

NHDR 2015 – Report on Consultation with Youth Group

A. Basic Data

Location	New Muslim Degree College, Charsadda
Date & Time	22 Dec. 2014, 10:00 am - 11:30 am
Topic	National Human Development Report 2015
Participant Profiles	15 male higher secondary school students, aged between 16-17
UNDP Team	Dr. Adil Najam (Lead Author), Gemma Stevenson (Lead Coordinator), Muntazir Ali (Research Analyst)

B. Overview

This session with intermediate students in a private college in Charsadda was made possible through the kindness of the principal, Mr. Shehzaduddin. It appeared that he was very careful in selecting a very vocal group, most of them had participated in debates at school and college levels. In the first fifteen minutes of the discussion, Mr. Shehzaduddin and another teacher were present in the room; however, they were very tactfully led out by a member of the NHDR team, thus removing any inhibition the participants might have had in expressing their views in the presence of their teachers. The team felt that the introduction of the report focusing on engendering a discussion among youth, along with the actual report, was perhaps a better way of conveying its significance.

C. Key issues & themes

- The participants were of the view that the current examination system, which encourages rote learning instead of conceptual clarity, should be changed; there should be one curriculum and medium of instruction for all.
- There should be more focus on practical application of concepts, especially in science subjects.
- Teachers should be inducted after a credible selection process, and be properly trained so that they could identify individual talents of students and guide them accordingly.
- All of them agreed that the choice of field of study should be left to students, but that they should be provided enough information about various fields by teachers.
- Most of them said that everyone cheats. They cited various reasons such as tough competition, family pressure, and the issue of school's prestige leading to the prevalence of cheating.
- The participants thought that there were job opportunities in professional fields, such as medicine and engineering, but in other fields students have to create their own opportunities.
- They thought that their education has prepared them to fulfill their dreams. Most of them wanted to be engineers, a few said they wanted to join the army, one wanted to become a lawyer and another a journalist.

- Almost everyone said that they followed what happens in the political arena, and most of them said 7, on a scale of 1 to 10, on how well they thought they were informed about politics in Pakistan.
- Most of them thought that things would be better in Pakistan in 10 years.
- Most of them used internet on both cellphone and computer. They said they follow politicians and journalists on twitter, used internet for Wikipedia, youtube and facebook.
- Their fears revolved around terrorism and corruption. Their hopes were centred on increasing awareness, education, female education and unity.
- Not many of them played sports. Those who did were into cricket, badminton, and football.

D. Interesting quotes

- “An army soldier undergoes years of training, but a teacher is allowed to teach after a single test.” *Male, 17*
- “Our future is connected to what happens in politics, because it is politicians who make policies.” *Male, 17*
- “Betterment in every field is connected to education. Education would lead to greater awareness, and we would be able to elect the right people and send them to assemblies.” *Male, 16*
- “The more there are different views, greater will be the number of ideas. The more there are ideas, the more would be chances of success.” *Male, 17*