



**Pehli
Kiran
Schools**

Annual Report 2017

MAY 2017

A Project of the Jamshed Akhtar Qureshi Education Trust



Annual Highlights

2016-17 was a transformative year for the Pehli Kiran School System (PKSS), a chain of 8 primary schools in Islamabad's *katchi abaadis* (non-formal settlements and low income localities), marked by three major initiatives:

1. Introduction of an upgraded, expanded Montessori program
2. Strengthening the management leadership
3. Digitizing the school operational data.

We also secured tax-exempt status from the Government's Federal Board of Revenue in Pakistan for donations to the JAQ Education Trust, further facilitating philanthropic donors.

Key Progress Indicators

✓ **Student Enrolment**

increased to 1804 as of May 2017. Average enrollment grew by 19% year-on-year over the review period.

✓ **Girls' enrollment**

remained steady at 41% of the overall student body.

✓ **Student Attendance**

averaged 81%, around the same level as the previous year's.

✓ **Academic Results:**

over 90% of students passed the annual exams (including the Class 5 Federal Board government exam), and were promoted to the next class.

✓ **Students Mainstreamed**

429 Pehli Kiran students (24% of the total enrolled) successfully transferred to formal public and private schools, validating the PKSS feeder role. This included 41 graduating students from Class 5, as well as 388 students from the other classes. A large number of these students received double promotions when being admitted to their new schools, reflecting the PKSS education quality and high standard.



✓ **Student-Teacher Ratio**

was further brought down to 25:1, to enhance individualized child attention under the new Montessori program.

✓ **Staff Strength**

grew from 50 to 59 over the year. Of these, 52 are teaching staff while 7 are part of the central office team.

✓ **Fund-raising efforts**

with continuing support from our individual and corporate donors, we remain on track to meet our annual fundraising goals for this financial year. Donations received in the US have grown two-fold over the previous year, as the PKS brand gains recognition.



This report covers the activities of the Pehli Kiran School System (PKSS), operated and financed by the Jamshed Akhtar Qureshi Education Trust (JAQET), a non-profit entity registered under the Trust Act of Pakistan. Financial support for the schools is also being provided by 'Pehli Kiran Schools' - a USA-registered, Virginia-based 501C-3 non-profit, since 2015. *Donations to both these entities are tax exempt in their respective jurisdictions.*

For more information about our operations, and how you can contribute, please visit our website <http://www.jaqtrust.org> and www.pehlikiranschools.org

The Year in Review

Academics

This year has been pivotal for Pehli Kiran with completion of our transition to an authentic Montessori system. The PKSS team underwent a rigorous six-week training, which built upon their previous knowledge, to better implement the globally used Montessori curriculum and to become familiar with specialized, scientifically designed Montessori materials. The PKSS curriculum covers the following subjects: Language arts (English and Urdu), Sensorial Development, Exercises in Practical Life, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History and Culture, which includes Social Studies and Islamic Studies.



The Montessori Method is different from traditional education in multiple ways - one of the most salient being that the primary materials of teaching and learning are not textbooks, but physical materials that children can explore and manipulate for every subject. We have greatly expanded the quantity of material available to PKSS students, and have expanded the Montessori program to Grade 3. PKSS teachers will be practically implementing the Montessori Philosophy that is based on cognitive development in children, so they can excel academically, hone practical life skills, develop socially and emotionally, learn how to work collaboratively as well as independently, and be part of a community that



fosters peace and respect for pluralism and diversity.



The goal is to provide PKSS students - amongst the most deserving in the world - with a world-class education, despite the multitude of issues we face on the ground, including limited resources and a challenging physical environment, in unserved non-formal settlements lacking even basic infrastructure and utilities.

With this improved approach, we aim to open for our students and teachers a window to the world, make them aware of different possibilities for their future and instill in them a sense of agency, along with responsible citizenship. We recognize that this is a long journey and PKSS teachers will still require intensive mentoring and guidance, which will continue through the year.

Co-Curricular Activities

These remain a cornerstone of the PKSS education model. Our students participated whole-heartedly and excelled at various local and national events in the field of sports, environment conservation, culture, literature and poetry, theatre and art, peace education, health, and the struggle against drugs. These included the following:

- Earth Day activity sponsored by Kuch Khaas.
- Celebration of Children's Day, sponsored by the National Child Protection Centre, Ministry of Human Rights.
- Drama performance at the opening ceremony and participation in other sessions of the annual Children's Literature Festival, sponsored by Idara-e-Taaleem-o-Aagahi.



- Annual National Book Festival.
- Peace education through art with Fauzia Minallah.
- Orientation sessions against child abuse for teachers and staff by Sahil.
- Teaching civic values and human rights through sports, seminar by the NGO Right to Play (RTP).
- PKSS students won the trophy at the inter-school Football Tournament, sponsored by Right to Play, along with winning the first three prizes in inter-school races and games.
- Humqadam games activity, sponsored by Telenor.
- Motivational visit to PK 2 school by the Saaya Association of Persons Living with Disabilities (PLWDs), and gift distribution.
- Eid Celebration – by organizing Eid Millan Parties at each PK school.
- Environment-related activities in school: PKSS teachers and students continued to plant trees and plants in an effort to beautify their schools and make them more eco-friendly. PKSS students also joined other schools in the government's annual tree plantation activity around Islamabad.

Student Health and Welfare



The Pehli Kiran School System continued to provide its students nutrition supplements, annual health check-ups, hygiene and sanitation education, and the materials required for academic and co-curricular activities, including sports and arts. One of our supporters provided hearing aids to seven hearing impaired PK students, following appropriate check-ups and testing. A group of dentists from the Riphia Dental College organized a dental camp at PK-2. 116 students' teeth were checked and dental care advice was provided. The Rotary Club distributed stationery and reading materials to PKSS students as part of their anti-polio campaign. Prizes for cleanliness at each PK school help to reinforce positive hygiene habits. Periodic food distribution to PK students, sponsored by a range of



supporters and patrons, is welcomed by the students and parents alike.



- one new school store.

Infrastructure

Major infrastructure upgrades were implemented to accommodate the enhanced Montessori program. These included:

- four new school sheds, complete with flooring tiles;
- one new toilet;

In addition, routine repairs and maintenance were carried out at the PKSS schools and office.

Community Engagement

PKSS carried out community mobilization training for all staff, after which the school principals and teachers, with assistance from the Coordinators, developed Community Engagement Plans, tailored to the specific needs of



the respective katchi abaadis. These plans include activities that engage parents in school operations, and also address broader societal issues that impact their children's educational opportunities:

- Principals, teachers and Coordinators have had some success in persuading parents to bring children back to school, after they had been pulled out and put to work to supplement meagre household incomes. In one school, the Principal is working with the community to discourage child marriages, especially by keeping the girl students in school for as long as possible.
- As part of school operations, PKSS teams are actively working to educate parents on the Montessori philosophy, which focuses on the child's interactive engagement with educational materials, rather than the traditional emphasis on text books and rote learning.



PTAs (Parent-Teacher Associations) continue to be strengthened through regular meetings, along with a range of broader discussion topics pertaining to community life. Through the PTAs, parents and communities also continue to contribute to school-related expenses, especially through their own labour for infrastructure needs.

Many PKSS Alumni are enthusiastic volunteers and eager to remain involved in PK school activities, while continuing with their respective studies or work activities. They are a key link to the community, providing important channels of communication.

Management and Policy Oversight

To enhance the administrative and academic support to each of the eight PK schools, the Board of Trustees has strengthened the PKSS management team this year through the induction of two experienced education professionals to the positions of Director Operations and Montessori Trainer and Coordinator. Brief bios of the PKSS team are on the website.

We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of our all-volunteer Boards both in Pakistan and the USA. Their valuable inputs continue to provide policy guidance and hands on support where needed.

Going Digital

PKSS made major strides towards digitizing its operational data this year. The first phase comprising development of software for recording and analyzing student admission and attendance data, and staff appointment and attendance data, has been completed. This will provide central management real-time information on student and staff attendance across all our schools, enabling more efficient deployment of staff resources to improve operational effectiveness. Data entry of student records is currently underway. In the next phase, the database will be expanded to include complete student profiles, which will enable convenient online access to our students' academic and co-curricular performance, helping us identify, analyze and respond to systemic trends.

A key part of this initiative has been the provision of laptop computers to each school principal and coordinators/monitors, along with staff training in the use of computers. Software development and computer related training was undertaken by a pair of dedicated young volunteers.

Financial Summary

For the financial year ending on June 30 2016, the JAQ Education Trust's externally audited accounts show a total income of Rs.12,920,502 and a total expenditure of Rs.10,954,962. The JAQ Education Trust's annual financial statements are independently audited by BDO Ebrahim & Co., a member of BDO International Limited. We are grateful to BDO for providing their audit services on a pro bono basis. The audited financial statements are posted on the Trust's website

Our financial position for the **first 10 months of FY2016-17** (July 2016-Apr 2017) is summarized below.

- Total receipts: Rs.10,466,097
 - Total receipts - JAQ Education Trust (Pakistan): Rs.4,289,487
 - Total receipts - Pehli Kiran Schools (USA): \$60,555.
- Total PKSS expenses Rs 9,276,625.

We project an estimated expenditure of Rs 11,800,000 for the 12-month period up to June 30, 2017. This represents a 15% increase over the previous year's expenditure, in response to a 19% increase in the average enrollment. The **average annual cost per student of around Rs.7,600 (US\$75)** makes ***PKSS one of the lowest-cost primary education delivery models in operation across Pakistan today.***

Pehli Kiran School System is largely financed by individual donations – please visit our website to see how you can contribute.

Thoughtful, **in-kind donations** continue to fill gaps and respond to important PK school and office needs. This year they have included items such as computers and related hardware and software support, furniture, bookshelves, and other items to make the PKSS office more efficient and functional, items responding to academic needs (Montessori materials, library books, posters, A/V aids, children's songs CDs, and stationery supplies), sports equipment, a table-tennis table and accessories, food distribution on special occasions, and transportation to and from activity venues.

We would also like to recognize the important role played by the large number of volunteers whose efforts are critical to our success.

Final Thoughts

Despite challenging ground conditions, working in some of the most unserved, deserving katchi abaadi communities in Pakistan, we continue to grow and make progress at all levels, especially in enhancing the quality of education we impart. We are seeing the difference this makes in the lives of the children and families we serve. This could not happen without the continuing and generous support of our donors, which we gratefully acknowledge. It is our commitment to treat every rupee or dollar that is donated, as a sacred 'imaanat' (trust), to be used as intended – for the benefit of these deserving children.

