

## Girls' Clubs in Dubai Cares partner schools in 04 Districts (Multan, Muzaffargarh, Rahim Yar Khan and Shikarpur)



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**“To be a member of a girls' club changed my life. I now have more knowledge about school development plan (SDP), child & girls' rights, health & hygiene issues, and take part in enrollment drives to raise awareness about girls' education in my community. I get very excited when I sit in school council (SC) meetings as I can represent the student body of my school in the right way”.** These are the views of a girls' club member who is currently pursuing her 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Government Girls Primary School Gaji Wala, Kot Addu District Muzaffargarh.

Girls' club has proven to be an important dimension in quickly raising awareness among young students, especially girls regarding their rights and responsibilities. In a developing country like Pakistan struggling with education challenges, students are kept out of their school's development issues; decisions that impact the students the most are made without including their voice.

Forming Girls' clubs is an effort, through a formal forum, to empower girls to a level where they take part in SC / SMC meetings of their school and have a voice. The idea is to give students a say in their school's management issue and solutions, in order to mitigate the issues being faced by them with their involvement. Girls' club a Win-Win recent initiative.

### **Achievements (November, 2012)**

ITA teams began formation of girls' clubs in DC partner schools to raise awareness about rights & responsibilities, so the students could play their part in society. The process of club's formation began in September, 2012, after summer vacations. Girls' club were linked with ITA's CSR initiative, of “health & hygiene education in schools”, with Lifebuoy soap in collaboration with Unilever Pakistan Ltd. (UPL). In the latter, five vice-captains / students from each ITA partner school were selected belonging to grades 4-8 who could lead on the behalf of famous national hero and cricket captain Waseem Akram, the mascot for the Healthy Pakistan Mission (HPM) program. Thus the girls from target schools had already experienced leadership for health & hygiene

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education hence could easily be mobilized for “girls' club”. DC partner schools were visited and students were given formal orientation; students loved the idea. 5 to 7 students, on the basis of their active engagement, from each partner school were selected. The selected students / members were provided training sessions about health & hygiene issues, girls' rights, importance of girls' education, SC / SMC meetings, making of SDPs; confidence boosting exercises, so they could effectively make their school a worthy place for learning.

By the end of November, 2012, girls' clubs were formed in all DC partner schools as a platform for girls' rights and voice. Members have been sensitized about their roles & responsibilities, and girls' rights, so they could comfortably sit in SC / SMC and community meetings. Members now share issues from SC / SMC meetings with their fellow students and teachers to come up with quick and innovative ideas. Some of the schools also conducted enrollment drives; member of girls' club, in assistance with their teachers and SC members, visited houses of out of school students (OOSs) to repatriate them back in the schools.

Though members of these clubs are very young, the dividends reveal a positive change in their school's environment. The tragic but inspiring events around Malala, the courageous education 'girl activist' from Swat further inspired the Girls Clubs since early October, 2012.

### Roles and responsibilities

The members of girls' club are effectively taking part in their following roles:

- monitoring the health & hygiene issues: checking school's cleanliness and implementation of ITA's health checklists,
- participating in enrollment drives in their community and tracking the dropouts from the schools in order to mainstream the dropout students on the urgent basis,
- taking part in SC / SMC meetings in order to raise students' voice and formally reflect it in SDPs,
- participating in “right to education campaign”: raising awareness in students and community about article 25-A

