



THE STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATION

STORIES FROM RURAL PAKISTAN



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CASE STUDIES

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preface

The Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) is grateful to the project staff of the “Mobilising Communities to Demand Education (Article 25-A) and Local Accountability” campaign based in the Rural Support Programmes (RSPs). Specifically, these staff were located at the district level in Pishin and Jaffarabad (Balochistan Rural Support Programme), Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur and Thatta (National Rural Support Programme), Battagram, Mansehra and Haripur (Sarhad Rural Support Programme) and in Jamshoro and Tharparkar (Thardeep Rural Development Programme). It is through their hard work and dedication, that the efforts of rural communities to obtain a better education for their children have been documented through these 45 case studies.

We also appreciate the support that the Project Officers and management of the RSPs provided to their staff and RSPN.

Lastly, RSPN is thankful to Alif Ailaan for their continued financial and technical support in the implementation of this campaign; especially Mr. Mosharraf Zaidi, Mr. Imran Khan and Mr. Moiz Hussain.

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abbreviations

AEO	Assistant Education Officer
BRSP	Balochistan Rural Support Programme
CO	Community Organisation
CRP	Community Resource Person
DDEO-M	Deputy District Education Officer – Male
DEO	Deputy Education Officer
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
GBPS	Government Boys Primary School
GGPS	Government Girls Primary School
GPS	Government Primary School
IT	Information Technology
LSO	Local Support Organisation
MNA	Member of the National Assembly
MPA	Member of the Provincial Assembly
NRSP	National Rural Support Programme
PMAP	Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party
PPP	Pakistan Peoples Party
PTC	Parent Teacher Council
RAHA	Refugee Affecting and Hosting Areas
RSPN	Rural Support Programmes Network
RSPs	Rural Support Programmes
SMC	School Management Committee
SRSP	Sarhad Rural Support Programme
TRDP	Thardeep Rural Development Programme
UC	Union Council
VO	Village Organisation
WDCO	Women Development Community Organisation

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introduction

The “Mobilising Communities to Demand Education (Article 25A) and Local Accountability” campaign was a 13 month project which aimed to enable communities in 88 union councils (UCs) across 11 districts¹, to increase the enrolment of out of school boys and girls and to improve the quality of education by lobbying with local stakeholders. The campaign was funded by Alif Ailaan

and was implemented by the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) and four of its partner Rural Support Programmes (RSPs), namely the Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP), the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) and the Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP).

about RSPN and the RSPs

RSPN is the largest civil society network of Pakistan, representing 11 member RSPs² working with a mission to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of the poor in Pakistan. Having been established in 2000, it is a strategic platform for the RSPs with expertise in policy advocacy, grant management, networking, monitoring and evaluation, gender mainstreaming, renewable energy and social sector (health, education and sanitation) programming and implementation.

RSPN's strength is its vast outreach to rural communities all over the country through the RSPs. Currently the RSPs have presence in 118 out of 131 districts/areas of Pakistan's four provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and 5 of the 13 Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)

and Frontier Regions. The RSPN and the RSPs have adopted a three-tiered approach to Social Mobilisation. At the first tier, rural households are organised into Community Organisations (COs)³ at the neighbourhood level. At the second tier, the COs are federated at the village level into Village Organisations (VOs). At the third tier, VOs federate at the Union Council (UC) level to form a Local Support Organisation (LSO). As of June 2015, the RSPs have presence in 3,692 rural Union Councils of Pakistan and have mobilised over 6.03 million households (an estimated population of about 42 million) into 362,791 COs, of which 48 percent are women's COs. A total of 1,149 LSOs at the union council level have been fostered, with some LSOs forming networks at the tehsil and district levels.

About Alif Ailaan

Alif Ailaan is a Pakistani alliance for education reform and was founded to bring together and empower all those Pakistanis who want to respond to the country's education emergency, and equip children to succeed for themselves and for Pakistan. Through a dedicated campaign team, Alif Ailaan seeks to explain the importance of

universal education and the opportunity it presents for Pakistan's future success. Their aim is to lead a national conversation on fixing education and, with the input of their partners and the research and evidence that they produce, set out the steps they believe need to be taken to achieve positive change.

About the Campaign

Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world, with a population of 180 million. This population includes 26.98 million children between the ages of 5-9 years who are eligible for primary education; one of their most important and basic of rights. Despite the government's commitments to provide education to its people, Pakistan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the region, currently estimated at about 58 percent (69 percent for men and 49 percent for women). Although the government is taking measures to respond to the situation and improve its service delivery, there remains much to be done. To raise public awareness for education and ensure that the rural poor have access to quality education,

RSPN partnered with Alif Ailaan to implement a campaign which not only sensitised communities about their right to education, but encouraged them to seek education and demand education reform through lobbying with their local stakeholders – specifically the district Education Department, politicians, party workers, journalists and religious leaders. The objectives of the campaign were:

- Facilitating communities to actively engage with the political 'system', i.e. political parties, public representatives and the Department of Education, for the improvement of education and related physical and policy level infrastructure
- Creating accountability mechanisms whereby organised communities, i.e., VOs and LSOs can access and ensure quality education

Prior to the campaign's beginning, a baseline survey (consisting of two types of surveys) took place in the 88 project UCs. The aim was to calculate the number of out of school children as well as the status of basic facilities in schools. The baseline survey revealed:

- Of the 662,963 children (of which 314,163 were girls) aged 5-16 years old, over 43% were out of school.
- Of the 3,457 government, private and Madrassah schools surveyed, the most non-functional schools were found to be government schools where 14% of schools were non-functional.
- In terms of basic facilities, government schools had the most missing facilities.

- Overall in all schools, the situation of missing facilities was:
 - o 67% of schools did not have electricity
 - o 64% did not have sewerage system
 - o 46% did not have clean drinking water
 - o 44% did not have a main gate
 - o 43% did not have a boundary wall
 - o 38% did not have furniture
 - o 35% did not have toilets

The objectives of the campaign, i.e. to increase the access of rural children to education and for communities to lobby for quality education were achieved through a series of activities which consisted of holding first dialogues with 88 LSOs of the 11 campaign districts and training 173 master trainers from these LSOs. Having done this, the master trainers oriented and trained the general bodies of the LSOs; specifically regarding how to carry out the campaign. In order to make parents aware of the importance of education, 880 Community Resource Persons (CRPs) were trained in how to deliver awareness-raising sessions to parents. Over 246,200 people were made aware through these sessions which allowed the campaign to successfully achieve the enrolment of out of school children. As a result, over 74,000 children were enrolled into school.

In order to lobby effectively with local stakeholders at the UC and district levels, two types of surveys were carried out in order to better understand the actual education-related situation of each UC. Over

276,760 households were surveyed while 3,457 schools were surveyed to evaluate their basic facilities.

In addition to this, other lobbying activities consisted of sending over 42,434 text messages to local stakeholders and community members in which specific issues or missing facilities in schools were highlighted as well as enrolment of out of school children was requested. The campaign also strengthened linkages with local journalists by orienting 106 journalists and carrying out 44 exposure visits of journalists to allow them to see first-hand the condition

of schools in the project areas. 9,434 postcards were also filled out by students in which they drew and wrote about what kind of facilities they required in their schools. These postcards were then sent to stakeholders at the district, provincial and federal levels.

Lastly, lobbying took place face-to-face as well through the District Parent Ittehad meetings. District Parent Ittehad committees consisted of representatives from the grassroots communities as well as officials from the Education Department, elected politicians, political party workers,

journalists and officials from local NGOs. These meetings allowed community members and these local stakeholders to all come together on one platform to resolve education-related issues. Overall, a total of 53 District Parent Ittehad meetings took place. As a result of these various kinds of lobbying efforts of the communities and their LSOs, there have been improvements in basic facilities in 741 schools. Combined, these 876 improvements add up to an estimated value of over Rs. 150 million!

About the Case Studies

This collection of case studies provides a glimpse into the lives of some of the children, households and communities that were positively affected by this campaign; something that cannot be gauged through statistical reports and evaluations. Benefits converged around two key types; in terms of enrolment of out of school children and

secondly in terms of improvement in basic facilities of schools. Subsequently, the following case studies have been divided into these two broad categories. In addition to this, case studies were taken from all 11 campaign districts covering the four provinces of the country.

COMMUNITY CAMPAIGNING FOR INCREASED ENROLMENT

IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR EDUCATION, THE CAMPAIGN FOCUSED ON MAKING PARENTS AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITY IN ENSURING THAT THEIR CHILDREN WERE RECEIVING THE BEST QUALITY OF EDUCATION. THIS WAS DONE THROUGH AWARENESS-RAISING SESSIONS AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL WHEREBY COMMUNITY RESOURCE PERSONS (CRPS) WOULD DELIVER SESSIONS TO 25-30 PEOPLE AT A TIME THROUGH AN INTERACTIVE SESSION USING VISUAL AIDS. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY MAKING SURE THAT THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION REMAINED HIGHLIGHTED. THIS TOOK PLACE THROUGH EVENTS SUCH AS VILLAGE AND UC LEVEL WALKS WHICH HAVE TOTALLED TO OVER 162. IN ADDITION TO THIS, 11 DISTRICT WALKS (OF WHICH THREE WERE CONVENTIONS) ALSO TOOK PLACE. OTHER MEANS OF HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION WERE THROUGH THE USE OF SPECIAL EVENTS SUCH AS CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY AND WORLD LITERACY DAY AS WELL AS ORGANISING VILLAGE LEVEL SEMINARS AND PRINTING SMALL FLYERS EXPLAINING THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION. THIS RESULTED IN THE ENROLMENT OF OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN BY PARENTS AS WELL AS THROUGH COS, VOS AND LSOS WHEREBY DOOR-TO- DOOR VISITS WERE MADE WITH THE AIM OF MOTIVATING HOUSEHOLDS TO ENROL THEIR OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN INTO SCHOOL. IN THE CASE OF SOME HOUSEHOLDS, THESE GROUPS OF ORGANISED COMMUNITIES WOULD ALSO TAKE ON THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FACILITATING PARENTS TO ENROL THEIR CHILDREN BY GOING WITH THEM TO THE SCHOOL TO HELP THEM WITH THE PROCESS.

A TOTAL OF **74,677** OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN (OF WHICH **28,262** WERE GIRLS) HAVE BEEN ENROLLED INTO SCHOOL; THE STORIES OF SOME WHICH HAVE BEEN DOCUMENTED IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION.

BAHAWALPUR

Yes, We Can Make a Difference



FATIMA AFTER BEING ENROLLED IN SCHOOL

Fatima is a seven year old girl from village 107/DB located in union council 106/DB, tehsil Yazman. Village

107/DB is situated about 20 kilometres from Yazman town. Yazman is a rundown tehsil of Bahawalpur district. 80% of its villages are located in the Cholistan desert which is the most deprived and remotest area of Bahawalpur district – especially in the context of facilities. In addition to this, the literacy rate is very low in almost all of the villages located in this area.

Fatima has five sisters and two brothers. Her father is a labourer. Due to old traditions, conservative mind-sets and a lack of education, most of the people of the village do not send their girls to school. The locals think that girls have nothing to gain from education and are good only for household chores. This was the case for Fatima as well. Her paramount wish was to go to school but the environment of her area did not allow her to do so. She often would see her brothers and other boys of the area with colourful uniforms and school bags going to school while on her way to the fields with her mother where she would help her get feed for their livestock.

One day she expressed her desire to go to school and get an education with her mother. Her mother in turn told her that her father would never ever allow her to do so and would get extremely angry. She told Fatima to never talk again of school.

In the month of October, 2014 Fatima's mother was invited by her neighbourhood's women to attend a meeting in a nearby house. Fatima and her mother were going to fields for their routine work at that time when she got invited. So she took Fatima along to attend the meeting. When they reached the venue, they found out that the meeting was being held by the members of Village Organisation 106/DB and was regarding creating awareness for education and enrolment of out of school children. At the end of the meeting, a female member of the VO asked Fatima whether she was going to school or not. Her mother told them that in their area, people do not send their daughters to school due to cultural restrictions and old traditions. The members of the VO told Fatima's mother that education was a basic right of every child and that their religion also instructed them to get educated.

The members urged Fatima's mother to send Fatima to school but her mother told them that her husband was very strict in these matters and that she could not go against his decisions. The members decided to meet Fatima's father in this regard. In the first meeting, Fatima's father gave a negative response and refused to send Fatima to school. Members of the VO continuously followed up and paid several visits to Fatima's home to convince her father. After consistent meetings, finally Fatima's father agreed to send his daughter to school.

At last Fatima's dream came true and she got enrolled in a nearby private school in class prep. She is now very happy after getting admission in school and is finally able to wear a colourful uniform and have a school bag. Fatima told the members of the VO that after completion of her studies, she would become a teacher and teach the children of her area free of cost.

THATTA

Where There's a Will, There's a Way

Keti Bander is a union council of District Thatta and is located at the edge of the Arabian Sea. The living standard of the people there is very poor. The education standard is well below normal benchmarks due to the fact that most of the schools there have been closed for a long time.

Revenue village Jamnasar is part of the union council. The village has 515 children who are not attending school due to three closed Government schools. There is only one private school which is functional in this revenue village.

Mr. Ramzan Sanghar is a teacher at Sindh Education Foundation School and resident of village Abdul Hakeem Sanghar. The LSO nominated him as a community resource person. Having obtained training, he started to conduct education awareness sessions in different settlements of village Jamnasar. It was very difficult for him to motivate people to send their children in the school because schools were closed with the Government not taking any steps to open them.

After his hard work and efforts, parents agreed to send their children in the schools that were open. He contacted a private school called the Citizen Foundation (about 4 kilometres away from the village of Jamnasar).

Due to his efforts, 54 children have been newly enrolled in the school as of March 2015. Ramzan continued to work for the children of his village by contacting a local philanthropist. He conveyed the problems of his village to Akbar Kalhoro, resulting in the fact that he was provided with a mini bus which would be solely used to pick and drop students from and to the school. This has eased the problems of the poor parents of the village since their children can now safely go to their nearest functional school.

CHILDREN USING FREE
BUS SERVICE



JAFFARABAD

Enrolment Campaign led by Women



AWARENESS WALK FOR ENROLLMENT BY WOMEN, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The women of village Noor Mohammad Nawarra have taken things into their own hands when it came to the education of their children. The village is situated in union council Cattle Farm, Tehsil Jhatpat, in Jaffarabad. The population of this village is approximately 2,131, with 287 households. Balochi, Saraiki and Sindhi languages are spoken in the village. The population is deprived and neglected of basic human rights and necessities such as health, clean drinking water, electricity and sustainable livelihood sources.

There is one Government Girls Primary School (GGPS) and one Government Boys Primary School (GBPS) in the village, but the enrolment in the GGPS was very poor with only 13 girls being enrolled. Since most of the residents are extremely poor, they do not pay any attention to girl's education. As a result, most girls either spend their time at home taking care of the house or in the fields with their parents working hard.

Having taken part in the Alif Ailaan campaign for education, the community of Noor Mohammad Nawarra realised that they cannot be developed until their girls get educated too. Therefore, they agreed to work for the improvement of education. They carried out awareness-raising sessions and started enrolling children into school; especially girls. VO members met all the parents individually and motivated them to enrol their school age girls in school. Women members of the village played an important role in this campaign. They had many meetings with all the women of the village and visited each house where they met them. During their door to door visit they motivated them to enrol their out of school girls in school.

Meanwhile, the VO arranged a mega event in the form of an awareness walk; carried out by the women of the village. In this walk, women, out of school girls, teachers and students participated. Due to these continuous efforts, 43 new girls were enrolled in the school. Day by day, the enrolment has increased gradually in the school with a total of 61 girls enrolled in the school. Amazingly, all of these girls have stayed in school as the village women pay regular follow up visits to check retention.

The community's next goal is to get a second teacher for their girls' school due to the increase in enrolment. They have already met with the DEO Jaffarabad for this purpose and are hopeful that they will soon achieve the goals as well.

RAJANPUR

Community Self-Help Initiative for Education

Rajanpur district is in the far south-west of Punjab, Pakistan. The district is a narrow 20 to 40 miles wide strip of land sandwiched between the Indus River on the East and the Sulaiman Mountains on the West. Rajanpur is situated on the right bank of the river which is bounded on the north by Dera Ghazi Khan, in the east by Muzaffargarh and Rahim Yar Khan Districts, in the south lies district Jacobabad of Sindh province while on the west are the districts of Dera Bugti and Barkhan of Balochistan province.

Union council Kotla Diwan is one of the deprived union councils in Tehsil Jampur, district Rajanpur. Basti Gopang is situated in the union council and is a rural settlement of 35 households which lies 15 kilometres away from the busy Indus highway. The population's livelihood depends on farming, livestock and working as casual labourers in the nearby town of Kotla Mughlan. The people of this settlement are very poor and their literacy rate is not more than 0.3%. They were not interested in educating their children because of poverty, unawareness and absence of a school in their settlement. Their nearest government school is around 4 kilometres away which made it too far a distance for their children to attend school.

After the involvement of their LSO in an education campaign, the members of the settlement were sensitised on the importance of education and their role in improving it. This sensitisation was done through their local community resource person, Faiz Rahim. Due to this sensitisation and the newly found energy and commitment that they gained, the community opened up a school in their settlement.

This new school now has 20 girls and 22 boys regularly attending and studying in it. A local man was hired to be their teacher and who says "I am very happy to teach here and I feel proud to teach the children of my area. I feel proud every single day!"

The parents are also very happy to see their children studying in schools. They now have a great wish to see their children get a higher education and become respected citizens of their country. They are fully committed to educate their children and are ready to face all challenges in this regard. They now realise that education is the key to resolving all problems of life.

MANSEHRA

Enrolment of Children and Help in Family Matters

Balakot is a far-flung union council of District Mansehra. The less privileged community earns their living through farming, seasonal businesses, government services, skilled and unskilled labour. Balakot town was totally destroyed in the October 2005 earthquake.

Mr. Nazeer Hussain and his family settled down in Saudi Arabia after the earthquake of 2005. He has six children. The ages of his youngest children are 9 and 10. In late 2014, Mr. Hussain passed away leaving his family with a very uncertain future upon return to Pakistan.

Mr. Hussain's two children Mohammad Niaz and Gorri Bibi were studying in classes two and three in Saudi Arabia. In Pakistan, could not carry on studying due to their family's financial troubles. During data collection, a local activist informed the LSO about these children and their financial troubles. The LSO's members met their family members and asked them about their children. They were told that they did not have any source of income to enrol the children in school. The LSO took responsibility for enrolment of these children and got them admitted into a private school in Balakot free of cost. The LSO has also prepared a case of death claim subsidy for the remaining family members and submitted their case to the Overseas Pakistani Foundation and the Protection Office through the Consul General of Pakistan. The case has been approved by the Saudi government and soon the vulnerable family will receive their claim.



ENROLMENT OF CHILDREN IN SCHOOL



BAHAWALPUR

I want to Become a Teacher

Tauqeer Hussain, 9 belongs to Chak 75/DB which is located in one of Bahawalpur's remotest areas of Tehsil Yazman, near the Cholistan desert. Tauqeer Hussain was studying in a Madrassa situated near his home which unfortunately had a teacher who would punish almost all the children without giving any reason for their punishment. This behaviour was naturally very disturbing to not only Tauqeer but also to the other children. The students complained many times to their parents regarding the humiliating behaviour of their teacher but due to the religious aspect, none of the parents took any action against the teacher. "I like studying and want to become a teacher in future but due to the teacher's humiliating and rude behaviour, I didn't want to continue my studies", Tauqeer said.

One day the teacher punished Tauqeer very badly with the result that he fell unconscious. His two friends had to take him home. It was on that day that Tauqeer decided to leave the Madrassa. His parents were very angry because of this but he told them that if they ever tried to send him back to the Madrassah, he would run away from home.

Tauqeer left the Madrassa and his parents made him work by taking their animals out to graze. Not happy with how he had ended up, Tauqeer had no choice but to take care of their animals. One day Tauqeer was passing through a nearby neighbourhood along with his animals when he was called out at by a group of people sitting under a big tree. He was asked by them about why he was out of school and grazing animals. Tauqeer told them the whole story of the Madrassa's teacher and his dream of becoming a teacher. It turned out that the group of people consisted of members of the Local Support Organisation working in that area. They assured him that they would help him to fulfil his dream of going to school and becoming a teacher. The LSO members contacted Tauqeer's parents and convinced them to send him to a nearby non-formal school. Having been convinced, Tauqeer's parents agreed to send him to the school.

Tauqeer has now been admitted to the new school and is studying wholeheartedly to achieve his dream.



TAUQEEER HUSSAIN AFTER ENROLLMENT
WITH OTHER SCHOOL CHILDREN

DERA GHAZI KHAN

Mother's Goal to Educate her Children



SUKHAAN MAI

Sukhaan Mai is a poor woman who lives in village Mazari Wala, union council Mutefariq Chahan. The village is about 40 kilometres away from Dera Ghazi Khan City.

Sukhaan Mai works as a daily wage labourer picking cotton and harvesting wheat in peak season. She earns approximately Rs. 8,000 per month. Sukhaan Mai lives with her aged husband, seven daughters and one son. As a result of being poor, Sukhaan Mai has been able to educate a few of her children but not her physically-challenged daughter, Memoona, 12. Her biggest wish has been to earn enough to give Memoona the education that she deserves. One day Sukhaan Mai attended a meeting in her village arranged by a community resource person (CRP) or activist of her Local Support Organisation. The CRP told her and other community members about the "Mobilising Communities to Demand Education (Article 25-A) and Local Accountability" project and the importance of education. One of the enlightening facts for Sukhaan Mai was Article 25-A which allowed for any 5-16 year old child to get a free education in government schools. She told this to her family members and then made contact with her nearest Village Organisation (VO).

The members of the VO briefed her as well of her children's fundamental right to education; with the result that the next day she went to her nearest school along with the VO members. There they asked the teacher to enrol her children in the school, including Memoona. The teacher obliged and enrolled her children into the school the very next day.

Sukhaan Mai now has two more children who go to school. Memoona too is very happy as she is now able to learn and interact with other children in the school. The VO members are also now working to get a wheelchair for her so that she can move around easily on her own.

BATTAGRAM

I will Become a Teacher and Educate my Community

Helplessness in education can be overcome if attempted. Massive numbers of parents believe the myth that they cannot get their children educated because due to being poor. After some time they just lose all hope in education and do not care about its terrible consequences. Haleem Shah, a poor resident of village Ughaz Banda, union council Peshora, Tehsil and District Battagram, is a tenant and does not possess even his own house. He manages to get labour work irregularly and is encircled by numerous problems. Haleem says “poverty is a curse; I cannot arrange bread and butter for the family. Getting my children educated is not my priority because it seems of no use to me”. Subsequently his six year old son Muhammad Fawad, was never admitted in school and was paid no attention by his parents.

Under the “Mobilising Communities to Demand Education (Article 25-A) and Local Accountability” project, Village Organisation (VO) Peshora organised a meeting with the Parent Teacher Council(PTC) Ughaz Banda with the facilitation of the LSO. The issue of out of school children and dropped out children was discussed in detail; including the case of Muhammad Fawad. After the meeting, the VO met Haleem Shah and convinced him to admit his son into school. Haleem Shah was not very much motivated. He was thinking that admission of his son is impossible, because he should have been enrolled two years ago; no one would allow him admission at this stage. VO Peshora motivated him and took responsibility of his son’s admission. Members of the VO then held meetings with the Head teacher of the school and discussed the entire matter thoroughly. With the efforts of VOs members, Muhammad Fawad was admitted in the school. Moreover, teachers were requested to pay extra care and attention to Muhammad Fawad in order to ensure his retention.

Muhammad Fawad now says” I will become a teacher and will educate my community”.



MUHAMMAD FAWAD AFTER ENROLLED IN SCHOOL

HARIPUR

A Passionate Man

Mr. Muhammad Saleem (LSO General Secretary) is a person with high goals and who is determined to work for education. When LSO Tamer e Nou was formed, he was appointed as General Secretary. When the Alif Ailaan campaign was initiated, Saleem played his role very actively and motivated the LSO and its members to participate fully in the campaign. Saleem launched a door to door enrolment campaign along with the Head Teacher of Government Primary School Darwaish #3. The Head Teacher, Gulzar was asked to identify out of school children in the different areas of the UC. Areas coming under the enrolment campaign were Naseem Town, Swat Colony, Khyber Ada, Darwesh Mere, Swat Chowk and Naseem Town sector.

Regarding GPS #3, during the enrolment campaign, it was discovered that the school had only eight students. It was a very frustrating situation. Saleem held a broad-based meeting with the local community (specifically those households with out of school children; found through the data that his LSO had collected) in addition to meeting teachers, Education Department officials and local politicians. His aim was to increase enrolment in his local school.

During his efforts, Saleem had to face many hardships and barriers. For example initially the school administration would not allow Saleem to enter school premises without the permission of the Education Department. In order to convince parents, he took his own child out of private school and enrolled him into GPS #3.

As a result, Saleem was successful in increasing the enrolment of GPS #3 from eight to over 70 students!

Now as a result of the work he carried out, his relationship with the local community has become much stronger. This can be seen by the fact that Saleem stood as candidate in the local elections from his village and won! Saleem is hopeful that the education situation of his village will improve even further with continued commitment of the community and himself.

THATTA

The Awful Condition of Education

Government Boys Primary School Qasim Jat is a school by name only. Functionally it has lost its purpose of educating the children from not only Qasim Jat but four other villages as well; covering approximately

200 households. The men of these 200 households who are fishermen by profession and remain at sea for 10 to 12 days every month. This means that their whole lives revolve around the sea and fishing, and they are unable to full give attention to other matters such as the education of their children. The children of these five villages are all out of school due to the fact that the teacher appointed to the school does not come. Instead Government Boys Primary School Qasim Jat has become a shop where fruit is sold. The biggest impact of this was on the innocent children of these villages who have been deprived of their basic right to education.

Government Boys Primary School Mullan Muhammad Uris Khaskeli is situated in the revenue village of Palki, union council Garho. Before August 2014 only seven children were enrolled in the school. After the “Mobilising Communities to Demand Education (Article 25-A) and Local Accountability” project, Mr. Muhammad Ismail Khaskeli, VO member and school teacher took it upon himself to improve the school in his village. Mr. Khaskeli recalls that he had “become deeply disappointed when he saw such few children in the school”. Therefore with the support of the LSO, he visited numerous villages in order to motivate its residents to give children their basic right to education. With his constant efforts, Mr. Khaskeli was able to enrolled 23 children into the local school.



ENROLLED CHILDREN
IN THE SCHOOL BY
MR. KHASKELI

MANSEHRA

If you Educate a Man, you Educate an Individual but if you Educate a Woman, you Educate a Nation

Union council Kaghan is about 100 kilometres away from the district headquarters town of Mansehra. Most of the school infrastructure within the union council was destroyed during the earthquake of

2005. In addition to this, due to its high altitude, there is a heavy seasonal migration which takes place every year especially during winter where residents move to warmer pastures while an influx of tourists comes during the summer. As a result, the enrolment of children of the area has always been disrupted due to this with children having massive breaks in their studies. The residents do not realise the seriousness of this disruptive pattern and who are happier in not enrolling their children into school at all in order to avoid the hassle.

This same situation was present in the village of Kalas Jamal Mari where when Community Resource Person of local LSO Mr Liaqat Ali started awareness-raising sessions, he came to know that the enrolment of girls in the village was non-existent. He realised that there was no separate school for girls in the village Kalas Jamal Mari; the residents of which had not bothered to make any efforts to obtain one.

This issue was discussed in the UC Parent Ittehad meeting in which it was decided that door-to-door campaigning would take place in which members would meet parents and motivate them to send their girls into the village's Government Boys Primary school. After several months of campaigning, the community agreed to send their girls to school.

As a result, so far over 20 girls have been enrolled in the local boys' school. The community is one step closer to saving the futures of at least 20 families.

BAHAWALPUR

Enrolment of her Children in School



SOCIAL ORGANIZER WITH THE FAMILY OF ENROLLED CHILDREN

The President of VO Phool, Ms. Uzma Nazir found Razia and her family consisting of her four daughters and husband. This family lives in village 106/DB near union council office 106/DB, district Bahawalpur. Three of their daughters are of school-going age but are not going to school. The family said that the reason for not sending their daughters to school was that they could not bear their children's education expenses.

After some days Uzma became successful in conducting a meeting with the mother of the children at the VO office. Uzma found out that Razia was 30 years old and that she had lived in the village for the last 15 years. Razia said that they were very poor, with her husband working as a day labourer in the fields. Uzma then asked Razia if she could meet her husband as well.

When Uzma met Razia's husband, she asked him about the education of their children. He told her that they could not provide books, uniforms and fee etc. for their children. Uzma however made him realise his responsibility and told him that if you could afford to smoke daily and have enough money for Dish TV, then it meant that you could afford to pay for your children's educational expenses. When Uzma saw both husband and wife fall silent, she knew that if she pushed a bit more, she would be successful in getting their children enrolled into school.

Uzma told Razia's husband that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had said that to gain education is the responsibility of every Muslim man and woman. She advised him to leave smoking and that the same amount should be used for the education of their children.

Both husband and wife agreed to enrol their children into school. Uzma helped them in the enrolment process with the result that all three school-going children are now enrolled into school.

BAHAWALPUR

A Step Forward towards Improving Education



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS IN
GOVERNMENT CENTRE PRIMARY
SCHOOL, BASTI PAHORAN -
BAHAWLAPUR

Basti Pahoran is very populous settlement of union council Jalal Abad's revenue village Utera. Basti Pahoran is situated about 25 kilometres northwest of Bahawalpur City. Comparatively, Jalal Abad has a very low literacy rate compared to the other rural union councils of Bahawalpur. In the context of educational facilities, Jalal Abad is the most deprived union council of Bahawalpur District as it has only one high school in the whole UC and no facility for girls' higher education. One of its schools is running without a building. Another of its schools has no boundary wall at all while other schools have various issues such as no electricity connection, no safe drinking water and washrooms. There are a total of 19 schools in the UC including private ones and Madrassahs. Due to this very low number of schools, there are 4,700 children that are out of school; they are occupied in child labour and other home based work activities.

The Government Centre Primary School, Basti Pahoran was a Masjid Maktab School before 2008. It was upgraded to primary level in 2008 but there was only one classroom, no facility of washroom, boundary wall, main gate etc. When the Punjab Government announced co-education in public primary schools from 2010 onwards, the village still had a large number of girls sitting at home due to the non-availability of basic facilities and a female teacher. Enrolment of boy students was also very low due to the insecure environment of the school and lack of facilities.

The issue of this school was taken up by the members of Village Organisation (VO) Utera. They visited the school and met with its teacher and discussed the whole matter. Members of the VO also discussed the matter with their Local Support Organisation Jalal Abad and the issue was taken up in the LSO's General Body meeting. A resolution was passed that this issue would be observed at top priority and meetings would be conducted with the Education Department as well as local politicians in this regard. LSO/VO members conducted several meetings with the Education Department and local politicians and highlighted the issue.

As a result of continuous follow ups/meetings by the members of LSO/VO and residents of Basti Pahoran, a grant for the school for provision of new rooms, washrooms, boundary walls and other basic facilities was approved in 2014. Construction was started in the month of August 2014 and finally the work has now been completed in December 2014. The school now has two classrooms, two washrooms, furniture for students and teachers and a boundary wall. Enrolment of students has increased to 100 and the residents of Basti Pahoran are now sending their daughters to school. The school has now 30 girls and 70 boy students who are being taught by two teachers.

JAMSHORO

Improving Teacher Absenteeism



LSO PARENT ITTEHAD
MEETING UC JHANGARA

Village Babar is located in UC Jhangara, in District Jamshoro. The village is inhabited with an estimated population of 387 in the form of 55 households. According to the villagers there is one Government Boys Primary School which provides service to around 49 students. However by August, 2014 the school's teacher, Mr. Ghulam Sarver Baricho remained absent from school for several months and the students were unable to attend school.

The villagers were aware about the matter; however they did not try to resolve it. According to one villager, Shaheena, the teacher had a background in politics and was the relative of a local political leader. They thought that if they were to complain about the teacher's absenteeism, the local politician would make their lives difficult.

However after the community took part in the Alif Ailaan education campaign, things began to change. A meeting of the UC Parent Ittehad was organised in the UC where this issue was raised. They had decided that they would mention this point during their district level meeting with the Education Department. In the meantime it was planned by the LSO and VO members that they would also complain against the teacher by going to the Education Supervisor, Syed Dilbar Shah directly. He discontinued the salary of the teacher for the next three months and said that he would look for another teacher.

Later on in June of 2015, in the UC Parent Ittehad meeting, Ms. Shabana Baricho wife of Mr. Ghulam Sarver, the teacher, discussed with the members that they should request the Education Supervisor to allow her husband's salary. She strongly apologised and ensured that her husband would attend all the classes regularly and in case he was absent, she would teach the children. The UC Parent Ittehad decided to give the teacher another chance and is monitoring his attendance closely with the support of the Education Supervisor.

PISHIN

Self-help Initiatives of Community are the indicators of Positive Change



Killi (village) Band Shikalzai is located in union council Malikyar, district Pishin. There are 52 households in the village with a population of 221. The village is situated north of Band Khushdil Khan Dam. Killi Band Shikalzai is positioned in the remotest of areas of District Pishin. The situation of the village is not different from the other villages of Balochistan; where the population is deprived of basic facilities such as health and roads. The residents' main source of income is agriculture. There is only one Government Boys Primary School which was functioning without a boundary wall, main gate and water. However, the school was functional and was providing some level of education as compared to other schools of the area. However, because it lacked basic facilities, there were hardly any students enrolled.

Mr. Muhammad Ramzan who is a member of the local Village Organisation (VO) said that when his LSO started the Alif Ailaan education campaign, soon all of their community members became much more aware regarding the importance of education and of education-related issues in their UC.

In various meetings of the UC Parent Ittehad, the improvement of physical conditions of schools, provision of school supplies such as furniture, reading and writing material for children would be discussed. After these series of meetings, the LSO decided to talk to the Education Department as well as politicians to highlight these problems. The community continued highlighting the issue of the missing boundary wall of Killi Band Shikalzai's school through text messages. Even though there has been no response as yet, the community members decided to build a temporary boundary wall by pooling their own resources. They ended up building that wall as well as obtaining a main gate and connecting their local school with water supply through taps.

With this temporary work, the community has seen an increase in the enrolment of their local school with 40 additional children being enrolled. They are continuing to lobby with the Education Department and politicians until they have obtained their boundary wall and other basic facilities for their school. The Education Department itself has departmental obligations to support them with provision of facilities.

JAFFARABAD

Re-opening of a Closed School



SCHOOL CHILDREN ARE STUDYING AFTER RE-OPENING AND APPOINTMENT OF TEACHER IN JAFFARABAD

Village Roshan Khan Jamali is situated in union council Hafizabad of district Jaffarabad at a distance of 15 kilometres. The population of the village is approximately 990 with 127 households scattered across several kilometres. Residents primarily speak Balochi and Sindhi. Village Roshan Khan Jamali has only one Government Boys Primary School (GBPS) which unfortunately has been closed since 2013 due to unavailability of a teacher; even though it had 50 students enrolled there. In addition to this, the school only had a single room whose condition was not satisfactory at all.

The community members approached the Education Department several times for the placement of a teacher but they could not get any sort of success. As a result, they were discouraged and lost all hope for making the school functional again. In mid-2014, the village participated in the Alif Ailaan education campaign in which their aim was to increase enrolment of children and to improve basic facilities in schools. As a result, the community members carried out awareness raising sessions and restarted their lobbying efforts. The VO had a meeting in which they decided that they would re-open their school on self-help basis. During the meeting Mr. Akhter Ali, a community member, showed his willingness to become a volunteer teacher. All the members agreed that they will start their non-functional school with a volunteer teacher. They also decided to increase the enrolment of the school and to include all out of school children.

Thus the VO initiated a campaign for increasing the enrolment of out of school children. VO members met all the parents individually and motivated them to enrol their school age children in school. Initially 21 children were sent by community to attend school. As the school re-started with the volunteer teacher, a total of 35 children were enrolled. Meanwhile, the VO circulated text messages to all the relevant stakeholders highlighting the issue of their non-functional school. VO members also had meetings with the Education Department for re-opening of their school and posting a teacher. Due to the efforts of the village community members, their VO and LSO, Education Department appointed a permanent teacher to the school.

Both students and villagers are now very happy due to the re-opening of their school. The VO continues to observe the attendance and retention of children. In addition to this, the volunteer teacher is still supporting the teacher and assisting him in the school. The teacher is also facilitated by the community members who provide him with food daily.

THARPARKAR

Raising Voices for Basic Right to Education

Village Mahavo Bheel of union council Khario Ghulam Shah, District Tharparkar, is situated at a distance of 12 kilometres from Islamkot town. This village consists of 62 households with a population of 425. The village is deprived of basic facilities such as health, education and electricity. The main income source of the inhabitants is seasonal farming, daily wages and harvesting crops of the barrage area during drought- like situation.

There are no link roads or electricity in the village, despite the fact that a metaled road and electricity passes at a distance of two kilometres! Safe drinking water is also available but at a distance of two kilometres. There is one Government Primary School in the village but has been closed since the past two years due to unavailability of teachers. The future of 70 students was heading towards darkness. People were unaware of how to raise their voices for their children's basic rights through media, protest or any other way.

The villagers started efforts for appointing a teacher and extra room facility for the school. Through a long process, the Sindh Government provided them with one extra room which was completed in May 2015. However the school remained shut due to lack of teachers.

When the community members learnt about the Alif Ailaan campaign, they realised that they could work together to approach their local stakeholders. The union council and district Parent Ittehad meetings were an ideal forum for community members to raise their voices. They kept this agenda point in three continuous District Parent Ittehad meetings. The school could still not be opened due to political interference and non-willingness of teachers. Parents along with their children protested twice before the Press Club Islamkot for appointment of teachers. Coverage of these protests appeared in local papers as well.

Community members kept up the pressure by organising awareness walks which ended with demands for facilities such as teachers. At last community representatives were able to get their Taluka Education Officer, Mr. Jan Mohammad Bajeer to come to their UC Parent Ittehad meeting. There they succeeded to convince the TEO for appointment of two teachers in two closed schools of their UC, including village Mevo Bheel.

Through all these efforts, the Education Department was compelled to provide a teacher (which was done in May, 2015). Now all the villagers are very happy that because of their protesting and lobbying, they were able to get their school reopened. The school enrolled a further 59 students as a result.



NEW EXTRA ROOM FROM GOVERNMENT OF SINDH

BAHAWALPUR

Construction of GPS Nahar Wali School



CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUILDING IN BAHAWALPUR

“It was the mid of December, 2014 when we started to work more proactively on this; the classrooms were becoming more dangerous day by day. The students were scared of sitting in the classrooms. The Education Department was not acting seriously on this matter despite acknowledging that the building was “dangerous”. We were in the middle of nowhere”, said the newly transferred head teacher of Government Primary School Nahar Wali.

GPS Nahar Wali is situated in union council Jalal Abad, Tehsil Bahawalpur. Union council Jalal Abad is one of the most deprived union council of Bahawalpur with a very low literacy rate.

The head teacher continued, “We were losing hope of having better infrastructure for our students. The toilet blocks were also in a very bad and non-functional state. We visited the concerned Member of the National Assembly (MNA) to talk to him but all in vain. Every time we visited the MNA’s house, his secretary told us that he is in Islamabad”. The head teacher said that during this time, the LSO’s President, Mr. M. Arif came to him and asked him to write down the details of all the applications that he had sent to the Education Department. He also asked for copies of those applications. Mr. Arif told the head teacher that they were arranging a district level meeting with the Education Department officials and other stakeholders to highlight the education related issues of union council Jalal Abad.

A few days later, Arif came again to the teacher and said that they had highlighted the issue of the school and had gotten very positive responses from the Education Department. Arif also said that he along with other parents in the union council was trying to contact the MNA Mr. Najeed Awaisi to take up this issue. After about a week, at last, the head teacher along with the UC members managed to meet up with the MNA. The head teacher along with the members briefed the MNA regarding the whole scenario and provided copies of all the applications to him. The MNA assured his full cooperation and support in this regard. He talked with the EDO Education and wrote a letter to DCO Bahawalpur with his recommendation to allocate funds for the new building of GPS Nahar Wali. The very next day, the MNA called the head teacher and the LSO members to come to the DCO’s office. It was there that the entire issue was discussed.

DCO Bahawalpur responded immediately with a very positive response and wrote a letter to the Building Department and directed them to prepare BoQs for the construction of a new building for the school. The Building Department along with Education Department officials visited the school and presented the estimates of the school to the DCO. Construction work started immediately without delay and now the school has three new classrooms and one office. Two new toilet blocks are also being constructed and will be completed in a couple of weeks.

JAFFARABAD

Small Changes Reap Huge Rewards

Village Suleman Marre is situated in union council Naseerabad which is about 12 kilometres away from district headquarters Jaffarabad. The population of the village is approximately 665, with 40 households scattered across several miles. The community speaks mainly Balochi and Sindhi. The population is deprived and neglected with even basic necessities like health, clean drinking water, electricity and sustainable livelihood sources being unavailable. Majority of the people depend on agriculture or domestic livestock for income generation. In village Suleman Marre, there is only one Government Boys Primary School with one room, but it was non-functional due to low enrolment and students' absenteeism. Due to this situation, the teacher was also not regular. As the overall literacy rate is very low in the village, parents were not aware of the importance of education thereby not paying attention to the education of their children.

After the engagement of the LSO in the education campaign, the community was sensitised and made aware about Article 25-A and their responsibilities for the improvement of education. The LSO president organised a meeting of the VO and community in the village in which they discussed the importance of education and their non-functional school. In the meeting, parents decided that they would enrol all school aged children in school and that they would meet the Deputy District Education Officer – Male (DDEO (M)) regarding teacher absenteeism. They also decided that they will meet their local teacher to start coming to school again to teach their children.

The VO members met all the parents individually and motivated them to enrol all school age children in school. In this way they mobilised parents to increase enrolment from 30 students to 73 (boys 58 and girls 15). Meanwhile, the VO President along with LSO president met the DDEO (M) Mr. Ali Murad and shared the problem of their school and teacher absenteeism. He took notice of the issue and he asked the teacher to join the school on a regular basis. Due to this action, the teacher started coming to work again. The VO President met him and ensured the full support of the community for the better education of their children. He also informed the teacher that parents would now send their children on a regular basis.

The VO also took action regarding the school's facilities. As enrolment increased in the school, the VO felt that many students were coming to school without books and that there was no proper seating arrangements. The VO President along with LSO President met with UNICEF's Coordinator Mr. Basheer Lehri (since UNICEF was also working in the district on education). They shared the problems of their school with him and he assured that he would support the school. After one week, the UNICEF coordinator provided some material for the school which included:

- Plastic Chattai (mat) for 73 students
- Text books
- Chalks - 5 packets
- Pencils - 6 Packets

The provision of this material helped the teacher a lot as well as students to continue their education in the school. As of this moment, the VO has also requested the Education Department for a second teacher as well.



CONSTRUCTION OF NEW BUILDING IN BAHAWALPUR

BATTAGRAM

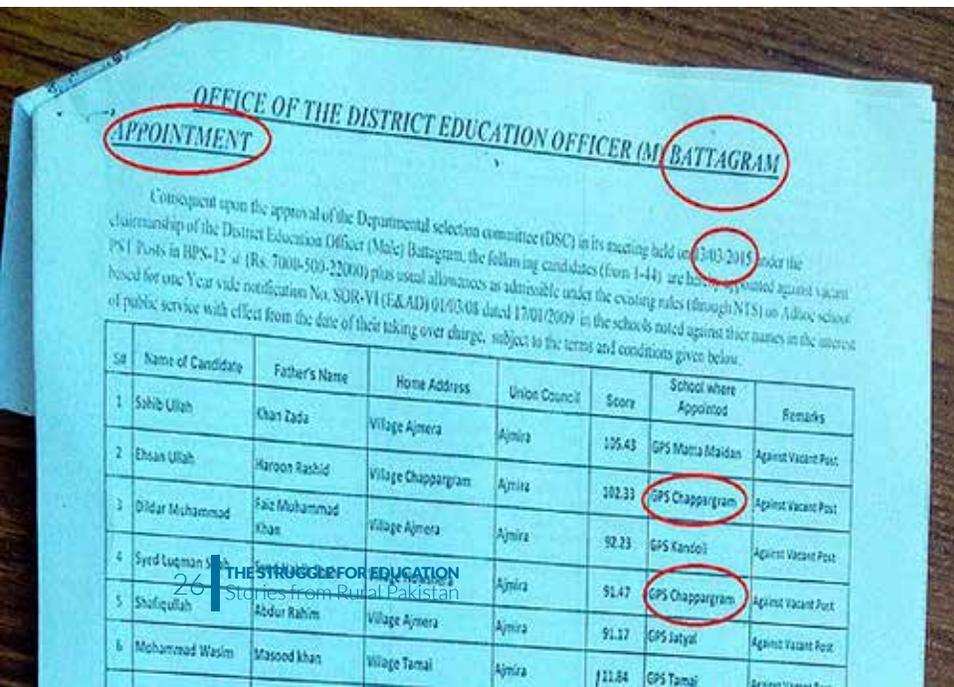
Demanding Appointment of a Teacher

District Battagram is one of the far flung districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Educational indicators for the district are very low and according to the Alif Ailaan's survey, it is ranked at 22 out of 25 districts. The topography of the district is hilly and livelihood opportunities are restricted. Awareness in the communities about importance of education is very low. Local culture and values are the elements that hinder girls' education in the district.

Ajmera union council, being one of the union councils involved in the "Mobilising Communities to Demand Education and Local Accountability", project took it upon themselves to find out from their community members regarding what their exact educational demands and needs were. During meetings they found out that appointment of teachers was one of the most important and commonly identified needs of schools. Student to teacher ratios were extremely high with some schools having a ratio of 239 students being taught by just three teachers. Naturally, this was a big reason for bringing down the quality of education and student's learning outcomes.

The matter was discussed in the meeting of the Local Support Organisation (LSO). Members of the LSO agreed to advocate and raise this issue in their district level Parent Ittehad where their local stakeholders such as politicians and officials of the district Education Department would be present. Members of LSO were identified and were assigned with the responsibility to coordinate with the relevant stakeholders on the subject. Members of LSO held meetings and submitted a proper case for the appointment of two teachers in their required schools. Politicians were also motivated to push the Education Department for the approval of the request.

The efforts of the LSO were successful as the Education Department appointed two teachers on vacant positions.



OFFICIAL NOTICE FROM THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SHOWING APPOINTMENT OF TWO TEACHERS

DERA GHAZI KHAN

Utilisation of School Management Committee Funds

VO Neveed-e-Subha conducted a meeting with its local School Management Committee (SMC) and teachers. The meeting was conducted in the Government Girls' High School in Basti Notak in March,

2015. During their discussion they come to know that the height of the boundary wall of the school was not high enough thereby making it insecure for the students and teachers of the school (considering the recent wave of terrorism in the area and country as a whole). The SMC did not have sufficient funds for the raising of the wall and neither did they have funds for purchasing a CCTV system or a barrier for their main gate. All the members suggested that a secure gate should be installed as a first step for the security of their children (especially since the school was located in the main town of the union council).

A meeting was held after a few days in which the VO members made it a point to convince the SMC members about the dire need for a secure gate; for the safety of the students. They members also briefed the SMC regarding Article 25-A and the responsibilities of various stakeholders; amongst which were SMC members. Having been motivated, the SMC members agreed to utilise their funds for making the school more secure while the remaining amount would be obtained from the Education Department. The members passed a resolution for the raising of boundary wall and installation of barbed wire and a CCTV camera. This was followed by a meeting with the UC's AEO and formation of their purchase and monitoring committee.

The VO members and SMC were successful in obtaining barbed wire, raising their boundary wall and obtaining a CCTV camera. The SMC members commented that "Education is a very necessary right of our children. We will also start meeting with our community members and politicians; for the future of our children!"

JAFFARABAD

Village Organisation Make it Possible to Educate Children!



Village Ghulam Mohammad Kanrani is situated in UC Band Manic of Tehsil Jhatpat, district Jaffarabad. The village consists of 55 households. Balochi and Sindhi languages are spoken in the village. The population is deprived of basic health facilities i.e. clean drinking water, electricity and sustainable livelihood sources. The main source of income is agriculture, whereas some people depend on livestock for earning a living.



In the village, there is a Government Girls Primary School, having enrolment of 51 students. Due to unavailability of teacher, the school has remained closed. The local LSO under the “Mobilising Communities to Demand Education (Article 25-A) and Local Accountability” campaign built the capacities and raised awareness of communities regarding the importance of education and how to improve its quality. These awareness sessions allowed communities to learn about the importance of collective approach and community participation, rights of children, importance of education, self-help initiatives, development linkages with other departments/NGOs etc. These sessions had a positive impact on the minds of community institutions, i.e. Community and Village Organisations (COs and VOs) of village Ghulam Mohammad. Subsequently, they approached the Education Department and shared their problems regarding teacher absenteeism. At the same time, the VO also made their own arrangements in order to ensure that their girls continued with some form of education. They did this by mobilising a volunteer from their village to start teaching in the school. Mr. Ghulam Mustafa who is a VO member, started teaching voluntarily in the school from August 18, 2014. VO members were motivated and were able to get parents to send their girls to school. Initially 50 girls were attending the school. As the school became functional through the self-help initiatives of the VO, the VO members again decided to contact the District Education Officer (DEO) (Female) to find out a permanent solution for girls education.

They had a meeting with DEO Ms. Zuleikha and shared their school problems and requested her to appoint a teacher on permanent basis. Finally, due to the community's continuous efforts and meetings with the DEO, the school is now functional as it has been appointed a government teacher. Furthermore, on the request of VO members, the DEO also provided books to the students. The government teacher joined the school in September, 2014. VO members have managed to enrol 15 more girls in school; making the total number of girls enrolled to 65. This support will definitely have a positive impact on the learning of the students and will increase the enrolment of students in school.

JAMSHORO

My Dream has Come True



Since 2003, Mr. Iqbal Khoso has always wanted a primary school to be established in his village. Now his dream has come true. Iqbal lives in village Rajhari. The village is situated in Deh Dhabhi, Taluka Manjhand, union council Manjhand in district Jamshoro. The village covers an area of 7 hectares with an estimated population of around 3,000 in the form of around 400 households. The village has a predominantly rural society with a set of historic traditions, norms and culture.

According to Mr. Iqbal, among other problems, availability and access to quality primary education is a serious issue for his village.

Desperate to resolve the issue in any way possible, Iqbal by his own efforts established a primary school in 2012 comprising of one room on 400 sq. feet of land. The school could only accommodate 30-40 students out of 96 enrolled. The rest of the children have to go to a nearby village to fulfil their educational needs.

The villagers had also been demanding for a school building along with basic facilities since 2003. They had met with several Education Department officials and political leaders but to no avail.

Having started the Alif Ailaan campaign in their village, a UC Parent Ittehad meeting was held in which this issue was discussed. It was decided that during the district level meeting, they would put these problems across to their Education Department and Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs).

The meeting was held in April of 2015, in which villagers of UC Manjhand, teachers of government primary schools, political workers and media persons were invited. During this meeting, the issue was raised to MPA Faqir Dad Khoso. The MPA said that he would work with the Education Department to make sure that a Government primary school was built in the village. As a result of the district level meeting, the Education Department approved a school building with two class rooms, one office and two washrooms.

MANSEHRA

Coordinated Efforts towards Quality Education

Behali is one of the hilly union councils of Mansehra District. It is 25 kilometres from the district headquarters town of Mansehra. Its population is about 2,500. The community's main source of income is agriculture. Behali was one of the eight UCs which took part in the Alif Ailaan education campaign. The community members found out through their door to door survey that they had a total of 133 children who were out of school. The reason for these out of school children was primarily because of the lack of schools in the area.

During one of the District Parents Ittehad meetings, the community members of Behali met with the representative from the Elementary Education Foundation. During the meeting the issue of the lack of school in village Behali was discussed. On this the representative of the Elementary Education Foundation shared that they had some budget for non-formal schools in the district. Seeing that the community had a genuine need of schools, they agreed to provide a school for the village however they would require a building. The building issue was discussed in the UC Parent Ittehad meeting in which the members all agreed that they would arrange for a building.

The site chosen was a community centre building which was being underutilised. The non-formal school started in April of 2015. Books were provided by community members who contacted their Education Department. Other expenses such as staff salaries are being paid by the Elementary Education Foundation.

The school has already had a rush of enrolment of students; all of whom have dreamed of going to a school where they could learn and feel safe.

BAHAWALPUR

Computer Lab in School

Jamrani Kohna is a backward and deprived union council of Bahawalpur situated almost 30 kilometres from Bahawalpur City. The union council consists of nine revenue villages; all with a serious lack of health and educational facilities.

The union council has a great lack in terms of Information Technology (IT) related facilities in public schools. In today's advanced world, IT skills are a basic need of every student. Due to its high demand, students that are fortunate enough can avail these skills but only in Bahawalpur city. For those with financial and mobility issues, they sadly miss out.

Government Middle School Maharani of union council Jamrani Kohna was also facing the same issue of lack of IT related facilities. Previously during a visit of the LSO President to the school, he noticed that there was no Computer Lab. The school's Head Teacher asked him whether the LSO could help them to resolve this issue. LSO Jamrani Kohna's President assured them to make joint efforts in this regard. The LSO President highlighted this core issue in the monthly meeting of its LSO members with different suggestions being offered from the members. It was suggested that the LSO President and General Secretary should arrange meetings with Education Department officials and the local MNA/MPA to find some solution to the problem. In the next LSO meeting, the President and General Secretary said that they had met with Education Department officials and that they said that only the MPA/MNA could help them in this regard as the Department does not have any funds/grants for the provision of IT equipment. They also said that they were unable to get a meeting with either the MNA or the MPA. At this point, the LSO had lost all hope and gave up.

Months later, the "Mobilising Communities to Demand Education (Article 25A) and Local Accountability" campaign started in UC Jamrani Kohna. With a newfound zeal, the issue of middle school Maharani was once again taken up. The LSO managed to conduct continuous meetings with their MNA/MPA and for three months sensitised them on this core issue and the need for it to be addressed properly.

In the month of September 2014, efforts of the LSO resulted in a landmark achievement by getting approval for a grant for provision of a computer lab in the school. After approval of the grant, the school was provided with six computers (with complete accessories and furniture).

With the efforts of the LSO, the students of the middle school can now use IT facilities right in their own union council.

JAFFARABAD

Step taken for our Children's Education!

Schooling plays an important role, particularly of girls' education, which helps transform and enlighten a society. An educated society uses their resources and searches for sustainability in such a manner that the future of their coming generations is not compromised. The rural poor of Balochistan generally face interconnected impediments to economic, social and political opportunities. They lack political voice due to illiteracy and by being located remotely from the helms of power. These factors limit their access to required infrastructure for development and their ability to obtain or utilise social services such as health and education.

Village Zaman Tareen is situated 25 kilometres away from Jaffarabad in union council Sohra. The population of the village is approximately 1,101, with 183 households scattered across several miles who speak mainly Balochi, Barahvi and Sindhi. The population is deprived and neglected; even basic necessities such as health, education, clean drinking water, electricity and sustainable livelihood sources are lacking. The major livelihood of the area depends on agriculture; where most people work in fields and rear domestic livestock for income generation. There is only one Government Girls Model Primary School which was established in the year 2003 and which has seven teachers appointed. All the boys and girls of village were getting their education together in this school but unfortunately the school was closed after the floods of 2012 as teachers were not coming to school and were transferred to another school. There was no teacher from the village.

Due to the closing of the school, the children of the village were suffering and were deprived of education. In this situation children were compelled to spend their time working with their parents in the fields.

Individuals from the community approached the Education Department several times for the placement of teachers but could not succeed and became disappointed. In August, 2014 when the VO took part in the Alif Ailaan campaign, they began by sensitising their own VO members and other village residents. In the VO meeting, it was decided that the Education Department would be contacted for re-opening of the school. In this connection, the villagers met EDO Education Mr. Akhter Ali Khetran and Ms. Zulaikhaa. The villagers also started sending text messages to all the relevant stakeholders regarding their closed school.

Meanwhile, the VO mobilised all the parents to send their children to school. Through their commitment, efforts and participation of parents in the campaign, there were large numbers of children that were enrolled in a matter of a few days.

The awareness sessions by community resource persons (CRPs) regarding Article 25-A and importance of education resulted in a positive impact on the minds of the village's residents. The VO on self-help basis mobilised one volunteer from the village to start teaching the students of the non-functional school. Volunteer Ms. Sabra showed her willingness to teach the students in the absence of regular teachers.

As the school was functioning well and students' strength was increasing gradually, the VO members along with the LSO of UC Sohra met DEO Female and requested her for the placement of government teacher permanently. They also informed her about the re-opening of the school on self-help basis and the strength of students. DEO Female Ms. Zulekha Buledi issued the order and appointed three teachers in the school.

Finally, the school officially restarted in January, 2015. Both students and villagers are now very happy. The volunteer teacher is still supporting the teachers and voluntarily teaching in the school. Furthermore, provision of school materials and placement of teachers has motivated parents to send their children to school. Similarly, the teachers are being facilitated and are provided food by the community of village Mohammad Zaman Tareen.

HARIPUR

Power of the People for Opening and Teacher Appointment in School

Government Girls Primary School (GGPS) Pamba is located in union council Ladarmang, district Haripur. The construction of the school building was completed in the latter part of 2007 with the school expected to be operational by the start of 2008. However upon the completion of construction work of the school, the government changed resulting in the new government bringing in their own staff and priorities. As a result, GGPS Pamba was never appointed any teachers.

Due to the unavailability of teaching staff, GGPS Pamba was non-functional for almost six years. During this course of time, children of the area and their parents suffered a lot due to the unavailability of a school. Some of the parents admitted their daughters into Government Primary School (GPS) Pamba (which had boys enrolled in it) however due to cultural constraints, only 20% of the girls managed to be enrolled. The remaining 80% were out of school and thus deprived of one of their basic rights; education.

2014 saw LSO Ladarmang become involved in the Alif Ailaan campaign. As a part of the campaign, trained members from the LSO sensitised communities on the importance of education. Communities began to claim their rights of their children to education and started to contact politicians and different stakeholders to address their education related problems. Local elders also joined in and held meetings with the LSO and discussed the issue. It was decided that they would approach their Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA), Mr. Faisal Zaman. A meeting was held with the MPA and the problem of the school was raised. The MPA took it into consideration and decided to take immediate action. The MPA consulted with the concerned authorities in Haripur's Education Department. As a result, they provided a female teacher to GGPS Pamba. The school has now been functioning since the last two months with the community finally being able to provide their daughters with education.

THARPARKAR

Education is the Right of Children

Village Sobdar Shah is a backward and remote village of union council Mohrano of District Tharparkar. The village is deprived of basic amenities such as education, road, electricity, health and school facilities. It consists of 45 households with a population of 238 and was registered in the year 1930. The village has limited livelihood options with the majority of people dependent on seasonal farming and daily wages.

The prior situation of this village was very downtrodden; the villagers were living life in an unorganised way and were facing many problems. They had no basic facilities of life; their children were uneducated because they had no concept regarding education since there were no schools in their village due to the unavailability of a government teacher. The reason why government teachers were unavailable was that the village was cut off due to an absence of any link roads. As a result, because the village is about 14 kilometres away from the main road, people face a daily battle in trying to travel to and from the village. Because of this lack of awareness and being cut off, the children of the village had ended up working as labourers.

In August 2014, the Local LSO took part in the “Mobilising Communities to Demand Education (Article 25- A) and Local Accountability” campaign. The aim of the campaign was to create an accountability mechanism whereby organised communities, i.e. VO and LSOs could access and ensure the quality of education.

Having gone through training and awareness sessions, the LSO along with the community members decided to call a community level meeting. The meeting concluded with a unanimous vote to open the primary school in the village and the decision to nominate a young Intermediate-pass man to become the teacher of the school. This decision was supported by all the members of the LSO and villagers. With due course, a local young man was interviewed and appointed to become the local teacher. The school opened its doors in September, 2014 for the first time in six years.

Now the school boasts a total of 32 happy students (of which 11 are girls) enrolled into the primary school. Their parents are ecstatic to see their children finally in school; possible only because of the awareness they received through the campaign. The LSO was successful in changing the mentality of the community members with the result that the community has plans on initiating other education-related improvements; which include lobbying with the Government to get a new building for the school, to appoint a government teacher for the school and to build a separate school for girls.

BATTAGRAM

Parent Ittehad Raising Voices for Girls' Education

District Battagram ranks at number 22 out of the 25 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in terms of education. Awareness in the communities about importance of education is very low. The local culture and conservative values are the elements that hinder girls' education in the district. Furthermore, most of the female teachers working in the district belong to neighbouring districts of Mansehra, Abbottabad and Haripur. This leads onto a very high occurrence of teacher absenteeism in girls' schools.

Union council Paimal Shahrif is one of the union councils of the Alif Ailaan campaign. Government Girls Primary School Paimal Sharif is situated in the centre of village Paimal Sharif. This school was closed since the last one year; reason being the continuous absenteeism of the two appointed teachers. As a result of this continuous absenteeism, there were only six girls registered in the school. The school had been newly constructed and was already deteriorating due to it being shut. The local community was worried about this situation which saw their girls being deprived of education.

The matter was discussed in the meeting of the Local Support Organisation (LSO) Paimal Sharif. Members of the LSO agreed to advocate for the opening of the school in their district level Parent Ittehad in which along with parents, politicians and officials of the district Education Department would also be present.

After having thorough discussion upon the issue, it was decided that a committee would meet the DEO Female Battagram to take up the issue and to come up with some solution. The committee was formed comprising of Parent Ittehad members and Executive Body members of the LSO. The committee met with DEO Female Battagram Ms. Rehana Yasmeen and discussed the sensitivity of the issue and requested for immediate action.

After listening to the issue, the DEO transferred a teacher from GGPS Dabri to GGPS Paimal resulting in the closed school being reopened in May 12, 2015. In addition to this, school enrolment increased tremendously from 6 to 72 students. Reopening of the school was not less than a blessing for the local community and it became possible only with the help and efforts of Parent Ittehad Committee Paimal Sharif. The residents of Paimal village are now demanding one more teacher in the school and they perceive that, if one more teacher is appointed in this school, enrolment will increase to more than 100 students.

BAHAWALPUR

Free Medical Dispensary

He parked his bicycle in the parking lot of the EDO Health's office in Bahawalpur and sat on the ground for a while to catch his breath. He had travelled 30 kilometres on his bicycle in the cold month of December in 2014. He was 55 years old and his health did not allow him to travel such long distances on his bicycle in harsh weather. Having recovered, he started to move towards EDO Health's office. Fortunately he found the EDO in his room. He entered the room after getting permission from the clerk. "Sir, please do me and the community of my village a favour; please approve my case of a dispensary as you promised in our previous meeting", he said to the EDO. "I am too old to visit again and again on a bicycle to your office for approval of a dispensary; I am a diploma holder in dispensary and I want to serve my community as there is no healthcare facility in our heavily populated village", he added. The EDO called up his secretary and asked him to fetch the concerned file. After re-visiting the file, the EDO approved his case and asked the concerned department to provide him with a first aid medicine kit along with other necessary accessories. He thanked the EDO upon this favour and went with his secretary for further procedure.

This man is Allah Wasaya, a resident of UC Jamrani Kohna and an active member of LSO Jamrani Kohna. Jamrani Kohna is a backward UC of Bahawalpur with no proper healthcare services. The residents of the UC have to travel about 7-8 kilometres to obtain basic healthcare services at Musafir Khana, a well-developed town adjacent to their UC. Allah Wasaya was also engaged in the Alif Ailaan project's activities on a voluntary basis with other members of the VO/LSO and CRPs and used to go to schools for enrolling out of school children. Once he visited a nearby school for enrolment and came to know that a student had fallen unconscious during class. He attended to the student and came to know that the student's blood pressure was too low which had caused him to fall unconscious. He was unable to do anything for the student and somehow managed to take the student to a nearby doctor for his treatment. It was then that he decided to talk with the Health Department for provision of a dispensary with first aid medicine and basic medical equipment so that he could provide free healthcare basic services to school children as well as to the community.

Having gotten his dispensary, Allah Wasaya is now paying regular visits to all nearby schools on his bicycle to provide free of cost first aid medical services to students during school hours. After school hours, he sits in his dispensary in order to serve the rest of the community. In addition to this, Allah Wasaya also delivers training to school teachers for first aid treatment and has provided a first aid medical kit in a few schools of his UC.

JAFFARABAD

Initiative to Promote Girls Education

This is a story of Government Girls Primary School Naseer Khosa. The school is situated 16 kilometres away from Jaffarabad in UC Hafizabad. GGPS Naseer Khosa was established in 1987 and has had a female teacher since its establishment up until 2001. After 2001, the one and only female teacher was transferred by the Education Department to another school. After this several teachers were appointed to this school but all the teachers were not regular. In addition to this, there was no separate classroom or building for girls in the school and therefore was being used as a mixed school in which both girls and boys were studying. When their only female teacher left, several parents were reluctant to send their daughters to school.

Through the Alif Ailaan campaign, the LSO became sensitised and started focusing on reopening closed schools in their UC. In this connection they held a meeting with the VO of Naseer Khan Khosa and talked about their non-functional girls' school. In the meeting the VO decided that they will meet with the DEO (F) for reopening of their GGPS so that they can continue the education of girls in their village. They also decided that they will contact all the parents and will motivate them to send their girls for education.

VO members along with their LSO held meetings with the Education Department to know about the status of their teacher or to request for the appointment of another female teacher in their girls school. The VO found out that the teacher was not willing to teach in the building of the boy's school. She told them that until there is a separate girl's school, she will not come for teaching.

Seeing that a school building could not be obtained on such short notice, the LSO mobilised their community through the VO to send their girls to be taught by a male teacher along with the boys in the school. All the community members started sending their girls to school with the result that 40 girls were being taught by the male teacher.

Meanwhile, the President of the LSO Mr. Nasrullah and other members started the struggle for getting a separate building approved for the girls' school. They held meetings with the Education Department and other NGOs working on education in the district. The LSO also met with a local organisation called WDCO (Women Development Community Organisation). WDCO is already working in the UC on different components of education. LSO shared the problem of their girl's school which is non-functional due to separate building issue and requested the organisation to visit their village and provide a building for the girls' school.

Due to the efforts and invitation of LSO, Mr. Muhammad Hanif Rind of WDCO visited the village Naseer Khan Khosa on January 12, 2015. He met the LSO and visited the boy's school and saw the strength of girls in the school. During his visit he announced construction of a separate building of two rooms with boundary wall and a latrine. LSO/VO was very thankful to Mr. Muhammad Hanif Rind for the approval of the girl's school building.

Soon after his visit, on January 18, 2015 construction of the boundary wall and two rooms along with one latrine started and the construction work completed in the last week of February, 2015.

The LSO along with the VO of Naseer Khan Khosa met DEO (F) and requested her to resend their teacher as a separate building had been completed. DEO (F) appointed their teacher Ms. Sadia Nawaz again and the school reopened on February 25, 2015. 40 girls enrolled into the school which is now functional.

Teacher and students are regularly coming as the VO is ensuring their attendance. The community is very happy now as there is no disruption to their girls' education.

THATTA

Joint Efforts of Community Members for Opening of Closed School

Government Primary School Ali Muhammad Kodan located in village Saleh Muhammad Kodan was closed since the past nine months. As a result, the children of the village would roam all day in the village lanes with nothing to do. Their immediate need was education but because the school was closed and there was no teacher, this need could not be met.

The villagers had been waiting for a long time for their school and teacher to be appointed by the district authorities. They finally stopped waiting after their LSO started the education campaign in their union council and village. The villagers were sensitised on the importance of education and that it was their duty to work to improve the education of their children. Their Community Resource Person said that “without education we are blind. This is our right and responsibility of the government to provide us with a functioning school as well as a teacher for our children’s education - to save their future”.

The villagers realised what their children were missing out on and started the struggle for making their school functional again by getting a teacher appointed. They met with the Education Supervisor, Chairman and ADO Education Mirpursakro and demanded that their first priority was obtaining a teacher for their children. They said that they would not tolerate their children being out of school anymore. With a series of these meetings, the wish of the villagers was fulfilled as the school reopened in the November, 2014. Their children are now attending school regularly with their teacher performing duties on a daily basis.

The children say “now we are happy that our school is reopened and we are getting educated”. The CRP also commented that “I realised that this issue concerns our entire village so I started from my village sensitising them. My community understood this problem and they supported each other and now because of our joint efforts, our school has reopened”.

BATTAGRAM

A Significant Change for Girls' Education

Battagram is one of the most remote and under developed districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the provincial education ranking, it was ranked at 22 out of 25. Education, as it turns out, has been least important for the stakeholders and politicians of district Battagram. Moreover, local culture and traditional values have also left girls' education at the bottom of people's priorities.

To improve and enhance the education in the district, communities in Thakot union council, while collecting household and school educational data found out that there was no high school for girls in the entire union council. This absence of a high school was resulting in the dropout of girls after completion of their secondary level schooling.

This serious concern was brought under discussion in the monthly meeting of LSO Thakot. During discussion it was agreed that the matter would be advocated with the district Education Department and political representatives of the areas. A small committee was constituted which was assigned with this task. A meeting was held with the former Member of National Assembly, Mr. Alamzeb Khan and with the current Member of Provincial Assembly, Mr Nawabzada Wali Muhammad Khan. Need of the school was shared with them followed by the request that the Government Girls' Middle school in Thakot should be upgraded to a high school. The committee remained resolute in this demand and kept paying follow up visits regarding the request.

Finally the efforts of the LSO bore fruit with the up-gradation of the school to a high school. The tender for the building construction has been carried out while and work on the building's construction is in progress. It is expected that work will be completed by June, 2015 while classes for the girls of UC Thakot will commence from July, 2015.

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BAHAWALPUR

Para Teacher's Appointment

"Sorry, Mr. Mehmood, we cannot help you at this time. We don't have enough teachers in our pool to entertain your request", said Rana Naeem, Deputy Education Officer (DEO). It was the end of the summer vacations of 2013 and was the fifth time in a month that Mehmood had visited the EDO Education's office. All of his visits and requests had gone in vain in order to avail a teacher for the Government Girls Primary School for Chak 15/BC. He was feeling tired and helpless.

This is a story about Mehmood, a VO member from GGPS 15/BC. This school is located in union council 24/BC's remote village Chak 15/BC. The school was closed for a long time due to non-availability of a teacher. Mehmood along with other VO and LSO members visited the EDO Education's office several times but the Education Department was unable to provide a teacher for the school. Department officials told them that they are in short supply of teachers and cannot entertain their request. As a result, the children of the village were left helpless as most could not travel long distances to continue their studies.

Mehmood decided to call a meeting of influential personalities in the village to address this issue. So, the next day, he visited LSO 24/BC office and requested Basheeran Bibi, LSO President to help him embark on this issue. She agreed and promised to participate in the meeting along with some other active members of the LSO. Mehmood arranged a meeting in the village where this issue was thoroughly discussed. He got a very positive response from all the participants of the meeting as they too wanted to resolve this issue. Mehmood told the participants about the times he had visited the Education Department without any sort of response. It was decided in the meeting that community members would hire a Para teacher to re-open the school so that students could continue their studies. Basheeran Noreen, LSO president said that the first month's salary of the para teacher would be given by LSO 24/BC. Mehmood was asked to contact the Education Department to share the meeting minutes. The next day Mehmood visited EDO Education's office and met with the Deputy Education Officer (DEO) Mr Rana Naeem. DEO appreciated the efforts of community members and of the LSO as well and asked his concerned Assistant Education Officer (AEO) to help them further in this regard. He also promised that he would share these detail with EDO Education and would try his best to send a permanent government teacher to the school as soon as possible.

The para teacher was hired and the school was re-opened the very next week. 30 students joined their classes after a long period and were very happy to know that they could finally start studying. In February 2015, the school's enrolment had reached 70 which resulted in community members hiring another para teacher for the school. Mehmood visited the Education Department again in the month of February 2015 and this time got a very positive response as he was told by the Department that recruitment of new government teachers was in process and that in June, 2015 a permanent government teacher would be appointed in GGPS 15/BC.

HARIPUR

Linkage Development

Government Girls Primary School Qazian is situated in village Qazian, union council Dheenda of district Haripur. The school was facing several problems namely the lack of basic facilities for the last three years. The school's building was in poor condition, its bathroom also was inadequate and it had a major problem of lack of clean running water. Due to these problems, students started to drop out from the school which resulted in only 75 students being left behind. The matter was discussed in the meeting of the local LSO and it was decided to highlight and coordinate the issue with the Parent Teacher Council (PTC).

Problems of the school were intimated to the Parent Teacher Council(PTC) and in the joint meeting of LSO and PTC, it was decided to take up the problem with NGOs and other institutions working on education in Haripur.

LSO HOPE arranged the combined meeting of the Refugee Affecting and Hosting Areas (RAHA) Project with the PTC and the LSO's Education Committee. After a series of meetings and detailed discussions, RAHA approved the amount of Rs. 1,966,000 for the renovation of damaged classrooms and construction of two new classrooms, a bathroom and veranda of GGPS Qazian.

With the facilitation of the RAHA Project, VO Qazian received a first instalment of Rs. 883,150 on 13th August, 2014 and a second instalment of Rs. 883,000 on 21st December, 2014. The remaining amount is to be handed over to the VO after the completion of the school building.

The community has appreciated the struggles and initiatives of the LSO as they can see the progress taking place in front of their eyes on the renovation and construction of their local school. The community acknowledges that without their apex level organisation and the community's participation, these developments and provision of quality education would not have been accomplished.

LSO HOPE has also started to mobilise the community to send their children back to GGPS Qazian and for this purpose they have conducted various sessions at the neighbourhood and village levels. As a result, the current strength of GGPS Qazian has increased to 150 which show the satisfaction level of the community.

PISHIN

Education is one of the Basic Necessities of Human Beings

Killi (village) Atozai Ajram is located in union council (UC) Ajram Tehsil Saranan, District Pishin. There are 78 households in the village with a population of 471. The village is situated west of Pishin. The main source of income of the population is agriculture and livestock. There is only one Government Boys Primary School which was closed due to the non-presence of its teacher and non-availability of school basic facilities.

Mr. Haji Amanullah, a community member says that when they participated and took up the Alif Ailaan education campaign, they realised the negative effect of having schools with no basic facilities. He said that this lack of facilities was affecting the education of their children.

In their UC Parent Ittehad meeting, it was discussed that the school should be reopened as well as an improvement in its basic facilities such as classroom conditions and boundary wall. The community followed through by holding meetings with the Education Department and politicians and highlighted the problem of their school. The community also lobbied through text messages.

As a result of these lobbying efforts, their local MPA Syed Liaqat Agha and the Education Department took notice. The school was finally reopened after five years in 2015. The construction of two new classrooms with boundary wall and main gate has also been completed. The village's issue has been solved with a teacher also being posted soon. There are now 20 students studying in the Government Boys Primary School Atozai. Both community members and their children are very happy with this initiative as they can now begin their education again.

THATTA

A CRP's Initiative for a Bright Future

This is the story of a community resource person (CRP) named Karam Ali Jat. He is the resident of revenue village Khaghan, union council Buhara. Before Alif Ailaan campaign intervention, there was no functional government school in that area. Karam started delivering awareness sessions after his LSO took part in the Alif Ailaan education campaign. He conducted awareness sessions in different villages including village Jumoon Junejo and Muhammad Ameen Jat. The communities there realised the negative impact of an uneducated society and the fact that their children were out of school and had no future. They decided to educate their children through their own resources because they were tired of waiting for the Government to step in and take responsibility. Karam Jat took self-initiative and motivated the villagers to start schooling with their own resources and in the month of January,

2015 they opened a new private community driven school named Roshan Mustaqbil. For it, they arranged for a local teacher. The community pays him Rs. 6,000 from the donations of parents. There are now 41 boys and 30 girls who are obtaining an education in this school.

BATTAGRAM

Establishing Accountability

Having highlighted the importance of education amongst communities, people have started taking interest and actions in order to resolve education related issues in partnership with various stakeholders such as the Education Department.

Currently, teacher absenteeism level lies at 14% in district Battagram while the situation on ground in rural areas seems to be even more dire. In this regard, Village Organisations Sedra and Bilandkot in union council Kuza Banda discovered through their meetings at the village level that there was a big issue of absent teachers in four schools. These teachers had been absent from their duties for a long time with no one raising a complaint against them. The VOs' members decided to take up the issue with the Education Department. Upon physical verification by the Department, the issue of absenteeism of the teachers was found to be accurate in GPS Landi Naumanabad, GPS Cham Seydan, GGPS Amar Shahabad and GGPS Sedra. Show cause notices were issued to these four teachers. As a result, these teachers have now started coming regularly to their schools and are reporting for duty on time.

While reporting the success, VO members expressed that "We were never encouraged to register a complaint against teachers and neither were we confident about the positive results. Now we have been through the experience that we, the local community will have to raise our voices and take steps, otherwise issues will persist."

JAFFARABAD

Combined Effort for School Promotion for Education

This is the story of LSO Khanpur and one of its villages called Sarfraz Jamali in district Jaffarabad. Village Sarfraz Jamali is located north of Quetta Road while it shares its boundaries in the south with the district's headquarters and has Sindh at its east. It has approximately 82 households and a population of 600 along with its surroundings hamlets. This is an agricultural area and mostly people work in the fields and keep livestock in order to earn a living. The village has a Government Boys Primary School which was established in 2004. However the education status of the area is very poor resulting in a very low literacy rate.

Mr. Sabir, President of the LSO says "we were not giving any attention to the education of our children as we were not aware about the importance of education. But after getting involved in the Alif Ailaan education campaign, our LSO has become sensitised about the importance of education. We now know about basic things such as Article 25-A and that it is our responsibility to improve the quality of education of our children".

The village's local Village Organisation (VO) decided that they would educate their children and would work for increasing the enrolment of their area. In this regard, VO members met with each and every household and mobilised them to enrol all out of school children in their school. They also arranged a village level walk for the advocacy and awareness of education and to increase the enrolment. In this walk, community representatives, press members, students, teachers, volunteers and local politicians participated.

Consequently, enrolment increased from 33 students to 123 students now (88 boys 35 girls). The VO also arranged a seminar in the village on "The importance of education for the advocacy of community".

Furthermore the LSO members also contributed in renovating a room in the school as well as building a shelter on the school premises. In this regard the LSO collected Rs. 23,000 in which they white washed the classrooms and painted messages on the walls regarding Article 25-A. The LSO also developed linkages with Sungi Foundation, a local NGO which was also working on education in the area. Due to these efforts, Sungi Foundation constructed one room in the school and provided tables, a water cooler, a blackboard, a cupboard, two chairs for teachers, two ceiling fans and complete electric wiring for the school. Sungi Foundation has also approved two latrines for the school but the construction work has not been initiated yet.

The LSO also found that due to the increased number of students in the school, there was a space problem for students, therefore LSO members requested Dr. Sarfaraz (a local philanthropist) to contribute in providing extra space for school building. He visited the school and became very happy because of the increased enrolment of students and he promised to construct the second room in the

school. Dr. Sarfaraz donated Rs. 220,000 for the construction of the second room. Construction has been initiated with two concrete rooms under construction now.

The LSO also contributed to the construction process of the second classroom by collecting Rs. 15,400 from its community in order to level the floor of the second room of the school. Due to the efforts of LSO, its VO and communities, their school's environment has been improved greatly.

MANSEHRA

A Committed Teacher Working for the Betterment of Education

Mohammad Bashir is a government school teacher who lives in the hilly village of Basala in union council Bhogarmang, which is located 38 kilometres from the district headquarters town of Mansehra. Generally, the community members do not take that much of an interest in the education of their children.

On August 2013 Bashir was transferred to GPS Basala where at the time, there were only 45 students and three teachers in the school. He observed the school condition of the school. The school was running in two temporary shelters consisting of a total of two classrooms. Other than this, there was no proper school building - for which the Education Department did not have any funding.

Since Bashir was a resident of the village, he knew that the enrolment was very low in the school compared to the total households in the village. He first enrolled his own children into the school and then decided to meet with other parents to convince them to send their children as well. After nearly one year's continuous struggle, he succeeded in his mission. Seeing his struggle, the other teachers also took out their children from private school and enrolled them into the Government school. Now the strength in GPS Basala is 204 due to Bashir's efforts. He now plans on starting a pre-nursery class in his school for the new session.

PISHIN

A Step towards Positive Social Change

Village Talarai Shabzai is situated about 95 kilometres from union council Mandozai, Tehsil Barshore in District Pishin. District Pishin is also among the areas which were severely hit by the catastrophic drought stretching over a decade in most parts of Balochistan. This drought affected the area's economic activity and forced people to work as labourers for their livelihood. Karez (underground canals that carry water) is the only source of drinking water. There is only one primary school for boys while there is no girls' school in the village. Girls are enrolled in the boy's school. No steps were taken regarding a middle school in the village due to the low literacy rate and lack of awareness among the community.

There is only one middle School in the whole of UC Mandozai, which is at a far distance from several villages such as Abdulaqai Shabzai, Aolang Akhterzai, Dara Shabzai, Bayan Shabzai, Kachona Shabzai, Tokai Shabzai, Walgai Shabzai, Yazaha and Talarai Shabzai. This has resulted in the fact that most students are compelled to leave school after only getting primary level education.

After the LSO's work in education and running a campaign for increasing the access and quality of education, communities were made aware of Article 25-A and that it was their right to get the quality education for their children. The LSO in their meetings with VOs discussed the problem faced by the community in educating their children due to unavailability of a middle school in the area. They decided to meet Mr. Asfandiyar Kakar (Ex Minister Food) and Mr. Essa Roshan, District Secretary of the political Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) to discuss the dire situation of education in their community, and to ask them to provide higher education (school) for their children. LSO members had a meeting with these notables and discussed the problem.

After the meeting with Mr Asfandiyar Kakar Ex Minister Food (Pakistan Peoples Party) and Essa Roshan District Secretary (PMAP), they provided their support for the approval of Middle school in their village. The continuous efforts of the LSO and the community (along with the support of their politicians such as Mr. Raza Mohammad Barech, Advisor to Chief Minister for Education) resulted in the approval of a Government Boys Middle school for the village. After getting approval, construction of the school started and is near to completion now. This middle school contains four classrooms and two washrooms. Now the people of the community are happy that they will soon be able to see their children continue their higher school education in their own village.

HARIPUR

Foundation for Tomorrow

Government Girls Primary School Kanikot is situated in village Kanikot, union council Kalinjar, District Haripur. Samina Bibi is its sole teacher. In the past few months, Samina Bibi suddenly became very ill and had to go on three months' leave in order to undergo an operation. In the absence of Samina Bibi there was no one at the school who could teach the students. Therefore due to the unavailability of a teacher in the school, drop outs began to increase dramatically with the result that only seven children were left behind in the school.

After the inception of the “Mobilising Communities to Demand Education (Article 25A) and Local Accountability” campaign, community institutions were made aware of the importance of education and how to go about improving its quality. Sessions were held on Article 25-A which states that all 5-

16 year children will be provided with free education in any government school. It all resulted in increasing the interest of the local communities in education related affairs. In this entire situation, Village Organisation (VO) Kanikot held a meeting and discussed the issue amongst their members. They also intimated the problem to their Local Support Organisation. The VO decided to coordinate with the Education Department on the subject with a meeting being held with a representative from the Department.

The representative presented a strong interest in wanting to address the issue of getting another teacher however it was taking too long due to the government's procedural issues. VO Kanikot arranged a meeting and through consensus of its VO and women VO members, they decided to arrange a substitute teacher for three months. It was decided that the salary of the teacher would be generated by money collected on a self-help basis. They also decided to bring back those children who were admitted in Beer union council and Haripur city schools. The LSO also extended its support to the members of the VOs and arranged a teacher, Ms Naila Bibi was provided a salary of PKR 7,000 per month. The first month's salary was paid in advance to the teacher for motivational purpose. Ms. Naila Bibi now comes to school regularly with the members of the VOs and LSO mentoring and monitoring her school activities. As a result of this self-help initiative, the VO and LSO were able to enrol all of the dropout children back into school.

CONCLUSION

What has clearly become evident from this Alif Ailaan campaign is the power of the people. This campaign has been implemented in a large part exclusively through the network of people's own institutions in the form of LSOs and they have shown that they are capable of using evidence-based advocacy to bring about concrete change. The two largest pieces of evidence of this can be seen by the sheer number of out of school children that they have enrolled and secondly through the immense improvements in basic facilities of schools. The total cost of school improvements is estimated to be more than Rs. 150 million, and this investment was leveraged by the people by lobbying resources from various stakeholders.

The achievements of this Alif Ailaan campaign have surprised many; not more so than the community people themselves. Common complaints or thoughts heard at the beginning of the campaign revolved around issues such as what difference could poor communities make, those in power would never allow common people to make decisions, rural communities have no clout, why would parents change their minds just because of us, why would local politicians listen to the poor, local Education Department bureaucracy has no ears and will never listen to ordinary people, we are poor and have no resources, etc. As a result of the campaign and by working in partnership with key stakeholders such as the Education Department, elected politicians, political party workers, media and various NGOs, questions such as these have been laid to rest due to the changes that the organised communities (and other stakeholders) can now see in front of their very own eyes.

The key lesson that this campaign has shown to communities, stakeholders at the district level, RSPN, its partner RSPs and Alif Ailaan is that if communities are willing to work together and do so in an organised manner, minimal amounts of capacity building and technical support can result in a systemic change in the way that education is accessed in rural areas and how resources can be efficiently allocated for them. This is a lesson that is applicable not only in the case of education but in other crucial areas as well such as health, human rights, infrastructure and governance; all priority areas for the rural communities.

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