



Entrepreneurship Development and the National Youth Policy of Pakistan

Youth Conference – June 3, 2008 – Islamabad, Pakistan

130 students, young entrepreneurs, and decision-makers came together to develop the following policy recommendations for the draft National Youth Policy of Pakistan at a conference organized by the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), and the Ministry of Youth Affairs. The Youth Conference, which focused on entrepreneurship development, was the first-ever opportunity for youth in Pakistan to provide feedback directly to policymakers. These draft recommendations, once finalized, will be presented to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Secretary Mr. Ashfaq Mahmood, who demonstrated his strong commitment to engaging youth in the reform process at the Youth Conference.

Draft Recommendations

The following programs should be developed in consultation with youth and the private sector.

Entrepreneurship

- The concept of entrepreneurship must be explained in schools and promoted as a career opportunity for youth; counseling should be available to youth in order to develop a culture of entrepreneurship.
- The Government should reassess its own policies, in consultation with youth representatives, to identify and reform laws and regulations that present hurdles to young people starting a business.
- More companies should be invited to participate in the National Internship Program through a concerted outreach effort on the part of the Ministry of Youth Affairs.
- The Government should launch a national entrepreneurship program with incubation centers around the country (similar to the National Internship Program).
- Venture capital (local and foreign) should be promoted as a practical way for young entrepreneurs to gain access to finance.
- There must be cooperation between the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, trade bodies, and universities to assist young entrepreneurs.

- The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry should launch a program to help youth entrepreneurs register with the Federal Board of Revenue and Government Association; a separate desk for youth should be established in the Federal Board of Revenue.
- Strong linkages should be built between the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and entrepreneurs.
- The Ministry of Youth Affairs should hold a business plan development competition on regional and national levels.
- Universities should invite businesspeople to give lectures in class or in a guest lecture series.
- Government programs should reach out to lesser-educated youth in rural areas – they should not be limited to youth studying in urban universities.
- A youth cabinet should be formed with the opportunity for regular consultation with the Ministry of Youth Affairs.
- Both the Ministry of Youth Affairs and chambers of commerce and industry should offer career counseling services for youth.

Skill Development

- The Ministry of Youth Affairs must regularly conduct needs assessment surveys on what type of practical training youth need to enter the private sector.
- The Federal Bureau of Statistics needs to reassess the types of statistics it collects so that the figures can be used to develop programs that raise youth employment; the Government and private sector must develop an action plan to use these statistics for creating more jobs and new businesses.
- Significant research and development is needed to create a new curriculum for vocational training centers.
- Educational programs should shift emphasis from theory to practical application of knowledge.
- Skills building programs/training institutes should be developed and emphasized for certain sectors, including:
 - Health management and first aid
 - Hotel management
 - Fashion design (institutes are needed)
 - Jewelry design
 - Furniture design and construction
 - Handicrafts
 - Forest products
 - Cosmetology
- The skills development institutes should reach out to those with few educational opportunities, and serve people at the local level and in rural areas.
- A career counseling system should be instituted for youth; universities and other educational establishments should hire career counselors to assist students.
- Chambers of commerce should develop a database for job information.
- Practical interaction of educational (polytechnics and IT institutes) and private/public sector organizations with the National Vocational and Technical Education Commission (NAVTEC) is needed.

Microfinance

- The State Bank of Pakistan should offer low interest rates for young entrepreneurs with a sustainable business plan.
- The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) should develop a database on sources of finance for entrepreneurial ventures on provincial and regional levels, with sector-specific information.
- Awareness of microfinance programs should be raised through youth workshops, television, and FM radio.
- Women economic partnerships should be developed.
- Incubation centers or career centers in universities should offer technical experts to guide youth in finding sources of funding for businesses.

Internships and Job Placement

- Business development centers and career centers should be established in all universities; students need guidance in finding appropriate internships and jobs.
- The Government should institute a uniform application process for its internship program.
- An online portal for interns to interact and search for employment should be developed.
- Universities, the Government, and business organizations must increase their cooperation to fully serve young people who need practical educational training and career guidance. This tripartite partnership (university – government – business organizations) would work together in curriculum development, internship program administration, and project development to bring more young people into the private sector.
- Job fairs should be held regularly throughout the country.
- More effort should be made to encourage alumni contact with universities, leading to greater communication about job openings in alumni's firms.

For questions, comments, and feedback, please e-mail

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