

Mariam Ansari

History and Philosophy of Art Education

Summer session 2020

Madiha Leghari and Aatiqa Sheikh

27th August 2020

I believe that the education system should develop a sense of community among students to produce compassionate individuals that aim to make a difference in the world. To help students build an empowered relationship with their society, we should give them the opportunity to engage with the real world. This should be emphasized when students are acquiring higher education because this is the time when they have prior knowledge of their particular field, they are critically, rationally and effectively trying to find solutions to problems and eager to demonstrate their knowledge practically. This will not only help the students to identify the problems and opportunities that practically exist in their particular community but also make them socially conscious while helping others in society. The importance of social responsibility should be reiterated by the fact that only 15% of Pakistan's eligible population aged 18-24 graduate each year and the remaining 85% are deprived of higher education. So students should pay back their society by devising programs through which the literate youth can effectively impart knowledge in others and help Pakistan to rise as a whole. They can work towards the greater goal of growing as a nation.

I believe that the government can wisely utilize Pakistan's human capital to deal with its infinite problems. By creating a link between the problem and the solution makers, the

government can nurture a youth that helps the state. If students are given the power and means to solve the problems, not only it will encourage them to actively participate and consider their country's problems their own but they will be aware of their potential in bringing a difference. When thousands of students are coming up with creative and cost-effective solutions, educating the underprivileged and creating awareness then Pakistan as a whole will progress and state's expenses would cut down as they would have to hire and train fewer people to tackle with these issues. I have developed this point by interpreting the Leftist/Rightist ideology which was adopted after the first World War, in which the Rightist who were more conservative believed that their bad circumstances are a result of an outer source and the authorities should fix it. While Leftists believed in social equality and that blaming could not solve the issues and every individual had to work collectively for the society to progress. So I support the Leftist Ideology and believe that every drop of individual effort will contribute towards a better Pakistan.

On the other hand, John Dewey, a social reformer and an educationist, proposes the approach of learning by doing practically. His approach falls under Pragmatism which believes that reality must be experienced. This historical precedent helps to build on my point that students should lead community service projects on their own which will give them on-ground experience and prove as a source of the practical implementation of the 4C's: critical thinking in devising a practical solution for the problem, creativity in using the most cost-effective way, collaboration through teamwork, and communication by interacting with other students, authorities and community members. This opportunity will help the student's minds to think beyond their textbook knowledge and come up with innovative ways to solve real world problems with limited funds. They may find untapped potential areas on which they can work on

in the future. Through hands-on experience they will know how work is done in their particular field and this way they can understand their studies in a deeper, inquisitive manner, question it and come up with more practical solutions.

My proposal involves including a compulsory course of 'Community Service' in the curriculum of all universities, from art, medical, engineering, computer sciences to business, throughout Pakistan in all public and private universities. The students will be enrolling in this program during their summer break before their final year so they have ample knowledge and understanding of their subjects. The government will set up a new department that will be affiliated with HEC. It will identify the areas that need attention throughout Pakistan. Local offices will be responsible to work with the local district managers and find out the problems of that particular area. Local offices will report to the main office which will update the arising issues on an online portal which will link the students of that area with tasks they can perform. Students will be randomly grouped according to the project they have enrolled for, for example, medical students from public and private institutes may be grouped together to work on a Hepatitis awareness campaign. This will give students exposure by working with people from not only outside their own university but people of different backgrounds and this will teach them imperative skills like teamwork and communication that are necessary for the job market.

Students from different fields like doctors, engineers, and architects can also work in collaboration on a project like a rehabilitation one, as per the current scenario of Karachi where health and infrastructure both need attention. Students can also pitch in their own ideas regarding the areas they think improvement is needed. For example, the organization "*Rizq*" is an initiative

by a LUMS student that distributes food among the underprivileged by collecting leftover food from restaurants and other people who want to share food. They started with the concern of giving back to society as Huzaifa Ahmed's (CEO) mother first opened her house doors for the needy people to have free food every day and now they are serving thousands of people. Their belief is that "Lack of compassion is true poverty. Its abundance is Rizq". So ideas like these can come from young fresh minds and if the right support is offered by authorities then there will be no limit to better possibilities. The government department will approve these ideas and then provide limited funds and resources to fulfill that project. The students along with the department's guidance and expertise will carry out the implementation of the project. Once finished, they will bring in their research and documentation regarding its running, so it can continue working.

There can be a wide range of possibilities for students belonging to every field. The medical students can visit rural areas and carry out awareness campaigns about prevention from dengue, coronaviruses, and breast cancer which will help to save a large number of people from getting affected and reduce government's medical provision expenses. This is being carried out in some universities like "Akhtar Saeed Medical College" under the name of "Community Medicine" where the community is linked with the services of the upcoming doctors. Students along with ambulances and medical supplies visit villages to provide them with basic medical help. Some students take the task of carrying out research about why a particular disease, virus, and deformation is prevalent in that area. In my opinion, this field research should be submitted to government authorities so they can take further notice. Research based projects help medical students to develop expertise in conducting research that would prove helpful in their future

careers and act as a stepping stone for opening more possibilities and areas of interest for them. These researches once evaluated can be published in medical research magazines, which can connect the students to research institutes. This way students can be helpful to the community while paving their way for their future.

An international example of how young brains came up with a brilliant solution to a growing problem is of MIT's students Palavajhala and Kohn. With funding from MIT India they deeply studied about the information gaps existent between the employers and job opportunities in Delhi and the people migrating from the suburbs. They created an app called "*Bandhu*" so low-income workers can make confident migration decisions based on employment opportunities. In this way, the students applied their technical skills acquired at MIT in serving the vulnerable segments of society. These experiences can build confidence, compassion, and knowledge in students who can now get a better idea of the real-world issues and learn from on-ground realities which can aid in developing practical thesis ideas and better startups ideas.

Moreover during my time in NCA I witnessed how an NGO called the "Build Better Pakistan" formed a team from NCA's students who volunteered to build shelters in the severely earthquake affected areas in 2015. Some of the students belonged from that area and knew its dynamics. They took a truck of construction material along with them to Shimla Hills in Swat, made their own arrangements to stay and then the team worked to make shelter homes. They constructed 3 houses and distributed the resources they brought with them. These students learnt the qualities of communicating, empathizing, managing, and collaborating in ways that cannot be

taught. In this way, young minds were nurtured in a way that they could devise better solutions in the future.

My last example of the proposed work is that of communication designers that can support different social causes and build their social media presence, like the case of Julie Khan - a transgender that created waves throughout social media by talking about the dark truths of our society. A project can be conducted where they interview the unflagged heroes of our nation that have done tremendous work but are not acknowledged. Government can allocate them to help NGOs and social welfare startups by documenting their efforts to appeal for international fundings. They can also help small scale businesses and craftsmen in branding and marketing through social media to increase their market. Artists can use the tool of art to carry out art therapy in orphanages, old homes and hospitals. Workshops can be conducted in slums to inculcate some skills and create opportunities for them. An exhibition can be held at the end of this program, where the students will exhibit their ideas that they have practically implemented. Students can learn from each other while different companies can come review and buy their ideas, also creating future job opportunities for the students and minimizing the gap between the students and the job market. The best solution can be awarded which would increase student's motivation and encourage them to carry this in the future.

In conclusion, this course would be beneficial for students in increasing their exposure and experience while cultivating growing mindsets which would help in the progression of the nation as a whole. Many of these community service activities are practiced by individuals or by

some institutions, which are bringing up great benefits but imagine the change that will come if it is implemented nationwide.

Works Cited

Ahmed, Huzaifa. Share Rizq, <https://www.sharerizq.com/en/about-us-manifesto> Accessed 28 August 2020.

Haq, Riaz. "Pakistan's Rising College Enrollment and Graduation Rates". Riaz Haq, 23 July 2015, [http://www.riazhaq.com/2015/07/pakistans-rising-college-enrollment-and.html#:~:text=The%203%20million%20enrollment%20is,Vocational%20Training%20Authority%20\(TEVTA\)](http://www.riazhaq.com/2015/07/pakistans-rising-college-enrollment-and.html#:~:text=The%203%20million%20enrollment%20is,Vocational%20Training%20Authority%20(TEVTA).). Accessed 27 August 2020.

MIT MISTI, <https://misti.mit.edu/homepage> Accessed 29 August 2020.