Country: Pakistan

VOPE name: Pakistan Evaluation Network (PEN)

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Title: Network for Change

Background

The idea to form the ***Pakistan Evaluation Network*** was born both out of necessity and professional sensibility. The main trigger was the indifference of authorities to deploy aid and technical assistance received from around the world that consisted of tax payers' money in an efficient and effective manner for bringing on change in the lives of people. PEN started as a colleagues' forum for dialogue on development issues and to share disappointments on not having any impact of continued efforts to plan and implement programme after programme for alleviating poverty, for providing primary education to girls, protecting children and women from violence and for getting the youth into productive and gainful job market. That scenario still exists with some variations. However, immediate encouragement came from my (Khadija Khan's) participation in IPDET[1] in 2004. On my return from IPDET, I invited my colleagues working with various UN and International Agencies, government departments and NGOs, and shared with them some of the newly learnt concepts and techniques for evaluating the impact of development aid. We came to the conclusion that a more formal platform was needed to intervene in the situation in Pakistan. Hence the establishment of PEN. The mandate we chose consisted of three main streams of work across development themes: knowledge sharing, capacity building and networking.

PEN envisioned using the core skills and knowledge of the people working in the development arena with and/or in national and international organizations, with some independent resources and influence to act as catalysts for change. Key thematic areas initially mandated were:

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[1] International Programme for Development Evaluator Training, WB-Carlton University joint programme held at Carlton University, Ottawa, Canada since 2000

- Good Governance
- Democracy and Social Justice
- Human Development
- Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance

There were initially seven founding board members, all of whom were working in professional fields in prestigious organizations. Most of founding members were engaged in monitoring and evaluation of development projects as part of their employer organizations. This gave us a strong basis for creating a working environment to implement PEN's mandate.

Over the last 8 years, PEN has grown into a network constantly sought after by serious minded professionals who are not seeking self-promotion, but working quietly behind the scene.

PEN has established a general body and an executive body (board) consisting of seven founder members and three co-opted members from diverse professional backgrounds. The number of members is 58 at present, out of which 5 are corporate members. (Recently enquiries from two prospective members have been received who will soon be joining the forum.) The board members are elected in a virtual general conference every 5 year; hence the current board is the second, formed in 2009. There is a board meeting every year to go over the performance of the past year and to plan for the next year. (This coincides with Khadija Khan's visit to Pakistan as the sitting President of PEN due to work responsibilities aborad).

Membership profile is given below.

- At present, we have 53 individuals and 5 organizations as Members of PEN. They are dispersed geographically and sector-wise.
- There are 34 male and 19 female members.
- Minimum Level of Education is B.A (2) and maximum Ph. D (2). Predominantly M.A., M.Sc., CA and ACCA
- We are also starting the process to register PEN as a non-profit company under relevant laws
- In order to encourage membership, we are carrying out a campaign to offer membership on gratis basis before formal registration.
- 2013 is the next election year as PEN will complete its four year run on current Board. The list of members is undergoing revision at the moment.

Strategy and implementation

Below are the situation analysis and the role of PEN, as envisioned by its current Board.

Pakistan is a developing country and as such benefits from international support to overcome a range of issues related to poverty, economic and social disparity, security and humanitarian crisis management.

Of the $4 billion in development assistance recorded by the State Bank of Pakistan in 2009, $2.6 billion came from multilateral organizations and development banks. Several non-OECD countries, most significantly China and Saudi Arabia, now give significant amounts of aid. The United States is the largest source of bilateral aid to Pakistan. For FY2010, the United States has budgeted approximately $1.2 billion in economic assistance to Pakistan, with another $300 million pending through the President's supplemental request. In the next few years, the United States expects to spend more than $1.5 billion a year, as authorized by the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009.[2]

Despite the large and growing inflow of foreign assistance, the economic indicators have not shown much progress. Since 1985 till 2000, the GDP per capita almost remained static around US$500. One can draw it on the graph as a horizontal straight line. Compared with the GDP per capita in the Middle East $2,670 and the World $5,632.[3] The Human Development Index shows Pakistan to rank 145 among the world community. Both education and health, despite being claimed as priority areas, receive low % of GNP i.e. 1.8% and 0.2% respectively[4].

On the qualitative side, the living conditions do not seem to improve. The latest Economic Survey 2011-2012 depicts the situation as follows:

> "The floods of 2010 and heavy rains of 2011significantly hurt the efforts to improve standard of living of the people. The floods and rains affected approximately 20 million people directly and a much larger proportion indirectly; the loss to infrastructure and livelihood sources further impacted the people of these areas."

Considering the above situation, it is reasonable to ask if the development assistance described above is really making a difference in the life of ordinary people in Pakistan. The answer is not readily available. In order to understand the context and build its mandate for the next five years, PEN has conducted the following analysis.

- PEST analysis at country level
- SWOT analysis at organizational level

PEST Analysis
Political
- Ineffective and instable political leadership
- Alienation from the development process due to constant security problems
- Distorted democratic process; democracy turning into monarchy as each generation of politicians passes over power to its new generation
- Impact of education is not visible.
- Development policies are few and sporadic

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[2] Centre for Global Development
[3] Economic Indicators - Pakistan
[4] Pakistan Economic Survey 2010-2011 Economic and Social Indicators

- Weak accountability

Economic
- Government perspective of development is oriented to seeking foreign exchange to stabilize the economy
- Inflation, unemployment and disguised employment rates are constantly rising (Economic Survey of Pakistan)
- External funding is not well-applied for results.
- Due to shortage of energy, industrial sector and businesses are suffering with low production, laying off workers and investing in real estate
- Self-employed skilled workers are not able to make their commitment good due to energy shortage. (For example tailors and auto workshop mechanics can only work when their machines are operating.)

Social
- Social instability due to friction among various thought groups regarding terrorism
- Security situation most disturbing in remote areas where communities have no way to protect themselves either against terrorist attack or against army attack.
- Youth and women have fewer or rather no chance for employment due to slack in business and closing down of industries.
- Media and journalism is comparatively free, however there is imbalanced focus on issues in media.

Technological
- Lopsided progress in technology
- Well-developed nuclear facilities, still the energy production is low due to mismanagement.
- Focus on acquiring finished goods instead of building or assembling complex machines and electronics.
- Technological education is not well-supported except in IT sector.
- Army is the hub of technological development which is not mainstreamed
- Due to brain-drain, most of the highly qualified technical professionals are not significantly contributing to the development of the technological basis for the country.

SWOT analysis - consolidated

Strengths and Opportunities
- Board and general membership has diverse professional backgrounds equipped with monitoring and evaluation skills and valuable experience in various sectors.
- PEN is now capitalizing on introducing M&E in the public sector and disaster and humanitarian organizations are focusing on improved governance and transparency.
- Some government departments, private sector, academic institutions, NGOs and journalist are supportive of PEN.

Weaknesses, Threats and Challenges
- Politically charged environment that might convert M&E exercise into a struggle for political gains/blames.
- Unpredictable and uncertain political and socio-economic conditions in the country.
- Security issues in the field especially two of the four provinces.
- No clear national monitoring and evaluation policies and lack of qualified M&E professionals in the underdeveloped and remote areas of the country (where most of the development projects are required and located).

PEN's Strategy and Action Plan:

Under the circumstances, NGOs and professional bodies have taken to connect with people to substitute some of the work that the government departments are supposed to perform in the development arena.

The two questions we asked ourselves are:

- What is PEN going to do to improve upon the areas highlighted above if it believes itself to be the **Network for Change**?
- How it is going to do it?

The **PEN vision** as stated below is right on target:

A responsible society built on knowledgeable people and transparent governance.

Thus PEN is going to catalyse change towards a monitoring and evaluation culture in national organizations for accountable and responsible public and private sector performance and/or services. It is done through advocacy for evaluation policies, creating and sharing knowledge on development issues, building capacity in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, and strengthening networks for experience sharing and mutual learning.

PEN members individually and as a team believe in and practice the following values:
- Personal commitment and responsibility
- Professional integrity
- Belief in democracy and mutual respect
- Transparency in business and communication
- Change to serve the people

PEN looks at the above situation as an opportunity as well as a challenge to play its role as a neutral professional body. The opportunity to engage the government departments, private organizations, academia, journalists and other professional networks in the debate on good governance and financial and economic

pragmatism, particularly with regard to the use of scarce resources deployed to the development of people, and the challenge to keep apolitical and devoted to the cause of development and not to fall into the trap of being a reformer.

Setting PEN mandate in the light of PEST and SWOT:

Area of Influence	What is the issue	Why PEN should be involved	How PEN should be involved
Political	• Development policies are few and sporadic • Weak accountability culture	Most connected to the transparent, efficient and effective development:	The first priority for PEN is to create awareness on the inadequate policies on development issues including a strong legal context for monitoring and evaluation of policies and their impact on people.
Economic	• Government perspective of development is oriented to seeking foreign exchange to stabilize the economy. • External funding is not well-applied for results.	Concerned with development	Through a range of actions including mobilizing opinion of professionals in the government departments and building understanding of, and skills and attitude to treat the foreign assistance. Complementarily, engage media and law and justice bodies for awareness on related matters. It will not be easy as the main challenge will be to remain apolitical in this scenario
Social	• Youth and women have fewer or rather no chance for employment due to slack in business and closing down of industries. • Higher education funding is depleted and students studying abroad were discontinued support.	Concerned with development	PEN has no direct intervention or influence on changing the above situation, but it has a mandate to engage relevant people and sections of the society who could be in a position to act.
Techno-logical	• Due to brain-drain, most of the highly qualified technical professionals are not significantly contributing to the development of the technological basis for the country	Concerned with development	This is not the mandate of PEN to persuade the government authorities to create economic opportunities for technological growth. However, PEN keeps an eye on such issues and uses examples in its core mandate on development.

Capacity to Implement PEN Action Plan:

PEN is a part of the whole scenario:
PEN is fully integrated and interacting with government and non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, professional networks and last but not the least print and electronic media.
- Government Ministries/Departments
  - Planning Division

- Ministry of Social Welfare and Women Affairs
- Department of Special Education
- Social Development/Sociology Departments of the following Universities:
  - Quid-e-Azam University, Islamabad
  - Iqra University, Islamabad
  - Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore
  - Bahria University (partnership in negotiation)
- NGOs & Experts – a large number of national organizations and professionals in development business

Individual members of PEN include independent M&E consultants and professionals working for various organizations:

- Public sector organizations such as Planning Division, Ministry of Social Welfare and Women Affairs, Department of Special Education.
- Private sector institutions,
- Not-for-profit sector including NGOs and INGOs, and
- Academic institutions such as Iqra University, Bahria University, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), etc.

PEN is networked internationally:

PEN is well connected internationally. It is an Associate Member of International Organization for Cooperation on Evaluation (IOCE). It also has the intellectual and technical support on the subject from international forums i.e.:

- International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation - IOCE
- International Development Evaluation Association – IDEAS
- Programme Planning & Evaluation, Inc. Michigan, USA
- Malaysian Evaluation Society, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Sri Lankan Evaluation Association, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Latest Participation/Representation at NONIE:

By PEN Board Member: Ghulam Mustafa, Director, Project Evaluation Cell, ERRA, Prime Minister's Secretariat (Public), Murree Road, Islamabad, Pakistan.

PEN's Legal Status and Conduct of Business:

In Pakistan, professional bodies such as PEN can be registered either under Corporate Law or Social Welfare/Voluntary Organizations Law. But it is not mandatory unless the organization is seeking funding from the government or bidding for government contracts. In the case of PEN, we have initiated the process of registration with the Ministry of Social Welfare last year in order to be included in their roster in case there was an opportunity for PEN to engage more effectively in the government activities. The registration might take some time due to a long vetting process.

PEN's Financial Assets/Liabilities

PEN has nominal fixed assets and working capital pooled in by the board members on the basis of as-and-when-required to carry out an activity. It literally has no financial liability as its members work through collaboration with other organizations. PEN, at the moment, does not mobilize financial resources from donors. It is expected that after its registration with the relevant ministry, PEN may seek financial resources to deliver specific projects and bid against contracts with the public/private sectors.

Action in Progress:
Technical:
- Formalize the 5 year strategic plan
- Start campaign for advocacy for political leadership and bureaucrats
- Prepare a project on building capacity of government departments in monitoring and evaluation
- Conduct research and update situation analysis of development scenario in the country to make adjustments in the action plan
- Engage academia and journalist in the debate on transparency and invite writers to write and publish articles from PEN forum

Administrative:
- Application for attaining legal status - Islamabad
- Campaign for membership – Pakistan
- Updated list of Members
- Prepare for Board Election in 2013
- Prepare projects to deliver training to existing partners
- Conclude negotiations with Bahria University
- Develop Website subject to support from EvalPartners
- Attend event organized by EvalPartners in Thailand in December 2012

Bottlenecks/challenges: *What were (are) three key challenges/bottlenecks that hampered your VOPE's capacity to contribute to the above strategy?*

Firstly: it might sound rhetorical but it is a fact that without sustained financial backup, the organization cannot implement its programme. It is by far the most critical agent in defining the scope and extent of work PEN can undertake effectively.

The main challenge is to secure a funding partnership and still maintain professional and intellectual independence. PEN board's hesitation to go out seeking for funding is based on this challenge.

Secondly, in the working and operating environment, the main challenge is to get over the bureaucratic system for introducing evaluation concepts, practices and systems in the government departments. There is a great deal of misunderstanding and skepticism about evaluation versus annual audit which is mandatory. Moreover,

utilization of the audit or evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations is rare.

Thirdly, the WB and ADB as well as a number of UN and International development organizations have introduced many different kinds of monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Since these are sponsored actions, the government seems to have no problem with getting along a myriad host of philosophies without bother. For example, WB has been following its 360° approach whereas ADB is working on MfDR (Management for Development Results). UN agencies are pushing for UNDAF (UN development Assistance Framework) and Planning Division is working on RBM (Results Based Management).

Progress and results: *What progress has been achieved so far? What are expected and unexpected results achieved?*
PEN has made slow but sustained progress over the last 8 years due to resource constraint and non-congenial national environment for evaluation. PEN has established its organizational structure and built a reputation as a neutral, apolitical professional network. It has formed several collaborations and partnerships with public and private sector organizations; mainly with government departments and academic institutions and other non-profit organizations.

The expected results included, among others:
- Maintaining membership and profile of the organization
- Progressive expansion in the mandate
- Continued interaction, dialogue and advocacy with public and private sector
- Productive partnerships with academic institutions
- Engagement in activities with meagre resources

The unexpected result: There was no opposition to our work from any sector. So far, we managed to work in collaboration with both public and private sector.

Key enabling factors: *From your perspective, what are three key factors that enabled your VOPE to achieve expected results, or progress towards them?*

- PEN has managed to work due to the dedication of its board and members who are committed professionals, and its partners. Collaboration with academic institutions is our main strength.
- Besides, we are constantly in advocacy and dialogue with government departments and have developed mutual respect for each other's point of view on monitoring and evaluation scenario in the country.
- Networking at international level, especially with IOCE has positively supported PEN in enhanced profile at the national level. Our members got a

chance to get involved in global discussion that added to our learning and gave us broader exposure.

Next steps: *What does your VOPE plan to do in the foreseeable future to strengthen the enabling environment, strengthen individual capacities, advocate for equity-focused and gender-sensitive evaluation systems, and to strengthen its own institutional capacity?*
Based on the above SWOT analysis and the strategy reflected in the table below;

Political	• Development policies are few and sporadic • Weak accountability culture	Most connected to the transparent, efficient and effective development:	The first priority for PEN is to create awareness on the inadequate policies on development issues including a strong legal context for monitoring and evaluation of policies and their impact on people.

PEN will continue to work closely with government departments on developing monitoring and evaluation policy or synergizing practices through consultation with international funding organizations. PEN would like to build its own capacity to assist the government in identifying the common monitoring and evaluation requirements/features across all the above approaches and adopt a general framework to cover the larger part of development portfolio. PEN is best placed to provide training, develop knowledge base and build the institutional capacity of the government.