

Note for Record

By: Shoaib Sultan Khan

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Subject: Visits to New York, London and Kenya in first quarter of 2017

I was greatly touched by my friend Hakim Feerasta's email from Canada that no communication from me had him concerned. I am quite well and fairly active.

The first quarter of 2017 ushered lot of travel. In early January I was invited by American Pakistan Foundation Offsite to discuss plans for 2017 for the organisation, preceded by a dinner the previous evening in which I was to have a conversation moderated by Clare Lockhart, Co-founder, Institute of State Effectiveness. We had conversation about concept of community driven development (CDD) and its implementation through my experience of over last six decades, when I first met Akhter Hameed Khan and followed his teachings since 1959. Clare was fully conversant with Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) and how AKRSP had inspired Afghanistan's National Solidarity Programme (SDP) with which she was directly associated. I thoroughly enjoyed an hour of conversation with her and was very pleased when over thirty members of APF not only listened to our conversation but at the end asked many insightful questions led by Mr. Riaz Siddiqi, Chairman of the Foundation. I was delighted to meet Vanessa O'Brien, a British-American mountaineer, who held the Guinness World Record of being the fastest woman to complete the Explorers Grand Slam i.e. Seven Summits Plus Skiing to the last degree to the North and South Poles. She had summited four of the World's 8000 meter peaks, including Mount Everest and in June 2017 will attempt K-2.

The next day Rashid Bajwa and I participated in the APF Board meeting to explore opportunities and connectivity of the talent, diversity and dedication of APF's enhanced leadership, relating to diaspora engagement and impact. The meeting covered current state of US-Pakistan Bi-lateral Relationship, Political Engagement within Pakistan-American

diaspora, Business Opportunities in the US-Pakistan relationship and APF programme framework.

I explained how Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) since inception of AKRSP in 1982 are trying to go to scale and have a countrywide programme of poverty reduction. RSPs are, therefore, not looking towards APF for organising fund raising functions. RSPs objective is to access bilateral donor funds given to Pakistan. RSPs would like APF to influence USAID, Congress and the Senate how best US funds can be effectively used to reduce poverty in Pakistan through RSPs.

My friend Kashif Zafar, a most senior executive of Barclays Bank, who got us invited by APF and has been supporting RSPN/RSPs since 2010, on my return from New York hosted a dinner in London inviting a galaxy of Pakistani bankers and others to interact with me. I was delighted when he wrote to the guests, copied to me “Thank you for taking time to attend the dinner tonight with SSK. I am grateful for your participation and I know that the fan club of RSPN and Shoaib Saheb grew tonight in a way that will have a big multiplier effect in the months and years to come”. To me he wrote “Thank you for staying late to answer all the questions and for inspiring us all in a manner that only you can”. I know how generous and kind Kashif is but I could not have asked for more for my effort. Kashif has been propagating RSPN/RSPs at every imaginable forum including British Houses of Parliament, Media Houses like Telegraph, Le Monde, Huffington Post etc., the US Congress besides APF and BPF. His selfless pursuit of helping rural poor of Pakistan through RSPN/RSPs has been a peerless asset for us.

Before leaving New York, Rashid and I also made a courtesy call on founder CEO of Acumen Fund Jacqueline Novogratz, who is a shareholder in NRSP Bank. Subsequently I received an email from Jacqueline saying “I am always so inspired at your commitment, perseverance and love of the world In thinking about our conversation, it struck me that I missed an opportunity to talk to you more fully about our upcoming gathering of Acumen Fellows. This is a meeting of over our 400 Fellows in Naivasha, Kenya. It would be an honour if you would consider being interviewed and participating in three day seminar. Even if you come only for

one day, I am sure you would change the lives of many of the world's future leaders". How could I refuse such a magnanimous and kind invitation? So off I went to Kenya in mid-March.

Like APF event, I was interviewed by Pat Mitchell, a seasoned media personality who had spent years at CNN. This was a plenary session being attended by all the Fellows. In her inimitable way Pat was able to give me opportunity to describe and explain all facets of the influences on my life and career and the role played by Akhter Hameed Khan and lifetime opportunity afforded to me by AKRSP and its replication in Pakistan and countrywide in India.

Attending Acumen Fellows Global Gathering was an amazing experience and learning for me. I had never been really able to understand what Social Enterprise is? Listening to the Fellows it dawned on me what Social Entrepreneurs do? But it was also quite clear to me these were Jacqueline's brand of Social Entrepreneurs, not the product commonly touted in the name of Social Enterprise. I can well comprehend because I face the same dilemma about making people understand what Social Mobilisation is. Everyone flaunts Social Mobilisation as their strategy doing something quite different.

How does one persuade Presidents and Prime Ministers of Developing Countries to make Acumen brand of Social Enterprise the centerpiece of their youth employment creation strategies. Acumen Social Entrepreneur not only are self-employed, they create jobs. Instead of spending billions of dollars on ineffectual youth employment generation schemes if governments would pursue fostering Acumen type Social Entrepreneurs, the employment problems of youth would be history.

There were 76 Fellows from Pakistan amongst the 400 strong gathering. The stories Fellows narrated were most heartwarming. One of the Fellows from Pakistan, a Baloch Girl settled in Mirpurkhas, narrated how everyone in her family was opposed to her going to school. Her uncle came to her rescue and gave her a name common to males and females and asked Shamim to attend school as a boy, which she did upto middle grade and then somehow continued and got a degree and was selected for a job in Thardeep Rural Development Programme in Tharparkar. Her father forbid her from leaving Mirpurkhas. At night she went to

her father and told him she was catching the bus to Tharparkar in the morning and had come to say goodbye. In the morning she was thrilled to find her father at the bus stand to see her off. She subsequently joined the Education Department and is now pursuing doctoral degree. Every girl in her family is now going to school. Those who opposed her going to school now come to her to help them to send their daughters to school.

There were many stories of entrepreneurs how with small help from Acumen, were now offering employment to many others. Many Fellows came to see me, after the interview, from different countries asking how they can initiate RSP type programme in their country. Some Fellows from Pakistan contacted me, even on my return and came to see me. I am simply amazed what they are doing be it Lahore, Rawalpindi or Nawabshah.

On my letter of thanks to Jacqueline, she responded:

Dear Shoaib sb,

Oh my goodness! You beat me to writing to you. It is for me to thank you with a thousand roses if I could. You are so extraordinary and it was such an incredible honor to have you there.

I cannot thank you enough for taking a 22-hour flight to spend four days with 400 global souls in Naivasha. You inspired every person there by your lifelong commitment, your persistence, your unwillingness to capitulate to the easy. Please know what a difference it made. You changed lives through your story and your presence, the impact of which we may not know for many years.

I would love to have better answers to the questions you ask. I will be in Islamabad on April 6-7 to speak at the Nutshell Forum and apparently have been invited to dinner with the PM. Any advice you have for being more effective in telling our story there would be so appreciated!

It is an honor to know you, Shoaib, to be your partner, and I couldn't be more grateful nor feel more blessed. I look forward to many adventures in the future and send the appreciation and love of the entire Acumen community.

With love, gratitude and respect

Jacqueline

The visit to Kenya turned out to be an unfathomable joy for me when my daughters Roohi and Shelley flew from Europe to be with me, at half an hour away Resort from Great Rift

Valley Lodge where Acumen Gathering was taking place. Very few people know the contribution and sacrifices my family made in reaching where I am today.

As a Government Boys College Student, I fell in love with a girl, a distant cousin, who was studying at a Hindu Girls College. She used to observe purdah from me. How we used to meet, I cannot divulge that secret. In a couple of years, I had finished college and had to move to Lucknow University, hundreds of miles away. Musarrat was a beautiful girl from Frontier Province but had been adopted by her maternal grandmother's sister and was brought up miles and miles away from her ancestral home at Dera Ismail Khan. She had lot of suitors. We decided to get married. She was so headstrong that her adopted grandmother acquiesced. My family ex-communicated me and cut off all relations as they felt that this was the end of my education. I had four years of university education ahead of me but Musarrat was determined to see that I complete it she would send her pocket money to me by post. Once the postman, who used to deliver the letters at the University hostel, suspected there was something fishy and my envelopes started disappearing. I had to warn Musarrat against this practice. In the meanwhile we had a baby but that did not deter Musarrat. In my post graduate studies when I wanted to study History, Musarrat put her foot down and persuaded me to do it in English Literature. The reason she give was that her father had done doctorate in History from University of London and was too argumentative.

In my final year I persuaded Musarrat to go to her parents' house in Peshawar with our daughter. She reluctantly agreed and I followed her after my examination. My degree in English Literature got me a job in a degree college immediately as there was cute dearth of qualified lecturers in English in Pakistan.

Having been brought up in a civil servant's house, my ambition was to compete in civil service competitive examination. Having cleared the examination in Pakistan, I needed domicile of a province but the Government of Pakistan, Establishment Division declined to accept my domicile from the Frontier Province, although since my arrival in Pakistan I had lived nowhere but Frontier Province (now KP). I was lecturer in Jahanzeb College Swat. Musarrat could not tolerate this injustice to her husband and went straight to Dr. Khan Sahib,

Federal Minister from Frontier Province. Musarrat's father was a staunch Muslim Leaguer. Dr. Khan Sahib was ANP. Musarrat did not tell her father where she was going. Dr. Khan Sahib was in Karachi. Despite political differences, Dr. Khan Sahib rang up the Establishment Secretary and made him accept my domicile. That is how I got into the civil service in 1955.

Throughout over 62 years of our married life, she made every kind of sacrifice and suffered all kinds of hardships to propagate my career, be it initial years of service in the then East Pakistan or since 1978 allowing me to be in Nagoya, Sri Lanka or Gilgit because at none of the places, she could be with me. She not only took care of the family but gave our four daughters an upbringing and education which has always made me proud. She went away to a better world four years ago but left the greatest gift of loving daughters. They dote on me and worry too much about my welfare. At every possible opportunity they try to be with their father. Even Jacqueline was touched by their solicitude and wrote to them, it soothes to her heart to know that I am so beloved at home.