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# A symposium on impact research: Issues and dilemmas

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## A SYMPOSIUM ON IMPACT RESEARCH: ISSUES AND DILEMMAS

*Anjum Halai, John Retallick, Fauzia Shamim, & Iffat Farah,  
AKU-IED, Karachi, Pakistan*

A symposium was organized around three papers discussing issues and dilemmas faced in planning and conducting impact studies. Each paper draws on experiences at AKU-IED. The session was coordinated by Dr. Ifat Farah.

The first paper was based on a recent effort by AKU-IED to develop a plan for studying the impact of AKU-IED programs and discusses issues and questions that came up in doing so. It particularly focused on the various meanings of impact, and the implication of a particular meaning/interpretation on how we study impact.

The second paper discussed some issues arising from an impact study of ADISM conducted in 2002 using an action research method in two schools in Karachi. Two strategies from the ADISM course were identified and each was further developed through action research to seek understanding of how the ADISM graduates shaped and worked with those strategies in their schools. The central dilemma was over the extent to which the impact of ADISM or the influence of action research was being studied.

The third paper addressed the socio-cultural and ‘political’ dimensions of studying impact of educational reform. Issues and illustrative examples will be drawn from research studies (both completed and in progress) at AKU-IED.

The three discussion papers follow.

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