



NEWSLETTER OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2017

From the Implementing Partners

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Stories from the Districts

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Education—called the “Divine Light” in the Holy Scriptures—is one of the most basic human rights necessary to develop and unleash the talents and infinite potential. The research evidence confirms that education is the most powerful tool to help the disadvantaged break the shackles of poverty and lift themselves out of it forever.

In pursuing its mandate, UNESCO has been making a difference, since 2015, in the lives of numerous marginalized children, through its Girls Right to Education Project (GREP). The Project has been making strides in ensuring girls' access to education, increasing retention and improving physical and learning environment in schools.

Often situated in the marginalized communities, most of the GREP schools are the single- and/or two-room primary schools having fewer teachers. Therefore, these schools feature the multigrade teaching-learning situation. The teachers inadequate qualifications constrain them in providing children joyful learning environment in classrooms. Hence, teacher capacity is improved through the multigrade and activity-based learning courses enabling them to employ participatory, activity-based and learner-friendly teaching approaches. The GREP mechanism also develops community members as advocates for girls education—an innovation hardly featuring elsewhere in the country!

Several of the GREP schools have already started emerging as ‘schools-of-choice’ for the parents, while the government has started replicating and scaling the promising GREP model to improve other schools in different parts of Pakistan.

Dr. Mola Dad Shafa

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Children Learn Better through Stories

“Children learn better through stories”. It is quoted by Ms. Farzana Qudoos, a primary school teacher at Government Girls Primary School Bagh Syedan in Union Council Said Pur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Reflecting her thoughts on establishment of a small reading corner as library in her school she said that every student enjoys reading story books, though this realization happened very recently in my teaching career, it has started yielding results. The reading corner is a pleasant addition as before this we had no story books or reading materials available in the school except textbooks as the only source of teaching and learning.

As a teacher, I never thought of providing story books to students to make them learn joyfully and create a conducive environment for learning. Through UNESCO’s GREP, Saiban Development Organization formed a small reading corner in my school with a wooden cabinet and many colorful books. This initiative has substantively changed the school environment. I can see increasing girls’ interest and enthusiasm to borrow these books and read them instantly one after another.

School Library consists of book with stories, art work, general knowledge and dictionaries etc. It has become a habit of my students to ready these books, learn difficult words and get new knowledge which also help them in reading their text

books. I observe that student’s reading skill is improving day by day and more importantly they are not just reading story books but also share their own stories and knowledge with each other.

Ms. Qudoos is happy to see students borrowing these books and using dictionary to find meanings of difficult and new words. She is confident that establishment of the reading corner is a remarkable initiative to help students learn better and enhance their reading habits which is generally declining in the society with growing use of IT. She is thankful to UNESCO and Saiban for their support in enhancing the quality of education in her school.





Classroom Activities Improve Children Interest

Girls in many schools of Mohmand Agency in FATA, typically do not perform as well as boys. Domestic work mean girls cannot always attend school regularly, or do necessary study at home. UNESCO's GREP not only supports the most vulnerable girls to stay in school, but also supports them to do well in school.

She adds on, “we have never been provided such trainings which can enhance our teaching skills. Class room setting has been very boring for children and us to teach effectively. Our teaching was not contributing to students’ learning. But after getting this training, I am able to undertake different class room activities, which boosts students’ interest in the learning process and we all are enjoying teaching and learning”.



Ms. Zakia Teacher from Dev Dheri Government Girls Primary School, Teshil Prang Ghar in Mohammad Agency is a qualified teacher who has been teaching in this school for more than 8 years. Reflecting her thoughts on training in Activity Based Learning (ABL), she says, “After availing the ABL training she can now engage her students more actively in the studies and getting active response of children compare to previous days”.

She also appreciates UNESCO’s support through Women Empowerment Organization (WEO) in the provision of teaching aids which has also played an important role in increase in students’ enrollment in school.



SMCs Making Difference

Government Girls Primary School Jaffar Wala in Union Council Kallar Wali, Muzafargarh `was operating with only one room for 91 primary school girls. Most of the time students used to sit in the open area beneath the banyan tree in the school courtyard and exposed to scorching heat in summer. Drop out was serious issue in the school due to the lack of proper physical facility. The School Management Council (SMC) formed under UNESCO's GREP was worried about the situation. The SMC prepared the school development plan in which availability of space was identified as one of the most urgent priority.



Highlighting the need for additional space, the school teacher stated, "The school has only one class room, which made it difficult for us to accommodate all students, especially during

the rainy season. The students went through various problems such as heat strokes and viral infections, which caused lower attendance - surviving extreme weather conditions in a courtyard was tough".

SMC played a proactive role in mobilizing funds for preparation of shelter. The total cost of the shelter was Rs. 119,890 of which Rs. 80,000 were provided under the GREP while Rs. 39,890 were contributed by the SMC from its funds received from School Education Department, Government of Punjab. After two months of work, the shelter was completed in October 2017 and soon after its completion 30 out of primary school girls were re-enrolled.



Mother of one of the girls recently re-enrolled says, "Our girls are very happy going to school and we are not worried about the hot weather conditions anymore".



NFBE - An Alternate Source of Learning

Girls facing socio-economic and cultural constraints in village Basti Chitra in Union Council Kotla Lal Shah in Tehsil Jatoi have no basic education facility and non-formal basic education (NFBE) center is the only source of learning for them.



Life is taking an interesting turn for out of primary school girls in this area where, otherwise, going to school was almost a dream. The NFBE center in village Basti Chitra is providing non-formal education to 50 out of primary school girls, who are regularly attending the center and very happy to have this opportunity available to them at their doorstep. The center was established in April 2017 by UNESCO in partnership with the Plan International. The local community has provided free of cost space for the center. Establishment of these centers under GREP in four union councils of Tehsil Jatoi proves to be appropriate alternate arrangement for most of the out of primary school girls in these union councils.

Teachers Appreciate MGT Training

Ms. Alishbah Faryal is a teacher in Government Girls Primary School Jalkot in Union Council Dassu, Kohistan. She has recently received MGT training and said, “MGT training helped me to think and work differently. I feel more confident and motivated to teach now. I am managing six classes on daily basis but still do not get tired.

Ms. Naila Sadaf is head teacher in Government Girls Primary School Jafer Wala in Union Council Kalar Wali, District Muzafargarh who has been teaching in multigrade situation since 2003. Reflecting her thoughts on MGT training organized under GREP she said, “it was quite a useful training as her teachers are now practicing MGT techniques effectively and able to create students’ interest in learning. Students are now more engaged and their confidence level is much improved. She observed that most of the students have become more regular in school which is encouraging”.

Talking about the MGT kit provided in the school, Ms. Sara Safdar, teacher Government Girls Primary School Masoo Wala in District Muzafargarh states that “students enjoy using the MGT material and games. She believes that interactives games are helping to change in students’ behaviors; they are helping each other in problem solving, listen to teacher carefully and become more active. They participate in group activities joyfully and love quiz competition, using flash cards and Jigsaw puzzles, playing snake and ladder game and role plays”.



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