

THE SOE DIGEST

جستجو





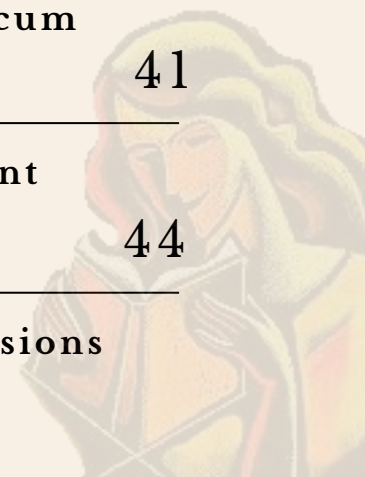
Table of Contents



Cover Art Credits:
Leon Zernitsky

Zernitsky, Leon.
Books.LeonZernitskyArt.
<https://www.leonzernitsky.com/listing/680724696/university-education-college-office>.
Accessed 1st November 2021.

	1
Dean's Message	2
Meet the Editorial Team	3
Welcome to SOE	13
Emerging Trends in Education Research	15
Faculty Spotlight	19
Entrepreneurship & Education	27
The SNC	30
Words of Advice	33
The SOE Practicum	41
Career Placement at SOE	44
Student Submissions	





A Message from the Dean



Welcome to Syed Ahsan Ali and Syed Maratib Ali School of Education (SOE), a community of reflective leaders and change-makers that unite in their commitment to spearhead education reform. Over the last year, I have been more impressed than ever as I watched our students, faculty, staff and alumni rise to meet the continued challenges of the pandemic with such ingenuity and dexterity. In the midst of a most unusual year, we not only created an empathetic community of inquiry and support but also strived for academic excellence.

This Fall, we welcomed the inaugural cohort for our Executive MPhil Education Leadership and Management programme – a body of 36 diverse, motivated working professionals. From teachers, non-profit leaders and policymakers to entrepreneurs, this student body that is 75% female, features diversity

across experience, region, age, socio-economic background and interests. Our MPhil ELM cohort of 47 students embody similar values of leadership and motivation – 79% female and committed to creating a positive change in the education sector.

The Policy, Politics and Governance minor was launched in Fall 2021. Through 15 diverse and innovative undergraduate courses offered across two minors at SOE, undergraduate students got the opportunity to engage in education discourse and broaden their understanding of foundational issues such as education and social justice, teaching and learning, and education policy and practice.

At LUMS SOE, we are constantly growing and reinventing our policies and practices to adapt to the changing landscape and allow our students a space to have conversations, express opinions and take action. This year we have not only welcomed two new faculty members but are preparing to expand the scope of programs and policy engagements offered by SOE. We hope to develop new undergraduate, graduate, and executive-level qualifications to reform and cater to the burgeoning education sector.

With SOE's dedication to leading efforts for education reforms, we have set up an extensive professional development and policy wing, centered around collaborative and strategic trainings, workshops and programmes. This past semester, we designed a collaborative project on teacher training in pedagogical approach with leading industry specialists, led a Leadership and Management training of VCs with Punjab Higher Education Commission (HEC), and launched our flagship certificate in School Leadership and Training programme.

The SOE Career Placement Programme in its third year has allowed our students to undergo a comprehensive, skills-based professional training. Through resources, strategic sessions on resume writing, cover letter building, mock interviews and a graduate networking event with 20 employers participating, our students have developed their career interests, knowledge and experiences appropriate to career opportunities - available in Pakistan and globally.

We, at SOE, for the past 5 years have worked together to tackle complex educational challenges. We have actively worked with educators, researchers, policymakers and other strategic stakeholders to catalyze change in the educational landscape. I am looking forward to seeing our graduates become resilient and reflective leaders, who will shape a reimagined education reform agenda for Pakistan.

Meet the Editorial Team



Maham Afzal, Editor & Student Lead, MPhil ELM 2022

Dare to question whatever comes easily to you!



Mahnoor Ashraf Editor & Admin Lead, Marketing & SA

Glad I'll have a copy of this to remind myself years from now that this too happened. Grateful to have ended my time at SOE with Justuju and my Digest team. I'll miss it.

Aneeqa Khalid Editor, MPhil ELM 2022

Make the best use of your time and stay at SOE. Learn from your instructors, meet and greet everyone and build memories with those who make your journey beautiful.



Maham Abid Editor, MPhil ELM 2022

For me, working for the SOE Digest was like becoming one with SOE - documenting SOE's journey: its students, alumni, faculty, guests, and its get-togethers, welcomes, and farewells. Here, writing my last note for the SOE Digest as its Editor.

Saira A. Qureshi Editor, MPhil ELM 2022

"Mild success can be explainable by skills and labor. Wild success is attributable to variance." (Naseem Talib) I would suggest you be content with the former and aim for the latter!



WELCOME TO SOE!

Departments at SOE

Meet the Administration at SOE that is at the core of SOE's events and operations.

Orientation 2021

A hybrid Orientation was held for the Executive MPhil ELM and MPhil ELM batches between August 28th to September 3rd.

Farewell 2021

On October 23rd, SOE held an in-person farewell for its graduated MPhil ELM batch of 2021.

SOE's Student Representatives

Meet SOE's 4 Student Representatives for each cohort plus the SOE representative on the LUMS Student Council.





Welcome to SOE

This section aims to introduce the SOE student body, in particular, to the Administration at SOE. The SOE Administration actively seeks to ensure that its students' expectations are both sincerely and adequately met.

The Dean's Office

The Dean's Office acts as the human resource office at SOE, overseeing intra-School activities at all 3 levels: student, faculty, and staff. From extending technical assistance to granting approvals, the Dean's Office lies at the core of SOE.



Tayyab Iftikhar

tayyab.iftikhar@lums.edu.pk



Taimoor Khalid

taimoor.khalid@lums.edu.pk

The Office of Marketing & Student Assistance

Sarah's three-people Marketing and Student Assistance team is the focal department responsible for both coordinating and managing all student engagement. Additionally, the department specializes in all SOE marketing activities.



Sarah Mahmood

sarah.mahmood@lums.edu.pk



Mashal Mushtaq

mashal.mushtaq@lums.edu.pk



Mahnoor Ashraf

mahnoor.ashraf@lums.edu.pk



Welcome to SOE

The Office of Academics

The Office of Academics manages all academic affairs at SOE. This covers a plethora of activities including, but not limited to the holding of regular EduTalks, managing faculty-student engagement, and facilitating SOE internal council elections.



Tayyaba Tamim

tayyaba.tamim@lums.edu.pk



Arslan Sajid

arslan.sajid@lums.edu.pk

The Office for Partnerships

The Partnerships Office at SOE, in essence, manages all external SOE partners. It also manages and oversees the SOE MPhil's flagship Practicum Project that is a practical culmination of the SOE experience.



Mehreen Noon

mehreen.noon@lums.edu.pk



Maydda Nabeel

maydda.nabeel@lums.edu.pk





Welcome to SOE

The Placements Office

The Placements Office oversees the Career Placement Program at SOE, seeking to assist current students in landing quality work upon their graduation. This involves conducting mock interviews, and holding an annual Graduate Networking Event, among other activities.



Hira Qureshi

hira.qureshi@lums.edu.pk



Rameeza Rizvi

rameeza.rizvi@lums.edu.pk

Professional Development and Policy Engagements Office

The Professional Development Office works in the training and development space to offer tailor made and off the shelf, short and medium length courses and trainings to educators across Pakistan. The scope of this office, hence, is not limited to SOE.



Ghazi Taimoor

ghazi.mirza@lums.edu.pk



Faryal Shahid

faryal.shahid@lums.edu.pk



Orientation 2021



SOE held its hybrid Orientation Week for its inaugural Executive MPhil ELM and fourth MPhil ELM cohorts of 2023 between August 28th to September 1st. The event included a day in-person followed by two days of online activities and sessions for each cohort.



In order to facilitate inter-cohort familiarity, however, on August 31st, a joint Orientation Day was held for both cohorts online; this included an inspirational session with the esteemed Syed Babar Ali along with other members of the LUMS senior management: Vice Chancellor Dr. Arshad Ahmad, Rector Shahid Hussain, and Management Committee member Osman Khalid Waheed; the session was moderated by the Dean of SOE Dr. Faisal Bari .





Farewell 2021



After multiple attempts at scheduling and rescheduling a farewell event, for the recently graduated MPhil ELM Class of 2021, against the backdrop of COVID-19 and its many waves, the event was at last held on Saturday, October 23rd. The event was hosted by the junior MPhil ELM Class of 2022, and invited Syed Babar Ali, the Provost Dr. Farhat Haq, the Vice-Provost Dr. Tariq Jadoon, and SOE's Dean Dr. Faisal Bari, to bid the outgoing Class goodbye, sending them off with some quality words of wisdom.





Meet SOE's Student Representatives



Ali Hassnain Naqvi,
Student Representative
Executive MPhil ELM Class of 2023

"Live like you have never been hurt and smile until your face hurts."

I stood for this position, to learn from the experience and to get a chance to work closer with the management. I hope to use this role as a means to interact, in a positive way, with my juniors from the regular MPhil program, and to make this executive program more exciting for my own batchmates.

My aim, thus, is to become the voice of my classmates and to share their genuine concerns with the management. Ours is the first batch of Executive MPhil students, and I'm hoping to make this cohort's experience truly worthwhile."



"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken."
(Oscar Wilde)

To be a part of the SOE student council is a lucrative opportunity to participate in school governance by engaging with the leadership. My aim is to represent the cohort's voice effectively and devote my time to making their LUMS journey smooth and gratifying. With a strong belief in mutual respect and pluralism, we aim to create a conducive learning environment for a cohort that is eager to learn and passionate to grow."



Sajjad Haider
Student Representative
MPhil ELM Class of 2023





Meet SOE's Student Representatives



Arslan Abdullah
Student Representative
MPhil ELM Class of 2022

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."
(William James)

I chose to stand for this position because our cohort did not get a chance to enjoy campus life under COVID-19; I plan to make the rest of their stay at LUMS as amazing as possible.

My plans include, among many things:

- Highlighting the students' voice at the school level
- Arranging information sessions for Ph.D. programs."



"Believe you can and you're halfway there."
(Theodore Roosevelt)

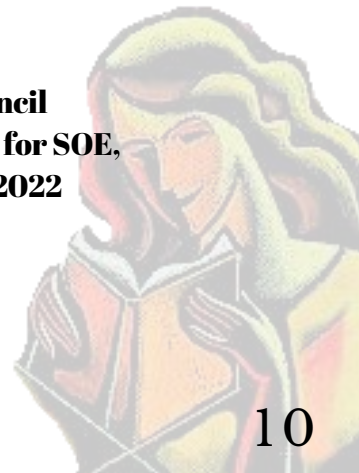
This year for the first time, SOE will be represented in the LUMS Student Council. I seek to set a high precedent in terms of both quality of SOE representatives in the Student Council and how they contribute to the general welfare of the Student Council the student body at large.

My future plans include, among many things:

- Developing a healthy liaison between the SOE student body and the general LUMS community at both undergraduate and graduate-level
- Raising my batchmates' concerns at university level."



Aneeqa Khalid
LUMS Student Council
Student Representative for SOE,
MPhil ELM Class of 2022



EMERGING TRENDS IN EDUCATION RESEARCH

The TALIS

This piece explores a unique tool called the Teaching & Learning International Survery (TALIS).

Inclusivity in Education

This piece explores a paper authored by Dr. Tayyaba Tamim, Director Academics and Associate Professor at the School of Education.





The Teaching & Learning International Survey (TALIS)

By Saira A. Qureshi, Editor SOE Digest

Pakistan is one of those countries with a very high influx of donor money in the education sector. A large number of trainings designed to build capacity and leadership skills in public school teachers and administrators in Pakistan are sponsored by foreign donors and organizations such as UNICEF. There has however been rigorous debate about whether these trainings actually have any effect. New scholarship in education leadership and teacher capacity building points towards the flaws of top down policies where initiatives are developed without consulting the main stakeholders and where designed interventions are not relevant to the needs of the target audience. Research suggests that the best kind of capacity building happens through internally designed interventions or through peer collaboration and mentorship. Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) is an international large scale survey of teachers, school leaders and learning environment in schools. The survey uses questionnaires to collect comparative international data on aspects that enhance student learning, to create more informed policies.

Of the many aspects of TALIS, a significant

indicator is what is called 'collaborative professional development'. SOE in its EduTalk series recently invited Dr. Pablo Fraser to discuss his work with TALIS where he discussed the phenomenon of collaborative professional development. Dr. Fraser deems it a cost effective way of building teachers' capacities by means of collaboration with teachers within school. It requires little extra equipment for professional development which otherwise may include travel costs, venue costs and equipment costs if the PD is organized outside the schools by a third party.

This is an important consideration in the local context. If attention is diverted towards this approach and Pakistan becomes a signatory to TALIS's partnership with different countries around the world, it will open doors for potential research and consultation opportunities for aspiring doctorate candidates. It can also save the state and donor agencies millions in staff training and capacity building.

According to the latest TALIS survey, this kind of collaboration enhances collegiality amongst teachers and removes unconstructive

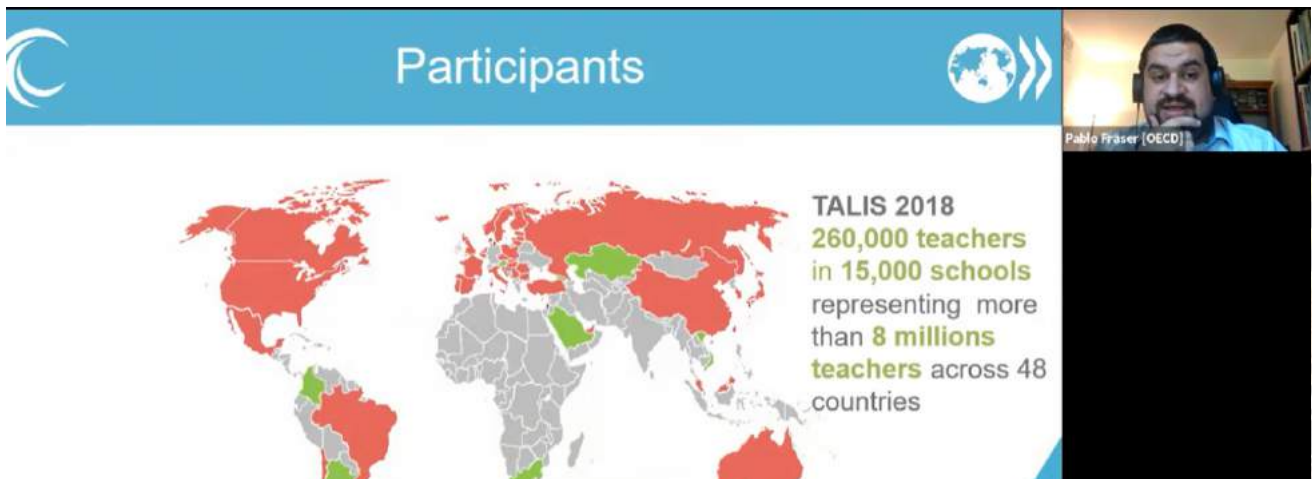


Image: From the EduTalk 'Connecting School Leadership and Professional Learning Networks: An International Perspective from TALIS 2018'



The Teacher & Learning International Survey (TALIS)

competition that benefits only the more resourceful and capable teachers. In contrast this kind of collaboration inculcates a kind of respect for and seeing value in other colleagues' expertise. To develop this environment of collaboration, school leaders need to develop a new school culture to change mindsets, throughout the school across all levels. This can be achieved through making teachers collaborate on small projects, collaborative teaching in classrooms or collaborative professional development. It is also recommended to delegate the task of fostering this environment to those teachers and schools leaders who are natural team workers.

According to the findings of TALIS 2018, where 260000 teachers at 15000 schools participated, 61% teachers claimed to discuss the development of students with colleagues on a regular basis, 28% teach classes as teams, 47% claim to exchange teaching materials frequently and 9% observe colleagues and give back. In addition, according to the survey, more experienced teachers are engaged with more dynamic activities and collaboration level is lower in upper secondary as opposed to the primary level. Furthermore, it was discovered that teachers who are allowed participation in school decisions collaborate more with each other. These findings have implications for a country like Pakistan where professional development is an isolated and ineffective process and takes a top down approach. It costs the education sector a large sum of money without desired results. If policy makers initiate collaborative learning activities for professional development, it can have major benefits for learners and teachers. Unfortunately Pakistan is not a part of TALIS's list of countries.

I spoke with Dr. Gulab Khan regarding the survey and this is what he had to say:

"Collaboration is something that is in my research and scholarship radar. I consider it utterly important for any organization that is aiming to have an impact in their field, to mandate collaborative culture. This is much truer when the idea is to reform schools at scale. The world of teaching is so complex and most often a daunting experience for the teachers so in a system like Pakistan where pre-service teacher training is far from being called 'high quality,' promoting professional learning in schools is a challenge.

Traditional approaches often fall short of the objectives. However, professional learning can be developed by working on cultural aspects of the organization and collaboration is one facet of that culture. As Pablo discussed, the aim has to be 'meaningful collaboration,' not the casual, shallow collaboration that leads to no purposeful ends. Meaningful collaboration that leads to an improvement in practice is what needs to be promoted. Collaboration is a hard nut to crack and may not have a set formula but it does have tremendous pay-offs for lasting improvement in schools and this is where the role of leadership is pivotal."



[1] https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/talis-2018-results-volume-i_59069890-e



Inclusivity in Education in Pakistan

Dr. Tayyaba Tamim of SOE, recently published her work titled '*Language, Class, and Education: Deconstructing the Centre to Rethink Inclusivity in Education in Pakistan*'. The paper discusses widened learning gaps in the aftermath of the pandemic, highlighting the need for inclusivity in education. Dr. Tamim evaluates inclusivity in educational institutions against the backdrop of class-related exclusionary practices viz-a-viz the promotion of dominant languages.



DR. TAYYABA TAMIM
DIRECTOR ACADEMICS &
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SOE

The paper argues that educational institutions in Pakistan are actively engaging in and increasing class segregation. This is creating what Dr. Tamim calls 'class-based spatial exclusion', based on access to and proficiency in dominant languages, 'leading to clustering of disadvantages for the relatively socioeconomically disadvantaged'. Not only that, this exclusion has multidimensional effects on the excluded such as lack of access to quality higher education, stigmatization as the inability to speak in the dominant languages leads to conflation with lower or inferior classes. The process has a twofold effect; the larger culture at the institutions has defined certain acceptable ways of being an educated person, such as speaking the dominant languages and rejecting the local or mother tongue, and grants anyone who does not fit that, an inferior status. On the flipside, those oppressed by this culture accept themselves as inferior and lacking ability. In that 'English proficiency or lack of it became a social conversion factor that sealed class privilege'. This leads to individuals being coerced to 'dismiss their local languages and culture, which in itself is exclusionary and repressive, yet never seen that way'.

Tamim (2021) suggests that this segregation can only be removed if the education policy makers focus on improving the teaching and learning in government sector schools, to provide students with the competitive edge with learners at private schools, encourage use of bilingual or multilingual instructional models responsive to local contexts and discourage 'shunning and degrading of local languages', and last but not least, training teachers to become more sensitive to how class can play out in their classroom practices. It is also recommended that equitable teaching and learning of the English language be made a reality so it does not hamper an individual's human capital accumulation due to lack of access to it.

This is a social justice issue and the state and educational institutions must look inwards to reduce the growing class divide as a result of stratified educational practices.

Tayyaba Tamim | John Lee (Reviewing editor) (2021) *Language, Class, and Education: Deconstructing the Centre to Rethink Inclusivity in Education in Pakistan*, Cogent Education, 8:1, DOI: [10.1080/2331186X.2021.1897933](https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2021.1897933)

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

This section seeks to showcase the extraordinary minds, researchers, and teachers at the core of SOE. In this issue of *Justuju*, the focus is on the newest addition to SOE's academic-team: Dr. Syed Jamal Haider.





Dr. Syed Jamal Haider
Adjunct Faculty, SOE

Q. Could you share a little about your current projects or research undertakings?

"Regarding my background, I am a Professor of Practice in Leadership and Management. I have 25 years of experience working in the industry and higher education settings. During my fourteen years working at the largest private and public multinationals in the United States – Cargill, Inc., and HSBC Financial – I worked on a variety of assignments on leadership and organizational development, including performance management, employee career development, team building, process improvement, and executive and management development in five different competencies: personal, interpersonal, business, project management and technical. I also served as the Director and Professor of Leadership and Management Program for five years at the University of Saint Mary in the U.S. Then I joined George Mason University in South Korea where I taught for four years. Recently, I came back to Pakistan and was offered to teach leadership classes in the executive and standard MPhil program at LUMS.

My primary research undertaking culminated in the publication of the book, *Transformational Leadership*, a two-year research study of market conditions and organizational factors including, leadership style, culture, mission and strategy to analyze the economic performance and

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Haider is a professor of practice and an organizational and leadership development consultant with an interdisciplinary background in education, business, and communication. He brings a high degree of practical relevancy into his consulting and teaching practices as a result of his twenty-five years of diverse working experience in the industry and higher education settings.

profitability of a subsidiary of a multinational firm in Pakistan. Research signified that leadership is the driving factor behind a high-performance culture to achieve organizational goals. My research experience also includes conducting focus groups in United States, Europe, Latin America, and Asia to assess skill standards to improve training and developmental planning practices of multinationals."

Q. How do you see yourself collaborating with the MPhil students at SOE?

"Collaboration happens at many different levels:

1. Personal Development: This is where I work with the students to help them develop a leadership skill set required for them to succeed both in their personal life and professional career.

2. Career Development: In one of the leadership classes, students are required to diagnose organizational processes in five different areas: HR, Finance, Marketing, Operations, and Strategy. Then they have to make a recommendation in each of these five disciplines of management such that if the organization were to implement their recommendations, the business would stand to improve its gross profit by at least 2%. In the other universities I taught, students made presentations to the management committee and were even considered for a promotion.

3. National Development: One of the goals of the MPhil program is for our school to produce future leaders who will redefine best practices in education and reimagine an education reform agenda for Pakistan. In my opinion, the biggest challenge we are facing, apart from lack of mass education, is that unless our schooling system focuses on character building and produces graduates that speak the truth regardless of the cost, our goal to create a progressive society will remain elusive. Our academic institutes so far have continued to develop professionals, who on becoming a part of the bureaucracy, judiciary, executive branch, the parliament and the civil society ruined the country in their lust to accumulate ever more wealth and power. If we want to become a progressive society then we have to make character building priority number one and transform our students into Allama Iqbal *ka Shaheen*. For this to happen classroom education will not be enough. Our schooling system needs to develop a very strong home-school partnership. This is an area where I need to do more research myself."

Q. What are your aspirations for your students?

"My aspiration for my students is for them is to self-actualize their leadership potential. So in my classes, I first start by giving them an understanding of the essence of leadership as defined in the literature review. Here are some excerpts from different authors on what leaders do (references excluded for this article). Honesty and integrity are virtues in all individuals but have special significance for leaders. Integrity is the correspondence between word and deed, and honesty refers to being truthful. Without these values, leadership is compromised.

Leaders know themselves. Part of their secret is that they know their strengths and development needs, and align their talents with their vision and goals. Therefore, self-awareness is the first step to becoming a leader. While leaders come in every size, shape, and disposition – short, tall, young, old, male, and

– there is at least one ingredient that all leaders share: concern with an over-arching vision. World-class leaders have a clear vision of the future, and the ability to communicate their vision in a persuasive manner.

Leaders can influence behavior and thinking and are skilled at gaining commitment and inspiring individuals to surpass self-imposed limitations. Researchers at the Center for Creative Leadership found that leaders are emotionally intelligent – calm under pressure, confident, and predictable during crisis.

Leaders continually ask questions, probing for information, and testing their own perceptions. They stay alert to ways in which things can be improved, and strongly encourage innovation and risk-taking in the identification and implementation of change. They are extremely aware of the external environment and its impact on their goals. Also, they bring out the best in people through trust, respect, fairness, listening, inspiration, sacrifice, and by setting an example.

In the MPhil program, we teach the tools and the practices of educational leadership and management, but only the students can liberate the leader within themselves to make a difference in their life and make an impact in the lives of others. Yes, there are many challenges on the way to leadership development, but then the greatest gift of all is to live life to its fullest potential and tap into one's leadership gifts. The question I ask my students is: Are you ready to accept the leadership challenge? Of course, their answer is a resounding yes!"

Q. A career in education demands constant innovation, especially when faced with a multitude of existing problem areas. What advice would you give to students looking to create a positive impact through their work?

"Recently I discussed the topic of constant innovation in the Change Leadership class. There are many ways to innovate but two are basically a) Seeking New Paradigm, and b) Creating New Paradigms.



Seeking New Paradigms: Innovation comes from seeking best practices. My favorite example is that of Henry Ford, how he reduced the price of a car from \$7000 to \$700. He did that by creating an assembly line and increasing the factory productivity manifold. Now that begs the question: from where did he get that idea? Henry Ford and his team look at other industries and found four principles to make cars more efficiently

1. Standardized parts – borrowed from machine tooling industry
2. Continuous-flow – mills and canning factories
3. Reducing wasted effort – conveyor belt borrowed from meatpacking and brewing industries.
4. Division of labor – Assembly of Model T done in 84 distinct steps

So I tell my students that they should look for best practices not just in their own industry but outside as well, and find ideas that they can apply in their own field of study and practice.

Creating New Paradigms: Innovation happens through research and development. Examples are many:

Established Technology	Disruptive Technology
Silver halide photographic film	Digital photography
Wireline telephony	Mobile telephony
Circuit-switched telecom networks	Packet-switched communications networks
Notebook computers	Hand-held digital appliances
Desktop personal computers	Sony PlayStation II, Internet appliances
Full-service stock brokerage	On-line stock brokerage
New York & NASDAQ stock exchange	Electronic Communications Networks
Full-free underwriting of new equity and debt issues	Auctions of new equity and debt issues, conducted on the Internet
Credit decisions based upon personal judgment of bank lending officers	Automated lending decisions based upon credit scoring systems

Many organizations now provide time and space to their employees to work on their pet projects and innovate to help the organization move forward. In academia, teachers also understand the importance of experimenting in the classroom to create new paradigms in teaching and learning methods."



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EDUCATION

The NIC, Education & SOE

Education start-ups are gaining growing acceptance in Pakistan, and the National Incubation Center or NIC has served as a key launching pad for them. This section seeks to explain how the NIC operates, and further sheds light on SOE's Haroon Ashfaq, his start-up Cluent Corp, and his experience with NIC LUMS.

Maydda Nabeel & Alif Aur Art

Maydda Nabeel's startup Alif Aur Art, incubated at NIC LUMS, is another example of education-centric startups being facilitated by NIC.

Al-Bayan

Meet Maryam Riaz, a final year undergraduate student from SDSB, who has been running her own, independent low-cost fee private school called Al-Bayan, since the past two-and-a-half years.





THE NIC, EDUCATION, & SOE

By Saira A. Qureshi, Editor SOE Digest

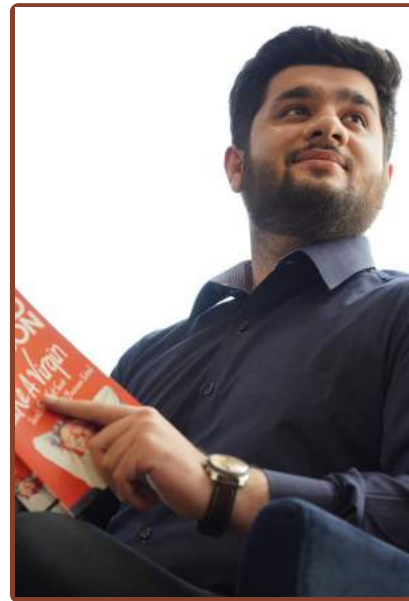
Start-ups are the new hot item in the market. Venture capitalists are constantly on the lookout to invest in the next best thing but for most people in our country work at start-ups is not synonymous with work in the education sector and very rarely are students who are studying to build a career in education, encouraged to develop their ideas and market them as start-ups. However, the fact of the matter is that Pakistani EdTech start-ups have managed to get serious funding. For example, Maqсад, founded in 2021 procured investment worth two million dollars and Edkasa managed to acquire funds equal to 320 USD. Needless to say, there is immense potential for start-ups in the education sector in Pakistan and young aspiring educationists who have a problem-solving mindset must try their hands on it. This is where collaboration hubs such as the National Incubation Center (NIC) come into play.

NIC Islamabad is Pakistan's largest technology incubation center. It is a first on many fronts in Pakistan. With the vision, 'Dream, Build, Rise', the mission of NIC is 'to build a well-connected community of team leaders'. NIC aims to create a dedicated space for innovators and mentors to come together to help new talent develop innovative ideas and turn those ideas into profitable ventures.

NIC has an operational office in the basement of the Syed Babar Ali School of Science and Engineering (SBASSE) at LUMS

and they plan on building an innovation district at LUMS. Likewise, many students from the Syed Ahsan Ali and Syed Maratib Ali School of Education have also been associated with the NIC for the incubation of their own start-ups in many areas including EdTech, research and development, and arts-infused education, among others.

For this article, I spoke with our very own Muhammad Haroon Ashfaq from the MPhil ELM Class of 2022 at the School of Education about his start-up idea that got approved at NIC and is now in the incubation period. He is the founder of Cluent Corp. a B2B research consultancy providing RaaS (Research as a Service) platform to the global clientele. Cluent Corp. aims to bring the power of insight to every great professional decision.



MUHAMMAD HAROON ASHFAQ
FOUNDER CLUENT CORP





the power of insight to every great professional decision.

Cluent Corp. aspires to be the world's go-to insight network and a marketplace for business leaders and subject matter experts to connect. The team at Cluent Corp. uses the power of digital tools and technologies to facilitate clients with powerful business insights across numerous industries through a pool of premium quality network of experts.

They aim to develop an expert network platform to service the world's best businesses, from Fortune 500 corporations to leading technology companies to professional services firms and financial institutions. We connect our clients to the world's largest and most varied source of first-hand expertise, including executives, scientists, academics, former public-sector leaders, and the foremost subject matter specialists.

Cluent Corp.'s industry-leading compliance framework allows clients to learn in a structured, auditable, and transparent way, consistent with their own internal compliance obligations and the highest professional ethical standards. Our quality and compliance standards are a major competitive differentiator and key component of the company's culture.

Q. Can you tell me something about the process?

Haroon: "The process is simple but long. You fill out an induction Google form given by NIC at the beginning of each cohort's recruitment. If you get selected, you get an email to prepare the Pitch Deck of your idea,

basically a presentation of your idea and details on how you would implement it, how big the market is, and additionally, how lucrative it is. Then you have to present the pitch and there is an interview after that. After you get chosen, you get to sign a bond with NIC and the schedule for classes is shared after that."

Q. What is the purpose of these classes?

Haroon: "Basically, they help you prepare your entire business model and connect you to all the investors in their panel. The staff and teachers involved help you with areas like Financial Modeling, Risk Management, operations and even prototyping of your idea. You also get mentors to help you prepare, like our mentor is the CEO of Pakistan's biggest consulting firm because our business is related to consultation.

Q. What happens after that?

Haroon: "At the end, there is an investors' summit where you get to present your idea to a panel of investors and they may show interest or invest in your business against some equity.

So, if you at SOE have an idea that needs incubation, do not hesitate and put it in writing, develop your proposal and apply for the next cohort at NIC. Who knows, you might even come up with something bigger than Amazon!"





MAYDDA NABEEL
CO-FOUNDER ALIF AUR ART

ALIF AUR ART

Alif aur Art is a venture initiated by Maydda Nabeel, an alumna of SOE in collaboration with NIC, LUMS. It aims to provide stress-free and learner-centric resources to students and children to facilitate Urdu learning and speaking.

Urdu isn't easy. Especially for students who are being taught primarily in English at schools, tuition centres and homes. One minute, they are being taught their ABCs and the next, they are learning 'Harooof'. This makes it difficult for the child to transition. Parents are also worried about how Urdu is being taught at schools. Hence, 'Alif aur Art' introduces creative technological methods of teaching, learning and engaging students within learning environments.

It is essential to ensure that what is on the screens is ideal for the learning and development of children. For this purpose, we are currently planning to reach out and collaborate with schools and small businesses, introduce our art-based techniques and approach students and teachers to gather data on the effectiveness of these techniques. The recent introduction of SNC (Single National Curriculum) has allowed us to expand the target market, as high-end schools also require good quality and digitized Urdu resources.

We are aiming for children from 3 to 6 years and 6 to 10 years. They can use the digital resource to facilitate their learning, with the help of parents and teachers. However this is not limited to a complementary resource, it can also be used by parents who wish to homeschool their kids. The psychographics of our target market includes parents who want their children to be 'well rounded' and

see activities as an investment into their child's learning. Parents are aware of the growing dependence on devices and online services but they are still navigating how to use them effectively. There is no aversion to the use of apps and games but the priority is learning with engagement. Especially during the summer with increasing competitiveness among children, parents want to ensure that there are activities lined up for their children. Simultaneously, teachers and parents need good resources to facilitate their teaching and to engage students with this language. One way to spark an interest and gather motivation to learn is to make learning about the student rather than about the content or the one teaching or delivering it.





Our team has founders with education and technology backgrounds, and hence, we hold expertise and specialization in fields of Education, Leadership and Technology, which is a perfect blend for this business idea. Two of the co-founders, Maira Shahzad and Maydda Nabeel, come from a background in education and they bring to the table expertise in research, early childhood education, and EdTech. They have also worked together on a project for using technology in a 'flipped classroom' setting. The third co-founder Aiman Nabeel has expertise in Android Development and is currently working for Touch Surgery. Touch surgery started as a startup in London and has now been bought by the HealthTech giant Mechatronics. Together, these streams in education, research, app design are significant resources in creating the Alif Aur Art App and understanding its market. We want to integrate our expertise and bring forth a product that is quality-driven and backed up by our experiences in the Education and Technology Industry.

We acknowledge the fact that 'Alif and Art' is in its initial stage of development and introduction, and requires intensive marketing and awareness to compete with the existing competitors nationally and globally. We also feel that this disruption in the market will create awareness and will solve our customers' problems with regards to learning Urdu through art and gamification.



Image Above: Logo for Alif Aur Art





MARYAM RIAZ
CO-FOUNDER AL-BAYAN

AL-BAYAN

Meet Maryam Riaz, a final year undergraduate student at SDSB, LUMS who has been running her own, independent low-cost fee private school called Al-Bayan, since the past two-and-a-half years. Maryam's work is a live testament of the fact that change is possible when there is genuine will-power at play

"My name is Maryam Riaz. I am a twenty-two-year-old Management Science senior who is expected to graduate from LUMS and join the corporate world like so many others before me, but instead, I want to make a difference in the world, one student at a time.

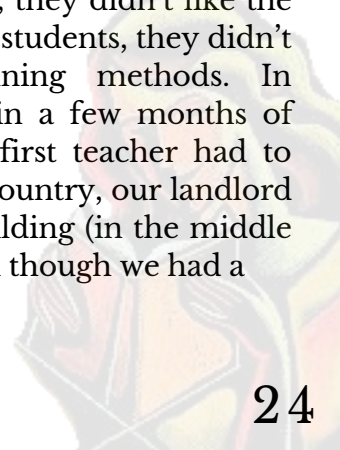
I was around fifteen years old when I started tutoring my driver's two sons, and while teaching them, I realized how poor the quality of education in our country is. You know it's a real problem when an eight-year-old can barely form a sentence, and it made me think about all the other students out there who don't have access to a basic human right: education. This unfortunate reality fueled my passion to fix our education system or play some role in it, so I decided to one day open my own school. With time, as I went on to do my A levels and start LUMS, I realized how privileged we are and how that privilege eventually leads to our success in life.

I wanted to break that cycle for the ones who aren't born with that privilege and give them a fighting chance. It all started with a small WhatsApp group comprising of only ten people, out of which four were my immediate family members. I contacted everyone in my circle, posted on LDF on Facebook, and eventually, the number went up to eighty people. My post on LDF got a response from a senior, Navera Burki, who

had a similar passion and decided to join in my cause.

Hence, began the journey of Al-Bayan, with two young girls, in our early twenties, ready to change the world. We found a 7 marla building with 3 rooms in a small neighbourhood next to LUMS, we went knocking door to door, to advertise a new school in the area which became Al-Bayan's first campus with our initial donations. We opened doors on 19th July 2019 to 25 students, 2 teachers, 3 grades and a lot of hope for the future.

The thing about privilege is that you often don't see the world around you for what it is, you just see it from inside your little bubble. Once Al-Bayan started running, our problems had just begun. We faced backlash from the community; we were called Christians who were trying to convert their kids, we were suspected of being kidnappers because we capped the admissions to 30, we were not taken seriously due to our age and gender; everyone expected a man to be in charge. They didn't like our rules, they didn't like the way we chose to teach the students, they didn't understand our disciplining methods. In addition to all that, within a few months of opening the school, our first teacher had to leave to move across the country, our landlord asked us to empty the building (in the middle of our academic year even though we had a



yearlong lease), we had to urgently find a new place while keeping the classes running. Finally, when we settled into our new building on main Bedian Road, and were beginning to feel confident about our pilot year, the entire country locked down due to COVID and schools had to be shut down.

In the face of all these challenges, however, we didn't give up. Many people told us that we were just inexperienced young girls who couldn't manage a brand-new school during COVID when so many others were shutting down. We had good days and we had bad days, but at the end of it all, we had a passion we were working towards and we weren't going to give up this easy. We took all the steps we could to keep our students engaged: introduced holiday booklets to keep them in touch with their studies, and divided them into sections that came to school on alternate days so we could have social distancing. Online learning wasn't an option, since most of our students didn't have laptops/tablets or smartphones to log on from.

Slowly, we started to expand the organization to bring in more people to help us cope with the workload. From being a 2-woman team, we are now an all-female core team of 5 department directors, plus department team members: Events & Training, Corporate Relations, Finance & Operations (My department), Education & Research (Navera's department) and lastly, Marketing.

With an expanded team, we've been able to introduce several new initiatives like the Saturday Volunteer Program, which allows everyone to give back to the community by dedicating their Saturdays to teaching our students. These volunteers hold sessions on climate change, child abuse, gender equality, karate and much much more. We have also partnered up with societies such as LCSS, LUMUN, and Next Generation Pakistan for extracurricular activities like Al-Bayan's annual play, sports day and field trip.





To ensure our students receive the best education possible while keeping our costs low and benefiting the community, we hire educated teachers from the neighbourhood and put them through continuous training sessions with Oxford, private trainers and external organizations like Barkat Foundation which train teachers on better class management, activity-based learning, technical skills etc.

After all that Al-Bayan has been through, it is here to stay, and to ensure that we play our role in improving the education system. Over the past 3 years, our donor base has become stronger, our place in the community has become permanent, and our school's strength has increased to 105 students with 6 grade levels and 10 teachers. We aim to continue growing but we also believe in sustainable expansion and quality retention which is why the school expands by opening 1-2 classrooms annually. We plan to eventually cater to students from kindergarten to the twelfth grade and our long-term plan is to one day be able to open branches of Al-Bayan in other underprivileged areas of the country.

As for myself, I am committed to making this dream come true and pursue my career in Education to ensure that I can one day proudly claim that I made a difference in the world.



The SNC

Dr. Soufia Siddiqi, Assistant Professor at SOE, was a member of the Single National Curriculum design process. We, at the Justuju Editorial Team, had the unique privilege of speaking to her about her experience with the SNC; in the process, we managed to get some great insights into what went behind the development of the curriculum as we now see it. An insider's perspective, we feel, would be more helpful for those keen on better understanding Pakistan's national education system: its present and future. This piece ultimately seeks to assist aspiring educationists understand the dynamics and efforts required to bring about change in the education space via national policy processes and beyond.





THE SNC

On being a part of the SNC process – the selection and decision:

“I was nominated by the School Education Department of the Punjab when I used to work there between 2018/19. I agreed to participate in the process because of my research interests in curriculum design and policy reform. I also thought it might be a chance to bring a modest academic voice to a space that is often overloaded with political, bureaucratic and practitioner/business narratives. Not saying that the last three categories are bad, just that they’re often working at a pace that doesn’t support a daily return to systematically produced evidence about mid- or long-term successes and how to get them – academia does, and by design.”

On the work process:

“The National Curriculum Council asked me to participate in a select committee-based review of the General Knowledge curriculum and subsequently, its model textbook initiative. We were given these drafts that committees or writers had already come up with and asked to go at them with as critical an eye as possible.

So we would think about child psychology, implementational realities, design questions, aspirations for Pakistan, existing stereotypes and which ones really need to be transformed for more coherent social existence, language styles, imagery, so on and so forth.

A lot of the argument was structured around what the average Pakistani child or teacher could respond well to.



DR. SOUFIA A. SIDDIQI
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, SOE

Great learning because the answers were so many. It really reinforced the idea that it’s genuinely impossible to have a ‘single’ curriculum for all the many types of learning environments and experiences needed, desired by, and practised across contemporary Pakistan. You might wonder why I’m saying that because then how is this an SNC exercise: I’m saying it to reinforce that there’s a critical learning one can gain through participation in processes, but what really counts next is how well systems are willing to respond to those learning.”

On the limitations and lasting impressions during the process:

“I’ll start by saying that the process left me both tired and inspired. We aren’t an idiotic country by any means – I say this frankly because that’s how we tend to think of each other, and it’s not a great way to exist as a society or country, frankly. But we have to understand that we are so many, and our experiences are so diverse that there is bound to be friction in what we think makes sense for Pakistan, but also the fact that everyone really does want goodness at the end of the day. So how do we get it?



I think we're a country that doesn't actively curate enough space and time for honest conversation – and I really felt this so much during the SNC process. So I was grateful for the opportunity at a relatively young stage of my career to be tasked with very difficult (even stressful) decisions for Pakistan.

One of the hardest things that I went through was an effort to be heard, to bring support to evidence-based argument, to also take feedback and dwell on whether I was pushing everyone else too hard, and then use all of this real-time chaos to keep taking decisions about how best to review curricular or textbook writing/design.

I will never forget that I had to argue, quite literally, for 73 minutes without a break to have a cricketer inserted as an option in the chapter on professions. Sana Mir's picture in front of the word cricketer so that anyone looking at that combination of profession and picture for the first time in their young lives could think: oh, cricket can be a career, and it's quite normal for females to be professional athletes. In a committee of maybe 8-9 people, I remember that it was only myself and a young teacher in the garrison school system who knew who Sana even was. By that point, incidentally, she had already been nominated to the International Cricket Council's Women's Committee as Current Player Representative (before she retired). There were members who hadn't ever heard of her here in Pakistan. So that gave me a simple but really useful sense for just how much we need to push the conversation on challenging stereotypes: not just for women or gender, but for ethnicity, religion, even what it means to be Pakistani or just human, really."

On envisioning SNC – the outcomes:

"Honestly, it's a very complex exercise that's only just been rolled out, so any prediction will be a poor one to make without reasonable or sensible amounts of evidence. But what I do feel, with confidence, is that if there is only one thing the SNC will accomplish, it will finally put education back on the dinner table. Every home, every parent, everywhere in this country is right now really quite concerned once again about the education of Pakistani children – it's a silver lining, really, even if it's happened through very frustrating circumstances. As a citizen, my only hope – and I say this personally – is that the conversation doesn't end with this election cycle."

On the most exciting aspect of the process:

"I rediscovered the library resources of the federal ministry. The thing is, especially for people like myself who have always been identified as a kind of 'nerd' since childhood, libraries are a deep source of comfort and serenity. To have that realisation that – oh my God – so much of this material is just strewn across Islamabad, can we do anything to preserve it before we lose entire decades of our precious history as a country?"

Final thoughts for readers:

"I'm not a spokesperson for the government or state. Just a lighter note for my students with which to end a very serious piece."



WORDS OF ADVICE

Meet our students from the MPhil Education Leadership & Management Class of 2022, and the inspirational words of advice that they have for aspiring educationists, policy enthusiasts, and future leaders of the education landscape in Pakistan and beyond.





WORDS OF ADVICE

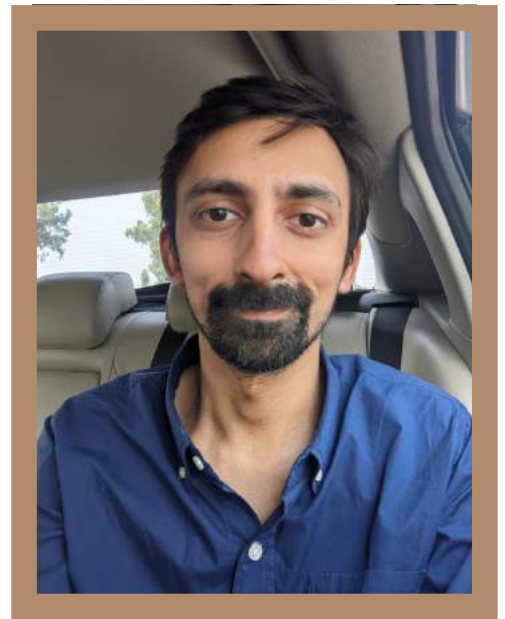


Saman Malik

"Make sure to prioritize your mental health. If your personal life is going well, it will have a significant impact on your ability to perform well in class. Your instructors at SOE are some of the best qualified and empathetic people you will ever meet. You can talk to them about any serious issues and they will try their best to understand and help."

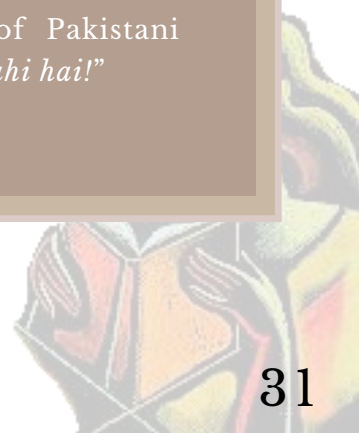
Momin Masood

"If your beliefs are challenged, if your ideas are turned down, if you find yourself in the midst of uncertainty - don't dip your toes in the water, jump into the river! Embrace it and thoroughly enjoy that process. And never fail to take a moment for some reflection through it all."



Rabia Mazhar

"You're at SOE - this is a journey from *"boss yahan buhat mushkil ho rahi hai"* to *"v r proud of u"* and trust me, everything will be worth it! You're going to be changing the shape of Pakistani education so yeah, *aap ne ghabrana nahi hai!"*





Muhammad Faisal

"Welcome to The Jungle - Guns N' Roses' pretty much sums up your first semester. You'll find people from all walks of life; don't react too quickly or act too late. Be surprised, be distressed, be challenged, and it's even perfectly alright to lose a little faith at times. 'Learning to Fly - Pink Floyd' might seem relatable in the second and third semesters. Finetune YOUR narrative and find YOUR flow and hold onto them. Lastly, if you make it through, remember that you are 'Alive - Warbley Jets', and there should be "no sign of settling" as you navigate ahead. Also, if you wanna RUN/ JOG away from stuff, cricket ground is a good pick."

Noor E Muzammil

- "SOE is your one-stop platform for knowledge and networking in the industry. Make the most use of the resources, people, networks around you. REACH OUT!"
- Create your work boundaries. Work on your scheduling, mainly because you'd be doing most things in groups. Please be mindful of others' time and efforts. Be kind.
- EXPERIMENT. Audit all the courses that you couldn't earlier. Study across disciplines. Join student societies and events. Make your own space."



Adnan Tariq

"Be dedicated and committed to everything you do. Just remember, do not simply devote yourself to a single role. Roles limit us to be the best versions of ourselves because they are just a part of self. Explore your SELF because self is a sacred heart. No matter what, keep advancing towards your goals consistently and try to increase your competence. You will feel proud of yourself for never giving up on your dreams."

Mavra Amjad

"I started this degree right after the birth of my second child. Maintaining academic and personal balance was the biggest challenge throughout. But support from my husband and parents proved to be a huge help. I thoroughly enjoyed the degree and have learned so much for my professional and personal growth. Now I feel this was the perfect time to pursue my MPhil degree and both my kids will benefit from a mother who's more aware of early years education."



THE SOE PRACTICUM

Understanding the Practicum

The capstone project at SOE for its MPhil program is alternately known as the 'Practicum' which forms a culmination of the MPhil ELM experience.

Partner in Focus

A key SOE Partner and now also an employer, the Al-Beruni International School (AIS) will be the highlight of this section.

The Practicum Experience

Embark on a quick journey with some of our alumni as they talk about their respective Practicum experiences.

SOE Partner Organisations





UNDERSTANDING THE PRACTICUM

The Practicum is a student-led project accompanied by support from faculty supervisors. It is a residency that encompasses mutually beneficial work and learning experiences over four months, involving full-time work of deep engagement with a partner organization. It is a strategic project defined by the Partner, with potential for actual implementation, based on an analytical and reflective thesis about the strategic project. Above all, the practicum is a research-based capstone that distinguishes an MPhil from a Master's. Each project is tightly curated and includes an individually negotiated list of projects covering a wide area of educational issues with diverse education stakeholders and organizations.

EACH PROJECT

INVOLVES A PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

GUARANTEES A HIGH LEVEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

IS MISSION-CRITICAL FOR THE ORGANIZATION

BRINGS ITS OWN OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

HAS FACULTY OVERSIGHT





Partner in Focus

AL-BERUNI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL (AIS)

The Al-Beruni International School (AIS) is a modern co-ed school that aims to bring out contemporary techniques of learning and engagement, preparing its students for 21st-century education. Unlike many high-end schools, AIS is facilitating students from around its community in Harbanspura, Lahore. The school has a total student body of 700 boys and girls pursuing education from Montessori to Matriculation.

Much of the school's innovative and technologically advanced contributions are attributed to its owner and academic director, Ammar Rashid. He is an alumnus of the University of Warwick with a background in Education Leadership and Management, and has a passion for improving the quality of education within his community. Ammar has been working in partnership with SOE, trying



to create means and tools to overcome the learning losses that happened due to the closure of the school during the pandemic. He is an advocate of the 'Flipped Classroom Model' which is a form of blended learning, where students are introduced to the content at home and start working on it during school hours. He practices this in this school as he believes this will move students away from passive learning and rote learning to active learning and engagement.

AIS partnered with SOE when the MPhil Education Leadership and Management programme was in its initial stages. Both organizations share a strong bond and collaborate in avenues related to educational research and dialogue.

During the lockdown, Ammar also participated as a panel guest for an online webinar at SOE titled 'Covid-19: Reopening and Reimagining Schools' and shared practical insights on how to implement the Flipped Classroom model as a means to overcome the education and social challenges





of modern times. In his words, “We adapted to this model by using technology. We are trying to let our children learn at their own pace.” This reflects the school's philosophy of anchoring learning in the student and their abilities. In a Flipped Classroom, the teacher records videos before the students come to their classes, on Google Classroom. These recorded lectures are then discussed in class with reference to the textbooks for more active and high-order thinking and learning.

Ammar during his talk also acknowledged that he came across challenges such as the unavailability of gadgets, devices and the internet at students' homes which led to a major disruption in learning and engagement. To overcome this challenge the school provided extra classes/coaching to these students within school hours. The school had to be mindful of these problems as Harbanspura caters to a community of lower-middle-income families. AIS also hired a technology instructor who trained teachers on the effective use of technology. This included recording and editing, uploading and downloading videos, managing weekly planners on google classroom and researching for up-to-date content for students in line with the curriculum of the school.

One of the many areas where AIS partners with SOE is for MPhil Students' research and fieldwork. A group of graduate students from the 2021 cohort worked closely with it on two

Practicum projects. The nature of the projects focused on evaluation and assessment within the Flipped Classroom model at the primary level and capturing the stakeholders' perception of the model at the secondary level. The former addressed the need for technological intervention and teacher training for primary grades to improve the evaluation and assessment criteria, particularly in English and Social Studies, while the latter was extensive research on capturing the stakeholders' perception of the implication of the Flipped Classroom model at the secondary level. These stakeholders included students, teachers, parents and the school administration. The two Practicum projects led by the students with faculty support gave insights to school leadership as the research project brought forth mindful and contextually relevant solutions.

Recently, SOE's alumna, Sheeba Ajmal, whose work with AIS formed one of the two aforementioned Practicum projects, joined the school as its newest principal. Sheeba has been successful in demonstrating her leadership skills at AIS in reforming the school into a more technologically advanced and conducive learning space. She has successfully initiated a number of projects which include inaugurating professional development training for instructors, launching several school clubs, forming student councils, and engaging students with a plethora of co-curricular activities such as walk-in exhibitions, movie days, and student elections.



Mariam Durrani, Muhammad Aqib Irshad, and Vareesha Khan

"The LUMS School of Education offers its students the unique chance of entering the education sector as an apprentice in their final year of the MPhil – Education Leadership and Management program. My team and I developed a capability-based curriculum after a rigorous year-long study conducted in partnership with Akhuwat Educational Services (AES) under the supervision of Dr. Mariam Chughtai (LUMS) and Ms. Huma Mirza (AES). Upon completing the project, we also received the Capstone Distinction Award from the LUMS School of Education.

The study used in-depth qualitative research methods to arrive at specific findings emerging from the data collected from alumni of Akhuwat College, Kasur, regarding the capabilities or competencies valued by them at the university. Our primary and secondary research helped identify specific areas where institutional interventions could enhance students' ability to build on existing capabilities and acquire the ones they value. At the beginning of this study, the question was to explore how low-SES students could build substantial conversion factors, i.e. skills and competencies that would help them leverage their qualification for long-term success. These conversion factors are ones that their middle/high-SES colleagues already demonstrate due to greater access to educated adults, resources, and aids. Thus, as a final stage of this research, we proposed a curriculum intervention to begin the process of building contextually valued capabilities for low-SES students at the High School.

The four modules of this curriculum targeted areas that the High School alumni had identified as valued capabilities. These models adapted programs and frameworks developed worldwide to improve youth and adult capabilities and negotiation abilities. Our suggested modules included lesson plans for a growth mindset, acquiring digital competencies, enhancing communication skills to network effectively, and developing the ability to adapt and respond via the Adaptive Leadership Model. The researchers deliberately avoided adding a module for language development as the High School had already commenced a robust program for language development on campus. However, based on our findings from the teachers' focus group discussion, we supplemented the customized lesson plans with Urdu translation to aid students struggling with English as a medium of education.

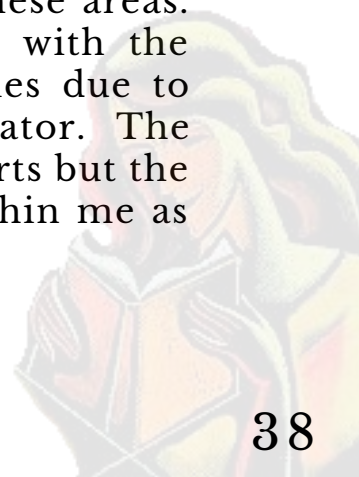
Thus, as a result of consistent communication and exchange of ideas and feedback through the focus group discussion and interview, we arrived at four foundational modules with three underlying characteristics. Firstly, the capability-curriculum was bilingual to support all backgrounds and ethnicities using the two most common languages, i.e., Urdu and English. Secondly, the modules were designed to suit in-person classrooms and virtual ones in the context of COVID-19 related school closures. Lastly, we hoped that the modules provide a foundation that can be enhanced with additional modules through an iterative process of reflection between the staff, faculty, and students."

Sincerely,
Mariam Durrani
Muhammad Aqib Irshad
Vareesha Khan

THE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

By Fatima Umar

"My capstone was the culmination of everything I learnt at the School of Education including applying rigorous academic content to persevering the integrity of research to being able to really delve into the context and design of a project for my targeted schools. Spending 2 semesters on a project helps form an emotional connection with the work; every idea, everyone in the sample, each finding was a precious part of the journey. I worked with the esteemed organization, Idaara e Taleem o Agahi (ITA), an organisation whose views on education completely align with my own, in terms of the importance of providing holistic education to all. My project revolved around taking their Children's Literature Festival (CLF) to communities across the country by empowering teachers from low to middle-cost schools to develop festivals of reading, art and STEM in their communities. The vision of the CLF was developed as a healing experience, bringing celebration to conflict stuck regions to inculcate values such as empathy in students. Developing a hybrid model where the CLF was taken at a smaller scale to neighborhoods after the pandemic imposed lockdown was another essential kind of healing I could be part of. I got the opportunity to develop and implement training content for 3 schools (Lahore, Swat, Nawabshah) for multiple grade levels and subjects encouraging activity-based learning, art, poetry and reading. Another objective of conducting these mini-festivals was to revive the love of Urdu through art and poetry in different neighborhoods and also give students the chance to showcase their regional languages at the festivals through various activities. The training was tailor-made based on intensive interviews with participants from each school and the content was flexible enough to be moulded as per the context of each of these areas. The teachers' determination, attending and engaging with the content despite internet issues, unstable school policies due to COVID-19 was commendable and a massive motivator. The capstone was envisioned as a social movement for the arts but the whole experience caused an everlasting movement within me as well."



THE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE

By Farwa Tassaduq

"Unlike most schools in Pakistan, our partner, The City School, was keen to explore the potential of a 'blended learning model' for early years after COVID-19. The blended learning method is where students can get a mix of both online and face-to-face learning opportunities. Since this topic was too broad, we further narrowed down our project 'Development of an Effective Blended Learning Model for Early Years Program of The City School' to English language lessons in two classrooms of one branch of the school. We collected data through online and face-to-face classroom observations, interviews of teachers, and surveys from parents.

The blended learning model that we developed suggested Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic (VAK) learning opportunities in early years' classrooms in terms of pedagogy, content, relationships, and environment for each learning method. Additionally, we also developed an assessment tool for online classes for the teachers. Interestingly, the survey results revealed that most parents were interested in shifting to a blended learning model permanently. Finally, we also compiled policy-level recommendations for the school to continue this model for the long term in the early years, during or post COVID. I hope we were able to provide them with sufficient data and content to consider this opportunity in their school.

During the Practicum, one of the main challenges we faced was related to COVID itself. The students were wearing facemasks, so initially, it was tough to recognize them and write class observations. Then the government policies regarding the online and face-to-face classes also made us complete some part of the research in a hurry. For example, after a sudden government announcement, the school had to make the prompt decision to shift back to a face-to-face classroom setting, leaving us with a week to make ten online classroom observations in one week. We also found it challenging to work as a team sometimes because it was hard to manage our personal lives with the student life in an online setup. Hence, as a researcher, I realized that nothing could go as planned in the field, and it depends on how we navigate and make decisions to reach our goal on time.

Overall, my Practicum group was probably one of those that had the least hiccups throughout the project. We were fortunate to have Dr. Mariam Chughtai as our supervisor and The City School as our Practicum partner, who facilitated us at each step. The most memorable moment during the practicum was the lovely surprise given by Class 2 of the school in the form of beautiful pencil sketches of all my team members."

SOE PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



THE CITIZENS FOUNDATION

CERP

Centre for Economic
Research in Pakistan

teach for
Pakistan



SMU
CHIEF MINISTER'S
SPECIAL MONITORING UNIT



ALBERUNI
INTERNATIONAL

TEVTA



GOVERNMENT OF THE PUNJAB



OASIS
UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL



SCSPEB



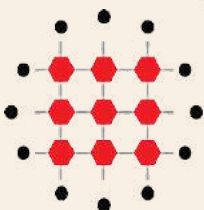
SABAQ



SCHOOL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Government of Punjab



Since 1978



PMIU

تعلیم آباد
POWERED BY ORENDA

INFINITY



FESF
Family Educational Services Foundation



RISING SUN EDUCATION
& WELFARE SOCIETY

KAWISH
WELFARE TRUST

ایمان - احسان - اخلاص



Beaconhouse



Punjab Education Foundation



NATIONAL
EDUCATION
CONSORTIUM



ROOTS
IVY
INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOLS



Door of Awareness



PUNJAB EXAMINATION COMMISSION



BUNYAD WAY TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



GHAZALI EDUCATION TRUST

CAREER PLACEMENT AT SOE

The Career Placement Program at SOE seeks to assist current students in finding work, and in transitioning into the professional work space. In this section, the Program itself, and its future plans for the current student body at SOE will be discussed.

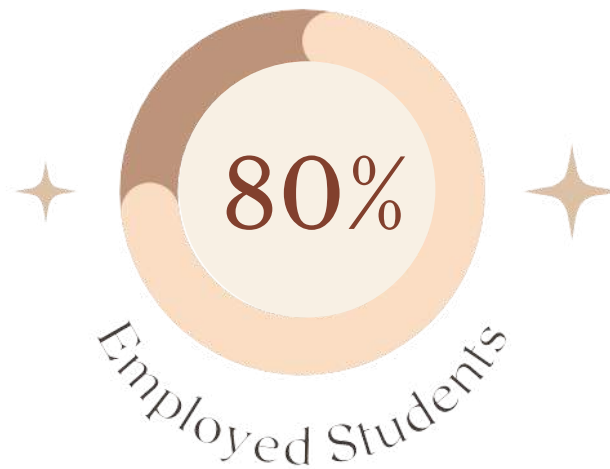




Every year, SOE organizes Mock Interviews for graduating batches. This year, in January 2021, the office successfully arranged Mock Interviews for the (now graduated) MPhil Batch of 2021 despite the ongoing COVID situation. 12 industry specialists were invited to virtually interview students and provided the students with critical feedback on structure, style and communication skills. The organizations invited included The Citizens Foundation (TCF), Centre for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP), The IVY School, Knowledge Platform, LUMS Academic Advising, Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS), Tintash, Punjab Monitoring Implementation Unit (PMIU), Learning Alliance, Beaconhouse School System, The City School, and Generation.

A mock job advert was shared with the students before the interviews and they tailored their resumes and cover letters accordingly. Each student got a 30-minute interview slot with 2 or more industry specialists, where the first 20 minutes were for questions followed by 10 minutes of direct feedback. This also provided the students with a networking opportunity with relevant HR professionals in the development sector.

MPhil Education Leadership and Management Class of 2021



Placement Organizations: The Citizens Foundation, Teach the World Foundation, LUMS, Al-Beruni International School, Amal Academy and others.





Career Placement at SOE

Moreover, SOE organized a virtual Graduate Networking Event in April 2021 with the aim to engage students with the divergent perspectives of the education researcher, practitioner and policymaker in the landscape of change. This event was critical in exposing the students to career prospects in the multifaceted opportunity space in education. The 16 organizations invited to the Graduate Networking Event were the Beaconhouse School System (BSS), Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS), Akhuwat, The Aga Khan University (AKU), Durbeen, Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF), Teach for Pakistan, The City School, Shalamar Institute of Health Science (SIHS), The IVY School, Deaf Reach, The Citizens Foundation (TCF), Oxford University Press Pakistan (OUP), Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA), Noon Academy, and Centre for Economic Research in Pakistan (CERP)

Each organization representative received the resumes of the students that their panel interacted with. Students were matched with organizations based on their preference of industry skills and career interests. Each organization representative was in a Zoom panel with 4 to 5 industry specialists and every panel interacted with 8 to 9 students. Students got to share elevator pitches and relevant questions and organizations shared potential openings with them.

MPhil Education Leadership and Management Class of 2021



Summer Internship Program 2021: Students placed with an organization for unpaid/paid internships. This is entirely voluntary and students are not obligated to intern.

An online session with Dr. Suleman Shahid – Director LLI, for the batch of 2022 where he discussed several employment and academic opportunities.

SOE Career Placements Program 2021-2022

- A Placements Specialist is hired to carry out advising sessions and career placement workshops for the students - Fall Semester 2021
- Students will be given the opportunity to polish their interview skills through mock interviews with industry specialists - Spring Semester 2022
- SOE will invite partner organizations to network with second-year MPhil students through Graduate Networking Event in Spring Semester 2022



STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

Justuju celebrates diversity at SOE by inviting written pieces (poetry and prose) - academic or otherwise, fiction or non-fiction, in English or Urdu.

Hours Before the Exam

By Hafsa Qasim,
MPhil ELM Class of 2023

یادِ وحشت

By Hafiz M. Hassan Siddique
MPhil ELM Class of 2023

وصل

By Rukhsar Fatima, SOE alumna
MPhil ELM Class of 2020





HOURS BEFORE THE EXAM

By Hafsa Qasim, MPhil ELM 2023

The few moments before an exam seem to be the most critical but also the most memorable time for a student. One can see a small group of friends huddling together as if like a team, forming a circle, ready to cheer each other on. Everyone tries to talk over the other, trying to be part of the conversation and consolations. Complaining about how sleep-deprived they are, confirming if any chapter of the book is “ignorable” for the exam. Turns out that one chapter could have saved their grade. Some would explain complicated topics in hopes that they also manage to understand while explaining to others. There would be those grieving over that one concept they did not do for the exam, and another would comfort them, “I don’t understand natural selection either”, “me neither”, “same, I didn’t memorize the Mughal Empire’s timeline either, you know I’m bad with dates”, “I didn’t even open the book for that matter”. In reality, we all know they did open the book and probably did memorize every bit of information available about the Mughals.

Nonetheless, these phrases of support would give small bouts of relief. But, there would also be that lot of students who would be cramming at the last minute, walking back and forth in the class, their heads buried deep in their scribbled notes, and textbooks. And then the teacher would say, “What you haven’t learned in a year, what is the point of learning that in 10 minutes before the exam?” A bitter truth it was, however, these last-minute revisions and memorizations gave ease to the mind that at least we did not give up, at least we tried our best, and the rest is history. And there are those students, who simply give up and form a

strategic plan to cheat their way through the test, and somehow they never get caught.

Eventually, the invigilator would arrive, and the unity among the students withers away as they take a look at the seating plan, and realize they are further away from their friends than expected. Everyone takes their seat, facing the unfortunate fact: in the end, it is their exam. There will be a few whispers here and there, the very last seconds busy in explaining that one formula that might pop up in the exam; just like it did in the surprise quiz a few months ago. A few pencils, pens, and erasers will be exchanged, the rambles before will drop to mumbles, then even quieter whispers, and finally, silence. Leaving behind the fluttering and flapping of pages, followed by pens slicing through the ink, writing away the answers in the best way possible. The gears churning in the mind, trying to catch the right year when India became part of the British Raj. If my memory serves me right, it was 1858.

Some would worry, others would breeze through the paper, and then there would be those who have accepted their fate and decided not to fret over their impending grade. It is like a burst of feelings clamped down under the clock, ticking away the time with each passing second. It is like a “make it, or break it” moment, like the game changer of your life. Like the catch that should not be dropped. These conversations and moments are mixed with nervousness, anxiety, and anticipation. But after a year or two, you realize that this exam never really mattered, it was the small moments in between with your friends, the before and after, that made it meaningful.



یادِ وحشت

By Hafiz Muhammad Hassan Siddique, MPhil ELM 2023

وقت کی کُٹیا میں رات
خیمے خوابوں کے جلتے رہے
سوچوں میں لُٹتے سب قافلے
لفظوں کے گھاؤ سے مرتے رہے
گزر ہوا جو سنگریزوں سے اپنا
کتبوں پر لکھی سب قصیدے تھے سپنا
وہیں... کسی کے سنگِ در پہ ہم بھی
ویرانے کی ازاں کو سنتے رہے
وقت کی کُٹیا میں رات
...خیمے خوابوں کے جلتے رہے





وصل

By Rukhsar Fatima, SOE alumna, MPhil ELM 2020

خیالِ حشر سے عاجز ہوئے سائل کی طرح
وہ چھیڑتا ہے مجھے پہلوئے گھائل کی طرح

میں جونہی قرب کے دامن میں گھرنے والا تھا
پہنچ گیا وہ مسیحاءِ امائل کی طرح

جو میرے سامنے بہتا ہوا سا دریا ہے
میں بکھر جائوں تو ڈٹ جاتا ہے ساحل کی طرح

ہائے وہ لہجہءِ ثریں میں برسنا اُس کا
وہ میرے عیب بھی پڑھتا ہے فضائل کی طرح

ناجانے عمر کیا ہے اس عجیب تعلق کی
اُجھ رہا ہے جو پیچیدہ مسائل کی طرح

وہ میرے نام کو لکھ لکھ کے مٹا دیتا ہے
کسی ناسوز مجرمانہ دلائل کی طرح

اک زمانے کے انتظار پر ملنا اُس کا
ہم مُنتظر تھے جس کے دیدہ ذائل کی طرح

یہ گھڑی بھر کی ملاقات کے اثرات ہیں جو
اُتر گئے ہیں مجھ میں زبرِ حلال کی طرح

یوں تو رُخسار~ وہ کاملِ کمالِ ذات بھی ہے
اور ہے جسدِ مکمل کے شمائل کی طرح



