

ASER Pakistan and ITA in UK – Discussions for Collaboration in Research & Advocacy: Right to Education and Post 2015 Agenda

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) /*centre for education and consciousness*, Pakistan and UK have been actively engaged with important meetings and discussions on education and advocacy in different cities of United Kingdom.

ASER Pakistan 2013 Roundtable/Seminars were held at two most prestigious universities in UK in June 2014.

Warwick University hosted a seminar on “Citizens of Tomorrow: reshaping education from the grassroots” on June 11, 2014 moderated by Professor Shaheen Sardar Ali, at the prestigious Law School. The discussion focused on several areas but particularly on the need for ASER methodology to be replicated in the field of health as well to address fundamental needs of people by a citizen led approach - a demand side response.

On June 12, 2014, the Centre for Education and International Development (CIED) at Cambridge University hosted a roundtable discussion on “Citizens Reshaping Education through Evidence Based Annual Learning Accountability Initiatives in Pakistan and Beyond”. The roundtable was moderated by Dr. Pauline Rose, Professor International Education, Director International Initiatives CEID and former Director GMR. In attendance were Dr. Madeleine Arnot, Christopher Colclough and Dr. Nidhi Singal, a lively discussion followed on the need for qualitative research to supplement the quantitative trends.

At both sessions the ASER Pakistan team led by Baela Raza Jamil and Monazza Aslam made a powerful case for the citizen led methodology, a unique south-south initiative that has influenced the global post 2015 agenda on learning and challenges of inequality influenced by income, gender and geography. ASER generates panel data allowing comparison over time. Each year over one million children are tracked on basic literacy and numeracy (aged 5-16) across South Asia, Africa (East/West) and Mexico at the household level to highlight The large country wide data set allows dynamic analyses as demonstrated by Dr. Pauline Rose through the GMR tool called WIDE or the World Inequality Database on Education tool that has country specific dataset. The Pakistan data analyses can be seen at: <http://www.education-inequalities.org/countries/pakistan/#?dimension=all&group=all&year=latest>

PPTs of the sessions can be seen at [“http://www.aserpakistan.org/index.php?func=ASERRoundTableDiscussioninUK”](http://www.aserpakistan.org/index.php?func=ASERRoundTableDiscussioninUK)

At both universities discussions on research collaboration were held for the future and easy access for researchers to ASER raw data over the years.

Dr. Pauline Rose wrote a blog for the occasion titled What the Annual Status Education Report tells us about learning inequalities in Pakistan ["http://www.aserpakistan.org/index.php?func=ASERRoundTableDiscussioninUK"](http://www.aserpakistan.org/index.php?func=ASERRoundTableDiscussioninUK)

On June 10th 2014 Baela Raza Jamil and Noor Jehan Dhanani met with Sir Gordon Brown, UN Secretary General's Special Global Envoy for Education and his entire team at the impressive offices at the Portcullis House Westminster London – The meeting took place with the team of “A World Called School “ to put final touches on the collaboration with ITA and its Right to Education team for mobilizing 500 Global Youth Ambassadors in Pakistan. The launch will coincide with the global activity of the A Day of the African Child on October 16, 2014 – in solidarity against violations of right to education. On 16th October the Global Youth Ambassadors (GYA) will ensure a firm date for the reopening of a government primary school which has not opened its doors to children in four years in the suburbs of Islamabad. The media has become an active partner putting pressure through print and electronic channels on authorities to restore the right to education of 5-16 year olds by opening the only government school in a very populated town <http://www.dawn.com/news/1112874/construction-dispute-delays-school-opening-by-four-years>.

Other than the GYA initiative the other two areas of cooperation with Sir Gordon and Sarah Brown include, working through coalitions within Pakistan on Child Marriage Free Zones and mobilizing industry in Pakistan for a country chapter on the Global Business Coalition (GBC) for Education. ITA's right to education team is working diligently with the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE), the Child Rights Movement (CRM) and Alif Ailaan teams to combine advocacy with evidence based activism, claiming child rights through education.



**Noor Jehan Dhanani Chair ITACEC UK;
Sir Gordon Brown and Baela R Jamil ITA Pakistan**

Blog: Dr Pauline Rose, June 12, 2014 .

What the Annual Status Education Report tells us about learning inequalities in Pakistan

Dr Pauline Rose, Professor of International Education, University of Cambridge. Director of the 2013/4 Education for All Global Monitoring Report.

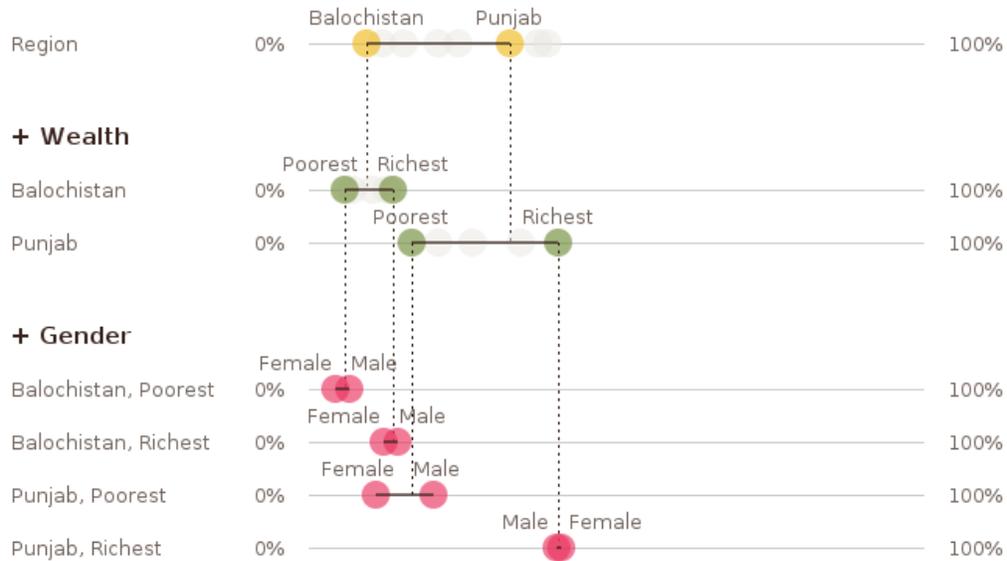
With the recent announcement of [proposed post-2015 education targets](#), which place good quality education at their centre, it becomes paramount to make sure we are able to measure progress to achieve ‘relevant learning outcomes, with particular attention to gender equality and the most marginalized’. The debate on what is meant by ‘relevant’ learning outcomes is likely to ensue, but in the meantime it is important to look at the information we have available on learning outcomes to see how far we have reached, and so the distance to travel to 2030.

Along with international and regional assessments, there have been important locally-driven initiatives in countries such as Kenya, India, Mali, Mexico, Pakistan, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda to measure learning – not as an end in itself, but as a means to engage communities and inform policy.

As part of this movement, data collected for the [Pakistan’s Annual Status of Education Report](#) (ASER) present a sobering picture. Analysis of ASER data presented in the Education for All Global Monitoring Report’s [World Inequality Database on Education](#) shows us, for example, the wide gaps between regions, income groups and gender.

Even amongst the richest rural areas in the wealthier province of Punjab, only 41% are learning the basics in reading. Within the Punjab, there are wide disparities, to the extent that only 11% of the poorest, rural girls in this province are learning the basics – a proportion which is close to the average for the much poorer province, Balochistan. Gaps within Balochistan reveal that a mere 4% of poorest, rural girls are learning the basics. These figures take into account the fact that large numbers of children remain out of school in Pakistan, affecting poorest girls in particular – those not in school are assumed not to have learnt the basics. They also take into account that the learning standard is very low, as it focuses just on the ability to read rather than on reading comprehension. As the 2013/4 Education for All Global Monitoring Report shows, these data [place Pakistan towards the bottom of the pile](#) of the proportion of children learning the basics – on a par with poorer countries in West Africa.

Wide inequalities in learning in rural Pakistan by region, poverty and gender



Source: ASER (2012) data analysed in the [World Inequality Database on Education](#)

So returning to the question of what ‘relevance’ should like – if children are either not completing primary school, or reaching the end without being able to do simple calculations, or read a story in Urdu, Sindhi or Pashto, this needs to be the starting point. Unless all children, regardless of their background, are able to achieve these basic skills, they are unlikely to be able to achieve the other important learning skills that education systems ought to offer (as other proposed post-2015 education targets aim to address) - whether critical thinking, or knowledge, skills, values and attitudes related to global citizenship and sustainable development.

If we do not start with these basics, there is a danger that these children in Pakistan, who are amongst the 250 million not learning the basics, will be leap-frogged over as policymakers decide to focus on other parts of the education system which the most disadvantaged will have no chance of benefiting from.

Annex: <http://www.aworldatschool.org/news/entry/16-facts-for-day-of-the-african-child-on-june-16>

Day of the African Child is on June 16 – will host events around the world. Here are 16 things you should know about this day and why children's rights in Africa are so vital.

1. The June 16 annual event honours the memories of students who were [massacred in Soweto, South Africa, in 1976](#) for protesting against education injustice and inequality in the apartheid regime.
2. It was designated as Day of the African Child in 1991 by the African Union and every year events are organised to promote children's rights.
3. This year's theme is "Right to participate: let children be seen and heard".
4. Thirty million of the world's 57million children out of school are in sub-Saharan Africa.
5. The biggest event this year is a youth takeover of the Africa Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by 500 young people from countries all over the continent.
6. On June 16, there will be 560 days left until the Millennium Development Goals deadline of the last day of 2015 - MDG2 was to ensure that all children in the world are in school and learning.
7. The Day of the African Child theme last year was "eliminating harmful social and cultural practices affecting children: our collective responsibility".
8. One in six children born in sub-Saharan African do not live to their fifth birthday - even though child mortality fell by 45% between 1990 and 2012.
9. More than [100 events in more than 40 countries are being held](#) around the world to mark Day of the African Child and Youth Action Month.
10. A campaign to end child marriage across Africa was launched in May by the African Union. One in three girls in low and middle-income countries are married by the age of
11. One of the aims of the Day of the African Child is to highlight harmful practices such as genital mutilation. Thirty million girls in Africa are in danger of undergoing FGM in the next decade.
12. The poorest children in sub-Saharan Africa are four and a half times more likely to be out of school than the richest children.
13. By the year 2050 almost one in three of the world's children under 18 will be African.
14. The children of African women with at least five years of schooling have a 40 percent higher chance of survival.
15. UNICEF and partners have secured the release of more than 1000 children from armed groups in the Central African Republic this year, more than five times the total number of children released in 2013.
16. There are wide variations in school enrolment between African countries - ranging from 37% for boys and 34% for girls in Eritrea to 98% for both boys and girls in Tanzania.