

Leadership Development Program

REPORT

16—17 October, 2025



**Executive
Development
Institute**



NATIONAL SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY
Government of Pakistan-Lahore

TEAM EDI

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Rector's Message



As Pakistan's leading institution for advanced professional development, the National School of Public Policy (NSPP) equips senior civil servants, executives and sectoral professionals with the skills for strategic leadership. Its core units—the Executive Development Institute (EDI) and the Pakistan Administrative Staff College (PASC)—create a rigorous learning environment designed to spark intellectual curiosity and foster cutting-edge analysis. The EDI further amplifies this mission by hosting policy dialogues, workshops and webinars that convene thought leaders to tackle critical national challenges. Through this integrated approach of training and discourse, the NSPP systematically enhances the quality and effectiveness of public policy in Pakistan.

It is my distinct honor to address the participants and contributors of this Leadership Development Program, convened by the Executive Development Institute (EDI) of the National School of Public Policy. This initiative embodies our institution's steadfast commitment to cultivating the strategic foresight, ethical grounding and adaptive capabilities essential for effective public governance in an era of profound complexity and digital transformation.

True leadership transcends formal authority; it is the responsibility to inspire trust, foster collaboration and guide institutions through uncertainty with vision and integrity. Over the course of this program, we have delved into the critical pillars of modern leadership from building high-performance teams and mastering emotional intelligence to harnessing innovation and managing conflict constructively. These are not merely theoretical concepts but essential tools for enhancing organizational resilience and driving meaningful public value.

As you return to your respective roles, I urge you to embody these principles. Apply your refined insights to nurture inclusive cultures, make courageous decisions and lead with a commitment to transparency and accountability. By doing so, you will strengthen the institutions you serve and contribute tangibly to our national development agenda. This program is an investment in your potential and I am confident you will translate this learning into impactful action for the betterment of Pakistan.

Dr. Jamil Afaqi
Rector, NSPP

Overview by Dean EDI



It is my privilege to present this overview of our “Leadership Development Program” held on October 16–17, 2025. In an era defined by rapid change and complex governance, this intensive forum was designed to address the urgent need for public sector leaders who are not only administratively competent but also strategically agile, ethically grounded and emotionally intelligent.

Our core belief is that authentic leadership extends far beyond positional authority; it is the art of inspiring teams, empowering individuals, and cultivating environments where innovation and excellence can flourish. This two-day forum brought together a diverse cohort of senior professionals, united by a shared commitment to enhancing their strategic impact. The curriculum was structured around critical, interconnected themes essential for modern governance: mastering team dynamics and high-performance models, adapting leadership styles to situational demands, leveraging emotional intelligence for effective communication, managing conflict constructively, adapting leadership styles for team effectiveness and responsibly harnessing emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.

Each session moved beyond theoretical discourse to deliver practical, actionable frameworks grounded in real-world public sector scenarios. A distinctive feature was the highly interactive methodology, which facilitated rich dialogue between participants and our distinguished faculty—a multidisciplinary group comprising renowned economists, seasoned civil servants, medical professionals, military strategists and technology experts. This exchange of perspectives ensured that learning was both profound and applicable.

The ultimate goal of this initiative is to forge a generation of leaders equipped with the vision, agility and skill to translate policy intent into tangible societal impact. We are confident that the insights gained will empower participants to navigate uncertainty, inspire collaboration and drive meaningful institutional reform, thereby strengthening Pakistan’s governance resilience and public service delivery.

Dr. Naveed Elahi
Dean, EDI

Executive Summary



This report summarizes the key insights and outcomes from the Leadership Development Program (LDP) titled "Leading with Impact: Creating High-Performance Teams," held on 16-17 October 2025 by the Executive Development Institute (EDI) of the National School of Public Policy (NSPP). Designed for senior public sector officers, the program provided a rigorous exploration of contemporary leadership challenges through sessions led by distinguished experts.

The program commenced with a foundational session on Understanding Team Dynamics & High Performance, distinguishing between mere groups and cohesive, high-performing teams. It emphasized psychological safety, clear roles (using tools like RACI charts) and adaptive leadership as critical success factors, drawing lessons from global case studies like Google's Project Aristotle and Toyota's production system.

A critical discourse on Leadership and Management highlighted the systemic barriers to innovation in the public sector, such as hierarchical rigidity, risk-averse cultures and misaligned incentives. The session argued for a transformative shift towards flatter, collegial structures, empowered talent development and a culture of collaborative accountability to foster organizational resilience in the 21st century knowledge economy.

The theme of Leadership and Innovation in the Public Sector was illustrated through practical case studies of urban development in Islamabad and Lahore. It underscored the importance of visionary leadership, creative team building and the courage to make decisive, calculated risks to overcome bureaucratic inertia and deliver tangible public value.

The human dimensions of leadership were addressed through sessions on Communication & Emotional Intelligence (EI), Conflict Management and Negotiation Skills. These modules established EI and strategic communication as core competencies for building trust, managing stakeholder expectations and transforming inevitable conflicts into opportunities for innovation and consensus-building.

Further analysis of Leadership Styles and Team Effectiveness provided a framework for understanding how transformational, transactional, democratic and autocratic styles impact team innovation, morale and execution. The key takeaway was the necessity for leaders to cultivate *behavioral flexibility*—adapting their style to contextual demands, task nature and team maturity.

Finally, the session on AI & Emerging Technologies for Leaders demystified artificial intelligence, outlining its potential to revolutionize public service delivery, decision-making and efficiency. It balanced this potential with a strong emphasis on the associated challenges—data bias, transparency, workforce displacement and ethical governance as outlined in Pakistan's National AI Policy 2025.

In conclusion, the program equipped participants with a comprehensive toolkit to build high-performance teams. The consistent themes across all sessions were the need to move from command-and-control to connect-and-collaborate models, to foster psychological safety and innovation, to integrate human-centric skills like EI and to harness technology responsibly. The accompanying policy recommendations provide an actionable pathway for institutional reform to cultivate agile, ethical and impactful public sector leadership in Pakistan.

ACRONYMS

EDI	Executive Development Institute
NSPP	National School of Public Policy
PAS	Pakistan Administrative Service
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
NHS	National Health Service (UK)
UN	United Nations
SAW	Sallallahu Alayhi Wasallam (Peace Be Upon Him)
AS	Alayhis-Salam (Peace Be Upon Him)
RACI (Chart)	Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed (Chart)
EQ	Emotional Quotient (Emotional Intelligence)
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
EI	Emotional Intelligence
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
DPM	Diploma in Psychological Medicine
MRC	Member of the Royal College (of Psychiatrists)
FRCPsych	Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists
FCPS	Fellow of the College of Physicians and Surgeons
PAF	Pakistan Air Force
AGI	Artificial General Intelligence
ML	Machine Learning
AI	Artificial Intelligence
NAIP	National Artificial Intelligence Policy
XAI	Explainable AI
IPO	Intellectual Property Organization (Pakistan)
IT	Information Technology

Understanding Team Dynamics and High Performance



Dr. Allah Bakhsh Malik

Dr. Allah Bakhsh Malik is a distinguished PAS officer with a PhD in Economics, having studied at prestigious Universities including Cambridge, UK and Columbia, USA. He has received notable accolades such as the UNESCO Confucius Laureate, becoming the first Pakistani and Muslim to achieve this honor and has made significant contributions to education in Pakistan, serving in various leadership roles and authoring 13 books and around 100 research papers.

Dr. Allah Bakhsh Malik, in his session, examined the foundational principles of team dynamics and the drivers of high performance within organizational settings. It distinguishes between mere groups and cohesive teams, emphasizing the critical role of leadership, psychological safety and structured capacity building. The analysis concludes with actionable policy recommendations to cultivate resilient, adaptive and high-performing teams in modern, often hybrid and work environments.

The Team-Group Distinction

A fundamental distinction in organizational design exists between groups and teams. A *group* is an assemblage of individuals coordinating efforts with primary accountability to individual goals. A *team*, conversely, is defined by a unifying collective purpose, interdependent work, mutual accountability and positive synergy that amplifies collective output.

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Foundations of Team Dynamics

Team dynamics encompass the behavioral and interpersonal processes that determine cohesion and effectiveness. Successful dynamics are marked by professional collaboration, role clarity and open communication, underpinned by psychological safety—the shared confidence that interpersonal risks will not be met with negative consequences. Mastery of these elements allows leaders to foster innovation and preempt performance barriers.

Stages of Team Development

Team development progresses through defined phases, as outlined in Tuckman's model: '**Forming**' (orientation), '**Storming**' (role negotiation and conflict), '**Norming**' (cohesion and norm establishment), '**Performing**' (high-level synergy) and '**Adjourning**' (dissolution). Effective leadership provides stage-appropriate support to guide this evolution.

Indicators and Case Studies of High Performance

High-performing teams exhibit a clear common purpose, shared leadership, open communication and psychological safety. This is evidenced globally:

Google's Project Aristotle identified psychological safety and dependable collaboration as paramount.

Toyota's production system exemplifies operational excellence through 'Kaizen' and visual management.

The UK’s NHS demonstrates efficacy through integrated, patient-centered teams.

UN Peacekeeping Missions highlight the critical role of inclusive, rules-based collaboration in complex environments.

The Central Role of Leadership

Leadership establishes the strategic and cultural conditions for team success. Effective leaders articulate vision, foster accountability and empower members. Historical and contemporary exemplars from the consultative leadership of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and the principled

Leadership establishes the strategic and cultural conditions for team success.

governance of Hazrat Ali (AS), to the transformative vision of Nelson Mandela and the strategic pragmatism of Lee Kuan Yew—

illustrate that adaptive leadership, grounded in integrity and justice, is essential across contexts.

Sustaining Performance in Evolving Contexts

The transition to hybrid and remote work models necessitates a shift from "command and control" to "connect and collaborate." Sustaining performance requires deliberate strategies: clear digital communication protocols, inclusive virtual practices and mechanisms to maintain trust. Continuous investment in skill development, resources and recognition is vital for long-term resilience.

Conclusion: From Principles to Practice

Building high-performing teams is a strategic imperative that requires cultivating genuine interdependence, psychological safety and adaptive leadership. By integrating the core principles of purposeful design, structured dynamics and continuous learning, organizations can develop teams capable of excelling in a complex, digital landscape. The accompanying recommendations provide a pathway to translate this framework into actionable policy.

Key Issues	Policy Recommendations
Lack of Psychological Safety	Mandate regular safe-space forums and leader training in empathetic listening to foster trust and open dialogue.
Unclear Roles & Accountability	Implement and communicate clear RACI charts for all teams, with quarterly reviews to maintain clarity.
Ineffective Hybrid Collaboration	Establish a ‘Digital-First’ protocol with standardized core platforms and mandatory weekly video check-ins.
Inadequate Continuous Learning	Create a dedicated ‘Team Learning Fund’ for skill development and innovation projects, tied to recognition.
Absence of Unified Purpose	Implement a cascaded ‘Vision Alignment’ process to directly link team goals to the organizational mission in all communications and reviews.

Leadership and Management



Dr. Ishrat Hussain

Dr. Ishrat Hussain is a renowned economist and public servant with a career spanning national and international institutions. He has served as Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (1999-2005), implementing major banking sector reforms and later as Advisor to the Prime Minister. His exceptional public service has been recognized with Pakistan's highest civilian awards, the *Nishan-e-Imtiaz* and *Hilal-e-Imtiaz*. He had a two-decade career at the World Bank, holding prestigious positions, including Chief Economist for Africa and East Asia. He is a prolific scholar, authoring several books, including "Governing the Ungovernable" and is designated a National Distinguished Professor. Dr. Hussain, a graduate of Executive Development program by Harvard, Stanford and INSEAD, holds a doctorate in Economics from Boston University, USA.

Dr. Ishrat Hussain, in his session, analyzed systemic barriers to organizational innovation and agility, including hierarchical rigidity, risk aversion and siloed operations. It proposes a transformative shift towards collegial structures, empowered talent development and a culture of collaborative accountability to foster resilience and growth in the knowledge economy.

Transforming Organizational Leadership and Management for the 21st Century

In an era of rapid technological change and global complexity, traditional organizational models hinder progress. This report, drawing on insights from the Executive Development Institute, identifies critical leadership challenges and proposes a reform framework to foster innovation, agility and collective intelligence.

Structural and Cultural Inertia

Deep structural barriers create silos and slow approvals, stifling timely decisions. Hierarchical subservience suppresses open dialogue and diverse perspectives. This is reinforced by a rule-bound, risk-averse culture that penalizes deviation, entrenching a “don’t rock the boat” mentality.

Misaligned Incentives and Accountability Deficit

Compensation and recognition systems often correlate strictly with rank rather than innovation or outcomes, offering no incentive for divergent thinking. The significant, often punitive, cost associated with failure encourages blame avoidance and buck-passing. A pervasive culture exists where acts of omission, failing to act, carry no penalty, while those who take responsibility and make decisions are singularly held accountable. This disincentivizes initiative and entrepreneurial spirit.

Information Asymmetry and Decision-Making Corruption

Information is frequently hoarded as a source of power, leading to inefficient resource allocation and outcomes within a diffuse responsibility framework. Furthermore, evidence-based decision-making is undermined by the distortion of facts through disinformation, polarization and partisan dynamics, compromising the integrity of organizational strategy and operations.

Flattening Hierarchy and Harnessing Collective Knowledge

The 21st century knowledge economy demands that organizations harness ideas from all sources. This necessitates a shift from a rigid hierarchical structure to a more collegial model where every individual is empowered to contribute. Leadership must evolve from a command-and-control function to a role of guide, facilitator and integrator of collective intelligence, particularly leveraging insights from younger entrants and middle management.

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Revolutionizing Talent and Incentive Structures

Talent strategies must prioritize creativity, adaptability and systems thinking over traditional credentials, seeking individuals skilled in digital literacy, analytics and team leadership. Compensation should reward innovation and outcomes, while empowerment through agile decision-making authority and intrinsic motivators like recognition is essential for organizational agility.

Cultivating a Listening and Collaborative Culture

Building a culture of open feedback, where constructive challenges to the status quo are valued and acted upon, is essential for fostering widespread commitment and ownership. Leaders must practice integrity and transparency, aligning their actions with their words to build trust. The ultimate goal is to nurture a culture of collaboration and teamwork, actively displacing adversarial relationships and blame games.

The Leadership Transformation Pathway

The transition from manager to leader requires fundamental shifts in mindset and skill. This involves evolving internally from a **Specialist to a Generalist**, an **Analyst to an Integrator**, a **Tactician to a Strategist**, a **Brick layer to an Architect**, and a **Problem Solver to an Agenda Setter**. Externally, it demands moving from a **Warrior to a Diplomat** and, in presence, from a **Supporting Cast Member to the Lead Role**—serving as an inspirational and communicative role model for the entire organization.

The Imperative of Transformative Leadership and Culture

Leaders of integrity and vision must embody this change to unlock their workforce's collective potential

Organizational resilience and innovation require deliberate structural and cultural reform. This entails flattening hierarchies, realigning incentives, empowering talent and cultivating

trusted collaboration. Leaders of integrity and vision must embody this change to unlock their workforce's collective potential.

Key Issues	Policy Recommendations
Hierarchical & Siloed Structures	Flatten hierarchies; form cross-functional teams; implement streamlined decision authorities.
Risk-Averse, Rule-Bound Culture	Create "safe-to-fail" pilot programs; reward calculated risk-taking; decriminalize honest mistakes.
Slow & Inhibited Decision-Making	Empower mid-level managers with clear authority; use digital tools for transparency; foster psychological safety.
Misaligned Incentive Systems	Link pay to outcomes and innovation, not just seniority; establish formal non-monetary recognition programs.
Information Hoarding & Distortion	Mandate knowledge-sharing via digital platforms; ensure transparent data protocols; train teams to counter misinformation.

Leadership and Innovation in Public Sector



Mr. Kamran Lashari

Mr. Kamran Lashari, a 1979 PAS officer, is Director General of the Walled City of Lahore Authority. He holds an LLB and M.Sc. in Public Administration. His career includes roles as Deputy Commissioner, Chief Commissioner of Islamabad, CDA Chairman and Federal Secretary for Housing.

He is a former President of the Pakistan Swimming Federation and received the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz in 2020. In Lahore, he launched cultural events, developed food streets and cricket grounds and restored historic sites like Shahi Hammam, earning international acclaim. In Islamabad, he contributed to projects such as Lake View Park and Saidpur Model Village.

In his unique approach, Mr. Kamran Lashari underscored that leadership in the public sector is an essential art of achieving common goals through vision, team building and decisive action. This report explores its critical role in governance, outlines key traits of effective leaders and provides actionable policy recommendations to enhance institutional performance.

Defining Leadership in the Public Sector

Leadership is the ability to guide a group toward the achievement of a common goal. It is an art of accomplishing objectives through and with others, rather than through individual exertion alone. In the context of the public sector, leadership extends beyond mere administration—it involves inspiring change, driving innovation and improving organizational delivery. While administrators may focus on maintaining systems, leaders actively shape strategies, motivate teams and foster a culture of accountability and creativity.

The Importance of Leadership in Public Governance

Effective leadership is fundamental to good governance, particularly in contexts such as Pakistan where institutional performance directly impacts public trust and service delivery. Leadership influences organizational output, enhances the efficiency of public institutions and ensures that entities are not overly reliant on individual personalities. The emotional intelligence (EQ) of leaders is especially crucial, as it enables them to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics and build resilient, adaptive organizations.

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Cultivating Leadership Traits

Leadership traits are cultivated through diverse experiences, including education, social and cultural exposure, sports, arts and the emulation of role models. Self-belief and clarity of purpose are foundational. Three core traits are particularly vital for public sector leadership:

Vision, Innovation and Creativity: Leaders must articulate a clear vision aligned with political and organizational objectives. This involves designing roles creatively, embracing new methodologies such as public-private partnerships and sustainable models and leveraging technology to improve systems.

Team Building: Leadership is a collective endeavor. Effective leaders integrate roles, marshal resources and build team capacity in skills, methods and morale to achieve specific targets.

Courage in Decision-Making: Decisiveness distinguishes exceptional leaders in the public sector. This requires avoiding bureaucratic delays, demonstrating integrity, taking calculated risks and providing timely, clear decisions.

Case Illustrations: Leadership Initiatives in Practice

The application of these leadership principles can be observed in specific urban development projects led by Mr. Kamran Lashari:

In Islamabad (2004-2008): Initiatives included the development of major avenues (7th and 9th), underpasses and interchanges; the revitalization of Said Pur Village and Monal Restaurant; the upgradation of Damn-e-Koh and F-9 Park; and the creation of public spaces such as Rawal Lake View Park, Shakar Parian Arts & Crafts Village and recreational trails.

In Lahore (2013-2019): Leadership focused on cultural heritage restoration, including projects at Delhi Gate, Shahi Hamam and Wazir Khan Mosque. It also promoted economic activity through street tourism,

These examples demonstrate how visionary leadership and effective execution can transform public spaces, enhance cultural heritage and stimulate local economies.

night tourism, public festivals and the revitalization of Lahore Fort.

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Key Issues and Policy Recommendations

To strengthen leadership within the public sector, the following structured interventions are proposed:

Key Issues	Policy Recommendations
Lack of Innovation Culture	Mandate innovation and strategic foresight training in senior leadership programs, promoting PPPs and digital solutions.
Weak Team Development	Create a dedicated fund for continuous team capacity building, skills training and merit-based incentives.
Risk-Averse Culture	Implement a "Protected Decision-Making" framework to allow calculated risks without punitive fallout for documented, good-faith decisions.
Over-Reliance on Individuals	Institutionalize leadership through codified SOPs and cross-training to ensure continuity beyond individual personalities.
Administrative vs. Leadership Focus	Reform recruitment and promotion criteria to explicitly value leadership traits (EQ, vision, teamwork) alongside administrative skill.

Communication and Emotional Intelligence



Prof. Dr. Sa'ad Bashir Malik

Prof. Dr. Sa'ad Malik, graduated as doctor of medicine in 1977 from King Edward Medical College, completed his psychiatry training in the UK, earning the DPM (1983) and MRC Psychiatry. He became a Professor in 1996, training thousands. He holds FRCPsych (1999) and FCPS (2003) degrees.

He is the Founder & President of MIND Organization, providing free psychiatric clinics in remote areas. An active member of government mental health committees with numerous publications, he focuses on Religion & Psychiatry and Positive Mental Health. He advocates that "there is no health without mental health," conducting workshops nationwide.

In a uniquely professional style, Prof. Dr. Sa'ad Bashir Malik, emphasized that effective communication and emotional intelligence (EI) are foundational competencies for modern public sector governance, driving trust, efficiency and public value. Furthermore, he examined their strategic role, identifies systemic challenges and provides actionable recommendations for institutional integration.

The Nexus of Communication and Emotional Intelligence

In an era of increasing public scrutiny and complex societal challenges, the performance of public sector institutions depends not only on technical expertise but on the human competencies of communication and emotional intelligence. These interrelated disciplines govern how policies are conveyed, how stakeholders are engaged and how trust is built and maintained. This report examines their critical role, outlines prevailing gaps and proposes a framework for their systematic development within public administrations.

Defining Core Competencies

Communication in the public sector refers to the clear, transparent and multidirectional exchange of information between institutions, citizens and stakeholders. It encompasses both dissemination and active listening. Emotional intelligence is the capacity to recognize, understand and manage one's own emotions and to recognize, understand and influence the emotions of others. In practice, EI enables empathy, conflict resolution, adaptive leadership and the building of collaborative relationships—all essential for effective communication.

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Relevance to Public Sector Performance

The integration of EI and strategic communication directly enhances several governance outcomes: it improves policy uptake through clearer public engagement, increases employee morale and collaboration, mitigates conflicts and fosters resilience during crises. When public servants communicate with empathy and clarity, citizen trust and compliance improve, thereby reducing implementation gaps and enhancing the perceived legitimacy of government action.

Current Challenges and Systemic Gaps

Despite their importance, communication and EI are often undervalued in public sector training, recruitment and performance evaluation. Common deficiencies include: a prevailing culture of one-way, top-down communication; minimal training in active listening or empathetic engagement; reactive rather than strategic communication planning; and a lack of institutional mechanisms to incorporate stakeholder feedback into decision-making processes.

Strategic Imperative for Institutional Integration

To transform public institutions into agile, responsive and trusted entities, communication and EI must be treated as core professional competencies—not optional soft skills. This requires committed leadership, dedicated resources, and a shift in organizational culture to prioritize relational skills alongside technical and administrative capabilities.

Building a More Connected and Empathetic Public Sector

The deliberate cultivation of emotional intelligence and strategic communication within the public sector is not merely an enhancement—it is a necessary evolution for effective governance. By adopting the recommended policies, institutions can develop a workforce capable of bridging divides, managing complex human dynamics and sustaining public confidence through clarity, empathy and integrity. The result will be a more adaptive, trusted and impactful public administration.

Key Issues and Policy Recommendations

The following table outlines five systemic issues and corresponding recommendations for embedding communication and emotional intelligence into public sector frameworks.

Key Issues	Policy Recommendations
No Formal EI & Communication Training	Mandate EI and strategic communication modules in all public service training and development programs.
Top-Down Communication Culture	Institute mandatory public consultation protocols and internal feedback systems to enable two-way dialogue.
Complex, Inaccessible Policy Language	Require plain-language guidelines and public testing for all official communications and policy documents.
Poor Crisis & Change Communication	Develop and routinely drill a crisis communication playbook, with EI training for all spokespersons.
Lack of Performance Metrics	Integrate KPIs for stakeholder satisfaction and communication clarity into departmental and leadership evaluations.

Conflict Management and Negotiation Skills



Dr. Muhammad Abdur Rehman Malik

Dr. Abdur Rehman Malik, following a corporate engineering career focused on people management, transitioned to academia, completing an MPhil/PhD at LUMS (2007) with research at Concordia University, Canada. He has now sixteen years of teaching experience across undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels in Pakistan, Canada, Malaysia and Morocco, having supervised multiple MPhil and PhD students. His research, published in top-tier journals like the Journal of Organizational Behavior, has earned international awards. He also actively engaged in executive education, consultancy and community service, driven by a passion for contributing to society through his work in management and psychology.

In a three-hour workshop, Dr. Abdur Rehman Malik, explored how constructively managed conflict can act as a catalyst for innovation and enhanced decision-making in public organizations. His findings detail the key conflict management and negotiation strategies presented, which empower public sector leaders to turn disputes into opportunities for building consensus, fostering collaboration and sustaining public trust.

The Inevitability and Utility of Conflict in Public Organizations

Conflict is an inevitable element of organizational dynamics, especially within the public sector where diverse stakeholders, limited resources and competing priorities regularly intersect. While poorly managed conflict can undermine institutional performance and erode trust, constructive conflict has the potential to stimulate innovation, strengthen decision-making processes and clarify organizational goals. Negotiation serves as the primary mechanism through which leaders can transform contentious situations into opportunities for consensus and cooperation. For public sector executives, proficiency in conflict management and negotiation is indispensable for effective policy formulation, inter-agency collaboration and the maintenance of public confidence.

Core Concepts in Conflict Management and Negotiation

Conflicts within organizations may be categorized into several types, including interpersonal, intergroup, organizational and policy-level conflicts. Effectively addressing these requires an understanding of different conflict management styles, as illustrated by the Thomas-Kilmann model: avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising and collaborating. Each style carries distinct implications for outcomes and relationships.

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In negotiation, two primary approaches are recognized. Distributive negotiation, often characterized as a win-lose dynamic, focuses on dividing fixed resources. In contrast, integrative negotiation adopts a win-win philosophy, seeking to create value by exploring underlying interests and identifying mutually beneficial solutions. Public sector leaders frequently assume the roles of mediator, negotiator and facilitator, ensuring fairness, preserving relationships and aligning conflict outcomes with broader organizational objectives.

Importance for Public Sector Leaders

Effective conflict management and negotiation skills enhance interdepartmental collaboration and improve service delivery. They prevent the escalation of disputes, which can damage institutional credibility and strengthen the ability to manage stakeholder expectations during governance reforms. Furthermore, these skills enable the building of durable agreements that balance competing interests in the policy-making process, thereby contributing to sustainable and legitimate public outcomes.

Illustrative Global Cases

Historical and contemporary examples underscore the applicability of these principles. The Camp David Accords (1978) demonstrate the power of third-party mediation in resolving deep-seated international conflicts. South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996) exemplifies how structured dialogue and negotiation can facilitate national healing and conflict transformation. The complex multi-party negotiations within the World Trade Organization highlight the challenges of reconciling national and global interests. Similarly, local governance models in Scandinavia emphasize sustained collaborative negotiation among government, unions and citizens, underpinning high-trust societies.

Key Challenges

Leaders face several obstacles in managing conflict and negotiation effectively. Significant power imbalances between stakeholders can distort dialogue and outcomes. Emotional escalation often leads to the breakdown of communication, while cultural differences may create misunderstandings. Additionally, short-term political cycles can undermine the sustainability of long-term negotiated agreements, prioritizing immediate gains over durable solutions.

Strategic Framework for Leadership Action

To navigate these challenges, leaders should employ a suite of strategic practices. Active listening is essential to identify underlying interests beyond stated positions. Mediation techniques can facilitate constructive dialogue between parties. Developing cross-cultural negotiation competencies allows for more effective engagement with diverse stakeholders. Leaders should encourage integrative negotiation by focusing on shared goals and creative problem-solving. Finally, applying emotional intelligence helps in managing one’s own emotions and de-escalating tensions within negotiation settings.

Conclusion and Key Takeaways

Conflict is not inherently negative; its constructive management can strengthen organizational resilience and performance.

Conflict is not inherently negative; its constructive management can strengthen organizational resilience and performance. Leaders must balance firmness with empathy during negotiations, recognizing that collaborative approaches typically yield stronger and more sustainable agreements than adversarial ones. Transparent and fair conflict resolution processes are fundamental to maintaining and enhancing public trust.

Key Issues	Policy Recommendations
Power Imbalances	Implement transparent protocols and provide support to ensure equitable stakeholder participation.
Emotional Escalation	Train leaders in de-escalation techniques and integrate neutral mediation early in conflicts.
Cultural & Communication Barriers	Deliver cross-cultural negotiation training and use cultural liaisons in multi-stakeholder engagements.
Short-Term Political Cycles	Design agreements with implementation milestones and non-partisan oversight to ensure continuity.
Adversarial Negotiation Mindset	Incentivize collaborative, interest-based negotiation through performance metrics and leadership standards.

Leadership Styles and Team Effectiveness



Air Comd. Khalid Chishti (R)

Air Commodore Khalid Chishti (R), a former PAF fighter pilot, is decorated with the *Sitara-e-Imtiaz* and *Sitara-e-Basalat* (Military). With over 3,000 flying hours, he commanded a fighter squadron, served as Base Commander in Karachi and later as Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Training) at Air Headquarters.

He holds an MSc in Strategic Studies from Karachi University and another in Security & War Studies from Quaid-e-Azam University. His distinguished military career includes training at prestigious institutions like the Turkish Armed Forces War College.

Air Commodore Khalid Chishti(R) highlighted that effective leadership is the cornerstone of high-performing teams, positing that aligning style with context directly drives productivity, innovation and morale. His analysis of the leadership-team effectiveness nexus provides a framework for strategic policy interventions to improve public sector performance.

Leadership as a Determinant of Team Effectiveness

In the contemporary public sector, the efficacy of any initiative is ultimately dependent on the performance of its constituent teams. Team effectiveness—defined by the achievement of objectives, innovation, cohesion, and member satisfaction—is not an automatic outcome but a cultivated one, profoundly influenced by leadership. The style adopted by a leader serves as the primary environmental factor shaping team dynamics, communication patterns, and motivational climate. Consequently, understanding the interplay between distinct leadership styles and team outcomes is a critical imperative for optimizing public service delivery, fostering adaptive capacity and ensuring the prudent use of public resources.

Team effectiveness is not an automatic outcome but a cultivated one, profoundly influenced by leadership

Theoretical Framework of Core Leadership Styles

Leadership theory delineates several predominant styles, each with discrete characteristics and implications. **Transformational Leadership** is characterized by inspiring and motivating followers through a shared vision, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. It seeks to elevate team members' engagement beyond immediate self-interest. In contrast, **Transactional Leadership** operates on a principle of exchange, utilizing clear structures, rewards and penalties to ensure compliance and meet established objectives. **Democratic or Participative Leadership** emphasizes collective decision-making, soliciting team input to foster ownership and consensus. Conversely, **Autocratic or Directive Leadership** centralizes decision-making with the leader, prioritizing speed and clarity of direction. The **Laissez-Faire** style, marked by minimal guidance or intervention, often results in a vacuum of leadership. The situational application of these styles forms the basis for strategic people management.

Impact on Key Dimensions of Team Effectiveness

The chosen leadership style directly impacts several pillars of team effectiveness. Transformational and democratic styles are strongly correlated with enhanced **innovation** and **creative problem-solving**, as psychological safety and participatory climates encourage risk-taking and idea-sharing. For **task efficiency and execution speed**, transactional and autocratic styles can be effective in crisis situations or for routine tasks requiring strict adherence to protocol. **Team cohesion and morale** are typically strengthened under transformational and democratic leaders who build trust and relational capital, while excessively transactional or autocratic approaches may erode it over time. Furthermore, **talent development and succession planning** are natural outcomes of transformational and participative approaches that mentor and empower team members.

Contextual Factors in the Public Sector

The public sector environment necessitates a nuanced application of leadership theory. Operational contexts vary widely, from the rule-bound procedures of regulatory compliance to the adaptive challenges of community programming and crisis response. The nature of the **task** (routine vs.

Leaders must cultivate behavioral flexibility—the capacity to judiciously adapt their style to the demands of the situation

complex), the **stakeholder landscape** (political, media, public scrutiny) and **organizational culture** are decisive factors. A one-style-fits-all approach is ineffective; instead, leaders must cultivate **behavioral flexibility**—the capacity to

judiciously adapt their style to the demands of the situation, the team’s maturity and the strategic objective at hand.

Prevailing Challenges and Key Issues

Several systemic challenges impede the optimal alignment of leadership and team performance. A prevalent mismatch between leadership style and operational requirements leads to suboptimal outcomes. Many public sector systems lack structured mechanisms to identify and develop leadership behavioral flexibility. Furthermore, rigid hierarchical structures can inherently stifle participatory and transformational approaches. Short-term operational pressures often compel leaders to default to directive styles, undermining long-term team development. Finally, the frequent absence of team-specific metrics makes it difficult to evaluate the tangible impact of leadership behaviors on effectiveness.

Cultivating Adaptive Leadership for Public Service Excellence

Leadership is not a monolithic practice but a strategic variable that must be managed with intention and insight. The movement toward team-centric public administration requires a concomitant shift in how leaders are selected, trained and evaluated. By fostering adaptive leaders who can consciously apply the most effective style for a given context, public sector organizations can build more resilient, innovative and effective teams. This investment in leadership sophistication is not merely an operational concern but a fundamental prerequisite for enhancing public trust and achieving sustained service excellence.

Key Issues	Policy Recommendations
Style-Task Mismatch	Implement training on situational leadership and contextual style assessment.
Lack of Adaptive Skills	Embed "Adaptive Leadership" training with coaching and feedback cycles.
Rigid Hierarchies	Pilot flatter team structures for innovation and collaborative projects.
Short-Termism	Link leader performance metrics to team development and health indicators.
Unmeasured Impact	Define and adopt a "Team Effectiveness Index" as a core leadership KPI.

AI and Emerging Technologies for Leaders



Dr. Rizwan Basharat

Dr. Rizwan Basharat, an officer of the Pakistan Customs Service, currently serves as the Collector of Customs in Faisalabad. A medical doctor by initial training, he also holds advanced degrees in Economics and Intellectual Property Law. A founding officer of Pakistan's Intellectual Property Organization (IPO), he has extensive expertise in public sector IT implementation. He has automated systems for both the IPO and Customs, including online trademark filing and the recent faceless assessment. He deployed staff efficiency tracking and a real-time alert system for traders in Faisalabad, significantly reducing direct interaction and enhancing transparency.

Dr. Rizwan Basharat conveyed that Artificial Intelligence represents a transformative force capable of enhancing public sector efficiency, decision-making and service delivery. Additionally, he presented a foundational understanding of AI technologies and frameworks, analyzes key implementation challenges, and offers strategic policy recommendations to guide responsible and effective adoption.

The Imperative of Artificial Intelligence for Public Sector Governance

The rapid evolution of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and associated emerging technologies presents both unprecedented opportunities and complex challenges for public sector leaders.

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complex challenges for public sector leaders. AI, defined as the capability of machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence—such as learning, reasoning and problem-solving—is transitioning from a theoretical concept to a core component of operational strategy. For leaders in governance, a nuanced understanding of AI's potential, limitations and implementation pathways is no longer optional but a critical competency for driving innovation, ensuring accountability and maintaining public trust in an increasingly digital age.

Understanding AI and Its Evolution

Artificial Intelligence is not a monolithic technology but a spectrum of capabilities. It encompasses systems that can learn from data, understand context, apply knowledge and adapt to new situations. This functionality is distinct from traditional software, which follows explicit, pre-programmed instructions without adaptation. The development of AI can be conceptualized across a maturity continuum: from Stage 0 (simple, rule-based automation) to Stage 5 (theoretical Artificial General Intelligence, or AGI). Most current applications, such as facial recognition, predictive analytics and autonomous systems, reside at Stages 2-4, representing "Narrow AI" that excels within specific, bounded domains.

Core Technical Foundations

Machine Learning (ML) serves as the foundational engine for modern AI, enabling systems to improve performance through experience without being explicitly reprogrammed. ML operates through a cyclical process of data collection, processing, model training, and prediction. Key paradigms include Supervised Learning (using labeled data), Unsupervised Learning (finding patterns in unlabeled data), and Reinforcement Learning (learning optimal actions through rewards). A significant recent advancement is Generative AI, which leverages vast foundation models to create novel, original content in the form of text, images, or code. This shift from purely analytical to creative AI expands its application landscape but introduces new concerns regarding transparency and provenance.

Current Applications and Sectoral Impact

AI technologies are already delivering tangible benefits across global economies and within forward-thinking government functions. International case studies, such as Amazon's recommendation engines and IBM Watson's healthcare diagnostics, demonstrate significant gains in efficiency, sales and service quality. In the public sector context, high-impact use cases include fraud detection in finance, diagnostic support in healthcare, predictive maintenance in infrastructure and personalized citizen service interfaces. Effective implementation streamlines repetitive tasks, enhances data-driven decision-making and can improve operational transparency and accountability.

The National Context: Pakistan's AI Policy Framework

Recognizing this technological imperative, Pakistan has established its first National Artificial Intelligence Policy (NAIP 2025). The policy outlines an ambitious strategic vision built on core pillars: public awareness and skills development; research, innovation and commercialization; secure and ethical governance; sectoral transformation (government, health, agriculture); infrastructure development; and international partnerships. Key targets include training one million citizens in AI by 2030, creating an AI innovation fund and delivering 50,000 AI-driven civic projects. This framework provides a necessary roadmap for coordinated national action.

Conclusion and Strategic Integration for Responsible AI Adoption

The integration of Artificial Intelligence is a defining strategic journey for public sector institutions. Success depends on moving beyond mere technological acquisition to fostering an ecosystem of readiness characterized by data literacy, ethical governance and adaptive leadership. Leaders must champion a balanced approach that aggressively pursues efficiency and innovation while rigorously safeguarding against risks related to bias, transparency and employment. By implementing robust governance frameworks and investing in human capital, the public sector can harness AI not as a disruptive force, but as a powerful tool for enhancing service delivery, informing policy and building a more responsive and trustworthy government.

The integration of Artificial Intelligence is a defining strategic journey for public sector institutions.

Key Challenges for Responsible Adoption

Despite its potential, integrating AI into public sector operations is fraught with challenges. These issues must be proactively managed to mitigate risk and ensure equitable outcomes as follows:-

Key Issues	Policy Recommendations
Data Integrity & Bias	Establish mandatory algorithmic impact assessments and fairness audits for all public-sector AI systems, with diverse testing datasets to identify and mitigate bias.
Transparency & Accountability	Develop and enforce standards for "Explainable AI" (XAI) in government tools, ensuring decision-making processes are interpretable and subject to human oversight.
Workforce Displacement & Skills Gaps	Launch a dedicated public sector AI reskilling program alongside "AI-Augmented Workforce" pilots that redefine roles around human-machine collaboration.
Financial & Infrastructure Constraints	Create a shared, secure public cloud and computing infrastructure pool to provide agencies with cost-effective access to necessary AI development resources.
Ethical Governance & Public Trust	Form an independent AI Ethics Advisory Board tasked with creating ongoing guidelines for procurement, implementation, and monitoring of AI systems against ethical norms.

PICTURES GALLERY-1



Rector, NSPP & Dean, EDI address the inaugural session



Distinguished Speakers receive a Souvenir from Dr. Naveed Elahi, Dean EDI



PICTURES GALLERY-2

Dr. Jamil Afaqi, Rector NSPP awarding
Certificates & Souvenir to the Participants



Group Photograph



NATIONAL SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE Executive Training Course on "Leadership Development Programme" 16th -17th October 2025



1st Row:	Mr. Qaiser Iqbal	Mr. Muhammad Shoaib	Dr. Allah Baksh Malik	Dr. Muhammad Jamil Afaqi	Dr. Naveed Elahi,	Mr. Kamran Ahmad	Mr. Muhammad Ikram Barkat ,
L to R	Addl. Dir (EDI)	District & Session Judge	Guest Speaker	Rector NSPP	Dean EDI	Director EDI	Director General (PEMRA)
2nd Row:	Mr. Zulfiqar Ali,	Ms. Sumaira Ayub,	Barrister Maimuna Ranjha,	Ms. Rabeeah Anwar,	Ms. Sharaf Jehan Qasmi,	Prof. Dr. Rizwana Bashir,	
3rd Row:	Mr. Muhammad Naeem Bazai,	Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ali Nasir	Engr. Muhammad Kashif Ali,	Engr. Ikram Ullah,	Mr. Taimur Javed,	Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb,	
	Mr. Qaisar Mehmood,	Syed Kashf Ahmed,	Mr. Amir Muhammad Khan Niazi,	Mr. Arshad Ali Khan,	Mr. Muhammad Junaid Khan,	Mr. Hamid Ali Khan,	
4th Row:	Mr. Nadeem Adnan Shah,	Mr. Fahad Shahbaz,	Mr. Sohaib Islam,	Mr. Muhammad Shakeel,	Dr. Muhammad Akram Shakir,	Mr. Muhammad Adnan Mukhtar,	
	Mr. Aitesam ul Haq Mughal,	Mr. Abdul Haseeb Asghar,	Mr. Owais Javed,	Mr. Nashad Khan,	Mr. Haris Bin Maqsood,	Mr. Maratab Ali,	
5th Row:	Mr. Nasir Saeed Akhtar Warrach,	Mr. Hassam Rustam,	Mr. Niamat Ali Baig,	Mr. Hassan Rashid,	Mr. Muhammad Ammar Naveed,	Mr. Naeem Shahzad,	
	Mr. Iftikhar-ul-Hassan,	Mr. Muhammad Azam,	Mr. Muneeb-ul-Hassan,				
6th Row:	Mr. Usman Azam,	Prof. Dr. Muhammad Atif,	Mr. Mukesh Kotak,	Syed Asif Ali,	Sayyed Ahmad Ovais,	Mr. Muhammad Yar,	Mr. Baber Hussain,
	Dr. Saif Ullah Khalid,	Mr. Muhammad Irfan,	Mr. Fiaz Chohan.	Mr. Muhammad Ali Malik,			