

Educating Imagination: Brief report about the first workshop
28 – 31 March, 2018

Partner: Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA), Lahore

The workshop was the first part of a nine-month programme aimed at working with teachers to develop their capacities to nurture their students' imagination in order to develop what we have called the 3Cs – Care, Criticality and Creativity.

Education is a forward looking activity, by definition. Hence, we need to think about the kind of future young people will grow into and help them prepare for it. The future, as always, holds immense possibilities and challenges to do with technological revolution, growing interactions among people, and environmental changes. These will have far reaching impact. How young people are able to respond will depend, partly, on the type of education they receive.

After much reflection, reading and consultation we believe that an essential part of education has to be the nurturing of imagination. Human imagination is central to our ability to empathies, to critique and to be creative. Yet, this does not receive the emphasise it deserves.

The Educating Imagination programme is designed to address this need.

We have designed a programme that combines theory and practice, enabling teachers to integrate their learning into classroom teaching. Workshops provide the theoretical grounding and fieldwork provides the opportunity to put the learning into the classroom context.

The teaching team consisted of experienced school and university teachers, with knowledge of both the UK and Pakistani context. The participants, 13 in number, were from five low cost private schools. The workshop was conducted in English and Urdu to ensure full participation.

We have included monitoring and evaluation as an integral part of the project. Hence, we captured teachers' views on key concepts. This was followed by observations in the classrooms and the capturing of students' perspectives. The process will be repeated at the end of the programme.

Our initial understanding is that teachers greatly appreciated the learning and were fully on-board with the proposal to make nurturing imagination central to their teaching approach. This was evident from their enthusiastic participation and engagement. Post-workshop observations in the classrooms indicate that teachers are trying to incorporate the learning into their teaching. Finally, in a meeting with the teachers, there was a general consensus that they are finding the application of learning very fruitful. Among the concrete changes noted by the teachers included – greater student participation, particularly by those who were known to be quieter students, freer articulation of thoughts and ideas and more dedication to learning.

In the next workshop, we will be observing teachers in the classroom, giving feedback and strengthening areas of improvement. We will also be conducting sessions to extend the learning and introduce new ideas for incorporation in teaching.