IDARA-E-TALEEM-O-AAGAHI
PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH QUALITY EDUCATION

Collection of Case Studies
Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) or the “Centre for Education and Consciousness” Public Trust was established in 2000, as a response to the profound crisis of education and multiple crises forming the nuts and bolts of the education challenge. ITA was born out of a growing realization that the most critical of human entitlements, the right to learning, knowledge systems, citizenship skills and a 9,000 years of living heritage is being denied to the citizens of Pakistan.

ITA’s implementation is through a sector wide lifelong learning approach. The programs range from Early Childhood Development-ECD (0-8 years); school improvement (5-16 years ); non-formal catch up programs (4-14 years) to technical vocational (15-30 years); college and tertiary level (17+ years) embedded in health hygiene, environmental responsibility, gender and learning for understanding. ITA not only strives for providing quality education among children/youth but inculcate values of sustainable development and human happiness.

Nationwide scalable campaigns have been implemented within the framework of social movements triggered by the powerful assessment on learning levels (5-16 years)- Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), aligned to Right to Education (RTE), Learning for Access (L4A)/ Chalo Parho Barho - Lets read and grow; and Children’s Literature Festival (CLF). Together the campaigns are placed under an umbrella, titled “Citizens’ Movement for Quality Education” (CMQE).
The Journey of Dubai Cares in Pakistan

Dubai Cares (DC) works to improve children's access to quality primary education in developing countries. The UAE-based philanthropic organization's programs are currently reaching over 7 million beneficiaries in 28 developing countries with the highest gap in primary education.

Dubai Cares has been working extensively in Pakistan, reaching out to 4028 schools and 1,035,300 beneficiaries since 2008. The education programs focused on girls education and vulnerable groups have spanned Chiniot, Multan, Muzaffargarh, Rahimyarkhan, and Bahawalpur in Punjab; Sukkur, Shikarpur and Karachi in Sindh, and Lasbela, Quetta and Qila Saifullah in Balochistan. Dubai Cares partnered with Oxfam GB and Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) in 2008 for its first project titled “Enhancing Girls Enrolment in Remote Areas of Pakistan in South Punjab”. It extended its support to ITA for an emergency program “Enhancement of Girls Enrolment and Retention in Flood Affected Areas” in 2013 and upon completion of the program, it resolved to expand its footprint across Pakistan with this third ongoing partner program, 'Improving learning outcomes, enrolment and transitions from ECE to primary education especially for girls and vulnerable groups in Pakistan'. Phase-III of Dubai Cares (Jan 2014- Dec 2016) focuses on “Improving learning outcomes, enrolment and transitions from early childhood education (ECE) to primary education especially for girls and vulnerable groups in Pakistan” in 10 districts across the country. This project essentially targets early childhood education (ECE), enrollments and retention, learning levels of in-school children (ISC) and out of school children (OOSC) and consequently mainstreaming OOSC in schools.
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FOREWORD

Being an organization committed to the holistic evidence based reforms in the education sector of Pakistan Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) strongly believes that education plays an integral role in promoting sustainable development of any country, gender entitlements and protection, its social prosperity and enhanced labor productivity. An educated population contributes positively towards democratic values, human happiness, economic growth and non-discriminatory access to a quality education system; reducing and eventually eliminating inequalities related to gender, geography and class. It creates social cohesion and possibilities to respect diversity, overcome divisive cultural norms, laws and practices. With this philosophy in mind, ITA has been fortunate to partner with Dubai Cares' for “improving learning outcomes, enrollment and transitions from ECE to primary education especially for girls and vulnerable groups in Pakistan”.
Theme Surrounding the Case Studies

This publication broadly reflects the impact of two components (Early Childhood Education and Learning for Access) implemented by ITA and supported by Dubai Cares across 3 provinces and 10 districts in Pakistan. The two components are explained briefly below:

**COMPONENT 1**

Establishing quality “Early Childhood Education (ECE) in government primary schools for holistic experiential learning and transition from pre-primary to primary education

412 ECE centres were established in 412 schools to ensure safe and protected learning space for young children. The schools were identified in consultation with the district education department developing formal understanding with concerning authorities and key stakeholders/actors in public/private sectors. In each school, one room was renovated/constructed (as per need) to address critical needs of children ensuring both equitable and quality early learning environment. Child-size furniture, play equipment, drinking water facility and washbasin were provided to each school for a well-equipped ECE room. Children aged 3-5 were identified through household survey and enrolled in ECE section for a period of one year. The intervention was implemented for two years in all schools such that two new cohorts were counted over 2 academic years. A local para teacher was appointed to support ECE classrooms in schools throughout the project span to ensure quality teaching and narrowing the gap of access at the pre-primary level. Teachers were trained through cluster and on-the-job training for approximately 36 days on ECE curriculum and pedagogy. National Curriculum of ECE 2007 and other teaching learning materials were distributed to all schools to improve classroom practices.

**COMPONENT 2**

Establishing “Learning for Access” Program to provide access and accelerated learning opportunities to Out of School Children (OOSC) and support for school improvement where the OOSC will be mainstreamed

Learning for Access (L4A) is a component which helps put out of school children into school and provides intensive bursts of remedial education in reading and mathematics through learning camps called “Chalo Parho Barho (CPB)” to out of school children and primary school children (grades 3–5) who are behind in basic literacy and numeracy skills.

The program began with the testing of children (aged 6-12) in the village at household level. Based on this assessment, children were selected for the CPB learning camp to be set up at the identified schools during regular school timings. In-school children at risk of drop out (grades 3-5) were also made to take part in the camp. The camps run for 45-60 days ideally, with three cycles of baseline, midline and endline assessment held every 15 days. Para teachers from the local community were hired for the entire duration of the project and were trained vigorously on accelerated learning methodology to lead the learning camps. Upon successful completion of the camp and acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills, children were mainstreamed in regular schools.

This component also included a school improvement (SI) strand which helped to address the supply side constraints by upgrading the stability of the school to sustain new intakes.
Stories from PUNJAB

- Punjab
- Sindh
- Balochist
- KPK
- FATA
- Gilgit Baltistan
- AJK
- AJK 2
- Gilgit Baltistan

Punjab
On a sunny morning in Liaquatpur, a village 110 kilometers from Rahim Yar Khan, a little boy named Ghulam Yaseen was standing alone next to a tree, away from the crowd of children playing in the ground. Despite being shy and scared, his eyes were bright and full of enthusiasm to learn. His hands, however, told a different story.

Ghulam Yaseen is one of those millions of children who had been deprived from their right to education due to child labor. Owing to financial crisis Ghulam Yaseen's parents decided to pull their son out of school who was already enrolled in the third grade and sent him off to find work. Ghulam Yaseen ended up in a brick kiln where laborers have been working in the most hazardous conditions with precarious effects on health such as heat strokes, skin burn, lungs problem etc.

According to Labor Department Statistics (2016), there are 23,642 children below the age of 14 working in brick kilns. Brick kilns are just a small fragment of the whole picture; the number shoots up to 12 million as quoted by the International Labor Organization of children involved in child labor in Pakistan.

Fortunately, Ghulam Yaseen did not have to work in the kiln for a long time. With efforts from Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA) and supported by Dubai Cares, he is now back into the school from where he left off. One of the para teachers from ITA identified him during the household survey and convinced his family to enroll him back into the school after series of counseling sessions. He started off with the 'Chalo Parho Barho' (CPB) camp which primarily focuses on out of school children and helps them to mainstream in formal school system after improving and assessing their learning levels over a period of 60 days. Ghulam Yaseen participated in the CPB camp and after a yearlong gap, he was enrolled back in the third grade. He can now not only read and write sentences in Urdu and English but can also multiply up to two digit numbers. As Ghulam himself puts it “I enjoy coming to school and I never want to quit”.

It reflects on the aspirations of millions of those children who have been in the disadvantaged fringes of society and are being helped by organizations such as Dubai Cares to make their lives meaningful. Dubai Cares projects in Pakistan have created a basis for pushing the agenda of comprehensive, caring approach to the most vulnerable in Pakistan for the silent and major emergencies in multiple geographies. ITA, as an implementing organization, has played its part in ensuring enrollment and mainstreaming of children, physical rehabilitation of schools, provision of teaching learning materials, enrichment activities and basic infrastructural support to schools. Together we intend and hope to ensure that cases such as that of Ghulam Yaseen become an anomaly in Pakistan.
Aaqib Shah, son of Sheer shah is an 11 years old intelligent boy from Nizam Wala Union Council Ameenabad. Nizam Wala is a small village at 20 kilometer distance from Liaqatpur city with a population of not more than 2800 people. Aaqib Shah's father died when he was still young and the responsibilities of the household were soon to be borne by him and his elder brother. The survival of his family depended on what both the brothers brought home after the day’s hard labor to meet basic needs. Beneath all these responsibilities lied the ambushed dreams of getting educated but unfortunately Aaqib Shah had to drop out of school after completing grade 4. He had to work with his brother in sheep herding to feed his family of seven - four sisters, two brothers and their mother.

When Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi started interventions in Rahimyar khan, fortunately the GGPS Basti Nizam Wala was selected as a target school. During the baseline survey in Nizamwala, Aqib was identified as a drop out child. Aqib met the criteria for CPB camp which is a part of the Learning for Access (L4A) component of the Dubai Cares program. ITA team and para teachers visited his home to meet his family but they refused to send Aaqib to school again considering their financial circumstances. Giving up on the daily income Aaqib brought to the house was totally unacceptable, let alone providing for his educational expenses at the behest of basic survival needs. After much persuasion by ITA officials and stressing at the expense free nature of this education program, his family requested for some time so that they could make the decision. Finally, an ITA para teacher was able to convince his family after multiple visits to their house. She succeeded in convincing Aaqib’s elder brother to send Aaqib in the CPB camp in GGPS Nizam Wala. Aaqib attended the camp regularly and after the completion, he was successfully mainstreamed in the fourth grade in GBPS Nizamwala.
Aneesa Riaz, a 9 year old girl, belongs to a small village Bodla Sandila of district Muzaffargarh. She has three brothers and two sisters. Unfortunately, all of her family members are deprived of their basic right to education due to poverty. Aneesa was at first enrolled in a school by her parents but eventually she had no option but to drop out.

Aneesa's father is a wood cutter who couldn't bear her educational expenses which was primarily the reason for her dropout. There were times when her whole family had to sleep without a meal at night. When ITA began CPB camps in Muzaffargarh, ITA's resource person had several meetings with Aneesa's father regarding his daughter’s education and was finally able to convince him. He agreed with the team’s point of view and committed his daughter to school in order to get enrolled in the CPB camp which would bear no cost.

She joined the camp and started to take part actively in the camp based activities. At the baseline assessment in the camp, she was marked at a “beginner” reading level in Urdu and English. In Maths, she could only identify double digits. However, she was able to learn a lot in a very short span of time. At the end of the camp period, she was assessed at “Story” and “Sentence” reading levels in Urdu and English respectively. In Maths, she was able to perform double digit operations correctly. This marked a very significant improvement in her learning capacities. She was successfully able to secure admission in class two of GGPS Mouza Bait Ali and now has been promoted to class four.
Leaving Lahore at 4am for Rahim Yar Khan made me realize that it must be imperative to work in and for the district that was ranked lowest amongst 36 districts of Punjab in terms of education indicators. The ITA team led by Baela Raza Jamil reached the EDO office as per the scheduled meeting time. The discussion held at the meeting focused on the grave issue of out of school children in RYK and how it could be resolved. The EDO agreed that it was not only essential to enroll students in schools but also to make sure that they were enrolled according to their learning levels. The EDO ensured that he would support the ITA team in whatever capacity he can and would help in improving the ranking of RYK. To make sure that the community was willing and ready for the changes to be made, a field visit was required. As directed by Mr. Zakir (AEO) we paid a visit to Basti Gul Muhammad, a village nearly 30 kms away from the EDO office. Zakir expressed his concerns about the village community that had completely rejected the idea of sending their children to schools. We thought it was safe to consider this as a demand side failure but when we showed up in the village the people had a different story to tell.

Travelling 30 kms on the highway and 3 kms on a katchi road through agricultural land we reached our destination. Upon our arrival a few men along with children came to meet us. In a little time we had around 40 people surrounding us and trying to answer our questions about the school in their village, all at once. While answering our questions they kept repeating that the teacher does not come to school regularly and when he does it is just for an hour. Mr. Zakir kept reminding them that he had given his number to them for any such complaints but they never called. When the argument got a little heated up we decided to sit somewhere and discuss the whole matter in detail to get a fair picture of the situation at hand.

This community had around 300 children and 80 households. There was only one school for boys which had no gate and had broken walls. There was no school for girls. The highest level of education achieved by any woman in the village was till 6th grade. Ishra, the mother of a 2 year old girl, was the most eager one to have a girls school in her village.

The crowd around us grew, and most of the people raised constant complaints about the absence of the teachers from school. This had resulted in the children whiling away their days doing nothing.

The purpose of ITA team’s visit was to engage the community and make them realize that if they do not own up to this school now, no one else would. It was however relieving to see that by the end of our discussion, people from the crowd; fathers, mothers, the Imam of the mosque and even the children of all ages, agreed to participate actively in making this school functional again. Parents promised to send their children to the CPB camp that ITA had planned to run to mainstream these 300 children. A couple of boys who had just given their matric exams readily agreed to become para teachers and were willing to do more, if need be. Maahiwaal, one of the villagers, offered his place to ITA to conduct its CPB camp. Seeing such a positive spirit and great enthusiasm of the community it was hard to believe that it was a demand side failure.
On the very first day of CPB camp induction, I visited schools to ensure that all the required material had reached and baseline assessments were being conducted in the correct manner. This field visit left several questions and stories in my mind. I, along with my team at ITA, left Multan early in the morning to reach Muzaffargarh. Other than ensuring the smooth running of CPB camps, the major focus of these field visits was to interact with the kids and hear some inspiring stories.

Tahira is one of the students in our CPB camps who is the eldest in class and most eager to learn. Her father, Mazhar Hussain, does not work because of his poor health condition and both of her elder brothers have shifted to Sialkot to work in a factory. She has two elder sisters who have never been to school but work as a stitcher to earn enough money to support the family. A few months back her family went for a wedding ceremony to another village. Her sisters found some earning opportunities so they lived there for a few months. Owing to this, Tahira had to dropout of her school. Upon their return to the village Tahira wished to continue her school so she woke up early one day and left for school. She was excited to see her friends and teachers again. The class began with the usual recitation of Quran by a student, followed by the attendance. The teacher ended up taking the attendance but Tahira's name was not called out. When she enquired she got to know that the school had dropped her name from the enrolled students list because of her absence for a few months. The school head teacher told her that they cannot enroll her again since students going away for months could not make up for the lost time and eventually they may fail exam and end up dropping out.

Tahira had lost all hope to ever see a school from inside again when our OOSC identification began. One of our para teachers took her case up to the school and ensured that through our accelerated learning in CPB camps she'll be able to make up for the lost time and can be enrolled again in the next class. When we asked Tahira if she wanted to be a stitcher like her sisters, we got a prompt reply “Never. I want to be a doctor.”
Liaquatpur, a small village 110 kilometers away from Rahim Yar Khan had been a beautiful drive along ripe mango fields and expansive green fields on both the sides. As I visited an enthusiastic pre primary class of 64 children at government primary school DarhiSangi, I was awe struck by the performance of the students in all domains of Urdu, English and Maths. Students were outperforming in this class as compared to all the other schools I had visited previously. I met with the para teacher, Haseena Bibi, who was an ITA appointed teacher.

I stayed back till late after school so that I could have a conversation with Haseena Bibi. The story of Haseena Bibi is pretty simple as she puts it. However the impact she has created is worth noting for educational practitioners around the country. It had been nine years since Haseena Bibi started teaching in her village and has been a part of many development projects in the capacity of a teacher. Her Husband is a 'rickshaw' driver and she has no children. Haseena Bibi joined ITA back in August of 2015 during commencement of ITA's 'Chalo Parho Barho' camps in ITA's selected schools in Liaquatpur.

Since the commencement of CPB camps and Dubai Cares project interventions in the village, general awareness regarding education increased in the number of households who then wished to send their children to school. “First I had a class of 40 students in August, but then there were many out of school children enrolled through ITA. The head teacher told me to teach more so they added another 24 students to my class. Many of them will soon be transitioned into higher classes.”

The Dubai Cares Project under Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi gives paramount importance to improvement of learning levels of children transitioning from Early Childhood Education to primary level classes. Para teachers have specifically been trained on the provided teaching learning materials to apply their skills into interactive and conceptual learning. We also asked Haseena Bibi about what should be done to improve the education system. She answered, “The sports, reading, science and health kits provided by ITA really helped. It is an incentive for the little children to get up and come to school every day to play and read with it; even the smallest of incentives can make a huge difference in educating more children.” We learned from Haseena Bibi that provision of proper incentives such as the teaching learning materials indeed facilitate teachers along with the formal curriculum.

Haseena Bibi’s classroom wasn’t just another classroom in a remote village. The 64 children along with Haseena Bibi have set a precedent on lessons of equality, empathy, incentivized learning, conceptual and quality education. We are proud to have para teachers such as Haseena Bibi a part of the ITA family; working on the ground and making the change possible.
During my visit to Bahawalpur on a field check to inspect the new cycle of ‘Chalo Parho Barho’ Camp, I met a shy yet intelligent girl named Bushra studying at our intervention school in Mar Sheikh Shijra, a village in the Bahawalpur Jurisdiction. This was the first time Bushra was interacting with a teacher, and although overwhelmed by her surroundings she was not reluctant to participate in the camp’s activities.

According to the para teacher Ms Asma from Mari ShekhShijra, Bushra's family belonged to a very poor family, the strata of a society which barely makes day to day ends meet. In a casual conversation Ms. Asma explained how survival supersedes any other considerations of self-actualization of the labored class. Bushra’s family worked long hours in different areas with below par compensation at the day's end. This permeates in not only educational negligence but also the lack of interest in spending scarce financial resources on education. Ms. Asma explained that poor families living in such conditions exempt themselves, intentionally or unintenationally, over the need to their child's education in plight of other extreme circumstances. However if the efforts are extended to make them realise the need for education through awareness and proper incentivisation, the change is possible.

Henceforth, the para teacher took Bushra’s family in confidence explaining to them not only the benefits of education but also assured them that if they send Bushra to the CPB camp, they will not have to pay a penny for her education, to which they happily agreed.

Once enrolled, Bushra was identified as a ‘beginner’ at the baseline assessment, and she wasn’t even able to read letters in English and Urdu. However, the hard work of the para teacher ignited Bushra’s commitment for education. She left the camp many times during the seasons of cotton picking and wheat season as she had to support her family in different tasks but despite the abrasive environment, she worked hard and managed to return to the camp when her part of the work was done.

At the end of the CPB camp, she was able to read stories fluently; which marks a significant positive improvement. She was also able to secure admission in class two in GPS Mari ShekhShijra. She now regularly attends her school and dreams of becoming a teacher one day.

“UNESCO Institute of Statistics estimates that 171 Million children globally can be pulled out of poverty if they were able to read fluently by the time they left school”
Stories from Sindh
Lyari Town is one of the eighteen Constituent towns on Karachi district. Lyari, home to one of the several ethnic groups from Balochs, Muhajirs, Kutchis, Zikris, Chhipas amongst others forms one of the most densely populated areas of Karachi District. The city previously known for its political activism had fallen prey to violence in the previous years with hostilities between different ethnic groups. The following story reflects the everyday life of two sisters and their toil for getting education in a hostile environment compounded by cultural and social norms constraining their progression in life.

“We could barely walk when our mother passed away. My father didn't remarry and we started living with our grandmother. We were going to school but then our father stopped us from going for several reasons. The environment of school was getting very bad. There were bad boys who started teasing all the girls. Some of them even had guns with them and there was no police to stop them. Police was also afraid of gangsters in Lyari. We changed the school but after few weeks my grandmother fell sick and got confined to bed. My father asked us to stay home and look after grandmother while he worked as a mechanic in a workshop. Unfortunately, we couldn't take good care of grandmother and she passed away. We didn't go to school for the next 5 years. But then we heard about a learning camp established by ITA. An ITA representative talked to my father and asked him to send us to school. We then resumed school. After all that we have been through, we have learnt that education is the key to success. We enjoy learning and do not miss school. Thank-you ITA!"
“25th November was Ali’s first day in my class. I am a teacher in Govt. Primary school Lashari Goth Sukkur where ITA (in collaboration with Dubai Cares) has established an ECE (Early Childhood Education) class for children aged 3-5. Ali came with his mother to get admission in school. I remember that his mother pleaded with the head teacher, ‘Please get my son Ali enrolled in your school, he is a little abnormal but there is no school for special children nearby and I do not want him to roam around the village streets all the time as people call him Chariyo (a Sindhi word which means mad).’ Whilst the head teacher was thinking what to say, I stepped forward and introduced her to the ECE program being run by ITA. I felt a little unsure about my ability to teach this child, but I undoubtedly did not want to turn her away.

Ali entered the class holding my finger and was not paying much attention to the other children. His eyes were instead on the surroundings. He was keenly observing the learning corners around him, and then his eyes went on to the swing placed at the end of the room and he started clapping. I could see that he is being attracted by colors, swings and flash cards. ITA has made this room into a happy place, so much so that children enjoy attending the pre-school.

I introduced Ali to the whole class and asked the children to welcome him. With the passage of time, I tried to figure out the activities that he enjoyed more. Once, the children were playing with dough and making figures. Ali also took a lump of dough and started rolling it round between the palms of his hands. I observed that he seemed to enjoy it and was laughing during this activity and so I asked him to join a group to make figures with other children.

I learnt that he loves to play with colors. He likes dipping his hands in bright colors and making a print of his hand on paper. He claps cheerfully when he sees his hand prints displayed in the classroom and tells others about it.

Ali does not have a full grip on his hand while writing. He cannot draw a straight line. However he tries to draw different things that he likes. He likes flowers, animals, the moon and stars. I give him a star on his hand before he leaves for home as that makes him happy. We are thankful to ITA and Dubai Cares for making schools a better and happier place to learn. Even Ali does not forget to say “shukriya (thank-you)” before going home.
Village Shahpur is situated east of Indus River near Taluka Pano Aqil. The village, although a closely knit small community, is vulnerable to yearly floods which destroys homes, crops, roads and other facilities of an already destitute population.

Talib Hussain, who belongs from Shahpur, is a 9 year old boy who was identified as a dropout child from class two during the ITA's household survey.

When Talib was in school he felt discouraged as he faced punishment by teachers due to his academic performance and students also bullied him in the school. Talib started feeling isolated in school and could not concentrate much on studies. His father who was also uneducated and working as a waiter at a local hotel wasn't able to assist him with studies as well. Talib however did manage to pass grade 1 and progressed into grade 2. However due to lack of motivation, he dropped out of school.

ITA Team conducted a survey in the village Shahpur and identified out of school children from village. Talib Hussain was also identified as one of the dropouts. ITA team observed that he has great potential and interest provided that he is given personalized attention. Following a meeting with the Village Education Committee (VEC), ITA team met with Talib Hussain's father and convinced him to enrol his son in the CPB camp where he would be able to catch up with his studies. Talib had a keen interest in learning and his hard work soon bore fruits as his learning levels gradually increased. In fact he started leading many school activities in student club, singing competitions, Children's Literature festival, Global Action Week etc. Talib was successfully mainstreamed into grade two. Now he is a regular and punctual student in the class.
QadirBuxKhoso village in district Shikarpur is one of those villages which epitomize rural life in Sindh. People living there have to struggle every day to arrange for the basic necessities of life. The circumstances under which people like Fehmida have to work are very challenging. Fehmida is an ECE teacher at Hoat Khan Khoso Government Primary School. The kind of society she has been brought up in has many barriers for women to excel, especially in the field of education. Fehmida has always wanted to change the status of education in her community especially for girls and did not want the children to face the same issues that she had to face. Fehmida started off as a polio worker, visiting different homes in the community.

“Working as a polio worker gave me the necessary skills needed to gain the confidence of the community. This proved to be very helpful when I initially requested the people in the community to send their children to school. People already knew me and trusted me so there was less reluctance on their part. I obviously had to reason with numerous people as to why education is important and why their children should be reading books in school rather than working on a farm. The process was gradual and difficult as many parents were stubborn at times. I believe that perseverance yields success, therefore, while it was disheartening at times, I never lost hope. Now the community is much more cooperative and I love working for ITA and for education.”

The level of dedication that Fehmida possesses is inspirational and is articulated in the fact that she voluntarily teaches children who need extra attention after school hours.

The community’s confidence in Fehmida was evident in an interesting story narrated by one of its members. Some of the children did not want to go to school and so to incentivize them, their father instead of giving daily pocket money directly to the children, asked Fehmida to give that money to the children after they get done with school every day. This kind of arrangement was only possible because the family could trust Fehmida with their children and the money. Hence, women like Fehmida prove to be the beacon of hope for the entire community.
AMINA IS BACK TO SCHOOL
Amina
Abdul Ghani Brohi, Shikarpur

For most girls in rural Shikarpur, access to education is really a privilege and not a right therefore many remain deprived from basic education. Factors that primarily hamper the process of education are lack of access to schools, missing facilities, and shortage of separate girl schools. Moreover, religious fundamentalism and cultural constraints prevalent in these areas exacerbate problems leading to retention rates of girls in schools. A subsequent decrease is observed in the transition of female students from primary to middle level.

Same would have been the fate of 10 years old Amina who belongs to a poor family in village Abdul Ghani Brohi, district Shikarpur Sindh. Amina was forced to leave School when she was in 2nd Grade; once again the reason was no different than the non-availability of separate girl schools and female teachers.

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi, in collaboration with Dubai Cares, hired a female para teacher to teach girls in the school and advocated for sustainability of the same at the district level. Amina has just been enrolled in CPB camp (Chalo Parho Barho-Lets Read and Grow) which aims to help out of school and in school at risk children aged 6-14 gain basic literacy and numeracy skills to be mainstreamed in the formal education system. There she is taught by a female teacher and all missing facilities have also been enabled in the school.

Amina can now pursue the bigger dreams she has for her future. “There is a teacher at my school and I want to be a teacher like her when I am older. I did not like staying at home as I had to do all the household tasks. I always thought about school and how I could learn a lot there. When a teacher from ITA came to talk to my parents, I was finally able to tell them that I wanted to return to school.” says little Amina.

“Since ITA field workers talked to us about the importance of girls’ education in community meetings in our village, we are convinced that a girl should be educated. I am happy that my daughter is back in school” Amina’s Father.

Amina’s case has made a new precedent in the village it has made the way easy for the younger girls to attend school as well.
Sehar Gul, who lives in village Bagarji, is a village of around 15000 people. Almost thirty different communities live in village Bagarji and their main source of income is agricultural and livestock industry. Sehar belongs to a lower middle class family; her father Mr. Imdad Ali passed away and all responsibilities are shouldered on her. She studied her primary, middle and secondary from her local school and after completion of her high secondary education she joined a private school on a minimal pay.

ITA started its Whole School Improvement Program in Sukkur District in 2014 and thus needed volunteers for the baseline survey in which Sehar was one of the few female volunteers who participated. In spite of mobility constraints she faced during the survey, she successfully completed them with great sense of responsibility. Following the survey, ITA needed committed and hardworking para teachers for the Dubai Cares project. Sehar Gul’s application was accepted following a series of successful interviews. Sehar Gul joined in July 2014 and during the vocation period all selected para teachers were given ECE training. Due to her excellent performance in all the activities, she was selected as an ECE master trainer and assigned to conduct ECE trainings. She not only completed her own training successfully but also engaged another 60 para teachers including government teachers in the trainings.

After joining the school as para teacher herself, Sehar Gul felt ambivalent due to the environment she had to teach in. The school predominantly composing of male colleagues challenged Sahar in a society which not only looked down upon women working but also shunned women working with the opposite gender. But her internal dilemmas weren’t the only challenge she faced. The community also disapproved the need to educate women. Yet, Sehar’s hard work and struggle in education eventually encouraged other families to send their girls to schools. Sehar was then given responsibility of the ECE class which had been left idle for so long. ITA provided the material, furniture, books and curriculum for ECE class to Sehar and she was able to well utilize these materials to create a learning environment for children. Sehar Gul turned the ECE classroom in a model class room for the school. She made different drawings on the wall of class room with the help of children and stimulated their interest in studying, drawing work included ABC with pictures, Math work, nature and other teaching aid. Children now attend school regularly and never miss her class due her efforts and commitments to the education cause. Sehar is also an ardent writer in her free time. She loves to write poetry and during the last few minutes of our interaction with her she shared a stanza of her poem regarding her passion as a teacher.
Soniya is a 10 year old girl from Shikarpur District. She comes from a background where families do not encourage female education likewise exacerbating inequalities in other areas of social and civic life. From a very early age the girls face discrimination in multiple aspects; they are forced to stay at home and help in domestic chores from an adolescent age.

Soniya, a resident of Village Abdul Rahim Machi is a remote village of district Shikarpur whose fate like the rest of the girls in her community was preset. She got engaged at an early age and was compelled to stay home. On the contrary Soniya had dreams of her own; she wanted to go to school instead of staying home but was forbidden by her parents and other members of her family. Soniya had almost given up.

It was like a ray of hope, when in Soniya's village Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi initiated a program named Chalo Parho Barho (CPB) for out of School children and launched a social mobilization campaign.

Change is always a result of collective efforts. ITA’s field teams with the help of teachers and some of likeminded villagers made efforts to mobilize Soniya’s elders to get her enrolled in the CPB camp. Ultimately they were successful in doing so. Soniya was registered in the CPB camp where she started from a 'beginner' level and ended up reading a story in a short span of 60 days. Her eagerness to learn made her successful throughout. It's been a year since Soniya is in Class-II and she daily comes to school with dreams of becoming a doctor one day.
Rasheeda Haroon is a brave, self-motivated and hardworking woman in GBPS Frash and she worked as para teacher for ITA. She was born in 1978 at village Bagarji and has gained education up till intermediate level. She commenced her career from the year 1996, when she was still studying in a high school. At that time, an organisation SEW (Society Education for Welfare) gave her a task to establish school in village Haji Arbab Khan Ghumra. Her efforts culminated into a school with an enrolment of 120 girls. The distance between her resident village, Bagarji and Haji Arbab Khan Ghumra is three kilometres and Rasheeda Haroon walked to and from the school every day to teach children. She utilized her own resources in purchasing children books and stationary. Her aim was to make it possible for every child to attain education. Rasheeda’s worked tirelessly for eleven years and became successful in establishing a permanent school named the Bethak School. Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aaghai recruited her as an ECE para teacher in GBPS Farash, UC Arain. Rasheeda Bibi to date is determined to provide education to children of these villages and walks miles every day to reach the school where she teaches. In Farash Village most of the community members are religious and not in favour of girl’s education especially in this village. When Rasheeda Haroon joined this school there was low enrolment of children but after her mobilization there are 45 children enrolled in her ECE class. Rasheeda conducted many community meetings with villagers but soon she realized the external pressures from landlords (Wadera) of the village who did not allow girls to get education. Despite these challenges Rasheeda was able to overcome them by forming an enthusiastic ECE class. She also cleans the class herself due to unavailability of sweeper and peon at that school therefore going an extra mile to create a comfortable environment for children. She not only teaches the ECE class but she also volunteers to teach elder girls of the school. Resheeda's valiance and undaunted efforts for girls education motivated children to come to school.

“If they get education they will be aware of their rights and the value of life.” says Rasheeda.
Stories from BALOCHISTAN
When ITA launched its intervention in Lasbela district in Baluchistan, there wasn’t any primary school, let alone Early Childhood Education centre (ECE) in Wahid Bux Jamali Goth in UC Sakran Lasbela. A lady named Ms. Asma was married off here from Dadu District (Sindh) to Mohammad Sharif in this village. She was relatively qualified among the villagers of Wahid Bux Jamali Goth as she had recently passed Matric from Dadu. Similar to the other females in the area, the customs of her family did not allow her like to go out to work but she had a great yearning to promote education and indeed her own learning. Therefore she started teaching the children of her family and neighborhood at her own home.

When in August 2014, the ITA team carried out the survey of this village, there was no proper government school for children from where they could get education. There was a community school in a hut run by a male volunteer of the community. The teams had a meeting with community members and requested them to identify a female teacher so that she could be trained to teach children. The community members informed that there was only one educated female but the local traditions of the community do not allow her to teach in the community school as the stated school was running its class in a hut and may compromise the norms of parda/veil.

After three persuasive meetings by ITA’s team with the community and her family, her husband and community members allowed her on the condition that she will not teach the local children in that open hut but at her own house. ITA’s team accepted the demand of the community and met with Ms. Asma. A basic test was taken to gauge her abilities and she was hired as an ECE para teacher. She started teaching at home with 28 girls and 19 boys. After three months ITA started construction of the school. After the completion of construction work, the ITA teams held meeting with the community to shift the children in the newly constructed school building from the adjacent hut. The new school building was fully furnished and beautifully equipped with all the necessary teaching aids and teaching learning material including chairs, tables, ECE kit, black boards, altogether a very conducive and safe atmosphere for learning.

The community happily allowed Ms. Asma and her students to shift to the new school as it was private and safe. The new school building is such a source of pride for the village, where Asma now teaches. A celebration took place when the ECE class at Wahid Bux Jamali shifted to new school building on 15th March 2015.
Bismillah is a student of GBHS Kharot Abad of district Quetta. Due to the illness of his father for the last couple of years, Bismillah had to shoulder the responsibility as the only bread earner of the family. Bismillah had no option but to quit school and earn a daily wage for his family. He was earning PKR 3000 per month on daily wages which was not sufficient to cater to the financial needs of his entire family considering the aggravating medical expenditures of his father.

Recently, Bismillah's father recovered from his illness which has opened a new window of hope for Bismillah to continue his education. However, given the financial crunch in the previous years and low income of his father; Bismillah's family didn't have the financial capacity to get him admitted in a school. ITA para teacher visited and assured his parents that if they will send Bismillah to CPB camp, it will bear no cost to them and ITA will bear all the expenses. His parents agreed to the proposition of the para teacher and enrolled their child in the CPB camp.

Bismillah successfully completed the camp and is now enrolled in GBHS Kharot Abad
This story gyrates around a 14 years old girl named as Noor Bibi. She belongs to a remote village, Sappat, 270 kilometers towards the outskirts district Lasbela, Balochistan. Noor Bibi is the only female in the entire village of Sappat who has ever been to a school. ITA during its intervention in Lasbela was focused on improving conditions in Sappat. To commence the intervention the team looked for an early childhood education teacher. They visited different houses searching for a community teacher but all in vain, until finally someone informed them about Noor Bibi. The team recalls their first interaction with Noor bibi and found her a very eloquent lady midst of all the educational deprivation the community was going through.

“She was sensible, motivated and courageous lady among the population of around 43 houses. Her eyes were sparkling with a new hope after meeting with the ITA team. She was asked for her services as a teacher, she accepted it with pleasure.”

The next challenge the team faced was that there was no building in the area which could be taken as school premises. To their surprise, the community stepped forward to build a hut for the children. A couple of days later when the team revisited the school to distribute the basic required materials, they were surprised to see a self-made iron blackboard in the hut. It was made up of iron with wooden support from back.

Noor Bibi did not wait for good things to happen to her community. Extending a hand of encouragement was enough for her to mobilize the community towards their betterment in education. ITA team made sure to supply all required ECE materials to Noor Bibi to further her aspirations of teaching children in her community as a para teacher representing ITA.
Glossary

**CPB camp**: Chalo Parho Barho (CPB) camps (in this report) refers to the learning camps which were organized by ITA within the school premises in order to provide accelerated learning to out of school children and primary school children (grades 3–5) who were behind in basic literacy and numeracy skills

**Dropout**: Student who leaves school definitively in a given school year

**Learning for Access (L4A)**: Learning for Access (L4A) is a component which helps put out of school children into school and provides intensive bursts of remedial education in reading and mathematics through learning camps

**OOSC**: Children in the official primary school age range who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary schools

**Para teacher**: Para teachers (in this report) refers to teachers hired by ITA through fixed-term contracts to support L4A and ECE components as well as assist regular school teachers in day-to-day school activities
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