

# CHAON چھاؤں

Children's Action against Oppression and Neglect

A Project of Save the Children



## CREATING IMPACT

### Success Stories

Improving the Lives of Children in Cotton Growing Districts of Pakistan

District Shaheed Benazirabad, Sindh



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# Introduction:

Save the Children implemented a child rights program, titled as CHAON “Children's Action against Oppression and Neglect” in 200 villages of Muzaffargarh (Punjab) and 150 villages of Sanghar (Sindh) from 2009 to 2014. This Program was implemented with the financial assistance of IKEA Foundation. The lives of 199,000 children were improved by implementing an integrated program on Child Protection, Health, Education and Economic Empowerment.

Keeping in view the success and the impact of phase one, a second phase (2014-2018) of the program has started in 200 villages of Lodhran (Punjab) and 150 villages of Shaheed Benazirabad (Sindh) targeting 153,000 children in 350 communities of both districts.

## Program Goals

1

153,000 girls and boys in 350 communities of two cotton-growing districts of Pakistan exercise their rights to survival, development, protection and participation.

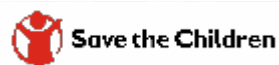
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To demonstrate a model of a holistic child protection system suitable to the rural context in Sindh and Punjab.





## CHILD CLUB STOPPED CHILD MARRIAGE



Puppi is a 14 year old girl and student of class 8<sup>th</sup>. She lives in the village Peer Baksh Zardari, in the district Shaheed Benizarabad of the Sindh province. Her father doesn't own any land, however, he is working as a peasant on a local land owner's farm. Her father earns around Rs. 20,000 (US\$200) per month. The family consists of seven sisters and six brothers, living in a small house. When Puppi's sister Sayani turned 15, her father decided to marry her to a family from where her brother brought his bride (it's called watta-satta which implies give-take, a form of bride exchange that is common in Pakistan. Watta-satta involves the simultaneous marriage of a brother-sister pair from two households). Sayani was not ready for marriage but could not oppose the decision of her father according to the cultural norms where girls and women cannot voice their opinion.

In August 2015, a team from the CHAON project visited Puppi's village and invited all girls to a meeting place. They formed a child club and started conducting their meetings on a monthly basis where they came together and discussed solutions to the problems they were facing. After that, they named their club "Pari Club" and Puppi is an active member. The CHAON team arranged trainings for the club members on eight different life skills. The skills were: self-awareness, expression of emotions, decision making, child rights, communications, health & nutrition and child protection. The training really enhanced their confidence and knowledge in different child rights issues and laws. They also became aware



***"It was very hard to change the decision and convince the other family members to postpone this marriage but my wife and my younger daughter presented logics to convince me. The government of Sindh has drafted a child marriage law which imposes punishment on families who get their children, both sons and daughters, married at an early age. Finally, I was able to convince the in-laws and we decided to postpone the marriage until our children turn 18."***

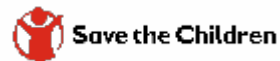
**Karim Bakhsh, Father Puppi**

of the law of child marriage in Sindh and the implications of child marriages. There were also some examples in their village where girls experienced motherhood at an early age and suffered from severe health issues. In some cases, both mother and child died during labour.

Puppi got enough knowledge, skills and motivation to take a stand against the decision of her sister's marriage. She discussed the matter with her mother and got her convinced. Later on the Pari club arranged a meeting with Puppi's father, and her mother also helped to motivate the father to stop the marriage. Puppi's father, Karim Bakhsh, agreed to delay the marriage of his daughter (Puppi's sister). He talked to the in-laws and convinced them to wait until she turns minimum 18. It was the first time in this area that someone delayed a marriage. Now Karim Bakhsh has decided that he will not arrange a marriage of any of his child before the age of 18.



## SCHOOL DROPOUT ENROLLED AGAIN AFTER 5 YEARS



Rukhsana Godharo is 13 years old and lives in the Puno Godhoro village of the district Shaheed Benizarabad which is 17 km away from the district headquarter. Among 3 siblings, Rukhsana is the youngest daughter of her father Ghulam Haider. She lost her mother 8 years ago. Her father is a gatekeeper in the Govt. Primary School and also works with Rukhsana's 20-year-old brother on a land farm. He grows cotton and wheat and sells it in the market.

Rukhsana was in the 2nd grade when she faced severe punishment from her teacher in school and she left her studies. Rukhsana's father took her to hospital and she lived with a bandage for a month. She wanted to resume classes but her father refused. He asked Rukhsana to assist her elder sister at home instead.

Rukhsana really wanted to study and become a teacher in the future. In April 2015, the CHAON project established Child Clubs for boys and girls in Rukhsana's village. Rukhsana participated in the meetings of the girls club. The CHAON team told them that the aim of this club was to provide opportunities to learn and to express thoughts, desires, hopes and ambitions. To increase the girls' awareness of their right to education and well-being. In one of the sessions, a female staff member of the CHAON project had an interactive session with Rukhsana, in which Rukhsana expressed her desire to continue her education. The CHAON project has started an Accelerated Learning Center (ALC) in her village. The Community mobilization team also conducted meetings with Rukhsana's father and told him the importance of education and ensured him that corporal punishment is not allowed in schools. Finally, he agreed to send his daughter Rukhsana to the ALC to start her education again. She joined



***"I want to be a teacher but had no hope for the future when I left school because our teacher slapped us, pinched us, twisted our ears and used a stick to beat us. She physically abused me to the extent that I got extremely scared. I was beaten up by my teacher and my ribs broke. I even cried to see my books and copies. But the ALC is really a ray of hope for me and I am confident that within a year I will join school again in grade 6. Thanks CHAON".***

**Rukhsana, 13 years, Puno Godhoro**

the ALC and took from where she had left 5 years ago. In the ALC, the teachers use different activities to teach students which makes studying more attractive and lessons easier to understand. Now Rukhsana is in class 3 and is expected to pass grade 5 next year as the ALC is designed for accelerated education and each class consists of 6 months.

***"She is intelligent, responsible, focused and active student of my ALC. I'm so glad that Rukhsana and many other school children like her are getting educated through CHAON. It makes me proud when I teach them. I am using advance techniques in class to help children learn and children are very interested in learning based activities. I never use physical punishment to discipline my students. When you give physical punishment, it relays the wrong message to young minds that violence is the way to solve problems. I learned to avoid corporal punishment and use various teaching methods according to their aptitude and level of understanding."***

**Sanam Ghodharo, ALC Teacher**





## LAKHA DENO RESUMES EDUCATION AFTER FOUR YEARS



Nine year old Lakha Deno Khumber lives with his four brothers and four sisters in a small house of village Thouher Keerio, district Shaheed Benizarabad, Sindh. His father is a pottery maker, monthly income is less than Rs. 10,000 (US \$ 100) and it is difficult to live a good life with no other source of earning. His father is eager to provide basic facilities including education to all children irrespective of low income.

At the age of 5 years, his father enrolled him in nearby government primary school. Immediately after few months, school head teacher informed his father that Deno is not a normal child and cannot enrol him due to his inability to understand. His teacher argued that Deno is mentally weak and disturbing other fellows during teaching. He is a special child and needs more attention and care during teaching as his understanding level is low compared to other children. He also faces difficulty in communicating with other people.

He dropped out from the school and started helping his father in pottery work. He looked other school going children with a hope to get enrolled in school again soon. He really wanted to get education and become an engineer. His father would not allow him to play with other children and would mostly keep him at his workshop.

In August, 2015, CHAON project started Accelerated Learning Canter (ALC) in his village

*“I was very hopeless and disappointed because school in-charge of government primary school in our village refused to enrol my child in the school although my son Lakha Deno is very keen to go to school like other children. His four years have been wasted but CHAON project provided this opportunity and ALC started in my village for out of school children. I am happy because my son Lakha Deno is happy to join centre. I have noted change in his attitude, behaviour and confidence. Now if any guest visit our house, Lakha Deno is the first one who shake hands with the guests. He also plays with the children in the village. We are really thankful to CHAON for all of this”*

**Ahmad (Father, Lakha Deno)**



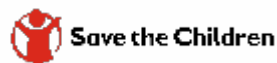
and project staff visited his father to enroll Deno in ALC. In the beginning, his father did not agree because he thought Deno can't study due to his former school teacher remarks. Deno also showed great interest and his father agreed to enroll his son in ALC. Deno started education again after 04 years of gap and ALC teacher paid extra attention to build his confidence.

Although, he lost his precious 4 years of education but now he is very happy to identify objects in his book. His confidence has increased and he communicates with others through signs. His parents are also very happy and take care of him at home because they know that Lakha Deno is now a school going child. In the morning, he helps his father in the shop and attends regular sessions at ALC in evening time.





## MY IMPROVED NUMERIC SKILLS SAVED ME FROM QUITTING SCHOOL



Saba is an 8 year old girl living with her 13 other family members in the village 60meel, in the district of Shaheed Benizarabad, Sindh. Her father, Abdul Karim, is laborer and earns around Rs. 10,000 (\$100) per month. Saba is a student of grade 2 in the Government Primary school 60meel. She is not a quick learner and finds it difficult to understand the curriculum, especially mathematics. She got punished by her teacher many times because it was very difficult for her to remember different equations of math. She felt confused when it came to subtracting, addition dividing of figures and that's why she was reluctant to attend math lessons at school. She was fed up because she failed to remember all the things she was supposed to. Many times Saba thought of quitting school to get away from the situation. She also told her mother that she found maths very difficult and facing harsh words from her teacher was hard, so she wanted to quit school.

In March 2015, the CHAON project started a math camp in her school. Her teacher told the whole class that everyone must join the math camp after school hours and insisted that Saba attends the camp since she was aware of Saba's weakness. At first, Saba was reluctant to join the math camp because she thought it would be the same kind of math class as at her school. But when she joined the camp, her interest grew as the teaching was based on activities. The camp teacher was very friendly with all the girls and gave them blocks to play with and learn from. She told stories to the class, taught them with help of cards, assigned them group activities and provided them with opportunities to do painting and drawing by using different stationary items which were provided by the CHAON



*“Activities with blocks and sticks give me a concept and methodology to add two or more than two numbers and subtracting of two numbers. Our teacher also gives us home assignments and I am learning while playing which I like the most. Math is no longer challenging for me and I am not thinking about leaving school. Now I am helping my father at home accounting as well and I'm very thankful to our Math camp teacher. I also want to be a teacher in the future”*

**Saba, 8 years, Village 60meel.**

project. These activities not only increased Saba's confidence but the whole class' skills. Now Saba waits eagerly to join the math camp every day. The mathematical skills of Saba improved significantly because she learnt the concept of addition and subtraction through different games and activities and she is using her own mind to solve the math equations.

**“In math camps, I am focusing on basic counting, adding and subtracting numbers through different teaching methodologies. For instance, color identification, using blocks for counting and pursuing lessons in accordance with the interest of the children in the subject. Saba improved her learning capabilities, understanding and interest. She comes regularly to the camp and her teacher in school has told me that Saba is now also active in the class room”**

**Mariam Khatoon  
Community Learning Worker**





## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TEAM TURNED THE HEALTHCARE FACILITY AROUND



Ghulam Hussain is co-leader of the Quality Improvement Team (QIT) for the Basic Health Unit (BHU) 60meel, Shaheed Benizarabad, Sindh. He is a teacher by profession and volunteering at QIT which was formed a year ago under the CHAON project. His area is underdeveloped and large parts of the population depend on agriculture and livestock for earning their livelihood. Around 14,000 people of three adjacent union councils are depending on the BHU for health care services. This BHU is located at one hour drive from the Shaheed Benizarabad District Headquarter Hospital. Ghulam Hussain and his other relatives who were depending on this BHU for basic healthcare services were facing difficulties even for the most basic services. The overall condition of the BHU especially healthcare services was poor. Staff often remained absent, or positions were vacant, medicines not sufficient for the population and after the second week of every month, patients had to purchase medicines from the market. There were no medical officers (male or female) posted in the BHU. The cleanliness condition of the facility was also very poor. Due to the non-availability of uninterrupted power supply, immunization was not possible at the BHU. There was no concept of antenatal care visits, delivery through a skilled birth attendant and vaccination of children. In case of an emergency, the local population had to hire a private vehicle to shift their patient to the civil hospital Shaheed Benizarabad. Ghulam Hussain wanted to do something to improve his BHU but couldn't do it alone.

In May, 2015, the CHAON project team started visiting this village and BHU and formed a committee, named "Quality Improvement Team (QIT)". It consisted of 16 members from work areas including healthcare staff of the BHU. Ghulam Hussain joined the QIT as co-leader voluntarily due to his personal interest in the matter. Finally he found a proper and official forum to play his part to advocate for the improvement of health services in his village. The CHAON team conducted different sessions with the QIT and brought awareness to the team on roles and responsibilities and guided them on how they could improve their basic healthcare services in the BHU and its surroundings.

After developing an action plan, the QIT started conducting meetings on monthly basis. They held frequent meetings with the District Health Officer (DHO) of Shaheed Benizarabad and also met with local politicians like the Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) and other local leaders of the ruling party. After strict follow-up, the DHO took action and fulfilled the demands. The first step was to ensure provision of medicines as per their quota and the QIT members started monitoring the quantity of medicines on a monthly basis. An ambulance was arranged for the referral of patients from the BHU to next level health facilities, different necessary laboratory tests, including ultrasonography and dental healthcare facility has also been provided the BHU. With efforts of the QIT, the electricity has been restored in the BHU and vaccination of children has started. The QIT members also launched a campaign in the area and now 30% of the pregnant women are consulting a Lady Health Worker during pregnancy. Delivery with a skilled birth attendant has also improved.

*"My wife faced difficulties during the birth of our youngest son and I was very disappointed because the basic healthcare services in our nearest BHU were very poor. There was no doctor to do checkups the patients. As teacher I teach my students about immunization but even my own children are not immunized. I wanted to raise my voice but individual voices are not strong enough to resolve the issues. The QIT is the legal and strong forum which provides me with the opportunity to highlight the issue with the concerned. We utilized the forum and now have basic healthcare services in our BHU. The number of patients increased to 40% in the OPD due to the availability of doctors, medicines and lab tests. Proper vaccination of our children has started. Our QIT is focusing on around the clock emergency services in the BHU. Now we have 22 members in the QIT and have excellent coordination between the health facility staff and the local community. We are extremely grateful to the CHAON project for this initiative."*

**Ghulam Hussain**  
**School Teacher (QIT Member)**





## WOMEN SUPPORT GROUP MAKES ANTENATAL CARE AND VACCINATIONS POSSIBLE



Pashmeena is working as a Lady Health Worker (LHW) and has done so for 9 years in the village Allah Bukhash Chandio, Shaheed Benizarabad district. The population of the village Allah Bukhash Chandio is approximately 550 people. Pashmeena was facing severe difficulties in fulfilling her job responsibilities, especially registering pregnant women and giving vaccinations because there was no trend among pregnant women to consult, a skilled birth attendant, ahead of the delivery. Some cases of mortality were reported during delivery, where the child and mother died. The local community was not sensitized and there were no organized efforts to motivate the community to accept healthcare, especially antenatal visits and immunizations.

In March 2015, CHAON project formed a women support group in the village Allah Bukhash Chandio and conducted a 5-day training on antenatal care (ANC), nutrition and how to maintain a balanced diet for pregnant women. Furthermore, vaccinations and complications during pregnancy, breastfeeding and other important mother and child related issues were components included in the training. Due to continuous follow-up of the CHAON field team, the support group remained active and conducted meetings on monthly basis. The support group started having meetings with women in the village and

*"I am satisfied with my job because now I am performing my duties well. The local community accepts me because the CHAON initiatives support group increased awareness in the village. Most of the women are my friends and happy to receive me in their homes now. Another thing which has changed in my area is that now 40% of the pregnant women are using folic acid tablets as per my recommendations. Breastfeeding is also promoted in this village as women are motivated and knows the importance of breastfeeding."*

**Pashmeena,  
Lady Health worker**



motivated them to deal with different issues. The most challenging part was to raise awareness among their husbands around the various issues.

After a continuous struggle of the support group and the CHAON team, things changed and for a year now Pashmeena has registered 35 pregnant women on their first antenatal care visit. She is visiting the pregnant women frequently and advising them regarding their diet and use of vitamins during pregnancy. This is first time in the village that women are consulting Pashmeena for ANC and vaccinations of their children.

“  
Clearly there is no inherent impossibility  
in saving the children of the world.  
It is only impossible if we make it  
so by our refusal to  
attempt it.”

EGLANTYNE JEBB







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