



World
Population
Foundation-Pakistan

National Learning Forum, 2007

Life Skills-Based Education

October 8 – 9, 2007

Karachi



Table of Contents

FOREWORD	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
INTRODUCTION: LIFE SKILLS-BASED EDUCATION	6
OBJECTIVES OF THE LSBE FORUM	8
PROCEEDINGS OF THE FORUM	9
DAY ONE – OCTOBER 8, 2007	9
WELCOME NOTE	9
OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION TO WPF, PAKISTAN	9
OVERVIEW OF THE LEARNING FORUM AND METHODOLOGY	10
OVERVIEW OF “GENESIS OF LIFE SKILLS-BASED EDUCATION”	10
LAUNCH OF THE LSBE PORTAL	11
KEYNOTE ADDRESSES: IMPORTANCE OF LSBE IN PAKISTAN	12
WPF TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION	13
DAY TWO – OCTOBER 9TH, 2007	14
REFLECTIONS ON DAY ONE	14
OVERVIEW OF “EVOLUTION OF LIFE SKILLS-BASED EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN”	14
GROUP WORK:	15
GROUP ONE: EXPERIENCE SHARING OF WORKING WITH IN-SCHOOL YOUTH:	16
GROUP TWO: EXPERIENCE SHARING OF WORKING WITH OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH:	16
THE UNICEF EXPERIENCE	16
RETHINKING LIFE SKILLS-BASED EDUCATION	17
CLOSING SESSION	18
LEARNINGS OF THE FORUM	19
RECOMMENDATIONS	23
ANNEXURE	25
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	25
NEWS COVERAGE	27

Foreword

As the youth population in Pakistan is growing at an unimaginably rapid pace, there is a critical need to educate and empower this young lot to adopt healthy social behaviors through Life-Skills Based Education. The programs to support this huge population are becoming more essential than ever before due to the deprived conditions of poverty, communicable diseases and economic instability in the country. Though many organizations are focusing their developmental initiatives on this enlarging group, yet there is a constant need of new tools, resources and outreach strategies to work on Life Skills-Based Education. In this course of action, it is vital that we learn from one another's experiences and develop strategies in a synergized manner that can bring in a national impact. Thus, WPF organized a two day national learning forum in which all the major stakeholders of LSBE in Pakistan participated.

The feedback received from the participants of the forum made the success of the event obvious in terms of achievement of its objectives. The credit of this success goes to everyone involved in different stages of the learning forum from idea generation till its implementation and documentation. I take this opportunity to thank and congratulate all of them.

Foremost gratitude is extended to the facilitator of the forum: Ms. Kamyra Marvi, LDM for her professional and valued input through the entire process of the forum. I am also grateful to the speakers and facilitators of the forum for their valuable feedback. In this regard thanks are extended to Mr. Yahya Waliullah, Secretary, Planning & Development – Sindh, Ms. Yasmin Qazi, Senior Country Advisor, Lucile Packard Foundation, Mr. Mashhood Rizvi, Director Sindh & Balochistan Region, British Council, Ms. Rahal Saeed, Aahung, Mr. Rana Manan, UNICEF and Mr. Abbas Hussain, TDC.

I am thankful to all the participants of the forum for their active and worthy participation. Ms. Batool Fatima, Ms. Marzina Khan, Ms. Nida Mushtaq and Mr. Kashif Muneer are highly appreciated for their efforts in organizing this event. Ms. Nida Mushtaq is also thanked for her time and efforts in compilation of this report.

In the light of this forum, I am most hopeful that we will be able to take this very important issue forward towards national institutionalization with the close coordination of other partners.

Qadeer Baig

*Country Representative, Pakistan
World Population Foundation*

Executive Summary

World Population Foundation globally works for the improvement of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of women and young people. Keeping in mind the increased demographic dividend, since the last one decade WPF has been working in Pakistan for the improvement of SRHR of young people through different strategic initiatives in the field of education, health and social welfare. One such initiative is its Life Skills-Based Education Program that has been carried out through partners since 2005 covering 160 schools and has provided Life Skills-Based Education to about 25,000 young girls and boys through out Pakistan.

Our initiative of Life Skills-Based Education is a sincere effort towards promoting young people's abilities to make informed choices and decisions, developing their capacity to be responsible citizens and participate efficiently in nation building and also participate in social dialogue processes to bargain effectively for their social protection.

Similar programs are being conducted by other organizations like Aahung, Rozan, UNICEF, Amal, UNFPA, PAVHNA, PVDP, HANDS and WESS etc since last few years to ensure access to the expanded youth population in Pakistan. With this extent of realization and relatively little change in the society towards the youth issues, WPF felt the importance of a platform for lesson sharing among these organizations. In view of the above background a National Learning Forum was organized in Karachi on October 8 -9, 2007 by WPF, Pakistan.

The Forum aimed at sharing life-skills program experiences of different organizations, by identifying key issues and exploring effective approaches to meet some of the growing needs of the vast and diverse youth population of Pakistan. The forum was well attended by almost 50 participants representing government, UN agencies, NGOs, CBOs, educational and training institutions and others from across Pakistan.

The first day of the forum revolved around defining life-skills, its evolution and global implications. Presentations were also given on life-skills in Pakistan and discussion around the key local approaches and strategies were conducted. The second day included an in-depth discussion and group work on the best practices identified for effective life-skills programs with in-school as well as out-of-school youth. Two papers were presented by WPF that were compiled as literature reviews on "Genesis of Life Skills-Based Education" and "Evolution of Life Skills-Based Education in Pakistan".

The event was also significant with the launch of the first "Life Skills Portal" of Pakistan developed by WPF, Pakistan. The portal includes information on all aspects of Life Skills that can be easily accessed by the young population. In this way they get the right kind of knowledge about sexuality issues and they get educated on issues important for their development as responsible citizens.

The major learnings from the forum are compiled in this report and are related to teaching methodology, resource materials, networking and coordination and other important aspects of Life Skills-Based Education. It was emphasized that policy and legal reforms are critical for the institutionalization of LSBE in our national curricula. This will lead to the



acceptability of youth issues by the society and also an enhanced commitment of stakeholders towards the issue. Institutionalization of LSBE has a potential to contribute to the education reforms in the country and thus can impose a far greater impact on the nation.

Furthermore, recommendations were drawn out of all the discussions and group work of the forum. Also a committee of five members, from different regions of Pakistan, was formed to take forward the agenda of the forum and ensure the inclusion of the recommendations in life-skills programs around the country.

The following report presents the details of each session and its technical contents as well as the comments and discussions by the participants. We hope it serves the purpose it has been compiled for and we achieve the goal of furthering the benefits to our target group.

Introduction: Life Skills-Based Education

(Extracted from the literature reviews conducted by WPF, Pakistan for the National Learning Forum; "Genesis of Life Skills-Based Education" and "Evolution of Life Skills-Based Education in Pakistan")

The burgeoning adolescent group constitutes more than 1.76 billion people with 1.5 billion of them living in developing countries and whose numbers are expected to rise sharply over the years (*Investing in Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights of Young People: Options and Opportunities, IPPF-East and South-East Asia and Oceania Regional Advocacy and Alliance Building Meeting, June 2005, Malaysia*). With over 200 million people living in poverty, 130 million illiterate, 88 million unemployed, and 10 million living with HIV/AIDS; this youthful population is prone to many risky circumstances. This is because they are uninformed or poorly informed, about the implications of their risk behaviors. This diminishes their personal capability and productivity, and thus directly affects economic growth and poverty reduction trapping them in a vicious cycle of poverty that runs from one generation to the next.

Moreover, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, 1994), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000), UNGASS on HIV/AIDS 2006 and other international declarations emphasize the need for programs for young people in order to address the prevailing vulnerabilities among the youth around the world including limited knowledge about their Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and thus reducing the social and economical problems from societies. In this regard, a brief on Life Skills-Based Education according to World Health Organization (WHO) reveals that it is a means to empower the younger generation and assist them in facing the challenging situations in their lives.

The history of Life Skills-Based Education dates back to the sexual revolution of the 1800s in Europe when both males and females started to agitate for debates on issues concerning their sexuality (*Reference: The Long Sexual Revolution: English women, sex and contraception 1800-1975 by Hera Cook*). Initial efforts involved mobilizing communities towards the institutionalization of sexuality education but the controversial nature of the issue at that time did not allow for sexuality education to become established. Later on, with the world facing issues of rapid population growth and poverty as its most severe effect, population education was introduced as having a potential of tackling the problem but this strategy was given little priority. During the late 1980s, the high prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (especially HIV/AIDS) became the basis for the realization of importance of sexuality education. The major causes of spread of HIV/AIDS included poverty, illiteracy, gender discrimination and other strong cultural beliefs and misconceptions that made the younger population more prone to the disease. Given the interactive nature of the subject of sexuality its content ranged from human growth and development, relationships, attitudes and behaviors including others and with these considerations the United Nation Agencies named the program as "Life Skills Based Education".

World-wide the rationale for Life Skills Education includes: taking responsibility of sexual health, building new morality and removing falsity among people, preparing adolescents for adulthood roles, helping adolescents to achieve their full potential and providing sexual knowledge that can serve as a weapon against ignorance, abuse and violence.



Life Skills Education Defined:

“Life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. In particular, life skills are a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner”

(WHO, *Skills for Life*, Geneva – 2001)

A comprehensive framework of essentials of life skills can be adopted from WHO – *Skills for Health*, that designates ten life skills into three broad categories:

Communication and Interpersonal Skills	Decision-Making and Critical Thinking Skills	Coping and Self Management Skills
Interpersonal Communication Skills Negotiation/Refusal Skills Empathy Building Cooperation and Team work Advocacy Skills	Decision-making/problem-solving Skills Critical Thinking Skills	Skills for Increasing Personal Confidence and Abilities to Assume Control, Take Responsibility, Make a Difference, or Bring About Change Skills for Managing Feelings Skills for Managing Stress

Including both the processes of teaching and learning, Life Skills-Based Education caters to the acquisition of knowledge and in doing so develops the needed skills and attitudes to support healthy behaviors.

Life Skills Education evolved in Pakistan during the late 90s due to the enhanced realization from the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD) Plan of Action (1994) by the civil society in Pakistan. Here it was identified that the investment in youth groups was critical towards poverty reduction and human development all over the world. Initially, Life Skills Based Education Programs were executed by a very few civil society organizations like Aahung, Amal, UNICEF, Rozan and WPF etc but now many other organizations have mainstreamed LSBE in their main area of work such as poverty reduction, eradicating HIV/AIDS and provision of quality education.

The National Learning Forum documented in this report is an effort by WPF to bring the decade of these experiences to one platform that can be utilized to bring about improvements in the sector accordingly.

Objectives of the LSBE Forum

The agenda of the National LSBE Learning Forum was specifically aimed at the following objectives:

- Document literature review of LSBE work in Pakistan done by different organizations with different youth groups
- Develop a clear understanding of the strategies and approaches of different organizations working on Life Skills Education in Pakistan.
- Derive lessons learnt by all the organizations, implementers and beneficiaries of the LSBE programme.
- Develop a platform for experience sharing and advocating the inclusion of LSBE in national curriculum in Pakistan

Proceedings of the Forum

Day One – October 8, 2007

Welcome Addresses

Overview of the Learning Forum

Paper Presentation: “Genesis of Life Skills-Based Education”

Launch of “Life Skills Portal”

Keynote Addresses: Importance of LSBE in Pakistan

WPF Tenth Anniversary Celebration

Welcome Note

Ms. Marzina Khan, LSBE Programme Manager, WPF, Pakistan

Ms. Marzina Khan welcomed all the participants and speakers to the Forum on behalf of WPF, Pakistan. She introduced her team of organizers and facilitator: Kamyla Marvi. She welcomed the Chief Guest: Mr. Yahya Waliullah and the Chairs of the Day: Mr. Mashhood Rizvi and Dr. Yasmin Qazi and appreciated their worthy presence at the event. She also facilitated the introduction of the participants who gave their introduction with reference to the organization and the target groups they are working with for life-skills programs.

Ms. Marzina then talked of the mandate of WPF to strengthen the existing LSBE interventions and adopt innovative approaches to bring about behavioral change in the youth group of Pakistan. She also added that ensuring the expansion of LSBE and its inclusion in the national curriculum is a priority for WPF.

In the end she expressed her heartiest wishes for the desired achievement of the objectives of the learning forum and hoped that the event would result in an enhanced commitment to a coordinated effort for the institutionalization of LSBE in Pakistan for In-School as well as Out-of-School Youth. She concluded by thanking all the participants and stakeholders for their attendance at the Forum.

Opening Remarks and Introduction to WPF, Pakistan

Ms. Batool Fatima, Head of Programmes, WPF, Pakistan

Ms. Batool Fatima welcomed all the participants to the Forum and stated her high expectations from the expert participation in meeting the objectives of the Forum. She gave a brief orientation of the LSBE programme of WPF, Pakistan. She also informed the participants about the recently developed five-year country strategy plan of WPF that has an underlying focus on programs to empower young people in Pakistan through improving their SRHR.

Life Skills-Based Education is one of the key strategies to empower the vulnerable youth population of Pakistan who are often deprived of even basic education. WPF in close coordination with the government is making efforts to reach the marginalized youth groups such as street youth and physically or intellectually challenged youth through its LSBE program.



WPF recognizes the efforts made by other organizations working on issues directly or indirectly related to life-skills and also believes in the enhanced impact of synergetic efforts. In this regard, this learning forum aims at improvement of resources, strategies and models to achieve a higher level of behavioral change in our society.

Ms. Batool further highlighted that the forum is a fruitful product of extensive planning and literature review on part of WPF, Pakistan and thus has been aimed at a few very ambitious objectives that are expected to be met with the valued participation of all the stakeholders present at the event. She concluded by thanking all the participants and stakeholders.

Overview of the Learning Forum and Methodology

Ms. Kamyla Marvi, Country Manager, LDM, Pakistan

Kamyla Marvi, the facilitator of the forum, provided a comprehensive orientation to the participants about the agenda of the forum extending over two days. The first day of the forum will be focused more on evolution and theory of Life Skills-Based Education in general terms and in a global scenario while during the second day of the forum practices regarding the Life-Skills programs will be discussed. The second day will also include experience sharing from different organizations through group work in two groups of those working with “in-school youth” and “out-of-school youth”.

While talking about importance of experience sharing for better results, she shared that it is only during the last one decade that a few organizations like UNICEF, Aahung, PAVHNA, Amal and WPF started working on Life Skills-Based Education in Pakistan. During this period a lot has been implemented some part of the enormous youth population has been reached but unfortunately little has been evaluated in terms of assessing impact in the target groups and their communities. Even if there have been some assessments conducted, very little has been shared around with other stakeholders to replicate the best practices for a broader impact on national level.

She shared with the participants that during her experience in the development sector, this is the first national level life-skills learning forum to be conducted in a decade. She emphasized that we shall thus anticipate this forum as a starting point of life-skills in Pakistan for this being our first learning point. She invited the participants to forthrightly discuss and share possible strategies to develop efficient intra-country resources to promote life-skills in Pakistan.

She assured the participants that during the forum they will be sharing experiences and exploring avenues of coordination to work on advocacy level for enhancing outreach and institutionalization of Life Skills-Based Education in Pakistan.

In the end, she appreciated WPF and Qadeer Baig in particular for realizing the importance of experience sharing for the successful LSBE programs and thus taking the lead in organizing the Learning Forum on a national level.

Overview of “Genesis of Life Skills-Based Education”

Mr. Qadeer Baig, Country Representative, WPF, Pakistan

Mr. Qadeer Baig extended a warm welcome to all the participants of the Forum. He particularly thanked the chief guest and chairs of the session for taking keen interest in the mandate of WPF for this forum. Mr. Baig said that the idea for this forum came through a discussion with Rahal Saeed, Aahung.

Mr. Baig presented the paper titled “Genesis of Life Skills-Based Education” that is a compilation of literature review conducted by WPF prior to the Forum. He said that the paper had been presented to develop a clear understanding of LSBE from a global perspective. He highlighted the main features of the paper that is the emergence of Life Skills-Based Education as a century long effort by the advocates of sexuality education around the globe. He also briefly touched upon other aspects of LSBE presented in the paper like its conceptual clarity, definitions and essential components according to international standards, its cultural and religious relevance, modern approaches, strategies and models used worldwide.

Mr. Baig informed the participants that the discussion paper is in its draft form and has been shared at this event for the review of the experts present at the forum. The valuable inputs by these experts will shape this paper into a more comprehensive and accurate document that can be later used as one of the resources of LSBE in Pakistan. He then facilitated a discussion around the paper by all the participants of the forum. He concluded by thanking all the participants and stakeholders for their valuable feedback and assured them of its inclusion in the final version of the paper.

Participants’ Comments

A number of participants suggested that best practices, which might prevail in the global scenario to tackle the challenges of cultural and religious reluctance to the youth issues should be documented in the paper. This would enhance the capacity of this document as a resource for LSBE in Pakistan.

A participant pointed out that there are many organizations working on LSBE in the global arena but there is not enough known as to which indicators can help measure the behavioral change as a result of such programs.

One of the participants highlighted the importance of exploring the links between LSBE and quality education in the paper. This will lead to greater acceptability from society and increase government commitment towards youth issues.

Launch of the LSBE Portal

WPF realizes the importance of electronic media in carrying messages effectively and thus took a lead in developing a Life Skills Web Portal in Pakistan that includes a wide range of information about Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) and which is accessible to everyone and also provides an interactive platform for the young people to discuss their issues with experts from the field.

The portal was formally launched at the Forum due to its valuable linkage to the event. The launching ceremony was lead by the Chief Guest: Mr. Yahya Waliullah, Secretary Planning &



Development – Sindh, accompanied by Mr. Qadeer Baig, Country Representative, WPF, Pakistan and Mr. Kashif Muneer, IT Manager, WPF, Pakistan.

Keynote Addresses: Importance of LSBE in Pakistan

Mr. Yahya Waliullah, Secretary, Planning & Development, Government of Sindh, Pakistan

“Pakistan currently has the largest young population with around 60 million individuals between ages 10 – 24. With the rapid technological changes around the globe and the sensitive nature of our society, these youth groups are exposed to almost every kind of unsafe information and risky situations. The young spirits are full of energy and keen about trying almost everything that comes their way. In this vain, we shall adopt active strategies to equip our younger generation with the skills to cope with such situations and adopt positive and healthy behaviors.

Life Skills-Based Education is one of the best strategies to cope with the vulnerable situation of these young people and thus every effort shall be made to deeply embed it into the society and country-wide systems. We have so far understood a lot about LSBE and now the need of the hour is to motivate our public sector and other community based organization to work towards it.

We shall realize the importance of partnerships for effective LSBE programs as no individual partner can accomplish everything that is required; however, through a collaborative approach, and with a sustained commitment, significant progress can be made. This National Learning Forum is a proof of WPF’s enthusiasm and commitment in developing the youth of Pakistan for a better nation. It is strongly hoped that it will achieve what it was organized for!”

Dr. Yasmeen Qazi, Senior Country Advisor & SRHR Expert, Lucile Packard Foundation, Pakistan

“Our youth is one of the major assets of our country and we shall invest every possible bit in them for the betterment and development of our entire nation. Very unfortunately, the majority of youth population of Pakistan lives on the margins of the society and is deprived of even the basic living needs. These frustrating situations accompanied by the youthful energies indulge them in risky behaviors that bring about unsafe health and social consequences to the individuals as well as their societies.

As we know that there has been a decade of LSBE in Pakistan but no significant changes have yet been observed in our society. Organizational progress reports show considerable achievement of indicators but as usual what is reported is not totally inline with what is actually happening. We need to address the realities to push the interest of public sector and communities forward in supporting LSBE in Pakistan. Also the word “youth empowerment” shall be given its due and genuine place and thus we need to provide opportunities to our youth groups to raise their voice and pull them out of suffering in



silence. There are many programs going on regarding LSBE in Pakistan; we just need to look into a coherent and coordinated effort to achieve the desired change in society. The efforts made by WPF in this regard are very much applauded!”

Mr. Mashhood Rizvi, Director, Sindh and Balochistan Region, British Council, Pakistan

“There are three important values to be promoted while working for and with youth: Learning, Creativity, and Society. Keeping the dynamic nature of youth of Pakistan we shall give LSBE a different and unique perspective through critical thinking and not get stuck in its definitions. The meaningful use of technology and electronic media can be of great help in this regard. It is the most suitable vehicle to carry on genuine and indigenous knowledge because young people’s sexuality is a very sensitive issue and the little the human interference the greater acceptability it will gain.

Also we need to root everything through the public sector that increases the level of commitment and acceptability in society as well. Thus, government shall be motivated and involved in every such effort that will further help us in the institutionalization of LSBE in Pakistan. The stakeholders of LSBE shall adopt innovative approaches to maximize their outreach to the young population and thus shall utilize every available youth forum and development activities in this regard.

We shall emphasize more on Education for What instead of Education for All!”

WPF Tenth Anniversary celebration

WPF had recently completed its 10 years of working on SRHR issues in Pakistan and thus a cake cutting ceremony was conducted to celebrate the anniversary and acknowledge the success and commitment to the future endeavors that WPF – Pakistan enjoys. The ceremony was led by Dr Yasmin Qazi accompanied by Kamyla Marvi and Mr. Qadeer Baig. With this the first day of the Forum came to an end leaving the participants with refreshed minds for the next day.

Day Two – October 9th, 2007

Review

Paper Presentation: “Evolution of Life Skills-Based Education in Pakistan”

Group Work and Presentations

Presentation on “The UNICEF Experience”

Presentation on “Rethinking Life Skills-Based Education”

Formulation of Recommendations

Closing Session

Reflections on Day One

Mr. Qadeer Baig, Country Representative, WPF, Pakistan

Day two started with a reflection session that was given to the participants for recalling the discussions of day one. Mr. Baig facilitated this session and gave a brief review on the mandate of WPF in conducting the Learning Forum and also gave an overview of the paper presented on the previous day on “Genesis of Life Skills-Based Education”. He briefed the participants about the proceedings of the day two and expressed that he is optimistic about their participation in achieving the objectives of the Forum.

Overview of “Evolution of Life Skills-Based Education in Pakistan”

Ms. Marzina Khan, LSBE Programme Manager, WPF, Pakistan

Ms. Marzina started off with her presentation on “Evolution of Life Skills-Based Education in Pakistan”. The presentation was based on the paper developed by WPF through an extensive literature review on history of life skills in Pakistan. Ms. Marzina stated that although not with the same terminologies but with the same rationale, LSBE started off in Pakistan back in 1993 by a Rozan program called “emotional health of children”.

Later on, with the commitment of Pakistan to youth development in a number of international agreements, organizations like Aahung, UNICEF and WPF started the Life Skills Programs with educational institutions during late 90s. With the realization of a major youth group living in deprived conditions in Pakistan, the need for life skills was felt more so with street and out-of-school youth. Organizations like Pehchaan, PAVHNA, WESS and Al-Eimman Development Organization started their Life Skills Programs with out-of-school youth groups. Recently with the increasing importance of life skills education in efforts to eradicate HIV/AIDS, national level efforts especially those by NACP have started to institutionalize LSBE in Pakistan.

Ms. Marzina shared with the participants that the studies on life skills in Pakistan show that around 1.3 million adolescents; 2300 teachers/trainers have been trained and around 782 schools and drop in centers have been approached so far through Life Skills Programs. The major contributors in this regard are UNICEF and WPF. The major donors for Life Skills Programs in Pakistan are UNICEF, Directorate General of Netherland, GFATM, European

Union, CHIP, Embassy of Finland, Global Fund for Children, Packard Foundation and SDC including others.

In the end, Ms. Marzina informed the participants that the paper is open for discussion and will be finalized as a document after the inclusion of feedback drawn from the following discussion. With this note, Ms. Marzina opened the session for discussion on the evolution and state of LSBE in Pakistan and particularly in light of the paper thus presented.

Participants' Comments

Participants suggested that this paper should include the description of work carried out by other potential stakeholders of the sector like educational and teachers training institutes including others. This document can then be used as an advocacy tool for their involvement and commitment to the LSBE programs.

There is a greater need of public sector involvement in the Life Skills Programs to reduce the social reluctance. This can be done by the development of an evidence base through field research that is properly documented, efficiently presented and disseminated widely.

One of the participants commented that many researches have been carried out by different organizations on youth issues of Pakistan but these documents are rarely accessible. Thus there is a need of developing strong linkages among stakeholders to share resources for timely improvement in the implementation models of Life Skills programs.

Group Work:

For the group work the participants were divided into groups according to the target youth groups they work with, either in-school youth or out-of-school youth. The facilitator shared an outline according to which the learnings could be formulated. Each group was assigned the same outline to be analyzed according to their experiences.

The key areas to be analyzed included:

- Resource material: content, language, size of the curriculum
- Teaching methodology: effective teaching models, duration of the curriculum, capacity building of facilitators
- Coordination and networking: donor organizations, government, NGOs and educational institutes
- Policy and legal reforms: educational reforms and social change

The group exercises extended over two hours and once the groups were done with their group work they were invited to present their learnings. The facilitator of the forum interpreted the learnings and expressed that these findings and learnings can lead to formulation of a set of recommendations.

Group One: Experience Sharing of Working with In-School Youth:

The first group included almost 18 participants and the group was led by Kamyla Marvi. The participants in the group shared their experiences that were then organized under each key area of the outline provided to each group. The presentation of the group learnings in the plenary session was made by a representative from AKU – IED.

Group Two: Experience Sharing of Working with Out-of-School Youth:

This group was consisted of 14 members and Rahal Saeed facilitated the experience sharing session among them. The group learnings presented by Sarah Asad, Pehchaan on behalf of the entire group in the plenary session.

The learnings of the groups are given ahead in this document followed by the recommendations drawn from them.

Participants' Comments

Many participants pointed out that there are many things that are common in both the target groups and thus same strategies can be used to impart LSBE to them. This can save resources in the sector.

One of the participants suggested that the involvement of young people is critical for developing effective implementation models for LSBE in Pakistan. Inclusion of a youth perspective can increase the sense of ownership in them for such programs.

It was also emphasized by the participants that when we talk about networking and partnership, parents and teachers should be considered important stakeholders to increase the efficiency of our programs.

The UNICEF Experience

Mr. Rana Manan, UNICEF, Islamabad

Mr. Manan appreciated WPF for organizing the Learning Forum that has provided opportunity to all for sharing a decade of experiences and utilizing them in improving the Life Skills programs. Mr. Manan stated that life skills are as important a part of general education for young people as knowledge of road safety tools, hygiene and cleanliness etc. If things are seen in this perspective then we would realize that somehow life skills had always been a part of the course. The only difference lies in our acceptance of this fact. If we sense the degree of exposure of our youth to high risk situations, we would strongly feel the need to prepare them for tackling with such situations. With this concern, the provision of life skills to young people is the most appropriate way to equip them with positive behaviors.

He highlighted the role of UNICEF in providing Life Skills-Based Education to a number of young masses of Pakistan during the last one decade. He stated that UNICEF has so far reached one million adolescents by working in close coordination with the Ministry of Education, National AIDS Control Program (NACP) and some educational institutes. The LSBE package of UNICEF is according to international standards set by World Health

Organization (WHO) consisting of the ten core life skills aimed at enhancing the psychosocial competencies of the target groups.

Furthermore, UNICEF is conducting a national level consultation for the revision of its LSBE package in collaboration with Ministry of Education. The experts will review the package for improvement purposes and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the programs will be developed. The packages will be shared with all on district level and will be executed in seven districts of Pakistan on pilot basis.

UNICEF and NACP have also developed a generic manual for Life Skills that is aimed at providing Life Skills-Based Education to the MARAs and EVAs like sex workers, IDUs and street children including others.

In the end, Mr. Manan emphasized the mainstreaming of LSBE in other developmental interventions to reach the huge mass of 40 million adolescents in Pakistan out of which only 1.3 million had so far been reached through the existing LSBE programs.

Rethinking Life Skills-Based Education

Mr. Abbas Hussain, TDC, Karachi

Mr. Abbas Hussain gave a very refreshing and unique perspective to the Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE) through his creative presentation. He stated that there are ten dimensions of quality of life; time, values, vitality, purpose, career, spirituality, health, talents, relationships and money. He very nicely presented them in the context of Life Skills-Based Education and emphasized on the importance of each one of the ten dimensions in the life of a sensible human being and a responsible citizen.

These ten dimensions of life are very much interlinked with the basic LSBE contents and can be easily designated into the three broad categories of Life Skills that are:

- Communication and interpersonal skills (career, talents, relationships, money)
- Decision making and critical thinking skills (values, vitality, purpose, career)
- Coping and self management skills (time, values, spirituality, health)

Mr. Abbas also referred the participants to some very thought provoking readings that would help them in thinking innovatively while revising the Life Skills Curriculum. The readings are: *The Organized Executive* by Stephanie Winston, *Man's Search for Meaning* by Victor Farnkl, *When All You've Ever Wanted Isn't Enough* by Harold Kushner, *The Power of Purpose* by Richar Leider, *The Inventurers* by Janet Hagberg and Richard Leider, *The Road Less Traveled* by M. Scott Peck, *Wellness Workbook* by Regina Ryan and John Travis, *The 7 Kinds of Smart* by Thomas Armstrong, *Transitions* by William Bridges, *Voluntary Simplicity* by Duane Elgin.

After much emphasis on the content of the Life Skills and how it shall be reshaped in order to yield from the LSBE the real meaning that it holds, Mr. Abbas then introduced a framework of *Nine Gateways* by David Hargreaves. This framework enables the personalization of learning and thus can be used as a tool in putting all the wisdom of the above mentioned readings in the Life Skills Curriculum and thus trickle it down into the classrooms. The framework includes: students' voice, design and organization, assessment for learning, learning to learn, new technologies, curriculum, advice and guidance, mentoring and coaching and workforce reform. Mr. Abbas stated that any one or a combination from the

nine gateways can be adopted to initiate the efforts of institutionalization of LSBE in Pakistan.

In the end, he showed the participants an graphical presentation that highlighted the importance of Life Skills-Based Education for the better future of a nation and thus stated that:

“The paradox of true human happiness and real contentment is that they are ultimately found not by seeking them *directly*, but through the good of others. We have allowed ourselves to be hoodwinked into thinking otherwise. We have created a culture of reward that devalues public service and elevates private gain, *almost as if the former were parasitic on the later*. In fact the true wealth of any society is simply its people. The real wealth creators, therefore, are PARENTS and TEACHERS. Long term, everyone else depends on them.” *By Cardinal Basil Hume*

Closing Session

Mr. Qadeer Baig, Country Representative, WPF, Pakistan

Mr. Baig requested Ms. Batool Fatima to give away WPF souvenirs to the speakers, facilitator and participants of the Forum. All of them were given “WPF - Life Skills Posters” as a token of thanks for their participation in the Forum and commitment to the cause.

Mr. Baig thanked the facilitator of the Forum: Kamyala Marvi for her valued support in making the Forum a success. He also thanked all the participants for their interest in ensuring the effective implementation of the recommendations drawn from the Forum in their own spheres of work. He expressed that it is really encouraging for us and the supporting committee formed at the Forum will be a great experience for LSBE in Pakistan.

Moreover, he emphasized upon the importance of coordination and networking for the effectiveness of LSBE programs in Pakistan in regards to the eradication of social reluctance and achievement of genuine indicators of change. To uphold the spirit that the Forum had raised among us, the participants were made sure that the report of the event will be disseminated among all that will include the learnings and recommendations for further reference and implementation.

In the end, he expressed that this Learning Forum will prove as a milestone in the development sector and will surely contribute to the achievement of the national development indicators.

Learnings of the Forum

In this session learnings from the group work and experience sharing have been grouped thematically. Thus learnings regarding the content, methodology and duration of life skills based education have been presented. These are followed by experiences of which models of life skills have been most effective, and experience sharing regarding capacity building, policy reforms and advocacy; and networking and coordination.

Content

Experience from all LSBE professionals emphasized that a mix of knowledge attitude and skills are important with the skills component being of the most importance. Knowledge in itself as stand alone information was not recommended as being effective.

It was found that most of the existing curricula for in-school youth address the ten skills as outlined by the WHO framework. These skills are decision making, problem solving, creativity, critical thinking, empathy, interpersonal communication, relationships, coping with emotions, self awareness, and coping with stress. While all of the curricula do not place an equal amount of stress on all of these skills, the group proposed that all these skills are an essential part of any curriculum.

Beyond skills, different curricula in Pakistan have had different content for the delivery of the skills. This has been led by the program agenda of the organizations, however concepts which are relevant to the context of Pakistan and which should be built into the curriculum are knowledge of child rights, policies and laws, gender, religion and culture, puberty, peer pressure and bullying, tolerance, substance abuse, sexual abuse, ethics, citizenship and values.

Out of school children that live and work on streets, or simply have dropped out of school due to poverty, the need to contribute to their family financially or in the case of girls through supporting household chores; face challenges quite different to those of in school youth. These challenges make them highly vulnerable to stress, addiction and violence stemming from emotional trauma and low self esteem. Girls who seek work on the streets or as domestic labor are especially vulnerable to sexual abuse. Life skills for out of school children especially those who are on the street and/or homeless need to address these aspects through skills which include stress management and coping with sadness, self protection, anger management, abstinence from addictions, and rights and self respect. Some basic topics such as hygiene and nutrition are also important for maintaining good health and since many of these children are independent or making money, money management is also important.

The experience from both in school and out of school curricula was that content related to sexuality and bodily changes were especially sensitive and challenging to deliver. However gender, HIV/AIDS and ethnicity had also proved challenging and controversial subjects. It was also found that most of the challenges in low and middle income were faced through gatekeepers such as parents, teachers and the administration rather than from the children themselves. These gatekeepers challenge issues related to life skills from a religious point of view. LSBE professionals felt themselves to be ill equipped to take on these arguments from a religious angle, while acknowledging that in most cases the resistance stemmed from cultural and social norms and existing patriarchy rather than from religion.

In more high income schools however, LSBE professionals felt that the challenges lay with children themselves who tended to take the subject matter lightly and despite misinformation, had a tendency towards disinterest.

In out of school youth as well it was found that there was some resistance to the life skills education from the children themselves. Street children have their own hierarchies and power dynamics and these sometimes led to resistance against the program.

Methodology

The use of participatory methodology that brings in multiple interactive tools of engagement and reflection such as case studies, brainstorming, pictures, discussion etc. was seen as an essential aspect of delivering life skills. Participatory methodology in itself is empowering. Yet training teachers to understand how to use participatory methodology was seen as extremely challenging as most subject matter in schools is taught in a highly didactic way, and despite teacher training teachers often resorted to 'providing answers' and telling the students rather than supporting the process of reflection and self learning.

Other innovative methodologies tried out and tested by organizations have been; games, role plays, videos, street theater, and online discussion forums which allow for anonymity and therefore greater openness.

Experience from in school curricula found it useful to include practical or homework in each chapter or section of the curricula. This encouraged the young people to hone the life skills acquired through practice within their own lives. The child to child approach and peer education was also found to be effective.

Experience in both in school and out of school curriculums emphasized the use of culturally sensitive and relevant language. This includes the use of local language, local phraseology and terminology, and especially in the case of out of school youth, slang and street terms that can be easily understood by the child. Yet it must be acknowledged that in many cases an aspect of life skills was also to give young people a neutral vocabulary to discuss subjects that were otherwise seen as taboo or vulgar.

It was also found that incentives such as food, night shelter and health services were required to promote the involvement of street children in life skills programs. For schools based programs involvement of parents and community members also promoted the success of the program.

Duration

An ideal approach to life skills is one that integrates issues of life skills into varied subject matter within the school curriculum. Thus in an English lesson, children may be asked to make sentences about words describing different feelings, religious studies can promote ethics and concepts of rights, and science lessons can introduce puberty and bodily changes. The advantage of this is that teachers feel less burdened by an extra subject, resistance to the concept of life skills is overcome as it is presented in the guise of subjects which have already been taught in schools, and an integrated approach can promote life skills throughout the school year and over classes. An integrated approach to life skills while ideal, would however not be achievable without federal commitment to changing national curriculums.

Keeping this reality in mind two types of add on programs have been tested with both in school and out of school youth, one which takes the young people through an intensive

period in the form of a camp or week long workshop during holidays where the children have an opportunity to immerse themselves to the ideas and concepts of life skills which proponents believed could not be imparted in short sessions. Based on experience of such a 30 hour program by UNICEF this method was found to be more effective by them.

Another form of add on program is one which takes short lessons (experiences are from 2 hours to 45 minutes long sessions) which are taught within the school timings, either once or twice a week. Proponents of this type of program felt that the gap in between lessons enabled the students to better absorb, reflect and in some cases practice the skills imparted.

In school, add on programs were found to be burdensome on the teachers as it required separate teacher training, taking time out of the school curriculum and calendar for non exam related teaching. This resulted in reluctance from teachers, the need to trim programs and reduced chances of sustainability of the LSBE program. Ultimately LSBE professionals will need to design the program based on the specific needs of each particular group of young people, and for this a flexible approach and a modular curricula of life skills is to be encouraged.

Effective Models

Across the board there is a dearth of impact assessment studies, and therefore it is difficult to assess conclusively which models of life skills are the most effective. However based on experience all practitioners did support an integrated approach for school going children, where the life skills curriculum is part and parcel of other school subjects as well as part and parcel of the teacher training curriculums pre service and in service.

Within the project approach to the implementation of life skills, the institutionalization of life skills, though more time and resource intensive, was seen as essential for any long term sustainability of the work. Institutionalization implies that there is ownership and belief in life skills by the school administration, teachers have been trained to implement a life skills curriculum, and appropriate time and resources have been set aside by the school administration for the implementation of the lessons. Several strategies for supporting the institutionalization of LSBE have been found to be useful.

Within the private school system, school results were seen to be a primary motivating factor as a good track record of the school meant more new enrollments. If LSBE can be seen to impact overall school results then this would motivate top management of private schools to adopt life skills. Within the public system positive examples of the involvement of the EDO (Mathiari, HANDS) were found to show that the administrations buy in to LSBE could lead to the institutionalization of LSBE in many schools. Overall institutionalization requires continued advocacy and motivation at every level. In this context too, the need to build a case for the effectiveness and long-term impact of life skills was reiterated.

For out of school youth it was found that there was most experience with the drop-in center model where youth dropped into the center to avail not only life skills but other services as well. However the drop in center is an expensive model and sustainability is of great concern.

A more reasonable, cost effective and sustainable model recommended is one where the community provides spaces for the education of out of school youth. In this model fundraising and donations from local philanthropists contribute towards sustaining the centers for out of school youth.

Rural support programs were also seen as a potential program through which to tap in to the potential of wide coverage of large organized communities.

Capacity Building

A once off training was not found to be enough to train teachers in the implementation of life skills. The most effective way to train teachers was included a practical component as well as follow ups over time so that teachers could learn on the basis of experience. Refresher trainings were also an important component of continued capacity building.

Apart from the technicalities of implementing life skills, an essential component of life skills was also found to be developing the motivation of the teacher, and building their commitment.

One of the challenges faced by those implementing LSBE was fast staff turn over in schools. Teachers or administration once motivated and trained often moved out of the school thus resulting in the program having to build capacity again of new persons. Teachers were found to be most effective after 5 years.

Policy and Legal Reforms

Experiences of advocacy for mainstreaming LSBE were shared as follows:

WPF support group formation for advocacy initiatives. They have also conducted advocacy related to the Youth Policy and lobbied for the inclusion of life skills into the Policy.

The HANDS component of the WPF LSBE program had a lot of success when the EDO of Mathiari, Sindh signed an MOU to implement LSBE district wide.

UNICEF has worked closely with the National AIDS Control Program to mainstream life skills in 6 districts, Quetta, Larkana, Peshawar, Lahore, Faisalabad, and Mardan. A steering committee has been formed to implement this program consisting of NACP, UNICEF and Ministry of Education.

Networking and Coordination

There was a unanimous call for greater networking between those working on life skills to share experience, build a critical mass towards advocacy, and upscale life skills. The work done by those currently in the sector should be augmented by new partners, rather than reinventing the wheel. New partners need to be brought in to contribute towards program implementation, funds and advocacy efforts. Organizations from different regions and sectors should also be brought together through the network

Further documentation and proper dissemination of experiences and learnings was also recommended for the whole sector. A need for scientific research and impact assessment studies was also called for.

Few experiences of networking between organizations implementing and advocating for LSBE exist except for ad hoc seminars.

Recommendations

In the end of the technical sessions of the forum, Kamyla Marvi facilitated a plenary discussion among participants on the line of action that shall be adopted to make a difference in the sector. The recommendations given below are generally based on the participants' comments and particularly surfaced from the group work and the last plenary discussion:

Development of a Standard Curriculum

A standardized culturally sensitive but complete Life Skills Curriculum should be developed in consultation with local and regional Life Skills-Based Education and curriculum development experts. This curriculum should then be adopted by all the Life Skills programs in the country to ensure quality of the programs.

Pre and post test of the students under the Life Skills programs should be taken and an impact assessment exercise should be conducted before the finalization of the curriculum.

The curriculum should be flexible to changes made by specific programs in specific areas according to the needs and traits of different target groups. This should be done in consultation and under supervision of experts.

The content of the curriculum should largely look upon gender perspectives and programs should encourage and emphasize the importance of life skills education for girls.

The curriculum should be so established as to encourage activity based learning. This will widen the range of use of the curriculum in different circumstances and with diverse groups of people.

The language of the curriculum should be sensitive to our religious and cultural context and also be gender sensitive.

A complete toolkit should be developed for teachers to build their capacity in teaching the curriculum, facilitate sessions and become strong advocates of LSBE representing the educational institutions.

Development of Support Structures

Research on youth issues in Pakistan should be carried out so that evidence based models can be developed that will counteract reluctance from the society towards youth issues and strengthen the existing interventions.

A Life Skills resource center should be developed to encourage the information and experience sharing among different organizations of the sector. This will serve as a focus of reference for all the stakeholders working for and with young people.

Media and technology should be widely used to promote innovative approaches of disseminating the information regarding Life Skills. Use of such mediums like "The Life-Skills Portal" by WPF, Pakistan can easily motivate young people towards acquiring such knowledge and skills.

The capacity of local NGOs needs to be enhanced for effective implementation of Life Skills programs. Training, resource sharing and technical and financial support shall be extended to them for the achievement of the indicators of social change in Pakistan.

LSBE should be mainstreamed into other developmental initiatives bringing to the fore its importance as a basic developmental step especially in eradication of HIV and AIDS and other fatal diseases.

Advocacy

Coordinated efforts and strategies of advocacy should be formulated to strengthen the agenda of the institutionalization of LSBE curriculum in Pakistan for the social and economic development in the country.

To strengthen the interventions and widen the social commitment; local communities, parents and school/college authorities should be involved in the programs and should be sensitized on the importance of youth issues for overall development of those communities.

Capacity building programs for youth groups in Pakistan should be organized to develop advocates for their issues. Advocacy for Life Skills by youth groups themselves can play a very significant role in institutionalization of Life Skills curriculum in Pakistan.

Resources should be mobilized within the local scenario as well as from the international arena towards the Life Skills Programs in Pakistan by presenting the critical situation of young people in Pakistan.

Formulation of a Supporting Committee

In the end of the recommendations formulation session, a supporting committee consisting of five members was formed that committed to take the agenda of the forum forward in terms of inclusion and implementation of the recommendation throughout the LSBE programs in the country. The member organizations of the committee are:

Teachers Development Center (TDC) – Karachi

Pakistan Village Development Program (PVDP) – Peshawar

Pehchaan – Lahore

Participatory Integrated Development Society (PIDS) – Quetta

HANDS – Matiari

Annexure

List of Participants

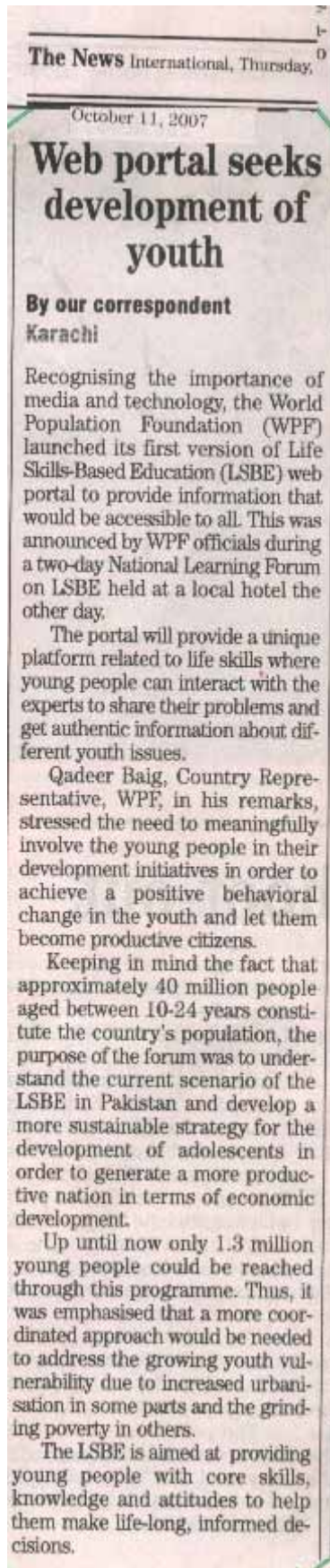
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News Coverage





BUSINESS RECORDER KARACHI TUESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2007

WPF holds LSBE programme to help 44m adolescent youths

RECORDED REPORT
KARACHI: The education process will be designed to assist young people in their physical, social, emotional and moral development because 44 million are adolescent youths in Pakistan.

Yahya Waliullah, Secretary Planning and Development stated this at inaugural session of two days "Life Skills Based Education Programme: National Learning Forum: Uniting for Change" which was organised by World Population Foundation (WPF) at local Hotel here on Monday.

Yasmeen Qazi, Senior Country Advisor, Packard and Lucile Foundation, Mashhood Rizvi, Director, British Council, Sindh and Balochistan, Qadeer Baig, Country Representative, WPF, Pakistan and others were present on the occasion.

Yahya said that although several other civil society organisations and United Nations' agencies were also working for the reproductive health and education of adolescents in Pakistan, joint efforts between them could play a vital part towards more betterment in this regard.

He appreciated that the organisations were constantly developing new tools, resources outreaching the new strategies to work on issues of life skills therefore, they learnt from one another's experiences and develop strategies that could bring in a national impact.

This will also help in strengthening the existing resistance to meet some of the growing needs of the vast and diverse youth population of Pakistan, he said.

Mashhood said that British Council wanted to work for youth and urged to uproot competitive environment, which create a negative impact on a welfare work.

He emphasised joint efforts between Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to spread sexuality education among masses across the country.

He said that the world was becoming a global village therefore, it was easy to convey messages electronically and observed that Short Messaging Service (SMS) and Frequency Modulation (FM) radio could be more helpful to communicate with a common man.

Yasmeen said that people of Balochistan and NWFP were desired to get education on these serious issues because they had no platform but they never asked and still silent due to cultural restrictions.

She said that due to international commitments towards institutionalisation of Life Skills Based

National Youth policy had been drafted in 2007 in Pakistan.

Sexual Reproductive health is not included in drafted policy, she apprised and added that public sector should be involved in every forum for effective convincing process for youth.

Qadeer said that WPF had organised a National Learning Forum with all major stakeholders of the LSBE sector in Pakistan to share their experiences and learning of working with young people in Pakistan.

He said that LSBE was a result of collaborative efforts of WPF with its partner organisations included Aahang, Amal, PAVH-NA, Rozan, Azad Foundation, Nui Zindagi, Unicef Islamabad and Karachi, UNFPA, Institute for Educational Development-Aga Khan University (IED-AKU) and Aga Khan Education Support Programme (AKESP), Health and Nutrition Development Society (Hands), Participatory Integrated Development Society (PIDS), Pakistan Village Development Programme (PVDP), Community Development Services (CDS), All Pakistan Women Association (Apwa).

He apprised that WPF was launched LSBE Portal, which would provide complete online information to adolescents

It has designed its future strategy for LSBE, with the aim to make LSBE as a part of the National curriculum, which will be helpful for the extension of LSBE with various Government Ministries.

WPF looks forward for the co-operation of all the stakeholders in future for LSBE, which will play a vital role in the lives of the youth in Pakistan.

This segment is more than 60 percent of whole population therefore, the enhancement of knowledge is extremely important for the social, political and economic development besides facilitating them for the stability of the country, he concluded.

It may be pointed out that LSBE was directed to provide young people with skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them for making decisions, manage their emotions, communicate effectively and practice positive and health-seeking behaviour.

The programme is being carried out in five districts (Hala, Karachi, Peshawar, Multan and Pishin) of Pakistan and focuses on building skills of youth in developing positive and healthy choices in their lives.

It is implemented through part-

The News International, Saturday, October 20, 2007

Saturday, October 20, 2007

Event

LSBE web portal provides all the information related to life skills and it will work as a platform for young people

Equipping youth for a better tomorrow

Pakistan is a rich nation comprising about 40 million people between the ages 10-24 years. Unfortunately majority of this large group is living on the margin of the society that puts them at higher risks to unsafe practices and ruined lives. The youth face a number of critical life decisions as they negotiate the transition to adulthood. These projections of youth population dynamics call for enhanced policy and programmatic measures to address young people's vulnerabilities empowering them to be the agents of change.

For the past ten years, many NGOs in Pakistan have been working for the adolescents, advocating their life skills, which are directed at providing young people with core skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them make lifelong and informed decisions, manage their emotions, communicate effectively and practise positive and health-seeking behaviour. However, the Life Skills Programmes executed by about 20 NGOs, UNICEF and UNFPA have educated only 1.3 million out of 40 million adolescents. This gloomy situation calls for an urgent need to do much more for this burgeoning population.

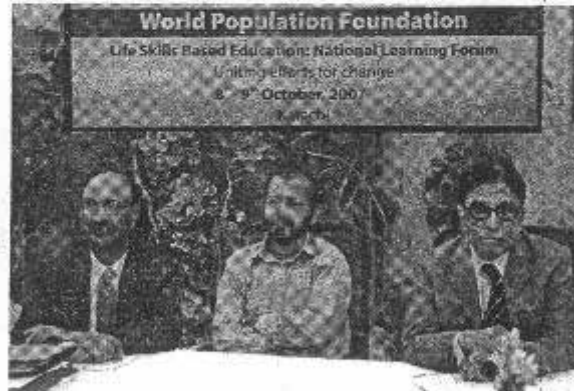
World Population Foundation (WPF) is a pioneering agency working for the rights of adolescents at the national level through Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) Programme with the support from the Dutch govt. Recently, WPF organised a two-day National Learning Forum, at a local hotel to share experiences and learning of working with young people in Pakistan through LSBE for 'in school' and 'out of

school' youth. At the forum, 25 private and public sector organisations and media united together on one platform to share their efforts and design to envisage future strategies to scale up LSBE. Major partners of the forum were UNFPA, UNICEF, British Council, Packard Foundation, IILANDS, PVDF, IED-AKU, Aga Khan Board, PHDS, Rozan, Pehchan to name a few. Secretary Planning and De-

velopment, Yahya Waliullah was the chief guest at the inaugural session.

information related to life skills as well as will work as a platform where young people can interact with the experts to share their problems and get authentic information about different youth issues.

Qadeer Baig, Country Representative WPF in his remarks stressed upon the need to meaningfully involve the young people in the development initiatives in



order to achieve a positive behavioural change among youth of Pakistan and let them become productive citizens of Pakistan.

The Forum agreed on strengthening the networking among NGOs for more collaborative efforts and collective voice.

Others speakers at the forum were Dr Yasmeen Qazi, Senior Country Advisor of Packard Lucile Foundation, Mashhood Rizvi, Director, British Council for Sindh and Balochistan, Batool Fatima, Programme Head, WPF, Kamyla Marvi, Country Manager, LDM and Abbas Hussain, Director Teachers' Development Centre.

The participants of the Forum recommended to enhance the scale of LSBE education programme to reach about 40 Million Pakistani youth. It was further resolved that government, NGOs and media need to foster effective partnership to educate our youth about life skills. At the forum, WPF also launched its first version of LSBE web portal in recognition of the importance of media and technology in forwarding the message to larger masses. The portal is unique in its nature due to the fact that it provides all the

order to achieve a positive behavioural change among youth of Pakistan and let them become productive citizens of Pakistan.

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