

PAKISTAN-U.S. ALUMNI NETWORK

STRENGTHENING PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE TIES BETWEEN U.S. AND PAKISTAN

ALUMNI NEWS

ALUMNI SUCCESS STORY

GRANTS

Communicating Through Cricket

PUAN EDITOR November 13, 2015 0 6 min read 1744 views



FOLLOW ME @PAKUSALUMNI

Follow @PakUSAlumni

#DYK Angelou's 1969 memoir made literary history as the first nonfiction best-seller by an African-American woman.... <https://t.co/PuAUJRSCVE>
3 years ago

RT @UGRADPakistan: .@NAFSA globalize your campuses today with Pakistani & Tunisian #youthleaders. Applications close Feb. 28th. <https://t.co/58b12LVpsI>
3 years ago

WATCH: Be the Change, an #ASG by @UGRADPakistan alumnus Noman Sajjad on #FosteringHarmony -->... <https://t.co/58b12LVpsI>
3 years ago

READ: PUAN #NEC2017 brings together 12 chapter leaderships for annual strategic meeting -->... <https://t.co/CXm9QRbjmx>
3 years ago

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT VANESSA O'BRIEN

"The focus of my activity was to give women an open and safe environment for physical activity that is not only good for their health but also for their psychological development. Vanessa O'Brien's presence and the support from the PUAN leadership have been instrumental in making this project a success."



Ms. Shah Rukh

10,000 Women Project Artemis – U.S. State Department & Pakistan



Why are sports important?

When it comes to the most popular sport of Pakistan, cricket, the answer is easy. From late-night street matches, to amateur championships, to the prevailing craze during the official season of the T20s, test matches and the World Cup, cricket is the sport that connects communities in and outside of Pakistan.

Goldman Sachs Project Artemis alumna, Shah Rukh, capitalized on the connecting power of cricket in her second activity of her grant project series: "Empowering through Sports," by organizing a day of cricket training camps between Pakistan youth and New York Police Department (NYPD) officers. This cricket day activity, "Strengthening Ties through Sports and Community," was made possible with the help of \$5,000 USD grant from the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network. All alumni of various U.S. government sponsored exchange programs in Pakistan are eligible to apply for the grant to enable them to give back to their communities.

Previously in August, Shah Rukh conducted "Empowering Women through sports," the first activity of her grant project, with American mountain climber Vanessa O'Brien at the Ibex Club with young girls from the English Access Micro-Scholarship program and Mashal Model School. The participants learned many skills and gained a sense of accomplishment as they took turns ascending the climbing wall and cheering each other on.

Cricket Fundamentals, Fundamental on the Field and Beyond



Female participants' warm-up for the cricket practice

On October 27, 2015, the Saidpur Cricket Ground was a sight for cricket enthusiasts. Seasoned coaches of Pakistan Cricket Board, members of five-time national champion women's soccer club, Young Rising Stars, young scouts from Pakistan Boys Scouts, and students, boys and girls, from Pakistan Sweet Homes, Mashal Model School and English Access Micro-Scholarship Program gathered to teach and learn the ins and outs of cricket. With six training camps spread across the ground, participants learned how to adjust their swing to the type of ball thrown, how to score a four on a spin ball, correct posture, and the importance of warm-up activities.

These young cricketers were joined by visiting NYPD officers: Adeel Rana and Elvis Vukelj. Despite the American officers' limited experience with cricket, they quickly caught on to the game by drawing on the parallels between cricket and the popular American sport of baseball. Their ability to engage the diverse group of participants demonstrates the power of sports to bridge communication and cultural barriers.



NYPD Officer Elvis Vukelj applying his baseball skills to cricket

For NYPD detective, Adeel Rana, outdoor sports activities, especially cricket, are key tools in inculcating leadership skills in youngsters by engaging them in real-life high-pressure situations that encourage quick decision-making and teamwork.

One participant, International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) alumna Saima Amjad noted:

“

“It is only through interactive community participation that we can achieve concrete, positive change in the society. Sports give us the playing field to hone the skills that will bring about that change. Through sports we learn to climb high and expand our horizons on life.”



Closing activity gave all participants to aim to reach for the ball after spinning their head six times

Sports as an agent of change promotes social inclusion across all boundaries: race, culture, gender, nationality, and is fast becoming the ultimate binding force. Shah Rukh's activities at the Ibex Club and Saidpur Cricket Grounds not only engaged and empowered the participants, but enabled them to connect with groups and individuals despite any language or cultural barriers.

To check out pictures from the activity, visit our **Flickr Page**

To check out video highlights from the activity, click **here**