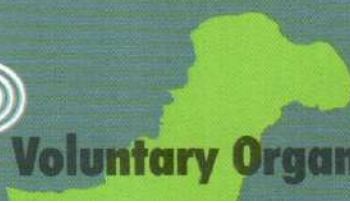


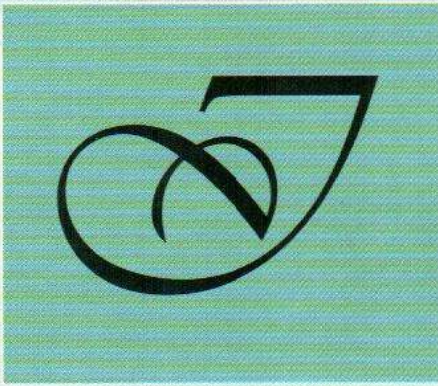
Bridging the Gap



Trust for Voluntary Organizations



Message from the Chief Executive Officer, TVO



It gives me great pleasure to introduce “Bridging the Gap” a collection of some of the success stories of social development projects for which TVO provided funding and technical assistance. These success stories are a product of third party field-based research that utilized the expertise of development professionals.

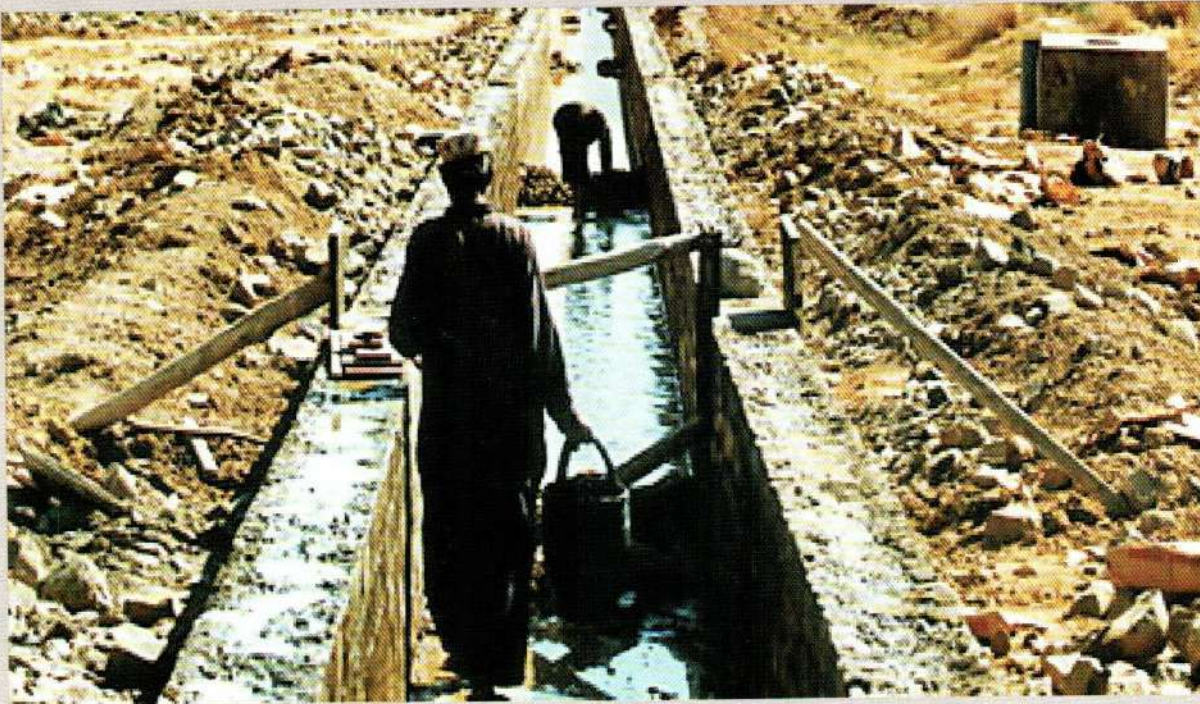
The 20 stories in this collection, which reflect diverse cultural, ethnic, social, geographic and economic kaleidoscope of four provinces of Pakistan, show how the community-based organizations (CBOs) and NGOs worked in tandem with TVO in the four sectors that TVO has funded over the years: poverty alleviation, primary health care (including water and sanitation), primary education and rehabilitation of the physically-challenged persons, especially children.

These stories have one common strand, and that is that none of these stories read like an accountant's balance sheet with highlighted red and black! The stories are certainly not “sustainable” business ventures. They are expressions of social innovation, changed behaviours, and an inventory of social confidence building measures that have added to self-esteem, greater gender equity and participation.

It would not be out of place to mention another success story not told in this collection; the story of the Tehsil Network (TN). The TN was formed by TVO and it now has more than 350 poor, unheard and under-represented tehsils of Pakistan. The TN was formed primarily as a platform to advocate and promote involvement of people in pro-poor initiatives, provide voice to the highly disadvantaged and the unheard, and to promote ethnic, religious, social and cultural harmony among the people. The TN has been working on voluntary basis for many years and is a success story of communication for social change on sustainable basis. The TVO stories are a testimony to the strategic importance the organization gives to the power of communities in resource-deficient areas of Pakistan.

Iqbal Jafar

WHEN UPLIFT IRRIGATION MEANS A SOCIAL UPLIFT



asteland, high and dry, unreceptive surroundings, harsh environment, dirt streets, disconnected with its own district administration and environs; water shortage for drinking and irrigation, and resultant poverty, poor health and hygiene, joblessness and disappointments galore.....These lines may not be enough to describe village Sulemankhel, Tajori, Lakki Marwat in the south of Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP, where people lacked initiative, frustration was rife and a sense of directionless prevailed all over” said an informed

community male in the area about the situation in the year 2000.

A few committed individuals, deeply conscious of the vast lack of development in the area, got together and founded “Sulemankhel Rural Development Association (SRDA). SRDA was an organizational development that had the will of the people behind it and managed to develop a project for sustainable irrigation in the area, an initiative many thought would help alleviate the condition of the community. The technical and financial support of TVO provided through the TVO regional office, acted as a catalyst to rev up the people’s motivation and commitment into a community development initiative.

Dilber Khan further described the situation of the area prior to the TVO initiative “We have been living in this village for three generations. This area was almost a desert; barren, life-less and very, very hot! Water was a scarce commodity. This shortage had its impact on the lifestyle of people. Very little safe drinking water, and very little to engage agriculture! Drinking water had to be brought on donkey-back from afar by male members of the community.” Dilber Khan’s wife quipped to our female researcher, “Women suffered more as they were not prone to talk about the great dilemma that the males could talk about. We did not have water to wash our face, hands. Taking a bath was a great luxury in this area.” Another influential male told our team, “The plants, crops and our animals were dying and we were having only chickens and eggs to eat and their supply was also dwindling! This drastic situation forced many people to migrate. Leaving our area where our forefathers lived was not a very pleasant and easy action.” Use of contaminated water resulted into many diseases including eye infections and skin diseases, particularly among children.

In the 1960s, to the west of Sulemankhel and not very far in the frontier region Bhattani, Bare Dam was built which laid the foundation for canal irrigation system. Agriculture activities produced wheat, maize, vegetables, fruits and animal fodder. After the Dam closed down due to gradual but steady build-up of silt, all agricultural activities ceased and Sulemankhel lost its "life" in words of Raheem Gul, resident of the area.

Nungram is a nullah, a rivulet flowing from hilly Bhattani region in the south west of Lakki Marwat. Nungram joins river Tochi which ultimately submerges into the Indus. The total length of Nungram is about 25 km and according to experts 10 cusecs water flows every day in Nungram. In summers, quantity of water increases in the nullah and the outflow of water causes soil erosion in the area. SRDA was able to convince the community and helped them in arriving at a conclusion that introduction of lift irrigation system from Nungram would be able to utilise surplus water flowing in Nungram. This would also stop thousands of acres of land from erosion and that further soil erosion would cease with the uplift irrigation. Separate community meetings of males and females spread awareness about the potentials of the uplift irrigation project. SRDA communicated extensively about the new system of irrigation, its benefits that could include new economic opportunities, better socio-economic standards, end to soil erosion and beginning of a sustainable irrigation system. With community participation and support, experts' advice and technical and financial assistance of Trust for Voluntary Organisations (TVO), SRDA was able to introduce the irrigation uplift project in the area.

The implementation of the project raised the income level of the local people through increased yield, self-employment. The irrigation uplift scheme brought a revolution in the lifestyle of the community. Agriculture brought fruits and vegetables, forward-looking thinking, healthier and cleaner living and an uplift in the spirit of the communities in the area.

Rehmat Bibi, a local woman said "now I send my children to college". The people are so happy and enthusiastic that they take their primary school as a college. This may sound like a linguistic anomaly but it does capture the vision of a community reborn with greater aspirations for the future. A few women in the community told our female researcher, "thanks to this scheme, our husbands now have time for us to talk about various things." This community based sustainable uplift irrigation initiative irrigates 3000 kanals, involves more than 100 local families benefitting more than 6,000 people in the area.

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WE WERE SIMPLY DYING!



My name is Ali Khan and I have been living in the area for a long time as Imam Masjid (prayer leader). Before the drinking water project was introduced, the area was in dire shortage of clean water. Whenever I asked people for keeping themselves neat and clean, they usually shot back "Maulvi sahib, you are absolutely right but how can we keep ourselves neat and clean and *pak saf* when there is no clean water to drink and wash." Women were responsible to fetch drinking water from a two-hour distance. This daily tiresome routine created a host of problems; children being ignored, domestic work neglected, and a big burden on our women with additional attendant problem like their personal security."

Quest for clean drinking water misleads people to areas infested with guinea worm. "Look, here comes little Amjad. He had Guinea Worm. You can see the worm peeping out of his leg. Watching Amjad with this disease is not easy. Imagine the pain Amjad has to go through and the agony his family has to undergo every day." "Other common diseases in the area are diarrhoea and hepatitis, Ali Khan further said!"

Continuing the conversation with our team, the Imam Masjid further said, "People asked me if I had a solution for the problem of scarcity of clean drinking water. I often said why not? I'll try to find a solution with people's involvement as I am also a part of the society."

A golden opportunity and a blessing occurred in the form of Gomal Islahi Tanzeem (GIT), Gomal Kanan, Tehsil and District D.I. Khan. GIT approached TVO with a project to install 15 water pumps in the village for 120 families. TVO provided financial support and finally one



water pump was installed for a cluster of 8 houses. A water tank was also constructed with each pump for water storage. Taps were connected to use clean water and carry it home.

The community is happy and enthusiastic about this new development. The change in their lives is visible through enthusiasm to manage this resource of life. The maintenance and electricity charges are the responsibility of the households. The community also provided the land free of cost for installation of water pumps. Hours of water supply are fixed to encourage water and energy conservation. The Imam Masjid and other community elders often talk to people about conservation of resources and about their commitment to maintain this facility that was built with financial help of TVO.

The people of area are poor but responsible to meet their obligations. They regularly pay their share of nominal monthly charges of Rs.30 per household for maintenance of the pumps, electricity charges and salary of the chowkidar.

The community now feels they can walk tall. Women folk are particularly happy with this facility. They are now able to devote more time to other things that require their attention. Nonetheless, convincing women about the project was not easy!

"I still remember the day when planning of this project started. In the beginning women were not convinced about the possibility of such a project as they had been fetching water from a long distance and couldn't think of any other source of water. It took quite a bit of time to convince them that clean drinking water, available right at their doorstep, would be better in quality than the dirty canal water they fetched. With the installation of pumps, the women regard this as a big blessing" said an elderly woman in one of the households.

The planning, installation and regular maintenance of water pumps signify what empowering communities in real terms means. The water pumps are no longer seen as mere mechanical and electrical devices churning out water. They are viewed as profiles of courage, commitment and a desire to lead a better life. A sense of joint responsibility, clear definition of roles to play and a need-based approach works!



WE HAVE A REASON TO BE PROUD OF!



ina Malik a social researcher narrates:

"I am standing in the corridor of a large school building. The name of the school is Khapal Kor Model School (KKMS), Mingora, Swat. This school looks after the orphans in the area. The community told me that initiative for establishing the school was taken by the students of a local college where some orphan students came for free tuition. The school started in a small room. As time passed,

and with the interest of the college students and the community, it was converted it to a small school in 1994. Later, a local NGO Khapal Kor, Mingora, with the financial support of TVO converted it to a big school with over 3000 students." KKMS is a three-storey building with facilities of a good school; nice furniture, airy class rooms, computer lab, library and qualified teachers. In addition to orphan students, there is significant numbers of students from the area. Students who live far away are admitted and study along with these students without any discrimination.



The school building was completed in one year with 60 percent grant from TVO, and the rest of the resources were provided by the NGO and the community.

The school provides free hostel facilities for orphan students. Free books and uniform are also provided. The students of the school are responsible and conscientious, according to a senior member of school management. They also have earned a good name for the school in sports. The parents and guardians also expressed satisfaction with academic standards of the school.

The landscape has natural beauty but the people are poor. According to some local experts, 72 percent of the families live below poverty line. This is almost double the national average poverty line. The people are not in a position to afford good education for their children. This school is a blessing for them as nominal fee is charged. Keeping in view the interest of the people to give education to their children, the NGO also started a primary school with the support of Rural Social Development Programme (RSDP) and TVO. With the hard work of the school staff, management and local community the school became a model school within years.

To meet the running expenditures of the school, the building is used as computer commercial lab in the evening. This covers 50 percent of the expenditure and the rest of the cost is met by the NGO project for sustainability. The school has been upgraded to a high school now. The students of the school debaters, recite Holy Quran (qari), participate actively in sports, among other extra-curricular activities. The students occasionally go out for educational and other exploratory tours to enhance exposure, add to their abilities and leadership qualities.

One of very significant aspects of the school was a living harmony among the orphan and other students. In order to provide help to the school, some teachers work on voluntary basis in the school and they termed it as their "social obligation."

The parents, students and orphans take pride in the institution that has brought a healthy change in individual and community lives, promoted harmony among the haves and have-nots and pulled the surrounding area on a journey from darkness to enlightenment.

CORRECT YOUR SPELLINGS MISS!!



I am a press reporter. This time, I am standing in a neat and clean classroom of a school, well decorated by the students.

Despite the presence of 30 students, a complete silence prevails in the room. Not because the students are sleeping, unfortunately but they are not able to speak and hear. They all are deaf and dumb. Despite this unfortunate challenge, their faces are bright with courage and confidence. Their disability is not their inability!

"My daughter Samina was not able to express herself. If she needed something, she could not convey properly" her mother told me before I came to this school. "That was a very crucial and critical moment for both of us that my daughter was asking for something and I was not in a position to understand and fulfil her need. We both used to weep on the failure of communication between us" the mother continued. "But since she started going to school, she is now in a position to communicate express her need and I'm able to meet her demand. Her confidence has developed so much that now she does not sit in isolation but joins us in family conversation and gossiping in her own way."

Many children like Samina have developed confidence in them to walk tall and move in the society. They are developing their skills to work and have communication with their others. One big impact is that both the special children and their parents are happy and relaxed.

This was made possible with continued commitment and enthusiasm of Anjuman Naujawana, Charsadda with financial assistance from TVO. The joint collaboration between the two organisations resulted in further strengthening the Special Education Centre, Charsadda.

Charsadda has 10, 350 physically and mentally challenged children in Charsadda of which 635 are deaf and dumb and are children under 12 years of age. These children needed help and rehabilitation in order to make their lives really liveable. In order to assist the children in dealing with their initial problems and imparting skills and enabling them to generate income to avoid dependence on others in future were some of the major objectives of this very special school. The school now boasts purpose-built classrooms, modern equipment and trained staff ready to make these special children extra special by being able to communicate.

Thirty students have been enrolled in the first year. The number will increase by 30 every year. The numbers of indirect beneficiaries would be 90 families in the third year of the project. The school has been focusing on informal primary education to be gradually upgraded to middle level.

The biggest impact of this special school centre has helped in providing education to the special children, transforming them into an equally important persons of the society. The parents feel wanted and inclusive now, and in communication with their children who go to this special school. This has made life easier for both. The special children have the motivation and the ambition to learn and live like other children. While having gossip with them in the class room, I asked about their learning process. I wrote a word on the black board in incorrect spellings on purpose. One special girl child stood up and started making noise, pointing out that my spellings were wrong. I pretended that I could not understand what she was saying. She got up from her seat, came to the black board, pointed out my mistake and wrote the correct spellings her body language all the time saying "correct your spellings miss!"

UP ABOVE THE WORLD SO HIGH



Khyber Agency is one of the valleys among the mountains and remains one of the most backward areas in the federally administered tribal areas (FATA) region. The Agency encompasses

2,576 square kilometres of rough mountainous terrain with extremely low economic productivity. The existing tribal society lives by a traditional culture and has its own set-up. Hujra, a room in the house where males congregate to discuss various issues, plays a prominent role in the lives of Khyber Agency tribesmen. Hujra remains as an age old institution governing the social life of these tribesmen. Hujra is a venue for resolving

all disputes and for different social ceremonies. Hujra has thus provided a male dominated culture that has resulted in women being inactive, and thus not given the opportunity to define their status in the society. They are confined to house chores, and looking after children. The circumstances do not allow them the right to take their own decisions.

Jamrud is one of the three tehsils of Khyber Agency hardly six kilometres from Peshawar. The estimated population is 75000. The project area lies in the Ghundi village, with seven more sub-villages. Literacy rate is around 5% in the area. Clean drinking water and drainage system is very poor in the area. Poverty, illiteracy and lack of economic opportunities have created innumerable social, cultural and economic problems. The water supply and sanitation situation in the area leaves a lot to be desired. The estimated rural water supply and sanitation coverage is only 20% and 5% respectively, as compared to the urban areas of NWFP with 82% water supply and 40% sanitation coverage.

With the objective to provide clean drinking water and sanitation facilities to the people of village Ghundi and enable them to mobilize their resources for their own betterment. The flag ship of the project is 20 hand pumps for clean drinking water at the community and household levels providing 25 flush-down latrines. These facilities has mobilized local communities and organized them to implement and undertake their own waste disposal, in addition to hygiene promotion and health education program in the village. These community-led interventions have led to a significant drop in incidence of water and sanitation borne diseases.

Sakina Bibi, a village women recalled "we used to go to long distance, carrying water pots on our head and in arms, and walking hours and hours, leaving our children behind at home; unguarded, crying and playing with mud and stones. Often the children were ill, required medical attention and our company. We were aware of this but were forced to traverse long and difficult distance to fetch water". Ejaz Khan said "non-availability of potable drinking water caused many diseases and epidemics. We could not take bath for weeks, and our children used to take bath only when they have to visit some relatives and attend a wedding function which was not very often".

A local person Asad Ali Khan informed "only 3-7 percent of the population have household latrine whereas most of the males go outside to the fields for relieving themselves. Women and children use traditional "Dheran" and dry pits for defecation, which is unhygienic. Majority of people is unaware of human excreta disposal practices and household latrines; poverty is the main reason for not having their own household latrines".

Jamal Shah, an activist, said "There are 20 hand pumps and 25 pour-flush latrines installed in the area. From one hand pump 15 families benefit, with sometimes 20 members in a family. Hence, over 6000 people are using clean water from hand pumps near their homes. Similarly 6500 persons benefit from latrines. The people particularly children are now safe from eye infections and other serious diseases caused by use of contaminated water".



WATER EMPOWERS!



h my God, I still remember the days when Ammi used to go to fetch a pot of drinking water for us and we kept on waiting and waiting for her for a long time. She used to be too tired to prepare food for us on her return after covering miles of distance. Her health was going down due to this hardship and fatigue. The whole home was disturbed due to this daily activity. But now the whole scene has been changed! Thanks to Allah that this blessing is available now in our home. Water at home not only quenched our thirst but also gave our mother back to us". Bashir, a young boy told with tears of happiness and gratitude in his eyes.

"Chak 303 lies in the west of Fort Abbas, a tehsil of Bahawalnagar with a population of 4,200 people in 400 houses. The area is very backward and water is brackish. The locality is deprived of the basic civic facilities including clean drinking water, sanitation, solid waste and garbage disposal. Village has kacha houses and muddy streets. The soil and water testing laboratory Bahawalpur has declared the shallow ground water as harmful", remember Shamshad, a middle aged woman referring to the times before the TVO project.

Anjuman Samaji Behbood, Chack 303, Fort Abbas with the financial support of TVO developed and implemented this project to supply safe drinking water to 400 households of the area resulting in improvement in health and possibly better socio-economic conditions of the poor people.



This project is a joint effort of TVO, the local NGO and the local community. The NGO provided a piece of land to install motor water pump along with a space for room of tube well operator and a tank with the storage capacity 5000 gallons of water. A motor of 10 horsepower was installed to pump out water from a safe water table level, with water pipe connections to every house. The community contribution was one-time payment of Rs.1000 for a connection, and Rs. 30 as water charges per house per month. The amount collected is used for the maintenance of project equipment and activities.

Mian Hayat Ahmad said "Before this project there was no proper arrangement of clean drinking water in the area. There was only one water tank constructed by local government, back some in 1968 and it got filled once in a week. People used to get water from this tank which was never enough even for basic needs. The storage tank was an open tank attracting all kinds of pollution making this stagnant water unhygienic for health. The launch of this project is a blessing for the community members and people are not only willing to participate physically in the project implementation but also contribute financially. Twenty gallons of water is supplied to each household per day which is quite sufficient for their needs. People are enthusiastic about the project and feel empowered as if they have their life and health in their own hands! Water empowers, really!

SAFE MOTHERHOOD



anזורان died while giving birth to a dead baby. This was our 6th child. She was not given proper treatment and medical advice, as there was no such facility of health care in this area. She lost her life on the way to Multan city. Every year, she gave birth to a child. She has left five children to be looked after by me. It is big challenge for me to work, and do her job simultaneously. But it is never too late, now a health centre has been established in Mouza Kacha Buch, village Khar Kharan,

Multan. I have lost my wife and mother of five children but I hope with the health centre in our area, so many mothers would not leave their children helpless and alone. And also husbands and wives would produce lesser number of children in order to stay healthy and safe". Allah Ditto was talking and his eyes were filled with tears, standing in the corridor of the Health Centre, holding her six year old sick daughter in his arms. So many tragedies like this have taken place since long in the area.

The local community based NGO "Organization for the Pregnancy and Care of the Disabled, the community and financial assistance from TVO made it possible to establish a health centre that Allah Ditta wished were there before his wife died!

There was no health care facility for women and children in the area prior to this centre. The health centre is now serving 7871 persons including mothers and children. The building consists of four rooms, and a ward with the primary health care, health care for mothers during pregnancy and rehabilitation of the disabled. A number of mothers have been provided health care for safe delivery in addition to regular advice on family planning and reproductive health. This project also provides permanent employment to some people of the area.

Over 1600 families, consisting 3128 male, 3100 female and 1671 children have so far benefited the medical care of the health centre. The centre is providing basic health care and health education to the local population and is the only and last hope of survival in the area. Provision of ante-natal and post natal care, treatment of common ailments, advice and services of reproductive health are provided regularly by the centre. The centre is managed by Christians while majority of the beneficiaries are Muslim. All service is provided without any bias on the basis of religion, caste or colour! This project carries an age old tradition of such philanthropy in Pakistan which has thrived on the basis of humanity rather than any bias involving faith, colour, caste or social class!

HEALTH FOR ALL

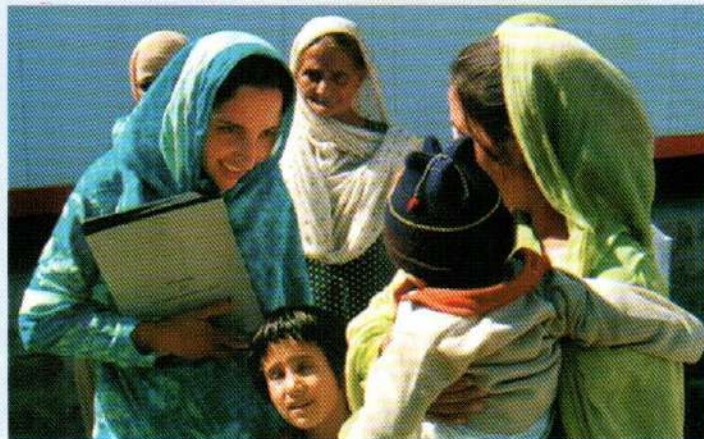


Health care is a basic right of all and should be provided to all indiscriminately. While WHO does keep the Health for All slogan alive world-wide, there are many places in Pakistan where provision of basic health care is still an unrealised dream. One such area is New Kotla Naseer, Rajapur in southern Punjab that had been ignored for many years.

District Rajapur is one of the 29 most underdeveloped districts of Pakistan. Like most of South Punjab, New Kotla Naseer in the Rajapur district lacks basic civic amenities. Majority of the people are engaged in agricultural activities. Basic health facilities are not available; particularly women are totally deprived of health care services. But the community has not lost hope and its will to cooperate with those who help others is very much alive. It is also ready to cooperate in establishing facilities that provide succour and support to them. One such example of participatory community development is the effort of Anjuman Falah-e-Behood Kotal Naseer which has established a health centre, AFB Welfare Hospital for the poor and needy.

The population of Kotal Naseer is over 30,000. The villages close to the project also benefit from the health centre swelling the directly benefiting population to over 70,000 persons.

Akhtar Ali, a resident of the area said "This area has totally been ignored and there is no health facility given by the government. However, there is Basic Health Unit (BHU) at a distance of two kilometres. But the BHU is good for nothing. No doctor is interested to come and work permanently in this remote and undeveloped area. Some time, for months, no doctor is seen in the BHU. The medicines are not available here. Only a dispenser attends BHU, and after two pm the BHU is locked".



Anjuman Falah-e-Behood Kotal Naseer initiated its social work in the area by establishing a small dispensary for very basic health facilities. This was the only post for medical aid in this area. In a period of two and a half years over 14000 patients were facilitated. However, this was not a sufficient source of medical care for the local people. There was a great need to upgrade this small dispensary to a health centre. The NGO, for this purpose, developed a project which was funded by TVO, the NGO and the community. "This has brought a revolution in the area and women are particularly safe now. Before this a patient had to go to the city and sometimes he/she expired on the way to hospital. This was a huge need of area" said a woman who came for treatment in the centre.

The centre provides health services to males, females and children. Medical camps have also been set up by the centre in the adjacent villages to provide health care facility at the door steps to 600 persons in addition to the services provided at the centre. A large number of patients have been transferred/referred to big hospital in the city by the centre. The centre is also providing services like immunization, safe facility-based delivery and health care information. Thousands of children have been immunized through this centre and in collaboration with the expanded immunisation programme (EPI). An experienced and qualified physician, a trained LHV and TBAs work around the clock. A laboratory has also been set up for basic tests and diagnostics, and for diseases like hepatitis, TB, among others. The Centre is an example of a facility that is acting as a health services provider, a referral mechanism and as a forum spreading health education far and wide in the community. The project is run and maintained by the NGO and local community.

HEALTH IS WEALTH



“First health care, then Roti Kapra aur Makan, because only a living person needs these things. We were dying and needed to survive first, these people are our saviours” said a patient sitting with the doctor in the Primary Health Care Centre, Islam Nagar, Kumhar Colony, Liaquatpur, in Rahimyar Khan District.

The project area consists of villages Mahajer Colony, Rasheed Abad, Ghosia Colony, Kumhar Colony, Hakeen Abad, Fauji Colony and Islam Nagar. More than 3, 000 families with a population of 24,000 live here, according to a doctor living in the area. This is one of the most underdeveloped and poor area of Punjab. “We can not afford a proper meal. How could we go for treatment with a private doctor since there was no other health care facility in the area before this centre started? The patients mostly expired in the effort of getting better treatment at low cost. There was a great need of family planning services because there were so many unwanted pregnancies and no reproductive health service was available. Thanks to Emergency Patient Welfare Society which established Primary Health Care Centre in the area and gave us a chance to survive in illnesses, pregnancy and child birth complications” Musarrat, a local woman expressed her reactions.

One of the staff members of the Health Centre was of the view “TVO provided financial support to establish Primary Health Care Centre. The community provided full support to the NGO. We are trying to achieve our objectives to provide full immunization to all children of the area, safe delivery, family planning and health information and services to mothers, imparting training to local Dais (traditional birth attendants) blood grouping and eye testing of students and holding health education activities. Medical Camps are arranged in schools, parents are involved in health issues and mothers on reproductive health care. The PHC Centre has its own ambulance which is available to the community for a small charge. The revenue is generated through perchi System, ambulance hire, blood grouping, eye testing, safe delivery, family planning services; diagnose/test facility for TB, hepatitis and diabetes and from the medical store. All these charges are nominal and not a burden for the people of the area”.

More than 8, 000 men, 9, 000 women and an equal number of children have been provided health care services. The sustainability of the project is one of the most important component and the community and administration of the Health Centre is responsible for the maintenance, resource generation and future up-gradation of the Centre. The appointed staff is qualified, experienced and hardworking. The community is happy and satisfied to be in safe hands.

MORE THAN A SOCIAL SERVICE!



ocial and Economic Welfare Association (SEWA), a Thar NGO received financial support from TVO for a safe drinking water facility project for population that exceeded 21,000, and also for more than 36,000 animals of 39 villages of tehsil Diplo, District Tharparkar.

"Before the project started to operate, availability of clean and safe water was one of the major problems of the people in the area. Traditionally, women look after the house, take care of the animals and work in the fields along with the males. Water being part and parcel of all these activities is always a problem in this area, coupled with the fact that traditionally women are responsible to fetch water from far away places. Despite having various government BHUs in different villages the women had not much relief from ailments. Having an arduous task at hand, both in normal conditions and in times of pregnancy, women were facing serious health issues not to mention the difficulties in fetching water from wells which needed extra labour. The recent case of the wife of Mataro of Mirasi Mohallah of Diplo who died while she was fetching water, succinctly sums up the hazards that lack of safe drinking water posed in the area," said Ramu, a middle-age resident.

SEWA started a project to install one hand pump for one village, which covers 40-50 households of the area. Although most of these areas had old wells and hand-pumps but still there were some locations where hand pumps were either very far or were installed at such a place where it was difficult for an empty handed person to walk easily let alone moving with a pitcher full of water! But women have been doing this impossible feat since ages.

According to Lal Mohammad Bajeer, President Thar Sewa "the area has a lot of sand storms (jholay), which add dust, and other pollutants in the water well water which gradually makes water unfit for human consumption. Sometimes cholera has broken up due to consumption of contaminated water. On the contrary, hand pump water is free from physical pollutants and germs, is near by, close to safe drinking water".



Trust for Voluntary Organisations (TVO) with the help of Thar SEWA installed these hand-pumps in 39 villages to provide easy access of water to women. An estimated 75% of Hindu population lives in Diplo town. Both Muslims and Hindus live in complete harmony. According to Rajesh Kumar (treasurer of SEWA), "both Muslims and Hindus have been living here for the many decades through thick and thin and have proved to be the trusted friends of each other. The Hindus take pride in being Pakistanis and celebrate their religious ceremonies with complete freedom."

Marvi, a local woman says "now the women of our house have enough time for their home and children. They no longer need to go to far off places to fetch water. They do bharat work and stitch clothes and earn additional income for their home."

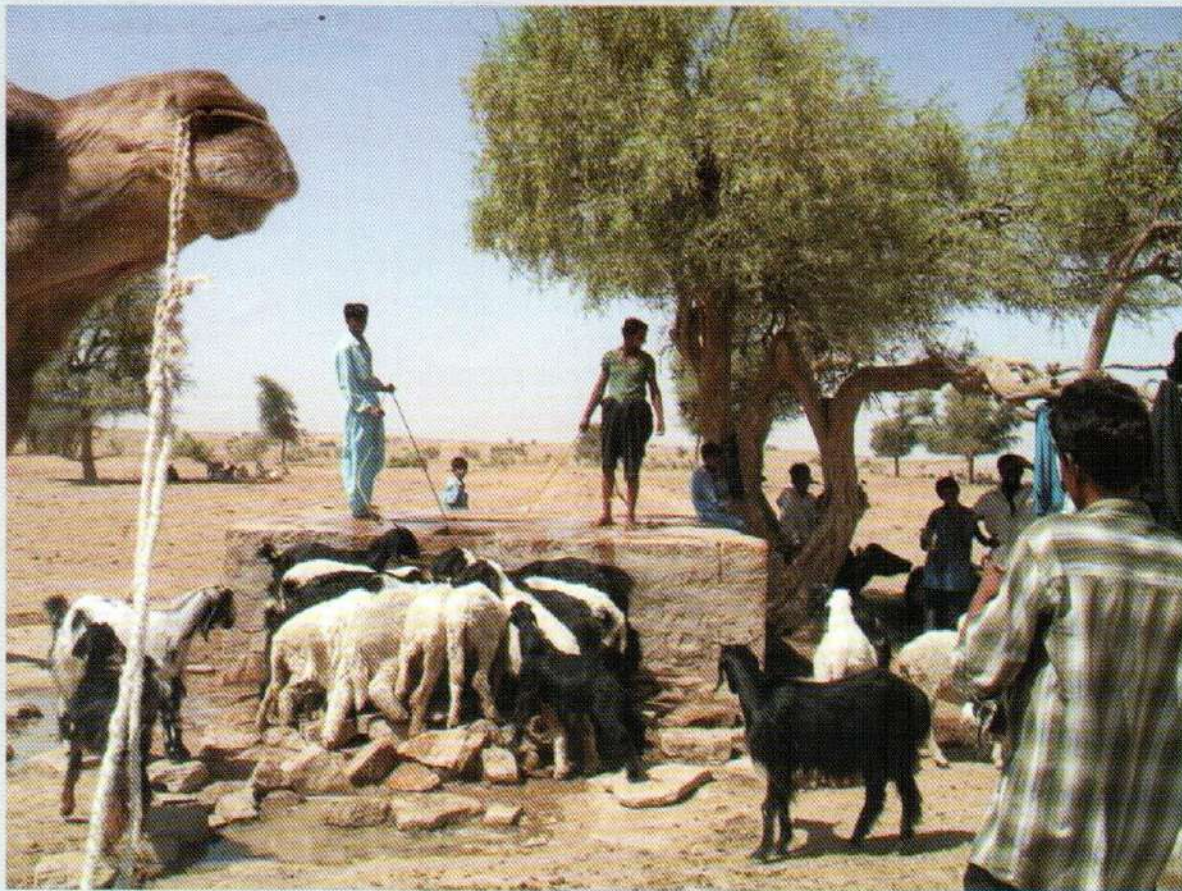
Sakeena, 50 also lives in Faqir Mohallah. She has only one son, who like other people also sells water. Sakeena feels at much ease because she has access to clean drinking water just at her doorstep. It has also increased her income. Earlier her son used to fetch water from a well installed by a Memon. The well being the only source of water in the area mostly remained crowded, as many people would fetch water from there. But now they have a lot of extra time at their disposal to do some bharat work. She earns Rs 150-250 daily from bharat work.

Shehnaz Akhtar, a school teacher added, "There is now more awareness about personal hygiene and cleanliness in the area. The diseases have also decreased as people have more water at their disposal to care for their hygiene and clean the house. The poor community has benefited a lot, especially the Meghwar community. Earlier the young girls who used to fetch water at the far away well had some problems because not only the villagers but also the professional water carriers used to come to fetch water. But now with hand pump in their own village they can fetch water any time".

A local social worker said "It's more than a social service and I feel so happy that I am serving my community. There are 20 households in Ratnabad. Earlier, dysentery cases were frequent here which have now decreased. Similarly, there were also some cases of maternal mortality but now these are less frequent and most important thing is that now the women are more confident. Hand pumps have given a sense of pride to women of the area".



WHERE THERE IS A WILL, THERE IS A WELL



earing colourful traditional clothes with their dopattas worn in a peculiar style covering their heads, cylindrical hands beautifully decorated with white bangles, worn at arms length, three to four women hold fast and gradually pull the rope at the far end of which is tied a leather bucket carrying water from the deep well dug near their village. With beautiful smile on their lips, sometimes they hum a song or just chuckle and suddenly a full hearty laughter fills the area with pleasure. The water bucket is out from the well.

This is a scene at a deep well installed by Veenjhar Social Welfare Organization (VSWO) at one of the villages of Kaloi (Thar).

The project "Construction of 10 wells in 10 Villages of Tehsil Diplo, District Tharparkar" was initiated by VSWO as a joint venture of VSWO, Community and Trust for Voluntary Organisations.

The project is living up to its main objective for improving the health of the women and children by giving access to clean water to a population of 4,200 people and more than 30,000 animals.

The people in Thar Desert mainly depend on deep wells or hand pumps for their water needs. Although a water supply scheme is working in the urban areas, the quality of water there is not only substandard but due to high quantity of arsenic in it, it has becomes quite hazardous for human consumption.

The project area which includes UC Subhiar's seven villages (Gujhiari, Chheho, Singario, Wingro, Piloni, Kathwaro, Rohero & Bhail); UC Khaitlari's two villages (Khaitlari & Rohilo) and UC Kaloi's one village.

Old wells in the area are installed at distant places, mostly near the residences of influential waderas (landlords) who have an unseen control on these sources of water. Resultantly, the common people face difficulties and women have to travel miles and miles to fetch water for their daily needs. This exercise besides being a waste of time, poses serious health hazards to women especially during pregnancy when the burden becomes real heavy. This is coupled with negligible or rather non-existent health care facilities for women and children.

In such a condition, TVO, in collaboration with the NGO, helped the people and funded 15-well project in this area, which was successfully accomplished. Then they started the recent project "Construction of 10 wells in 10 Villages of Tehsil Diplo, District Tharparkar."

A local social worker informed "with access to clean water at their doorstep, the general health condition of the Giani Para population is improving. In the past, many incidents of water-born diseases were witnessed. Now women feel at ease and have a lot of time at their disposal to spend on making embroidery and sell it. Jannah Kumhar, 38, says "I now earn enough money every month from *bharat* and *ralli* work. Besides, spending the money at home for my children's needs, I could save money to make jewellery for myself, too."

A woman living in a nearby para (mohallah) has gone through this terrible experience many times when she had 9 consecutive stillbirths. Her happiness knows no bounds when now she had the first baby who is healthy and alive. She does not cite water fetching as the main reason for her illness but says: "I do not know exactly, but this may be one of the reasons for my illness because I used to go far away to fetch water. Now I have water just nearby."

Thar being an under-privileged area, still needs more facilities. A lot is yet to be done. One can never ignore a plea of 50-year old Fatima, who came to Gharibabd to fetch water from Mangaryar Para almost 2 km from there. "I want a well like this in my village from where I can get water according to my own will. Our village has a well which is owned by a wadera. He charges for it. Yet he sometimes does not allow fetching water and scolds us. So I go places in search of water all the day". Dear Fatima, rest assured, where there is a will, there is a well.



GIVING BIRTH WITH A SMILE



maida, 25, got pregnant early 2006. This was her second baby. Like other poor haris of the area, Omaida was worried about her delivery expenses. Living between hope and despair, malnourished, Omaida could not afford the fee of a private clinic opened by a local LHV, who charges Rs 3000-4000. Neither she could go to RHC Dhoronaro, as the LHV deputed there usually available in the daytime only and there also she would have to spend money. Then the local TBA Sachedinni, who was trained by the MCH centre, told her about the MCH. The time of delivery came and TBA brought her

to the MCH centre opened by Old Boys Association in Dhoronaro. She said, looking satisfactorily at her newborn baby, "All the facilities are provided by MCH free of cost," was her simple answer when asked about her experience at the centre.

And then there is Naseeban w/o Nawaz, who belongs to a hari family of Ghulam Mohmmad Mangrio village. The family is one of the hari families of Ghulam Mohammad Mangrio, living about eight kilometres from Dhoronaro. She also gave birth to a child in the last week of November 2006. Her delivery was done free of cost as is done for other poor mothers of the area and the neighbourhoods.

The MCH Centre at Dhoronaro, Tehsil Umer Kot, was brainchild of Old Boys Welfare Association, Dhoronaro, Tehsil Umer Kot, District Mirpurkhas, Sindh. The project has been working since 2004 after its completion on August 31, 2004. A total number of 12000 persons have so far been served. There is a Rural Health Centre (RHC) in Dhoronaro but the adjacent villages have no health facility.

Old Boys Association Dhoronaro, after consultation with the people of the area prepared a project of establishing One Mother & Child Health (MCH) Centre at Dhoronaro to provide health facilities to a large number of people.

The project was started 1st September 2002 and was completed after 24 months on 31st August 2004.



With its multifarious objectives, as were conceived at the onset of the project, the centre has been providing primary health care facilities, antenatal, postnatal check-up and delivery services to the patients of Dhoronaro and 20 villages in catchment area. In its four years of services, the centre has also gained popularity in the area beyond the catchments area. While living up to its objective the centres has trained 20 dais of 20 Villages coming in catchment area of MCH centre and these dais are not only handling deliveries carefully in their area but they also bring the patients whose cases look like beyond their competence.

As Sachedinni, the TBA trained at the MCH centre and was given a dai kit herself says: "I have been handling delivery cases in my area for many years but now I take extra care in handling delivery cases. I use gloves and I also create awareness among the women who come to my house, about cleanliness, antenatal, post natal care. This is all I have learned through a training conducted by the centre for TBAs. Training has definitely added to my knowledge." The centre also conducted awareness seminars and workshops on EPI and family planning and general health care in order to educate the people of the target area with 24-hour facility in the area.

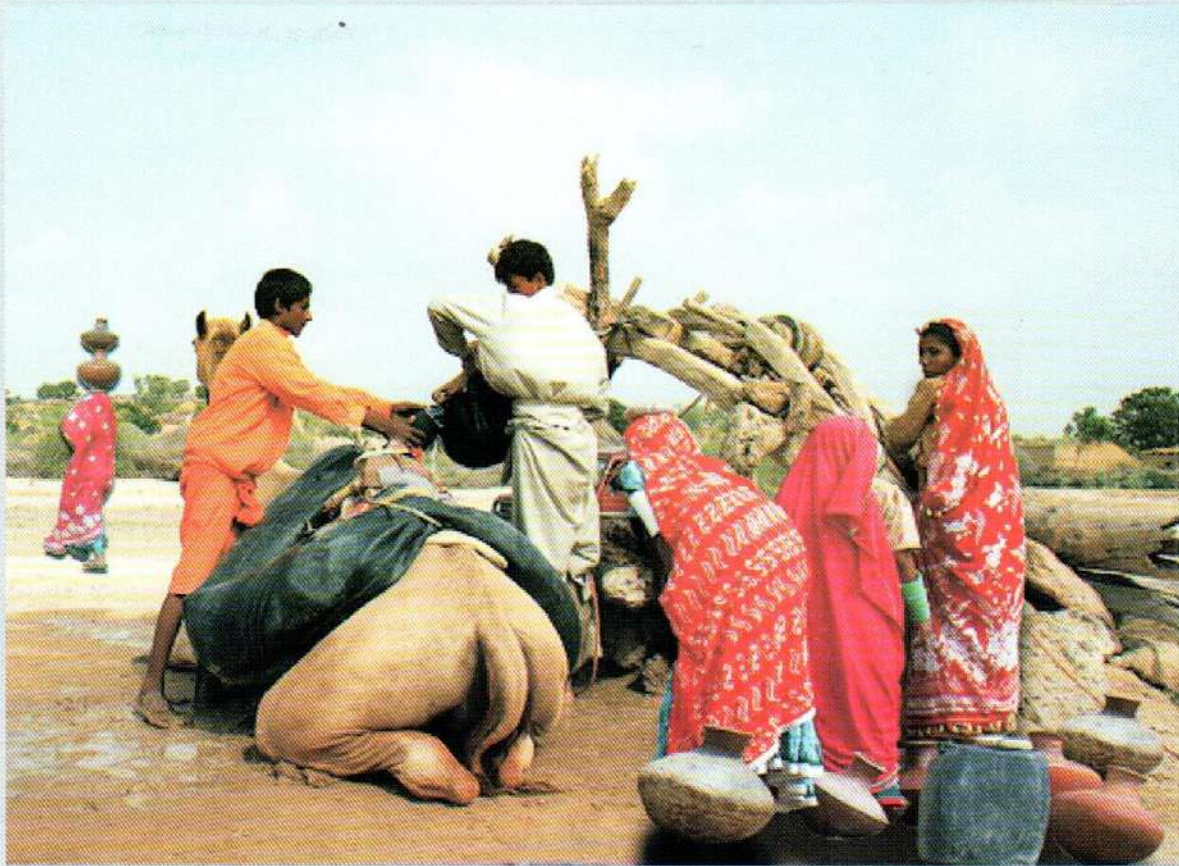
According to Ghanshyam Shyam, the Volunteer Project Coordinator, the centre, within two years of its establishment, has provided medical facilities to more than 10, 000 people which includes 4000 males, 4445 females and 1820 children. He said that besides providing health care facilities to mother and children, the project has also provided hepatitis vaccination to many poor patients with the collaboration of M. Ismail Corporation, Karachi which also provides antenatal medicines to the centre.

The centre has an ambulance for the patients. It brings patients from home and if needed also takes them to Umerkot or Mirpurkhas. The RHC serving in this area has no ambulance facility!

Presently the MCH has been conducting an average of 40-50 deliveries per month. Due to facilities of ambulance and oxygen available at the MCH, patients come from faraway areas also because the BHUs set up by the government there do not function properly. According to people of the area, the MCH is providing satisfactory health care to the women of Dhoronaro and catchment areas who were dying before the establishment of this facility.



BLESSING IN DISGUISE



ometimes a facility planned for a specific place, but then with a slight turn of the situation it ends up being established in another area where it is needed most. This “quirk of fate” happened with the village Khirohi which was originally not included in the proposed list of villages where Thar Sewa was planning to install hand pumps. But after the installation of a hand pump by Hardo organization in Kotrio the site of Kotrio was replaced with Khirohi village. The village Khirohi is situated at a distance of four kilometres from Diplo. It consists of 40 households with an average family size of 8-10 members.

Before the installation of TVO hand pump, the women of the area used to fetch water from the wells situated at a distance of ½ km and the road leading to the well was quite difficult due to its topography. Now with the installation of TVO hand pump, people have been given the facility just at their doorsteps increasing the comfort level of women.

The water from the well had impurities and was hazardous for health resulting in gastric ailments. The ease of use for hand pump is an added advantage for the women who do not have to do difficult and hard work of fetching water now. Now with sweeter and safer water at their doorsteps, the women not only feel healthy, they also have enough time to perform their routine chores at home.

The village does not have any healthcare facility and women have to go to Diplo or Mithi for health care. The village has one primary school where both girls and boys get education. The school has more than 100 students. Students go to Diplo for high school education where 10-12 girls and 25-30 boys are getting education. The villagers although happy with the hand pump, have also demanded installation of more pumps to cater to the needs of a growing population.

The basic reason for initiating the project in these villages was that the area had severe water shortage, especially in drought conditions. The water supply by the government is only confined to city and hardly caters to people's needs because even there people buy water from water carriers who bring water on donkey carts. The women besides bringing water from far away places also help their men in the fields and perform routine domestic chores.

The community living in these villages of Diplo Tehsil has a sense of possession and pride for these hand pumps because they are an active partner in progress through this project. They take care of these hand pumps and bear all maintenance expenses through a Village Development Committee (VDC). They give Rs 10 monthly to the VDC in order to keep it in working condition.

One of the project's objectives was to cater to the needs of animals also. In order to meet this objective Thar Sewa has also constructed a small pond besides the hand pumps from which the animals drink water.

Ratan, a young boy from Harijan Mohallah, studying in seventh grade said that the hand pump installed by the TVO is quite beneficial for the population of his area but due to its terrain (the houses are situated a little lower level while the hand pump is little above the ground) it is very difficult to bring water in large quantity.

The Arbabs are influential people in the town. This will be quite interesting to note here that the Arbabs have constructed a helipad near their Mohallah which is used by high officials of the government. Former Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz was also elected from this region. But despite being a VVIP area, the village was deprived of basic facilities and the NGOs like Thar Sewa have been serving the community through their small projects with community participation.



A DREAM COMES TRUE



“man Patta Chaar, mukhay mathay mein sur ahay” (Beti I have headache, please check my BP with this apparatus). This is the type of awareness, which the Reproductive Health Care Centre has been creating in 16 Villages in tehsil Mirwah, District Khairpur and its adjoining areas.

Usually the women, who used to ignore headaches earlier, considering it no ailment, now know what repercussions they can have if they do not attend to this. They come rushing to RHC if they feel a little pain, because nobody in the village has a BP apparatus, not even in the recently opened government dispensary, which also sends their patients here.

Al-Mustafa Welfare Society (AMWS) started addressing women's health issues with the launch of a family health clinic at Village Dubi in 1995, which is still providing family planning (FP) and reproductive health (RH) services in village Dubi and its surrounding areas. AMWS also arranged RH workshops in 12 villages of Tehsil Thari Mirwah with the collaboration of National Committee for Maternal Health (NCMH), Karachi. Before starting the project, AMWS trained 4 LHVs, hailing from rural areas of Thari Mirwah, in Regional Training Institute, Sukkur and Hyderabad. Then they selected three clusters of villages, where women health facilities were totally non-existent, with consensus and involvement of communities. The cluster of villages were also selected by keeping in view the number of surrounding villages in order that maximum number of people benefit.

The target area of the project comprises three cluster villages -- Dubi, Mandan and Yar Mohammed Khaskheli. The adjoining villages of Dubi include Tali, Yar Mohammed Jiskani, Nanbro and Usman Rind, while Mandan has Arbab Mandan, Nabi Dino, Nangar Khan, Haji Shahzad and Jamaldin and Yar Mohammed Khakheli has Jalbani, Shah Mohammed Leghari, Mangho Faqir and Hadi Bux Leghari in its surrounding. The 4,485 households of these villages have a population of 50,490 out of which 22,850 are male and 23,155 are female.



Prior to initiation of the facility of RHC centre, the women of the area used to depend on the local midwives who had limited knowledge of handling normal cases. The complex cases were sent to nearby urban centres of Khairpur and Thari, but due to remote distances, many women used to die on their way due to two reasons; firstly, the transport was the main issue, as Dubi is far away from the main road and it was difficult to arrange a transport immediately, especially at night and secondly, the midwife used to handle the case in such a manner that due to unhygienic conditions and infection, the women bled profusely and by the time they reached any proper health care facility, they would die. This is what happened with the wife of Haji Taj Muhammad of Mandan two years ago. There was no doctor or LHV available in the village. The midwife waited too long for the delivery while the woman was bleeding profusely. Ultimately, the midwife gave up. Taj Muhammad took his wife first to Thari Mirwah (20 km), then to Khairpur (100 km) and then to Nawab Shah, which is almost 3 ½ hours drive from the village. The woman could not live with the pain and excessive bleeding and died on the way.

"The centre has been a platform where we do "apni batein". "We share knowledge among ourselves and also disseminate it to other women in the neighbourhood. It is also a centre for talking our problems and frustrations out and solving our day-to-day issues with the advice of others," said Ajeeba, a woman who has also done a Child Care course with the collaboration of Al-Mustafa Welfare Society.

Minthar Ali Jiskani who lives at a distance of half a kilometre from the centre told that his daughter was born at RHC centre, Dubi. He appreciated that the staff of the centre is available whenever the villagers need them. The people from other areas like Union Council Sabast, Deh Bast, Goth Sina, Goth Jiskani, Goth Kiriya Jiskani and Goth Talpur, which are located in the radius of 5-6 km, also come here.

Muhammad Waris, a poor old farmer of Dubi, lost his three children, two daughters and one son due to the absence of any medical facility in the area. He said with an extreme sense of grief: "Alas! Had this centre been established earlier, my son would not have died and he would have a grown up son to help me and my daughters would give me comfort."

According to the women of the area, the centre has made a difference at many levels. Besides getting awareness, the women also come here to take advice before starting any medicines or initiating any family planning method. They also have understood the concept of antenatal and post-natal check up now.

The people of the area want to increase the staff number of the centre. Allah Dino, who came from Deh Mandhan, 10 Kms away, for the delivery of his daughter, said "There is a BHU in Thari but it was not functional due to which he brought his daughter here. I'm so glad about the availability of LHV in the centre round-the-clock."



GREENING THE FIELDS AGAIN



idrak, Turbat, Balochistan is an area with problems like poverty, water shortage and drought. Water is not available for agricultural activities, and for drinking. The only source for irrigation water was karez, which had dried out. As the karez dries up, so does life in the area.

Dehi Samaji Tanzeen Pidrak, an NGO and local community, in financial cooperation with TVO, developed a project for extension and cleaning of Karez in village Pidrak. Karezes are a major source of irrigation but due to a long and continued water shortage and drought, the karezes were literally drying and dying.

Thus, the agriculture, source of earning of 80% of population of the project area, was also dying!

A local social worker was of the view "We had almost totally collapsed economically. The project gave us a new lease on life by providing irrigation water to 50 to 60 percent of the fields. It has brought the economic relief to 40 percent of the population. Over 7000 persons of 12 villages have benefited through this project. There are 24 Karezes in the project area out of which most of these are not functioning. Due to the flood of 2005, the water flowed very fast and the soil could not conserve and absorb enough water to contribute to agriculture. Many were also damaged with the torrents of the flood. There was a great need to clean and reconstruct these karezes.



Another farmer put in "The project was great news for us as it brought prosperity in our lives. The dying fields and animals are now protected. Water for drinking is now available. With repair and extension of Karez the cultivated area has also been expanded. The state of health of animals has also been improved. However, with increase in population, the demand is not being fulfilled accordingly."

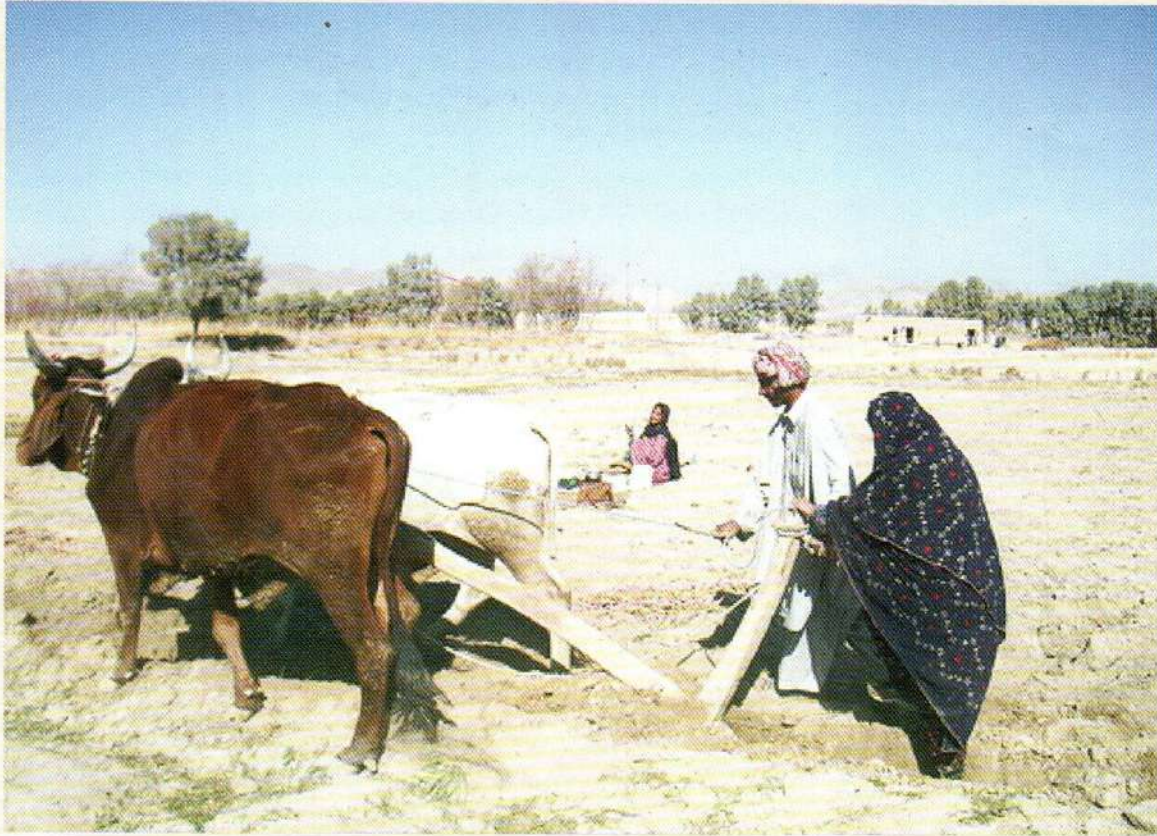
The expression of changed behaviours is noted through children going to schools, women starting embroidery work to supplement their family income, among others. Thus, women and children are busy in healthy activities. There is a sense of participatory development and the community feels empowered, motivated and in charge of its own destiny.

Agricultural activities have now become greener due to re-functioning of karez. The water is available right from 5 am to 5 pm. Forty four zamindar families are directly benefited and they are taking care for proper functioning of the Karez from their own pocket. There are many small land holders who have also been facilitated. The fruits orchards get sufficient water supply. Dates are the major fruit and water has given these trees a new life. Other crops are rice, barley, sugarcane, mango and pear and vegetables.

An NGO representative told "People of the area have a great potential and a knack for raising livestock for commercial purposes. The livestock is now growing after suffering a big loss due to flood and drought in the form of dying cattle, insufficient food and veterinary diseases."

The area is active now. Fields are greener, agricultural, economic and social activities have started again in the area. The fields that were not feeding the people properly now have been fed to feed fully.

SUSTAINABLE KAREZ- SUSTAINABLE FARMING



ural Community Development Organization Nazarabad, Turbat, with the financial support of TVO and moral and physical support of local community completed a project for the extension of Karez system in Nazarabad, Turbat. Farmers and community are taking advantages of Karez using water for irrigation and drinking purposes while the karez is being properly maintained. The social and economic activities in the area are growing and people are happy and enthusiastic, as the agriculture was possible only due to sustainable Karez in these areas.

Mr. Nawaz Ali, head of Karez informed "due to the extension of Karez the number of beneficiaries has increased both directly and indirectly. The number of such people is over 6000. The villages benefiting directly are Koharh, Shahik, Bazar, Koharh Balochi Bazar, Koharh and areas near the hospital, Charekar Bazar and Balochabad".

A farmer reported "before the extension of karez, water level was very low but now it has risen. I have 6 acres of land. Before the extension I was able to cultivate about 3 acres of my land but now all my land is irrigated and my income has raised from Rs. 11000 to 24000, and even more. Government is not providing any help in this regard."

Many farmers are growing dates trees which need too much water for its successful growth. Other fruits are mango, lemon, chiku and other vegetables. However, due import of fruit from Iran, the sale of the local fruits is certainly suffering.

The major objectives of the project included an increase of 40 percent in the supply of water, supporting 40 large land holdings and 600 villages, increase in date production and income of the people producing dates, availability of clean drinking water to the people of the area, protecting people against water contamination and to make 40 acres of land cultivable to raise economic activities of the people. Almost all of these objectives are being realised. Local people are contributing financially to maintain the operation and good working condition of karez.

WATER FOR LIFE



Union Council Baleecha has 11 villages situated in the west of Turbat city. These villages are near seasonal stream called "Nehang" that runs parallel to the road side. This is an over populated area as over 15000 people migrated here from near by areas due to drought and using that same resources which were already not sufficient for the local people created problems for the area. The major problem of the area is non-availability of clean drinking water. A local NGO Rural Community Development Organization, Baleecha developed a project to install 45 hand pumps in 11 villages in UC Baleecha, with the support of TVO and local community.

A local social worker said, "Before the installation, people were drinking water from open surface wells and were not in a position to cover the wells. The hygiene level was really low. They were compelled to drink contaminated water and common water-borne diseases like diarrhoea, cholera, and stomach problems were common. But with the installation of water pumps, people stopped using surface wells. One hand pump is sufficient for 15-30 persons. As a result of this initiative, the frequency of diseases like diarrhoea and kidney troubles has considerably come down. Another landmark in the area, a flush latrine has also been introduced following the installation of hand pump. Activities like kitchen gardening and planting date trees in the open areas of the house have also started as a result of this initiative".

"Over 10315 residents of 11 villages were not having clean drinking water and the sources were uncovered well, using leather Dol, not only unhygienic but a laborious task. But now they have not only having clean drinking water but also holding training and orientation sessions to give awareness, in each village on the importance of clean water and diseases caused due to use of containment water and their control. The major objectives are to provide clean drinking water to 242 families with 15 members in each family, reducing the burden of women to carry water from long distance and establishment of a healthy community. The project has full support and cooperation of the members of local community", said a social worker.

To make the project effective and technically accurate, trained staff including supervisor, repairman and working staff have been appointed. A management committee comprising the relevant persons and professionals has been constituted to assure that project runs smoothly and sustainably.

A JOURNEY TOWARDS ENLIGHTENMENT



education has always been an important factor in all societies. The rural areas need equally importance in this sector. The community of Aghbarg, Loralai believes that the advancement of the area depends on imparting education to their children along with other development initiatives. The area of Aghbarg consists of 20 villages. This is a poor and underdeveloped area with a population of 13000 people. The profession of people is farming, cattle raising, and shopkeeping and working on daily wages. Literacy level in the area is one of the lowest; around two percent having no government primary school.

A local NGO, Educational Development and Welfare Organization is running a primary school which can't cater to the education needs of the area.

The only primary school, Farooqi Primary Model School of the area had an incomplete building. More than 200 students, boys and girls, were studying in five class rooms, having no ceiling. The community on self-help basis constructed walls of class rooms and passages on a piece of land donated by the community but the construction of floor and ceiling are yet to be completed. The poor of community were not in a position to arrange more funds for this job. Children were sitting in the open to sky



class rooms without any shelter to protect them from heat, rainfall and chilly air.

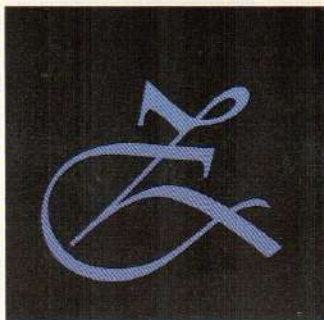
With the financial support of TVO, with the help of the NGO and community, the building of school has been completed. The objectives of the project included completion of the building through financial support from TVO, providing basic educational facilities to 200 children of the school, institutional capacity building of the school to enrol more children, constructing cemented floors, providing furniture and other educational infrastructure.

Professor Hakeem Abdul Kareem, an eminent personality of the area informed "setting up a functional school in the area made this village, a model village. Qualified and experienced teachers have been appointed and provided residence in the same premises. A dispensary has also been established here for children and other people of the area. School is having a hall and washrooms. High classes have also been started with all educational facilities. The project is thus a good combination of health and education."

"The school is serving over 30 villages with a population of 20000. "Before the school became functional, the children and young people were developing a bad habit of watching mini-cinema set up in a local restaurant. The school has changed this culture and convinced young children to come to school instead", said a woman in the area.

This is a self-sustained project and the resources for running the institution are generated by tuition fee and community contribution. The people are now happy and take pride in having a school in their area that is helping them in their journey from darkness to enlightenment.

WATER FOR UNITY



hob is the main tehsil and district of Balochistan. The topography here comprises hilly area along with vast plane land with very hot summers. Supply of drinking water is a major problem of this area.

The water table is very low at 150 to 175 feet. Water pumps already existed in the area but were not functioning. People had to go for a very long distance to get water for drinking and daily use. Society for Community Development and Promotion (SCDP) in collaboration with TVO developed a project to supply clean drinking water to the villages of Ripuzai, Zhub. So far 19 hand pumps have been installed in the area. But now the situation is much better and the

community members have experienced a great change in their life.

A local resident happily told, "We now having clean drinking water. This saved us lot of time and now we can go to our work on time. Our children are also going to school on time."

A local women said, "Yes, it is available for drinking and also for my animals and my kitchen gardening".

A young boy informed, " the people of different tribes have come near to each other and a harmony is very clearly seen, as people are getting water from one point, which also brought them to one point of unity".

The demand of more and more hand pumps is generating day by day as clean drinking water protects against many diseases and also saves lot of time spend on getting water from other places. People from 20 kilometers come to get water from these hand pumps as the water of well in their areas is unhealthy and causes many diseases. Karez system is not situated near cities and populated area, therefore the need and importance of hand pumps are many fold. The seasonal streams also dryup during summer season. Tube well is also not effective due to lack of electricity. In these areas hand pumps seem to be answer.

BRIDGING THE GAP



Young Social Welfare and Educational Association Lengerpura in AJK with the financial assistance of TVO developed a project of women vocational and literacy centre at Lengerpura village. The objectives of the project were to reduce illiteracy, expand basic education, impart skills to women in order that the women are involved in economic activities. Creating awareness in the women to increase their income, provide jobs to women and provide facilities to women for fulfilling their domestic needs through gaining knowledge at the vocational training centre, and increase in self employment were also the objectives.

Replying to a question, a teacher at Legerpura village, Muzaffarabad, said, "The project area has 21 villages and is located 29 kilometres from Muzaffarabad on Chakothi road. The population is around 17, 000 people. The area, with this big a population, did not have even a single vocational centre for women. The women have always been in need of such technical training that could improve their skills to do business at small scale to supplement their family income. This was one of the ways we thought we could reduce poverty. The centre has contributed significantly on this account."

This is an agricultural area with majority of the people are engaged in various agricultural activities. However, due to a paucity of modern agricultural techniques, limited use of fertilizers and pesticides, the income from this sector is insufficient for the people to support their families. The women of these families were eager to use their spare time in some commercial activities. The setting up of women vocational and literacy centre was a blessing for them. A good number of women showed their interest in this centre and started coming to the centre with great enthusiasm.



"We are imparting training in knitting, machine embroidery, tailoring and gabba making skills at the centre. There are 15 trainees at all four trades and over a number of 75 women completed training in the past six months. Over 150 women were trained in a year. After the completion of training, women started working on order bases sitting at their homes and at the centre. Some of them were employed as teachers/instructors at the same centre," informed an instructor at the centre.

When a trainee completes the training she is able to meet her basic needs. She saves money that she previously spent on sewing and stitching. Usually a family has 8 to 10 members. Thus, the number of beneficiaries comes to more than 3, 500 indirectly. Women also make dresses for their neighbours and relatives and doing business on orders. They buy raw materials from the market to make clothes."

Shamin Bibi told with pride, "the centre has brought a social and economical change in my life and created self confidence to walk tall. I am supporting my family and also saving some money for rainy days."

Mussarat Bano, busy making a dress for sale on the sewing machine said, "I'm having a good time here. We are not only learning skills but also getting information on health and hygiene. This is a better use of our time compared to gossiping and back biting".

The centre has bridged the gap: of poverty, illiteracy, lack of health information and social up-gradation in the local women with increased level of awareness and equality of opportunity. These changes will ultimately lead to an overall social and economic development in the area.



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