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Education Pilot

Collaboration with

Department of School Education Kashmir

In 2011, during one of my first visits to a village Zampathri in Kashmir, I met a young boy named Yusuf. Yusuf, a single orphan living with his mother, was in tenth grade. We were told that Yusuf's mother needed help so we visited Yusuf's house. As the CHINAR team went through their routine of determining if Yusuf's family qualified for CHINAR's support, I asked Yusuf to read a paragraph from a newspaper I was carrying. Yusuf stumbled as he struggled to read very basic words. Realizing that Yusuf's competency level was far below tenth grade, I asked if we could find a book of a lower grade. Yusuf's younger sister was in the 3rd grade. Surely he can read her books, I thought; but just out of curiosity I asked Yusuf to read a story from the little girl's book. To my horror and total dismay Yusuf struggled again. How could this be? Maybe this is an isolated case, I pondered. The little girl too was way behind the third grade level. Yusuf and his sister's case was not an isolated one. During the next several months, I interacted with many children from the marginalized communities and I was shocked to see their competency levels.

This prompted us to look closely at the education system in Kashmir and very soon we realized not only the depth of the problem but the utter lack of initiatives addressing it. The programs provided by the government and other NGO's were NOT sufficient in addressing the root cause of the problem. It was, however, encouraging to know that the Department of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) was open to getting support from NGO's. It took us close to 2 years to get our act together – understanding the gaps and obstacles in the government school system, forming our education team, building relationships and after innumerable brainstorming sessions with multiple stakeholders

CHINAR Daleel



and experienced educationists to finally draft CHINAR's educational strategy.

On March 8th, 2014 CHINAR finally presented a proposal to DSEK. After a very intense discussion accompanied by some excellent questions, the Director of DSEK finally gave his consent to start the partnership.

The pilot phase will kick off in the second quarter of 2014. CHINAR will be developing and executing a remediation plan for schools in 5 districts in collaboration with DSEK.

We don't want to get ahead of ourselves, but it's hard to contain our excitement about this project. We are very grateful to DSEK for their cooperation and for this opportunity.

And finally about the name of the newsletter— Daleel means story in Kashmiri. We plan to present the CHINAR Daleel to you every quarter.

Ifan Shahmiri—President & Executive Director



Developments in our Districts

HANDWARA

In January 2014, CHINAR provided winter supplies to the families of village Shathigam, Magam, Baki-Aker and Handwara, to fight against the severe cold. The supplies included waterproof covers, Kangri (Kashmiri fire pot), Blankets & Pherans.



January also marked the beginning of three-month remedial education classes as part of CHINAR's Comprehensive Education Strategy. The classes consisted of 20 children selected in tehsil Handwara under Remote Child Sponsorship Program and aimed to bring them to equal academic levels with their peers. This better prepared them for the reopening of schools in March and brought excitement to students to begin their classes again.



Additionally, CHINAR has continued to provide care and attention to children in need of medical assistance. Offering check-ups and covering medical expenses, CHINAR is dedicated to children's health and nutrition.

SRINAGAR

The CHINAR team enrolled 30 children from 11 families after a rigorous process of selection that lasted over three months, bringing the total number of children supported in the Srinagar district to 60. The number of families supported under the Livelihood Program in the Srinagar district increased to six with the selection of one more family under the Remote Family Sponsorship Program.

On 09 March 2014, a Medical, Educational base lining, and distribution event was organized for the beneficiaries of district Srinagar. All beneficiaries including children and their parents attended the event. CHINAR invited doctors and educational experts from DSEK for the event.

General physician, Dr. Sarosh Khan and dental surgeon, Dr. Aijaz Malik together conducted general medical and dental checkups of chil-

dren & developed a medical profile of each child. This was followed by education base lining of the children which was conducted by Hilal Gilkar, District Resource Person (DRP) Srinagar and Javeed Ahmad Bandy, DRP Budgam. Children were graded in all the subjects and an education plan for each child was developed.

Chief Guest, Mr. Sajad Bazaz (Head of Corporate Communications JK Bank) and Guest of Honor, Mr. Muzaffar Shah (Station Head Big 92.7 FM Kashmir Division) distributed supplies to the children. All Children received uniforms, bags, stationary items and hygiene kits.



SHOPIAN

In preparation for the winter months CHINAR distributed two-month hygiene kits to children. which included soap, tooth brushes, tooth paste, Vaseline, glycerin, shampoo and towels. The kits also included monthly nutrition as well as stationary and winter shoes. CHINAR ensured that the children were prepared for both the winter and the reopening of schools in March.

The children were all pleased to be starting classes again with the end of their three-month winter vacation. Since the reopening of schools the students have been working hard on their studies. In addition to providing children a quality education, CHINAR also offers Islamic teachings, which are given by a respectable Molvi from the same community.



PULWAMA

In January, hygiene kits for two months which included soap, tooth brushes, tooth paste, Vaseline, glycerin, shampoo and towels were distributed to children. In addition to this, monthly nutrition, stationary, and shoes for the winter months were also distributed. CHINAR ensured that every child was prepared for winter with proper supplies and nutrition.

March arrived as a moment of joy for students when their schools reopened after a three-month winter vacation. Children were excited to resume their classes and continue their education.

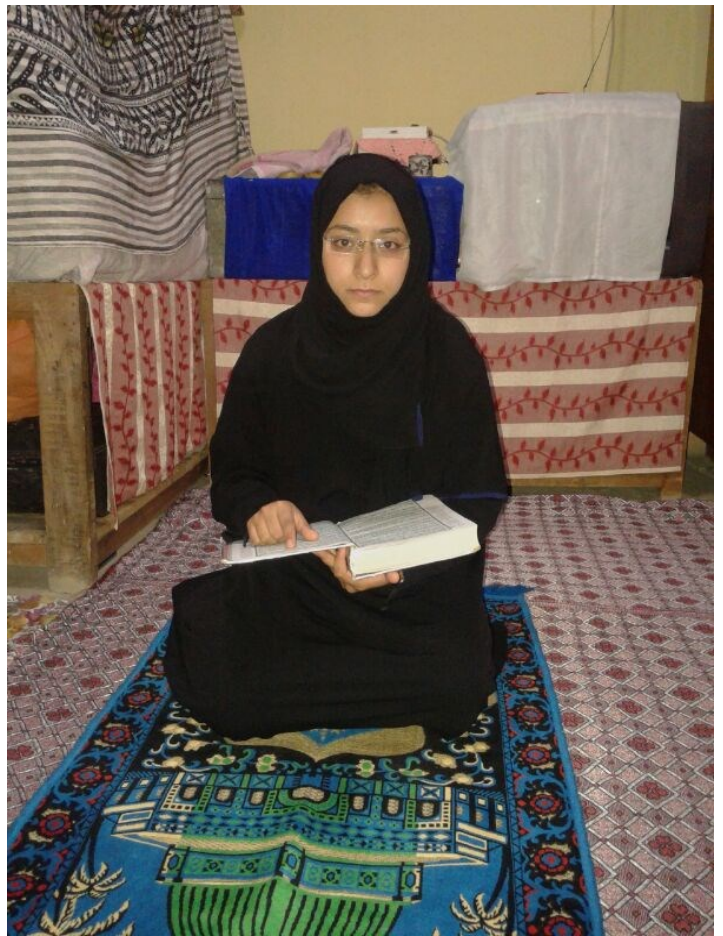


SAIRA'S STORY

Domestic violence is a serious problem facing individuals and families worldwide. Saira, a young girl living in Kashmir, is one such victim. When a domestic argument between her parents turned into a violent fight, her mother was killed and her father soon abandoned her.

Saira's uncle took her into his large family of six and offered her a new loving home when she was just a year old. Since then, Saira has grown up to be a smart and hardworking student, excelling in her studies and dreaming of becoming a doctor. She is also a Hafiz Quran. Her uncle was able to fund her education up until her higher secondary level, but supporting the education of six children became a hardship for him after his retirement. Saira became distressed with the fear of losing her education and the opportunity to become a doctor.

Saira was selected for the Remote Education Sponsorship Program (RESP) while CHINAR was doing a survey of Srinagar, scaling up their operations in the area. With the Remote Education Sponsorship Program Saira receives educational support through school fees, tuition fees, uniforms, and stationary. "I aspire to become a doctor and would like to thank CHINAR for helping me and bringing me one step closer to my dreams" says Saira.



SAVE THE CHILDREN STUDY

On February 12th, 2014 CHINAR successfully completed the study, *Impact of Conflict on Children in District Srinagar, Rajouri and Poonch*, for Save the Children - India. The final report was submitted in mid February and has been accepted by Save the Children. The objective of this assignment was to assess the overall impact of conflict on children in three districts of Jammu and Kashmir. This assessment will guide us to frame future strategies and program interventions for these three districts.

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To assess the field situation and impact of the on-going conflict on children in three districts of J&K



- To review the existing strategies and mechanism (Govt. or Non- govt.) of providing support to children who are affected due to conflict and landmines
- To assess the effectiveness and sustainability of existing mechanism for providing support to children affected due to conflict
- To develop strategies to address the issues of children in conflict and border areas .



The study is the intellectual property of Save the Children, India. The release date for the study has not been announced yet.

Marginalized Youth Support

Bachelors in Computer Application:

Seven marginalized youth who were enrolled in CASET College of Computer Sciences & Engineering by CHINAR in July 2013, appeared in their first year annual exam from 22 February 2014 to 8th march 2014.

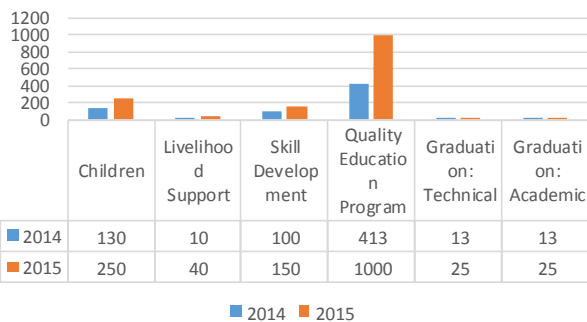
Data Entry Operator (DEO) :

As part of CHINAR's Skill Development Initiative, 40 marginalized youth (including 8 females) from downtown area of Srinagar were selected for 6 months Data Entry Operator (DEO) course in collaboration with Kashmir Government Polytechnic. The course is scheduled to finish in June'2014.

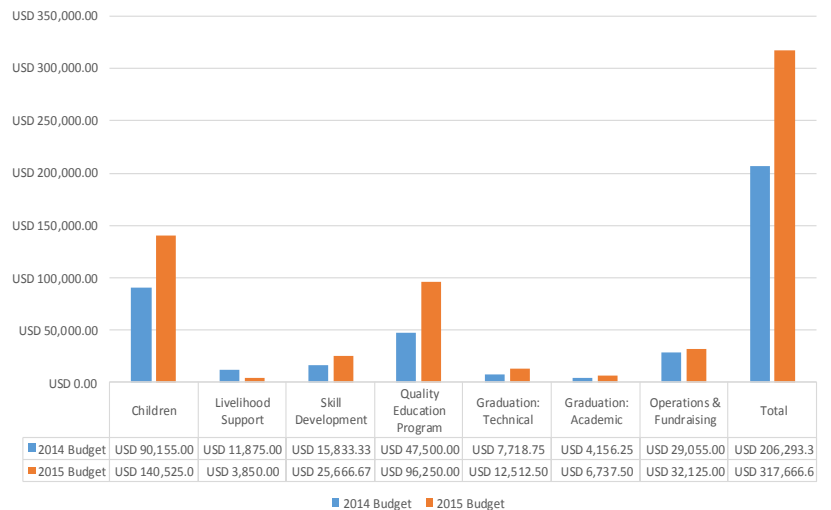


2014—15 Projections

CHINAR Support Projections for 2014 and 2015



CHINAR Budget Projections for 2014 and 2015



TESTIMONIAL - *Sehla Ashai*

Having worked for many years as an advocate for women and children in crisis, I am proud to support CHINAR in its mission to improve the lives of disadvantaged children. In my work, I have observed the values and skills that characterize effective child welfare organizations, values and skills that CHINAR demonstrates through its thoughtful and powerful programs. First, transparency and accountability, not just to donors, but to its own staff and the community it serves. Second, commitment to equal partnership with community stakeholders, which results in sustainable improvements to welfare of the community. Third, rigorous evaluation programs, which refine programs and compel creative solutions to the most challenging of issues. Finally, and this is an issue very close to my heart, CHINAR works tirelessly to improve not just the lives of children, but the lives of entire families, so that at-risk children may continue to live with and be loved by the people who care for them most - their own families.



Sehla Ashai worked as a Program Specialist at International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA). Previously she served as a Staff Attorney at the National Immigrant Justice Center after graduating from University of Michigan law school.