

Mariam Chughtai

SAI Graduate Student Associate, 2012-2013

Mariam Chughtai discovered that her career lay in education policy reform when she was working for a relief organization in Pakistan. She witnessed students suffer from ineffective teachers and an outdated curriculum. This galvanized her to conduct policy research and to present a recommendation to the Ministry of Education calling for curriculum reform in government schools.

Currently at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Mariam is pursuing a doctorate in Education Policy, Leadership and Instructional Practice. Her thesis examines identity politics and religious nationalism fostered through the Pakistani education system. She has two Masters degrees, also from Harvard, in International Education Policy and Education Policy and Management, and has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Rice University.

Mariam founded the Harvard Pakistan Student Group in 2009 with a small community of less than 20 people. Three years later and with over 600 members, HPSG became the first university-wide student organization recognized by Harvard University.

After she completes her doctorate, Mariam sees herself returning to Pakistan to run for political office working towards systemic social change. She hopes to engage youth in political participation and discourse on their right to quality education. Mariam says the increase in global terrorism has hijacked her religion - a religion of peace. "It is my duty to be a catalyst for education reform in a country that has been both misunderstood and misused."