

Students Envision The Pakistan They Want

From **Teach For Pakistan** Classrooms

On the Flip Side



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Let Voices Make Impression

Every day, miracles walk, hang from overloaded vans, perch on animal-drawn carts, and ride on rickshaws to and from schools. These miracles unfold before our eyes, only if we care to look. Yet, the potential of these miracles may never be fully realized due to the inherent inequities in our education system.

To imagine the future without bringing in the voices of our children is to shortchange ourselves. We, the grown-ups, have long excluded the young from our conversation around their development, perpetuating this exclusion through the use of a foreign language and technical jargon. It is time we tried to see the world from their vantage point and listened to their definition of the change they want. At Teach For Pakistan, we believe children to not just be the beneficiaries of our mission but the creators of it. This booklet represents our efforts to give our students the space, voice, language, and agency to participate in the conversations about their future. It seeks a countervailing narrative about the future, away from the technical jargon and official numbers, rooted instead in the beliefs of the real leaders: the young people of Pakistan.

The slim volume in front of you is a culmination of a massive effort involving 20 schools and as many Teach For Pakistan Fellows, their coaches, and over 1,000 students from grades 6 to 10 who were introduced to the five themes that form the philosophical underpinning of our work: Leadership, Centrality of Education, Educational Inequity, Community Engagement, and Vision for Student Success, through specially designed lessons. In addition to Fellows-led tutorials, students participated in group discussions and reflection circles to understand and debate how each theme impacted them and their communities.

The students were invited to participate in an essay competition on the above themes, encouraged to use whichever language they could best express themselves in, with most choosing English to demonstrate their new mastery of the language. In the first round of shortlisting, out of a thousand entries, 107 essays in Urdu and English were selected based on critical thinking and relevance to the topic. A five-member committee of Teach For Pakistan staff selected one winner from each category.

The content before you is the handiwork of students from public schools located in underserved communities around Islamabad. We want you to have the pleasure of an unhindered insight into their fertile imaginations. Therefore, while essays in Urdu have been translated, we desisted the urge to elaborate what they have so beautifully and honestly expressed in their own words and style. We at Teach For Pakistan will continuously strive to capture, amplify, and mainstream the voices that matter, to build an equitable society.

Khadija S. Bakhtiar
Founder and CEO

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My Community is peaceful, helpful, and most importantly open-minded, strong, and confident; ready to stand up for me. This is very important for girls to achieve their vision in life.

Aima Noor, Grade 7

““

Disparity between private and public education, especially the quality of education between the two is very disturbing. Private schools offer sports facilities, cultural activities, science labs, and debating societies; government schools lack these opportunities for students. The educational system has to change for the betterment of Pakistan.

Alisha Manzoor, Grade 8

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Just as one must know the direction to get to the destination, so, everyone must have the vision to succeed in the journey of life. In the same way, I have my own vision of what a woman can be...My vision for success is to be a Teach For Pakistan Fellow, and then work in the development sector.

Amara Sehar Nisar, Grade 7

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As you know, the society is like a human body. All organs have to work in tandem for the body to function. If one of them is neglected, the whole body will suffer. My role in society is to be the immune system, to fight the disease of inequality that is strengthened by hatred and ignorance.

Sara Saleem Ahmad, Grade 7

Leadership

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Instead of looking for saviors, we should be calling for leadership that will challenge us to face problems for which there are no simple, painless solutions – problems that require us to learn new ways.

”

Ronald Heifetz

Author of 'Leadership without Easy Answers'

Student Leadership

Arooj Fatima | Grade 8

A leader is someone who guides a group of people towards a shared goal and collective growth. I want to highlight some qualities of a good student leader: listening to others, helping them with challenges, thinking creatively, and being attentive and respectful.

I'll share one example of student leadership from our surroundings. When a teacher made a mistake in counting our total marks, I told her about it. When she heard me, she fixed this problem by accepting her mistake and rechecking the whole class's marks.

I believe that I can pledge to be a good student leader because I am responsible, attentive, and think carefully before giving solutions to problems.

However, I believe I will have to build our collective vision and motivation for collective growth in order to be a good student leader. I believe I can use my expertise to push everyone to become a leader in their own right.

Student leadership is important for the collective progress and learning of students. For example, students are often confused about lessons and topics taught, but teachers do not make an effort to explain them further. In such a situation, student leaders can help and teach their fellow students, by sharing their own knowledge. Good student leadership is required to ensure that all students feel empowered and confident so that they can stop being afraid of teachers. Good student leaders can stand up for their class fellows when they are being bullied and push them to stand up for themselves.

In my school, I notice that most students are too scared to ask questions when they are confused. If some of us can set a different example, everyone might follow and challenge this trend in the school.



Centrality of Education

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Making smart and effective investments in people's education is critical for developing the human capital that will end extreme poverty. At the core of this strategy is the need to tackle the learning crisis, put an end to Learning Poverty, and help youth acquire the advanced cognitive, socioemotional, technical and digital skills they need to succeed in today's world.

”

Ending Learning Poverty and Building Skills:
Investing in Education from Early Childhood to Lifelong Learning
The World Bank, 2023



Centrality of education to overall development

Muhammad Inam | Grade 5

Education plays a very important role in personal development and social progress. Education means teaching others and learning from them. The crux of the matter is that good quality, higher education is essential for progress. Quality education must be available to men and women alike, it helps them under all circumstances. Quality education develops critical thinking in us. A good teacher, books, school supplies, and a quality school are essential for education.

By educating ourselves, we can become doctors, engineers, teachers, pilots, etc. Good education creates broadmindedness among us. All of this requires education. Modern scientific subjects and technology can only be acquired through education; Thomas Edison banished darkness from people's homes by inventing the light bulb. Hence, education can eradicate all types of darkness, we, too, should strive for a higher purpose.



Development is an act of positive change in an individual's personal life; higher purpose, broadmindedness, and improvement in standard of living. This impacts the entire society. All doctors and engineers are products of education. Without education, there can be no progress, we can push our country forward through development and also make a name for ourselves. Progress plays an important role in making a name for a country, and only developed countries make a big name for themselves.

Doctors play an important role in a nation's progress; informing them about what is good for them and ridding them of ailments. Doctors can also push the country forward in the field of science. Engineers play an important role in society; all engineers work hard to build roads, bridges, fix things like computers, modern vehicles, and innovations that propel development; all of this is the engineers' feat. Education also creates excellent teachers and literary figures in society. If you do not consider it an exaggeration -- I don't believe it to be so -- Teacher, is a title, an identity, or a word that causes the entire universe to rise out of respect. Literary figures are the best members of ours and any society.

They shine a light on society's positive and negative aspects. Along with it, they also help in the intellectual development of a nation by educating it. Top literary figures create high literature; those who differentiate between high and low literature are called critics who do this by studying and critically analyzing poetry, short stories, novels, etc. A critic's study is different from others as it evokes critical thinking among us, a sign of good education. Art also enjoys the same stature as literature. An artist transfers thought onto the canvas; both negative and positive aspects are their subject. Societal positives and negatives can be effectively brought forth through art. Art does not mean drawing a picture, an artist writes history on society's pages through their art.

The question that now arises is, why quality education is not widely accessible in our country? It does not have one but many reasons. In my opinion, the biggest reason behind it is political neglect, lack of understanding, and setting our sights low. We vote for our politicians to help them win elections so that they ensure our personal and societal development. To ensure basic human rights like health, education, and other developmental activities. But often, they do not bring improvement. A politician, after winning elections and becoming a member of the national assembly or prime minister, must ensure improvement in health, and education, at least in their own constituency. Until the politicians work hard, education or health systems cannot be set right.

Hence! An individual or society's progress is possible only through education. Access to education will ensure good doctors, teachers, scientists, politicians, pilots, artists, etc in society. To make quality education accessible to all, our politicians will have to display seriousness, or else our circumstances cannot change appreciably. In addition to the politicians, the ministry of education, school principals, teachers, and parents will also have to work hard.



Educational Inequity

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Addressing education inequity involves system-wide change, and solutions need to be approached through a systems thinking lens, as a coordinated effort between groups rather than it being the responsibility of a single stakeholder group.

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Amplify Insights: Education Inequity
Centre for Social Impact, 2021



Fairness in Education

Syed Bilal Zaidi - Grade 8

Fairness in education means that all students have equal access to educational opportunities regardless of their backgrounds, socioeconomic status, or abilities.

It means that every student has an equal chance to succeed and that no one is discriminated against. Fairness in education is critical because it helps to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential.

It promotes social mobility and reduces inequality by providing opportunities for students to learn and grow regardless of their circumstances.

It also helps to promote diversity and inclusion by creating a learning environment that values and respects differences.

Fairness in education means that students are treated with respect and dignity and that their individual needs are taken into account.

It means that students are evaluated based on their abilities and achievements and not on irrelevant factors such as their race, gender, or religion.

It also means that students have access to quality teachers, resources and facilities, regardless of where they live or their family income.

Fairness in education is essential for building a strong and prosperous society that values education and invests in its future.

It is the responsibility of educators, policymakers, and society as a whole to ensure that every student has access to a fair and equitable education.



Community Engagement

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The process of participatory development proceeds through a dynamic interaction between the achievement of specific objectives for improving the resource position of the local community and the inculcation of a sense of community identity. Collective actions for specific objectives such as a small irrigation project, building a school, clean drinking water provision, or agricultural production activities can be an entry point for a localised capital accumulation process.

”

Akmal Hussain

**Participatory Development Praxis:
A Case Study from Pakistan's Punjab, 2006**



Role of Community in my Life

Mehak Jahanzaib | Grade 7

A community is a social unit that shares something in common, such as customs, identifying characteristics, values, and benefits. It consists of the people we trust, love, and hold in high regard. My community includes my mother, sisters, teachers, friends, and others.

My community is very important to me because it gives me plenty of opportunities to showcase my capabilities. It strongly supports me, giving me the capability to help others, study hard, respect elders, and share my problems with them.

My community is important because it helps me in both good and bad times, supporting me in every critical situation. It gives me more time to focus on my education. Because of this, I am capable of speaking in English and speaking up against negative things within my community. With my community's help, I pursue my goals and dreams, which makes me more confident in speaking with other people.

In the future, I hope to become a doctor. I hope for a supportive community that encourages me to express my strengths and values and build meaningful relationships with others. I want my community to think positively and show kindness towards me and others.

I want my community to have a positive mindset, attitudes, and thoughts about others. I want my community to support me, and grant me freedom. I hope that my community provides me with a platform to express myself and my abilities, helping me convert my dreams into reality.



Vision for Student Success

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By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and culture's contribution to sustainable development.

”

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Target 4.7

The vision for my life at the age of 25!

Sadia Nawaz | Grade 8

I am Sadia Nawaz. I have three sisters and one brother. My parents support me in all stages of life. I am studying in class 8, and I am 14 years old. I am good at my studies. My teacher is Ma'am Sehr-ish Muluk.

The vision of my life at the age of 25 is to become a doctor, a dream shared by my parents. I am a hardworking, focused, and committed student, excelling in my studies. This aim of my life is very important because it would enable me to make a significant impact on people's lives.

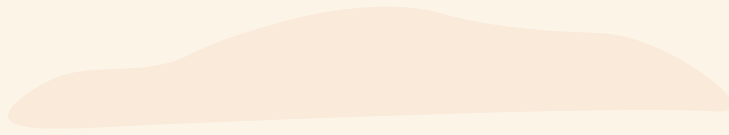
My great motivation to become a doctor is because of Dr. Ruth Pfau. She was born in Germany and she was a specialist in leprosy. Dr. Ruth Pfau is also known as the "Mother Teresa" of Pakistan. She devoted more than 55 years of her life to fighting leprosy in Pakistan. She achieved these awards:

Hilal-e-Imtiaz

Hilal-i-Pakistan

Sitara-i-Quaid-e-Azam etc





One of the reasons I chose this profession is because I admire the devotion, dedication, bravery, and courage it entails. I want to follow in Dr. Ruth Pfau's footsteps by helping people in need. I like to help people in challenging times. Medicine is one of the most compassionate professions in the world. Other people may have other reasons for becoming a doctor, and many people may even have different visions for their lives. Although the life of a doctor is very difficult, my passion for helping people gives me the courage to handle these difficulties.

My passion for this profession stems from my desire to help people during difficult times and to make a significant impact on their lives. I aim to specialize in cardiology and as a cardiologist, I want to treat heart disease, which is becoming a growing problem worldwide over time.

Many of my classmates want to be doctors. I always contact them in difficult situations. In the future, I hope to work with my classmates to collect donations to build hospitals in different areas.





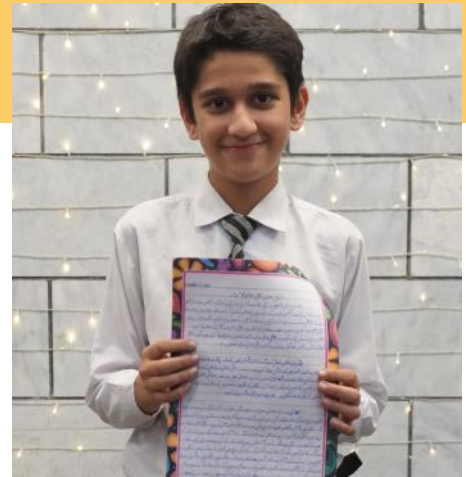
I will assemble a team and then visit different areas to organize a free-of-cost medical camp, where we will work together to help the sick people who cannot afford the expenses of disease. We treat our patients with care and compassion like we would with our friends. We will work for the development of both people and our country. I am fully committed to working to overcome the difficulties that come with this profession.

In conclusion, the medical field is the most compassionate profession for serving people and I would like to serve my community in this way. That is why I chose this profession. My role model, Dr. Ruth Pfau, is a great symbol of a blessing for the people, having devoted her whole life to serving humanity.

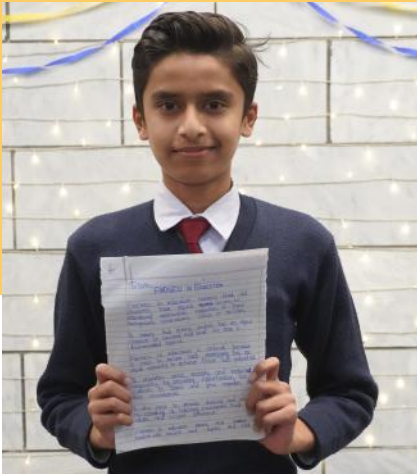
The Winners



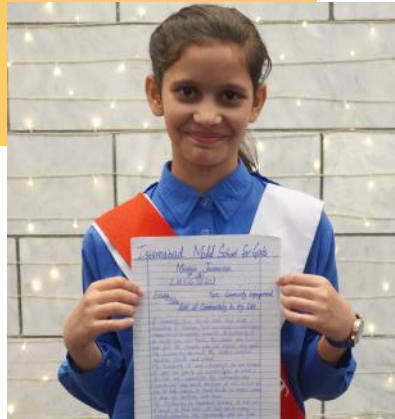
Arooj Fatima
Leadership



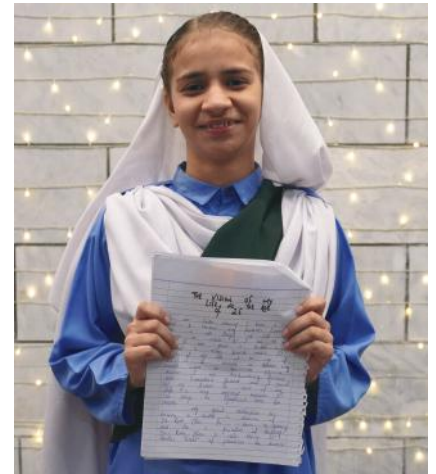
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