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# AKDN

AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Spring Newsletter: *Pakistan edition*



## The world's largest mural being documented and studied

In September 2015, the Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan (AKCSP) began the documentation, presentation and promotion of the Lahore Fort Picture Wall, with the financial support from the Royal Norwegian Embassy and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture facilitated by the Walled City of Lahore Authority. Established as the world's largest mural, the 1450'x50' Picture Wall was exquisitely decorated with glazed tile and faience mosaics, embellished brickwork, filigree work

and frescos during the Mughal period in the reign of Jahangir in 1624 AD and completed under Shah Jahan's reign in 1632 AD. Each individual mosaic gives us an insight into life and entertainment in the royal courts, such as battles scenes, royal portraits, mythical creatures, dance, music and geometric patterns. These unique elements became the principal reason for the Lahore Fort being declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981. The first phase of the project involves the complete documentation of the 350'x50' western section of the Picture Wall. Thus far, the architectural documentation of the facade using electronic distance measurement devices has been completed and high resolution rectified photography is in progress. Architectural documentation of the Summer Palace and the Sheesh Mahal located behind the Picture Wall was also carried out, as their documentation is essential for the holistic conservation of the site in future. Specialists Mr. Talib Hussain, recognised with the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1983 for his work on the Tomb of Hazrat Shah Rukn-i-Alam in Multan, and Dr. Nadhra Khan, renowned historian of 16th-18th century Sikh and Mughal art, have been brought on board for supervising the delicate work on the mural. This pilot study will lay the groundwork for the complete digital documentation and sensitive conservation of the remaining section of the Picture Wall and the entire Lahore Fort. Work on the western elevation is expected to be completed by June 2016. The AKCSP team working on the Picture Wall is headed by architect Wajahat Ali and includes architects Shoaib Mohammad, Maham Neha Ansari, Rabeeya Arif and engineer Tanveer Johar. A team of female surveyors including Shahnaz Qunber, Sikim Bano and Shahina Musa from Ciqam (a women social enterprise in Hunza) was also deployed to assist with the documentation process.



Details of glazed tile mosaics on the wall

## Research for the real world: an insight into the eye health of the poor

In a fishing village in Karachi, some people are having to adjust to a worrying reality. Familiar faces and everyday settings have blurred and there is a mist that is making them anxious about what lies ahead. Eye challenges have interrupted the lives of so many in Pakistan but the fishing community is significantly more affected. Over the past seven years, Dr. Khabir Ahmed, assistant professor (research) in ophthalmology at Aga Khan University, has been investigating the reasons for this startling inequality. Dr. Khabir Ahmed is leader of an AKU team that interviewed 640 people across



On spot treatment of the community members by AKU doctors

three islands and four coastal neighbourhoods in Karachi, all on the borderline of poverty. Findings of the study were striking. Curable eye problems were the leading cause of vision loss. Worryingly, 55 per cent of respondents had never had an eye exam, 94 per cent of the elderly lived in extreme poverty and 84 per cent had no school-based education. These factors shed light on the persistence of poor eye health. Another striking finding was that women had markedly more vision loss than men.

According to Dr. Khabir Ahmed, "The research also made a difference. In the beginning our focus was on data collection, but as we met these communities we started identifying people who needed referrals, providing on-the-spot treatment and even handing out prescription glasses. At times we would ferry 20-25 patients for corrective surgeries. The fishing communities of Karachi and their cultures are extremely unique but abject poverty, illiteracy and negligible political representation mean that these communities remain on the fringes – overlooked and unheard in mainstream discourse."

For his next research project, Dr. Ahmed is going to explore whether a lack of surgical expertise or the advanced nature of cataracts are to blame for vision problems noted after surgeries.



*Fishing community members living in borderline of poverty in Karachi*



*Dr. Khabir Ahmed shares his ideas about his next research project*

## Building the resilience of rural communities against climate change in Sindh

**24 March 2016:** At the closing of a two year project to support the coastal communities of Sindh build resilience to climate change, Senator, Dr. Karim Khwaja graciously served as the Chief Guest. Senator Khwaja appreciated Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan's (AKPBS,P's) efforts stating, "We need fortified efforts from the government and support from civil society organisations to help us improve the quality of life of people in these areas. I am glad that this project by AKPBS,P marks a step in the right direction."

He also encouraged the Government of Sindh to create strong linkages with AKPBS,P and initiate pro-poor public-private partnership initiatives which can reduce the vulnerability of the coastal lying areas in Sindh. Since its inception in 1980, (AKPBS,P) has led multiple initiatives to improve the built environment and promote livelihood opportunities for the vulnerable communities in Sindh. AKPBS,P implemented the above mentioned project from April, 2014 to March, 2016 with the financial support of the Government of Canada, provided through Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC). Under the project, AKPBS,P

adopted a demand-oriented approach to promote gender empowerment and environmental sustainability while also reducing the vulnerability of rural communities against climate change in Thatta benefitting more than 12,000 people in 70 villages. The project activities included the construction of 15 mitigation infrastructure schemes including link roads, earth-filling and culverts; enterprise development trainings to improve income-generating opportunities for low income households; formation of Climate Change Adaptation Committees in 30 villages to encourage community initiatives on disaster preparedness; and manufacture and replication of energy efficient stoves in more than 850 households across 70 villages.



Mother and daughter using the energy efficient stove in Thatta (Sindh)

## Queen Máxima briefed about AKDN programmes during her visit to Pakistan

Her Majesty Queen Máxima, United Nation's Secretary General's special advocate on financial inclusion for development, held a meeting with the AKDN social development team on 10 February 2016 during her visit to Pakistan. Queen Máxima was accompanied by Mr. Neil Buhne, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Pakistan, H.E. Mrs. Jeannette Seppen, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Pakistan and Mr. Stephen Rasmussen, lead of the Technology Programme at CGAP, global microfinance resource centre housed at the World Bank. Queen Máxima was briefed about the overall work and impact of AKDN in improving the quality of life of people in Pakistan and was given an introduction to the Social Development programme of AKDN, including in particular the multi-sector approach, long term community driven development, Multi Input Area Development focusing the discussion on gender, youth and micro-enterprise programmes, and a summary of the impact and key achievements of AKDN programmes. Queen Máxima discussed issues of significant importance to advancing financial inclusion in the country. She appreciated the efforts of Aga Khan Foundation for being in the forefront of development efforts in Pakistan and a leader in the field of financial inclusion for decades.



Queen Máxima discussed important matters with special emphasis to financial inclusion in the country

## A STEP forward for Education: Learning condition of over 300,000 children improved in Sindh, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral

If you walk into the Government Girls Primary School, Shamsabad Sukkur, unlike many other state schools in Pakistan, you may find yourself surprised to be greeted by colourful educational displays, rich learning resources adorning the walls and a place that looks as if it was built to sustain young creative minds. However, five years back the story of this school was quite the opposite. The school was in ruins following the 2010 floods. Displaced families, housed in the school, had even burnt down the furniture and doors for fuel. It seemed as if the school had survived a war.

But now the broken floor has been fixed, washrooms built, water tanks installed and walls painted and decorated with art work produced by students. It is not only the infrastructure that has been transformed but the overall learning environment as well with the help of trained head teacher and teachers, an actively engaged community and support from the district government. How has this change come through? The Government Girls Primary School, Shamsabad Sukkur is one of the 1,650 schools that have benefitted from the seven year Strengthening Teacher Education Project (STEP) of AKU's Institute for Educational Development in Pakistan funded by the Government of Canada and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada.



A student presenting a poem to her classmates

STEP project started as a multifaceted intervention in 2009 to improve the quality and delivery of elementary education appropriate to the poor and disadvantaged, particularly women and children. Employing a holistic approach to educational reform, the project was able to reach out to 36,000 teacher educators, teachers, education managers and community members to improve the learning conditions for over 300,000 children in seven districts of Sindh, three districts of Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral. STEP's efforts translated into increased students' enrolment, attendance, and participation in schools. The change in the learning environment was able to mainly attract girls back to school, as they found their teachers more sensitive to their needs. While STEP has recently concluded, it has left behind a well-equipped network of 165 resource centres to sustain and further trigger positive change in the target areas.

## A story of hope, motivation and access to finance from Gujranwala, Punjab

Muhammad Sabir Shah is only 33 years old and has seen his fair share of difficulties in life. Ten years ago, Sabir lost his left arm and badly fractured both his legs in an accident which left him bedridden. It was a traumatic experience for him as the accident forced him to rely on his brothers and wife for physical and economic support for many years. Despite his limitations, Sabir decided to find a way to generate an income and become financially independent. He heard about the First MicroFinanceBank Ltd Pakistan's (FMFB-P's) financial assistance services and approached the bank to start his own retail outlet for building/construction material. Sabir received his first loan from the FMFB-P in 2009, followed by several others over the years for expansion. He started his initial business from a single room in his house with a small inventory and added more products over time to expand his work.



Sabir during his work in Gujranwala

Initially, he only earned PKR 10,000 in a month but currently his monthly sales exceed PKR 250,000, thereby increasing his monthly income to PKR 40,000 or more. Sabir managed to turn his life around and successfully grew his business from a micro-enterprise into a bigger venture that provides employment opportunities to other people in his community. With an improved income, Sabir is trying to ensure that his four children get a proper education to improve their lives, especially his six-year old daughter. Sabir was innovative enough in his business to collaborate with labour and construction/repair service providers in his area to purchase raw material from him. This marketing strategy helped him in becoming a contact point to locate labour for repair/construction work. He also managed to convince the local transporters to provide services to his customers which doubled their monthly income. His next move is to rent a shop and convert it into a warehouse to store additional material. The warehouse would help him in taking on bigger projects from clients in the area. As a result of his resilience and hard work, Sabir was awarded the runner-up award for 2014 by the Citi-PPAF in the "National Micro-Entrepreneur Award-Special Category".

## UN and AKDN partnership responding to flood and earthquake affected areas in Chitral

United Nation's World Food Programme and Aga Khan Development Network's Focus Humanitarian Assistance and Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) provided assistance to the flood and earthquake affected communities in Chitral. WFP's Food for Asset (FFA) project provided food assistance to the affected communities through FOCUS and gave the task of assessment, identification and technical support for completion of small projects to AKRSP keeping in view AKRSP's excellence in social mobilisation and community infrastructure

projects. Using food and cash transfer WFP got communities participating in activities such as repairing irrigation systems, building bridges, soil conservation and setting up community granaries. The projects remained highly successful due to strong coordination among stakeholders and implementing agencies, including AKRSP, FOCUS and WFP. Overall 53 most flood affected villages were targeted in three UCs and 3375 households were assisted under food for work programme. A total of 289 Mt food was distributed for one month in the targeted community. 90 community infrastructure activities were conducted, that included, 76 schemes of irrigation channel, seven link roads, five drinking water supply scheme, a bridge and a watermill.

In a partnership with AKRSP, WFP also supported 6784 families through its project 'Enhancing Food and Nutritional Security and Rebuilding Social Cohesion' that included two times cash transfer to the families. AKRSP implemented the project in the flood and earth quake affected UCs of Charun, Laspur, Mastuj, Mulkhow, Koh and Ashirate for a period of three months. AKRSP identified projects and beneficiaries for the cash for work support through Local Support Organizations and Village /Women Organizations. A total of 3900 flood affected households and 3,100 earthquake affected households received support by two times cash transfer during the process.

After the first phase a total of 489 schemes have been completed including; cash for relief, cash for training and cash for work that included the construction of check dams, construction of power house room, protection walls, drainage systems, rehabilitation of irrigation channels and link roads. A total of 13,563 participants were engaged. To ensure women participation in project activities, a separate training package on Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction applications has been designed for the women.

In addition, to further ensure food security in district Chitral, Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nation (FAO) in collaboration with AKRSP and District Agricultural Department initiated its project 'Revitalisation of Essential Food Crops Productions to Ensure Household Food Security' in Chitral to restore food security and agricultural based livelihoods for 6000 resource poor, food insecure vulnerable farming households affected by floods in Chitral. Under the agricultural inputs support component, fertilisers, and seeds were given to 6000 targeted households in 19 UCs (230 villages). In addition, 15 men and 25 women were trained in Kitchen Gardening, 30 irrigation infrastructures were restored in 9 UCs in 30 villages and Rs. 6,765,619 were given to the skilled and unskilled workers through Cash for Work.



Communities participating in repairing water channels

## Preparedness and Response: FOCUS restoring resilience within the communities in Pakistan

During 2016 torrential rains, Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral experienced avalanches and flash floods. Focus Humanitarian Assistance through its Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) provided early warning to at risk people, assisted in voluntarily pre-disaster evacuation of 200 households from the highly risky areas as well as helped in rescue operations. FOCUS's Search and Rescue Teams (SARTs) remained alert while its Disaster Assessment Response Teams (DARTs) collected post disaster data. Helicopter of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) participated in emergency evacuation of serious patients and supply of medicines to the remote areas. FOCUS stockpiles were used for more than 100 tents, blankets, basic first aid and basic rescue kits were the first relief that reached the communities in parts of GBC. 52 years old Bibi Sharifa from Chitral with an elderly mother in law counted her blessings after receiving FOCUS's emergency relief, "it is a blessing that our lives are safe and we are not in open without cover which would have been the case if we did not get the timely shelter and food from FOCUS teams".



Search and Rescue Team members loading the helis for transporting relief items to affected communities

With changing climate the scale of hazards and risks are rising particularly in natural hazard prone areas of Northern Pakistan including Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral. To counter climate induced specific hazards, FOCUS Pakistan through its Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) interventions has paced up its preparedness measures in the community. Using FOCUS hazard vulnerability risk assessments and mapping, 660 high risk score villages in GBC and over 200 urban location in South have become the centre of preparedness. FOCUS Pakistan, together with its donors and partners, has reached over 600 schools across Pakistan through its school safety programme benefitting over 60,000 students, teachers and parents. As a result of a well rooted FOCUS CBDRM, during 2015 floods and earthquake, thousands were evacuated and sheltered timely with support from FOCUS's Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs). FOCUS through its trained teams reached around 2125 households in GBC with tents, blankets, warm clothing and kitchen items. Food was delivered to 2125 households for a month and 800 most affected households for two months. During 2015, FOCUS trained 9000 community members of which 40% were women in CBDRM. For a coordinated response FOCUS maintains close linkages with disaster risk management practitioners, government and partners. FOCUS is committed to risk reduction intervention in community through CBDRM training, stockpiles and immediate response with AKDN partners. On same lines, rehabilitation leading to development is ensured through ongoing comprehensive village level disaster management plans.

## Communities provided with shelters and medical treatment during natural disasters in the mountainous north

Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan (AKPBS,P) initiated the construction of transitional shelters under its Relief and Early Recovery Programme to provide 674 safe and thermally comfortable shelters for flood and earthquake affected households of Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral who lost their homes. Despite the unfavourable weather in the region, AKPBS,P's team worked diligently to ensure that shelters were constructed as soon as possible. The community wholeheartedly appreciated AKPBS,P's efforts, as one of the shelter recipients commended, "we lost our homes, but the institutions took care of us and provided us with a place which we can call our home".



*Affected communities moved from tents into shelters provided by AKPBS,P*

Aga Khan Health Service, Pakistan (AKHSP) has been providing its services during the natural disasters in these regions. AKHS,P deployed its medical teams and nine mobile clinics were established, 1000 patients were treated during the earthquake and 8000 patients were provided medical help in total. In April 2016, communities in Gilgit-Baltistan again experienced heavy rains that resulted in land sliding and road blockage. Some of the patients admitted in Basic Health Centres and Comprehensive Health Centres (CHCs) needed surgical services that were only available in Aga Khan Medical Centre, Gilgit (AKMC,G). A mother's situation got critical when she was admitted in CHC Gupis with obstructed labour pain and needed an emergency cesarean section to deliver the baby. As roads were blocked AKHS,P management immediately coordinated with Aga Khan Foundation Pakistan & Focus Humanitarian Assistance Pakistan to airlift the patient. A total of 14 critical patients including the critical mother were transferred to AKMC, Gilgit. The mother went through emergency C-Section and a premature baby was delivered and the baby's life was saved along with the mother. The other critical patients also got timely help and their lives were saved as well.



*Patients airlifted by AKDN helicopters for further treatment*

## Aga Khan Education Service strengthens its Early Childhood Programmes

**5 April 2016:** Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES,P) commenced additional Early Childhood Development (ECD) classes in 53 schools across Gilgit-Baltistan, Chitral and Southern Pakistan, and established seven new ECD Resource Centres. A vast body of research has demonstrated that ECD programmes benefit children, families, and communities through reduced dropout and repetition rates, improved school achievements, greater productivity as adults, and higher levels of social and emotional functioning. In short, ECD programmes are a highly cost-effective means of strengthening society as a whole by ensuring that its individual members live up to their full potential. Considering the importance of quality ECD education, AKES,P has come up with a comprehensive strategic framework to provide children between the ages of 2 and 5 years with strong ECD programmes and services. ECD classes are running in many of the AKES,P's 159 schools across the country and this year approximately an additional 1,300 students will enroll as a result of the establishment of additional classes. Ninety ECD teachers and 11 facilitators hired and trained through Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development and Aga Khan University Human Development Programme will ensure the smooth running of the ECD classes.



ECD class activity in progress

Dear Readers,

Thank you for your contributions to the Spring Volume. It was because of your creative articles, stories and photos that this newsletter was possible. The purpose of this newsletter is to let the staff in Pakistan know about the wonderful work AKDN is doing. We would like to thank all the CEOs for their support and especially Muhammad Altamash (Aga Khan University's Communication Department), AKCSP Communication Team, Safina Kousar (AKU-IED), Tania Atzaz (FMFB-P), Aziz Ali Dad and Farid Ahmed (AKRSP), Amirali Parpia (AKPBS,P), Rubab Karar (AKES,P), Shamam Khan and Mehar Aftab (Focus Humanitarian Assistance, Pakistan), Nadia Huda and Kashif Jassani (AKHSP), Athar Tanveer and Ammar Malik AKF (Pak), Christopher Wilton Steer AKF (UK) and the AKF, Pakistan's Programme Heads of RD, Health and BE and Education for providing the content for this volume.

If you are interested in submitting articles or sharing ideas please contact the editor, Laila Naz Taj in AKF, Islamabad: [laila.taj@akdn.org](mailto:laila.taj@akdn.org). The next volume will appear in Summer 2016.

For more information about our programmes , visit our website: [www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org)