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About USAID to Pakistan – Since 2012



In dedication to Daniel Pearl

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Editor's Note

The recent clamoring about the fee hike in Pakistan which resulted in the PM's warranty and PTI's involvement to put a brake on fee spike proved to be another political gimmick. The wealthy Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif stopped short to freeze the annual fee spike and did not address the already steep cost of education.

The plight of education in Pakistan is a sad story of greed, political meddling, Ghost schools and also responsible for bifurcating the society from the very foundation. There has never been a strong political will to harmonize public and private schools for parallel equality of education and opportunities. Since 1971, Pakistan has seen collapse of the once thriving services like PIA, Railways, Pakistan Steel, water and power and irrigation sector are just few of them. During the same period, corruption and nepotism also started to penetrate and flourished by the succeeding incumbents. Education, police and revenue turned out to be the toppers of corruption and mismanagements.

There are tons of reports and analytical evidence available about the quandary of education produced both by the local journalists and international institutions - but all in vain as the education kept going moribund. Over 8,000 Ghost schools/ ghost teachers, schools without running water and electricity, schools without toilets and play grounds are all familiar to Pakistan to the extent that people have gone into utter oblivion that their fundamental rights are relentlessly and shamelessly being robbed. .

During early 90s, private schools and coaching centres started to emerge rapidly. The growth was rampant as the world was opening up to those who speak good English and the brain drain had picked up the momentum like never before. These schools and centres were as unbridled as Maderssah (so-called religious schools). People sick of the government schools welcomed private schools dreaming better future for kids. These schools spread like dengue virus in Punjab creating more disparities and further helping elites to slide their kids to overseas and helping the tragic phenomenon of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

An estimated 22,000 private schools operate against 1,500 government schools in Karachi. Majority of private schools are urbanites because of the capital gains thus creating an opportunity to turn education into a lucrative trade. The saddest part of it is the sky rocketing cost of education worth opportunities which is affordable to the minor segments of unjust Pakistani society.

I don't agree with the notion that the private school tuition fee accounts for 2 percent of the average household income in Pakistan. Re: *Private School Participation in Pakistan* Quynh T. Nguyen and Dhushyanth Raju. We are concerned about the quality that is required to prepare students for

tomorrow and then later acceptance in highly ranking educational institutions to end up working with better pay or doing profitable business. Without better paid jobs, it is not possible to pull millions out of poverty. It is very challenging for the children of the poor or lower middle class families to keep up with those kids going to the expensive schools.

The profitability and irregularities in education business have attracted gluttonous politicians and bureaucrats into this business. SZABIST, Sir Syed University, Beacon House School System, Karachi Grammar School, Karachi Public School are just few of them to claim the booty of education. The fee structure with transportation and other expenditures goes from Rs30,000 to well beyond Rs100,000 a month in a country where minimum wages are 13,000 (\$125.00) a month.

Ironically, this hefty fee is not helping in excellence to the quality of education, school buildings, teacher's training, curriculum, extracurricular activities, scouting, school wide/ team competition transportation and general knowledge; all suffers in poor standards. The fast adaptation of the western style is helping the crooks to entice parents and students in the name of merger or affiliation with the foreign universities. The foreign institutions compelled by financial hardships are recklessly endorsing such establishments. A fact is not yet a far memory.

The cost of education grew by leaps and bounds ensuing additional "Coaching or Tuition." A trend simultaneously emerged along with the private schools. Unfortunately, this manipulation is brazen, widespread and non-regulated. To many school teachers, private coaching or tuition has turned into primary earnings extracted from full time teaching, particularly for the government school teachers. The teachers push students for private tuition that also guarantees blessings from the teacher by giving away good grades, paying more attention and putting them as the monitor.

The parliament of Pakistan is predominantly consisting upon heredity, landlords and elites, who uses parliament to grow their wealth and intentionally ignoring the importance of education. They know educated farmers, bonded/ child labor would demand their rights if educated. The politician's children go to the best schools around the world like Bhuttos, Imran Khan and Altaf Hussain. Bhuttos kids only return to strengthen their grip on power.

It's time for the government of Pakistan to take real action and ensure that all the kids have access to the quality of education and opportunities

Sincerely

Syed Naeem Uddin

<http://www.bridgecommunicationsandresearch.com/>

Editor/ Publisher

Summary of the US Educational assistance to Pakistan from Jan 15 to September 30, 2015

As usual the United States continued to be the force that has been pouring all kind of support to educate Pakistani youths and professionals. During 2015, the United States awarded \$4.6 Million to UNICEF for Pakistan Safer Schools Program. 53,000 children including 10,000 displaced in North Waziristan together with renovating 989 schools capacitating 300,000 students and training 7,000 new teachers, 70% of which is allocated for women. Since 2005, the United States has also awarded over 3,000 scholarships through the Fulbright and Merit and Needs Based Scholarship Programs. The USAID is also funding Pakistani educationists to finish doctorate in the United States and 34 has already been to US as part of this scholarship programme.

More US involvement in Pakistan's educational sectors improvement

- **Pakistani and U.S. High School Students Join Together in Global Leadership and STEM Exchange Program** <http://blogs.state.gov/stories/2015/09/30/pakistani-and-us-high-school-students-join-together-global-leadership-and-stem> Posted by Angela Aggeler and Jonathan Foldi
- **U.S.-Sponsored "Back to School" Expo brings U.S. University Education Opportunities to Pakistan** 20 September 2015

USEFP Executive Director Rita Akhtar. "With over 4,000 accredited higher education institutions, there really is a program for everyone. For some students, financial aid and scholarship options are also available to make a U.S. education especially affordable."

USEFP is a bi-national commission established in 1950 by the governments of Pakistan and the United States. USEFP's mission is to promote mutual understanding between the American and Pakistani people through educational and cultural exchange. Since its inception, nearly 5,000 Pakistanis and more than 900 Americans have participated in USEFP-administered exchange programs the largest of which is the Fulbright program. Details <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pr-092015.html>

- **U.S. Ambassador Reaffirms American Commitment to Higher Education in Pakistan**

August 20, 2015 | Islamabad

U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson highlighted the importance of U.S.-Pakistan collaboration in higher education.

Each year, more than 1,300 Pakistanis travel to the United States for academic and professional exchange programs. In addition to Master's and PhD programs, other U.S. government academic exchanges support study at high schools, universities, and community colleges in the United States. In June of this year, the United States and Pakistan launched the Education, Science, and Technology Working Group, the newest of six working groups under the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. For more information on study in the United States, please visit:

<https://educationusa.state.gov/>.

Details <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pr-08202015.html>

➤ **U.S. Exchange Program Alumni Empower Youth through Technology** August 9, 2015

The United States invests approximately \$40 million annually on exchange programs for Pakistani citizens and sends more than 1,300 Pakistanis to the United States each year to participate in academic and professional exchange programs. PUAN is an alumni network of students and professional who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs. It is one of the largest U.S. alumni networks in the world with more than 15,000 members.

The United States invests approximately \$40 million annually on exchange programs for Pakistani citizens and sends more than 1,300 Pakistanis to the United States each year to participate in academic and professional exchange programs. Details <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pr080915.html>

➤ **Deputy Chief of Mission Welcomes Returning Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Students** Contact: U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section (051-208-2911, 051-208-1136) 52/2015 June 18, 2015

In Pakistan alone, more than 900 students have participated in the YES program since 2003, accounting for more than 10% of all YES participants worldwide. a new group of 108 Pakistani students are preparing to leave for their academic year in the United States for the 2015-2016 academic year. Details <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pr-06182015.html>

➤ **Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Richard Stengel Commemorates Launch of U.S.-Pakistan Centers for Advanced Studies** June 3, 2015

\$127 million investment from the United States building partnerships in higher education and research, at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST). More than 300 students, faculty, and administrators attended the event.

Since 2009, the United States Government has built or rehabilitated about 1,000 Pakistani schools, provided over 5,000 scholarships for Pakistani students to study English and awarded scholarships to more than 12,000 Pakistani students to study at Pakistani higher education institutions through various USAID educational programs. Details <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pr060315.html>

➤ **United States and Pakistan Advance Economic and Education Cooperation at Inaugural Education, Science, and Technology Working Group Meeting** June 3, 2015 | Islamabad

The Education, Science, and Technology Working Group are the sixth and newest working group under the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. At the inaugural meeting, Undersecretary Stengel stressed the importance of these key areas to the bilateral relationship. U.S.-Pakistan engagement in this sector is substantial, 19 partnerships already in place between U.S. and Pakistan universities and more U.S. funding going to exchange programs with Pakistan than any other country in the world. Details http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pr_060315.html

Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network Conducts Nationwide Campaign in Support of Peace Islamabad

| May 30, 2015

PUAN members organized a candlelight vigil to celebrate Peace Week
#PUANPeaceWeek. <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pr-05302015.html>

➤ **U.S. Exchange Program Alumni Advance Global Women's Empowerment** Islamabad | March 6, 2015

More than 300 alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs gathered at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad for the Opening Ceremony of the three-day 2015 International Women's Empowerment Conference co-sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN), and the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council. Comprised of more than 14,000 students and professionals who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs, Details (website hyper link) <http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/pr-03092015.html>

Pakistani and U.S. High School Students Join Together in Global Leadership and STEM Exchange Program

Posted by [Angela Aggeler](#) and [Jonathan Foldi](#)
September 30, 2015



Two U.S.– Pakistan Global Leadership and STEM participants take in the view during a break at Lake George in Upstate, NY.

On December 16, 2014, I sat in my office in Islamabad, Pakistan and watched in horror as the death toll from an assault on a school in Peshawar rose higher and higher. Members of the Pakistani Taliban had attacked the Army Public School and killed over 140 people – 132 of them children. This horrific event, however, inspired us at Embassy Islamabad to counter with something positive for that school's survivors.

The result was the U.S.–Pakistan Global Leadership and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math

(STEM) Program. For two weeks in late July to early August, twelve Pakistani and four American 11th graders participated in a program that demonstrated our solidarity with the people of Pakistan, encouraged leadership development, and brought real cultural understanding to some of Pakistan's and our brightest future leaders.

Through this program, the Pakistani and American students visited Washington, D.C., New York City, West Point, Albany, and Cooperstown, and bonded with each other through collaborative science projects focused on nanotechnology, cricket matches, basketball games, and a real American birthday celebration for one of the American students. They also got VIP treatment in meeting with the New York Police Department, the Department of Defense, and even with Secretary of State John Kerry.

I could say so much more about this terrific exchange, but I'd rather let Jonathan Foldi, one of the outstanding American students, tell you about the experience in his own words. Here's his story:



Group technology projects were part of daily activities in U.S.-Pakistan Global Leadership and STEM program.

“When I was selected to join the U.S.-Pakistan Global Leadership and STEM program, I was skeptical. What would I be able to get out of the program? What would I be able to offer? I hoped that I would be able to offer the Pakistani boys a better perspective on America – one that would differ from what they had seen in movies. But I didn't imagine much more than that.

When I first met the other students, I was overwhelmed by the new faces and unfamiliar accents. After some introductions, our first interaction took form in a game of “keep away” with a soccer ball.

I slowly began to learn names and some of other boys' personalities. Our games soon morphed into a makeshift game of cricket with a baseball bat and tennis balls doubling for "real" cricket gear -- that would come later.

It was during these first few hours that I began to develop friendships with some of the students. My roommate was the first of many new friends; within minutes of our first conversation we were already discussing how we would work together to build a plane that could double as a submersible after we became CEOs of our own companies. It was in that moment that I realized how similar Pakistani and U.S. students really are. We share the same career aspirations and enthusiasm for learning.

The 16 of us bonded during the events we attended at State University of New York Polytechnic Institute's Colleges of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE), and through sports we participated in throughout our program. During the CNSE program, we were exposed not just to tiny intricacies at the nanoscale, but we were also able to make sumo wrestling robots! Group projects at CNSE also gave us the opportunity to create a marketable product and business plan, but more importantly, the projects gave us the experience of working as a global team. They allowed us to create something greater than we could have individually or with a small group composed only of our American peers.



U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry greets students from Pakistan's Army Public School and Degree College in Peshawar, at the U.S. Department of State in Washington, D.C., on July 27, 2015. [State Department photo].

From these experiences, I can now say that I have 12 new Pakistani brothers who live on the other

side of the planet and my perceptions about the world broadened beyond anything I could ever learn in a classroom. I even learned new things about America, after visiting the Pentagon, meeting with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, and the Commandant while touring West Point. But it is the things I learned about culture are what will stay with me the longest from my time with these Pakistani brothers. I learned more than I thought I would about the history, geography, politics, music, and food of Pakistan. I have a deeper understanding of the long-standing relationship between our two countries.

Thanks to this program I now have a new worldview. I no longer think about what happens internationally as distant events that don't affect me, but rather world events are stories of individuals, people with whom I now know I can become friends in a matter of weeks – even if we are separated by thousands of miles.

During this experience I also learned some new things about myself. Despite my early skepticism, I would now classify this as one of my most life-changing experiences. It was also life-affirming, particularly given the circumstances that brought these boys to the United States – the terror attack on their school.

Most importantly I learned that it is through people of my generation-- the future leaders of these two nations -- our ties will be strengthened and enhanced. We were the start of something truly great!



U.S.-Pakistan Global Leadership and STEM participants visit with NYPD's Flatbush Precinct in

Brooklyn, NY.

About the Authors: Jonathan Foldi is a rising 11th Grader in Rockville, MD. Angela Aggeler is the Director of the Office of Press and Public Diplomacy in the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs.

For more information:

- Follow [U.S. Consulate Peshawar on Facebook](#) to learn more about programs like U.S.-Pakistan Global Leadership and STEM program.

- See more at: <http://blogs.state.gov/stories/2015/09/30/pakistani-and-us-high-school-students-join-together-global-leadership-and-stem#sthash.KLXajRTU.dpuf>

U.S.-Sponsored “Back to School” Expo brings U.S. University Education Opportunities to Pakistan Islamabad, 20 September 2015

Hundreds of Pakistani students attended a “Back to School” fair in Islamabad on Sunday, sponsored by EducationUSA Pakistan, in coordination with the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP). Pakistani students interested in studying in the United States met alumni from more than 50 U.S. colleges and universities, who talked about their own experiences. U.S. Embassy Diplomats and staff members answered questions about their alma maters, in addition to questions about campus life in America, the application process, and how to apply for a student visa.

“The United States provides excellent academic opportunities for Pakistani students,” said USEFP Executive Director Rita Akhtar. “With over 4,000 accredited higher education institutions, there really is a program for everyone. For some students, financial aid and scholarship options are also available to make a U.S. education especially affordable.”

Every year, the number of international students in the United States increases as more students select it as their destination of choice for higher education. It is a popular destination for international students because of diverse educational programs, cutting-edge technology, opportunities for research, and improves long-term career prospects while building self-confidence and independence.

“This fair is designed to help students familiarize themselves with what studying in the United States is all about,” said EducationUSA Advising Manager Umair Khan.

Kristin Hawkins, U.S. Embassy Islamabad Press Officer and University of Virginia alumna described her time living with international students in the dorms as “one of the most enriching experiences of

her life” and what encouraged her to become a diplomat.

USEFP is a bi-national commission established in 1950 by the governments of Pakistan and the United States. USEFP's mission is to promote mutual understanding between the American and Pakistani people through educational and cultural exchange. Since its inception, nearly 5,000 Pakistanis and more than 900 Americans have participated in USEFP-administered exchange programs the largest of which is the Fulbright program. USEFP offices in Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi provide advice and assistance to students interested in studying in the United States. USEFP also runs testing centers in Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi administering the TOEFL, SAT, GRE, and other standardized examinations. Students can learn more by visiting www.usefpakistan.org or www.facebook.com/EdUSAPakistan.

U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson Condemns Attack in Badaber

Islamabad, 20 September 2015 – “On behalf of the American Embassy community in Pakistan, I extend my deepest sympathies and condolences to the victims and families of the victims of today’s heinous attack in Badaber. The United States strongly condemns this senseless and inhumane act that took numerous lives, include those of 16 people inside a mosque while they were praying.

The United States stands with Pakistan in its struggle against terrorism and violent extremism. Few countries are as affected as Pakistan by the cruel violence perpetrated by terrorists. The United States will continue to work closely with Pakistan to secure peace and stability in the country and in the region.”

– U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson

Consumers in Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to get Increased Power Supply as USAID Helps to Improve Transmission System

Islamabad, September 15, 2015: U.S. Agency for International Development Mission Director to Pakistan John Groarke inaugurated two new autotransformers for the Mardan Grid Station in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and presented tools and trucks to power distribution companies in a ceremony held today at the Rawat Grid Station. The U.S. government is helping the National Transmission and Dispatch Company upgrade its network to accommodate Pakistan’s increasing demand for electricity.

USAID has provided training, equipment and vehicles to enhance the capacity of four distribution companies: Lahore Electric Supply Company, Quetta Electric Supply Company, Multan Electric Power Company, and the Sukkur Electric Power Company. This initiative is part of the U.S. government's

commitment to support the government of Pakistan in making improvements in the energy sector. With the training and equipment provided, all nine of Pakistan's power distribution companies will have the resources necessary for crews to perform tests and maintenance on live power lines without shutting them down. This capability will result in increased energy availability and reliability.

“The U.S. Government is proud to work with the government of Pakistan to increase the production, transmission, and distribution of power and to improve its delivery to the people of Pakistan,” said Mission Director Groarke during his visit. The USAID Director received briefings on the new autotransformers and live-line maintenance tools and trucks, and was given a tour of the grid station.

The assistance to the National Transmission and Dispatch Company is an example of U.S. support for the government of Pakistan’s efforts to increase power production and improve its delivery to consumers. U.S.- funded programs have supported the completion of the Satpara and Gomal Zam dams, helped the rehabilitation of Tarbela and Mangla dams’ power plants, helped rehabilitate Guddu, Jamshoro, and Muzaffargarh thermal power plants, and is working with all nine government-owned electricity distribution companies to modernize their operations. Over the past five years, this cooperation has added over 1,500 megawatts to the national grid, enough power to provide electricity to more than 16 million people.

For more information on U.S. assistance to Pakistan’s energy sector, please visit: (<http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/energy>).

U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson Extends Condolences to Pakistanis Injured at the Makkah Mosque

Islamabad, September 12, 2015 - "On behalf of the American Embassy community in Pakistan, I would like to extend my deepest sympathies to the Pakistanis injured in the tragic crane accident in Saudi Arabia on September 11. Our thoughts and prayers are with those injured and their families. We wish them a quick recovery and safe return home." - U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson

U.S. Supports Wheat Productivity Enhancement Program

Islamabad, September 11, 2015 - The U.S.-Pakistan Wheat Productivity Enhancement Program (WPEP) held its annual meeting in Islamabad this week. Through the partnership, the United States, utilizing expertise from the USDA and with funding provided jointly by USAID, is supporting efforts to strengthen Pakistan's wheat rust surveillance efforts, enhance collaboration with international researchers, and improve breeding methods and testing in collaboration with the Pakistani government. Wheat rusts, which have caused hundreds of millions of dollars in crop losses during the

past 50 years in Pakistan, are a critical issue for farmers worldwide.

The dynamic program is an international collaboration with a consortium of Pakistani government and university research facilities, USDA, International Center for Maize and Wheat Improvement (CIMMYT), and the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dryland Areas (ICARDA). The primary goal of the program is to protect and enhance the productivity of wheat in Pakistan, with particular attention to wheat rusts, which are difficult and expensive to treat with pesticides. The only real way to deal with the disease, according to experts with the USDA, is through the development of new, disease resistant strains of wheat.

"Long term, durable, genetic resistance to wheat rusts requires in-depth and on-going research focused on the pathogens involved, the varieties being developed, and management of the best production practices," said Dr. David Marshall, the Research Leader at the USDA ARS Plant Science Research Unit. "A unique pool of wheat genetic resources has been developed by this project. These genetic resources can be used by Pakistani, and U.S. wheat breeders, to improve disease resistance as well as grain yield and flour quality."

Agriculture is Pakistan's second largest sector, accounting for more than 21 percent of the nation's GDP. It remains the largest employer in the country, with 46 percent of the labor force working in farming. The USDA is continuing its long history of support for Pakistani scientists and farmers to enhance agricultural productivity in Pakistan, support economic objectives and meet food security needs. Wheat accounts for 60% of the daily caloric intake of the average Pakistani, and is grown on over 9 million hectares of land throughout Pakistan.

For more information about the program:

http://www.ars.usda.gov/research/projects/projects.htm?ACCN_NO=420458

Ambassador Olson Launches U.S. Mission Pakistan Urdu Websites

Islamabad, September 8, 2015 – U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson announced the launch of U.S. Mission Pakistan's Urdu-languages web sites today during his visit to Karachi. "We now have comprehensive Urdu-language web sites at the Embassy in Islamabad as well as our three Consulates in Lahore, Peshawar, and Karachi," said Ambassador Olson.

Recognizing the importance of providing information to Pakistanis in their national language, Ambassador Olson said, "Today, Urdu speakers all over Pakistan will be able to learn more about a range of U.S. government services and programs. This will be of special interest for those applying for visas or grants and exchanges, and for those who would like to keep up to date on the latest U.S.

Mission Pakistan announcements.”

The Urdu-language web sites will provide Pakistanis with contact information and links to major U.S. government agencies and partner organizations including the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. Education Foundation Pakistan (USEFP) and EducationUSA, and U.S. Commercial Services. The sites also have links to the U.S. Mission in Pakistan’s Facebook pages and Twitter accounts.

The four Urdu-language web sites can be accessed at:

- Embassy Islamabad: www.urdu.pakistan.usembassy.gov
- Consulate General Lahore: www.urdu.lahore.usconsulate.gov
- Consulate General Peshawar: www.urdu.peshawar.usconsulate.gov
- Consulate General Karachi: www.urdu.karachi.usconsulate.gov

U.S. Sponsored Mobile Libraries Bring Books and Encourage Reading

Islamabad, September 8, 2015

USAID Deputy Mission Director Cathy Moore celebrated the launch of four new mobile libraries provided through the Pakistan Reading Project at a government secondary school in Islamabad today as part of International Literacy Day, a global effort to encourage reading and education. The new buses will bring reading materials to more than 300 communities across Pakistan, reaching more than 2,500 students in 100 primary schools in Islamabad alone, and many more in rural parts of the nation which may not have traditional library resources. The buses will also be staffed by trained librarians, who will conduct storytelling sessions for children and young adults, and talk to older patrons about library services and the importance of literacy.

“The United States is pleased to be supporting this Mobile Library Program which will bring books and other reading materials directly to communities,” Moore said. “I am happy that through today’s roll-out of the mobile bus libraries under the USAID-funded Pakistan Reading Program we are continuing this tradition of supporting Pakistan in its efforts to strengthen its education system and promote a culture of reading.”

The USAID-funded Pakistan Reading Project is a \$165 million project, designed to support provincial and regional department of education to improve the reading skills of primary school children across the country. This program is designed to utilize three interrelated components to affect the quality of early education: improved classroom learning environment for reading, improved policies and

systems for reading, and community based support for reading in Pakistan.

For more information on the United States' assistance for education in Pakistan, visit:

<https://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/education>

U.S. Embassy, Government of Pakistan Urge Youth Engagement to Combat Drug Abuse - Islamabad, September 2, 2015

Over 400 college and university students from Islamabad and Rawalpindi gathered in the National Library of Pakistan this morning for a seminar entitled, "Engaging Pakistani Youth in Anti-Narcotics Efforts: Building Generations and Societies." The program educated students on their roles in combatting drug abuse in Pakistan. The Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) and the Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control jointly organized the U.S. Embassy-funded event.

U.S. Embassy Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Jeffrey Sexton urged the students to look for opportunities to volunteer and to serve their communities. "As we have learned so well today, to affect change you need strong communities. Communities unite people behind common causes. Communities call people to action. You are proof that youth with a vision can make a difference in Pakistan," he told the young audience.

Director of the U.S. Embassy's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Section (INL) Ramon "Chico" Negron discussed INL's support for drug rehabilitation programs across Pakistan and comprehensive drug awareness campaigns in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh province. "We all share responsibility for raising awareness about the dangers of illegal drug use," Negron stressed. Minister of State for Interior and Narcotics Control Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman also addressed the students. The close coordination between the Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control, PUAN, and the U.S. Embassy demonstrated the shared commitment of the United States and Pakistan to combatting the corrosive effects of the illegal drug trade.

Pakistan has one of the largest U.S.-alumni communities in the world, with more than 15,000 students and professionals who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs. PUAN organizes events across Pakistan through 12 regional chapters, including community service projects, leadership training, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities. Find out more about PUAN at <http://www.facebook.com/pakalumni>.

USAID Helps Pakistan's Power Utilities Increase Revenues, Improve Power Delivery - August 27, 2015 | Islamabad

U.S. Mission to Pakistan's Coordinator for Economic and Development Assistance Leon Waskin joined NEPRA Chairman Brig. (Rtd.) Tariq Sadozai at the Marriott Hotel on Wednesday to commemorate the successful completion of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Power Distribution Program. The five-year, \$218 million project is a part of the U.S. government's commitment to support the Government of Pakistan to improve the energy sector. The Program introduced several innovative technologies to Pakistan, such as smarter meters and anti-theft cables, which are helping power distribution companies reduce losses and increase revenues.

Speaking at the closing ceremony, Waskin said, "The U.S. Government remains committed to working with Pakistan towards a continuous, stable energy supply and a brighter, more prosperous future."

The Program introduced a number of modern technologies to upgrade Pakistan's electric power distribution network. As a result, Pakistan's power distribution companies have increased annual revenues by more than \$400 million and saved over 200 megawatts of energy, enough to supply power to about three million people.

From 2010 to 2015, the program trained more than 32,000 energy sector specialists, installed state-of-the-art systems to monitor and control of power flow, improved consumer billing systems, and introduced international best practices. The Program also installed nearly 90,000 capacitors on agricultural pumps to reduce electrical losses, replaced 260,000 meters of distribution system wires, and provided a variety of other equipment to upgrade the distribution system.

For more information on U.S. assistance to Pakistan's energy sector, please visit:
<http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/energy>.

USDA Leads Review of Cotton Productivity Enhancement Program - August

26, 2015 | Islamabad

Two top scientists from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Research Service are in Islamabad this week to lead the annual review of the U.S. -Pakistan Cotton Productivity Enhancement Program. The primary goal of the program is to study the Cotton Leaf Curl Virus and promote best management practices of the virus, as well as identify new sources of resistance. The study of Cotton Leaf Curl Virus is crucial in Pakistan, since the disease can cause major losses to Pakistan's cotton industry, both threatening Pakistan's economic stability and food security. The dynamic program is an international collaboration with a consortium of Pakistani government and university research facilities, USDA, and the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas.

Dr. Brian Scheffler, USDA's Lead Scientist for the program, described some of the groundbreaking

research that has been done under the program: "This partnership has identified new sources of resistance in cultivated cotton, which will be critical to maintaining long-term virus resistance while ensuring high levels of production. Under this program, the scientific team is developing laboratory diagnostic tests to confirm the presence of CLCuV and distinguish it from other viruses with similar symptoms."

Dr. Jodi Scheffler, USDA's Cotton Productivity Enhancement Program Coordinator, also noted, "So far thousands of small farmers in Pakistan have participated in trainings on best management practices for cotton production under this program. Employing practices that decrease the prevalence of the virus in the field, will lengthen the time the resistant varieties remain effective."

Both scientists remarked on the success of the monitoring techniques used by Pakistani scientists to track the spread of Cotton Leaf Curl Virus and the excellent cooperation they observed among research institutes in Pakistan.

Agriculture is Pakistan's second largest sector, accounting for over 21 percent of GDP. It remains by far the largest employer, with 46 percent of the labor force working in the sector. For the nearly 62 percent of the Pakistani population in rural areas, agriculture is a vital part of daily life. USDA supports Pakistani scientists and farmers to enhance agricultural productivity in Pakistan, support economic objectives and meet food security needs. The project also received funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

United States Supports Breakthroughs in Pakistan's Agricultural Sector -

Islamabad | August 24, 2015

USAID Mission Director John Groarke, Federal Minister Sikander Hayat Bosan, and CIMMYT Director General Dr. Martin Kropff inaugurate the two-day, USAID-funded Agricultural Technology Conference in Islamabad.

USAID Mission Director John Groarke commended new breakthroughs in Pakistan's agricultural sector today at USAID's Agricultural Technology Conference at the Serena Hotel. Joined by the Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Sikander Hayat Bosan, Groarke met with more than 200 Pakistani farmers, scientists, and agricultural leaders who highlighted new agricultural technologies made possible by USAID's Agricultural Innovation Program (AIP).

"Halfway through this four-year program, we are already seeing remarkable results," Groarke said. "This demonstrates that with the United States and Pakistan working together, we can achieve agricultural growth and prosperity in Pakistan's agricultural sector and beyond."

Launched in 2013, AIP is an initiative by USAID, the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), and the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council. Heat-resistant maize, higher-yielding wheat crops, livestock vaccines, and less water-dependent rice harvesting techniques are among the leading innovations stemming from the four-year, \$30 million initiative. Over the next two years, AIP will continue its farmer-focused innovations by helping Pakistani farmers increase their profits while addressing emerging resource challenges caused by climate change.

Since 2012, USAID's economic growth program has created over 23,000 new jobs and introduced new technologies and management practices to more than 118,000 farmers across 60,000 hectares.

For more information on USAID economic growth and agriculture programs, visit:

<http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/economic-growth-agriculture>

U.S. Ambassador Reaffirms American Commitment to Higher Education in Pakistan - August 20, 2015 | Islamabad

U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Richard G. Olson highlighted the importance of U.S.-Pakistan collaboration in higher education during a farewell ceremony held in his honor at Preston University in Islamabad, jointly hosted by the Archaeological and Historical Association of Pakistan and Preston University. Senior-level Pakistani government officials, including Chairman, National Commission for Human Rights, Ali Nawaz Chowhan, representatives from civil society, foreign diplomats, and students and faculty from the university attended the event, showcasing the history of cooperation in education.

"Education is the foundation of economic development, political stability, and personal self-fulfillment, and so it is naturally a main pillar of the U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relationship," Ambassador Olson said as he reflected on his interactions with young people during his three-year tenure in Pakistan. He highlighted the long-standing educational partnership between the United States and Pakistan, which has resulted in one of the world's most vibrant academic and professional exchange programs.

Each year, more than 1,300 Pakistanis travel to the United States for academic and professional exchange programs. In addition to Master's and PhD programs, other U.S. government academic exchanges support study at high schools, universities, and community colleges in the United States. In June of this year, the United States and Pakistan launched the Education, Science, and Technology Working Group, the newest of six working groups under the U.S.-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. For more information on study in the United States, please visit: <https://educationusa.state.gov/>.

U.S. Mission in Pakistan Condemns Attack on Punjab Home Minister -

August 17, 2015 | Islamabad

The U.S. Mission in Pakistan strongly condemns the terrorist attack on Punjab Home Minister Col (r) Shuja Khanzada's offices in Attock and extends its deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of the victims of Sunday's violence. Such blatant disregard for human life is unacceptable and contrary to the aspirations of the Pakistani people for a secure, stable, and prosperous nation.

The United States remains committed to the people of Pakistan and to the Pakistani government's efforts to fight terrorism. We support Pakistan's determination to bring to justice those behind the attack and are prepared to provide assistance, if requested, to government authorities investigating this reprehensible act.

U.S. Mountain Climber Highlights Important Role of Sports and Active Lifestyle for Women and Girls

Islamabad, August 12, 2015 – The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN) sponsored “Empowering Women through Sports” at the Ibex Club climbing wall in Islamabad’s Lake View Park. The day-long event allowed girls to practice wall climbing and archery, while discussing how to use sports as a way to build confidence and develop leadership skills. The event featured world record-holder, American mountain climber and explorer Vanessa O’Brien, and a mix of more than 50 youths, including team members of five-time national champion women’s club soccer team, the Young Rising Stars. Alumni of the U.S. sponsored English Access Microscholarship Program, as well as members of community groups from throughout the region also participated in the event.

“I’ve had a wonderful experience in Pakistan,” Ms. O’Brien said. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to use this climbing wall activity to help women explore the concept of team-building and develop trust in their own skills and abilities.” She encouraged all the participants in the special women’s empowerment event to apply the skills they practiced learning to climb in all aspects of their lives.

The U.S. government invests approximately \$40 million on academic and professional exchange programs, sending more than 1,300 Pakistanis to the United States each year. PUAN is among the largest U.S. alumni networks in the world. Its mission is to encourage people-to-people relationships between Pakistanis and Americans.

Consisting of more than 15,000 students and professionals who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs, PUAN organizes events across Pakistan, including community service projects, leadership training, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities. The organization has 12 regional chapters nationwide in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Bahawalpur, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Gwadar, Islamabad, Jamshoro, Karachi, Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, Lahore, Multan, and Sukkur. Find out more about PUAN and the conference at <http://www.facebook.com/pakalumni>.

U.S. Initiatives to Improve Irrigation and Reduce Power Demands for Small Pakistani Farms - Islamabad, August 11, 2015

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) organized a series of workshops for engineers and agricultural professionals from the On Farm Water Management (OFWM) directorate, and the South Asian Conservation Network (SACAN) to teach the latest techniques in irrigation by using small ponds for long-term water storage, and solar-powered drip irrigation. USDA civil engineers worked alongside workshop participants to build the capacity of Pakistani farmers to develop sustainable, environmentally-friendly techniques to improve water usage, and reduce farmer reliance on the electrical grid.

“Water is a limiting factor in agriculture,” said Jon Fripp, a civil engineer from USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. “On-farm water storage techniques, such as ponds, and conservation techniques, like solar-powered drip irrigation, are important tools for maximizing the efficient use of water, as well as improving agricultural resiliency to adverse climate conditions. Storing water so you can have it and use it when you most need it enables farmers irrigate their crops at the right time, and drip irrigation allows them to get water where it needs to be with minimal waste. Using the free power provided by the sun to get water to the plants reduces cost overall.”

The first set of workshops, which were focused on the creation of small reservoirs of water for use in irrigation, were conducted over several days in partnership with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA). The second set of workshops sponsored by ICARDA trained participants to power efficient drip irrigation systems using solar power in lieu of gas generators or local electrical grids. Trainees participated in hands-on activities designed to demonstrate appropriate ways to dam small ponds to create a stable water source for crops, and learned the latest in utilizing solar energy to power efficient drip irrigation systems, reducing the strain on generators and electrical grids in rural areas.

For more information on the Pakistan Water Dialogue project, visit their website at: <http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/research/projects/show-projects/?C=710>. Further information on ICARDA can be found at: <http://www.icarda.org/>

U.S. Exchange Program Alumni Empower Youth through Technology -

Islamabad, August 9, 2015

Minister-Counselor for Public Affairs of the U.S. Embassy Jeffrey Sexton spoke to more than 100

alumni of U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad. The group participated in the closing ceremony of the 2015 Youth Tech Camp, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and organized by the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN). During the three-day camp, PUAN introduced young alumni to new technologies and helped the group to develop their skills in thinking critically about using new technology to improve their communities.

In his closing address to the alumni, Minister-Counselor Sexton said, "Technology can make a positive impact on your communities and around the world. This year's Youth Tech Camp was designed to provide an opportunity to learn about and engage with the digital technologies of today's interconnected world."

Dr. Umair Saif, Director of the Punjab Information Technology Board, also met with the alumni from across Pakistan, who participated in hands-on training with cutting-edge technology, including crisis mapping, internet applications, online citizen journalism, short-film production, and crowd funding.

The United States invests approximately \$40 million annually on exchange programs for Pakistani citizens and sends more than 1,300 Pakistanis to the United States each year to participate in academic and professional exchange programs. PUAN is an alumni network of students and professional who have participated in U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs. It is one of the largest U.S. alumni networks in the world with more than 15,000 members.

PUAN regularly organizes events across Pakistan, including service projects, leadership training, roundtable discussions, and community engagement activities. To find out more about PUAN and the conference, visit: <http://www.facebook.com/pakalumni>.

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PUAN and the conference, visit: <http://www.facebook.com/pakalumni>.

U.S. Senate Confirms David Hale as Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (August 9, 2015)

The United States Senate has confirmed the appointment of David Hale as Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Ambassador Hale, a career member of the Foreign Service, currently serves as Ambassador to Lebanon.

Previously, Hale was the Special Envoy for Middle East Peace, 2011-2013, a Deputy Envoy (2009-11), and U.S. Ambassador to Jordan (2005-8), after multiple tours in Jordan and Lebanon and service in Tunisia, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and at the U.S. Mission to the UN. In Washington, Hale was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Israel, Egypt and the Levant and Director for Israel-Palestinian Affairs. He held several staff posts, including Executive Assistant to Secretary of State Albright.

In 2013 Secretary Clinton gave him the Distinguished Service Award, and Hale has several Department Superior and Meritorious Honor awards. He speaks Arabic, is a graduate of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, and is a native of New Jersey.

U.S. Initiative to Improve Agriculture Sales and Build Technical Capacity

- August 6, 2015 | Islamabad

New Mission Director of USAID Mr. John Groarke launched the U.S.-Pakistan Partnership for Agricultural Market Development.

The new Mission Director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Pakistan John Groarke launched the U.S.-Pakistan Partnership for Agricultural Market Development (AMD) initiative at the Serena Hotel today. The program, funded by the U.S. Government, consists of a \$21 million series of grants, training sessions and technical improvements designed to improve farming techniques and boost domestic and international market access for Pakistani meat, vegetables, mangoes, and citrus by nearly \$140 million over the next four years.

"The United States remains strongly committed to creating economic growth and employment opportunities for the people of Pakistan, and considers the agricultural sector a critical priority," Director Groarke said. "We are confident that our investments, in partnership with Government of Pakistan, will increase the linkages between Pakistani farmers and international markets to help promote a more prosperous, stable, and food secure nation."

The AMD program was created to teach farmers the most up to date, efficient and environmentally

sustainable techniques currently available. The program will also work to create trading hubs to close the gap between farmers, buyers, and sellers so Pakistani products can find their way to kitchen tables worldwide. With nearly 40 percent of Pakistanis employed in agriculture, and with almost 21 percent of the nation's gross domestic product generated through agricultural industry, the initiative has the potential to increase sales and investments by more than \$140 million.

USAID's economic growth program has created over 23,000 jobs since 2012 and introduced new technologies and management practices to more than 118,000 farmers on 60,000 hectares. For more information on USAID economic growth and agriculture programs, visit:

<http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/economic-growth-agriculture>

Ambassador Richard Olson Inaugurates New U.S. Embassy Building in Islamabad - July 31, 2015

Ambassador Olson addressing the ceremony after officially inaugurating the new U.S. Embassy building in Islamabad, Pakistan on July 29, 2015.

Islamabad, July 31, 2015 – Ambassador Richard G. Olson officially inaugurated the new building of the U.S. Embassy on July 29 in Islamabad at a ceremony on the diplomatic enclave. The Ambassador was joined by numerous Pakistani government officials and foreign diplomats to commemorate the occasion. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Daniel F. Feldman, and the State Department Director for Overseas Building Operations, Casey Jones, also traveled from Washington to take part in the ceremony.

Ambassador Olson said, “As we dedicate our new United States Embassy in Pakistan, let us also re-dedicate ourselves to promoting peace and continued mutual understanding between our two countries. This building represents a venue where Pakistanis and Americans can continue to come together to build a better future for both our countries.”

The state-of-the-art facilities began construction in 2011 and were built utilizing the expertise and skill of numerous Pakistani tradespeople and crews. More than \$85 million has been invested in the Pakistani economy through purchases of steel, cement, gravel, stone, sand and tile for the completion of the project. The new Embassy building incorporates numerous features designed to protect the environment, including an array of solar panels, energy efficient lighting, and architectural sunshades to reduce heat in the building. An on-site waste water treatment plant allows water to be recycled for irrigating landscaping throughout the campus and local Pakistani plants were used throughout the grounds to discourage erosion and maintain the original topography.

U.S. Embassy Islamabad is also one of the first U.S. embassies in the world designed to be fully

compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ADA, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, is one of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation, which prohibits discrimination and guarantees that people with disabilities have equal opportunities, including employment and the ability to participate and access all government programs and services.

Ambassador Olson Extends Sympathies to the Victims of Floods in Pakistan - July 23, 2015 | Islamabad

The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad extends its deepest sympathies to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan who have been affected by recent flash floods, including the nearly 300,000 people currently displaced from their homes. Our thoughts are with all those affected, and we applaud the efforts of those who are working to bring relief to those in need. The United States stands ready to offer assistance to the people of Pakistan in this time of need.

United States Supports Sustainable Grape Production in Potohar Region - July 8, 2015

Many new varieties of grape were on display for growers to select at USAID Agribusiness Project's event attended by farmers from Potohar region.

Many new varieties of grape were on display for growers to select at USAID Agribusiness Project's event attended by farmers from Potohar region.

Islamabad, July 8, 2015 - The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) hosted a training session for Pakistani farmers that introduced new techniques to produce grapes and ways to connect with merchants, processors, and exporters to better prepare their crops for market.

Scott Hocklander, USAID's Director of Economic Growth and Agriculture, noted that grape growing provides a special advantage for farmers in the Potohar region. "The grape farming in this region enjoys a competitive advantage, since Potohar grapes are harvested before the monsoon season, when grapes from other parts of the country are not yet available," Hocklander said.

USAID has helped cultivate nearly 70 percent of the 420 acres of grape vineyards in the Potohar region and its Agribusiness Project helps medium and small-scale farmers by providing plants and trellises. In addition, USAID provides training and technical assistance in canopy management, disease and pest management, harvest and post-harvest handling techniques, and marketing. The USAID Agribusiness Project aims to create 13,000 new jobs in the horticulture and meat sectors, and increase sales revenue in excess of \$14 million. In total, the project will benefit more than 24,000

rural households throughout Pakistan.

For more information about USAID's economic growth and agriculture assistance programs in Pakistan, please visit: <http://www.usaid.gov/pakistan/economic-growth-agriculture>

Bridge-US is nonpartisan and an effort to share and publish news of diversity, harmony and mutual understanding to bridge between nations and inform people directly about how humanitarian aid is positively changing lives in Pakistan.

Dedicated to



Daniel Pearl

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