

Pakistan request for feedback on Higher Education: January 2021

Following the request, UPSIGN put a call out to academics within its largely UK-based education group. From the request the academics listed below engaged in a meeting to discuss each of the questions raised. The answer to those questions are found on the following pages and the names of the academics who participated are listed below.

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UPSIGN (UK Pakistan Science and Innovation Global Network) was set up in 2017 and consists of a group of over 250 educated professionals globally who are dedicated to raising awareness and develop solutions to tackle various social and economic challenges that are faced by people of Pakistani origin in Pakistan and UK.

Questions put forward for the panel

1. What are the international trends in educational advancement?
2. How best can we address the achievement of global competence for our young generation?
3. How best can Pakistani youth navigate the complex interconnected world and compete for success?
4. What policy aspects are important to be included to ensure schools in Pakistan prepare young people for global excellence?

Q1 What are the international trends in educational advancement?

- **Improving digital infrastructure**, access, and digital literacy for students. Allowing them to gain access to a wide range of courses and content online. This will enable decolonisation of the curriculum and widen perspectives.
- Create a sustainable and scalable format for **training the trainers**. This will allow scale up of training and UK academics and experts will be coordinated by UPSIGN Network in the UK.
- A **blended learning approach** where faculty from overseas can support the development of resources and programmes, which are of international standard, giving students the correct skills and training to compete overseas. This similar approach can also target students where they are able to go on exchange programmes overseas and learn from other places.
- **Target specific cultural and social barriers**. For example, provide role models and opportunities for girls to develop their career, changing their perception of male dominated careers/subjects. Girls should not be specifically studying to improve their marriage prospects.
- **Fostering inclusivity, diversity and equality**. Improving diversity across all sectors and have representation in society. This includes men and women from all backgrounds and walks of life. Also target any financial barriers which allow girls from rural or poorer backgrounds to go onto higher education and make the most of the opportunities available.

Q2 How best can we address the achievement of global competence for our young generation?

- **First you need to define global competency** and how this can be measured, scaled up and sustainable. This could include skills and assessments based on resilience, reflective thinking, ability to adapt, be culturally sensitive/aware. This could be potentially done via blended learning or an online training course. Exchange programmes (online and in person) can facilitate this.
- **Training Students before leaving Pakistan** who are going overseas for their education e.g. PhD should be trained on what to expect and the culture overseas. This could be using the internet effectively, literature research, online resources/training, research & academic culture. Expectations should be managed from both sides (institutionally and student/supervisor relationship).
- **Critical and creative thinking should be embedded** socially and from an early age into the school's curriculum to allow students to become confident to think outside the box and ask questions, challenging the status quo.
- **Need to move away from the deficit model and look at what resources currently Pakistan has available**. These should be exploited to Pakistan's advantage. Pakistan has the ability to use these challenges and opportunities to develop and overhaul the education system which will develop leaders and citizens of the world creating a positive lasting change.
- **Create Global citizens**: teach accountability of world issues such as the sustainable development goals. How they as the next generation can solve them and the impact it has globally.
- **Embed continuous professional development for teachers**. Develop a curriculum and give them the access to tools/resources to understand what is required of them to reach a specific level. This can be applied to both their academic and professional career.
- **Provide access to diverse role models** beyond medicine and engineering. This applies to men and women. A society needs all sorts of skills and education to develop. All careers and individuals are respectable and should be respected.

- Students need to be motivated and be able to teach themselves.

Q3 how best can Pakistani youth navigate the complex interconnected world and compete for success?

- **Improve digital literacy** and how to use social media effectively e.g. LinkedIn.
- **Develop communication and transferable skills from an early age.** This can include (but not limited to) presentation skills, written, and spoken skills in different environments. Other skills such as critical thinking, self-reflection, self-development, awareness and analysis of oneself.
- **Encouragement of extracurricular activities** such as sports, internships, work experience, summer schools, voluntary work. They should be given importance and encouraged across all students..
- **Develop both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations** (Intrinsic motivation involves doing something because it's personally rewarding to you. Extrinsic motivation involves doing something because you want to earn a reward or avoid punishment)
- **Create awareness of who and what they are competing with** to give them an understanding and the tools to help them stand out and develop themselves on a national and international level.

Q4 What policy aspects are important to be included to ensure schools in Pakistan prepare young people for global excellence?

- **Improve curriculum design delivery and quality.** Ensure teachers have the correct background and have the right qualifications. Develop teachers and invest in them to provide them with the correct skills and resources to tackle issues which affect the students.
- Use a **problem-based learning approach** to some of their education. This will encourage people working together in teams rather than working to compete against each other and this is what employers are looking for. This is carried out very successfully in higher education establishments around the world.
- **Develop Accreditation in teaching and learning**, improving assessment strategy (moving away from just testing memory and regurgitation) and communication between students and HEI's. Having two-way communication will help improve standards.
- For higher education institutes (and schools) **develop relationships with multiple stakeholders including industry, charities, agencies** where they develop individuals and prepare them for their career as well a global workforce. This could be via internships, industry placements, exchange programmes and others. This will also show them real life problems and how their education/research has an impact on this. It can potentially give them the confidence to not just tackle issues on a global level but on a local/national level impacting society. In addition to this develop and embed citizenship and build key skills as individuals such as health & wellbeing.
- **Teach international culture and history.**
- **Look to develop teacher training or other initiatives which are both scalable and sustainable.** Much of the way in which training and other things are delivered at present to be very much focused around specific institutes at an institutional level. However when you want to develop excellence in training this can be achieved through an nationally excellent training courses which are then delivered rather than everybody reinventing the wheel for

themselves. This particular could be a blended learning approach which would make it highly scalable.

- Provide **tools, resources and access to learning and embed self-awareness** and the need to consistently develop oneself. Using one's time wisely and accessing online courses.