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Final Report

The AIPS Summer Travel Grant enabled me to travel to Pakistan for six weeks for the purpose of conducting preliminary dissertation research in Islamabad on educational narratives and discourses within development, philanthropic, and non-governmental sectors. Specifically, AIPS gave me the opportunity to further develop my research questions regarding discourses about the purpose of education and to better understand how the right to education is currently conceptualized or conveyed within a myriad of organizations.

During the six weeks in Islamabad, I was able to interview a number of people involved in education, broadly conceived. This ranged from those hosting summer literacy camps targeting out of school children, administrators of low-fee private schools, staff members of an education rights campaign, staff members of social mobilization organizations, journalists, land rights social activists, peace education developers, and researchers involved in education. In reflecting on these conversations during my time in Pakistan, I have gained valuable insight into understanding the ecology of the education sector. This information will be vital to the development of my dissertation proposal and dissertation fieldwork grant proposals and serves as the groundwork for my future research. I hope to present my preliminary findings regarding discourses in education at the Comparative and International Education Society Conference in 2016 as a part of the South Asia Special Interest Group.

Outside of formal interviews, I had the opportunity to participate in a wide array of ethnographically rich experiences including but not limited to Eid ul-Fitr celebrations, handing out food donations within a katchi abadi, qawwali performances, spending two weeks observing an education campaign office, and attending the night farmers market. These experiences combined, I was able to build rapport and establish a network inside and outside of sectors involved in education, laying a strong foundation for my future long-term dissertation fieldwork next year.