PRESS RELEASE

Citizens Led Survey on Learning Levels of 3-16 years old Children in Punjab –
Where do we stand? - Global Action Week 2010

Citizens across Punjab gathered data from 12077 students belonging to 4800 households in 240 villages of 8 districts in 2008/9 which has been compiled into an Annual Status of Education Report (2008). In Faisalabad (Rural), 1631 children, 600 household

1. Only 36% of Grade V children can read Grade II level texts (story) in Urdu

2. Only 42% of Grade V, children are able to do Grade II level division correctly 3 digits divided by single digit with carry

3. Children’s attendance is better than teachers at primary level (83% students vs. 54% Teachers) It trails behind teachers at elementary level is only 79% whilst teachers attendance at middle / high schools is just 50%

4. Inspite of missing facilities being the centre piece of government efforts for a decade, there are still 26% primary schools without water facility and 21% schools are without toilet facility. There is a improvement in elementary schools had water and toilet facilities in working orders.

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)-Center for Education and Consciousness has been working in Education sector since 2000, with a sector wide approach to improve the quality of education in Pakistan. ITA hosts the secretariat of the South Asia Forum for Education Development (SAFED: www.safedafed.org). SAFED is an educational forum for Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bumaa. SAFED in urdu means White, the color of Peace. SAFED is a forum to foster policy dialogues between public sector, civil society organizations and private sector working jointly for learning solutions to reduce poverty through Quality Education for All. SAFED and its alliance partners in Pakistan have carried out a survey in 11 districts of Pakistan (ICT, Punjab and Sindh) in 2008 to measure the learning level of over 17,000 students. This data has been compiled in a report to share it with the Government, Civil Society Organizations, bilateral and multilateral agencies and other stakeholders working in the education sector. In 2010 this survey will cover 30-50 districts and in the subsequent year it will cover all rural districts of Pakistan. The objectives of ASER Pakistan are:
To know and understand the status of learning and teaching in randomly selected rural areas in each district of age group 3-16 years.

To inform parents, elected representatives, teachers, and administrators about the findings

To participate in finding solutions to low literacy and numeracy levels at elementary stages

To generate qualitative insights into learning levels at scale to ensure the research can be used for large-scale policy reforms as well.

ASER 2008 survey in Punjab was carried out by 10 partner organizations, who contributed 220 volunteers, visiting 4800 households in 240 villages testing 12077 aged 3-16 years. The volunteers asked the following questions in the villages:

• How many children are enrolled in school?
• How many children can read simple sentences? ...Solve simple subtraction and division sums?
• How many children and teachers were attending the government primary school in the village on the day of the visit?
• In the local government primary school, was there water, toilet, classrooms

On 24th May 2010, the ASER 2008 Punjab results (Faisalabad) were shared with the senior government officials, members provincial assembly, and representatives of all partner groups.

• Mr. Shoiab Imran - EDO Education Faisalabad
• Ms. Khalida Mansoor - MNA

The ASER Pakistan report provides the following information:
• Of 1631 children surveyed in Faisalabad District (Rural) 85% of children of the age group 3-16 years are in schools
• 14.7% of the age group 3-16 years are out of school.
• 11.3% of all children never enrolled in any type of schools
• 64% of this age group are enrolled in government schools, 34% in private schools, 1.4% in madaris and other types of schools/learning facilities.

Parents send proportionately more girls to private schools than to government schools in rural areas!

Learning levels
• 47% of all the children in the age group 5-16 years can read para (level/ Class-I) whereas about 30% of all the children in the age 5-16 years can read story text (level/ Class-II)
• 40.6% of all the children in the age group 5-16 years can solve the subtraction (level/ Class-I) whereas about 26.5% of all the children in the age 5-16 years cannot solve the division (level/ Class-II)

There is an urgency to launch a province wide campaign for ‘numeracy and literacy’ at the primary age level 5-10 years through a very systematic approach of a 4-6 months module—chalo parhain barhain as the building blocks in language are the first urgent priority. ..children cannot wait ... numeracy will build on language skills.poor language skills leads to poorer numeracy skills.

ASER 2008 is just the beginning. ASER will be repeated every year from 2010 to 2015 with support of Government, Civil Society, and other stakeholders. This is not a project by NGOs, nor only the Government. This is a movement which requires initiative of each adult/youth of the entire country. Every citizen needs to be involved in this movement for change and improvement.