

ECW FUNDED MULTI-YEAR RESILIENCE PROGRAMME

HER FIRST SPOKEN WORD!



ABDUL BASIT IN HEALTH SCREENING CAMP, WITH HIS CHILDREN DISPLAYING HEARING DEVICES.

Abdul Basit sells unstitched clothes in a small shop in Bakhma Mohallah, Ward number 1, District Loralai. He earns approximate monthly income of PKR 25,000 (US\$ 90), and is hardly able to manage livelihood of the nine member family, including his wife, five daughters and two sons. Their three daughters, Asifa 16, Saeeda 12, Bibi Salma 11 and five-year son Kaleem Ullah have severe hearing impairment, since birth.

"We could not notice any hearing response in our children till age of six months. They could only understand signs and needed assistance for performing routine activities. They remained confined in home and had limited interaction. We purchased hearing devices for them, but these got damaged, and we could not afford buying new ones."

Zinat Bibi, Mother.

Their parents admitted them in school, but had to discontinue their children's education, because they were unable to understand and focus on studies because of hearing and speaking issues.

Rural Support Programmes Network's (RSPN's) ECW funded Multi-Year Resilience Programme (MYRP) implementing partner, Balochistan Rural Support Programme (BRSP) team identified this family, during enrolment campaign, focusing on admitting out-of-school children of the locality. The Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) and Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers, Nazia and Palwasha informed the team including community resource person, during identification of out-of-school children and children with disabilities (CWDs), about the children of this family, who had dropped out of school because of hearing impairment, and could now be admitted in school.

They subsequently visited children's home to convince their parents to resume education of their children. The team, including community resource person (CRP) and ALP and ECE teachers informed parents about importance of education and elaborated programme's educational support, which could address challenges hampering their children's education. They highlighted the friendly and quality teaching by MYRP supported and trained ALP and



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Asifa, receiving hearing device.

ECE teachers; provision of teaching-learning materials, including school bag, books, notebooks, and stationery items; health screening by health professionals and direct support, including provision of hearing and visual aids, to facilitate development and education of children. "Children will complete the five-year primary course in just years," the team informed.

Parents visited the ALP and ECE Centres, appreciated programme's support and eagerly consented to enrol their children. Kaleem was admitted in the ECE Centre, and three drop-out sisters in the ALP Centre, established in Government Girls' Primary School, Bakhma Mohallah.

The teachers began teaching them by using signs, and facilitating understanding lessons through their friends, who knew how to explain through signs. Meanwhile, health screening camp was organised by the programme. Trained healthcare professionals diagnosed and assessed hearing impairment of Asifa and her three siblings, along with other children of the locality. They recommended hearing devices for them, and informed that their speaking skill will gradually improve after they will start listening words and languages by using the device.

It was the moment when they began listening after using the hearing devices, and Asifa spontaneously spoke her first word Baba (father).

"We were ignored and ridiculed for inability to understand and speak. The ECW programme team and our teachers admitted us in ECE and ALP Centres, and provided hearing aids. They informed the students that no one is perfect. Persons with disability (PWDs) should be supported and empowered to deliver as contributing members of society. Our class fellows are now very cooperative. I am listening different sounds after 16 years. Our teachers are friendly and learning is becoming easier, each passing day. We will now continue our education. Thank you ECW for remembering us."

Bibi Asifa, Hearing impaired student, ALP Centre, Government Girls' Primary School, Bakhma Mohallah, Loralai District.

"Saeeda and her hearing challenged siblings are very active and participate in sports activities. They have started speaking after receiving hearing aids. Their learning and confidence are improving. Supporting and mainstreaming Children with Disabilities (CWDs) in education and social life is very important. Health screening of children by the ECW MYRP has enabled us identify disabilities, provide directly required support to children, or refer them to health facilities."

Noreen, Head Teacher, Government Girls' Primary School, Bakhma Mohallah.

5,500 or 13% of the ECW MYRP out-of-school beneficiary children are CWDs, who are being identified through health screening and community referral, and enrolled in programmes' focused government schools, and ECE and ALP Centres established in Panjgur, Kohlu and Loralai districts.

ECW MYRP is dedicated to providing assistive devices to 708 CWDs along with psycho-social support, while referring others to government health facilities. Programme is delivering trainings to 900 teachers on health and nutrition screening, Gender Based Violence (GBV) and psycho-social support, in collaboration with Provincial Institute of Technical Education (PITE), for ensuring healthy, violence free, inclusive, accessible and friendly schooling, especially for vulnerable CWDs.



Asifa and siblings studying in school.



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