



EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BISP:	Benazir Income Support Programme
CDD:	Community Driven Development
CO:	Community Organisation
CRP:	Community Resource Person
IGG:	Income Generating Grant
KPI:	Key Performance Indicator
NRSP:	National Rural Support Programme
PSC:	Poverty Score Card
RSP:	Rural Support Programme
RSPN:	Rural Support Programmes Network
SMT:	Social Mobilisation Team
VO:	Village Organisation
WeT:	Waseela-e-Taleem

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ABOUT WASEELA-E-TALEEM

The Government of Pakistan is committed to delivering Universal Primary Education as part of its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In order to support the children from the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) beneficiary households for primary education enrolment and retention, the Government of Pakistan launched the Co-Responsibility Cash Transfer (CCT) initiative known as the Waseela-e-Taleem (WeT) in January, 2018.

WeT aims to support primary level education through the provision of additional cash of PKR 1,000 per quarter per child to BISP beneficiary households. The programme involves co-responsibility in that its delivery depends on parents ensuring that the targeted children actually attend school. The primary objective of WeT is to increase enrolment in primary schools.

Other objectives of the WeT include:

- i) Reduce the drop-out rate in primary schools by ensuring retention, with focus on the vulnerable and disadvantaged children and;
- ii) Create awareness among BISP beneficiary families regarding the importance of education, not only for their children, but also for the overall economic development of the country.

The Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) has partnered with the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) for the implementation of its Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme 'Waseela e Taleem (WeT)' – Cluster 1 and Cluster 2. Under the Programme, 1,150,000 children between ages 5 to 12 of BISP beneficiary families from ten districts (falling under Cluster 1), and 550,000 children from eight districts of Sindh and Balochistan, placed under Cluster 2, will be registered with WeT Programme and of those out of school children will be enrolled in local schools. Upon completion of 70 percent attendance by registered children in schools, the BISP beneficiary families will receive cash assistance of Rs.1000 per child per quarter. The payments will be made after quarterly verification of each child's minimum attendance.

ABOUT WASEELA-E-TALEEM

This conditional cash transfer will continue till the child completes his/her primary education. RSPN has partnered with National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) and Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) to implement Cluster 1 in nine districts – three from Punjab, four from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), one from Gilgit–Baltistan (GB), and two from Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK); and Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO), Thardeep Rural Support Programme (TRDP) and Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) for the implementation of Cluster 2 in eight districts of Balochistan and Sindh, four from each province.

BISP BENEFICIARY COMMITTEES

BBCs are formed through mobilisation of beneficiary families. The objective of this activity is to register beneficiary families with the programme and motivate mothers to send their children to schools instead of engaging them in labour. Also, it helps mothers take stock of their issues related to BISP programme and communicate them through cluster leaders with BISP. Under this initiative, 523,815 BISP families will be mobilised to form 26,000 BBCs (14,516 in Punjab, 10,340 in KP, 1,044 in AJK, and 100 in GB) in Cluster 1, while 218,354 BISP families will be fostered into 10,900 BBCs (9,791 in Sindh and 1,109 in Balochistan) in Cluster 2.

CLUSTER FORMATION

On average 15 BBCs are fostered into one cluster. It consists of membership from BBCs, where each BBC nominates its representatives for the cluster. Cluster members discuss issues of BBC members in their regular meetings and directly communicate them to BISP for support. Under the initiative 1,700 clusters (925 in

CLUSTER FORMATION

Punjab, 698 in KP, 8 in GB and 69 in AJK) will be formed in Cluster 1 areas, and 700 (627 in Sindh and 73 in Balochistan) in Cluster 2 areas.

CAPACITY BUILDING OF WOMEN LEADERS

Capacity Building of Women Leaders aims to strengthen Women Leaders' role as informed community level advocates or frontline campaigners of BISP's Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) and Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) schemes. Under the initiative, 6,246 Women Leaders (3,486 in Punjab, 2,484 in KP, 24 in GB and 252 in AJK) of Cluster 1, and 2,616 Women Leaders (2,352 in Sindh and 264 in Balochistan) of Cluster 2 will be trained.

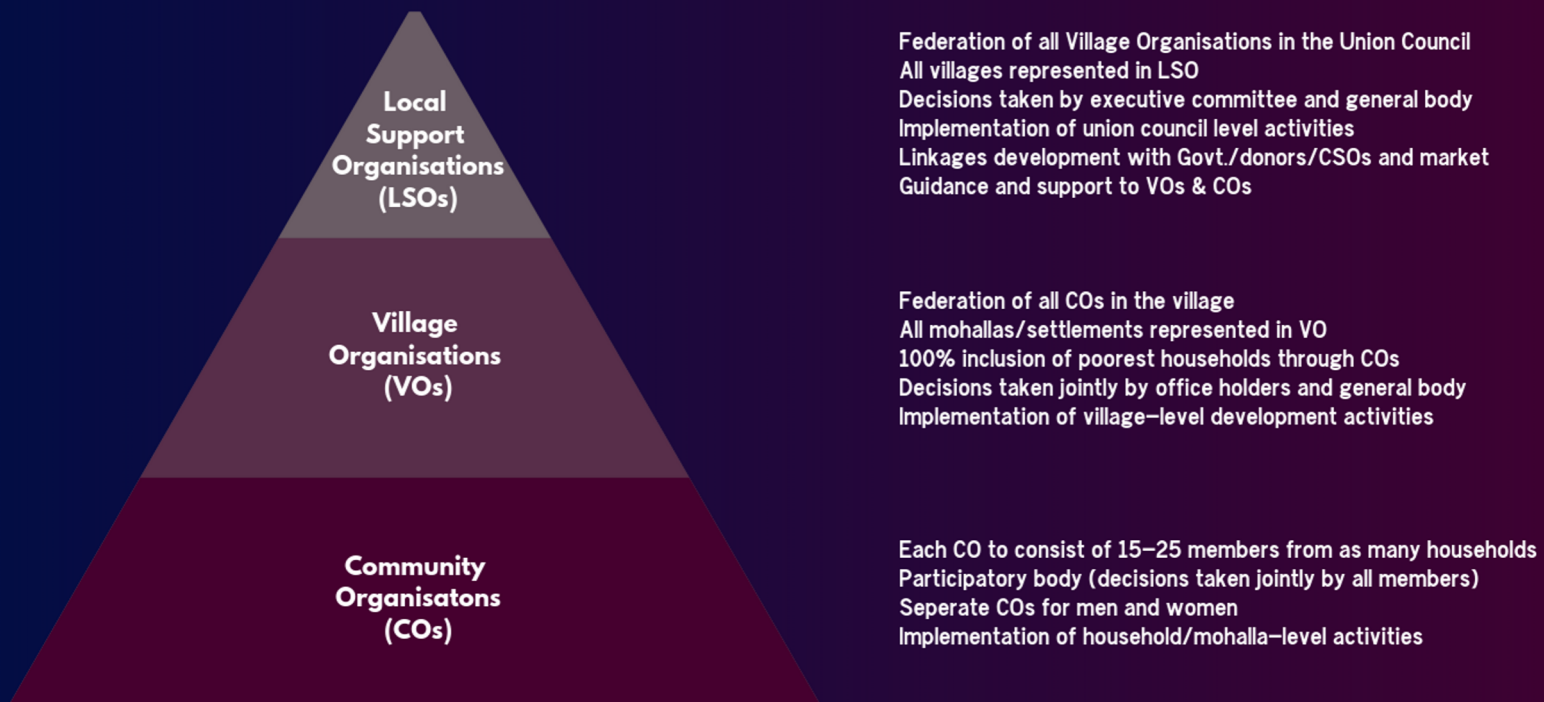
SUSTAINABLE PLANNING

Through this activity, 1,150,000 children (659,206 in Punjab, 446,884 in KP, 5,038 in GB, and 38,872 in AJK) from Cluster 1 districts, and 550,000 children (490,512 in Sindh and 59,488 in Balochistan) of Cluster 2 districts will be enrolled in identified schools. The activity is planned in a way that ultimately, BISP tehsil offices will take up this activity in the long run, with due facilitation from BISP headquarters, provincial and district offices.

COMPLIANCE MONITORING

Child enrolment is carried digitally through utilising android tablets having exclusive compliance application with indicators for the collection of attendance data. Funds are then transferred to the beneficiary families on 70 percent attendance compliance.

ABOUT THE RSP MODEL



ABOUT RSPN

The Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) consists of ten member Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) that espouse a common approach to rural development: social mobilisation. Social mobilisation centres on the belief that poor people have an innate potential to help themselves, that they can better manage their limited resources if they organise and are provided technical and financial support. The RSPs provide social guidance, technical and financial assistance to the rural poor. RSPN provides capacity building support to RSPs, and assists them in policy advocacy and donor linkages.

ABOUT THE CASE STUDIES

The four case studies provided in this report exhibit stories of beneficiaries of the Waseela-e-Taleem (WeT) Programme from district Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These case studies highlight women who have worked relentlessly to change the prejudicial mind-set of people within their community regarding woman empowerment and education, specifically girls' education. The awareness delivered with the assistance of both the BISP and its WeT Programme has helped pave way for a prosperous future for the youth, specifically the female youth of Mardan.

CASE STUDY 01

THE UNBROKEN



Akhtar Bibi, holding her daughter for a photo taken outside her residence in Mardan

Today, Akhtar Bibi of Union Council Pir Saddi, Tehsil Takht Bai, Mardan juggles multiple roles working as a Community Resource Person (CRP), Mother Leader (ML) and Cluster Leader (CL) for BISP's Waseela-e-Taleem Programme as well as performing the duties of a Lady Health Worker (LHW) for the local government. However, Akhtar's journey has been a continuum of endless hardships overcome by her unbroken resolve to build a better future for her children.

After five years of marriage, when Akhtar was only 18, her husband met with an accident, leaving him paralysed for life. Left at the mercy of her in-laws, Akhtar's sufferings began shortly after. Emotionally and physically tormented, Akhtar decided it was time to move out from her in-law's house. She appealed to the local jirga, who

unanimously decided that she was to be allotted one of her husband's lands to build her own home. She alone constructed a two room, mud-hut on the land and moved in along with her five children and an unwell husband. In order to support her family financially, Akhtar also started working as a Lady Health Worker for the local government, going door to door promoting the polio eradication campaign. However, since it was uncommon for women to leave the house without a male companion in her village, neighbours and family, especially her in-laws started to falsely allege her of having ill-intentions, defaming and ruining her reputation within the community.

Instead of allowing these accusations to break her spirit, Akhtar became determined to work hard towards

CASE STUDY 01

THE UNBROKEN

changing the mindset of her people, to provide a more conducive environment for her children to grow-up in. Akhtar knew education was the key to achieving her goal. Married at the age of 13, Akhtar had dropped out of school shortly after completing her education till the eighth standard. Therefore, alongside her job and home duties, Akhtar decided to continue her education, receiving a Faculty of Arts Certification (F.A.). At around the same time, Akhtar became a Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) beneficiary. The Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) payments from BISP not only helped Akhtar cover the costs of her education, but they also greatly enhanced the living conditions of her household.

With the help of BISP's Waseela-e-Taleem Programme, Akhtar's children have been attending the Pir Saddi Public School, where two of her children have been performing exceptionally well. Akhtar's daughter Ujala, 9-years old, scored 2nd position, while her son Abuzar, 7-years old, scored 1st position in their recent annual examinations. Akhtar's children having witnessed their mother's determination to complete her education despite all the difficulties in her way, understand the importance of education. Akhtar believes that her daughters have gained a lot of confidence through the example she has set for them.

She shares, "Previously, my girls were not very interested in studies, but now they are going on and on about becoming doctors and what not." She adds, "Many people within the community have also started sending their girls to school now. The very people who used to shame me, and belittle me are now sending their own daughters to school. Some people had forced their girls to drop out of school after the 3rd or 4th standard, but now thanks to the WeT Programme, they have re-enrolled their girls into schools."

When it came to selecting a Mother Leader for Akhtar's BBC, all the members of the BBC unanimously voted for Akhtar. Akhtar recalls, "They felt I possessed the most courage out of them all. They kept saying you are the bravest woman we have come across. You are our inspiration. No one can lead us better than you. Your struggles make you best suited to understand ours and decide what course of action will be best for us."

"Even when we were selecting a Cluster Leader to represent all the women leaders in meetings with the Assistant Director at the BISP office, my name was collectively brought forward. These women have too much trust in me, and I don't let them down either," Akhtar shares with a smile.

CASE STUDY 02

BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Farzana and her daughters, three of which are now studying in school

Farzana, a mother of five daughters, from Union Council Jahangirabad, Tehsil Takht Bai, Mardan, faced an immense amount of contempt and pressure from her family for being unable to birth a son. Farzana's husband who works as a tutor, giving lessons to neighbourhood kids, could barely make enough to cope with the expenses of daily life. Therefore, Farzana and her husband could only afford to send one of their daughters to school.

When Farzana was approached by Komal, a neighbourhood Community Resource Person (CRP) working for the Waseela-e-Taleem (WeT) Programme, Farzana was overjoyed. Repeated announcements were made on the mosque loudspeakers to call eligible mothers to come and enrol their children at the camp set

up nearby. Initially, Farzana faced a lot of resistance from her in-laws who found it very dishonouring that women and children of the house are stepping outside to meet strangers. However, Farzana remained steadfast in her commitment to want a better future for her children. As a result, Farzana got three of her daughters enrolled under BISP's WeT Programme, all three of whom now happily attend school on a regular basis.

Once the cash payments were received and the overall condition of the household improved, Farzana's in-laws also became a lot more accepting and supportive of her children's education. Moreover, they started to display a lot more affection and kindness towards her daughters. Farzana has also felt a positive change in the behaviour of her daughters whom she feels have become well-

CASE STUDY 02

BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

groomed and well-versed after attending school on a regular basis

While the prime motivation behind getting her girls enrolled under the WeT Programme was the cash incentive, the money is used solely to cover the expenses of the girls, including the cost of their school supplies as well as food, new clothes and gifts for special occasions like Eid and birthdays. The girls feel confident to attend school as well, as they are able to come in properly dressed with complete books and stationery in hand

Due to the life-changing opportunity that WeT Programme has provided Farzana, she is now actively advocating for other females in her family to enrol their children under this programme, too.

"My father-in-law told me it was extremely dishonouring and disrespectful that women and children of the house are going to step outside to meet strangers. I told him there is a lot more honour in it than spreading our hands and begging for money in front of people on the streets. It is simply our right to have a quality life, which the state is fulfilling."



CASE STUDY 03

A MOTHER'S DEVOTION



Farzana is thankful to the BISP WeT Programme for helping enrol her children into school

For the last 12 years, Farzana from village Piran, Union Council Mangah, Mardan has been waking at 3:30 am, cleaning, doing laundry, cooking and leaving the house by 7:30am along with her basket of accessories, hoping to sell just enough items to be able to feed her children that evening.

Farzana's husband suffers from a mental illness, due to which she is the sole breadwinner of the household. Farzana has been going door-to-door to sell various cosmetics and accessory items to women, as a source of livelihood for over a decade. Even though in her village it is highly frowned upon for women to leave the home without a male companion and walk around neighbourhoods, Farzana feels it was the only option she had considering she lacks an educational background.

Farzana recalls herself as being the *laadli* (favourite) at her parents' home, before marriage. She gets teary as she reminisces the comfort of her maiden home and talks about the ordeal she's been in ever since. She says, "My parents cannot help me out even if they want to, as they are old now, and financially constrained themselves. I was always their favourite child though, very much loved."

Farzana made certain to enrol her children in school from a young age, so they do not suffer the same fate as hers. However, her children often skipped school for days at a stretch, upset over being unable to wear new clothes or purchase complete school supplies. When Farzana was informed about BISP's Waseela-e-Taleem Programme by Uzma, a neighbourhood Community

CASE STUDY 03

A MOTHER'S DEVOTION

Resource Person (CRP) working for WeT, she immediately got all four of her children enrolled.

Due to the WeT Programme, not only are Farzana's children now able to acquire complete school supplies and new uniforms, but this has also enabled within themselves a sense of confidence which allows them to attend school on a regular basis. In fact, Farzana feels her children have become a lot more knowledgeable and self-aware. She shares, "Recently, I asked my 18-year old son if I should find him a girl and get him engaged? He clearly refused explaining to me how important it is for him to find a job and build his own house before he can think of marriage and starting his own family." She exclaims, "I was startled! And extremely proud of his new maturity."



CASE STUDY 04

GIVING THE VOICELESS A VOICE



Salma is very proud of her children for actively partaking in their studies

Salma Aziz of village Mani Khel, Union Council Toru, Mardan, is a proud mother of two position-holding, school-going children. When Salma's husband abandoned her and their two children seven years ago, the responsibility to raise the children fell entirely on Salma. Salma moved to her maiden home, where her family was extremely reluctant to support her in raising her children as they felt it was her husband's responsibility and often asked her to send them away.

Due to the lack of support from her family, Salma relied on her Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) payments from BISP to cover the expenses of her children, which often fell short. She was unable to send her children to school as the government school was far away and the nearby private schools were beyond her affordability.

Ever since Salma's children were enrolled under BISP's WeT Programme in March, 2018, they have been attending the Paradise Children's Academy in her village of Mani Khel. Not only are they regularly attending school, but they are also excelling in their lessons, scoring 1st and 2nd positions in their annual exams. Salma is extremely proud of her children and feels a sense of confidence now that she doesn't have to seek her family's help for financial matters. In fact, at times, she is even able to contribute towards the general household expenses with the salary she receives from her newly acquired job as a lab assistant at a nearby school.

Salma recalls, "Previously, I was constantly so worried about providing for my children that I was barely able to give them the time or attention they required. This

CASE STUDY 04

GIVING THE VOICELESS A VOICE

coupled with the contempt that my family showed towards them often left them feeling neglected. I was always fighting with my family to invest in their education as they are the future of our household.”

However, Salma has now become an active part of her children’s life, regularly visiting their school to meet with their instructors and serving as an active member on the Parent–Teacher Council. Salma believes that the WeT Programme has not only been able to empower women financially, but it has also enabled within them the courage to leave their homes and participate in social–awareness activities.

Salma herself serves as an embodiment of this change, working as a Cluster Leader for the BBCs of her area, in addition to being a beneficiary. Salma was also among the key speakers at the recent WeT celebration, “Marking A Million Enrolments” celebrating the successful completion of 1 million enrolments under BISP’s WeT Programme Cluster 1, held on 24th June, 2019. She recalls, “As I was walking towards the stage I was constantly wondering what my first word on stage would be. When I stood there I kept thinking how to start (my address). Soon, everyone started clapping for me which gave me a lot of encouragement and I was able to share my story very casually.”





WHO WE ARE

The Rural Support Programmes Network is the largest development network of Pakistan, with an outreach to over 48.9 million rural Pakistanis. It consists of 10 member Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) that espouse a common approach to rural development: social mobilisation. Social mobilisation centres around the belief that poor people have an innate potential to help themselves, that they can better manage their limited resources if they organise and are provided technical and financial support. The RSPs provide social guidance and technical and financial assistance to the rural poor. RSPN is the strategic platform for the RSPs: it provided capacity building support to them, and assists them in policy advocacy and donor linkages.



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