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A Female PDT's Journey in the Northern Areas of Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper presents the learning journey of a female Professional Development Teacher (PDT) in the context of Northern Pakistan. This journey highlights difficulties for the female PDT in constructing her image as a leader or a change agent in a traditionally male dominated society. The paper explores the major challenges faced by the PDT in putting the theory of leadership into the realities of the context and describes the supporting factors that enabled her to establish herself as a leader. From her experiences, the author draws the processes and strategies for a female leader in a rural male dominated society, which could help others to learn. Based on her learning she gives recommendations to future female PDTs and other institutions that are striving to develop female leaders in the region.

Introduction

I am Safida Begum, from a place called Gojal, in the upper part of Hunza, which is near the Chinese border and happens to be one of the remotest of the Northern Areas. I was born and brought up in the area.

The Northern Areas are geographically isolated and, climatically, very cold. The Karakoram Mountain Range divides the region naturally into different valleys and makes it difficult to access information, and to communicate and interact with the other regions of Pakistan. Cold weather and snow make the place icy and freezing in winter. This delays transportation and easy movement within the region and to other parts of the country.

Access to necessities of life, particularly products from the southern parts of the country, becomes dreadful for the people in the area, especially if the Karakoram Highway is blocked and the weather remains cloudy (as seen mostly in the fall and winter). The supply of natural gas, vegetables, flour and other necessities of life becomes erratic (as the area lacks variety in production). Interestingly, the prices of other goods increase, so it creates a clash between the force of nature and human necessities; and life becomes harsh and challenging. These harsh realities have also added to the difficulties of the developmental processes in education, health and social mobility. The area is lacking in many aspects of life

such as good institutions, industries, organizations and tourism corporations, to meet the needs of the majority of the people in the region; and for promoting social, educational, health and economical development.

Females are the most affected segment of the population in terms of education with a 13% literacy rate; indoctrination from male counterparts, lack of involvement in the decision making process, treatment at home and social stigmas from the society, all contribute to this. Men make decisions and lead women in the society by providing their basic needs and requirements. Ultimately, it makes women dependent and hence they lack skills in facing real situations. They get fewer opportunities to enhance their skills and confidence by proving themselves in society. Consequently, they have a low status in the society, and they face “social stigmas” and “gender discrimination”, along with a general harsh attitude from men. Moreover, they get less attention for their physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs, and so they remain underprivileged (Mian, 2000, p. 21). Discrimination starts from within the family, where females are made to eat after the males, especially in rural Pakistan. In most cases, “women are not encouraged to leave home, let alone pursue higher education” (Ali, 2005, p. 3). Research indicates that more girls than boys die in infancy. Moreover, Pakistan’s poor position internationally is seen in UNDP’s Gender-related Development Index (GDI) 2000, where Pakistan currently ranks 135 out of 174 countries.

Similar to Afghanistan, ethnicity is a critical issue and has further strengthened the controversy over female education, as respective leaderships take up various positions on this issue (Purzand, 1999, p. 90). Furthermore, the male leaders meet in *loya jirgas* (tribal councils) to debate and decide about important local and national issues and they are historically very conservative in their approach to the role of women in society.

In contrast, according to Leathwood (2005, p. 387), in other parts of the world, “The future is female and that has become a slogan of our times in the UK. Changes in the global economy, the demise of the UK manufacturing industry and the rise in service occupations have dramatically changed the nature of the labour market in this county, and opened up new opportunities for women in the workplace”.

The above indicates that there is a justified concern for the lack of female leadership roles in our society, as women are not allowed to participate in decision-making, strategic planning, leading institutions, discussing issues, resolving conflicts and solving problems. As a result, female leadership roles are neither accepted nor realized; and their skills are underestimated.

In order to begin to overcome this problem, Aga Khan Education Services (AKES) Pakistan initiated the process of sending females to different institutions. The Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) is one of the major players in capacity building through its innovative MEd programme and I was selected from among a number of female candidates for admission to the university.

At the end of the two year intensive MEd programme, as a graduate of AKU-IED, I was labelled a Professional Development Teacher (PDT) and my journey starts from there.

Journey of a Female PDT

My Turbulent Life

The last module in the MEd, *'Re-entry'*, was very interesting although somewhat confusing, because I was closer to a destination that gave me happiness but at the same time I was not confident about implementing the new ideas and teaching strategies. It raised lots of questions for which I had to seek answers and that created turbulence in my mind.

For example, I observed great motivation among our faculty members at AKU-IED. They used phrases such as *'PDTs as change agents'*, *'problems are our friends'*, *'change is a slow process'* and *'believe in the process; not the product'*. I also observed Michel Fullan in a video—his enthusiasm and his words about change and improvement. That, and reflections on my experiences, were all confusing moments for me. It sounded as if we were all in a hurry to bring about a quick change; so, I felt something was going to happen and everything would change.

There were two other confusing factors: (1) Initiating the theory of leadership into the practices of a leader in the realities of the context; and, (2) Constructing a new image of female leadership in the traditional area.

Moving Towards the Destination

When we left for the airport, each one of us had great expectations, confidence, faith and enthusiasm; but at the same time we were confused about the complexity of the task. There was a great urge to initiate change amidst the rigid and traditional leadership culture and practices of our society. But we were also excited and proud of our achievements, such as our combined initiatives. The

positive feelings got stronger when the driver said, “Dr. Baker [Director of AKU-IED] told me to drive smoothly and carefully because it is our precious group as we have spent lots of money to develop them.” This comment made us fly without wings to overcome our fear, and, as a result, we developed confidence that we were in safe hands wherever we would go. It bonded us together emotionally as a team.

Stepping Stones for Change

Personal Life

When we reached home, my younger daughter came to meet us. I then went to meet my eldest daughter at Aga Khan Academy, Karimabad, 35 kilometres away from where I lived. She was keen to come home, but she was not allowed to as she had to follow the rules and could only come home on weekends or holidays. She kept crying and I did not know what to do. My frustration with reality had started and I had to face facts and deal with them.

Gradually, I found I could not work in Gilgit because my family was suffering and my husband was not letting me work. So I reflected on how I could resolve this issue as a PDT? Suddenly, I remembered the PMI (Plus, Minus and Interesting) strategy. So I started to work on both options, such as working in Gulmit or Gilgit, and shared my options with my husband. He looked at me, surprised that I knew both the positives and negatives. He allowed me to take a decision about where to work—which was good—but he insisted that I not disturb the children or him and that I should stay with his relatives in Gilgit and go only on the weekends because he wanted to have his authoritative role as leader of the house.

I felt at ease, glad that the PMI had worked well; and this gave me confidence. But I also had to think about what to do next, because I was taking a risk by shifting my family. There were constraints of physical, social and emotional security. However, staying with relatives was not only problematic for the children’s education, but also for me. For instance, once I was going to Gilgit after a weekend, and I found my nine-year-old son on the road waiting for a van before me. This forced me to think about the risk of shifting my family. Eventually, it took six months to re-assemble my family; each step was hard, and I had to play an advocacy role to motivate my mother, husband, kids, relatives and other relevant people in my society.

Professional Life

Coming to my professional life, I involved myself with a team of PDTs to initiate a Needs Analysis Survey (NAS). Facing different people in different circumstances; familiarizing myself with the geographical and climate conditions in different regions; and, interacting with different people in different cultures enabled me to find my way. For example, once three of us female PDTs wanted to go to Chupurson Valley, but the head of FEO would not allow us, saying, "*Wahan jana ooratoon ke bus ki bath nahey*" (going to that place is impossible for females). When we insisted, he said, "If you give me in writing, I can allow you; otherwise, I can't". So gave him a written undertaking that we are taking the risk for professional reasons. These experiences taught me about the common problems for female PDTs: taking risks for a leadership role and handling people and natural constraints. I realized that if I have to survive and make a difference, I have to play an active role.

Professional Concerns and Uneasiness

The NAS made me reflective, stronger, more confident and a critical thinker. The findings gave me a real picture of the area and its educational needs. I realized that the area requires enormous attention for educational change; teachers, head teachers, heads of FEO, ADEOs (management), directors and heads of institutions, community and parents; all needed to be changed, because bringing about a difference in a classroom situation needs to be sustained. Fullan is famous for saying: "All change is not improvement but all improvement is change".

For instance, schools were working in isolation, focusing on covering the annual syllabus, passing examinations and reporting to the office and education department directors. The focus of the school visits from the management side was to identify weaknesses and to transfer staff to far flung areas as a punishment, rather than for improvement. This way of dealing with subordinates was a 'bosship' approach rather than pedagogical or transformational leadership that scrutinized their creativity and openness for cooperation and collaboration.

Though AKES Pakistan had decentralized administrative and academic power, the head of FEO still had little autonomy. This reflected gaps at the infrastructure level in the public and private sectors. Similarly, the way the head teachers dealt with the staff was disheartening and generally authoritative and status-defined. They found problems, but did not demonstrate an effective way of dealing with them, which hindered the development of human relationships and

respect at the workplace. In order to connect all these things together and bring about a real change and improvement, we needed a broader perspective of change. We needed strategic planning for quality leadership to initiate change for improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. For that we needed to try out different strategies and ideas and see what works, along with why and how to influence the educational policy.

Institutional Role

The first initiative taken by PDCN was a “Stakeholders’ Conference” in 1999. The head of PDCN gave us major roles in dealing with the higher authorities from government, private sector and AKES Pakistan. The friendly behaviour of the directors from AKU-IED and the head of PDCN, and how they delegated tasks and discussed issues while respecting our self-esteem, made us feel important. It gave us a leadership role in the conference, which was a hallmark in my career in terms of my motivation, interest, commitment, devotion, determination and confidence for initiating change in the real environment. So later, whenever I started taking initiatives, I forgot that I am a woman; rather I tried to work as a professional.

Combination of WSIP and CEM (CE:ELM)

My prior experience as a head teacher led me to take the facilitator’s role in the Certificate in Educational Management (CEM, now titled Certificate in Education: Educational Leadership and Management or CE:ELM) programme from 2000, to work with the senior faculty of AKU-IED, Karachi. The main purpose of this programme was to develop head teachers’ “indigenous leadership and management practices”. Gradually, I took over the responsibility for coordinating the course from 2002 onwards in terms of planning, developing the handbook, implementing the programme, monitoring, following up CPs in the field, providing them further support and evaluating at the end of the year.

Similarly, I had to work for the Whole School Improvement Programme (WSIP) in schools (see Appendix A for a summary of schools I worked with). I worked with students, teachers, head teachers and parents as follows:

Students in the real classroom situation to demonstrate different approaches to teaching and learning;

Teachers on co-planning, demonstration, observation, feedback and resource development in schools;

Head teachers on facilitating CE:ELM, and practically helping them on their indigenous leadership and management practices, such as facilitating in conducting staff meetings, encouraging them to discuss issues in the school, managing human and physical resources, building teams, and reflecting on practices;

Parents and communities for mobilizing parents and communities to participate in the school development plans.

I initiated mothers/parent days, and in the evolving process we found that the children in nursery/kachi classes were the most neglected students in terms of attention to their social, moral, emotional and intellectual developmental needs. The head of PDCN provided physical support and enhanced my interest, capabilities and creativity in handling and teaching small children through the concept of 'One Class One Teacher'.

I also conducted about 25 workshops every year on general aspects of teaching (e.g. how do children learn; multiple intelligences; assessment), and subject areas such as language (English and Urdu), social studies etc.

So the combination of CE:ELM and WSIP provided me the opportunity to facilitate teacher learning and reflect on my prior practices as a head teacher. It also caused me to modify my perception and practice in the school to bring about more effectiveness in my approaches. For instance, the baseline data enabled me to identify the problems; and remaining in the school for the whole day, I involved myself with the daily routines of the school and was hence able to explore the genuine issues and take actions.

Once, I was observing a teacher and I found that a student in the classroom was not only mentally disturbed but also disturbing others. The teacher tried to deal with the child politely but he never stopped, and the class was over so she left for another period. It developed my curiosity to see what the child did in another teacher's classroom, and how that teacher dealt with it. Interestingly, I found the same issue. I wondered what could be done to improve the situation in the classroom in order to provide an enabling environment for the child. Moreover, I decided to explore why the particular child was disturbed despite that fact that he seemed quite normal physically. The teachers also seemed to be very polite as it was a private community school and physical punishment was illegal. But, when I moved to another classroom, I heard the teacher's saying loudly, "Kioon parashan kertay ho?" (Why do you disturb me?); meanwhile, I also heard the child being slapped.

I learnt the differences between teachers' beliefs and practices. I wanted to explore the issue and found that the reasons for the said practices are often related to the individuals' family, culture and attitudes. So it really required a leadership role to resolve the issue. Therefore, I had to make it one of my first priorities as it was something that would give me great satisfaction. It gave the staff, the parents and community a hope that somebody listens to their concerns and helps them. Comer et al., (2004, p. 55) rightly says, "If people have no hope, they will not even notice that the current situation can be changed". Working on the issue, the head teacher, and the staff started realizing its importance and gradually started identifying other issues related to teaching and children's learning outcomes. I worked as a critical friend, showed sensitivity to the culture, and respect for individuals' personal and professional issues and their diversified attitudes. I guided them and shared my own personal examples in overcoming their problems. So a trusting relationship developed between us and slowly I became an important member of their staff and part of the school culture. In spite of not being a staff member, I was one of the more important people in the school. This experience in the first year of WSIP and CE:ELM gradually helped me in gaining confidence and practical experience.

I also felt that I was slowly proving my abilities and capabilities to the diversified group of people, because their facial expressions and their opinion of me were gradually changing. Mothers met with me warmly, kissed my hands according to the local culture and prayed for me and my family. Similarly, the community members and BOG (Board of Governors) appreciated my commitment and motivation for change, while the staff did not hesitate in sharing their professional issues by seeking my help in planning, developing and delivering content. So I played multiple roles as teacher, guide, facilitator, initiator, problem solver, decision maker and role model among them. It developed a trusting relationship among us to be able to work together amiably. I learned to develop teams, share information, communicate effectively, manage both time and human resources, monitor the progress and critically reflect and plan accordingly.

At every step of WSIP, I learnt from the staff and their needs and tried to incorporate this in the programme. Hence I noticed creativity in my approach for working in all 32 schools.

The theoretical input and the practical work in the school provided me occasions to put theory into practice and to link practice with theory. For instance, in the CE:ELM programme we taught about conducting effective meetings, developing teams, dealing with conflicts, and planning, monitoring and evaluating progress.

I tried to facilitate the meetings with the head teachers in developing agenda, circulation of minutes in advance, and leading or facilitating; along with delegating responsibilities for notes taking, preparing reports for meetings and the decisions taken in them. Overall, I encouraged taking responsibility for actions. Then I encouraged the head teachers of the schools to play the same role, which helped them in visualizing the said and practicing it. Gradually, I let the head teachers take decisions, have meetings and share problems. That not only helped them in enhancing their participation but it also gave them empowerment and an autonomy to continue practicing and reflecting. Moreover, it changed their style of leadership from authoritarian to democratic and reduced the status quo culture in schools.

Similarly, I sat with the teachers during tea breaks or free periods to co-plan, discuss, and prepare free to low-cost materials for teaching and also reflect on the sessions. It always kept me engaged in thinking, reflecting and modifying plans to bring effectiveness in my practices. So the practice went on in a cyclical way. It not only gave me confidence in relating the ideas and practices with the literature but also motivated me in gaining knowledge, skills and modifying attitudes.

My practice in schools was focused on six areas of improvement to provide a conducive learning environment for the holistic development of children;

1. Teaching and learning,
2. Leadership, management and administration,
3. Community participation,
4. Resource development and usage,
5. Curriculum and staff development,
6. Social, emotional and moral development and children and health education

Similarly, Comer et al., (2004) also suggests, 'Six developmental pathways' (such as physical, cognitive, psychological, language, ethical) for incorporating in planning for change and improvement. So in order to develop children socially, emotionally, physically and morally, the leadership has to play a significant role to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

Reflective Sessions

Connectivity

The head of the PDCN visited schools and supported us in terms of demonstration, observation and feedback. Moreover, she arranged reflective sessions to discuss issues and strategies that enabled me to work, reflect, and find solutions. It also gave me realization that all of us as a team are learners, and all of us have strengths and weaknesses. For example, each one of the PDTs had different positions in schools and institutions and taught different subjects; so we were facing difficulties in teaching previously untaught subjects, along with the added issue of teaching a different level of students. That difference brought variety in our reflective sessions and we gave suggestions to each other according to our areas of interest. This experience brought us together under one umbrella. Hence, we were connected to each other; and learnt to improve ourselves.

Contribution for other Countries

Learning within the realities of the school context also enabled me to facilitate Certificate in Education: Primary Education (CE:PE) programmes in Dhaka, Bangladesh and Khorog, Tajikistan through AKU-IED's platform. It gave me exposure to practice my learning in the contexts of these regions, which enabled me to reflect on my strengths and weaknesses. The free to low-cost materials and my practical work exhibited a good image of leadership and facilitation in accordance with the contextual realities of the said regions.

International Visiting Scholar

This richness in my experience also enabled me to obtain an International Visiting Scholarship and Fellowship Programme at a university in the United States of America. I did not face problems in accommodating myself in an advanced country. I managed to negotiate for attending masters' classes such as Staff Development and Evaluation, American Reforms, and School Finance. I visited six lower primary schools and studied some research on school leadership.

Challenges

Challenges are part of life generally and professional life specifically. I faced a lot of personal and professional problems. These are documented as follows:

Male Dominated Leadership

It was very difficult to change people's perception about change and improvement. People often challenged me by giving examples of failures of innovations of other institutions such as AKES Pakistan and various Government departments. Some argued for minor issues, and debated unnecessarily for useless points of view. For instance, once we conducted a workshop for the head teachers, and the heads of the FEO and the EDO, along with everybody else appreciated it. When it was time for suggesting further improvement, some CP's suggested the female PDTs should wear '*dopatta*' (head scarf).

Resistance

Interestingly, different forms of resistance were visible in working with the multicultural settings. For example 'burning out' when I talked about change and improvement; 'keeping quiet' and 'ignoring'; 'giggling and 'excusing'. While some showed an interest in learning; others 'followed quietly'. In order to deal with them, I had to use diplomacy and my interpersonal skills to avoid conflicts and to find ways to move ahead.

High expectations

Travelling in a white Land Rover and working under the umbrella of AKU-PDCN enhanced my status in the society. It created pride and ownership for having such an opportunity as a female, but on the other hand it also invited jealousy. For example, when I tried to motivate stakeholders, I got responses such as: "You come to school in 100,000 rupees Land Rover so you feel it is easy but actually it is not easy to change", "You have got high salary so you can afford time and resources but how could we manage as we get only — (Rs. 500 - 4000)", "You have got funds now, when it will finish you will also forget talking about change and improvement". However, these powerful comments led me to critical thinking in continuing the practices for change. Similarly, it also raised family and relatives' expectations, which were going to be difficult to fulfil. These comments always pressurized me, but I had to keep in mind the institutional

mission and my targets; so I had to listen, smile, keep quiet or persuade and advocate.

Higher Officials Perception for Change

It remained a constant constraint in dealing with the higher academic managers. Their narrow vision and lack of professional understanding for the quality of teaching and learning never allowed them to take the change in a broader perspective. They always saw change on an ad-hoc basis, for instance transferring teachers and head teachers remained one of the major issues. This reflected a huge gap in the infrastructure of the school system in bringing about improvement.

Lack of Support

I found it very difficult to leave behind my children. Whenever I remained on field based support or other official tasks, I remained under pressure with children after my mother's death, but my children supported me in fulfilling my tasks.

Financial crisis

When I compared the amount of work with my financial needs I found little fairness. I could not afford to take my children for any outings, nor could they go to visit friends or relatives; and most of the time, it was difficult to feed them properly. So it limited their positive thinking and respect for my institution.

Geographical and Climate Conditions

It remained a natural barrier on my way to improvement. I travelled for 13–20 hours to Islamabad, 6 for Skardu, 2-3 for Hunza, but the difficulty increased whenever the road was blocked or the weather changed. Schools lacking heating facilities also affected my health. Once I was observing a Kachi class for the baseline survey. The door and window were closed, and 60 students were sitting on small, locally-made individual benches, in the filthy environment. I could not interrupt because it was a baseline study. It was windy and very cold with the door open and this made me sick for three days.

Religious Clashes

Believing in diversity, I always encouraged my children to behave well and make friends with other communities, but I found it very difficult when my son's friends threatened him to discontinue his relationships with other communities. Moreover, religious clashes generated political clashes and a curfew, so at the time we were stuck at home without proper food and other necessities of life.

Learning

The physical appearance, social status and the natural emotional attachment with children, family and relatives leaves a woman weak for leadership in the society. This hinders her ability and confidence, but if she gets some physical and moral support, she can boost her confidence. If trusted then she is likely to give extra commitment, devotion and determination because she feels honoured and that leads her to higher motivation, positive competition and clearer vision. Once that vision develops she tries her best to transform herself and the society.

Exposure from grassroots to national and international levels enables the PDTs to initiate, internalize and sustain the change process. The exposure of MEd at IED picks them up to a different level where they get aspirations and find role models, which helps them to make linkages from theory to practice and from practice to theory, such as the realities of school in context with the literature. It always keeps their mind engaged in reflection, planning, implementation, observation, and modification of planning. So this cyclical way of reflection, on and in action, makes the PDT professionally stronger. Once the PDT grows stronger in professional life, she feels confident in leading others in that direction with her high spirits. Therefore, change and improvement becomes possible, and her image as a female leader generates change in people's notions, perspectives and social norms in society.

Personal Values

Personal values also count in a leadership position because in a leadership role one has to deal with human nature. We need to learn individual differences, their attitudes and their moral values. In order to have a pedagogical leadership role, one has to show flexibility, honour colleagues, appreciate small successes, provide practical support and have a sharing and caring attitude. Moreover, showing sensitivity to the local culture, taking responsibility for oneself and delegating tasks by empowering others, enables team to make a shared decision that leads to trust being built among teams. When that happens, the door for

cooperation and collaboration never closes. It leads to an empathetic approach towards human beings—you love working with them and they love working with you. So the two-way process enhances respect for each other and creates an enjoyment for learning that leads to schools becoming learning communities.

Identification of Potential in Females

I learned that the ground realities for females at home need a similar, rather than a drastic change. The current scenario, created from donor agencies and other NGOs working on gender issues, has threatened the less educated husbands. When potential is noticed in their wives, instead of providing support, they are indoctrinated to remain in their social and emotional roles, which they never ever come out from. Ultimately it hinders their abilities and skills. So in order to crystallize their abilities and to enhance human and social capital, one needs to have a critical eye and contextual knowledge, along with skills in identifying the said females for development.

Patience for Change

We believe that change is a slow process. Therefore, change requires a lot of time and patience, in order to achieve organizational and personal goals. Dealing with diversified human nature is always challenging, so one has to keep that in mind for initiating change.

Recommendations

Based on my individual learning as a female leader in the Northern Areas of Pakistan, I suggest that institutions and organizations that are eager to develop female leadership should consider the following;

- **Develop capacity:** develop females' professional understanding through an intensive professional course (e.g. MEd or PhD). When they return, it might be a good idea to provide them with a platform to practice their learning in order to gain practical experience. Apart from that they should also get exposure to the current educational changes through national and international conferences, and be allowed to attend seminars to re-charge their abilities and skills and to sustain their motivation.
- **Empowerment:** very few females contribute in leadership positions. It might be a good idea to give them status and position to continue their practices and to sustain their motivation, because generally females are

not considered nor accepted as leaders, making it more difficult for them to handle their status at home, workplace and in the society.

- **Fair mindedness:** male counterparts have been heading the majority of the organizations and institutions. When the donor agencies provide funds for gender equity, they also feel a threat. Therefore, I noticed that they do not tell the truth in stating that ‘there is no potential female candidate’. So it might be a good idea if PDCs encourage females in their courses to develop their professional expertise, so they may be able to take part in open competitions for admissions, rather than depending on only the institutions. This will reduce favouritism.

Conclusion

My journey from a PDT to a professional female leader was challenging and difficult but at the same time, interesting and rewarding. Being a female from a male dominated society, I had less confidence and faith in my abilities, skills and capabilities. However, the institutional support enabled me to take risks, face challenges, integrate my learning before and during MEd, and practice the said in the correct context. This enabled me to contextualize, internalize, and institutionalize the theories and practices.

My constant reflections, critical thinking and practices made me stronger day by day and enabled me to prove myself as a female leader. The close attention, the triumphs, the encouragement from my institutions (PDCN and AKU-IED), the collective reflection and the shared decisions helped me prioritize the institutional goals and the mission. So I worked with a high spirit to translate the vision of PDCN into the realities of the school context, which not only helped me to develop myself, but also made a difference in the project’s schools of WSIP.

The combination of CE:ELM and WSIP programmes enabled me to get exposed to the current theories of leadership, and running the WSIP programme helped me to put theory into practice. Moreover, it also provided me with a vehicle to develop professional understanding, speak with confidence and give examples from literature, which depict a professional approach in the society to influence stakeholders’ thinking.

So finally, I would like to thank PDCN and AKU-IED for giving me the confidence and the faith that I have come to value as if it were a treasure. It might have been difficult for me otherwise, in the sense that the traditional

leadership approach undervalues female expertise. Without your constant encouragement, professional support and guidance, I would not have succeeded. I hope you will enable me to continue my journey to a greater destination.

I thank you.

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Appendix

Summary of my Contribution for WSIP Schools

No.	Systems	Numbers	WSIP year 1 /Follow up 2	Year	Duration
1	Private	01	WSIP pilot programme	1999	3 months
	Government	02			
	AKES, P	01			
2	Private	01	WSIP Year 1	2000	1 year
	Government	01			
	AKES, P	01			
3	Government	01	WSIP + follow up year 2000 school	2001	1 year
	AKES, P	01			
4	Private	01	Follow up	2002	1 year
	Government	04			
	AKES, P	02			
5	Private	01	WSIP	2003	1 year
	Government	01			
	AKES, P	02			
6	Private	01	Follow up and support	2004	5-6 months
	Government	01			
	AKES, P	02			
7	Private	01	Coordinating WSIP	2005	03
	Government	06			
	AKES, P	01			
	Total schools	32		1999- 2005	