



ASA-Pakistan

AusAID Scholarships Alumni-Pakistan

Alumni Launch

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The AusAID Scholarships Alumni – Pakistan (ASA-Pakistan) was officially launched on 1st April 2011. The event was attended by 79 scholars from all over Pakistan. The Australian High Commissioner, Mr Timothy George graced the occasion with his presence. There were three speeches at the launch from; H.E. Timothy George, Fatima Moin, Team Leader Australian Development Scholarships and Aadil Mansoor, member ASA-Pakistan. The scholars enjoyed informal interaction and revisiting old times with fellow scholars. The launch received appreciation from all stakeholders.

The ASA-Pakistan is expected to play an integral role in the overall success of the ADS program. Its main objective is to provide a platform for AusAID scholars to interact, share experiences and facilitate each other to grow both professionally and socially. An online ASA-Pakistan Forum was launched on the ADS website in May 2011 to allow informal communication between alumni and scholars. Currently, there are 255 ASA-Pakistan members in Pakistan and abroad. With their contribution, ASA-Pakistan can become a strong, valuable and a vibrant network.

An interim Steering Committee is overseeing functions of the new association. Following the association launch, a committee meeting was held to decide the program for the upcoming elections which are due to take place in July 2011. This is when a formal ASA-Pakistan Executive Committee will be elected. Subsequently, an oath taking ceremony of the elected committee members will be organised by ADS in September 2011.



Human Resource Development Workshops 2011

The AusAID funded ADS Pakistan program aims at improving sustainable, pro-poor service delivery and governance in the priority geographic locations of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan in line with the country's development priorities. In pursuit towards development we have chalked out an overall Human Resource Development (HRD) strategy. One of the activities of this strategy is to conduct HRD workshops in the regions. To address the HRD needs the ADS team gave briefings in Quetta (government and private sector), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA (government and private sector). A two pronged approach was used



in these briefings firstly, Human Resource Development and secondly, information dissemination.

Overall, a total of 112 individuals in all three regions participated in these workshops. These included senior managers of civil society organisations (many of whom were themselves interested to apply) and, representatives of government; health, education, social welfare, agriculture, planning and development and other relevant departments. These 112 people are now in a position to act as ADS ambassadors in the target institutions, helping transfer information about ADS to a larger audience. It was due to these workshops that ADS has a larger pool of qualified candidates in 2011. The workshops have enabled ADS to gather useful feedback from stakeholders and select high quality candidates who can contribute towards development in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan.



'The Down Under'

by Mahjabeen Qazi

The very idea of studying and staying in a developed foreign country is unarguably an exciting one, but as one starts preparing to leave the comforts of one's own country into an unseen and unpredictable environment, it is quite possible that feelings of awe and apprehensions may creep in quite strongly. However, the Introductory Academic Program (IAP) offered by AusAID, which commences immediately as an AusAID Awardee arrives in Australia, really makes it





easier for the students to settle down and adjust to the new environment. This six week long program is comprehensive enough to familiarise and orient international students with the city, its norms and culture, and to the pedagogic methods adopted in various Australian Universities. Moreover, it provides an opportunity to all international students to get to know each other.

My IAP comprised of two parts; i) Orientation about the university and ii) about the city of Newcastle (locally known as Newy). The first part helped students settle into the campus life and understand the system of education in Australia. The second part of the orientation was even more exciting to most of the international students as it was about knowing and exploring the beautiful city of Newcastle. In this connection, the AusAID liaison office located within the university campus organised a couple of tours for the students within the city and one (memorable) trip to Sydney. My personal favourite was the boat cruising trip to Port Stephens, the account of which I am going to share as under.

On that lovely Sunday morning, we left Newcastle for a boat cruise in Port Stephens. We made it in good time to Port Stephen after completing a road journey of almost one hour. After almost half an hour in the deep sea of the Pacific Ocean, dolphins started to appear, diving in front of the boat. As we moved further into the sea, the number of dolphins increased. This was a first experience of this kind for most of us. We were told that many wild life documentaries about Dolphins developed by channels like National Geographic have been recorded and prepared at the same site. Each time the dolphins appeared out of water, all the cameras on board clicked almost incessantly to capture the golden moment. This was my first experience in deep sea and enjoying the dolphin sighting from so close.

Soon it became quite obvious to most of us that this was a life time opportunity; and we should enjoy and explore other tourist sites in Australia, especially those of



international fame. Accordingly, we tried to make the best of the time available and travelled as much as possible. The local tourist companies in Australia organise some really interesting and safe boat cruises that enable tourists to see and enjoy the ocean and its life. Of all the cruises that I undertook in Australia, the most memorable and the recommended one (called 'Edge' in Tasmania) is one where the Pacific and Indian oceans meet at the Tasman Sea in the South. During this cruise, you are most likely to see dolphins, sea lions, turtles, jelly fish, stinger fish and many other organisms of marine life.





ADS Graduate, UWA, 2006/2007

by Mohammad Jehangir

In 2006-07 I had received an opportunity to study in Australia under the ADS Scheme. Before availing ADS, I was working as a Hydrologist in a project called 'People and Resource Dynamics' in Hilkot watershed.

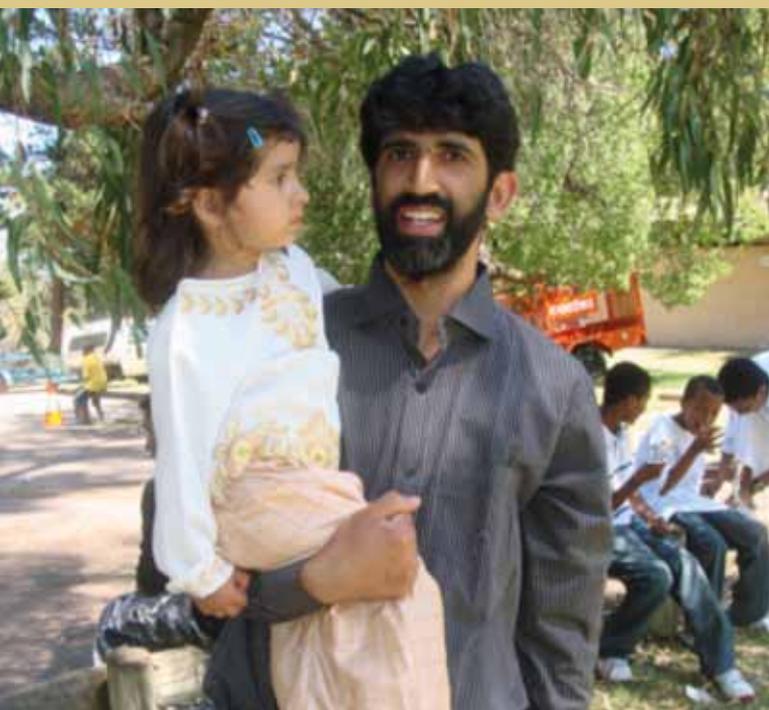
I went to Australia and joined University of Western Australia (UWA) in January 2006. I still remember that my first day in Australia was very depressing. It was a completely different environment and unfamiliar people were around me. I stayed in the college hostel on the first day and was feeling quite lonely. However, on the next day when I met with AusAID liaison officer and other ADS students, I started to feel more comfortable. We took classes in the Centre for English Language Teaching (CELT) in a friendly environment for the next five weeks and soon everything started to look normal and even better.

A month later, my family also joined me in Australia as we rented a unit in the University and started enjoying a smooth and settled life. My regular classes for MS course started in the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences along with visits to labs and tutorials. Initially, it was quite difficult to manage classes, regular assignments and domestic issues all at the same time but soon I was able to manage all the tasks properly. I received good grades in the exams and enjoyed the



holidays with my family. My family was having a very good time in Australia particularly my eldest daughter who was about 3-4 years of age at that time. Even now, she sometimes asks me, "Baba, when will we go back to Australia?" One of my daughters was born in Australia which was a new experience for me. In Pakistan we have a system of extended/combined family, where family women are supposed to manage all matters associated with child births. In Australia obviously we did not have such support, but thanks to a lot of facilities within the systemized health sector, the matters were managed easily.

We also enjoyed the climate of Western Australia. Unlike the harsh winters of my native town Abbottabad, it was mild and moderate throughout the year. After completing my studies I returned in December 2007 and after a break of one year I joined a project of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP-Pakistan) on Mass Awareness for Water Conservation and Development. I worked as Regional Manager-Water Resources and was based in Lahore. I also travelled throughout the province of Punjab to disseminate awareness about the importance of water conservation in agriculture, domestic and industrial sectors. The project continued for about three years and ended in December 2010 following which I joined the Department of Agriculture, Hazara University as a lecturer and to date, I have been conducting graduate level courses. I value very highly the knowledge and experience that I gained in Australia and firmly believe that it will always continue to be of great help to me in my professional life.





Masters and then Ph.D from Australia

by Owais Malick

I am currently studying a PhD from the University of Adelaide on an Endeavour Awards Scholarship. I have around seventeen years of industry experience supported by ten years of experience as a Management trainer/consultant with Pakistan Institute of Management (as General Manager). In addition, I have also worked for seven years as Mechanical Engineer with leading organisation like Descon, NESPAK and Enar Petro-tech services.

I was awarded an AusAID scholarship in 2007 for Masters in Applied Project Management and received the degree in December 2008. Living and studying in Adelaide was a once in a life time experience. It did not only give me great insight into my profession as a Project Management Trainer and Consultant but it was a fulfilling experience for my whole family. Life in Adelaide was such a mesmerizing experience that I decided to do my PhD in Australia and that too from a highly regarded University in the city of Adelaide, as it appears to be our second home. There is a lot to share about the quality of life in Adelaide but one thing that I would definitely like



to mention is that my wife was almost alone in Adelaide in 2007 and used to drive the car in a complete veil but was never harassed by anyone. The special thing about Adelaide is whatever happens people say "no worries" and by all means they really mean it. This attitude has engendered an almost stress free environment. Lastly, a few words about how my children feel about living in Adelaide. Most important fact for them is the school life which they thoroughly love as my four year daughter says "Baba, what a school, all the time I play and at the same time I learn". While in Adelaide we also visited Melbourne and Sydney, but Adelaide is wonderful.

Studying in Australia

by Iffat Jamil

It is often stated that exposure counts a lot in personal life and one's professional career and that foreign education really matters too. When I undertook my Masters in Development Studies at the University of Melbourne, it was indeed a dream come true. But, as I was grappling with the problem of settling in and orienting myself to the teaching and learning methodology employed by my University, I found myself engulfed with the assignments and reading material. Reading is part and parcel of University life but so much of reading is certainly a challenge for students coming from Pakistan.

My first semester was very tough as I read each article word by word and tried to make sense of it and then relating it to my assignments and class lectures.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ASA-Pakistan Executive Committee Elections in July 2011
- Oath Taking Ceremony of elected EC members in September 2011
- Alumni Participation in ADS 2012 intake pre-departure briefing in October 2011



Another challenge was to help my family (consisting of my spouse, two sons and a daughter) settle down in Australia. Time however, passed quickly and soon my first semester was over and in the meantime, I got accustomed to my studies and reorganised routine life.

The reading habit and reading skills inculcated in me during my studies in Australia benefited me a lot and enabled me to understand and assimilate the contemporary themes in my field of study and aided me to have a broad perspective on subjects I was studying. It is because of this that in my current job I have been in a position to build linkages among different policies internationally and nationally. Studying in Melbourne also sharpened my critical and analytical skills through different assignments, group work and presentations.

Alongside studies, I also participated in different events including fund raising for Burnet institute, and volunteer work with World Vision Australia and a local women group in a church for the stitching classes. I also participated in the Parent School Committee in the school where my sons were enrolled, which provided me an opportunity to understand, discuss and participate in different activities around school children. Our social network with expatriate Pakistanis also expanded while interacting in Parent School Committees and thus get-togethers with other Pakistani families was an on-going practice that never made us feel home sick. We still chat online and discuss topics of mutual interest.

Living in Australia has been a memorable experience for me and my family for which we are grateful to the Australian Government. It was at the same time a great learning experience of understanding



and interacting with people of different cultures and value systems. Australia has a multi-cultural society and there are other communities quite strongly represented in Australia like Indonesians and Vietnamese. We also developed quite good linkages with them. As Australia has a diverse society this setup was run by our Indonesian brethren. My kids used to attend weekly classes of reading Quran and other Islamic lessons.

Even before the end of my studies in Australia, it was truly gratifying to have received different job offers from various employers in Pakistan through internet channels. However, on my return to Pakistan, I joined a development organisation as a Program Unit Manager. I have since worked in the same organisation from 1999 to 2003 and I am grateful to them for trusting in my abilities. I am also indebted to AusAID for providing me a life- changing opportunity.





The AusAID Journey

by Nawaz Khan

It gives me a lot of pride to share with my fellow scholars the experiences I went through before and after becoming an AusAID Scholar in 2007. The objective here is not to indulge in “self-praise” but to highlight the value of an AusAID scholarship and the responsibility on Alumni in its wake.

My first degree was in the field of Agricultural Engineering and I graduated from University of Engineering & Technology Peshawar in 1993. After graduating, I joined the provincial government as Water Management Officer. One thing, I would like to share is that I loved my job and respected those for whom (farmers) I was there. I did so because I have read somewhere that one’s attitude at workplace reflects the level of professionalism.

During 1997-98, I started studying for the CSS exam. After reading a few books, I decided to read for improvement rather than authority. I read hundreds of books on history, political science, sociology, autobiographies and philosophy. Books and personalities which influenced me most included those written by Bertrand Russell (the famous English philosopher of the 20th century), Mahatma Gandhi (My Experiment with the Truth), Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Richard Nixon (Leaders) and Mirza Ghalib. This period of socialisation changed me considerably, but the biggest change in my career was yet to be unfolded when one day my nephew gave me a newspaper carrying an advertisement for the AusAID Scholarships; this was early in 2005.

I could not imagine at that point how the advertisement would change my life. Imagine this was a time when I had no email address and would use a computer only for word processing. Months later, I received an invitation from the Australian High Commission for a pre-departure meeting. At that moment, I told the then High Commissioner that my family and I are extremely thankful to the Australian citizens for their taxes to be spent on me and AusAID for selecting me - a man from a pure rural background - to go for higher education. At that time I did not know the significance of studying at the University of Melbourne.



I went to Melbourne alone and was joined by family two months later. In the beginning, I suffered a lot while searching for a house (this experience earned me the role of a mentor later on). The biggest challenge I faced was to catch the flow of lectures and assignments. I worked extremely hard and went to university even on Saturdays (70%) and Sundays (30%). I thought of myself as the weakest student at the university, but later realised I may be the second to last, as one of my closest friends, Mr Sushil from Bangladesh, used to ask me for help in assignments. My hard work enabled me to score above 75% (in aggregate) which gave me immense sense of satisfaction. I made good friends and relish upon the unforgettable moments I spent in Melbourne. I remember the long walk to Sydney road - the cheapest place in Melbourne to buy daily items and which I always prescribed to be the best place for shopping if you are a scholar. I learned how to wait for my turn in shops and offices, which I try here as well. I also played a key role in forming a Pakistani society (yahoo group) to share information. The group did well for some time by providing important and timely information, especially to new comers, but could not be sustained. I was also selected as a mentor twice to assist new comers which gave me an opportunity to make new friends. I completed the course in July 2007 and returned to Pakistan immediately.



After two months, I was selected as a Senior Research Associate (water management) in the Planning Commission Islamabad. Thanks to the AusAID Scholarship and degree from University of Melbourne which enabled me to advance quickly from a local field engineering position to the National Planning Institution. I would like the new scholars to focus their research project on issues relevant to their fields in Pakistan. I did so and was rewarded as I knew most of the things asked during my interview. My salary increased four times. I also brought my family from my village, including the children of my brother for education in Islamabad, credit of which goes to AusAID. More than anything else, I am confident that I am equipped to pursue further knowledge & skills in my field.

Lastly, this journey is not over, to me it is the beginning. The real test for an AusAID scholar starts afterwards. The success or failure of AusAID scholarship can be judged by the level of scholar's contribution in the development process for bringing change in the lives of people. I look forward to applying what I learnt

in Australia (and afterwards) for the development of Pakistan in particular. If I could contribute to this end in some tangible way, only then I would say that I have fully utilised the knowledge that I gained during my scholarship in Australia.

To end this story in compliments for Australia, I would like to share the comments of my six years old son, Behram Khan. During a recent world cup cricket match between Australia and Zimbabwe, he asked me as usual, "Who do you support?"

"Zimbabwe" I said.

"I will support Australia", said Behram. I asked, why?

He said, "If Pakistan is playing then I will support my own country otherwise I will support Australia because we lived there". These comments were strange for me because he was only two years old when we left Australia and has no recollection of anything there.

An Era of Educational Success

by Bushra Rahim

My educational experience in Australia was the building step towards pursuing a PhD in Educational Administration and Policy studies. The familiarity with the research based courses provided me a boost at take off stage despite the fact that I was late, many topics had already been covered and the course work was really very intense and challenging. Secondly, the schedule of classes and assignments in PhD were very tough but thanks to my educational experience in Australia, I had little problems in academic research and was able to finish my assignments on time and according to prescribed standards and received very good ranking in the first semester. I believe that my Master's degree from Australia was a launching pad of success for my professional and academic career, as it has opened many avenues for me. I attribute my success to AusAID and feel obliged and honoured to be an AusAID scholar.





An Australian Experience

by Mr Aamir Shouket

I belong to the Foreign Service of Pakistan (1994 Batch). At the time of award of scholarship, I was posted as Deputy Director in the Training Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Before that, I had served in the Pakistan Embassy Athens as Second Secretary for over three years. Although living overseas was not a new experience for me, I was still pleasantly surprised when I landed in Australia in 2004 for a one year masters. From the very moment I arrived in Australia I fell in love with it. I was not expecting Australia to be more developed than mainland Europe which I had extensively visited before visiting Australia. Nonetheless my expectations were proven wrong and even today while I am posted in Netherlands I continue to refer to the Australian experience whenever I have to prove a point with my Dutch interlocutors. Initially I went there alone but my family joined me after one semester. My two children attended school there and thoroughly enjoyed their stay in the beautiful country.

Academically I too benefited a lot, as I completed a Masters in International Affairs through the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra. Prior to that, I had no formal academic background in the field of international relations except the pre-service mandatory training provided by Foreign Service of Pakistan. At ANU, I was introduced to a new world of theory and practice at the well-known Headley Bull Center. It was there that I learned that Headley Bull was from my University and



from my department of GSIA (General Studies in International Affairs). I had one of the best teachers in the Asia Pacific Region. I would particularly like to mention that the Director of Studies, Dr. Greg Fry – a great personality and an excellent teacher – was always there to help me in whatever way possible.

As I love sports I was introduced to an interesting sport which is only found in Australia, called the AFL (Australian Football League). I started following AFL and eventually became a great fan of the “Sydney Swans”, which I continue to follow with great interest even today.

I would one day love to go back there; who knows may be as an Ambassador of Pakistan to Australia!

Primary School! I was admitted in grade 1 according to my age then. When I was new at the school I was pretty much ignored yet after spending a few weeks I gradually made some wonderful friends. The teacher I had was male; at first I was pretty disappointed at this because I had not studied from a male teacher before for in Pakistan it had always been a female teacher in our Montessori, however I soon became familiar and comfortable with this.

I have cherished memories of my school in Australia. My class and I went to the library each week; we had special library bags which we used for carrying borrowed books from the library. Our teacher Mr. Tony Boyce used to select a short book and read it to us. I also used to enjoy the sports and exercise periods. There were assemblies every Monday and each grade would

My School in Melbourne, Australia

by Hibra Shujat – daughter of Fizza Sabir (AusAID alumnus)

I was six years old when my mother was awarded an ADS in January 2006. We were all extremely happy for her on getting this opportunity. My father, my sister and I joined her a few months after she commenced her award in Australia.

After Easter holidays, I went to school, I found out that the generous Australian Government had given my mother permission to admit us in the school free of cost. It was a public school and its name was ‘Moreland



have to give a short presentation. I used to enjoy Grade 1 presentations a lot. Once we presented a poem, 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' in a new version with violin. Music was given great importance and our class teacher used to have a guitar and we used to sing songs with him. One more important thing about the weekly assemblies is that there were, "Pupil of The Week Awards" presented to kids for their outstanding behavior throughout the week. I used to get so excited whenever I received it. I have a collection of them with me and will keep them in my portfolio forever.

These were a few of the things available in our school: I learnt swimming, Maths, English, Arts and languages such as Arabic and Italian in very interesting ways. For English we took two books each for homework and for Maths we used to have practical assignments. As for swimming lessons, we used to go to a special training centre where we were supervised by professional trainers. I had very good teachers, for Italian I had Ms Bruna, and Ms Laila for Arabic. I liked both of them and will always remember them. My school was the most exciting place for me; I had great teachers who motivated all of us to take part in sports opportunities, competitions, funfairs, farm visits, and interesting Math activities. Parents also participated in a few school activities. I have a certificate from Mr Steve Bracks on completing my reading challenge as well.

While in school in Melbourne I made many friends from different countries such as China, India,



Bangladesh, Indonesia, Italy and of course Australia. To this day I am still in touch with my friends and teachers through email and Facebook.

My mother says that my personality has been greatly polished and my English accent also improved a great deal during my stay in Australia. Now I am in Grade 7 in Pakistan and currently study at the Fazaia Education System School. I am very thankful to the Australian Government for giving my mother such an opportunity and indirectly giving me an opportunity to experience something which I will remember for the rest of my life.





Editor's Note

by M. Tariq Jamal Khattak

It is an honour and privilege to be a part of ASA-Pakistan Newsletter's second edition. I note, with pleasure, that we have come a long way since we started, the interest and enthusiasm of Alumni members in developing their Newsletter has exceeded our expectations. This year ASA-P has taken another leap by launching its web forum which is available on Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) Pakistan's official website www.adspakistan.com.pk. I encourage each of you to register yourself and start benefiting from this unique form of networking and professional and academic assistance. Other exciting events planned by ASA-P will be shared with you in the coming months.

It goes without saying that ASA-P has flourished largely due to the personal interest of Honourable Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, H.E. Mr Timothy George. We are thankful to Mr George for his kind support and encouragement and we look forward to his continued support and guidance in future.

Lastly, I would encourage all Alumni members to actively participate in all the activities of ASA-Pakistan. Your write-ups for our Newsletter are highly valued not only by fellow alumni but also by potential candidates aspiring to study in Australia. Your ideas and suggestions for further improvement of this Newsletter are welcome.



Australian Government



Australia Awards

DEVELOPMENT AWARDS



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