



**CENTRE FOR
CONTINUING
EDUCATION**



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI PARTNERS WITH A PAKISTANI NGO TO TRANSFORM THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN

In line with the International Cooperation strategy of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the University of Helsinki has opened its doors to address the education emergency in Pakistan. Through a multi-year partnership with Durbeen, a Pakistan-based non-profit education company, the university will share its education resources to support the process of education reform in the public sector of the country.

A ceremony was organized in Karachi, Pakistan on Wednesday, March 6th, 2019 to announce a Public-Private Partnership between Sindh Education Department and Durbeen, a non-profit organization, to manage the Government Elementary College of Teacher Education, Hussainabad. The long-term goal of this partnership is to ensure that government schools across Sindh are staffed with competent teachers so that students from all backgrounds have an opportunity to learn and succeed. Durbeen also announced its partnership with the University of Helsinki, Finland to bring global best practices in teacher education to Govt Elementary College of Education, Hussainabad. Finland's education system is one of the best around the world and ranks highly in multiple international assessments.

The programme was attended by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Minister Education Syed Sardar Shah, Secretary Education Qazi Shahid Pervaiz, CEO Durbeen Salma A. Alam, Minna Saadé, International Business Development manager of University of Helsinki Centre for Continuing Education HY+, Finland, Shehzad Roy, President Zindagi Trust and Ali Tabba, the key donor of Durbeen, and others.

This initiative is a series of firsts. Not only will this initiative be a leading Finnish University's first education intervention in Pakistan, but also, never before has any government in Pakistan undertaken such a partnership with the private sector in a Higher Education Institution in Pakistan, and specifically in teacher education, with the aim to develop highly-skilled teachers to improve the public education system. At the event, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that the solution to all of Pakistan's problems lie in quality education for which we have to teach our teachers before teaching our children. Salma Alam, CEO Durbeen, remarked that unless the passionate and bright students of Pakistan start opting for teaching as a career, a major improvement in the public education system cannot be expected.

In Pakistan, the challenge in education is not just access but increasingly about the quality of education provided. According to the 2016 United Nations Global Education Monitoring Report,

Pakistan is more than 50 years behind in its school education targets. There are several elements that need to come together to ensure quality education, which begin with the central role of the teacher. This is considerably challenging in Pakistan given the low quality of teachers that are already in the system. Additionally, there are systemic barriers that undermine delivery of quality teacher education. Government teacher education institutions are deficient in infrastructure, knowledge and human resources to adequately implement quality teacher education.

With a long-term vision focused on education reform, the University of Helsinki will initiate its partnership with 'Durbeen' by revamping the teacher education curriculum and subsequently developing the capacity of the faculty of a state-owned teacher education college in Karachi, Pakistan. The graduates of this college will later be placed in public schools, trained and qualified to drastically raise the quality of education being offered to Pakistani students.

Education systems, such as Finland's, perform best when their teachers are respected, prepared, selected based on merit, and supported in their work. Durbeen, in partnership with the University of Helsinki, aims to achieve precisely this objective over the long run by linking teacher selection, preparation & placement with school reform in Pakistan.