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THE DEVELOPMENTALIST

A PROJECT OF LIFE SKILL BASED EDUCATION

Words of the patron

During the last quarter, with a team of young and energetic professionals, we delivered a strong performance in progressing youth development agenda in Pakistan, thanks to the focus, agility, and resilience of our colleagues at every level of the organization.

We have successfully been through the most challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Pakistan and globally. The innovative techniques and the modern ways of communication with new patterns of serving communities and bringing life back to the normal were achieved with excellence. We innovated quickly to meet the critical needs of our development industry and beneficiaries and created significant value of ACT to our stakeholders during and after the pandemic. All these achievements during a pandemic that tested all of us add one more feather in the cap.

During the year, we remained engaged in programs related to the incorporation of life skills-based education (LSBE) in a Single National Curriculum, created a cadre of young leaders around reproductive health and rights. Moreover, our competent team members have made it possible to widen the span of operations across the country, including four provinces, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

We have aimed to reach and provide benefits to all the members of society, including men, women and children. It has also been our prime area of focus to be inclusive in our functional approach to design programs for differently able people and other vulnerable segments of society. During the last quarter of year 2021, we have trained more than 200 public school teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and South Punjab. We have successfully conducted national LSBE guidelines dissemination workshop in Punjab and in previous months we disseminated this knowledge across other parts of the country. We have performed carpet coverage of all public schools in two districts of KP i.e Mardan and Nowshera, where we have successfully trained 3200 participants from community (community elders, parents, teachers, children) on LSBE in the light of national guidelines. This pilot project was conducted with the support and approval of provincial education department. We have developed LSBE supplementary material with the support of UNFPA and Federal ministry of Education for in and out of school children. We have shared this material with all the concerned stakeholders including provincial education departments, civil society, private school associations, donors etc.

We have demonstrated our ability to deliver on our short-term commitments while executing our long-term strategy as an independent, stable, and focused civil society organization. Let us all commit to working more hard to bring change in the lives of the masses to give them a better tomorrow. I am looking at the rising sun of the new year, intending to plan, organize, and implement our programs for the better tomorrow of our generations.



Editor's Note

In an ever-growing technology and data driven world, much of the focus in education has understandably taken a shift toward STEM-based (science, technology, engineering, and math) initiatives that will prepare students for the coursework and careers of the future. But life skills—how well equipped students are to make good decisions and solve problems in their academic and professional careers as well as their personal lives—should also play a critical role in a well-rounded and comprehensive education.

Think of life skills as the building blocks or framework that allow students to apply the knowledge they acquire in school to real world problems and situations. Also referred to as “soft skills” in a professional context, the ability to think abstractly and approach problems from multiple angles to find practical solutions, and the skill to communicate clearly and effectively are just as important as technical knowledge in a particular field or academic subject.

In a constantly changing environment, having life skills is an essential part of being able to meet the challenges of everyday life. The dramatic changes in global economies over the past five years have been matched with the transformation in technology and these are all impacting on education, the workplace, and our home life.”

Life skills provide children with important tools for development, such as independent thinking, how to socialize and make new friends, and how to take action in situations where their parents or teachers may not be around to help or intervene (dealing with a bully or personal insecurities and fears, for example.) Unlike motor skills and basic intelligence, executive function and decision-making skills are not innate but learned.

Writing this note for “The Developmentalist” having special focus on LSBE, I am thankful to all of those who shared their thoughts about LSBE and appreciated the project efforts of ACT International in this regard. We pledge our efforts to continue the same efforts next year to orient more people about LSBE with an aim to bring change for the better tomorrow of Pakistan.



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The Developmentalist

Life Skills Based Education

Prime Minister's Vision on Education System

"One system of education for all, in terms of curriculum, medium of instruction and a common platform of assessment."

In keeping with the vision of Honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Imran Khan, and under the guidance of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the National Curriculum Council (NCC) with the support of ACT and UNFPA is striving to develop and mainstream the Single National Curriculum (SNC) with the consensus of all provincial Education Ministries as well as federating units of Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. This year NCC has succeeded in developing SNC for Grades I-V with the inputs of provincial educationists, policy makers, academia, and civil society alike and progressively working towards development of curriculum for grade VI-XII. The main ingredient of SNC is LSBE and ministry has developed and approved national LSBE guidelines in this regard, along with LSBE teacher training manuals and so on.

Today's adolescents and youth are witnessing rapidly changing social, moral, ethical, and religious values around them, locally as well as internationally. The impact of Information Communication and Technology (ICT), small family norms, nuclear family system, exploitation & abuse, and cognitive-driven curriculum increase adolescents' stress, which is reflected by rising suicide rates, restlessness, and growing crime among young persons. They are perplexed with the emerging developments, daily life challenges, and the system which fails to understand their feelings. Academic, family, social, and peer pressure are imposed upon them, leading an unwieldy life. Therefore, there is an urgent need to provide today's adolescents and youth with a new set of ways and skills to deal with the demands of life.

Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) is a channel focusing on providing knowledge and information, skill-building, improving attitudes of the young people, and empowering them to adopt safe health-seeking behaviors and protect themselves from abuse, exploitation, drugs, and disease. In the last couple of years, the policy environment has changed because of ground realities and emerging challenges for youth, both in and out of school. Accordingly, LSBE has been included in explicit National Policies such as Youth Policy, National Education Policy, and Population Policy. Promoting Life Skill Based Education in Pakistan through Single National Curriculum is being renounced by UNFPA and ACT

ACT's LSBE program mainly focuses on improving young people's physical and mental health to build them into better and responsible individuals by providing insight into and exposure to 5 major components of LSBE aligned with WHO Guidelines. These key areas are;

Self-Awareness and Empathy

1

Decision making and Problem Solving

2

Creative and Critical Thinking

3

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

4

Coping with Emotions and Stress

5

The execution of LSBE is manifested in personal development, social development, intellectual development, and moral development. Aiming Change for Tomorrow (ACT), with the technical and financial support of UNFPA, has worked rigorously on the LSBE concept, its incorporation in curriculum & textbooks, and the establishment of the task force as a result of the early consultative workshop. Later on, we held a National Review Workshop on the LSBE curriculum to better understand the importance of incorporating LSBE into the mainstream curriculum and provide concrete recommendations based on the review process. Furthermore, National Dissemination Guidelines for LSBE were developed, followed by preparing training manuals for Teachers, Children, Parents, and Community. To disseminate the LSBE guidelines, workshops were held parallel to teachers' trainings across the country, including Gilgit Baltistan & AJK, and to date, 240 teachers have been trained. ACT International has also conducted a Pilot rollout of LSBE for Teachers, Children, Parents, and Community to orient 3200 people, starting from two districts of KPK Nowshera & Mardan, and so far, has achieved the landmark of 3200 people as per the criteria as mentioned earlier.



Reproductive Health and Rights:

Under the umbrella of life skills, one of the main life skill for adolescence is the skill of managing their reproductive health which directly impacts on population growth and associated issues. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) has 30 articles which also includes Reproductive Rights including matters related to bodies, fertility and reproduction. Reproductive Rights were first articulated in 1994 at the International Conference on Productive Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt and defined as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being.'

In Pakistan, we are now 5 folds of population since 1947 and population is still increasing 2.1% each year. Pakistan is having; high fertility rate in the region with an average of 3.6 births per women; highly gender inequality; domestic violence; sexual violence and harmful practices. Young people clearly lacks resources to access information and skills that will promote healthy choices and behaviors in life. Keeping in mind the above scenario, Aiming Change for Tomorrow (ACT) with support of UNFPA initiated the project to create awareness among youth and trained a cadre of activists across Pakistan. TOT and cascade model trainings were conducted for young leaders.

For this purpose, an RHR handbook as a reference document was developed, translated into Urdu. In a series of cascade training total of 63 participants attended the training, including 33 from KP and 30 from Islamabad. Going with our inclusive approach; Female, male & transgender were the participants having the ratio of female, male, and transgender as 27:35:1 accordingly. It was also kept in consideration to include people from different caste, creed and religions so there were participants from religious minorities, including Christians and Hindus. Many of the participants worked for some organizations as head of youth organizations or deputy team lead, but senior fellows were there during the cascade. A specific training for women was also conducted which was cascade training III, making the training event more gender-sensitive. The purpose of this whole practice was to create awareness on sexual reproductive health and rights, builds capacities of the youth-led organizations, and enables youth on the community level to make informed decisions regarding their reproductive health and life.

The Developmentalist

A PROJECT OF LIFE SKILL BASED EDUCATION

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We would like to present our gratitude and thanks to all Contributors for their views and opinions for this issue of the "The Developmentalist"

Aiming Change for Tomorrow (ACT) is a registered not-for-profit rights based national organization focusing on women, youth, children and marginalized segments of the society.

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MESSAGES

MR. EHTESHAM ANWAR – SECRETARY EDUCATION - SOUTH PUNJAB

Currently, 64 percent of the nation is younger than 30 and 29 percent of Pakistanis are between 15 and 29 years of age. Focusing on youth development, one of the essential ingredient of the personality development through education is Life Skills Based Education (LSBE). These skills are usually associated with managing and living a better quality of life and are equally important for in and out of school children, parents and teachers and community at large. Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) helps students build confidence in both communication and collaborative skills, provides them with tools necessary for development, finds new ways of thinking and problem solving, and provides methods for socializing, making new friends, and recognizing the impact of their actions and behaviors. Besides, LSBE are the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Keeping in view the local demographics of the South Punjab region, where a large portion of the population resides in the peripheries, the LSBE is an opportunity in strengthening the survival skills and devolution at the ground level. I hope that during year 2022 we work together with Aiming Change for Tomorrow to dig out the reasons of out of school children and will focus on neglected youth including transgender and PWDs.



MR. SOHAIL BIN AZIZ – AEO, NATIONAL CURRICULUM COUNCIL – MOFE&PT

Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision of evolving new education system was to create "One system of Education for all" in terms of curriculum, text books, teachers training and a common platform of assessment, so that all children have a fair and equal opportunity to receive quality education. As a step forward, National Curriculum Council developed "Single National Curriculum (SNC)" as an initiative in that direction. The Federal Ministry of Education is dedicated to reaching the goal through communicating value-based quality education to our young generations. Life Skill Based Education (LSBE) remained one of the main ingredient of SNC for grade Pre I-V and provided a framework for the educational institutions to teach our generation about problem-solving, decision making, situation handling, and most importantly to identify a potential threat of child abuse. Considering the importance of LSBE as a top-notch, we have incorporated the same into the curriculum from 1st to 5th grade and are expecting to go with it vertically soon. The efforts of UNFPA and Aiming Change for Tomorrow (ACT) are highly appreciable in this regard who developed National LSBE guidelines, Teacher training modules, and supplementary material to create awareness among stakeholders.



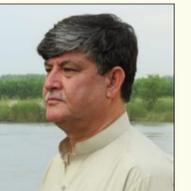
MS. SABRINA KHAN – PROGRAMME ANALYST, YOUTH RHR - UNFPA

Working closely with federal and provincial ministry, education department, and civil society organizations, UNFPA advocates for integration of age appropriate and gender sensitive LSBE content in national/provincial curricula for both in and out of school adolescents and youth. UNFPA has been actively involved in policy advocacy and community outreach initiatives, to equip young people with necessary life skills to enable them to make right choices for them selves and their families. In collaboration with the Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Program, a successful digital campaign on LSBE was recently rolled out (#hifazat), which reached out to 650,000 young people, creating awareness regarding key messages on LSBE including; gender based violence, cyber bullying, peer pressure etc. Building on our current partnerships and collaboration, UNFPA will continue to provide support to the MoE and provincial education departments, facilitating them to deliver necessary life skills based education to young people for a better and bright future.



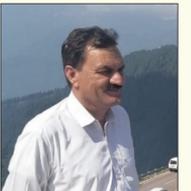
MR. GOHAR ALI KHAN – DIRECTOR, (DCTE) - KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

Education is the most significant area which needs to be strengthened to achieve holistic national development and unity. It can facilitate cultural and societal transformation toward sustainable development. It helps develop generic competencies, skills, attitudes, interdisciplinary understanding of knowledge, and application for a sustainable future. The Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education (DCTE) is devoted to achieve the goal of single national curriculum by adopting essential life skills and their transformation to out of school children as well. We understand the importance of LSBE in education, its potential to enhance the capabilities of young adults in making proactive decisions, reducing ecologically damaging behaviors, and improving their quality of life through sustainable living. LSBE is a quality standard developed through a highly participatory interprovincial process and setting learning outcomes and projecting standards for learners, teachers, curriculum, textbooks, assessment and the school environment. Besides, life skills have been identified as psycho-social abilities, encompassing a broad range of personal, interpersonal, psychological, social, and cognitive skills, which enable students to know, understand and translate the knowledge; take right choices and decisions, interact appropriately, manage their emotional well-being, and lead a harmonious and sustainable life. The efforts of Aiming Change for Tomorrow (ACT) in collaboration with UNFPA in organizing teacher trainings on LSBE at the most neglected parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remained one of the best activities during year 2021 and I look forwards to a positive impact on our youth in future.



MR. RAJA NASEER – DIRECTOR EDUCATION - ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION AJ&K

Youth is considered as an asset of socio-economic development and prosperity, if equipped with education and proper guidance/counselling. The Education department Azad Jammu & Kashmir is committed to achieve this goal through communicating value-based quality education in our young generation. We are committed to offering access to quality education at all levels to ensure that people are highly educated and competent to find employment and become responsible citizen. We believe in equipping the individuals specially our youth with the skills to understand, be aware of and translate knowledge into practical actions, strengthening psycho-social abilities to understand the world, and develop autonomy & judgment will change the future of our country. The step forward in this regard is to educate and create awareness about Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) among Children, Teachers, Parents and Community. The efforts put forth by Aiming Change for Tomorrow (ACT) are appreciated and I hope this will be fruitful for all educational intuitions, teachers, students, and parents.



MR. SAJJAD KHAN – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR – DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, GILGIT BALTISTAN

Life skills are psychological competencies and personal skills that help people to make careful decisions, communicate effectively with others, develop coping skills with surrounding circumstances, and manage oneself that sets foundations of a progressive society. Life skills are also the capabilities that enable individuals to take adaptive and positive behavior that makes them able to deal with the events and challenges of everyday life and participate in the modern world full of new challenges. This is done by promoting positive personal behaviors, social adaptation, citizenship, and positive attitudes that only life skills education can provide. The importance of having Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) in adolescent life lies in their ability to adapt to all circumstances and succeed in the renaissance and prosperity of society. It is an excellent opportunity for our growing generation to learn life skills-based education being provided via training and curriculum to make responsible decisions for their well-being. To provide quality education to the growing youth of Gilgit-Baltistan, the education department of GB is committed to strengthen Elementary & Secondary education in line with LSBE. In addition, life skills-based education can play a pivotal role in improving the social-economic development of Gilgit Baltistan.



Accomplishment



DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP ON LSBE - AJK



TEACHER TRAINING ON LSBE - PUNJAB(MULTAN)



DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP ON LSBE - KPK



NATIONAL REVIEW WORKSHOP ON LSBE FOR GRADE VI TO VIII



DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP ON LSBE - PUNJAB (LAHORE)



DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP ON LSBE SINDH



TEACHER TRAINING ON LSBE - CHITRAL



DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP ON LSBE - GILGIT BALTISTAN



DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP ON LSBE - BLOUCHISTAN

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LSBE Activities

The government of Pakistan has signed relevant international treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of Children, which focuses on LSBE for school children and adolescents. Accordingly, the LSBE was officially made part of some National Policies such as Pakistan's Youth Policy and National Education Policy. To further strengthen the government of Pakistan's relevant institutions and build the capacity of policymakers on the inclusion of LSBE in Single National Curriculum, UNFPA and ACT International partnered for joint interventions. Accordingly, during the year 2020, the UNFPA, in partnership with ACT & National Curriculum Council (NCC), initiated the program interventions.

A multipronged program was initiated by UNFPA and ACT International to engage the National Curriculum Council (NCC) and Federal Ministry of Education for inclusion of the Life Skills Based Education (LSBE) in Single National Curriculum. The program involved capacity-building support to NCC and National & Provincial Educationists and policymakers of provincial Education Departments on the (LSBE) LSBE, its importance, and inclusion in the mainstream Education System through NCC. The accomplishments made so far are;

Established and notified National Task Force for the inclusion of LSBE in SNC

Teachers were trained from ICT, AJK, and GB through a series of training events for teaching LSBE in schools in keeping with the LSBE-aligned SNC.

Developed National Guidelines on LSBE;

LSBE Dissemination Workshops

Developed Training Manual for Teachers on LSBE;

Pilot Rollout of LSBE guidelines

Development of supplementary material on LSBE

LSBE National Guidelines

In the context of untiring efforts carried out during the year 2020, where both UNFPA and ACT were able to access & influence the national level policymakers of federal & provincial governments for LSBE inclusion in the SNC, there is a dire need to integrate and build on this spadework to ensure that LSBE is incorporated in the SNC in letter and spirit, particularly to out of school youth. In this vein, the ACT proposes interventions to be carried out in 2021 in these areas, i.e., LSBE, by engaging all concerned stakeholders.

After detailed discussions, it was unanimously agreed to focus the six critical areas of national guidelines such as; guidelines for curriculum, guidelines for textbooks, guidelines for teachers, guidelines for assessment, guidelines for parents and community network, and guidelines for inclusive education.



LSBE Dissemination Workshop:

To spread awareness about LSBE, UNFPA and ACT International decided to conduct the dissemination workshops in the selected districts across Pakistan including AJK and Gilgit Baltistan.

The major components were based on the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for life skills education. They included self-awareness and empathy, decision-making and problem-solving, creative and critical thinking, communication and interpersonal skills, and coping with emotions and stress.



Development of Supplementary Material on LSBE

With the support and approval of National Curriculum Council – Ministry of Federal education and professional trainings, ACT developed, designed and printed supplementary material for in and out of school children. The book pack contains story book on LSBE for children in urdu and English. The pack also includes "guidelines for parents" to equip them with the requirements of child socialization in 21st century. The book pack is also reviewed and approved by directorate of curriculum and teacher education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Training Module for Teachers:

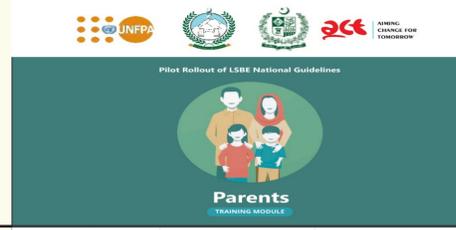
ACT, in collaboration with National Curriculum Council (NCC), Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training Government of Pakistan, issued a teacher's training manual on LSBE. The manual adopts an inclusive approach for the capacity building of teachers who teach students as an integrated subject. The training manual is developed, keeping Pakistan's educational demographics and socio-economic realities into the masses. Moreover, the manual is organized into four main sections: the aim of the intervention and learning outcomes of the teachers concerning LSBE. Further, it provides an overview of the structure of the training. It also covers brief session plans and requirements. Lastly, it includes an annexure containing handouts (reading material, presentation, worksheets, and relevant instructional resources).



Training module for Parents:

The module discusses differences in parenting practices can have profound and lasting effects on all aspects of development – cognitive, physical, social and emotional. It would be safe to conclude that while poor parenting practices can lead to unstable adolescents who are experiencing multiple – physical, emotional, social – problems, the good parenting on the other hand can lead to well-adjusted, cultured, stable and successful adolescents.

Besides parents, the entire family too has an essential role in the healthy development of a child. Thus, the module aims at building knowledge, skills and attitude of parents or guardians and other family members.



Pilot Rollout:

After developing guidelines and training modules for Children, Teachers, Parents and Community, the content was pilot tested in the twodistricts of KPK i.e Nowshhehra and Mardan. In close coordination with education department, the activity was performed by having 130 sessions to enlighten 3254 participants in total comprised of Children, Teachers, Parents & Parents having an inclusive approach for male, female, transgender, people with disabilities and children out of school. Further details are mentioned in the later parts mentioned below.



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LSBE ROLLOUT FOR CHILDREN

The prime focus of imparting LSBE was to orient the Children of age in between 9-10 years and enrolled in 4th and 5th grade so the module was prepared to orient them about Life Skills having following objectives at the backend; Enhance knowledge and skills, and demonstrate best practices of LSBE at peer and family level; Improve cognitive & communication skills, and attitude to mitigate the potential risk of fears amongst peers, parents, teachers and community; Increase motivation and positive behavioral change level during the pilot-rollout.

Trainers focused on important LSBE components i.e; creative thinking, decision making, communication skills, problem solving, and coping with different pressures.

Sessions were activity based and had inclusive approach to facilitate children with both genders and PWDs.

A total of 32 sessions were conducted to impart LSBE to 820 Children.



LSBE ROLLOUT FOR PARENTS & COMMUNITY

The parents, family, peers, and community play an instrumental role in children's physical and emotional development. A parent is their child's first teacher and should remain their best teacher throughout life.

So it was important to include them to teach about LSBE so during the pilot roll-out, 24 sessions each were conducted for Parents and Community and the number of participants was 600 each respectively.

In the roll-out sessions, Parents and Community were educated about; their role in child development, knowledge & importance of LSBE and Furthermore, the sessions were activity based and handouts of the content was also provided to the participants.

Parents specifically were taught about how; they are role model for their kids, to prepare kids for future challenges, to provide safe and conducive learning environment to children, to encourage social interactions, and It was also focused to teach Parents to how to monitor the social media and internet activities of Children and to protect them potential harm. how to enhance these skills. to avoid punishment.

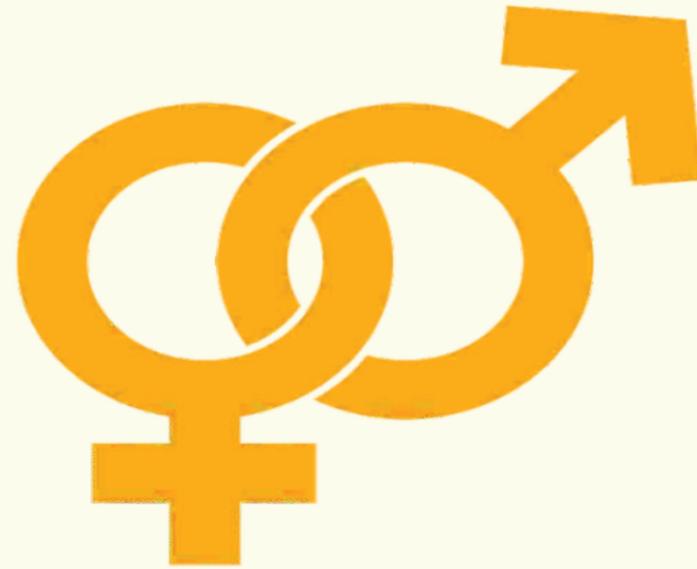


LSBE ROLLOUT FOR TEACHERS

Teachers are the most important stakeholder among the others and have a critical role in child education and development so during the roll-out, the number was kept greater i.e; 800 to be oriented about LSBE. During the session, Teachers were oriented about current situation of education sector in Pakistan, difference between child-centered & teacher-centered teaching method, and characteristics of effective teachers including positive attitude, high expectations from students, creative thinking and helping students to resolve the problems.

The sessions were activity based parallel to the lectures provided by the trainers. The relation of LSBE with SNC and its incorporation in the curriculum was also oriented to the participants.

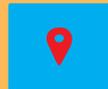




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