



A girl from Gulghandai Girls Middle School, Afghanistan
Photographed by Donna Fernandes, April 2012

Newsletter

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CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
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Dear Readers,

In this edition of the CWS-P/A newsletter, you will see many new changes and plenty of achievements. The new layout aims to bring you more images and more stories from communities in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The news section highlights some of our work with disaster-affected communities as well our continuing efforts in quality and accountability. It also shares how communities in Afghanistan benefit from improved access to and quality of education and health services.

In addition to helping disaster-affected communities rebuild, CWS-P/A incorporates disaster risk reduction into its initiatives in ways that communities can effectively learn and apply in their communities. Read more about health initiatives in Afghanistan in the feature on childhood nutrition.

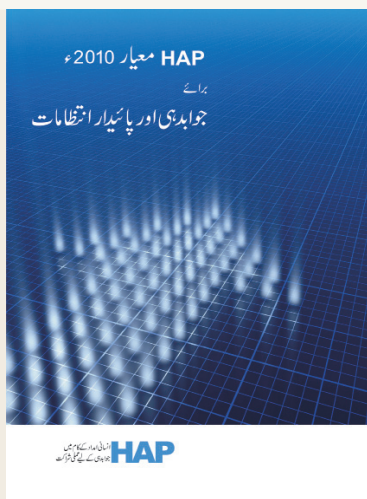
A main goal is to empower individuals and communities to ensure sustainable futures. Read how one woman in Northern Pakistan became a successful entrepreneur following skills training from CWS-P/A.

As always, thank you for reading our newsletter. Send feedback and suggestions to commoffice@cwspa.org.pk.

The CWS - P/A team

In This Edition

Suggested Reading



2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management in Urdu

EXCERPT: The 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management helps organizations that assist or act on behalf of people affected by or prone to disasters, conflict, poverty or other crises to design, implement, assess, improve and recognize accountable programs. It represents broad consensus on what matters most when organizations engage in humanitarian action.

The translation of the HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management was completed by CWS-P/A's Strengthening Humanitarian Assistance (SHA) unit in December 2011. It can be downloaded from <http://www.cwspa.org/resources/publications>.

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CWS-P/A's Mission Statement

CWS-P/A as an ecumenical organization will struggle for a community based on social justice, regardless of class, religion, gender, and culture by assisting marginalized communities in an accountable manner to achieve economic prosperity and improve human and social capital through participatory endeavor, which liberates people enhances their capacities to take control of their lives.

EDITORIAL TEAM : Kelli Siddiqui, Donna Fernandes, Shahzad Ahmad, & Shama Mall

PHOTO CREDITS : Donna Fernandes, Shahzad Ahmad, Rizwan Iqbal, Sana Yousaf, M. Nabeel, Rizwan Qazi, Naheed Bibi, and CWS-P/A Staff.

Changing Women's Lives: Better Health and Health Services

January - April

The lack of access to health facilities and skilled birth attendants place women from far-flung areas at higher risk of birth complications. In Afghanistan, the prevailing high maternal mortality rate stands at 1,400/100,000.

To overcome the challenges that pregnant women face and to improve the lives of mothers and children, CWS-P/A is working to ensure that women and children have access to improved maternal and neonatal health care services through six health centers. The organization's long-term existing health facilities have recently received new delivery kits and health staff have been trained for safe births, while two new

and works through female health workers which helps encourage the involvement of women.

Working at CWS-P/A's sub-health center in Chapdarya, Qarghai District, Ghotai is a midwife with sixteen years of experience. "There have been 110 antenatal and 60 postnatal services provided in the last four months. I will be doing deliveries here, and if the cases are complicated I refer the women to a hospital in Jalalabad." Describing more about the project she said, "We are well equipped and it is a complete program for the prevention of infection."

A twenty-eight year old expecting mother visiting the health facility shared, "Women are happy with the maternal health services that have started here. People are usually unable to afford proper health services and have to travel long distance." Then adding that the project has taught her personal hygiene and made her more aware on breastfeeding, she said, "If I had this facility before I would have not lost a child in my fourth month of pregnancy."



facilities have been established in the districts of Alingar and Alishang. Moreover, the efforts of trained health staff are helping to spread awareness on choices of family planning methods and proper nutrition for mothers, expecting mothers, and children. To ensure the ownership of the project and to encourage women's access to the facilities, CWS-P/A holds regular meetings with community elders, *shura* (religious council),

Together with support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D), CWS-P/A is working to improve mother and child health. Additionally, the combination of access to quality health services and health awareness encourages women to make informed decisions about self-care and their children's care.



A Teacher Discusses Educational Solutions in Qarghai District

April

Narjis is a young and ambitious teacher at Gulghandai Girls Middle School. In her early twenties, she is in her second semester training at the Teacher Training Center in Nangahar. "It is not easy teaching until afternoon and training to become a teacher in the evening. I get tired, but I am doing this because I like teaching and have chosen this profession."

At Gulghandai Girls Middle School, Narjis is one among two female teachers working in the school. "My family does not object and prevent me from working in this school despite the lack of female teachers. Maybe I am lucky that my house is near the school." Narjis knows that the lack of female teachers contributes to lower female students attending schools and adds that this is not the only problem facing the schools and children. "The children are sharing books, the school needs boundary walls and a gate, and there is no electricity."

She added that although the government provided the books, a shortage of books among the students exists. "During play time, some children wander away and go home. The school does not have a gate or boundary wall that can prevent this from happening. We have extreme temperatures and the school needs electricity."

Narjis has been teaching at the school for one year. She said, "It is good to have more children come to school, but it is hard to motivate them under these conditions. The

parents understand the importance of education these days."

CWS-P/A is in its third year of working to bring more female students to schools in Afghanistan. A total increase in enrollment of 2,630 girls has been reported and 86 students rejoined schools during January and March 2012. This was made possible through 123 home visits conducted that helped identify children who had left schools. Moreover, the active involvement of parents and *shura* (religious council) in increasing the attendance of female students has been commendable in the rural areas of Afghanistan.

CWS-P/A also conducts capacity building initiatives with teachers, with the most recent being a camp for female teachers and students. Overall training activities range from classroom pedagogical skills to topics that are not normally part of the curriculum including peace education, human rights, and gender equality.

With a greater acceptability for girls to attend schools, the momentum must be sustained by an increase in the number of female teachers and encouragement for female students to pursue higher education. A parallel component of sustainability is more investment in the structural and educational materials required to support the demand for quality education in a safe environment.

A Year of Recovery and Relief for Flood-affected Families

For more than a year, CWS-P/A assisted families to recover from the 2010 floods while simultaneously the response to the emergency needs of the newly and re-affected families following the floods of 2011 also took place. Although some activities such as the reconstruction of 500 houses in Thatta Sindh continue, many of the initial recovery projects ended after successfully helping families restore livelihoods and become better prepared for upcoming monsoon seasons.

In addition to providing families the resources they required to reestablish their livelihoods, CWS-P/A ensured sustainability by building individual and community capacities. This was achieved through hundreds of sessions on related topics such as integrated crop management and livestock management. The importance of understanding and preparing for future disasters was also shared with communities through various trainings on disaster risk reduction (DRR). Some communities received training on community based disaster management, following which resources were provided to implement community plans for reducing risks such as the provision and planting of tree saplings and the construction of retaining walls through cash-for work. For some communities emphasis was placed on school safety or safer housing construction. In Thatta, Sindh alone, more than 1,000 individuals received disaster risk reduction and preparedness training through the mobile knowledge resource center.

With much damage to schools, CWS-P/A reconstructed eight schools in the districts of Kohistan and Shangla in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Aside from working in this very remote area of Pakistan, CWS-P/A selected schools that were the most difficult to access in this mountainous

region. The newly reconstructed schools include boundary walls and other facilities that will ensure that children are able to learn in a secure and protected environment. After completion of the schools, children returned to their classrooms at which time CWS-P/A also provided school kits to more than 650 students.



In five union councils located in District Kohistan, CWS-P/A worked to help communities improve their access to clean water. A total of 37,854 individuals benefited from the repair of thirty-two water supply schemes. Additionally 300 domestic latrines and hand washing points were rehabilitated and 4,500 households received 4,500 non-food item kits.



To respond to the health needs of affected communities, CWS-P/A provided preventive and curative health services through static and hydraulic mobile health units (HMHUs) to 12,514 flood-affected families in Kohistan, Mansehra, and Muzaffargarh. These services were provided over a period of twelve months while two HMHUs and the first mobile laboratory unit provided additional health services to affected families in Kohistan.

When the need arose, CWS-P/A provided emergency food, NFI, and health services to families affected during the 2011 monsoon season in Sindh. Unfortunately, the overall lack of sufficient funding for planned humanitarian activities in Pakistan resulted in unmet needs and generally low preparedness for the 2012 monsoon season. CWS-P/A hopes that continued efforts will help vulnerable communities continue to recover while preparing for future emergencies. The organization remains committed to providing dignified opportunities and practical solutions to the recurring disasters that frequently afflict Pakistan's poorest communities.

Effectively Enhancing Quality and Accountability

January - April

Between January and April, CWS-P/A's Strengthening Humanitarian Assistance unit (SHA) continued to offer quality and accountability trainings and technical support to organizations in Pakistan. In the first quarter of the year, the unit's activities ranged from conducting an impact study delivered to over 2,000 former participants to mainstreaming workshops across country offices as well as disseminating translated HAP booklets to promote quality and accountability within organizations. While CWS-P/A demonstrates its ongoing commitment to improving humanitarian work, the following interventions helped mainstream quality and accountability at various local and international levels.



Coordinating Humanitarian Work

Since its inception two years ago, the Accountability Learning and Working Group (ALWG) revised its Terms of Reference (ToR). Its revitalized objectives with unanimous agreement from members include:

- To promote and support quality and accountability specific standards, principles, guidelines, and practices at organizational levels for participating agencies.
- To collect examples of good practices and challenges on quality and accountability.
- To enable learning and sharing information on key strategies and policies affecting the humanitarian response and development activities vis-à-vis quality and accountability in Pakistan.

Important Milestone for Quality and Accountability

With the collaboration of Church World Service-Asia/Pacific (CWS-A/P), Sphere Project, International Council of Voluntary Agency (ICVA), Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan (CWS-P/A) facilitated a series of quality and accountability (Q&A) initiatives held in Japan in late January and early February. With a total of 138 participants these initiatives included a one-day orientation and a half-day symposium on quality and accountability, followed by a five-day training of trainers (ToT) on both Sphere and HAP Standards in Tokyo. The final activity was a one-day orientation on quality and accountability in Sendai. These activities marked an important milestone for Q&A in Japan. It was also the first ToT bringing together these two internationally recognized quality and accountability standards.

Complaints Analysis

At the end of March, CWS-P/A and its implementing partner completed its one-year project, Information and Complaints Handling Centers (IHCs). One key achievement of the project was in referring 18,420 complaints to the relevant government agencies, local NGOs, and international organizations. This innovative project was implemented in the districts of Swat, Nowshera, Thatta, and Shahdadt. The impact report contains revealing statistics, for example, 16 % of the complaints were reported as successfully resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.

Trainings, Translations, and Service Delivery

Between January and March, 224 participants from various organizations benefited took part in SHA trainings, increasing awareness and application of the international Q&A Standards. Additionally, the unit held nine orientations and conducted re-orientations for project staff in both the Disaster Management Program (DMP) and the Capacity Building Program (CBP). A total of 162 staff members in the provinces of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were trained on the role of quality and accountability in project lifecycle (from project design to needs assessment to implementation and monitoring, through to exit strategies). The participants also gained understanding on the structure, purpose, and value of the CWS-P/A Accountability Framework, 2010 HAP Standard, Sphere Standard, Complaints Response Mechanism, and Information Sharing among others. CWS-P/A continued to advocate and actively promote



jointly at both national and regional levels for promoting quality and accountability.

HAP General Assembly, Board, and Accountability Report

The tenth HAP General Assembly was held on April 26-27 and CWS-P/A is pleased to announce that Deputy Director, Zainab Raza, was elected as Vice Chair of the Board. The HAP Board consists of twelve members of which two thirds represent agencies that are full HAP members and the remaining one third are

quality and accountability among its peer organizations. From January to March, the unit distributed 1,668 Sphere handbooks; 328 HAP Standards (English version) and 89 in Urdu.

Late June will see the launch of the Sphere handbook in Urdu and a new Q&A Workbook in English, Urdu, and Sindhi languages. The Sindhi translation of the Q&A Workbook will be launched in Hyderabad at the first meeting of sub-ALWG for Sindh. This translation was produced with the financial support of Act for Peace.

Furthermore, a newly designed questionnaire helped identify the effectiveness of the trainings and improve future services. The questionnaires were shared with participants who benefited from trainings in 2010 and 2011. Its study revealed that participants appreciated the quality of service offered and expressed an interest to work

independent board members, these members come from a cross section of experience in humanitarian and related fields. The Executive of the HAP Board is completed with the election of Lisa Henry from DCA as Chair, and Rein Paulsen from World Version International, as Treasurer. Some note worthy highlights from the General Assembly include the increase in tenure of board members from two to three years and additional individuals can be co-opted by the Board to serve for a fixed period not exceeding three years, defined at the time of appointment. The 2011 Humanitarian Accountability Report was also launched during the General Assembly in Geneva. The report can be accessed at <http://hapinternational.org/pool/files/2011har.pdf> and includes an overview of key developments in accountability in 2011 among other reports from HAP members and perceptions of accountability collected from HAP's annual survey.

People in Aid Membership Granted to CWS-P/A

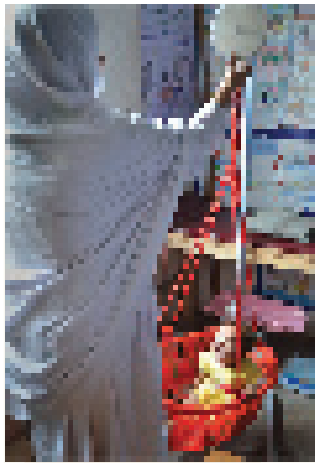
April

The People in Aid Code of Good Practice is an internationally recognized management tool that outlines an essential set of principles of good people management. In April 2012, CWS-P/A received membership from People in Aid.

Through years of international collaboration by various NGOs, international organizations, public bodies, and private sector firms, People in Aid helps agencies to improve standards, accountability, and transparency. CWS-P/A benefits directly from the researches, consultancies, resource materials, and case studies among other services available for members to streamline HR objectives and compatibility with international compliance standards.

The membership provides an opportunity to earn internationally recognized Quality Marks. The Quality Marks form part of the three stages of People in Aid membership and exhibit leadership in 'good practice people management.'

CWS-P/A's Deputy Director, Zainab Raza, shares, "The PiA platform is also a useful source of networking with organizations which share common goals and interest. CWS-P/A takes pride in being ISO and HAP certified and now its membership with PiA further reflects its commitment towards aspiring for higher goals on quality and accountability."



A midwife at CWS-P/A's health facility screens a child to monitor growth in Amar Khel, Afghanistan.



CWS-P/A's social mobilizer trains female community members on health and hygiene as part of the housing project in Thatta District, Sindh, February 2012.

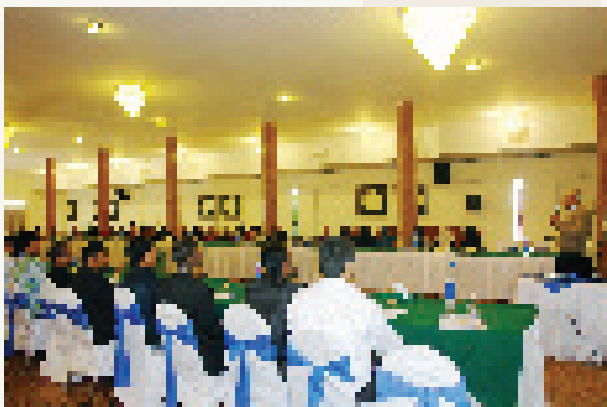


CWS-P/A's mobile laboratory unit brings health services to the residents of Kohistan, April 2012.



Participants engage in a group activity during CWS-P/A's peace manual orientation and application workshop in Sindh, March, 2012.

An adolescent HIV&AIDS session takes place in Karachi, January 2012.



A community member receives medicines from CWS-P/A's mobile health unit operating in Sindh, March 2012.





Students in Thatta District participate in learning disaster risk reduction education through the MKRC, April 2012.

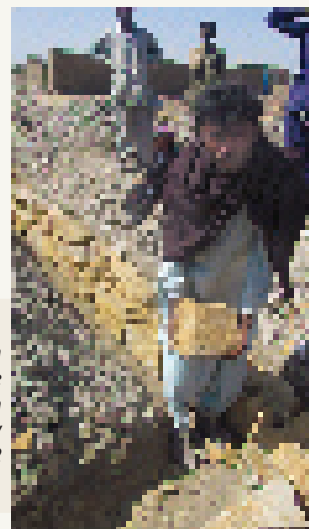


Students participate in an activity, 'Morning Meeting' during a transformational, learning, and development workshop in Sindh, February 2012.

Affected communities ready to travel back to their residence after receiving CWS-P/A's non-food items package, Sindh, February, 2012



Masonry graduates from CWS-P/A's CTTC participate in safer house building in Thatta District, Photo by CWS-P/A Staff, April 2012



Community members are introduced to CWS-P/A's complaints handling mechanism in Sindh.



Helping Communities Reduce Disaster Risks in Thatta District

By: Donna Fernandes



CWS-P/A takes an integrated and holistic approach to disaster risk reduction (DRR) in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Initiatives consider structural and non-structural aspects including extensive efforts to build community capacity. Following severe devastation from floods, Thatta District in Sindh became the focus of a comprehensive DRR initiative. Safer housing construction and a mobile education initiative enhance the communities' capacity toward safety and resilience.

Realizing the widespread damage to homes in the aftermath of the summer 2010 floods, CWS-P/A conducted a needs assessment in April 2011 with 750 affected families. While the assessment highlighted the immense

need to respond to recovery needs of affected families, the assessment also confirmed Thatta District as one of the most disaster prone district of the country. The findings indicated that despite having witnessed several disasters, communities had limited knowledge on lowering risks and staying safe. Moreover, the absence of a district level disaster risk reduction plan was identified.

Following the project's selection process, a total of 500 affected community members were selected to benefit from safer housing. In April 2012, CWS-P/A completed the construction of the first forty houses. The housing designs help to withstand disasters and are built on raised



foundations. The houses are equipped with sanitation facilities, a latrine, and kitchen. The construction materials are also suitable for the climate conditions.

A major achievement of the project is the formation of community organizations which continue to take collective action for the betterment of their villages even outside the scope of the project. They also play an active role in ensuring community participation in capacity building initiatives. CWS-P/A provided training on health and hygiene, leadership skills, disaster risk reduction, and the complaints mechanism. As construction activities continue, the communities take various initiatives including cleaning debris, painting their houses, and planning for additional risk reducing activities such as boundary wall construction and tree plantation.

In December 2011, CWS-P/A in collaboration with SEEDS Asia launched Pakistan's first mobile knowledge resource center (MKRC) to enhance local knowledge and capacity on disaster risk reduction. The mobile nature of the initiative enabled CWS-P/A to reach far-flung and remote areas of Thatta. The educational materials included simulation models, posters, and booklets. In order to ensure sustainability and more widespread awareness, a training of trainers (ToT) was designed for community members based on the Knowledge, Interest, Desire, and Action (KIDA) model. The model ensures the active participation of communities to help encourage measures that lower risks from hazards.

As of February 2012, as many as 1,063 individuals including students, teachers, and other community members enhanced their knowledge on being better prepared to save themselves and the lives of others at risk. Participants gained knowledge through the practical demonstration of disaster models relating to floods, earthquakes, cyclones, and safer housing construction in villages. They also received emergency bags with radios, flashlights, and a documents folder.

Additionally, community members received training on boat-making with local resources. These included the

use of ropes, styrofoam, and bamboo sticks. Students, teachers, and community members also received training in making life-saving bottles. The making of the bottles was demonstrated using plastic bottles, rope, glue, and an iron hook.

The project through imparting disaster risk reduction education also helped CWS-P/A's masonry graduates from its Construction Trade Training Centers (CTTC) program in Thatta District to learn safer house building. The newly acquired knowledge is being practically applied at the safer housing construction project where graduates have been employed. Approximately thirty masonry graduates were part this further integration and work is underway to provide more graduates with a similar opportunity.



The new houses with safety as priority reduce vulnerabilities to disasters, while the knowledge on disaster risk reduction will stimulate action for safety measures. All in all the knowledge base will strengthen as the communities' residents work toward reducing risks. The village organizations' positive response during the project indicates that the communities also have an established mechanism for maintaining community efforts, raising issues with concerned departments when necessary, and promoting disaster preparedness.



Child Development and Growth in Early Years

By: Donna Fernandes

With rising prices of essential food items, the problem of malnutrition plagues millions of people and particularly those with low income earnings in developing countries. Aside from the high cost of food, unawareness of what constitutes a healthy diet and good habits is another factor contributing to undernourishment among children. As family size increases, the inability to provide adequate nutrition to children deepens.

Children under the age of five, who often lack proper nutrition and are deprived of healthy meals, become the most affected. Health specialists confirm that proper nutrition is essential in the early years of life and it helps stimulate mental and physical growth. Additionally, a lack of good nutrition contributes to stunted growth in children with long-term effects on their future health and development.

In Afghanistan, malnutrition continues to be a serious concern. Statistics show that nearly 40% of children under age three are moderately or severely underweight and more than 50% of children in the same age group are moderately or severely stunted. In Nangarhar Province, located in the east of the country, the national nutrition survey conducted by the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) in 2004, revealed the estimated prevalence of chronic malnutrition at 60.5% in four districts including Beshood, Kama, Rodat, and Dara I Nur. In districts Khewa and Surkhrood, according to the Health Management Information System (HMIS) survey, the malnutrition rate for children under the age of five is between 10% and 12%. Recognizing the high prevalence of malnutrition in Khewa District and Surkhrood District along with ongoing

periods of drought, and issues of poverty and displacement, CWS-P/A initiated a project to help improve the nutrition of children under the age of five in the two districts. The project's main interventions include the establishment of early childhood development and care centers (ECD), child clubs at ten schools, and health corners at the organization's existing health facilities.

Each of the two established ECD centers caters to the special needs of twenty children through the provision of healthy mid-day meals and hygiene practices. While children at the centers are stimulated with learning and games, the project also focuses on directing these activities at mothers. The mothers participate at the ECD centers to learn how to prepare healthy, balanced meals and to engage in their child's development.



The healthy meals replace the food these children would otherwise be eating or not eating. Reviewed and organized by CWS-P/A's Mother and Child Health Coordinator (MCH), Dr. Malalai, a well-set food chart defines the caloric intake and sets the standards for proper nutrition. At the centers the presence of a health facilitator helps to screen the growth of children. Regular weight and height monitoring are conducted and recorded, while the center's kitchen helper keeps the utensils for each child clean and encourages healthy practices, like hand-washing before and after meals.

Moreover, the project in its initial stage continues until August 2012. By focusing on a group of 40 children, CWS-P/A is using an all-inclusive approach by involving mothers so that proper attention is given to the physical, mental, social, and emotional growth of children.

"Some of the children are orphans and from underprivileged families," added Masouda Safi working for the project in Afghanistan as she stressed the need for the project's extension. "There are some who also belong to displaced and refugee communities. Their families have many things to worry about including finding a place to live back in their villages."

The additional components of the project include the establishment of ten child clubs at schools in both districts and the formation of ten health education corners. In

been oriented on growth monitoring of children and are providing health education to mothers and expecting mothers. The awareness sessions at the health corners on essential topics including breast-feeding, proper nutrition during pregnancy, child-spacing, and children's nutrition among others have reached thousands of women.

Masouda says that some women are eager to make others aware and this is a step forward in anticipation that positive changes will occur.

From Shiga Girls High School, Laila a sixth grade student is actively involved in the school's child club and shares that the incorporation of the health newsletter has been an important contribution in raising awareness within the school. As a leader for students in the project, Benazir, a teacher, said, "The project is making children and their parents more aware. The messages are being passed on to other community members."

In Nangarhar Province, CWS-P/A's nutrition project is working to prevent malnutrition among children, promoting healthy practices within families, and contributing to influence positive child growth and development. Moreover, it is hoped that healthy children will be able to play proactive roles within their families and communities for their betterment and

MEASURING POSITIVE GROWTH

NAME OF THE CHILD: ROMA						
Date of Visit	Age in Month	Measurements showed - growth chart				
		Weight (kg)	Height (cm)	BMI	Height/Weight %	Expected Weight - kg
January 2012	40 Months	8.7	85.3	15	<-2SD, >+5SD	10.7
February 2012	41 Months	9.2	84	15	-2SD	11
March 2012	42 Months	10	85	14	-1SD	11.2
April 2012	43 Months	11	85.3	15	Medians	11.3
May 2012	44 Months	11.3	85.3	16	Medians	11.3

NAME OF THE CHILD: SUJAD						
Date of Visit	Age in Month	Measurements showed - growth chart				
		Weight (kg)	Height (cm)	BMI	Height/Weight %	Expected Weight - kg
January 2012	43 Months	12	91	13	-1SD	15.1
February 2012	44 Months	12.9	91	16	Medians	15.1
March 2012	45 Months	15.8	92	16	-1SD	15.4
April 2012	46 Months	15.3	95	16	-1SD	15.8
May 2012	47 Months	15.3	95	16	Medians	15.3

NAME OF THE CHILD: MUDDASIR						
Date of Visit	Age in Month	Measurements showed - growth chart				
		Weight (kg)	Height (cm)	BMI	Height/Weight %	Expected Weight - kg
January 2012	41 Months	8.7	85.3	15	-1SD	15.1
February 2012	42 Months	9.2	84	15	-1SD	15.1
March 2012	43 Months	10	85	14	-1SD	15.4
April 2012	44 Months	11	85.3	15	Medians	15.4
May 2012	45 Months	11.3	85.3	16	Medians	15.3

NAME OF THE CHILD: SAEEDA						
Date of Visit	Age in Month	Measurements showed - growth chart				
		Weight (kg)	Height (cm)	BMI	Height/Weight %	Expected Weight - kg
January 2012	38 Months	8	81	12	-5SD	10.5
February 2012	39 Months	8.2	81	15	<-2SD, >+5SD	10.5
March 2012	40 Months	8.3	82	15	<-2SD, >+5SD	10.3
April 2012	41 Months	9	85	15	-2SD	10.7
May 2012	42 Months	10	85	14	-1SD	10.7





SAMEENA'S STORY: The Emergence of a Skilled Businesswoman

Collected by: Naheed Bibi

Sameena is now a successful graduate from CWS-P/A's skills development course in Mansehra District with embroidery and beadwork skills. She is a mother of four children and among them is a physically challenged daughter named Ayesha. At the time of her selection, Sameena's husband was unfit for work due to a drug addiction.

Sameena knew basic sewing which helped her earn a seasonal and minimal income from wedding orders in her village and rarely from her neighbors. Ambitiously she completed the three months of training which enhanced her skills and taught her embroidery and beadwork. Following graduation in October 2011, Sameena's initial income ranged between 2,000 and 3,000 rupees (USD 22 – 32) from local market orders and other graduates. Sameena began giving herself and her family a better life – one that she hoped for since her selection.

In early December, Sameena opened her own boutique in the extension of her sister's house located in Hasan Abdal near Wah Cantt. Strategically located near the market the boutique is called 'Ayesha Boutique' where Ayesha visits regularly to watch her mother at work and to learn sewing.

Sameena's monthly earning is 30,000 rupees (USD 323), and she pays an assistant, Zarguna, 7,000 rupees (USD 75) per month. Zarguna manages the boutique during Sameena's absence and is also her student. "I teach ten students for a period of three months. This is currently the second batch, and the fee I charge is 60 rupees per month (USD 0.65)." With a prudent expression Sameena added, "I know this is a small fee as the girls are from poor families."

Moreover, Sameena hopes to expand her work by selling in Islamabad and focusing it on beads, jasti (traditional embroidery work which has originated from Hazara District, Pakistan), and crocheted work. During the skills development course, Sameena participated in a one-day training on business promotion, market access, and customers. Imparting this first-hand knowledge was an entrepreneur who owns a boutique. The knowledge she learned from the entrepreneur and her newly acquired skills gave her the confidence and capacity to open Ayesha Boutique.

Sameena's income initiated a series of improvements in her life. Her husband also now contributes to family income through a job at a local hotel after she was able to pay for the treatment he needed. Ayesha, who is unable to walk,

regularly sees a physiotherapist in Islamabad, and her son attends the tenth grade at a private school.

Sameena is indeed an example for other graduates and women in her community. While families in Pakistan have realized the transformations within a household when women work, the disparity in gender participation remains wide.

CWS-P/A repeatedly emphasizes the role of working women in transforming the lives of families and children through improved education, nutrition, health, and the utilization of financial and non-financial resources within family structures.

The skills development activities were introduced by CWS-P/A after its Construction Trade Training Program (CTTP) in the same area which successfully helped men learn skilled trades. Recognizing the need and significance of assisting women-led households, the activities were introduced during the second year of the project. Thus far, 89 women graduated including Afghan refugees and members of the host community in Mansehra District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These women benefit from acquiring skills in tailoring, embroidery, and dress designing. All graduates also receive sewing kits to match their newly acquired skills. Noteworthy is the fact that the graduates have diplomas affiliated with the Skill Development Council (SDC) of Peshawar which increases their employability in the local markets.





Words of Wisdom

Today the need to listen to each other, recognize our differences and prize diversity is greater than it has ever been before.

Daisaku Ikeda

Hot Topic

MDG 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education

The 2nd Millennium Development Goal is Achieving Universal Primary Education. Viewed as an absolute prerequisite for sustainable development, education helps societies move toward improved welfare. The goal states that by 2015 children everywhere will complete a full course of primary education.

In 2001-02, the net primary enrolment rate in Pakistan was 42% which followed a decline of 4 percentage points in ten years. A net primary enrolment rate of 52% was revealed in data collected by the Pakistan Social and Living Standard Measurement Survey (PSLM 2004-05). The factors contributing to this improvement included increased allocation by the government and enhanced participation by the private sector.

While literacy rates of the population over the age of ten remains low, reports have shown a gradual increase. However,

large gender gaps continue to exist at the national level with female literacy rates at 40% compared with the male literacy rate at 65%. In Afghanistan, the literacy rate for young women is 18%, compared to 50% for boys. Despite various efforts by countries around the globe, more work is needed to ensure a holistic approach that is aimed at creating and maintaining increased enrollment.

CWS-P/A works for improving access to quality education through a variety of initiatives. Particular emphasis is placed on promoting girls' education and improving teachers' capacity. In Pakistan, 18 disaster-affected schools were reconstructed during the past two years. In Afghanistan, the involvement of parents, teachers, other community members, and religious bodies is resulting in concerted efforts to improve education, which has resulted in particular increase in girls' enrollment. Other value adding educational initiatives include the distribution of school supplies and educational material and training on school safety, health and hygiene, child and human rights, and peace.

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