

DEVELOPMENTS IN LITERACY

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Shehnaz Ahmed

DIL USA's Accounts have been audited by
Link, Murrel & Company

DIL Pakistan's Accounts have been audited by
Anjum Asim Shahid Rahman



Motif inspired by an abacus from a DIL school in Dir

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DEVELOPMENTS
IN LITERACY

ANNUAL REPORT
2006



A NOT - FOR - PROFIT ORGANIZATION



From the CEO's Desk

Our focus in 2006 was on improving both the environment and quality of teaching and learning at DIL schools. Five new schools were constructed: 2 earthquake-resistant schools in Mansehra and 3 in rural Rawalpindi and Islamabad; while additional rooms were added to many schools at various DIL projects to accommodate the increase in enrollment and the addition of higher grades. Community members participated actively in this endeavor by providing free labor and even contributed monetarily in many cases.

We saw a sharp increase in student retention rates and extremely high student pass rates across the board, while a number of students excelled in District-wide examinations. Middle schools were added to the Dir project and 9th and 10th grades were added to the Baluchistan project – these are the only girls' schools in the region with these high grade-levels.

Overall, DIL invested heavily in training teachers and started developing its own curriculum and materials. We aim to create an education program based on the best practices used throughout the world so that our students can compete effectively in today's world.

I would like to thank our dedicated staff and partner NGOs for their commitment to DIL's mission and goals, the DIL Board of Trustees (Pakistan) for their invaluable support and, last but not least, our donors and volunteers who have given so generously of their time and money.

Fiza Shah
Chief Executive Officer
(Los Angeles)



Message from the Chairperson, Board of Trustees, Pakistan

The year ending June 2006 was auspicious, as it saw DIL complete the tenth year of providing educational services in the remotest parts of the country. It was also a year of qualitative change and taking a fresh look on the basis of past experience.

An important policy decision was to concentrate not on the number of schools opened but on refining the quality of existing facilities. The decision to continue beyond the primary level will ensure that the investment made in the early years will now be able to mature to its full potential.

It is heartening to see that despite the turmoil witnessed in all parts of the country this year, not a single DIL school had to close its doors. The credit for this must go to the DIL management team, and to our partner organizations who, despite difficult circumstances, continued to work with unflinching dedication.

Similarly the steady support and encouragement that we continue to receive from the Board of Directors in the USA and Pakistan has been a source of comfort and strength. The same applies to the community organizations of our schools who are now taking on an ever-increasing role in the conduct of their schools.

We were fortunate to have Dr. A.H. Nayyar join us in October 2006 as the Executive Director of DIL, Pakistan. His academic background and experience in the field of education augers well for the organisation's future.

Imran Ahmed
Chairperson, Board of Trustees
(Islamabad)

Overview



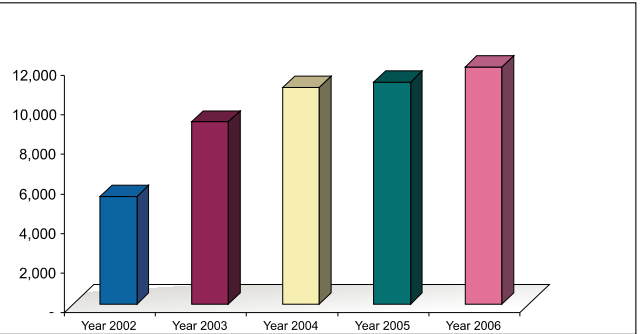
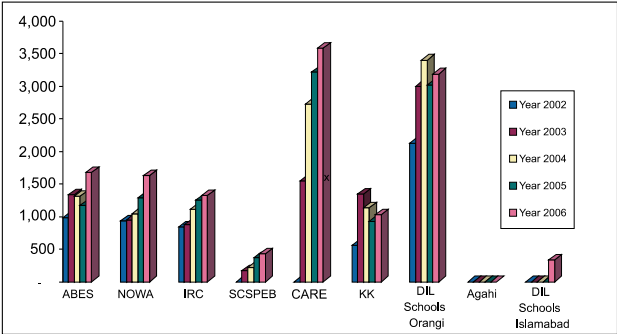
As Developments in Literacy (DIL) completes ten years of its existence, it has much to show for its efforts to promote education in Pakistan. DIL took its first tentative steps in 1997 by supporting one partner organization in the Punjab. It has come a long way since then and today it has projects in all the four provinces of Pakistan, including some of the most remote areas of the country where schools for girls were previously unheard of.

In District Khairpur, we have two Partners and are supporting 37 Primary schools (Grades 1-5) and 14 Elementary schools, which have classes up to Grade 8. In addition to this, DIL's policy for all its projects is to support all the students until the end of the school cycle, when they appear for their Matric examination after

completing 10 years of schooling. In Khairpur, the students join the nearest Government High School and DIL provides the tuition fee and also supports an extra teacher for the school. It also helps with school improvements in terms of up-gradation of the science labs, the libraries and the school furniture. This benefits not just the DIL students but the community as a whole. The staff members also make an effort to discourage early marriage, the norm in interior Sindh, and they have been reasonably successful in persuading parents to let their daughters complete High School at least. In many cases, the students themselves are standing up for their rights and insist on continuing their studies. Slowly but surely, attitudes are changing and the new order becoming acceptable. Seeing the

COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF STUDENTS 2002-06

	ABES	NOWA	IRC	SCSPEB	CARE	KK	DIL Schools Orangi	Agahi	DIL Schools Islamabad	TOTAL
Year 2002	980	933	841	-	-	560	2,130	-	-	5,444
Year 2003	1,331	951	874	170	1,543	1,351	3,000	-	-	9,220
Year 2004	1,315	1,047	1,115	222	2,731	1,134	3,402	-	-	10,966
Year 2005	1,167	1,291	1,249	374	3,220	929	3,015	-	-	11,245
Year 2006	1,680	1,629	1,326	431	3,584	1,033	3,188	-	335	13,206



earning power of females, parents are now less keen to get them married, since the girls are no longer a burden but a financial asset.

In Orangi, Karachi, DIL is working directly with twenty-one schools. This is an urban slum area with settlers from all parts of Pakistan. Originally the communities, be they Biharis from Bangladesh, or Pathans from the Frontier, were all squatters. But recently the Government has been working towards regularizing these settlements and bringing them under some authority so that they can benefit from legal land titles and Government infrastructure schemes. DIL has set up an office in Orangi in order to facilitate the schools and monitor them on a daily basis. Working together with the School Heads, DIL has managed to implement a uniform curriculum for all the Orangi schools, and this has helped make the management of the project much easier.

Since the DIL schools were expanding from primary to elementary, and DIL was trying to improve the quality even further, the Trustees felt that it was becoming difficult for the miniscule DIL staff in Islamabad to manage close supervision and overseeing of the training programme of all the projects. Subsequently, it was decided that we would open a DIL office in Karachi and appoint a Regional Manager for the projects in Sindh. Fortunately we had a resource person available who had been working with DIL, Islamabad, as a volunteer and was familiar with DIL's operations, had conducted many trainings for DIL and had just relocated to Karachi. Zeba Shafi joined DIL in November and is looking after the schools in Orangi and the two Projects in Khairpur.

In Balochistan, the success of DIL's Middle Schools has become a landmark event, and the Government

is showing a keen interest in replicating this model. They have also shown willingness to take over the schools whenever DIL wants to hand them over. This would make these schools sustainable and ensure lifetime support. DIL wants to make certain that the schools are well established, so that if they are handed over to the Government at the end of the project period, they have a solid foundation and the quality of education does not fall. DIL would also continue its monitoring of these schools for a few years. The success of this project has been due to the close cooperation with the communities and the ability to deal with their genuine problems. For example, providing transport for the students and the teachers helped enrollment and attendance, as the community members explained that it was difficult, in fact impossible, for their daughters to be seen walking to school on a daily basis. Our Partners have also worked closely with the Provincial Government and secured their support and help to overcome many of the hurdles faced by the education sector in Balochistan.

DIL's schools in Districts Upper and Lower Dir (NWFP) continue to grow from strength to strength and despite an atmosphere of extreme religious intolerance, not a single DIL school has been closed. In fact, five Middle schools have been established and there is a growing demand for more schools to be opened in more villages. DIL is not opening more schools, partly because of funding limitations, but also because DIL would like to provide quality education to all its existing schools, rather than just pursuing a number game and in the process not be able to give the girls a meaningful education.

DIL's policy of continued vertical expansion, past primary and towards elementary, has helped students of

Getting the Basics Right

Dr. A.H. Nayyar, Executive Director

There are two basic skills that make a child a good learner: communication and reasoning. DIL believes that formal education at primary and middle levels should focus on creating these two skills in children.

The first basic skill children need is to be able to understand what is being presented to them in class, by the teacher and in their textbooks, and be able to express themselves clearly. Language skills are central to this. When a child enters school, s/he typically knows only one language, and is not able to read or write in it. To develop language skills at this age, teachers must encourage children to express themselves orally in their mother tongue, gradually learning to make increasingly complex thoughts. By the time children are 12 or 13 years old, they should have become fluent in one or two or even three languages (usually their mother tongue, Urdu and English) in terms of reading with comprehension, speaking and writing. These skills lay the basis for their future education and learning. DIL is developing new curricula in Urdu and English languages for primary classes that seek to meet this goal.

The second basic skill a child needs is to be able to reason. Children need to formulate questions properly, construct an argument and arrive at a conclusion. The primary curriculum in Pakistan includes complex subjects like Social Studies and Science, but many children lack the fundamental language and reasoning skills to tackle such subjects, often leading to rote memorization. DIL believes that it is better to start with getting the basics right and then have the children learn the content of such subjects in the later part of their primary education. Once the children have a sound foundation, they will be able to learn with understanding the subjects required by the curriculum in Class 5.

ABES, in District Rawalpindi, Punjab, to access Middle Schools in the eight villages where there were enough students to warrant a Middle school. Previously the majority of girls would complete their primary schooling and then just sit at home. The boys found it easier to continue as they were allowed to travel distances and more schools for boys were available. Now the girls too are being provided the opportunity to pursue their dreams.

DIL's public-private partnership with CARE (Pakistan) in District Sheikhpura is now paying dividends, and the improvements – in the five girls' schools and one boys' school – in both academic quality and infrastructure are now clearly visible. However, many of the gains are wiped out by the Government's policy of enrolling all children who apply for admission. This policy may bring political gains, but in practice it creates problems as the Government does not provide the necessary classrooms, furniture or teachers for the children who enroll. For the DIL- supported public schools, it means an increase in the number of students in the existing classes (making it difficult for the teachers to handle the increased number of girls), new students in the KG classes sitting out in the yard without furniture or proper shelter, and consequently a high drop-out rate. The effort the Government of the Punjab is making is commendable, and its advertisement blitz very effective, but there is still a long way to go in terms of planning and implementation.

The terrible earthquake of October 2005 in Northern Pakistan galvanized the whole world into action. DIL's contribution has been the establishment of two custom-built, earthquake-proof schools for communities who suffered the consequences of the devastating

natural disaster. The two schools are in District Mansehra, close to Balakot. One more school will be set up in 2007.

Pursuing its aim of providing quality education, DIL decided to support two schools in the Islamabad Capital Territory area and work with the schools directly. The thinking was to directly monitor the schools, build the capacity of the teachers and make it a 'hands-on' learning experience for DIL. If all the ideas are implemented successfully and an understanding of the problems and pitfalls reached, then it would become much easier to replicate the same standard of education in all the DIL projects.

DIL is not planning to start new projects for the time being, as the main focus is on improving the teacher education programme so that the DIL students can compete with the best in Pakistan. To this end we are also hoping to start our own Teacher Education Institute in the near future. DIL also accepted American and Pakistani students as interns, who helped DIL design learning modules for teachers in Mathematics and Science. These are presently being piloted in one of the projects and the feedback is very positive.

DIL is very particular about keeping costs to the minimum and staff is only added when the Trustees are convinced that quality or efficiency would suffer if personnel are not hired. The addition of the Karachi Office has helped in the management of the projects in Sindh and taken some of the load off the staff members in Islamabad, who can now concentrate on the rest of the projects. A major change at the Islamabad Office was that the Executive Director, Tauseef Hyat, had to leave DIL in September for personal reasons. Fortunately the Trustees were able to find a replacement

and Dr. A.H. Nayyar joined the organization as the new Executive Director in October 2006.

The success of DIL is due not only to the hard work and commitment of the DIL staff in Pakistan but also because of the phenomenal effort put in by the members of DIL's Chapters and the Executive Board in the USA, all of whom work on a voluntary basis. For this reason, we have decided in this year's Annual Report to highlight our volunteers' thoughts and feelings on the various projects, and particularly, their hope for the future of DIL's schools.

Funding

Disbursements made by DIL to its partner NGOs stood at Rs. 47,737,127 for the financial year January 1st 2006 to

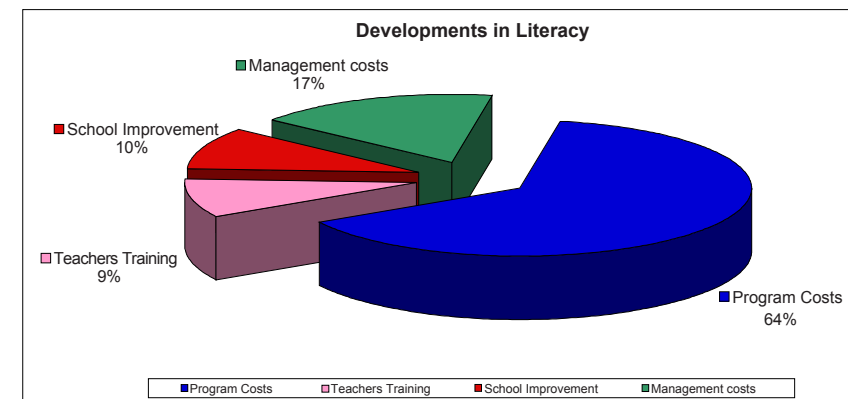
December 31st 2006. currently all independent fundraising is being done by the DIL Chapters abroad. During the year DIL received a grant of US \$15,506 from Target AMC Corporation for the computer laboratories in the DIL Orangi schools.

Auditing

The annual audit of the partner organizations was conducted by Anjum Asim Shahid Rahman, Chartered Accountants. The financial statements of DIL Islamabad office for the FY January to December 2006 were also audited. The audited financial statements are included in the report.

DISBURSEMENTS TO PARTNERS AND THEIR APPLICATION DURING THE YEAR 2006

	ABES	NOWA	IRC	SCSPEB	CARE	KK	DIL Schools Orangi	Agahi	DIL Schools Islamabad	TOTAL
Disbursements	5,956,713	6,159,093	8,028,402	6,392,997	3,869,478	3,240,484	8,826,001	3,535,281	1,728,678	47,737,127
Program Costs	3,837,398	3,988,655	6,092,733	3,518,557	2,812,143	1,927,336	5,004,199	297,280	327,250	27,181,021
Teachers Training	305,915	1,081,889	45,926	375,400	362,508	199,500	1,439,962	220,000	31,151	3,811,100
School Improvement	568,900	139,045	449,995	1,700,000	23,240	36,400	1,413,298	2,550,000	1,370,277	4,330,878
Management costs	1,244,500	949,504	1,439,748	799,040	671,587	1,077,248	968,542	468,000	-	7,150,169



DIL Chapters in Action

Starting from a single home in Los Angeles a decade ago, DIL today has ten Chapters in the US, Canada, UK and Singapore and a rapidly burgeoning youth support base internationally. The most recent Chapter to open was in London, in 2006. These Chapters work actively to raise awareness and funds, and organise fundraisers annually to raise money for DIL's schools in Pakistan. The fundraisers have been DIL's primary source of funding for most of its life; their role in the success of DIL's schools cannot be stressed enough. The Chapters also serve as intermediaries between donors and their schools, providing information on the adopted schools when requested and arranging for children's photos and letters to be sent on to sponsors. Below are their main activities for the year 2006.

DIL USA

San Francisco

More than 300 guests attended DIL San Francisco's fifth annual dinner gala in May 2006. The sold-out event raised more than \$75,000. San Francisco DIL board member Sara Abbasi shared an interesting story from one of her field visits to DIL schools in Baluchistan. "DIL's local partner organization found one of its jeeps and school monitoring staff forcibly taken away by armed men. Everyone was concerned about their safety until they showed up later to tell their amazing story. It appeared that these armed men had

heard that wherever this jeep visits, a girls' school is opened, so they decided to take the jeep and the team to their own village in the hope that such a school will open there too." Prominent Bay Area businessman and DIL supporter Mr. Saeed Malik, the guest speaker, eloquently described the slum outside of Karachi and the battle for survival there, putting the need to continue DIL's work in perspective. The evening concluded with a stunning fashion show by Hassan Shehryar Yasin, one of Pakistan's premier designers.

Houston

The Houston DIL chapter raised \$100,000 at its fourth annual fundraising gala in May. This was in addition to the \$30,000 contributed by DIL donors just a few months earlier after the September 2005 fundraiser was cancelled due to the threat of Hurricane Rita. The warm and colourful scenes and sounds of Pakistan surrounded guests, who walked around the exquisite bazaar set up with the help of DIL's dedicated volunteers. Handicrafts and art work were abundantly displayed, while bhangra dancers and tabla, dhol and sitar players regaled the onlookers. Stalls served delicious Pakistani snacks and beverages. About 370 people attended the gala, including many prominent political and community leaders. After a poetry recitation by Ishrat Afreen, the guests listened to both semi-classical and the latest popular Pakistani and Indian songs by Adiba Akhtar and Ali Durrani and his band.

YOUR DIL (Youth Outreach, Developments in Literacy) aims to create a youth network through activity-based fundraisers and events, and to lend outreach support to other organizations. Through these events, YOUR DIL hopes to expand awareness of DIL's important message of fighting illiteracy.

The youth chapters of DIL capped off a successful year with events in four cities. New York City held its fall gala in September, raising more than \$20,000 toward the project in Mansehra. Themed "A Night on the Indus," volunteers dressed up a loft as a Pakistani village, complete with street vendors, henna artists, and a hookah lounge. Chicago held its launch at Reza's Restaurant over Labor Day weekend, where 80 attendees enjoyed dinner followed by a short stand-up performance by Imrana Zaman. The Washington, D.C., launch took place at Tabaq restaurant in September. YOUR DIL also launched its Los Angeles chapter in 2006. As a first project, the Los Angeles chapter organised a Read-a-Thon, allowing children aged 5 to 12 years to gather sponsors who would pay them for each book they read during the summer. Los Angeles' event at Lucky Strike Lanes in November helped to raise more than \$8,000 for the YOUR DIL projects. Four very generous patrons agreed to match dollar for dollar all the proceeds from the night, making this the most successful YOUR DIL chapter event in 2006. In December, YOUR DIL held a fashion show and holiday party at Andalu lounge. Adding to the festive atmosphere was music by DJ Amer Sultan and a henna artist. Two designers showcased their clothes, with one donating a portion of the proceeds to YOUR DIL.

New York

DIL New York held its fourth sold-out fund raiser, "Once upon a Raj..." in November 2006 at the famous Cipriani's on 42nd Street. This elegant event with more than 530 guests honored Mr. Ted Turner, Chairman UN Foundation, for his generous support of DIL and girls' education. A beautiful collage made by the DIL students was presented to an obviously delighted Mr. Turner. The children also made colorful hand-painted cards for each guest, which were presented as part of the place settings. The event raised more than \$450,000, with an auction conducted by a Sotheby's auctioneer that raised \$87,000. In attendance were Dr. Nafis Sadik, DIL patron, Ambassador Robin Duke, Catherine Crier, and representatives of several Fortune 500 companies.

San Diego

The San Diego DIL fund raiser was held in September at the private residence of Dr. Nusrat and Hai Rajput in Fairbanks Ranch. Keynote speaker Dr. Shazia Jamil is an assistant professor at UC San Diego School of Medicine and Scripps. As a medical student, she was involved in conducting research on the socioeconomic and literacy of Chitrali residents and on maternal literacy in the squatter settlements of Karachi. In her presentation, Dr. Jamil made a forceful point of the literacy crisis in the world today, with special emphasis on Pakistan. This year, the San Diego chapter of DIL brought in more than \$60,000, which included a generous pledge made by Drs. Parveen and Khalid Ahmed of Whittier.



Mr. Ted Turner being presented with students' collage at the New York fundraiser

Washington, D.C.

DIL Washington, D.C., held its fifth annual fundraiser in October at the McLean Hilton. The keynote speaker was Ambassador Shirin Tahir-Kheli. After an elegant sit-down dinner, the internationally renowned British bhangra group, RGB, entertained a full house. There was a live and silent auction. The evening was a great success, and the amount raised in donations surpassed previous years.

Los Angeles

Imagine an evening filled with classical music, an elaborately presented gourmet Italian meal served under the stars, and more than \$250,000 raised to support DIL schools throughout Pakistan. This describes the DIL Los Angeles chapter annual gala in July held in Anaheim Hills. More than 100 guests were treated to a memorable evening hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Farooq Vakil, Ms. Rehana Vakil and Mr. Imran Vakil. Every dollar raised will go directly to help the underprivileged in Pakistan.

DIL Canada

Ottawa

DIL Ottawa's fundraiser was held on 8th September 2006 at the prestigious theatre of the Museum of Civilization. The event was a huge success, attended by 350 people. Guest speaker for the evening, Mr. Page is Adjunct Research Professor in the School of Canadian Studies at Carlton University, and has been a strong supporter of spreading literacy in underdeveloped countries in his capacity as Advisor to UNESCO (Paris) on the United Nations Literacy Decade since

2003. The second speaker was the Consul General of Pakistan, Mr. Ghalib Iqbal, who spoke about the importance of education for underprivileged children in Pakistan and appreciated the wonderful work being done by DIL Canada to eradicate illiteracy in the remote and rural areas of Pakistan.

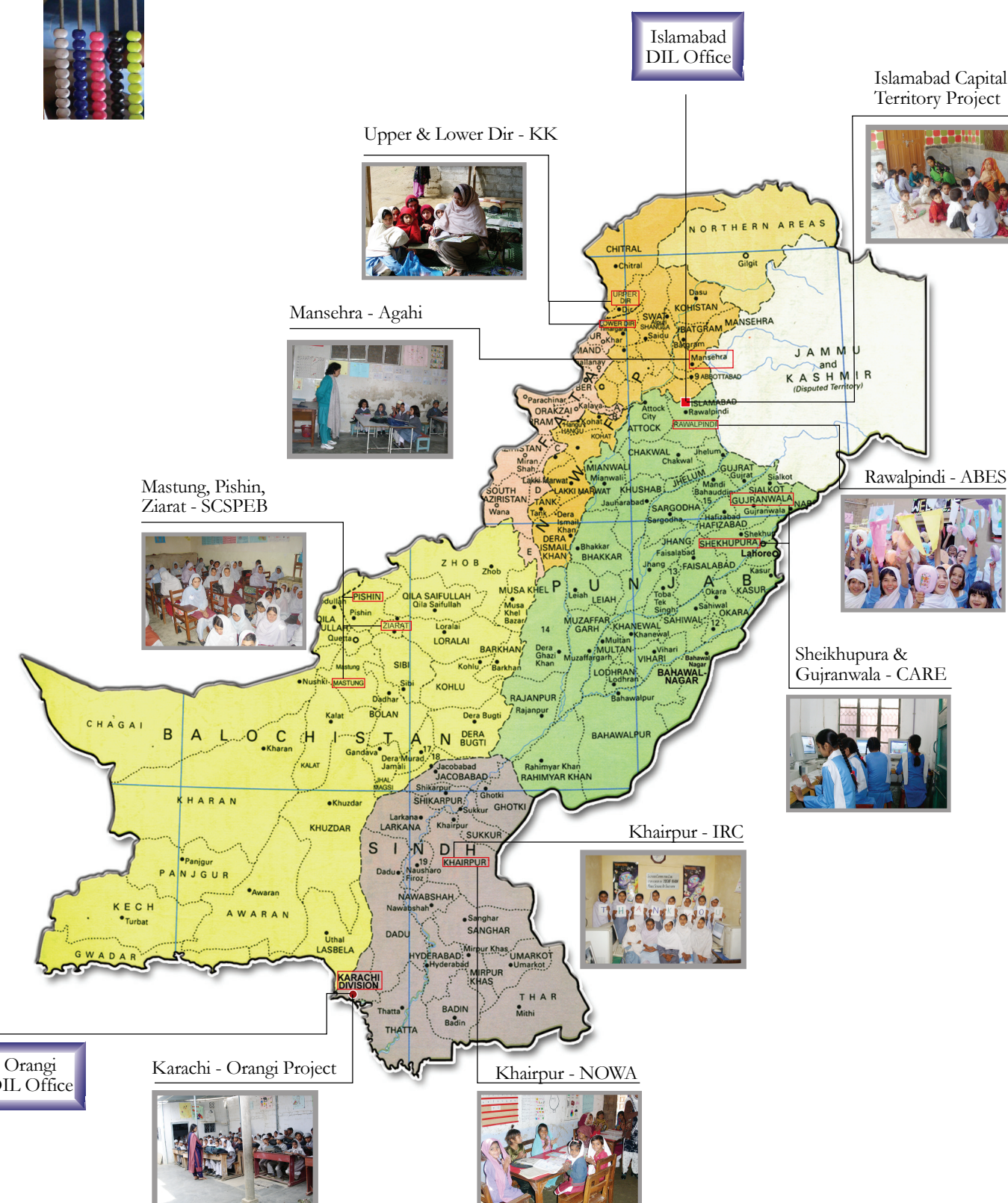
The program for the evening also included a fashion show that displayed exquisite regional, formal and modern clothes from Pakistan, a Khatak dance performance by the Capital Bhangra group and a performance by the renowned bhangra group, Josh.

Toronto

The second annual DIL Gala, hosted in the heart of the breathtaking Humber Valley at the Old Mill Inn, was a glamorous night of exquisite dining and live music performance by the award-winning fusion band, Josh. Guests danced the night away to the passionate rhythms of bhangra tunes while supporting a notable cause.

The event was a major success attended by many dignitaries and prominent members of Toronto's community. DIL Canada's work was appreciated in speeches made by Hon. Mr. Mike Colle - Minister Citizenship and Immigration, Hon. Mr. John Tory - Leader of the Opposition, and Consul General of Pakistan Mr. Ghalib Iqbal.

DIL Projects



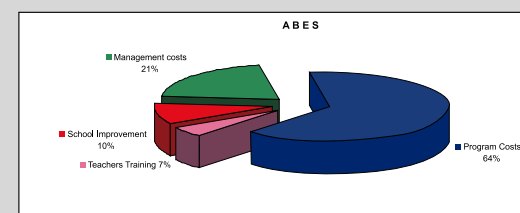
Adult Basic Education Society (ABES)

23 Community-Based Primary & Middle Schools

Location: Rawalpindi District, Punjab
Start Year: 2002
No. of Students: 1,680

DISBURSEMENTS TO ABES AND THEIR APPLICATION DURING THE YEAR 2006

Disbursements	5,956,713
Program Costs	3,837,398
Teachers Training	305,915
School Improvement	568,900
Management costs	1,244,500



DIL's agreement with the Adult Basic Education Society, which had been signed in 2002, was due to expire in 2006. After monitoring ABES' performance and noting improvements in the organisation's efforts over the course of the year, the DIL Executive Board decided to renew the contract for one year. An MOU was signed with Mr. Edwin Samson on August 1st, 2006.

Upgradation and Expansion

This year, ABES and DIL continued to upgrade some of the schools to middle schools, as was done successfully in the Khairpur project some years ago. Three

villages (Guff, Ghareeba and Shah Jeevan) were shortlisted for upgradation of their DIL schools. Two other villages were also very keen to get middle schools, but logistical challenges arose because of which their request could not be fulfilled.



Students from Shah Jeevan participate in a collage competition

In Guff, Ghareeba and Shah Jeevan, the process of upgradation was truly participatory. A series of meetings was conducted with the community and the education committees, after which the locals in Guff and Ghareeba donated land for the middle schools. Formal procedures for construction of school buildings were finalized in Guff, with DIL's approval. By May 2006, a contractor had surveyed the land and the community had undertaken the tasks of boring, installation of hand pumps and raising the plinth level of the land. DIL granted additional support for the hand pumps and assisted with the filling of the land. The contractor then helped with the leveling of the road track and also promised to provide a small generator where no electricity was available.

With increasing enrolments, a common problem was lack of space for 1st Grade. In Jattal, the community decided to contribute land free of cost and requested ABES for permission to use school funds to construct a classroom for 1st Grade. In November 2006, the construction was completed and 1st Grade shifted there. Jangla, which also faced an accommodation problem for 1st Grade, was able to contribute land and half the amount needed for construction. ABES provided the other half from the school fund, and thus the classroom was constructed.

Monitoring

The ABES field team kept up monthly monitoring visits, identifying specific areas for improvement and working on them with teachers and communities. An overall look showed that students' attendance was satisfactory, that most of the schools were tidy and the students neat and clean, that teachers were more comfortable managing multigrade classrooms, and that they were now maintaining school records more efficiently than before. Classroom displays were also good and teaching aids were being used effectively. The students' reading skills were becoming better (particularly in Urdu); however more effort was needed to improve their handwriting.

One of the key periods to monitor the effectiveness of teacher training was during the annual examinations in March. The ABES team found that the teachers managed seating arrangements, time management and invigilation quite well. The teachers also reported that communities took a lot of interest in having their children prepared for the exams. To encourage this process, ABES developed result cards for each child so that they had something to take home and show to their parents. Another activity that had to be monitored was implementation of the new scheme of studies. ABES had divided the syllabus into three terms, and the content into block chapters. A lesson planning format was developed for teachers, subject based activities were planned for the students, workshops were planned to provide more input to the teachers, and learning aids were developed according to scheme of studies. Proper usage of the above was monitored by both ABES and DIL.

Comprehensive monitoring of the DIL-ABES schools was conducted by DIL's Programme Coordinator and Training Coordinator from 29th to 31st May 2006. The results of this monitoring would eventually be used to decide whether DIL

would continue with ABES as a partner organization or if it would decide to manage the schools itself. A significant improvement was observed in the majority of the 18 schools visited. Specifically, the additional teaching content support provided by ABES' trainer, Ms. Kalsoom, had shown positive results, especially in Mathematics. It was noted that the previous summer's training was being implemented, and classroom management had become better. The DIL monitors still felt, though, that ABES needed to increase the frequency of its school visits to develop a sense of accountability in the teachers and to better gauge progress in learning. More persistent efforts were required to manage multigrade classrooms, and to implement training and the new scheme of studies fully. Moreover, it was pointed out that the teachers had to assimilate their training into their daily lesson plans in order to make a concrete difference in day-to-day teaching. The DIL monitors recommended that mandatory training be arranged during the summer vacations to address core deficiencies in subject knowledge. They felt that the teachers needed better understanding of English language, Mathematics, Geography and Science.

Monitoring by DIL took place once again on the 14th of September, when DIL USA Chairperson Ms. Fiza Shah and DIL Pakistan Executive Director Ms. Tauseef Hyat visited the community schools Khinger Khurd and Ranjali. During the visit they observed the teacher's performance, classroom management and assessed students' progress as well as the ABES trainer's performance.

Training

Intensive training continued year-round for the DIL-ABES teachers – during monthly review meetings, during monitoring visits, and in training workshops. In January 2006, ABES conducted a four-day teacher training

Executive Perspective

Mehar Jawad
DIL Washington Chapter

Based on my most recent visit to the Rawalpindi project, my view is that DIL's top priority should be to invest in excellent training and training follow-up for the DIL-ABES teachers. The schools that I visited required support in both teaching methodology and student motivation. When I next walk into a DIL-ABES school, I would ideally like to see children in full attendance, performing at a higher level and comprehending what they're reading. All this will be easier to achieve now that DIL is bringing in a new curriculum and investing in new learning technologies, but training must remain of paramount importance on the agenda. The Washington Chapter is keen to raise money for specific areas and projects; if required, we would be happy to take on responsibility for financing a top-notch training programme for the Rawalpindi project.

session on how to use its Roshni Primer. 25 newly appointed DIL-ABES teachers and teachers who needed help teaching the Roshni Primer attended the session. Teachers were provided with the Primer, Roshni teaching charts, chalks and blackboards in order to learn how to teach the Primer practically during the session. Participants also developed learning aids and designed activities with the help of the pocket board.

In June, based on the recommendations of the monitoring report from the previous month, DIL conducted subject-based training on teaching Science, Geography and English, as well as on classroom management. This was followed in July by a subject-based training on teaching of Mathematics. Tom Sabella, an internee working for the summer at DIL, designed the training module for the following topics: number sense, concept of measurement, time measurement, ratio and proportion, fractions and geometry concepts. The training was heavily activity based. For instance, the concept of measurement was explained by sketching rooms with furniture on sheets of paper. The activities based on ratio and proportion and fraction were done with the help of beans and

cups. Problems about mixed numbers and decimals were solved using water bottles and different fractions. This was not only useful for the teachers but also illuminating for the ABES staff, which spent some time picking up activity ideas from Tom.

Towards the end of August, Tom Sabella, Fahad Rehman and Ms. Kalsoom organised another training session for teaching primary level Mathematics, focusing on Geometry and Graphs. Mr. Fahad Rehman covered topics such as information handling, graphs and bar graphs for 3rd and 4th Grade teachers, while Tom briefed the 5th and 6th Grade teachers on how to teach Geometry, including angles and different shapes.

September 2006 was a particularly busy month for training. First, a 10-day workshop was held from 4th to 15th September on teaching the Roshni primer (Math and English) for 1st Grade teachers. The training covered topics such as group work, assessment, lesson planning and record keeping, all within the ambit of the child friendly community school philosophy. Soon after, a 5-day workshop on English, Math and classroom management was organised for new 2nd to 7th grade teachers. Teachers were trained in various methods of grouping children, teaching with the use of phonics, story telling methods, parts of speech, teaching Math, etc. Action plans, class timetables and schedules were prepared, and the teachers were asked to assign some responsibilities to community members. This was a very good orientation for the 21 teachers who attended.

The month was wrapped up with a one-day refresher course on teaching Science, which was attended by 16 teachers. All the topics (electricity, machines, and teaching methodology) were revised, and teachers were asked to solve activity sheets to test and refresh their knowledge.



Happy students at Mehra Khurd School



Celebrating World Children's Day

At the end of the year, two visiting researchers from the Department of Public Policy, University College Los Angeles (UCLA) conducted a qualitative assessment of

three DIL projects, using teachers as respondents. Nine teachers from the ABES project were interviewed in detail. They gave comprehensive feedback on the training they had received, and particularly praised the English language training they had received over the summer. Teachers also requested that training schedules should be managed better, with notice given well in advance to allow them to plan their absence from school. The visiting researchers were of the opinion that it would help for DIL's staff (US office, Pakistan office and field-based) to get training itself on teacher needs-assessment and pedagogical methods.

Community Participation

As ABES' contract with DIL was drawing to a close this year, the main issue at hand was to develop a proposal for continued partnership, with feedback from communities. Therefore, after doing detailed school-wise planning with the DIL-ABES teachers, meetings were held with Community School Council (CSC) members in every community. The ABES representatives presented the school policies to each community and discussed their respective school plans. The outcome of the meetings was that the CSCs accepted the school policies and all communities expressed the desire to expand their schools and were ready to

cooperate by ensuring higher enrollment and providing more rooms/ buildings.

Health Programme

The DIL education programme targets children from marginalized communities, who are frequently plagued by health problems. This affects attendance and student performance in schools. In response to this issue, ABES hired a full-time health professional to visit the DIL schools every month. Dr. Noreen was able to diagnose, treat and prevent outbreaks of infectious diseases during her scheduled visits as well as through medical camps, which benefited the whole village rather than just the DIL students. The most common ailments were cough and cold, flu, skin inflammation, diarrhoea and malaria. The doctor not only provided medicines but also educated students and community members about personal hygiene, pubescence problems and prevention of common diseases like cholera and diarrhea. Although DIL is not financially supporting this endeavour, we would like to showcase it as a successful example of primary healthcare being integrated with education, and viewing schools as centres from which to reach out to entire communities.

Future Direction

In the next one year, DIL and ABES will start nursery classes in those schools where there was an enrolment of at least 20 to 25 children, in the 4-5 age group. Efforts to phase out multigrade teaching will be continued and more schools will be taken up to middle level. DIL has also discussed the possibility of supporting girls' education up to high school level after they graduate from the DIL middle schools. Further, it has been decided that most of the teacher training will be conducted by DIL directly in the future.

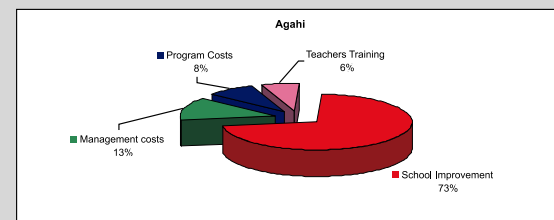
Agahi

02 Community-Based Primary Schools

Location: Mansehra District, NWFP
Start Year: 2006

DISBURSEMENTS TO AGAHI AND THEIR APPLICATION DURING THE YEAR 2006

Disbursements	3,535,281
Program Costs	297,280
Teachers Training	220,000
School Improvement	2,550,000
Management costs	468,000



After the terrible earthquake in the Northern Areas of Pakistan in October 2005, which affected nearly 1 million school-aged children and destroyed 8,000 schools, DIL decided that it would start a project in the quake-hit region. An agreement was signed with an NGO called Agahi, active in Mansehra District, NWFP, to establish three nine-room schools for approximately 500 students. DIL was able to procure grants from the United Nations Foundation and the Irfan Kathwari Foundation to support this new intervention.

Setting up Schools

The process of setting up schools was slow, as Agahi was determined to work with responsible communities that could ensure long-term sustainability. Mainly, it was necessary that the communities had democratically organised, motivated, properly working Tanzeems (village committees). By June 2006, two such communities had been identified: Shohal Mazullah and Shohal Maidan, about 40 minutes from Mansehra on the way to Balakot. The DIL team (Tauseef Hyat, Salma Sufi and Salman Asghar) met with the male community members in July and found them very sound and enthusiastic. The community agreed that at least 50% of the students would be girls. They were keen that quality education should be provided, so that their children could

compete with the best and have the opportunity to become doctors and engineers etc. They had demarcated land that would be leased to DIL for 30 years. Both the plots were just off a metal road and therefore easy to access.

Construction of schools

Relief International (RI), an organization that manufactures earthquake-proof prefab buildings, was hired to build the schools. Two technical surveys of the plots were carried out by the RI engineer and by a private contractor. Both tracts of land were found appropriate for school buildings. The building design was approved by the Earthquake Relief and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) and construction started. In Shohal Mazullah, Agahi helped to arrange water for construction, connection of electricity and removal of illegal shops that were cropping up in the area. A DIL Trustee also visited the construction site in November 2006 with a colleague, who found problems with quality of workmanship and material. Agahi took immediate action on those points and also hired a full time diploma holder civil engineer for three months to oversee construction. As the end of the year drew close, the structure was ready for concrete plastering and final fitting of doors and window frames was being done.

Relief International began the construction of the Shohal Maidan School on 6th December. Prior to this, the community had spent Rs.25,000 to remove large stones and level the ground. By the end of December, the foundations had been laid, the classroom floors were being leveled, the wall panels had been erected and the construction of the roof was in progress.

Hiring of teachers

Oral interviews of candidates for teaching posts were conducted towards the end of November by Agahi's team, and a written test was administered for the shortlisted candidates in early December. Sixteen aspiring teachers applied for the Shohal Maidan school, while eighteen applied for Shohal Mazullah. The candidates generally did not do as well on the written test as in the interviews, indicating that strong training support and mentoring would be required later. In Shohal Maidan, in particular, where a majority of the females had only done their F.A. or Matriculation, the results were so poor that the local Tanzeem decided that it would search again for competent teachers. The interview and test were postponed to January for this area. It was also decided that a 3-week training session on classroom management, school improvement and concepts in Science, Math, English, Social Studies and Urdu for teachers of both schools would start from 15th January 2007.

Community Mobilisation and Organisation

DIL was keen to partner with a third community for setting up a school in the earthquake-affected region. The Agahi Field Coordinator worked around the clock, identifying potential communities in six Union Councils and assessing their suitability for the project over several visits. A suitable candidate could not be found, however,



Construction work in progress

so for the time being DIL and Agahi have decided to maintain two schools.

In July, a short workshop was held at the Agahi office for Tanzeem members to discuss financial and management issues. A detailed financial plan was discussed with the Tanzeems, their roles and responsibilities were once again elaborated upon, and other issues such as the draft agreement, land-lease issues and organizational matters relating to registration were discussed. Guidelines and assistance to Tanzeems on registration, community survey etc. continued over the summer months. The Citizens' Community Board in Shohal Maidan emerged as a reliable partner for undertaking school enrolment efforts, sourcing of teachers and timely provision of local services and utilities for the projected school. The CCB surveyed every household in the community, making a list of possible students and teachers. Seeing its performance, DIL and Agahi helped it to register formally as a CCB under the Local Governance Ordinance 2001. A 6-member School Management Committee was also formed at the end of December to manage school affairs and promote the school's agenda in the larger community.

The local Tanzeem in Shohal Mazullah was asked to identify at least 25 students per class of which at least half would be female. It was also requested to maintain various details of the finances, furniture, academic and other material provided to school. It was agreed that the Tanzeem would hold a weekly meeting with the teachers in order to assess the academics, discipline and problems faced by the school and discuss various strategies for dealing with these, while Agahi would meet with them once a month. Before finalizing the fee and salary structure, the Tanzeem would investigate how much an average family paid for its children's education and teachers' salaries at other private schools.

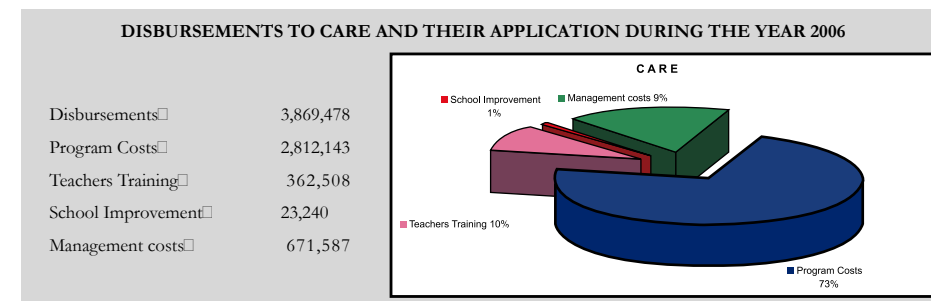
Future Direction

Agahi will keep up the search for an appropriate location for the third DIL school. DIL also needs to make a strategy whereby it does not lose teachers to other projects and NGOs, particularly in the earthquake zone, where supply of trained teachers is low and donor organizations are willing to pay high salaries for them.

Cooperation for Advancement Rehabilitation and Education (CARE)

06 Adopted Government Primary & Middle Schools

Location: Sheikhpura & Gujranwala
Districts, Punjab
Start Year: 2002
No. of Students: 3,584



Monitoring

The Project Coordinator for the CARE-DIL project kept up a rigorous monitoring regimen all year round, making regular visits to the DIL schools every month. The students' academic activities and personal hygiene, the teachers' performance, and physical infrastructure were monitored in detail. The Project Coordinator spent time in classes, noting mistakes during lessons and making suggestions for further improvement. One of the very encouraging things noted was that students' interest in reading library books had improved significantly.



Classrooms in the DIL-CARE Schools are much improved with the provision of furniture

Teachers were also learning how to use library books as reference material, thus being able to set questions and exercises apart from what was recommended in textbooks. The CARE schools had benefited from the Kiran Library Project some years earlier, when extra reading material had been provided to them through funding by Target AMC Corporation, and subsequently DIL had put extra attention into developing a reading habit in these students. This would lay a base for learning skills that would last well beyond their schooling years.

DIL monitored the CARE project carefully in 2006 to make a proper assessment of whether the public-private partnership was delivering the desired results. Mr. Imran Ahmed, Chairperson of the DIL Board of Trustees (Pakistan) visited the schools in January 2006 and discussed several managerial matters with the CARE representatives. These included: the selection criteria for teachers and their rules of employment, the monitoring and evaluation system, Training Needs Analysis, follow up of training workshops, cooperation between the government and CARE/DIL teachers, maintenance of hygiene standards at schools, and management of libraries. Mr. Ahmed also checked the progress

made on the construction of rooms and computer labs in the Nizampura Dhakka and Bhikki schools. This was followed up by visits by Ms. Tauseef Hyat, who monitored progress on the setting up of the computer laboratories at the adopted Elementary Schools in Nizampura Dhakka.

In August, DIL's Executive Director, Programme Coordinator and Education Coordinator observed training workshops for the CARE-DIL teachers. They also spent time in discussions with the trainers and the teachers. When the schools were monitored in September by CARE's team, a visible difference was found in the teachers' style of teaching after the summer training. This was corroborated by the DIL team on its visit in October, during which Dr. Nayyar – DIL's new Executive Director – also got the chance to become familiar with the CARE project. In November, the CARE-DIL Project Coordinator made 33 visits to six schools to further assess the impact of the training, and was generally satisfied with the results.

A delegation of UNICEF Quetta also visited the Government Boys Elementary School, Nizampura Dhakka on 20th December 2006. The delegates visited the classrooms and computer laboratories, asking the students various questions. They appreciated the efforts made by CARE and DIL to promote quality education and were impressed by commitment of the teachers, as well as the confidence of the students.

Training

Teacher training was essential for the CARE-DIL project, especially for the government school teachers, who needed constant reinforcement of attitudinal change. Ironically, it was difficult for CARE to organise a proper training programme because of the government teachers' resistance to change. Eventually,

DIL hired the Society for the Advancement of Higher Education (SAHE) to design and implement the appropriate programme. SAHE sent a five-member team to conduct a preliminary needs assessment. The team observed the teachers' classroom methodology and teaching performance, checked the students' copies and held meetings with the school heads. Based on feedback from teachers, SAHE initially recommended a school-based training programme, but CARE was not keen to allow an interruption of regular classes. It was therefore decided that training sessions would be held during the summer vacations. This made it complicated for some teachers to attend, as they were busy with personal activities and involved in preparing voters' lists for the next election. On the upside, it allowed teachers to go through an uninterrupted, dedicated period of subject training for nearly a month. All six DIL-adopted schools were represented at the workshops.

The training was geared towards katchi and primary level teachers. Through most of August, they attended workshops on English, Mathematics, Urdu, Science and Social Studies. The course content also included a section on how to make effective classroom displays. DIL's Executive Director observed some of the sessions on Science and Urdu, and came away with a positive impression of the way the training was being conducted. There was emphasis on activity-based learning, and the teachers were engaging fully in the discussions and in group work. Government officials, who also witnessed portions of the training, appreciated CARE's and DIL's efforts to promote quality education in the rural areas. In December, SAHE conducted follow-up sessions to assess the impact of the training and to refresh concepts learnt during the summer workshops.

In the second half of the year, CARE

Executive Perspective

Zeba Shah
DIL Houston Chapter

The Sheikhpura project has been a challenge because of the dynamics of government teachers working with the DIL-CARE teachers. It is a delicate situation where one has to change the old ways of the government teachers through training, example and gentle persuasion. DIL's intervention has brought an improvement in the quality of education but a substantial increase in enrolment has led to overcrowding in classes. Many students are sitting outside on floor mats. Classes keep moving around the courtyard in search of shade as the direction of the sun changes. On my last trip to Sheikhpura, it was heart warming to see that construction of classrooms had begun in many of the schools. Much needed repairs had also taken place. DIL is dedicated to finding solutions to improve the quality of education in its schools and to create an environment conducive to learning. Greater funds and volunteer support would go a long way in helping DIL reach its goals.

conducted smaller training workshops on various topics. For instance, the CARE Project Coordinator arranged a workshop on English reading skills in Misali after school hours, and a workshop on reading with phonics at Kalla. At the end of December, a four-day workshop was also organized at the CARE Staff Training Institute on topics such as interactive teaching of English and Science, and lesson planning.

Parental and Government Participation

DIL has seen through its experience that community members can play an important role in making sure that a school is being managed properly. However, since the CARE-DIL schools do not run on the community school model, parents are not usually involved in their day-to-day running. In an environment with few checks and balances, public school teachers also become apathetic, and resent it when they are called to account. Ever since the schools were adopted, CARE kept trying to increase parent-teacher interaction, parental participation in school activities, and government teachers' interest in the students. Efforts targeting parents met with moderate success, usually resulting in increased attendance at parent-teacher meetings. The regular monthly meetings between government teachers and CARE-DIL teachers delivered better results in terms of building trust and increasing involvement of government teachers. The CARE Project Coordinator noted a particularly good response in 2006 from the government teachers at Bhikki and Nizampura Dhakka.

Relationship building with government officials is another essential component for success in a public-private partnership. The CARE Project Coordinator, Mr. Tauqir Ahmad, met with the EDO Education, Sheikhpura, in May 2006 to

update him on the facilities being provided by CARE and DIL in their adopted schools, including the recent addition of computer laboratories in all the schools. It was on the EDO's directive that school heads had to ensure participation of the government teachers at the training programme in August. In December, the EDO also gave permission for a double shift system at the school in Misali, which did not have a building large enough to cater to its 800+ students. These successes demonstrate how regular interaction is necessary to maintain mutual respect and cooperation between CARE/DIL and the government.

School Improvement Activities

The major activity in 2006 to boost the academic environment of the schools was the introduction of fully equipped computer laboratories with qualified teachers, funded by Target/AMC Foundation. The school at Kalla received 5 computers, whereas the rest of the schools received 15 computers each. Regular computer classes were started once teaching staff was identified, and the students started showing remarkable progress very soon. DIL's Executive Director visited the computer laboratories in March, April and August 2006, and found that even though in some cases the rooms were cramped and conditions not ideal, the students loved using the computers and were learning useful skills like typing and various key functions. Security was a major problem, as there was a threat of the machines being stolen. Guards were hired for the computer labs in anticipation of this issue.

In the reporting period, new classrooms for the most overcrowded schools were finished, and this eased the pressure on classes that were choked with students. However, due to the Punjab government's drive to put every child of school-going age into school, enrolment went up



Learning to type on the computers given by Target AMC Corporation

dramatically and the acute shortage of space persisted. As construction of more buildings was a costly and long-term solution, DIL did all it could in the meantime to make conditions comfortable for the students. Taps for drinking water were installed, curtains and tents were provided for classes being conducted out in the open, furniture and blackboards were repaired, and waste paper baskets were distributed amongst the schools. To facilitate the learning environment, display charts and new library books were provided to all the schools. Over two hundred students from the Government Girls Elementary School Misali received school bags and stationery from Target AMC Corporation. While these measures helped to improve the students' school experience, the space shortage is a matter that still needs serious and immediate attention before it starts affecting their academic performance.

CARE's efforts to improve hygiene and sanitation conditions in the schools were also notable. In November, documentaries

were screened by Procter and Gamble at a funfair in the Misali school to illustrate the importance of cleanliness and a healthy environment. P&G's Safeguard soap team provided students with printed materials discussing diseases and how to avoid them by maintaining cleanliness. In the following month, sanitation supplies were given to all the CARE-DIL schools. It must be mentioned here that earlier in the year, the CARE-DIL adopted school in Kalla was visited by representatives of the Health Department, who were highly appreciative of the cleanliness being maintained at the school.

Future Direction

DIL has decided to take over training itself for this project from 2007, with a clear focus on improving academic standards. Infrastructure expansion for the new students will also have to be discussed seriously within DIL and with CARE, as it is the only real option for accommodating them.

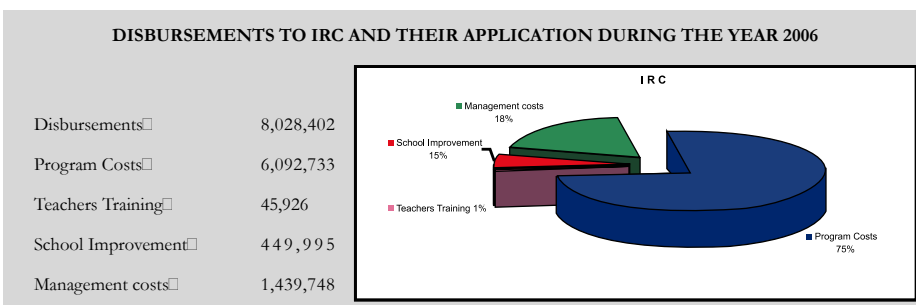
Indus Resource Centre (IRC)

31 Community-Based Primary & Middle Schools

Location: Khairpur District, Sindh

Start Year: 2002

No. of Students: 1,326



DIL signed a new agreement with IRC in January 2006. The purpose of the grant was to support and expand access to education for girls in Khairpur. A major component of the agreement related to poverty alleviation through provision of microcredit, which dovetailed with Levi Strauss Foundation's new worldwide strategy to support sustainable asset-building programmes. This was the third consecutive grant DIL received from the Foundation in support of its IRC schools.

The Khairpur project being one of DIL's oldest, a number of girls finished Middle schooling last year and moved on to Government High Schools. DIL continued to support any such students in their educational endeavours. Thirty out of thirty-three girls chose to continue their education and only 3 dropped out of the programme to get married. In a place like Khairpur, where girls were generally married off at a very early age, this was nothing short of a minor miracle.



Students thank their sponsor for their new computer lab at Model School Sagyoon

DIL also started supporting the improvement of these Government High Schools so that the larger community would benefit.

Monitoring

Internal Monitoring by IRC

IRC continued its system of cluster-based monitoring through its trusted cadre of Education Promoters. The Education Promoters observed the students' performance, teachers' performance and teaching methods. An overall assessment showed that activity-based learning was being used effectively, as were teaching aids. Interactive teaching methods were being employed with the support of flash cards, number ropes and local material as well as the series of "Listen to Speak" cassettes that had been provided to the schools. The results were extremely positive, with students retaining and using more new words than previously.

All the teachers in the Sojhiro Junior Schools (SJS) were making use of the Taleemi Basta and educational charts to teach the students English and Math, which was piquing students' interest in their lessons. In the Khuhra and Kumb clusters, the students were being made to do a lot of creative writing and were displaying this on the bulletin boards. The teacher at SJS Kumb II developed flash cards for use in her Math lessons and the teacher at SJS Kumb I developed a storybook using extracts from the "Starter" book (Grade K-G) to make the lessons more interesting. These initiatives in teaching methodology were exciting for DIL, as they indicated that the human resource at the school level was maturing and investments in teacher training were paying off.

Teaching of English was a major focus

area for IRC and DIL in 2006. In this area, as well, the Education Promoters found encouraging developments. The students in the SJS Sobodhero I and II were learning English using the phonetic method, because of which their pronunciation had improved to a great extent. The teachers at Sojhiro Model School Sagyoon were teaching verbs, nouns and adjectives by using instruction books from the Learning Resource Centre (LRC). In SJS Sakhirano, use of the Starter and flash cards made a big difference to students' English language skills, and the children were putting in an effort to use newly learnt words in their daily life. It was noted, though, that Sindhi was suffering at the expense of other language subjects. The Promoters kept working throughout the year to improve students' Sindhi vocabulary, spelling and writing skills, and noticed considerable progress by July 2006.

Monitoring by DIL

2006 was a busy year for the IRC project in terms of monitoring by DIL. Several visits were made to the schools during the reporting period. In January, Ms. Tauseef Hyat (Executive Director, DIL) and Ms. Farzana Naqvi (Education Coordinator, DIL) monitored 6 IRC schools. They found that Math proficiency was generally very good in the Junior Schools, helped by the use of learning aids. It was also observed that teachers and students were more confident this time round. The DIL team also visited the Computer Lab in Khuhra and saw the software in use. The school had a good learning environment and the local resource persons were very dedicated.

Towards the end of August, the DIL Executive Director made another monitoring visit to Khairpur. She visited the Model Schools in Khuhra, Sagyoon,

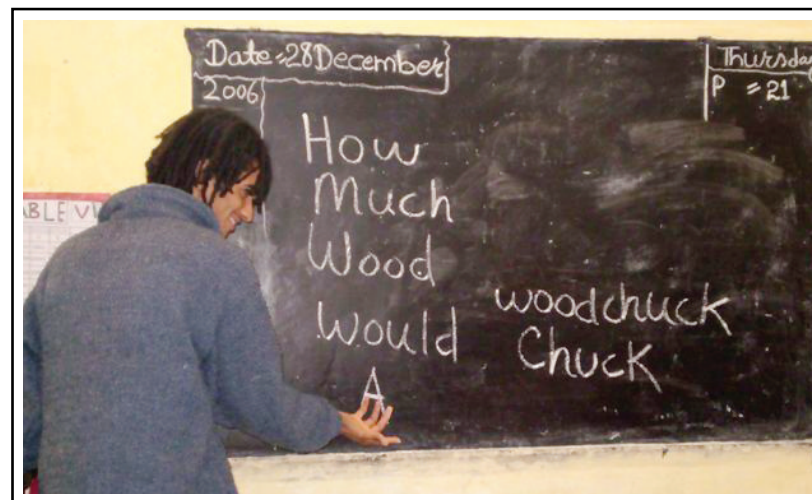
Executive Perspective

Najmi Sarwar
DIL New York Chapter

On my first visit to the Khairpur schools in 2000, I saw small classrooms in private homes, one-teacher multigrade schools, and shy teachers who were not handling their classes very well. Fast forward to three years later, the schools had been handed over to IRC and I saw formal schools with multiple classrooms, multiple teachers, subject teaching for each grade with specific focus on Math, Science and English, and trained teachers with much more confidence. Two years later, in 2005, I walked into computer rooms at DIL schools where bright-eyed girls were almost pushing each other out of their chairs to get on the computers. Now that so many of them are in 8th grade, I want to visit again and promise them that we will take them up to 10th grade. In the future, I also hope to see the microfinance grant earmarked by Levi Strauss Foundation strengthening communities and mothers around the schools.

Sobhodero and Kumb. Generally, Ms. Tauseef Hyat found that a serious and sustained effort was needed to improve English in all the schools, and that teaching of Social Studies needed more support. The Khuhra school was going through a process of expansion. It is one of IRC's most successful schools; IRC hopes that one day it will be taken up to Matric. The staff at the Sagyoon school told the Executive Director that one of the students had been forced by her mother to marry a 50 year old man who already had a wife and daughter studying at the same school. Although her husband agreed to let her study further, she got pregnant and had to discontinue her studies, which distressed her tremendously. The IRC staff and the teachers have managed to delay the marriage of 10 to 12 students in the last few years, but this child was one of those who fell through the net.

The DIL graduates who were now studying with DIL's support in the Sobhodero Government Girls High School also met with the DIL ED and gave voice to the problems they were facing there, requesting DIL to either think of making a high school of its own or allowing them to go to private schools.



Visiting UCLA researcher teaches students a tongue-twister in English

The DIL Chairperson, Fiza Shah, and Programme Coordinator, Rabia Waqar, also visited Khairpur in September. They monitored the Sobhodero and Razal Memon Schools, and had detailed meetings with the IRC staff on the establishment of a Sojhro High School at Khuhra and teachers' development programme. This was followed by a monitoring and orientation visit in November by a three-person team – Ms. Tauseef Hayat, who had just resigned from the post of Executive Director, Dr. A. H. Nayyar, the new Executive Director, and Ms. Zeba Shafi, Regional Manager DIL. A total of 12 schools were visited. Dr. Nayyar noted that all the DIL schools faced a severe problem of electric power shutdown, which not only made things difficult in summer, but also did not allow proper use of computers. He also observed that not all classes were equipped with maps. Zeba Shafi was also of the view that all the schools had too meager a collection of books, particularly on General Knowledge.

Training

The Education Promoters, apart from their role as monitors, also played an essential role as secondary trainers for the teachers. As part of their training, the Promoters from Khuhra (Shabana Arain) and Kumb (Atta Hussain Tumrani) were selected to visit Froebels School in Karachi, where they observed the school assembly, educational materials developed by the students, teaching methodologies, annual lesson plans, class-wise lesson plans, use of the Learning Resource Centre (LRC), computer education and classroom displays. These trainers and their colleagues kept conducting training sessions throughout the year on topics that commonly required support for teachers. They checked the teachers' lesson planning registers and gave them suggestions on how to use the lesson

plans more effectively. Ms. Shamshad (Education Promoter, Sagyoon Cluster) conducted a one-day workshop on lesson planning for 11 teachers from the Sojhro Junior and Model Schools in February 2006. The Promoter of the Sobhodero cluster took the initiative to start coaching classes after school for slow learners who required extra support in the Sojhro Model School. During the summer, one-day workshops were conducted on how to use 10 learning CDs produced by ABES. A total of 28 teachers from the Sojhro Junior School and 30 from the Sojhro Model School participated, and took back sets of CDs for further practice in their schools' computer labs.

In August, one-day cluster workshops were again conducted by the Education Promoters at Sojhro Model Schools Kumb, Sagyoon and Khuhra. The workshops focused on teaching fractions, lesson planning and record-keeping. In November, a one-day orientation workshop was arranged for the Sojhro Model School teachers on the Science manuals developed by DIL Islamabad. A detailed orientation/presentation was given to teachers on 6 manuals (the Human Body, Plants, Energy, Heat, Sound and Light, Magnetism, Force and Motion, and Electricity). Finally, IRC organised a two-day Math training workshop in December for the teachers of the Sojhro Model Schools. Atta Hussain Tumrani, the Education Promoter of Kumb cluster, facilitated the training, which was attended by 15 teachers and the Education Promoter of every cluster. The training focused entirely on the teaching of percentage, for Grade 6 to Grade 8. All participants took a pre- and post-training test, which showed good results that were shared with the teachers.

External training was also arranged by DIL during the year, mainly during the summer months. A three-day English

training programme was conducted in June for 30 Sojhro Model School teachers and the Education Promoters from all 5 clusters. The training was given by Ms. Zakia Sarver from SPELT, Karachi, who conducted several activities on English reading, writing, listening and speaking. This was followed in July by a five-day training on basic English for 26 Sojhro Junior School teachers. The trainer, Ms. Zeba Shafi from DIL Islamabad, employed a participatory approach and clarified all the issues that were raised by the teachers. She conducted many activities for reading, writing, listening and speaking, and distributed handouts for further practice.

The research team from UCLA (mentioned earlier in the ABES project update) visited Khairpur from December 27th to 30th 2006. They interviewed 5 teachers, 5 Education promoters, the IRC senior Education team, Village Education Committee members and representatives of Community Based Organizations. They also visited the schools, interviewed the staff and observed the classroom environment.

Community Involvement

With the cluster-based Education Promoters in place, IRC was able to maintain more meaningful contact with the communities and thus keep their interest and involvement in the project alive. For instance, when the Education Promoter in Hassan Din Kamboh conducted a meeting in February regarding the contribution of school fee, cleanliness, basic hygiene and regularity of the teachers and students, it was attended by 75 VEC members and parents – a large turnout, by any standards. In the month immediately after, the Promoters at the Khuhra, Sagyoon and Sobhodero clusters conducted meetings with the mothers and VEC members regarding different school

issues such as students' attendance, punctuality and hygiene. This was followed by similar meetings in villages Wali Dino Shaikh, Larhi, Mitho Lak, Chutto Lak, Syed Waryal Shah and M. Hassan Qureshi. In May, the Education Team also conducted meetings with the CBOs and the VECs of the Sobhodero and Khuhra clusters to discuss physical infrastructure development, shortage of teachers in the Sojhro Model Schools, admission of DIL Middle School graduates to the Government Girls High Schools, and ensuring that all the students from the Sojhro Junior Schools moved into the Sojhro Model School after passing Grade 2 examinations.



Engrossed in reading at Sojhro Model School Kumb

In addition to this, a women's wing was formed at Sobhodero to work for the schools and contribute an amount for regular school expenses. In the meantime, at Syed Waryal Shah, the Education team started creating awareness about the importance of literacy among the mothers of female students. Because of the excellent response received, the team plans to open an adult literacy centre there. Decentralisation of authority thus enabled not only the Education Promoters to grow individually, it also allowed them to build long term relationships with the communities and speed up the spillover process of the education programme.

A government policy decision in December made it mandatory for all private/civil society institutions' schools to register themselves with the concerned Taluka Education Officer. Consequently, from now on, question and answer sheets will be provided by the Education Department by paying a prescribed fee by the recipients.

Miscellaneous Activities

There were two causes for celebration in March 2006. First, a new computer laboratory was established at the Sojhro

Model School Hassan Din Kamboh. The laboratory has a total of 6 computers, one UPS, a cupboard for the CDs, and furniture. According to the IRC staff, the teachers and students were very excited about this new facility.

The second major event was the participation of a 32-member team from IRC at the World Social Forum (WSF) in Karachi from the 24th to the 27th of March 2006. Two DIL teachers – Farzana Arain and Zuriat Qureshi – one Education Promoter – Shamshad Channa – and 12 students from the Sojhro Model School Sagyoon were part of the team. The teachers shared their views on the importance of girls' education and the contribution of the community. The students, on their part, gave a theatre performance on rural girls' education. Both parties did DIL proud with their confidence and participation.

The Microcredit Programme

This was the first time that DIL had introduced a microcredit component in any of its projects. Although we were hesitant to branch out into an area that seemed separate from our education mandate, our donor for the IRC schools (Levi Strauss Foundation) was keen to pursue interventions that were more heavily focused on asset creation and tangible provision of livelihoods. At the same time, IRC had experience in microcredit projects and felt confident about introducing this new activity. Eventually, the decision was taken to start the new programme with effect from January 2006, on the condition that it would be designed for females and mothers of those children who were studying in the Sojhro schools.

The IRC microcredit team began by forming groups of women in the above

communities and offering them loans for different earning activities such as livestock rearing, tailoring, and setting up shops. Regular weekly meetings were also started with CBOs to discuss the economic conditions of the people and the benefits of the microcredit programme. Group membership in the rural areas ranged anywhere from 12 to 40 and above, while in the peri-urban areas, known locally as 'mohallas', there was usually a group of between 5 to 10 members. By April, the Credit officer had conducted the appraisal of 18 potential groups by drawing up a socio-economic profile of them and evaluating whether a particular applicant fit into the loan disbursement criteria. The first loans were given out to 161 borrowers, and amounted to a total of Rs. 1,485,000. This was the official beginning of the microcredit programme.

After that, each borrower's profile was maintained both electronically and manually. Each member had to save a minimum of Rs. 30/- per month. When repayment was made, the money saved was given to the member as a lump sum. Women who paid back their loan were also eligible for another, higher loan. After a second or third loan, a distinct possibility was created for asset building and saving. The Credit team also helped the female credit groups to open saving accounts in the First Micro Finance Bank, starting with the groups of the Kumb cluster, which were saving more than Rs. 6,000, on average. In addition, a 4-day vocational training session on stitching was organised in December, in which 10 women participated from the Kumb, Khuhra and Sobhodero clusters. The candidates were selected from the credit groups being supported by the microcredit programme. Candidates were given lodging and boarding facilities for the entire training period.

What the microcredit team really appreciated about the DIL approach was the fact that we had not insisted on a monthly return of payment, but left it up to the field staff to decide what would be the most convenient way of repayment. For example, a woman who had opened a shop would find it easy to make weekly repayments, but someone who had bought a goat would only be able to repay when she sold her goat in a few months time. That was why loan recovery was at its peak level in November, because it was the season for cotton picking and livestock selling for Eid-ul-uzha.

The demand of credit increased day by day, but the Credit team considered only those mothers who really wanted to change their living standard, give their children an education and save for a better future. That is why such borrowers were selected who were likely to spend the profit on the children and the household. Some of the women enrolled their children after this programme was initiated, while others who had been unable to pay tuition fee before were now keeping money to pay their children's fee regularly.

IRC would next like to start an adult literacy programme with these women. This would help them to deal with accounting, record keeping, calculating rates etc. Approximately 500 learners could be taught initially, and then supported with a post-literacy programme so that the women do not lapse into illiteracy. DIL is considering the funding modalities of this option.