Message from the Editor

I believe we, at the ‘Act Aiming Change for Tomorrow’, could justifiably feel proud to present this 2nd edition of ‘The Developmentalist’. Besides, it would be unfair not to extend our thanks and appreciation for the generous support extended and words of encouragement extended to us at ‘The Developmentalist’ by all those who had sent in their words, views and advises, spurring us to move on and thus we are here today with this second edition of ‘The Developmentalist’.

In this second edition we have decided to take up the most pressing issue of the role of youth in building and taking forward a society with a positive mindset. Needless to say that Pakistan is a country blessed with what is generally called ‘Youth Bulge’, the much needed segment of any society, brimming with strength and full of futuristic ideas. We strongly feel that for a better tomorrow we have to revive civic education aimed at engaging our youth in activities which should bring about early and positive impact on the society at large. Pakistan is in dire need to make the youth understand their role and responsibilities and guide them to exercise their strength and potential transform our society starting at the grassroots level.

I am not disillusioned that ‘The Developmentalist’ is still in the stage of infancy and there is a long way to go. And to survive and keep the journey onward, we at ‘The Developmentalist’ would be in need of persistent patronage from all of you. This patronage we expect in form of critical but constructive comments, positive contributions for ‘The Developmentalist’ and sincere advice.

I am particularly pleased that the first edition of ‘The Developmentalist’ was taken well and that has been the reason that we have received some very good articles, comments and opinions for this second edition. Our contributors have explored and highlighted various facets of ‘youth’, which we included in this edition. I am obliged to express my gratitude and extend my sincere thanks to all those who have taken time out from their hectic working schedule or even spared some time from their ‘personal quality time’ to write the pieces for this issue on my humble request. I will appeal to all to continue contributing in future as well with their brilliant ideas and solutions to the problems being confronted by the youth in our society. Because youth is segment in which we need to invest heavily to reap a golden harvest in future!
Reflections

Pakistan is experiencing, what is being called as demographic dividend. What it means is that at certain point of times in Countries history there comes time when most of its population comprises of young people. Today 64% of our population comprises of young people below the age of 29. This is termed as a window of opportunity in the life of a nations since the right measures and investments in this young population can put the nations and countries on the path to development.

Young people are the future of our country, it is unfortunate that we are still at the national level unable to mobilise this resource to the best of its potential since we do not have a national youth policy or framework to provide national guideline to provincial youth policies. At the provincial level apart from Government of Punjab, no other province has yet got its youth policy approved and in place. This is high time that we equip our youth with information, knowledge and skill that will help them in making right decisions about their lives that have a direct effect on the country. At the national level the government has not been able to come up with appropriate measures like reproductive health education in school curricula. If the Kasur scandal fails to make the leaders realize the need for empowerment of youth through proper and timely knowledge, what else will. Child and early marriage is still an issue. Government of Sindh so far is the only provincial government that has raised the age of marriage for girls from 16 to 18.

Acknowledging that young people are reproductive beings and need to have special provisions in the health system to cater to their needs ensuing privacy and confidentiality remains another challenge.

I started my journalistic career a decade ago, and as with all the youngsters and young blood, I too was very idealistic about the world, however, reality kicked in at a very initial stage of my career when I had to write reports on teen suicide and the rest, first it was shock and then I was appalled at the problems youngsters were facing, I could relate to some problems but not all, at that time, I was very actively involved with different youth groups and I was appointed President of a youth group, which was working extensively on awareness raising on socio-political issues. We organized seminars and talked about issues, unfortunately it did not make too much noise about issues and I felt some youngsters lacked the passion to ‘move things’, to be honest I felt disappointed at this lack of empathy amongst the youth. Their stance was very clear that ‘nothing can be done’ to change the country for the better. However, I succeeded in getting the curriculum reversed in Punjab where hate speech was rampant. Some stayed, some lost interest but I did not lose hope. I kept motivating the youth, feeling that this is a dormant power that would lead to change, and slowly but gradually I did witness a change. I saw to my amazement that youngsters were talking about their ‘civic’ duties and going to the streets campaigning for different causes, it coincided with the Tahir Square Revolution and Pakistan was also witnessing a revolution amongst the youth, the internet was a place that youngsters could voice their concerns and behold, the older lot or as we term it the ‘baby boomers’ were paying attention. Now it seems like a page from George Orwell’s book, 1984, where Big Brother is watching you, the internet has witnessed change, playing the role of Big Brother, if there is a selfie obsession there is also obsession about what is right and what is wrong, the youth of today is anything but attention. Now it seems like a page from George Orwell’s book, 1984, where Big Brother is watching you, the internet has witnessed change, playing the role of Big Brother, if there is a selfie obsession there is also obsession about what is right and what is wrong, the youth of today is anything but attention. Now it seems like a page from George Orwell’s book, 1984, where Big Brother is watching you, the internet has witnessed change, playing the role of Big Brother, if there is a selfie obsession there is also obsession about what is right and what is wrong, the youth of today is anything but attention.
school and out-of-school time learning opportunities. As the field has developed, there has been debate as to what constitutes effective youth civic engagement programming.

Pakistan is 6th most populous country in the world having youth bulge of more than 64 percent of its population below 29 of age. Participation of young people in every field is limited particularly when it comes to decision making in Pakistan. Excuse behind not involving youth is that they are considered as inexperienced or immature. Reality is young people are the most energetic, enthusiastic, innovative and pro active but at the same time vulnerable too. It has been noticed that young people are being used in extremism and terrorism in Pakistan and all over the world.

Government of Pakistan started working on National Youth Policy in 1992 but tabled in 2007. Youth were involved in the process first time during 2007-08 and cabinet approved National Youth Policy in 2009. According to the 18 amendment in the constitution of Pakistan youth ministry was also devolved to provinces in 2010. After devolution only Punjab province approved the provincial youth policy in 2012 while other provinces yet to approve. There is no political will to invest in the young people by any federal or provincial governments accept using them in election or political benefits. So it is high time to involve young people meaningfully in every field of life particularly in decision making and political process. We need to give them confidence so that they can play their role as responsible citizen.

**Youth in Pakistan**

Youth has the ability and energy to turn the unfavorable circumstances into the opportunity and grab that opportunity to achieve the desired results for any country.

Pakistan is lucky to have a huge population of this age group. All policy and decision makers are aware of this opportunity and quote it when they make tall claims about development in Pakistan. It is an open fact that Pakistan is experiencing once-in-a-lifetime demographic dividend as the working-age population is bulging and the dependency ratio is declining. Currently more that 64 per cent of Pakistan’s population is less than 29 year of age and falls in the age group of youth.

No doubt that Pakistan youth, both boys and girls, has all the talent to shine at the international level. Malala Yousafzai – the youngest Noble Prize winner and global campaigner for education -represents Pakistan at the most prominent international forums. We have record breakers in international examination systems like Ali Moen Nawazish and many others. Pakistani youth leads in some of the toughest sports- Samina Baig first Pakistani women climber of Mount Everest. There are many more examples to share. Besides these individual examples, we often hear about initiatives taken by the government to enhance the capability of youth. Youth Festivals, Youth Parliament, Young Leadership Conferences - all are organized by to create impact on youth.

For example, with an aim to enhance the scope of research and quality education in the country and increase the access to information technology, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced laptop scheme on the pattern of Punjab government. It will provide free laptops to 100 thousand students studying in Higher Education Commission (HEC) recognized universities. Punjab has already distributed the same number among undergraduates, graduates and post graduates. This year, the Punjab government plans to distribute laptops among students who will get more than 78 per cent marks in matriculation exams.

Another such initiative is Prime Minister’s Youth Business Loan Scheme for young entrepreneurs between the age group of 21 - 45 years. This scheme is designed to provide subsidized financing at 8.0 per cent mark-up per annum for one hundred thousand (100,000) beneficiaries, under which 350,000 youth would be given loans. To improve equitable access to higher education across the country, the HEC intends to establish new universities and sub campuses in almost every district of the country during consultation and collaboration with the respective provincial governments during next three years’ time. In addition, most prominent political parties have started a positive tradition of youth festivals. Young talent is awarded with highest achievement awards every year.

While quoting these glorious examples, some of which have been partially implemented and some are still in the planning process, we should not forget that the overall situation of Pakistani youth present a grim picture and conditions that not much has been done to utilize the demographic dividend that we are proud of. Such initiatives could be considered encouraging signs but to convert this valuable human resource into an opportunity, only encouragement would not be able to do the magic.

It seems that realization of the fact, that whatever serious issues Pakistan faces right now are directly linked with youth, is there in words but is missing in action from the priority list of our leadership. In fact, they only use youth to achieve their political agendas. It was young boys and girls who managed Tahir ul Qadri’s famous sit in. They were at the forefront of Imran Khan’s movement against the government and abused all who criticized their leader on social media. They are the ones who dance and chant slogans at the rallies of PPP and PML N and are always in the front rows of the unruly mob and charged gathering that throw stones to destroy the public property of their own country to protest against something unfortunate happened thousands of kilometers away. It is always easy to manipulate them for accepting the responsibility to implement Sharia in the country-so much so that they present themselves for suicide bombing.

But when it comes to positive utilization, harnessing of this unlimited potential and capacity building of this valuable human resource, the Pakistani leadership has nothing substantial to deliver. They have no well-articulated and calculated youth policy to build and foster the next generation into a capable workforce that can finally take this nation out of the present crisis. In fact, the current leadership has cultivated further crisis by ignoring the needs of the Pakistani youth.

HEC might be planning to reach districts but the fact is that current education sector is not capable to absorb such huge population of young people and standards are not good enough. The laptop scheme or youth loan scheme might contribute to a limited extent but it would not be able to change the fact that Pakistan has the highest rate of school exclusion for pre-school age children (51 per cent) and for primary school-age children (34.4 per cent). It might fail to bring back over 27 million out of school children in the country.

Similarly, youth festivals such as the ones organized by Punjab and Sindh governments would not provide quality play grounds and sports clubs for the youth in every district. At the same time, a member Parliament who wins elections with the help of unemployed youth in his area does not have the capacity to represent concerns of youth on the floor of National Assembly.

In recent past, an example of young political leadership emerged after Army Public School incident on December 16, 2014 when a group of young activists initiated a movement against the supporters of extremism throughout the country. Millions joined them through social media and the group of young activists organized successful rallies at some of the most feared spots in the capital, challenging the space of such elements in a way that had never been done before. Politicians, civil society and people from all walks of lives joined them.
ESTABLISHMENT OF TOLL-FREE HELPLINE IN KP, PROVINCE

ACT Aiming Change for Tomorrow Team had a meeting with Mrs. Mehr Taj Roghani Minister Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Peshawar KP to Establish Provincial Toll Free Helpline. Toll-Free services can enhance GBV response services and provide GBV survivors essential Helpline continuity solutions.

MenEngage Alliance Pakistan Has Launched “State of The World’s Fathers Report”

MenEngage Alliance Pakistan has launched a report titled “State of The World’s Fathers Report” presenting key international research findings on men’s participation. This report was produced by MenCare, a global campaign to promote men and boys’ involvement as equitable, non-violent caregivers. Joint advocacy initiative, research, and programming to engage men in positive parenting, equitable caregiving, violence prevention and in maternal, newborn, and child health.

International Symposium on Cultural Diplomacy in the UN

ACT Aiming Change for Tomorrow participated in International Youth Symposium in UN Headquarter in New York, Organized by Institute of Cultural Diplomacy Berlin Germany.
ACT INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATED WORLD’S TEACHER’S DAY ON OCTOBER 5, 2015 IN COLLABORATION WITH NCHD AT MUZAFFARABAD AJK.

- ACT is presenting Sheild to Mr. Aktar Uddin, UN Volunteers Programme Officer Pakistan for his Sincere efforts for youth development in Pakistan.
- Chairperson-BISP Marvi Memon Sahiba visited beneficiaries in Mirpur AJK.
- UNDP hold Community of Practice 10th meeting in ACT office Islamabad.
- Mid Term Review meeting with district coordinators of ACT Aiming Change for Tomorrow in Head Office.
- Trocaire team had meeting with programme unit ACT for strategic planning review of GBV project Mardan KPK.

A Selfie members of youth parliament Pakistan along with Marvi Memon State minister / Chairperson BISP

Pakistan’s digital-rights advocate Nighat Dad named TIME’s next generation leader

ACT Aiming Change for Tomorrow is going to Organize 3rd National Youth Summit 2015 in December.
Youth in Pakistan

Myra Imran

Journalist 'THE News'

The Developmentalist

Youth in Pakistan

Youth in Pakistan is a dynamic and vibrant segment of the society, contributing significantly to the country's economy and social progress. However, they often face challenges in realizing their full potential due to various socio-economic and cultural factors.

In the article, Myra Imran, a journalist from 'THE News', explores the issues faced by the youth in Pakistan and highlights the importance of investing in their development. The article emphasizes the role of education, leadership, and opportunities in shaping the future of the youth in Pakistan.

Myra Imran argues that the youth's potential lies in their ability to drive social change and contribute to the country's development. She advocates for policies that provide equal opportunities for all youths, regardless of their social background or gender.

The article concludes with a call to action, urging policymakers to prioritize youth development programs and invest in the education and leadership skills of the next generation.

In conclusion, Myra Imran's article provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges and opportunities faced by the youth in Pakistan, advocating for a future where the potential of the youth is fully realized.
Reflections

In light of the ongoing demographic dividend, it has become imperative for Pakistan to leverage its opportunities in the field of education and workforce development. The Ministry of Youth Affairs has developed a framework to address this challenge, which is expected to play a pivotal role in maximizing the country’s growth potential.

The framework is designed to promote youth-led initiatives, focusing on skill development, entrepreneurship, and engagement with civil society. It is anticipated that this approach will not only improve the quality of education but also enhance the employability of the workforce, thereby contributing to national development.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs is currently working on implementing a series of initiatives under the framework. These include the establishment of youth development centers across the country, providing training programs for youth entrepreneurs, and establishing partnerships with civil society organizations.

It is crucial for Pakistan to seize this opportunity and make the most of its demographic dividend. Failure to do so could result in a missed window of growth potential. However, with the right policies and initiatives, Pakistan can transform itself into a leading economic power.

The development framework is expected to be presented to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the Ministry of Education for endorsement. The framework will also be discussed at the upcoming National Human Development Reports (HDR) 2015 by UNDP, which will further highlight the importance of investing in youth education and development.
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