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Editor's Note



2017

had a fantastic ending with CHINAR creating history by connecting 10,000 people of remote Warwan Valley to rest of the world via V-SAT. The valley, with no electricity, remains cut-off from the world for around 4 winter months due to impassable roads.

Tremendous progress was made in Warwan valley. Baseline assessment of around 250 students was carried out (villages of Mulwarwan, Dasbal, Batta and Margi) to gauge their competency level. Two more community learning centres were established to provide educational support to a total of 600 students. A multi-skill development centre was launched at Mulwarwan for the youth. A large scale community mobilisation event was also held in the valley to ensure smooth running of interventions started there. Later in the year, a 3-week residential training boot camp was held in Srinagar for community volunteers from Warwan to train them to manage the multipurpose centres.

In August, CHINAR organised health cum awareness camp with the help of doctors from

Srinagar in Tehsil Handwara for over 100 children and guardians. CHINAR also sponsored Bungus Valley Soccer Tournament; 32 teams across 10 districts of Kashmir valley participated in the event and the finale was attended by over 20,000 people under flood lights; a first of its kind in Handwara. 36 women graduated a 6-month training course in cutting and tailoring from CHINAR skill centres in Shopian and Tehsil Handwara. Four new livelihood cases were initiated in Handwara and Pulwama

Internship program proved to be symbiotic with Kashmir University with five social works students successfully completing their one-month internship covering all CHINAR programs and activities. Laila Durrani, a student from New York (USA), also completed internship by teaching downtown Nowhatta government middle school kids.

In collaboration with Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), South Asian Network of Impact Masters (SANIM) and National Institute of Technology (NIT), CHINAR organised a two-day symposium on Youth Entrepreneurship in Srinagar. The event was attended by academics and entrepreneurs from all over the country. In September, CHINAR celebrated its first Annual Day at Kothibagh Higher Secondary

School. It was attended by NGOs, education department and Directorial board at India and USA.

CI partnered with Department of School Education-Kashmir (DSEK) and Avanti Learning Centers to implement CM's Super 50 - a government initiative where promising students of J&K state are given special coaching to qualify for professional entrance examinations. In Kulgam, we signed an MoU with District Development Commissioner for implementation of a holistic development for children on a pilot basis. We also participated in the MHRD's State interaction where around 30 education-focused NGOs from all over India participated.

This newsletter is a combined edition for 3rd and 4th quarter of 2017 and covers all the activities in child and youth development, education and additional projects. We continue to grow the support from our partners, sponsors, volunteers and donors to build lasting relationships with the community.

We look forward to your valuable feedback at info@chinarinternational.org.

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Scale up in Warwan Valley

In the month of July, CHINAR team made 4th trip to Warwan Valley to expand its interventions for children and youth. During the trip, CHINAR conducted baseline assessment of nearly 250 students from the villages of Mulwarwan, Dassbal, Batta and Margi to gauge competency levels. In addition, livelihood opportunities for the youth were also explored. After in-depth research and community participation, it was decided to initially provide training in cutting and tailoring to women. Tailor masters were identified to impart tailoring skills to selected group of women.



Earlier, CHINAR launched its first intervention in the valley in November 2016 - a remedial learning centre with 148 children in Mulwarwan village which remained operational for 6 months during winters. CHINAR assessed the competencies of the already enrolled children and found significant improvement in their competencies.

In September 2017, CHINAR established a multi-skill development centre at Mulwarwan village where youth will be trained in multiple skills. In the first phase,

women will be trained in tailoring, and subsequently in other marketable skills. CHINAR also started learning centres where children will receive education using fun-filled activity-based learning meth-



ods and learn basic concepts of language and mathematics. Trainings were organised for community volunteers who will run these centers where over 600 children are enrolled. Lastly, community mobilization event was held to ensure the Fun Learning centre and skill development centre are utilised to their maximum potential.

On 20th September, CHINAR held another massive community mobilization event in Warwan Valley. It was attended by over 600 people from across villages of Mulwarwan, Dassbal and Margi. Besides, the event was attended by ZEO Warwan along with the CHINAR team including Global Executive Director. The team exhorted the community to give greater emphasis on children's education and health. A distribution event was also held where bags and stationery were given to the children. On 21st and 22nd September, we held a training programme for community volunteers who will take classes during the winters.

“Warwan Valley is a remote Tehsil of Kishtwar District that remains cut-off

from the rest of the world for over six months in winters and has neither electricity nor mobile connectivity.”

Health cum Awareness Camp

CHINAR International organised a health camp in Handwara for children and families enrolled in Child Support Program. The event started with a welcome address followed by presentations by doctors on the importance of health and hygiene.



The camp included general health check-up and dental check-up. A team consisting of Dr Sarosh Ahmed Khan, Dr Ajaz Malik, Dr Junaid along with Nurse Tanveer examined around 100 children and their guardians. Vitamin C and D deficiencies, vision problems and tooth cavities were mainly prevalent among children while most of the women had gynaecology related issues. CI is grateful to all the doctors for giving their time for the children in Handwara Tehsil.



Internships

In the month of August, five social work students from Kashmir University successfully completed their one month internship period at CHINAR International. As requested by the social work department, the internship objectives were mainly related to social welfare management with the participation in ongoing activities of the organisation. All team members provided full support and encouragement to the interns in achieving their objectives. While sharing their experiences with the team, interns thanked CHINAR International for providing them an opportunity to learn about social work practices implemented on ground.



Laila Durrani-an 11th grade student from New York, USA also joined us in the same month. During her internship, she taught a class of 6th graders in one of our adopted schools in Srinagar. The children enjoyed the lessons and were excited to learn from about her experiences abroad. Laila has been teaching students from difficult background on weekends in United States and wanted to experience the education system of Kashmir.

Promoting youth through sports

Bungus Valley Soccer Tournament started on 6th August with a great opening ceremony in Baki Aker, Handwara. 32 teams across 10 districts of Kashmir valley participated in the event.



CHINAR International stepped up to support this initiative and became one of the key sponsors of the tournament. Due to relentless efforts of organisers, the tournament was a great success and attracted huge spectators.

The final match of the tournament was played on the night of 18th September under flood lights. The grand finale was attended by over 20000 spectators.

Director Youth Services & Sports J&K Shiekh Fayaz Ahmad was the chief guest on the valedictory function of the tournament. Dignified personalities from within and outside state were also present on the occasion. The final match of the competition was played between Saber Ushkara Baramulla V/S Mamdan Sports Sopore where Mamdan Sports Sopore won the match by beating Saber Ushkara Bala in penalty kick outs. CI be-

lieves in bringing a positive change among youth through sports.

Youth graduate from Skill centers

In August, a group of 26 women from Tehsil Handwara successfully graduated in a 6-month training course in cutting, tailoring and stitching. On the same day, CI held a stitching competition and the three best trainees were awarded sewing machines to start their own tailoring centers. In October, 10 women successfully graduated in the same course from skill center



in Zampathri Village of District Shopian and plan to set up their own tailoring units. Both skill centers were started in April 2017 to provide marketable skills to young women so that they become self-employed and create sustainable livelihoods for themselves.



CI introduced "Zero period" in one of its adopted schools in Srinagar. It will focus on improving basics in reading, writing and arithmetic. Special notebooks were distributed among children for these special classes.

CHINAR International celebrates first Annual Day

CHINAR's first ever annual day was held on 24 September 2017 at Govt. Girls Higher Secondary School, Kothibagh Srinagar. The main aim of the event was to celebrate the achievements made across child and youth development, education and special projects. The event was inaugurated in a traditional way with burning of Isband by CHINAR's board of directors and special guests.

Global Executive Director-Irfan Shahmiri



welcomed the audience and gave a brief introduction about CHINAR's areas of intervention. Over 200 people attended the event including Board of Directors of CHINAR, education officials, District Development Commissioner Kulgam-Mr. Talat Parvaiz and families/children enrolled in our programs across the valley.



DDC Kulgam appreciated CHINAR's development programs and ensured full support for education initiative in Kulgam District

After formal inauguration, the event started off with the speech by the program lead of Child support-Anjum Mir who shared her experiences and learnings with



the audience. A short video of the program was screened which gave a clear understanding of the program and what impact it has on the ground. Sadashiv and Javed talked about education and youth development programs. Each segment was followed by Q&A wherein audience asked questions related to current programs. Dr Nandita Mondal-one of the board of directors talked about CHINAR's community based holistic solution and how it leads to overall child development.

During the event, there was an engaging discussion on education scenario in Kashmir which saw active participation from the audience including Joint Director, School Education Kashmir, District Development Commissioner Kulgam Mr. Talat Parvaiz, members of Kashmiri Diaspora, representatives from various NGOs working in Kashmir, parents, teachers and students enrolled in CHINAR's programs. Joint Director and DDC Kulgam also spoke a few words on areas where education organizations like CHINAR can collaborate with government.

Mr. Talat Parvaiz, shared his experiences in education, particularly Early Childhood Education and ensured full cooperation and support to CHINAR's education initiative. Ruheed Gul, member of Innovation Cell, Directorate of School Education Kashmir shared his experiences working with CHINAR since its inception in 2011.

Prof. Saad Parvaiz from NIT Srinagar, in his

speech focused on the importance of Entrepreneurship in engaging the youth and changing mindsets by talking about the different options of earning livelihood in Kashmir.

Under special projects, Dr Sarosh Khan-a board member of CHINAR discussed Flood relief activities of 2014 and relief measures undertaken during Kashmir Unrest 2016. Another presentation was delivered by Project Coordinator-Ajaz Bin Shabir about Warwan Education Initiative. Students of Zampathri- Shopian and AIIMS School-Handwara further enriched the event with their beautiful stage performances.



The event ended with the felicitation ceremony where children received awards for their academic achievements. Middle School Malwan, Kulgam was awarded the best school among CHINAR intervention schools and received a projector along with certificate and trophy. Ruheed Gul and Arshad Hussain from education department also received certificate of appreciation for their contribution towards CHINAR's education initiative. Recognition was given to first team of CHINAR in 2011 — Bilal Hussain, Yassar Shah, Dr Shabina Mehraj and Salma Ashai. Members who completed five years at CHINAR were also felicitated at the event. Annual Day provided an active platform wherein donors and board from US had direct interaction with the beneficiaries .



Symposium on Youth Entrepreneurship in Conflict Areas

CHINAR International in collaboration with Tata Institute of Social Sciences and South Asian Network of Impact Masters organised a two-day symposium on Youth Entrepreneurship in Conflict Areas on 6th and 7th September at National Institute of Technology, Srinagar. The main aim of the symposium was to discuss multiple aspects of entrepreneurship in Kashmir focussing on how businesses can be sustained in conflict zone. Both academicians and practitioners in entrepreneurship from across the J&K state and the country participated in the symposium.



The first day started off with an overview of the symposium by Global Executive Director of CHINAR International-Irfan Shahmiri. The event kick-started on a high note with an insight on state's perspective on entrepreneurship by Honourable Minister for Finance and Labour, Dr. Haseeb Drabu which was followed by Q&A session.



Next in line was panel discussion which gave an overview of the Dynamics of Entrepreneurship in Kashmir keeping in view



the political instability and conflict dimension. The panel experts included Shakeel Qalandar (Chief Election Commissioner, FCIK), Parvaiz Qaiser (Industrial Consultant), Prof. Saad Parvaiz (NIT Srinagar) and Jahangir Raina (CEO, iLocus Consulting)

Prof Satyajit Majumdar along with a team of experts from TISS conducted a session on importance of creating a network of mentors and entrepreneurs in exploring opportunities for youth. Experienced faculties and speakers from reputed institutions like JKEDI, TISS, Institute of rural management (IRMA) and Kashmir University, discussed their ideas on entrepreneurship in higher education.

At the end of first day, two successful women entrepreneurs - Mehnaza from Kupwara and Anam Siraj of Srinagar, shared inspiring stories throughout their journey of entrepreneurship.

Day-2 saw the participation of notable personalities like Saheel Alaqaband, Shakeel Qalander and Daniyal Qureshi who discussed challenges and opportunities of entrepreneurship in Kashmir. The prominent new generation entrepreneurs

like founders of Kolahai Beverages, Win-terfell cafe, Eclectic Elan, L crystals, Mid town cafe, Kanavez and others shared stories of struggle throughout of their journey of starting an enterprise in a conflict zone.

The two-day seminar was attended by a large group of young people who want to start their own businesses. The symposium concluded on exploring a similar platform where young entrepreneurs could meet and share their concerns on periodic basis and find solutions to address them. CHINAR plans to conduct



monthly youth forums to gain deeper understanding of problems faced by current and aspiring entrepreneurs in Kashmir.

“SANIM is a network of practitioners and academicians to promote ‘social impact’ across the functions in the business enterprises, academic institutions and non-profit organizations. The main aim of the SANIM is to build network of business schools for south Asian region to encourage B schools to adopt various elements of pro poor investment curriculum along with conventional curriculum and encourage its students to be elements of social change and sustainable development.



Boot-camp training of community volunteers

CHINAR International organized a 3-week residential boot camp training for 15 community volunteers from Warwan Tehsil of District Kishtwar. The training programme



focused on basic concepts in elementary education and teaching methodologies.

During training, these volunteers were taught mathematics and language basics by experts from various government and private educational institutions. The purpose of the training was to capacitate the volunteers to run community learning centers for 6 months during winters when this region remains cut off from rest of the world. Samina Haque, a professional language trainer delivered sessions on basic concepts in English and Grammar. Besides, Dr Zahoor Lone who is the co-



founder of Warwan Eco Tourist Society and Assistant Professor in Government Degree College-Kishtwar also gave motivation sessions to volunteers.

As a part of the programme, the community volunteers spent last day of training at Oasis Educational Institute, Nowgam to get a sense of how schools function in Srinagar. This opportunity was made possible by the school management courtesy of Chairperson, Ashiq Hussain and the Principal, Mr. Sameer. The boot camp was successful in building teaching capacities of the volunteers.

CM's Super-50 coaching

CM's Super 50 is an Initiative by Directorate of School Education Kashmir where talented students of Kashmir division are given special coaching to qualify medical and engineering entrance exams like IIT-JEE, NEET AND JK CET.



Top 50 students are selected through an entrance test for each of the 11 centers spread across 11 districts. These students are then coached in an intensive 3-4 month course by subject experts from education department through winter. However, earlier the scheme was unable to deliver desired results on

ground mainly because teachers weren't skilled in competitive entrance coaching, syllabus was not completed on time and there was no track of progress of students. CHINAR International partnered with DSEK to implement CM's Super 50 this year.

CHINAR signed MoU with Avanti Learning Centres, a premier entrance coaching provider to be CHINAR's technical partner in implementing the program in the region. CHINAR and Avanti provided organized 8-day training for 160 teachers in four subjects (Physics, Chemistry, Maths and Biology) at State Institute of Education, Srinagar. Students will undergo regular assessments and the online learning management system will ensure that the syllabus is covered uniformly throughout the valley. Moreover, students and teachers get access to world class learning resources.

Annual Distribution event at Shopian

On November 29, CI organized Annual distribution event at Shopian where books, stationery and other educational material were distributed among children enrolled in the program ahead of new academic session.



Digital barrier overcome at Warwan Valley

On December 4, CHINAR created history by successfully installing V-SAT terminal at Mulwarwan Village of Tehsil Warwan. Satellite communication for the first time connected 10,000 people of Warwan to rest of the world through internet. With internet facility, our community learning centers have access to digital content which not only fosters learning process but also exposes children to new ideas and technology.



As a part of this initiative, smart TVs were also installed so that community volunteers can use digital content for winter classes. Moreover, it has helped CHINAR in remote management, monitoring and supervision of the program. CHINAR team along with chairman of the US directorial board, Khalid Ashai personally spearheaded this venture. We are grateful for the invaluable support and cooperation by the Warwan Valley Eco-Tourist Society.

Four new livelihood cases introduced



In October, CHINAR provided financial support to Younis Ahmad from Achgoza in Pulwama to start his own Business unit of Kangiris (Clay Fire pots). This has not only helped Younis in family needs but also his children receive education without facing financial constraints. CHINAR also provides him marketing assistance when required.

In November, CHINAR provided livelihood support to three families from villages Shathigam and Bakiaker of Handwara Tehsil to make them self-sustained and self-reliant. Based on the skill set and



knowledge of trade, these families were given sheep to attain sustainable income and become financially independent.

Integrated Development and Learning Project (IDLP)

On 5th October, CI signed an MoU with District Development Commissioner Kulgam for implementation of IDLP on a pilot basis in 2 clusters of district Kulgam—DK Marg and Malwan. Along with DDC, the signatories of the MoU included Programme Officer ICDS, Chief Education Officer, Chief Medical Officer, and District Social Welfare Officer. On behalf of CI, the signatories were Irfan Shahmiri-Global Executive Director and Sadashiv-Education Lead.



"IDLP is a programme that is aimed at holistic development of children in age group of 0 - 18 years. The programme aims to converge activities of all departments related health, social welfare, child development, school education, technical education, skill development and youth services & sports."

On October 2, CHINAR International attended MHRD event where around 30 education focused NGOs from local, national, and international discussed and shared their strategies and ideas. It was a great experience interacting with



Quick bites

Chairman of US Board of Directors, Dr. Khalid Ashai along with his wife, Ms. Sumaira Zaffar visited our Srinagar office in the month



of October. Team had a quality time sharing their thoughts and experiences with them. US donors also met with the team in Srinagar.

CI observed a fun-filled day at Srinagar office while celebrating children's day with children enrolled in the program.



It was a delight for all the children as they enjoyed playing games and doing fun activities. On this occasion, books and stationery were also distributed among children. Children also participated in art competition and the winners received gifts. CI team was actively engaged in fun activities with children.

CHINAR International held its "Annual Update event" for Greater Washington DC area on December 16th in Herndon, USA during which the progress made in 2017 and the roadmap for the coming years was shared. The presentation was followed by an in-depth interaction with the audience which provided excellent feedback and guidance.



The event was attended by over 75 participants including US Diaspora, directorial board of CI (Dr. Khalid Ashai, Zeba Dur-rani, Farooq Syed & Irfan Shahmiri), donors and supporters of CHINAR.

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CHINAR International (CI) is a child welfare and community development non-profit organization working in two areas: quality education for children and empowerment of marginal communities. However, when the floods of September 2014 hit the Valley, CHINAR International jumped into disaster relief activities as well.

Vision:

Peace, Progress and Prosperity in conflict areas of the world.

Mission Statement:

"Empowerment of vulnerable children and marginalized youth in conflict areas through quality education and socioeconomic initiatives."

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