

SEF Collective

June 2005 - September 2005



A glimpse of the QARC Conference in session

Conference and Symposium Held on Understanding Quality in Education

It is gradually nearing the end of the year and 2005 has been living up to its trend of being an eventful and exciting year for the Sindh Education Foundation. With a mega-event for the Quality Assurance Resource Center, the Home Schools Program establishing a number of new schools, a series of trainings and workshops and much more, SEF has realized that a vision to provide quality educational services is never an evolving initiative.

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Scholars and leading intellectuals of worldwide acclaim and government officials discussed and explored the spectrum of quality in education, problems, issues and challenges faced by the current education system in Pakistan during the three-day symposium and a day long conference organized by the Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) from June 27-30, 2005. The event was seen by many as a significant step by SEF and Department of Education and Literacy, Government of Sindh to concretize dimensions of what is meant by educational quality and how effective systems of quality assurance can be enunciated and implemented, keeping in view both the disparity and diversity of the educational scenario of Pakistan.

Dr. Hamida Khuhro, Minister of Education, Government of Sindh inaugurated the proceedings of the event and stated that her administration is trying its best to pursue a comprehensive effort to raise academic standards, promote accountability and provide greater competition and choice among the public, private and NGO/community-based schools. She lauded the efforts of the Sindh Education Foundation in promoting educational services and opportunities to many in the province and hoped that the symposium and conference will be a way forward in addressing diverse forms of learning in an effective manner.

Managing Director of SEF and recipient of *Sitara-e-Imtiaz*, Prof. Anita Ghulam Ali emphasized that the need for socially relevant and culturally applicable quality indicators in assessing the standard of education schools provide. She invited educators from the public and private sector to make a concerted effort to understand and respond to demands of communities vis-à-vis learning and growth.



DR. RUBINA SAIGOL



DR. PERVEZ HOODBHOY



DR. KAISER BENGALI



MR. RAZA KAZIM



DR. MUBARAK ALI



DR. ARFA SAYEDA



PROF. ABBAS HUSSAIN



DR. CLAUDE ALVARES



MR. WASIF RIZVI



PROF. PETER MCLAREN



DR. USHA NAYAR



DR. SHAHID SIDDIQUI



PROF. MAZHAR SIDDIQUI



MR. ABDUL AHAD KHAN



Understanding Quality in Education A Symposium by SEF

It is essential to critically examine the various aspects that have led to the dismal state of affairs of the education sector in Pakistan. It is equally important to reclaim education from its degenerated state and understand the critical role it can play in reshaping and reforming society to remove social inequities and injustices. This was discussed and debated by renowned practitioners, intellectuals and major stakeholders of the education sector.

Dr. Rubina Saigol argued that the existing system of education suppresses critical thinking and is isolated from the cultural and social realities of Pakistan. She emphasized the need to increase opportunities for organic learning and nurturing free and critical thinking. Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy commented that a critically charged education system is not possible unless it is liberated from the shackles of prescribed and controlled content and method. He suggested inclusion of objectivity and rational reasoning in all forms of education. Dr. Kaiser Bengali presented an analysis of educational policies and financial provisions to education in comparison to other sectors. He stated that unless real efforts are made to make education a genuine priority and considerable resources are allocated to revive the public sector, the existing state of affairs will continue to perpetuate.

Mr. Raza Kazim examined the historical contribution of learning and education in societal progress and development. He suggested that it is time that alternate paradigms of education and development are fully understood and implemented. Continuing with the exploration of moral and philosophical foundations of education, Dr. Mubarak Ali suggested that knowledge is being created, unfortunately, at the expense of indigenous wisdom and values. He stated that through the course of history knowledge and wisdom give meaning and value to education, but today we are faced with a contrary situation which will have to be corrected in order for the educational system to rectify itself.

Dr. Arfa Sayeda stressed the importance of curriculum revision in reviving the dismal state of education in Pakistan. Furthermore, Prof. Abbas Hussain analyzed what schools are doing in the current day and age, and what they should actually be doing. Dr. Claude Alvares and Mr. Wasif Rizvi concluded that the existing education system is monolithic and rigid which emphasizes more on singularity and uniformity, leading us to such a society in which monoculture, disrespect for indigenous knowledge systems and enfeebled social and moral values prevail.

Prof. Peter McLaren and Dr. Usha Nayar asserted that a critical look and deeper understanding of what is lost will indeed lead us to take concrete actions to reclaim what has been suppressed, degraded and corrupted for so long.



Re-envisioning Quality in Education A Conference by SEF

Given the problematic state of education in Pakistan and the diverse learning opportunities that have emerged as a response to it, it is essential that quality support and assurance mechanisms be developed which, while ensuring the quality of learning, are flexible enough to accommodate the diverse learning options available.

Having explored possibilities for meaningful learning and education during the previous three-day symposium, the conference day attempted to develop quality support, quality assurance and accountability mechanisms that will promote meaningful teaching and learning, ensure self and societal development, and create nurturing spaces for free and critical thinking. Having benefited from the discussions in the symposium, renowned practitioners and major stakeholders aimed at developing a road map for the quality framework for public, private and community/NGO schools. The roadmap developed in this conference will provide basis for the Quality Assurance Certification Program and will also be critical for the effectiveness of Quality Assurance Resource Center in promoting quality education in diverse forms of schooling throughout Pakistan.

The conference concluded with the hope that the deliberations and findings will significantly contribute in promoting good teaching and learning. It was also concluded that there must now be a move towards an educational system which should be more of a "service" model rather than a "command and control" model.

It was envisaged that SEF's Quality Assurance Resource Center will strive to establish innovative approaches for the establishment of sustained public-private collaboration to respond to the educational challenges of Pakistan in its present manifestation of social inequity. One of the key features recommended for QARC is the emphasis on the development and improvement of schools' institutional ability to become 'learning organizations' responsible for the dissemination of quality educational services to all segments of the society.

It was stressed that QARC, as an autonomous institute must emerge as an educational development project that is quantitatively and qualitatively different from schools and training institutions, as we (conventionally) know them. It was recommended that QARC must bridge the gap of research-based quality assessment framework in public and private sectors and aim to address the erosion of public schools and install accountability measures for ever mushrooming poor quality private schools. Lastly speakers stressed that QARC must be able to empower the parents to assess for themselves the right type and kind of schooling for their children.



SEF participates in Teachers Training at Plymouth State University

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Agahi provided Sindh Education Foundation with an excellent learning opportunity during the last quarter. Ms. Humaira Maheen, Ms. Shabnam Balaach, Mr. Mukhtiar Ali Chandio, Ms. Rakhsahnda Rais, Ms. Amira Zia and Mr. Ghulam Murtaza Nizamani represented SEF in the teachers training organized by the Plymouth State University, New Hampshire USA. The training was held from July 22-27, 2005. The goal of the program was to develop and deliver technical training in the areas of Mathematics and Science, with particular focus on secondary classroom teachers, administrators and their training needs.

Plymouth State University received a congressional grant for training Pakistani educators at the secondary school level and to increase mutual understanding between United States and other countries.

Students Participate In 'Young Film Makers' Project

Three students from the Adopt-A-School Program were selected for a project of British Council Karachi, titled 'Young Film Makers'. Ms. Maheen Zia, a prominent film maker and coordinator of the Kara Film Festival, is the facilitator for this project. The project is part of 'Young Ambassadors', a youth program designed to support interaction between the youth in Pakistan and UK to encourage cross-cultural dialogue (for further details log on to www.britishcouncil.org/pakistan).

The students who have been selected will be adopting a creative approach to the expression of identity by creating documentaries on their lives. Working in groups they will select seven minutes of footage which best represents their lives and themselves.

The resulting collection, 'Reality Reels', will be released in both Pakistan and UK, in schools, public places, and to a wide range of audience of people both young and old. The students will undergo a series of meetings and training sessions during this process.

Two Day Seminar on Strengthening the Adopt-A-School Program



The panel responding to the queries of the adopters

During the month of June this year the Sindh Education Foundation held a two-day seminar for the Adopt-A-School Program. The seminar was conducted to share views and perceptions regarding the program and possibilities of strengthening the program. The seminar provided a platform to adopters, SEF, government school representatives and government officials to collectively discuss program-related issues and reach a consensus regarding key policy recommendations.

A significant number of recommendations and ideas emerged from the range of stakeholders that were present during the seminar. During the preliminary round, held on June 14, 2005 adopters of all the Adopt-A-School Program schools were invited to reflect on the findings of the Situation Analysis conducted by SEF and to develop a concrete work plan for the course of activities of the program for the coming years.

The second day of the seminar focused on providing a platform to facilitate dialogue between the government and adopters to explore avenues for program strengthening. The seminar also provided an opportunity to reflect on existing roles and responsibilities of key program stakeholders and to collectively propose changes and recommendations regarding the program's future course of action. Prof. Anita Ghulam Ali, Managing Director, Sindh Education Foundation formally welcomed the participants and appreciated the contribution of the adopters. She assured the adopters of SEF's ongoing support and facilitation in all school improvement measures.

Mr. Hashim Leghari, the then Secretary of Education & Literacy Department, Mr. Mehboob Sheikh, Additional Secretary, Academics & Training and EDOs from Nawabshah, Hyderabad, Khairpur, Mirpurkhas and Thatta participated in the event. Mr. Hashim Leghari emphasized the need for providing access to education to out-of-school children. He reiterated the government's pledge to increase enrolment in Sindh and enumerated various schemes and projects in the pipeline for education sector reforms. Responding to various questions raised by the adopters he extended the Department of Education's commitment to support the program and facilitate the adopters as and when required.



From left to right: Ms. Baela Raza Jamil, Prof. Anita Ghulam Ali and Retired Gen. Moinuddin Haider

During the seminar Ms. Baela Raza Jamil, Chairperson of Idara-e-Taleem-o-Agahi highlighted certain issues central to the operations of the program. She outlined many ideas to strengthen the program, encourage philanthropists to help in the improvement of public sector education and create sustainability within existing schools.

The Adopt-A-School Program, initiated by the Sindh Education Foundation in 1997, is one of the pioneer programs that aim to partner the private and public sector in order to revive educational support for government schools.

Community Conferences Held for Community Supported Schools



Certificates being distributed amongst teachers at the CSS Community Conference

On June 21, June 23 and June 25, 2005, SEF and the Community Development Network (local umbrella organization of Village Education Committee) arranged an event titled 'Community Conferences' in prominent cities of Sindh, including, Larkana, Meher, Sehwan and Malir, Karachi respectively.

The main aim of the conference was the distribution of cheques amounting to Rs.25,000 amongst the Village Education Committees

(school management bodies of the Community Supported Schools - CSS) as an Institutional Package for each school. Appreciation Certificates and 'Best Teacher Awards' were given to school teachers. Many prominent personalities were invited to these events. The chief guests of the events included Mr. Khursheed Ahmad Junejo, District Nazim, Larakana, Mr. Rafique Ahmad Jatoy, ADEO, Mehar, Syed Gul Muhammad Shah, Taluka Nazim, Sehwan and Mr. Sajid Jokhio, MPA, Sindh, each of whom participated in the events held at Larkana, Meher, Sehwan and Malir respectively. The guests and community members appreciated the efforts of the Sindh Education Foundation to engage the grass roots section of the community in educational change processes and dialogue. Furthermore, children of the Community Supported Schools also actively participated by performing puppet shows, speeches and small theatrical feats such as tableaus.

SEF Provides 618 Schools with Institutional Learning Material

The learning environment of a school plays an important role in enhancing educational outcomes of a student. A safe, secure learning environment plays an integral role in creating a sense of interest and creativity amongst students. Well-equipped and well-lit schools create an inclination amongst children as well as their parents towards the school.

The Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) has always focused towards providing learning opportunities to children in various districts of Sindh and believes in establishing and maintaining quality education within its respective schools. During the past quarter SEF focused more on enhancing the learning environment for students by supplying institutional learning material, worth approximately Rs. 7.5 million, to its schools. After undertaking screening exercises of material available in the market, the Marketing, Advocacy & Publications Unit with support from the program teams purchased books, classroom material and teaching aids which are to be distributed to schools of the following programs:

- Community Supported Schools Program (100 schools)
- Fellowship Schools Program (118 schools)
- Home Schools Program (100 schools) and
- Support to Private Education Institutes Program (300 schools)

To use the institutional learning material more effectively, training workshops are been provided to all teachers. The training will revolve around encouraging critical thinking, the effective use of the material especially supplementary reading material and the method of developing low-cost teaching aids.

SEF Distributes Institutional Packages in Fellowship Schools



Mr. Mehboob Sheikh, Additional Secretary, Academics & Training distributing packages to FSP partner schools

The Fellowship Schools Program (FSP) organized three separate activities to deliver a package of Rs.30,000/- to the Fellowship Schools. The objective of providing financial support to these schools is to facilitate Parent Education Committees in procuring 'basic facilities' for schools. Prior to this activity, a comprehensive study was conducted and it was discovered that a number of Fellowship Schools needed repair work, furniture, books, and other forms of support.

The Fellowship Support Program team, in its evaluation of the schools, set forth a criterion for the distribution of an Institutional Package. The criterion contained various indicators of school success including: enrolment of students, Parent Education Committees performance (for three years), teachers' performance and quality of education in schools.

The Institutional packages were distributed on June 8, June 11, and June 14, 2005. Mr. Mohammad Usman Chacher, District Coordinating Officer Matiari District, Mr. Mehboob Sheikh, Additional Secretary, Academics & Training, and Mr. Sikandar Ali Shah, Executive District Officer (Education) Khairpur Mirs', attended these ceremonies at Bhatt Shah Rest House Hyderabad, Karachi and Khairpur Mirs' Clusters. A total amount of Rs.3 million was disbursed amongst 100 Fellowship Schools of the program.

The Fellowship Schools Program, supported by the Department of Education & Literacy, aims to provide and promote primary education for girls in remote areas of Sindh. The program is designed on self-reliance, and on promoting low-cost, high quality education within the target communities. Currently the program is operating in Karachi, Khairpur and Hyderabad districts.

Inauguration of Women's Literacy Center at Malkai Para



A new center at Malkai Para was inaugurated on the June 16, 2005 at the persistent requests of community women, eager to participate in the learning process. The enthusiasm of the community women can be judged from the overwhelming enrollment of 80 women. Dr. Khalil from Aga Khan University attended the inauguration ceremony along with Mr. Ali Mohammad Arzoo the councilor of the community, and the entire program team. Dr. Khalil expressed his appreciation of the work done by SEF in the field of education and was confident that the Center would prove to be extremely fruitful for the entire community.

SPEIP Extends Partnership to 50 New Schools



This quarter SPEIP welcomed 50 new schools in their program from district Karachi. 14 of these schools are working under the QuAID program of the Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan. 36 others are various private schools based in Karachi in Malir, Sachal Goth and Rashidbad towns. To initiate the intervention, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremonies with new partner schools were held in August 2005.

Women Learners Participate in Elections

The Women's Literacy and Empowerment Program (WLEP) team facilitated the establishment of two NGOs:

- Alliance for Goth Nari Sangat for Community Development in Sehwan
- Goth Nari Alliance for Community Development in Malir

Memorandums of Understanding (MoU's) were signed between SEF and the above mentioned NGO's in Sehwan and Malir. These two NGOs consisted of women from within the community that were selected through a rigorous election process. Women of each Center nominated their own candidates and voted for their final choice through a ballot. This procedure not only made the women aware of the mechanics of the election process but also taught them the importance of democracy and of their fundamental right to vote. It is expected that the formation of this alliance will empower women from respective villages by enabling them to voice their concerns through a proper channel providing them greater autonomy in making decisions for community development. It is also expected that this exercise will instill self-confidence in the women to participate in national elections. Moreover, the effort was able to bring together women belonging to different backgrounds as the candidates belonged to different villages. Therefore the activity has been able to generate a feeling of communal harmony and togetherness. The bodies are being encouraged to manage the alliance, with periodic guidance being provided from the program team.

Home Schools Program Partners with 68 New Schools

The Sindh Education Foundation partnered with other NGOs for the development of new schools under the umbrella of Home Schools Program. 68 new schools were welcomed to the Home School Program bringing the total number of schools to 100. The Home Schools Program is one such initiative which provides primary education to girls in areas where even boys' schools do not exist. These schools are established with collateral support from the community, which includes the infrastructure (building, furniture etc) as well as participation in the management process. Concurrently, SEF plays the role of a facilitator, providing financial and technical support for capacity building of the school.



In the last quarter an extensive situation analysis was conducted which identified potential villages where schools were required. Around 150 villages of district Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Badin, Tando Muhammad Khan, Sanghar, Nawabshah, Jamshoro, Dadu, Larkana, Shahdad Kot, Jacobabad and 3 towns of Karachi i.e. North Nazimabad, Kemari & Malir were monitored. It was then decided to open 68 new schools in potential villages. A ceremony was arranged at a local hotel in Hyderabad where letters were distributed amongst representatives of partner NGO's, to open schools in selected villages/areas. Cheques for the establishment of the schools, including the purchase of student benches, school sign board, blackboard etc. for every school were also distributed. Some of the NGO's that have partnered with the SEF for the development of the home schools include: Sachal Education Welfare Society, Community Development Foundation (CDF), Indus Development Association, Chandia Welfare Association, Women Literary Drive Organization and others.

SEF Participates in DAWN Lifestyle Exhibition



Honourable, Governor of Sindh, Mr. Ishratul Ibad reviewing SEF's stall

The DAWN Group of Newspapers recently conducted the much celebrated 'ALL ABOUT LIFESTYLES' exhibition from June 10-12, 2005. This was the sixth annual nation-wide ALL ABOUT LIFESTYLES exhibition. It had more than 200 exhibitors taking part in Karachi and also offered attractions such as a Books & Authors pavilion, an Images theatre with a Young World pavilion for children's activities featuring competitions and prizes and several other shows and stalls.

The exhibition provided SEF a great opportunity to be associated with an event that is considered to be the definitive showcase of all that is innovative, productive and imag-

inative. Specifically, SEF participated in the Books and Authors Pavilion of the exhibition. This pavilion was dedicated for Pakistani publishers and sellers of magazines and books such as Oxford University Press, Liberty Books etc. It is heartening to note the SEF stall, with its array of publications, was set along with leading publishers and booksellers of Pakistan and attracted many visitors.

Amongst the publications at the stall were *Nurture*, *Parwarish*, *EDucate!* and the SEF Collective. The stall also had for its visitors a collection of SEF's brochures, flyers, greeting cards and other promotion material for sale. In addition to the range of print material, an essential feature that added a lot of colour to the whole stall was the assortment of artwork created by children of various Community Supported Schools. These included various items such as hand-made pencils, friendship bands, bracelets made of beads and other wonderful works of art.

Not only did SEF's participation in the exhibition serve to increase sales of the children's hand-made items and the number of subscriptions for the aforementioned publications but it also served to inform on a mass level of the initiatives and activities taken forth by SEF. Visitors at the stall were informed of SEF's history, SEF's programs, its services to the educational system and to more than 700 beneficiaries schools in Sindh and the opportunities SEF creates for well-meaning individuals to contribute and play their part in reviving educational support in Sindh. The stall was also visited by Governor of Sindh, Hon. Mr. Ishratul Ibad. Mr. Ibad showed his significant appreciation of SEF's efforts of promoting educational efforts at the grassroots and policy-making levels.



Families making purchases at SEF's stall at the DAWN lifestyle exhibition

Understanding ECD through Practice

The Sindh Education Foundation conducted an exploratory study with Early Childhood Development teachers in Sindh. The study titled 'Understanding ECD through Practice' presents the findings of a research study which involved 26 teachers from 16 government schools in Sindh where the Releasing Confidence & Creativity (RCC) Programme is being implemented with support of the Aga Khan Foundation & USAID. The research study focused on exploring RCC teachers' (both government & community) understanding of ECD concepts, their perception of learning ECD concepts and their implementation in the classroom. Interested individuals can contact the Sindh Education Foundation to gain a copy of the report.

Trainings of SPEIP Partner Schools

Under the Public Sector Development Program, one of the pioneering initiatives taken by the Sindh Education Foundation is the Support to Private Education Institutes Program (SPEIP). SPEIP is striving to transform private schools into dynamic learning spaces for all and is being implemented in 300 private schools in nine districts of Sindh namely Thatta, Badin, Dadu, Hyderabad, Tando Allahyar, Tando Mohommad Khan, Khairpur and Karachi. SPEIP focuses on institutional development and quality advancement support to low-cost private and community based schools in areas of teacher's development, school management and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Since December 2004 SPEIP has been undertaking trainings for teachers and school management bodies of all partner schools in the area of quality advancement. Some of the trainings that were conducted in the last quarter are as follows:

In June 2005 training was conducted for 405 teachers from 135 partner schools. The training was divided into 2 broad themes entitled 'Teachers as Critical Thinkers' and 'Information and Communication Technology in Education'.

During the past quarter learning material was also distributed amongst SPEIP partner schools. The learning material comprised books, teaching aids, sporting equipment and teaching aids for *katchi* to grade 5 of all 300 schools. This resource material distribution was complemented with teacher training workshops for 900 teachers of the same schools. The training titled 'Diversifying Learning' revolved around the effective use of these learning materials for diversifying & improving learning within these schools.

In September 2005 training sessions were designed for members of School Management Committees (SMCs) of 300 partner schools. The trainings focused on the following topics: role of school management bodies, effective school culture, resource mobilization and school development planning. The trainings were attended by 900 SMC members.

Parenting, Care-giving Central Theme of Nurture Issue II



The second issue of one of SEF's most celebrated magazines is out on the stands. Rest assured all our devoted subscribers will be receiving their free copies of the latest issue of Nurture very soon. Gradually evolving into a more theme-oriented periodical, this issue embraces a wide range of topics under the banner of more wholesome parenting and meaningful care giving. A must-read for parents whose children are in their early years, the articles range from aiding children with their physical, social and cognitive development, supervising their TV viewing habits, nurturing confidence in growing children, creating a child-safe environment at home and much much more. The issue also provides an excellent read for teachers of early childhood classes providing interesting commentary on what a welcoming classroom environment entails and a number of locally available resources that are absolutely essential to form a cost-effective and meaningful classroom.

Free Subscription

If you are already a subscriber, remember to spread the word about Nurture, Pakistan's pioneer magazine on early childhood development that is available* absolutely free of cost.

If you still haven't subscribed call/email us now and book your free copy.

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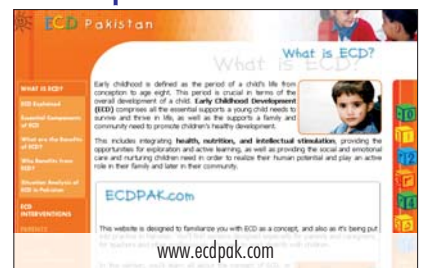
New Sections Added to SEF Website

A platform that is easily accessible to all those who wish to learn about the organization, the SEF website provides up-to-date and relevant information related to SEF which is vital for the government, NGOs, CBOs, other organizations and individuals interested and working in the field of educational support and development. The content of the SEF website has undergone numerous changes, with the introduction of two new sections; Units and Resources. With the help of pull down menus, details on the four units, Education Development and Research Cell, Marketing, Advocacy and Publications Unit, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit and Program Support and Development Unit, including unit objectives, core activities and projects have been described to provide a better understanding of SEF's operational framework. The resources page provides links to websites, books and articles related to the thematic framework of the Foundation.



Log on to Pakistan's First Website on Early Childhood Development

The Sindh Education Foundation is proud to announce that Pakistan's pioneer website on early childhood development is back online with much more to offer its viewers. The new website, almost complete after a major renewal, creates an interface between Pakistan based ECD initiatives and international programs. It serves as a forum for sharing information and exchange of ECD-related experiences for international NGOs, social development agencies and like-minded organization all over the world. This website is designed to familiarize you with ECD as a concept, and also as it's being put into practice in Pakistan. You'll find sections designed especially for parents and caregivers, for teachers and other professionals who have to work directly with children. Currently the website is under process but the following links and their sub-links are accessible to users.



- What is ECD
- Ask our ECD Expert
- ECD Interventions
- ECD Resources

SEF's Latest Brochure Now Available

To capture details of how SEF reaches out to provide educational services to communities a brochure was developed for the organization's stakeholders. The brochure aims to provide a snap shot of SEF's efforts in promoting education and literacy in the province of Sindh. The brochure provides sufficient and succinct information related to SEF's programs and units. A separate section has been designed for the Foundation's publications and resources. As the brochure will serve as a medium for inviting public and private sector agencies and individuals to collaborate with SEF in consolidating and expanding its initiatives, information on supporting the Foundation via donations and volunteer work has been incorporated in it as well.

