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# Promoting Sustainable Agriculture Practices

Continue reading at page 3

# NEWSLETTER

May - August 2016

Volume 2, Issue 2

A happy young boy from an agricultural village in rural Sindh, Pakistan  
Photographed by Khalid Rasheed, August, 2016

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# Contents

|                                  |    |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Star of the Quarter              | 02 |
| Suggested Reading                | 02 |
| Features                         | 03 |
| Promoting Sustainable            |    |
| Agriculture Practices            | 03 |
| Announcements                    | 04 |
| A Treasure that Cannot be Stolen | 05 |
| Trending                         | 07 |
| Trivia                           | 11 |
| Quote                            | 12 |

## Dear Readers,

Greetings from Community World Service Asia and welcome to our 2016 Summer Issue!

A lot has been happening this summer at our end- we've launched new projects, kick-started new activities of existing ones and successfully completed others. Many of our projects, ranging from Livelihoods to Health are based in Sindh and the boy on this issue's cover captures perfectly the impact of our presence in the region- providing basic needs to bring rightful smiles on people's faces! One such project is implemented through our Disaster Management teams in Badin which is supporting local communities with providing sustainable agricultural practices. The infographic on page 3 and 4 can quickly give you an idea of how we are doing this.

Promoting literacy through our various projects in Pakistan and Afghanistan is among our key focus areas. In Sindh we are particularly targeting rural women through our women empowerment and increasing livelihoods project to have access to basic literacy skills to be able to effectively run and manage their enterprises and raise incomes. As a special feature and centerfold photo story, participants of these projects have shared their views on why education is important to them.

Reading on, you will find a variety of stories and articles from our projects in the region in the #trending section. We have celebrated National Minorities day with communities in Sindh, Pakistan, engaged with academia to take them on board for inclusion of humanitarian and development related degrees in their curricula and provided trainings on Education in Emergencies for partners in Islamabad among our many other initiatives.

# Star of the Quarter



The star of the Quarter this month is **Tassaduq Hussain**, with many thanks for his commitment to the humanitarian projects, and his superb design as well as creative skills. Congratulations, Tassaduq!

## Suggested Reading

### Caste Away: The ongoing struggle of Punjabi Christians

More than 95 per cent of Pakistani Christians come from the central Punjab who trace their origin in the mass conversion movement, known as "Mass Movement", which took place in the villages of the central Punjab from 1870s to 1920s among downtrodden landless peasants. At the time of partition, these hundreds of thousands became jobless and homeless because their Sikh landlords left for India. Because of this, a mass displacement of Christians took place and these peasants became metropolitan sweepers across the country.



A wall painting in Essa Nagri, Karachi | Mohammad Ali, White Star

Read the detailed article on following link: <http://herald.dawn.com/news/1153523/caste-away>

We would also like to take this opportunity to bid farewell and convey our very best wishes to our core editorial team member, Alison Sneddon, who has left us to join another organization in the UK. We miss her enthusiasm and her endless commitment and contribution to our team but at the same time wish her a very bright future.

You are welcome to share your comments, suggestions and stories with us for future issues.

Enjoy reading!

# Editorial Team



Shama Mall



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Sahar Zafar



Hasan Imtiaz



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Tassaduq Hussain



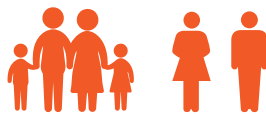
Ross Mahtani

# Promoting Sustainable Agriculture Practices

**Where:** Union Council Pangrio and Khairpur Gambo Talkua Tando Bagho, Badin district, Sindh Province



**Who are we supporting:** 650 Farming families - 3,575 individuals



**Time Frame:** 3 years



**What are we doing:** Initiated in October 2015, this three year project aims to provide food security and improve livelihood prospects of small-scale farming families by introducing sustainable agricultural practices to disaster affected and marginalized communities in Badin.

## What do we aim to achieve:



Increase agricultural production of targeted households



Reduce the practice of farmers leasing from vendors and private moneylenders



Improve nutritional intake of families



Decrease per acre production cost of each crop of the target farmers



Increase kitchen gardening



Increase awareness on healthy eating practices

## Features



### Our process:



25 target villages identified and community organizations formed in each



Farmers Field Schools established to provide capacity building sessions on sustainable farming processes for 650 farming based families



Six farmers field festivals and exposure visits organized



180 capacity building sessions on balanced diets



60 capacity building trainings on kitchen gardening for women



20 capacity building sessions on Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM)

### Achievements in a year:



28 villages identified and community based organization formed in each



21 training sessions on nutrition conducted for 523 women from the targeted community



314 women trained on kitchen gardening





Participants and training facilitator of the kitchen gardening session



An ongoing Kitchen Gardening teaching session



Feedback session on nutrition as part of the training with participants



Women busy discussing ideas and practices on nutrition among themselves



Women took a lot of interest in the kitchen gardening session and were very eager to learn about nutritional needs of women and families.

# Announcements



## The Great Shake-Out

More than a million people worldwide will practice earthquake safety on October 20th at the "Great Shake-Out Earthquake Drill". As part of the largest earthquake drill in history, and in memorial of the thousands affected by frequent earthquakes in Pakistan, Community World Service Asia, with the support of Focus Humanitarian Assistance, will be participating in this Great Shake-Out as well. Volunteers from schools, rural communities, Disaster Management Committees (DMCs), the DRR forums, government offices, project offices as well as private school associations in Sindh will be trained on DROP, COVER and HOLD and other DRR and safe school exercises in this campaign carried out on October 8th. The teams plan to reach out to 0.1 million people directly in Thatta, Sujawal, Umerkot, Karachi and Islamabad through this drill.

## Become a CHS Expert!

If you are based in Asia or anywhere else in the world, and interested in training on the [Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability](#)? This is the chance for you! There will be a [Training of Trainers \(ToT\)](#) on the [CHS](#) in Bangkok, Thailand from 28 Nov-1 Dec hosted by [Community World Service Asia](#). The workshop is aimed at humanitarian workers from INGOs, NGOs, UN, donors, universities and government agencies! Applications close 30th September. Download more info & application form here: <http://communityworldservice.org/training-calendar/>

## Would you like a diploma on NGO Management?

Community World Service Asia, in collaboration with University of Peshawar and University of the Punjab has now developed a year long diploma course for NGO professionals. This degree is especially apt for people who wish to work in the development and humanitarian sector. The added value of this course is that it integrates practical knowledge and the technical skills required to excel in the sector. This innovative approach will involve development practitioners as guest speakers or visiting lecturers for providing technical skills and practice based knowledge to the students in the classroom. These classes will be followed by focused research and extensive fieldwork under the supervision of development practitioners to be completed by the NGO management students. Read more on this collaboration in the #trending section article titled "Promoting NGO-Academia coordination to ensure theory and practical work integration"

### Projects Launched this year:

1. Maternal, Neonatal and Child Healthcare (MNCH) in Laghman Province, Afghanistan
2. Integrated Emergency WASH and Shelter Support to Earthquake affected Communities in Shangla, KhyberPukhtunkhwa, Pakistan
3. Quality Education and Safe School Environment (QESSE) In Behsood and Surkhrood District, Nangarhar province, Afghanistan
4. Social Media Activists Project in Sindh and Punjab Provinces, Pakistan



# A Treasure that Cannot be Stolen

Community World Service Asia is working with women in rural Sindh, Pakistan, to equip them with literacy and numeracy skills. In May this year, a new Adult Literacy Center was opened in Abdullah Ghoto village in Thatta. We spoke to the new students to find out why literacy is important to them.



Afsana, from Abdullah Ghoto village: "Education can make you a historian."



Azeez Bano, from Rahim Dino Thaeem village: "Education is a basic right of every woman. It brings wisdom and one should get it from cradle to grave."



Ikhtiyar Bano, from Rahim Dino Thaeem village: "Education brings awareness."



Ilm Ayesha, from Achar Khaskheli village: "Education is the only source of development."



Kanwal, from Abdullah Ghoto village: "Education improves your capability for decision making."



Naveeda, from Achar Khaskheli village: "Education makes the difference between lawful and unlawful."



Nazeer Bano, from Rahim Dino Thaeem village: "Humans are blind without education. Every woman has the right to get education."



Noor Bano, from Abdullah Ghoto village: "Education is a kind of treasure which increases by sharing."





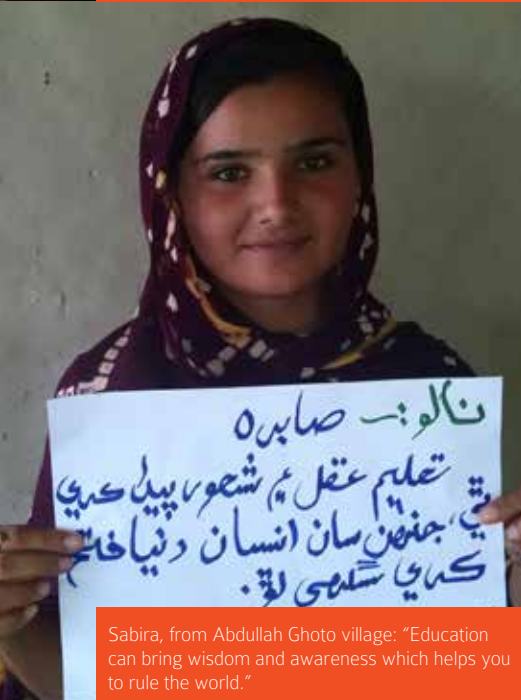
Noor Jahan, from Achar Khaskheli village: "Education turns you from inhumanity."



Razdan, from Abdullah Ghoto village: "Humans are blind without education."



Zahida, from Achar Khaskheli village: "Education is the third eye of wisdom."



Sabira, from Abdullah Ghoto village: "Education can bring wisdom and awareness which helps you to rule the world."



Sahiba, from Abdullah Ghoto village: "Education can enhance your integrity in society."



Sarwat, from Abdullah Ghoto village: "Seek knowledge from cradle to grave."



Sughra, from Abdulla Ghoto village: "Education is a treasure that cannot be stolen."



Shahnaz, from Rahim Dino Thaeem village: "Education is the eye of wisdom, it brings knowledge."



Shahida, from Achar Khaskheli village: "Education teaches you the lessons of morality."



# Trending



project management and implementation practices with them. . This was also an opportunity for the staff to cultivate more evidence based practices and gain knowledge on the subject for their theory based classes.

Five faculty members from COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Abbottabad, four from University of Peshawar and five from University of the Punjab participated in this meeting. Staff from various projects of Community World Service Asia from different locations provided an insight on their work and applied approaches for working with communities at the field level.

## Here is what some of the University representatives had to say after the meeting:

“Thanks to Community World Service Asia for giving a thorough introduction of the organization, it’s programs, approaches and thematic focus. It was a day full of learning! All of the team members from University of Punjab are very grateful for this opportunity.” Mr. Arshad Abbasi, Lecturer, University of the Punjab, Lahore:

“We have been working with Community World Service Asia since the last year. It was a great experience for us, much needed one, to know more about their programs, projects and thematic focus. I am glad to learn more about the organization’s work. Now we will look further to expand our partnership with Community World Service Asia and to engage more in field work.” Dr. Muhammad Ibrar, Asst. Professor, University of Peshawar:

“As academia, we are always open to working with NGOs and it is one of our prime requirement. Considering the situation in Pakistan, the opportunities to engage with development and humanitarian sector organizations are very limited. Exposure of this kind definitely helps in regaining confidence at both sides.” Dr. Adnan Dogar, COMSATS Institute of Information Technologies, Abbottabad.



## Promoting NGO-Academia coordination to ensure theory and practical work integration

By Hassan Imtiaz

In Pakistan, most Universities provide theory based knowledge in their curriculums. Moreover, a majority of the public sector universities’ curricula lack practical knowledge, application of technical skills and on ground exposure related to the degree program. This is one of the fundamental challenges faced by students aspiring to join the aid sector. These students lack knowledge about the approaches, strategic priorities and challenges faced by INGOs in Pakistan. Additionally, these students struggle to learn the ways of the aid sector when they initially join. Research methods, report writing or to understand the overall development/humanitarian framework in the country is all new to them.

Community World Service Asia is aiming to promote NGO-Academia partnership in Pakistan to bridge the gap between theory and practical humanitarian and development action. Universities are the best source for providing theoretical knowledge to students. Community World Service Asia, focus as an organization is on supporting the academia in exercising their educational role by organizing opportunities for students and faculty members both to gain practical experience within the development sector.

For this, the organization’s Quality and Accountability team organized an exposure visit for faculty members of three Universities from different parts of the country to share field experiences and



## Celebrating National Minorities Day in Sindh

By Rizwan Jaleel

On August 11th, Community World Service Asia’s Livelihood projects team in Umerkot celebrated National Minorities day with the local communities in village Mandal Thakar.

Umerkot is home to one of the highest population of Hindu communities in Pakistan. A large number of community members from village Mandal thakar and adjacent villages, especially women participated in the event. Village committee members, social activists, media persons and government officials also attended the celebrations.

The event was celebrated with the theme, “Empower women to combat poverty”, linking it to Community World Service Asia’s ongoing women empowerment and livelihoods projects and its contribution to the community’s improving socio-economic conditions and potential for future prosperity.

Participation and ownership of the village steering committee through the planning of and at the actual event was commendable. Both men and women of the committee were involved in the venue selection, circulation of event invitations, information sharing with community and the overall management of the event.

The women in particular participated with great enthusiasm and commitment at the event. They participated in singing the welcome song, performed in the theatre play on girls’ education and rights, took part in the group cultural dance and delivered powerful speeches on women empowerment.

Dongernath, a senior steering committee member, highlighted the root causes of poverty among the minorities in his speech at the event in village Mandal Thakar. He reiterated that the prime reason is illiteracy and lack of technical manpower or the effective use of technical skills. “Community World Service Asia and its partners are strengthening and polishing our capacities with providing us adult literacy classes and enhancing our skills. This is key to reducing poverty.” He further added, “It is now our responsibility to use these skills to our maximum benefit at the community and household level.”

Malkan, an artisan from one of the villages in Umerkot shared, “Before the skills building interventions in our village, I couldn’t even write my name, but now I can write my name, I can count and do basic numbering. I also feel that my embroidery skills have improved a lot since I have learned many new things about good color combinations, unique stiches, trendy designs and how to reach the market to sell my products.”

Engineer Bhoom Singh Sodho, from the government line department and belonging to a religious minority community himself, added, “It is not depressing if someone is born poor but it is depressing if someone dies poor without making any effort to change his/her situation. The skills building and education opportunities offered to our communities here are a great opportunity for minorities like ours to step out of poverty. Women can play a significant role in this regard and I advise all women to learn as much as they can.”



**Determined to bring back smiles** By Tassaduq Hussain

Maqsood Ahmad is a community mobilizer and a hygiene promoter working in Community World Service Asia’s Health project funded by UNOCHA and granted to REPID. Maqsood lives in a joint family system among his seven siblings in the Domail village

in district Banu.

After completing his bachelor’s degree, Maqsood started work in the development sector. At first, he did not have any intention to continue working in the aid sector, but as he continued working, Maqsood found his job very motivating and satisfying. Helping deserving people inspired him to work even more.

The communities of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) are very hospitable but they have certain norms which they set firmly. Though these communities are well aware of the limitations they have to live within but they still abide by their set customs and traditions.

“My responsibilities included mobilizing the communities to avail the health services, organizing village health committees and delivering health and hygiene sessions for men and children,” shared Maqsood.

“It is always a good experience to interact with the communities and take their input in planning and implementing projects which are meant for them. The communities were very cooperative in organizing the hygiene sessions and take a keen interest in applying the practices learnt. When practices of cleanliness and other hygiene issues are linked with Islamic teachings, the communities are even more eager to adopt them and ask their children to participate and learn about it as well.”

“They were also happy that we had separate arrangements for the women.” Many other minor issues that arise during implementation are also resolved through effective mobilization measures by field teams and working together with the communities.

“Once I was on field, and there was a pregnant woman in the community who was not given permission by the men in her family to go to a hospital for delivering her baby. At that point we instantly realized that this is where a mobile health unit is need. We took this opportunity to use the Community World Service Asia mobile health unit which came to where the woman was. She was able to meet a lady doctor and discussed her health concerns with her. When the lady was checked, it was found that she was eight months pregnant and was facing some prenatal complications, requiring proper treatment and a C-section surgery to deliver the child.”

“The woman’s condition was deteriorating by day but she was reluctant to explain her problem to her family. Our project team then intervened and tried to convince her father in law. Initially he was very angry upon our intervention about a woman in his family and was not at all happy about us talking about it with him. However, we explained to the father-in-law and the rest of the family that a lady doctor checked their daughter in law and she has requested that she be sent to a nearby hospital for an operation immediately.”

“The family and its men finally agreed. We considered this a huge success. The woman was taken to the hospital where she safely delivered a baby boy. The hospital informed the family that even if the surgery was delayed for a day, the mother and child would not have survived. This entire experience was quite strange for me but I considered it as a major achievement to be able to convince the family to listen to the doctor and her immediate request.”

As Maqsood recalled his experiences, he further added, “during my mobilization efforts with the community, I have made a lot of friends and I look forward to see them happy, healthy and secure. This thought drives me to continue working for such people who are great people but due to certain issues, live a hard life. We aim to work for them to bring smiles back on their faces.”





### **Sewing the path to gender equality** By Zunaira Shams

Kanwal is a 17-year-old artisan and a daughter of a laborer who struggles to earn daily wages for his six-member family residing in village Ranta in district Thatta. Kanwal and her other family members found surviving on her father's minimum wage very difficult. "We are very poor and we faced many financial challenges due to my father being the only income bearer in the family," she says. "Growing up in this penny-pinching environment was becoming painful and unmanageable".

The traditional attire in this and most parts of Sindh is enriched with influences of old heritage. Thus, stitching and embroidery are skills found commonly amongst rural women here. "I received training on stitching and embroidery in a skills developing center which opened up in our village," recalled Kanwal. "Though most of the girls in the village had basic embroidery skills, I had an advantage of learning more varied kinds of stitches, color combinations and contrasts that stood out. We were enlightened with modern designs which was high in demand in the markets." The trainers in the centre remember Kanwal as among the most skilled trainees, who picked up new designs and techniques fast and was determined to learn more.

"The income generated from the unique products that I made has eased our family's financial crisis. Our standard of living has improved as I proudly contribute to my own and my family's healthcare, food and clothing expenditures now." Kanwal shared how fulfilling her experience of learning new ideas of contemporary designs and variations in colors, stitches and clothes in the exposure visits to Karachi and Islamabad. "This experience has allowed me to make fashionable products which are high in demand."

Rural women in Sindh contribute significantly to arts and handicrafts. Traditional crafts produced by these women are not just a good source of income for them, but also allows them to feel empowered and appreciated. Kanwal has now developed several connections with local markets in the southern Sindh area and has also sold her products directly in the Thatta markets. She has become a regular income bearer, which has enhanced her value in the family. Her family is now encouraging other girls in the village to gain education and play a supportive role in their homes so that they can grow individually and professionally in the society. This revenue generation by young girls has enabled a mind-set change among Ranta residents, encouraging the women of their community towards skill development and empowerment.

According to Kanwal, it is not easy to step out and professionally grow in a male orientated society. The skill enhancement opportunities provided to us in our villages has permitted us to work with the men in the community. It has allowed us to contribute equally in family matters including decision making, and the provision of healthcare and education for children. "I can feel the change within me. My confidence level has increased and I do not hesitate while working among men now".

Kanwal now encourages her friends and other girls from her village to attain education and work towards developing their skills through sharing her own story. She hopes to motivate them to step out and represent their culture through their handicraft skills. "I am hopeful that opportunities like these will empower women in our area and reduce the poverty in these communities."



### **Serving Vital Health Needs in Rural Sindh: Janni's Story** By Alison Sneddon

With support from the Church of Scotland, Community World Service Asia works to provide preventive and curative health care services for women and children in Thatta, Sindh. Access to these vital services is of particular importance in this remote area, where cultural norms and the costs of transport can prevent women from seeking advice and treatment. These conditions mean that pregnancy and labor can be especially risky for women.

Janni, 35, was going through a fairly normal pregnancy. However, she began to feel labor pains late at night and there was no way for her to be brought to Community World Service Asia's Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health center to give birth safely. A local midwife delivered her baby at home, but during the delivery, Janni suffered from major internal bleeding, and the child was also going through many difficulties. During this testing time, Janni's husband thought that he had lost his wife forever.

"Most deliveries are done by midwives here. We work until 4:30 in the afternoon and sometimes deliveries happen at night, in which case we are unable to help. Janni went through a similar situation," explains Dr. Shazia, who is the doctor on staff at the center.

The day following the delivery, however, when Janni was brought to the center, Dr. Shazia helped stabilize her by giving her drips and necessary medication before referring her to a bigger hospital in the city, with more resources to treat her. Her blood pressure was very low and she had lost a lot of blood. If she had not been brought to the center, Janni would have lost her life.

Talking about the challenges and the state of healthcare in the village, Dr. Shazia further added that there are no ultrasound facilities in the area. "Even if patients are referred to bigger hospitals, we cannot provide transport."

Today, however, Janni and her baby, Niaz Ali, are healthy and well, and she has recovered completely.

### **No Compromise on Education** By Hassan Imtiaz

A growing number of conflicts, natural disasters and other unforeseen crises means everyday millions of school-age children and youth, especially girls, are deprived of basic education. In Pakistan, there many such children whose basic schooling is suffering.

In times of crisis, education can offer stability, protection and the chance to gain critical knowledge and skills. It can provide hope and is the only element that can bring a sense of normalcy back into the lives of children and families affected by disasters and conflicts. Without education, children in such circumstances face the risk of losing a prospects of a bright future. Children and youth among the most marginalized affected communities tend to become frustrated by being idle, and often become vulnerable to extremism and violence.

Keeping in view the unstable and frequently disrupted social environment in the country, it is vital to provide accessible, relevant and quality education to children affected by conflicts and climatic disasters in Pakistan. Recognizing this need, Community World Service Asia organized a three-day training on Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards in Islamabad this August. Participants from national and international NGOs took part in this training.

The exercises on the use of standards in real time scenarios were enjoyed and appreciated by the participants. As part of the trainings, participants also visited a trust school to test the School Self-Assessment tool after the session on contextualization. This tool was developed as per INEE Minimum Standards. The trainees committed to advocate the use of INEE Minimum Standards by within their organizations and suggested to promote it at an even wider level.



# Trivia



1. What was the theme of the 2016 World Humanitarian Day?
- A. Share humanity
  - B. One humanity
  - C. People helping people
  - D. Inspire the World's humanity

2. Which date is World Photography day, celebrated annually to commemorate the long journey of Photography, on?
- A. August 18
  - B. August 19
  - C. August 20
  - D. August 21

3. Humanitarian needs continue to rise, population displacements are increasing, and an entire generation of children is being exposed to war and rights violence, increasingly deprived of basic services, education and protection. Which conflict has triggered the world's largest humanitarian crisis since World War II?

- A. The Syrian Conflict
- B. The Burkini Ban in France
- C. Kurdish-Turkish conflict
- D. Boko Haram insurgency

4. Organized by the Socialist Party of America in remembrance of the strike on the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, the earliest Women's Day observance was held in New York on;

- A. 30th March 1888
- B. 6th June 1867
- C. 28th February 1909
- D. 2nd April 1908

6. According to Pakistan's independent Human Rights Commission how many women were killed in Pakistan last year by relatives who believed they had dishonored their families?

- A. 400
- B. More than 270
- C. 1100
- D. Less than 50

7. The United Nations' (UN) International Day against Nuclear test is observed on which day?

- A. August 28th
- B. August 29th
- C. August 27th
- D. August 30th

5. Teenage girls around the world face enormous challenges. With many considered ready for marriage or motherhood, many are forced from school which negatively impacts their future prospects. Without complete education, girls are denied access to basic information about health and rights. Each year, around how many girls are married before the age of 18? (i.e. roughly one every two seconds)

- A. Less than 3 Million
- B. 7 Million
- C. 2.5 Million
- D. 15 Million

8. Which of the following is not a part of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) structure?

- A. Supporting Quality Criteria
- B. Nine Commitments
- C. Take Actions to Fulfill Commitments
- D. Avoid Neutrality Standard Application

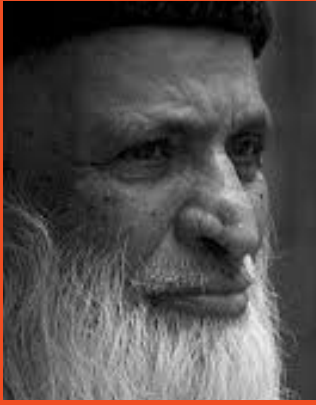
9. Where in the world is it most difficult for households to access clean water?

- A. Papua New Guinea
- B. Kyrgyzstan
- C. Chad
- D. Yemen

10. Which country will host the 19th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit 2016?

- A. Maldives
- B. Pakistan
- C. Bangladesh
- D. Bhutan

ANSWERS: 1 (B), 2 (B), 3 (A), 4 (C), 5 (D), 6 (C), 7 (B), 8 (D), 9 (A), 10(B)



### Abdul Sattar Edhi (1928 – 2016)

“This man, also known as the “Angel of Mercy” was a Pakistani philanthropist, ascetic, and humanitarian who founded the Edhi Foundation which run’s hospitals, homeless shelters, rehab centres, emergency services and orphanages across Pakistan. In 2013, **The Huffington Post** quoted that he might be “the world’s greatest living humanitarian.”

**“My religion is humanitarianism, which is the basis of every religion in the world.”**

#### Memberships



#### Certifications



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