyond their direct experience.

Upon graduation the participating teachers were designated as Professional Development Teachers (PDTs) charged with the responsibility of training teachers both in their own schools and at AKU-IED. The original title for the M.Ed. graduates was supposed to be 'Clinical Teachers' (CTs) (see note 4). However this term conflicted with a similar description being used at AKU's Medical College. The term 'Master Trainer' (MT) was rejected by AKU-IED faculty because of its behaviouristic connotations which do not fit with the concepts of reflection and inquiry. The faculty preferred the title Professional Development Teachers because it sent a clear message that AKU-IED graduates would be teachers involved in professional development activities.

The Professional Development Teachers in Action

On completion of the M.Ed. programme the participants, now PDTs, returned to their schools to work mainly in the capacity of exemplary teachers and as in-service teacher educators in their own contexts. Negotiations had

been held with schools and systems about the return of the PDTs and AKU-IED's expectations that the PDTs would get an opportunity to teach and also assist with the professional development of colleague teachers. However, in reality they went through different kinds of experiences (Halai, 2001). In schools with supportive school heads, the PDTs worked as both exemplary teachers and teacher educators. In some schools their role was restricted to teaching. In others they were promoted to management positions, for example, Education Officers in which no teaching was involved.

Soon after the completion of the M.Ed. programme, AKU-IED planned to embark on its first eight-week Visiting Teacher Programme (VTP) designed initially for teachers from the collaborating schools. The Visiting Teachers (VTs) have been seen, from the outset of AKU-IED planning, as key agents of change in their schools. The intention was that, having attended a VT Programme, they would apply their newly acquired professional knowledge and skills in their own classrooms and through modelling and guidance, help to improve the performance of their colleagues. The assumption was that once a 'critical mass' of VTs had been trained for each cooperating school, a significant impact on the overall quality of teaching could be expected.

After consultation between AKU-IED faculty and heads of cooperating schools it was agreed that whenever possible, two parallel VT programmes would be conducted taking into consideration the school term dates. It was agreed that the first VTPs would focus on the teaching of Social Studies and English (in October-December, 1995). This would be followed by Mathematics and Science VT programmes (early 1996). After negotiations with school management, six PDTs with specialization in English (3) and Social Studies (3) were invited to AKU-IED to plan and conduct the first two Visiting Teacher Programmes. The PDTs worked with AKU-IED faculty and Partner University faculty to develop the framework and the curriculum of the programme. The programme attempted to improve the content knowledge of the teachers, introduced them to a wide range of teaching methodologies and assisted the teachers to gain a better understanding of their own and their students' roles in teaching and learning.

A large component of this intensive programme was based in the classrooms of AKU-IED's co-operating schools where the VTs observed teaching and learning, applied new approaches and reflected on their experiences. By the middle of 1996 five Visiting Teacher Programmes had been successfully completed. Details are discussed in Chapter 5.

Evolution of AKU-IED

Findings from the First Programme Reviews

After two years of IED operations, both the M.Ed. and the VT programmes went through extensive scrutiny by external reviewers, an independent research team and AKU-IED faculty. There was a general agreement that

both the programmes were successful (International Development Research Centre Report 2, 1996; Skarret et al, 1996). The confidence level of the graduates was high. The PDTs performed well in conducting the VT programmes. Their school heads spoke highly about the change they had undergone. Some PDTs were pleased with their achievements in carrying out professional development activities in their schools. However, many issues were identified for the two programmes. For example, the M.Ed. programme had tried to include too much content for the available time. It was suggested that too much time was spent in face to face class activities, there were overlaps between modules and feedback on assignments did not come on time. Moreover it was felt that the area of primary education had been neglected, the English medium was a major challenge for some participants, and the subject content knowledge in all areas needed further strengthening. Keeping these findings in view the M.Ed programme was extended to two full years and mechanisms were introduced to ensure that issues identified were addressed.

The VT programme was also considered to be too comprehensive in scope. It needed more emphasis on content and a specialist focus on either primary or secondary level. Many teachers preferred a bilingual mode of instruction because of weak English language skills. A follow-up to the programme was considered to be essential. It was felt that this could include regular seminars, school-based support and possible networking. Lessons learnt were incorporated in subsequent programmes. A number of alternative models of the Visiting Teacher Programme have evolved since the inception – details can be found in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Development through New Programmes and Centres

In the past eight years AKU-IED has continued with its major programmatic activities. However, it has been open to considering new opportunities to test new grounds and other programmes. Some examples of these include:

- Capacity Building in Balochistan.
- Introduction of Advanced Diploma Programmes.
- New models of the VT Programme.
- New Professional Development Centres.
- Development of Professional Associations of Teachers.

Capacity Building in Balochistan

In mid-1996 AKU-IED faced a major challenge when the government of the Pakistan province of Balochistan approached it for assistance with capacity building to improve quality of education across Balochistan. After a number of meetings between representatives of the Government of Balochistan, World Bank consultants and AKU-IED faculty it was agreed by the Government of Balochistan Primary Education Department to develop a

sustainable model of professional development which would create capacity for developing contextually relevant programmes. Through this agreement a pool of 12 M.Ed. graduates was developed, 180 teachers went through a modified VT programme which enabled the teachers to work as mentors for colleagues in the field and a series of short management programmes were conducted for education officers [16], who would support the teachers in the field. The mentoring programme was conducted through the Urdu language medium, a first experience for AKU-IED. This intervention proved to be successful and was lauded by both the government and aid agencies. For example, (i) the graduates of the mentoring programme started a process of working with teachers in cluster schools (within a 15 km radius) supported by District Education Officers and the Primary Education Department staff; and (ii) while the first four mentoring programmes (120 participants) were carried out at AKU-IED, subsequent programmes were carried out in Quetta, Balochistan, by PDTs developed by AKU-IED with some support from AKU-IED faculty. For AKU-IED this intervention in the public sector showed a major achievement of its objectives of capacity building for sustainability (see also Chapter 6).

Introduction of Advanced Diploma Programmes

In July 1997 AKU-IED embarked upon two Advanced Diploma Programmes not envisaged originally in the first Task Force proposal although a mention was made of the possibility of this type of intervention. One programme was targeted at the headteachers of AKU-IED's collaborating schools who felt that they needed professional development to become pedagogical leaders. From AKU-IED's viewpoint, this group of school leaders would become better prepared to support their teachers who had gone through AKU-IED programmes. Upon completion of the programme it was found that the participants felt that it had added value to their work. PDTs felt that the heads seemed to appreciate their work better (see Chapter 9). This was the first time that such a programme had been conducted in Pakistan.

The other diploma programme targeted VT graduates of science and mathematics, giving them an opportunity to continue their professional development. From this subject specialization in mathematics and science, the participants felt that their classroom practices had improved and their pedagogical content knowledge had been enhanced. A number of cooperating schools utilized their expertise in professional development activities for other teachers. Many of the graduates of this programme have continued with their professional development (Aman & Macleod, 1999). Both programmes have become a regular feature of AKU-IED's professional programmes.

New Models of the VT Programme

In 1998 AKU-IED tested a modified model of the VT programme in Nairobi, Kenya. Instead of the usual eight-week intensive programme conducted at AKU-IED and its collaborating schools, this model was spread over five months taking advantage of school vacations in August and December when teachers met face to face with the Institute's team. Between September and early December the teachers taught in their own schools with support from the instructional team. During this period a number of weekend seminars were also conducted. The model proved to be contextually appropriate because it addressed some major issues such as releasing teachers during term time (Pardhan & Wheeler, 1998). This model has since been tried out in Karachi, Dhaka (Bangladesh), Gilgit (Northern Areas of Pakistan) and has also been adopted in various centres in East Africa. The model resolved a major problem concerning releasing teachers during the school term for training. Moreover the teachers got an opportunity to improve their skills and classroom practices in their own classrooms. Further details are provided in Chapter 7.

New Professional Development Centres

In December 1998 AKU-IED in collaboration with the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan, launched its second Professional Development Centre in Gilgit, Northern Areas of Pakistan. This centre offers a variety of courses and programmes, suitable for the context, aimed primarily at improving the quality of teaching. It is providing formal recognition of these courses of study through the award of AKU certificates and is acting as a regional educational and intellectual resource. A similar initiative also commenced in East Africa in early 2000. In both these centres the programmes are conducted by Professional Development Teachers (M.Ed. graduates of AKU-IED) with assistance from senior faculty of AKU-IED. Chapter 12 discusses the activity of this first PDC.

Development of Professional Associations of Teachers

Right from the outset AKU-IED has been committed to developing follow-up strategies and continuing professional interaction among the graduates from AKU-IED, their colleagues and other teachers. This issue was highlighted by the Second Task Force of the AKU-IED (AKU-IED, 1996). One recommendation of the Task Force was to encourage AKU-IED graduates to form professional associations for educators similar to the one developed in Pakistan in the early 1980s by the Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers, SPELT (Bacchus, 1996). A start was made in 1997 in mathematics education. Encouraged by Partner University faculty, mathematics PDTs, together with a group of teachers attending a mathematics workshop at the AKU-IED, decided to form the Mathematics

Association of Pakistan (MAP). The AKU-IED supported this venture and soon other associations were formed. These include the Science Association of Pakistan (SAP), the Association of Social Studies Educators and Teachers (ASSET), the School Heads Association of Pakistan (SHADE), the Association of Primary Teachers (APT) and the Pakistan Association of Inclusive Education (PAIE). AKU-IED supports these initiatives by providing space for association-related activities, expenses for refreshments and funds for a newsletter. The association members give their time to conduct workshops and to manage other activities [17]. All the associations are very active, conducting at least one workshop per month for teachers (and sometimes for children) in Karachi. For AKU-IED the development of associations has been important because through this it is able to reach out beyond the collaborating schools to teachers more widely.

Striving for International Standards

In all its work AKU-IED has striven for a level of excellence which meets international standards. In developing all its programmes the Institute has worked closely with its partners in Oxford and Toronto and has benefited from contributions from consultants from other universities throughout the world. All programmes have gone through review processes internally, at the level of Partner University Forum (comprising senior faculty from AKU-IED, OUDES and OISE-UT), and through assessment processes involving other external academics.

Challenges Faced by AKU-IED

The AKU-IED has faced many challenges during the past eight years. Most of these relate to human resource availability and high expectations from partners and other stakeholders. Some of the main challenges are expressed below:

- Very early in its existence the AKU-IED management recognized that the kind of faculty members needed to ensure the quality and implementation of the AKU-IED vision were not easily available in Pakistan. The Partner Universities played a crucial role in assisting AKU-IED in conducting the initial programmes. The few national faculty who were selected worked closely with the Partner University faculty. A faculty development process was also put into action. Junior faculty members with the potential for further development were hired and promising graduates of the M.Ed. Programme were identified for future development including doctoral studies. Some of these faculty have completed their Ph.D.s, and others are in the process of completing doctoral studies at the Partner Universities. The AKU-IED is, at the time of writing, developing its own Ph.D. programme for launch in 2004.

- Developing collaboration with schools and systems was a very slow process. As school/university partnership was a new concept in Pakistan, many problems were faced. These included lack of awareness on the part of school heads about their roles in academic leadership, difficulties faced by women (particularly married women) in participating in AKU-IED programmes for family reasons, competing priorities at school level because of the importance given to examinations. The University faculty often found it difficult to recognize the problems faced by the teachers. These issues are regularly visited in various forums and not all problems have yet been resolved.
- The AKU-IED has found it difficult to establish and document with credible data, the impact of its programmes on school improvement. In part this is because of difficulties, generic to educational research, which attempt to identify and link outcomes to inputs in complex school environments. It is also premature to ensure measurable outcomes in student learning and achievement. To do this appropriate baselines would be required and a longitudinal study needs to be conducted. Such activities require sufficient suitably qualified members of faculty, and, as in other areas of the AKU-IED development, building *research* capacity has been an issue. However, AKU-IED has undertaken some case studies of the qualitative impact on teaching and learning practices in schools to which its graduates have returned. Significant positive impact is observable in a number of schools. Chapter 10 documents some of this impact.
- As AKU-IED becomes better known in Pakistan and internationally there is an inevitable tension between wanting to take on ever more interesting, worthwhile and challenging initiatives and yet being concerned not to overstretch the institution to a point where the quality of its work is compromised.

Throughout the short history of AKU-IED support from the Aga Khan University and from the Partner Universities have been crucial in the overcoming of these challenges.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have given a brief overview of the evolution of the AKU-IED's programmatic activities and the associated issues. As His Highness the Aga Khan stated,

You can build new buildings, but if you cannot find quality men and women to implement the programmes and to give them confidence that their programmes will be able to continue and grow in the future, you have achieved nothing. (His Highness the Aga Khan at the inauguration ceremony of Professional Development Centre, Northern Areas on 19 October 2000)

The AKU-IED has embarked on a journey to develop human resources critical to the improvement in quality of education. A small beginning has been made.

Notes

- [1] The SMS school complex consists of a pre-primary school, a primary school with separate sections for girls and boys, a secondary school with separate sections for girls and boys and a coeducational Higher Secondary School. These schools cater to over 4000 students.
- [2] Professional Development Centres are organizations for quality improvement in education. They are established by AKU-IED in association with one or more partners or associates for the purposes of: offering a variety of courses and programmes aimed primarily at improving the quality of teaching and learning; providing formal recognition of these courses of study through the award of AKU certification; and acting as a regional or national educational, intellectual and research resource.
- [3] His Highness the Aga Khan is one of the World's most prominent philanthropists. In 1956 when he was just 20, he became the leader of 15 million Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims who live in 25 countries in East Africa, North America, Europe, and South and Central Asia.
The Aga Khan's family has followed a tradition of service in international affairs. Under the Aga Khan's leadership, vast development institutions have been created to serve communities where Ismaili Muslims live. A well-defined institutional framework has been created to carry out social, economic and cultural activities. This framework has expanded and evolved into the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of institutions working to improve living conditions and opportunities in the developing world (see also note 4).
- [4] AKU-IED signed formal partnership agreements with the University of Toronto, Faculty of Education and the Oxford University, Department of Education Studies in 1993. These agreements have continued until the time of writing. A partner university perspective is presented in Chapter 2.
- [5] See Mirza Pardhan, Director Education, Secretariat de son Altesse l'Aga Khan, October 1989, Internal Report.
- [6] The Aga Khan Development Network consists of a group of agencies set up to help improve living conditions and opportunities in specific regions of the developing world. The individual agency mandates range from education, health and architecture to the promotion of private sector enterprise and rural development. It includes the Aga Khan Education Services, the Aga Khan University, the Aga Khan Health Services and the Aga Khan Foundation.
- [7] Inaugurated in the early 1980s in Karachi, Pakistan the Aga Khan University quickly became an institution with growing international reputation as a centre of excellence in the field of medical and health education.

- [8] The SMS Aga Khan School catered only for pupils from K-10 at this time. Ideally K-12 was the requirement. While AKU-IED was being planned, the AKES,P Board approved the construction of a Higher Secondary School (grades 11-12) on the campus of the SMS Aga Khan School. The construction of the Higher Secondary School and the PDC became joint projects.
- [9] The phrase ‘Clinical Teachers’ mentioned in earlier AKU-IED related documents was replaced with Professional Development Teachers (PDTs) who are the M.Ed. graduates of AKU-IED.
- [10] Construction of the Professional Development Centre commenced in early 1994 within the SMS complex and was ready for occupation in November 1994.
- [11] AKU-IED received a grant of US\$12.5 million over a period of a little over six years. The main funders were the European Commission (54%), Canadian International Development Agency (26%), United Nations Development Programme (9%) and the Aga Khan Foundation (11%).
- [12] Further details of such activities and issues associated with them are taken up in subsequent chapters.
- [13] In subsequent years generic primary education was added to this group.
- [14] See also Chapter 4 for further discussion of these practices and related issues.
- [15] AKU-IED identified 15 schools in Karachi from the public, private and AKES sectors from which the M.Ed. course participants were drawn. These schools became AKU-IED’s initial co-operating schools.
- [16] Seventy-four education officers participated in what was described as the Balochistan Education Management Programme.
- [17] Recently the associations have networked and developed an umbrella organization called Professional Teacher Associations Network (PTAN). PTAN has been successful in getting external funding through the Canadian International Development Agency and Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan to support its activities.

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