

*Ensuring Sustainable Access of Water Stricken
Communities to Clean Water and Promoting
Safer WASH Practices*

Stories of Change





REYHANA TARAJIA

THE GOVERNMENT OF
PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF
RURAL AID

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ACRONYMS

BCC	Behavior change communication
CB	Capacity building
CBO	Community-based organization
CBSD	Community-Based Sales and Distribution
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CDWA	Clean Drinking Water for All
CDWI	Clean Drinking Water Initiative
CH	Community Hygiene
CLTS	Community Led Total Sanitation
CSO	Civil society organization
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
HIF	Hygiene Improvement Framework
GOP	Government of Pakistan
KAP	Knowledge, attitudes and practices
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
NGO	Non-governmental organization
O&M	Operation and maintenance
PHED	Public Health Engineering Departments
PMP	Performance Management Plan
PWD	Persons with disabilities
UK	United Kingdom
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene



ABOUT RURAL AID PAKISTAN

Rural Aid Pakistan is a not-for-profit non-government humanitarian and development organization registered with Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan -SECP under section 42 of the Companies Act 2017 & certified by Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy - PCP. Rural Aid is working at grass root level in rural areas of Pakistan to fight against poverty and empowering the marginalized and vulnerable rural communities for sustainable development. Rural Aid is implementing projects in Punjab, Sindh, KPK, Baluchistan, Azad Jamun & Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

VISION: “A society with improved living standards without poverty and discrimination”

We affirm that our programs have the potential to improve the social and economic justice and people are resilient from disasters and emergencies. We also believe that our systematic approaches and actions can bring about a radical change in the society.

MISSION: *Empowering the marginalized and vulnerable segments through providing sustainable development solutions.*

We are independent and free from political, ethnic, and religious affiliations. We help people in need regardless of caste, creed, or nationality. We have a set of principles that we follow during the planning and execution of our work. Rural Aid's principles are designed to achieve excellence and promote “Transformation, Empowerment, Partnership and Collaboration, Transparency and Accountability, Equality, Inclusion, Creativity and Sustainability.”

KEY PRIORITY AREAS

Rural Aid’s distinctive mandate is alleviating poverty and fighting injustice and inequalities. Rural Aid works to alleviate poverty and inequalities in the society by applying inclusive and holistic transformational development approach.

The Strategic Framework (2023-2027) is prepared in response to a national context keeping in view the chronic issues and quickly changing factors including growing rural livelihoods, enhancement of employment opportunities and accelerating natural resource degradation and climate change.

This strategic plan will inform the growth and guide Rural Aid over the declared period. In the coming three years, Rural Aid will implement multiple programs and project in Pakistan and AJK across 4 key priority areas:

1. Encourage inclusive rural growth leading to economic development and enhancement of employment opportunities.
2. Increase equitable access to quality social services, including health, education, WASH.
3. Reduce vulnerabilities to natural disasters, food insecurity and climate change.
4. Promote good governance and Gender Justice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Rural Aid extends its courtesies and thanks to all the stakeholders without whose participation these impacts and stories of change would not have been accomplished, especially Public Health Engineering Departments (PHED) for their encouragement and guidance, Penny Appeal UK and Thirst Relief for their support.

Moreover, the Rural Aid's field district teams, community and youth volunteers have set an exemplary method in reaching the targets and Rural Aid acknowledges their efforts, for their dedication and commitment was a major ingredient in this achievement.

Apart from this we would like to express our gratitude to all the partner communities, women and beneficiaries for giving us their time, listening to our message and learning from the community-based events and implementation of these learnings in their daily life.

We are indebted to the great cooperation and help of community level WASH committees for their commitment and enthusiasm for the successful implementation and participation, timely feedback, dissemination of information & awareness and promotion of safer WASH practices at community level.

We wish all of the participating stakeholders' success in future!

Mirza Moqem Baig
Chief Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rural Aid has documented sixteen impact stories depicting the success of its WASH program. These success stories show the differences made in people's lives. More than a list of events or activities, they describe a positive change and show how that change benefits the people of target communities. As these WASH interventions not only helped out individuals but the communities as a whole by easy and sustainable access to clean water, adopting safer health & WASH practices, domestic level cultivation of vegetables & fruit trees and livestock farming.

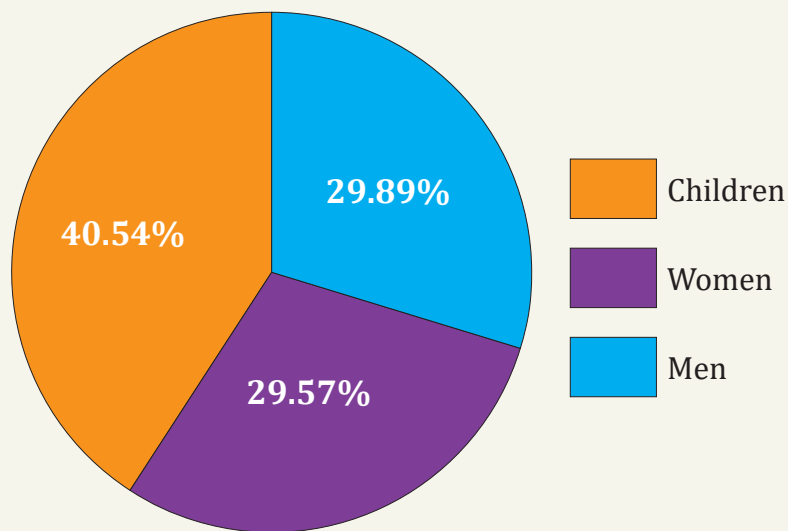
The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize the critical role of water in various aspects of people's lives, including health, environment, livelihoods, education, and economic development. The absence of safe drinking water has particularly profound implications for individuals living in poverty, marginalized communities, and vulnerable populations.

These WASH interventions has made significant contributions across various domains, including health, nutrition, livelihoods, education, and the protection of children and women among other areas. The WASH program contributed the SDG 3 Good health and well-being, SDG 6 Clean water and sanitation and SDG 13 Climate actions.

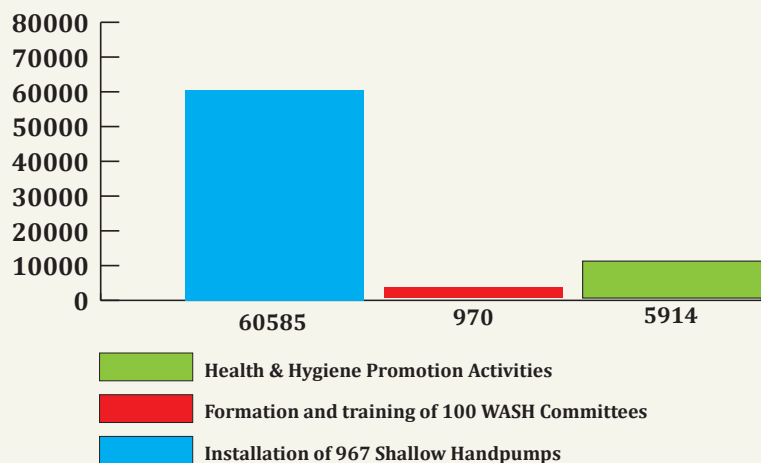
Rural Aid ensured easy and sustainable access of water-stricken communities to safe & clean water and promoted safer WASH practices in district Multan, Khanewal of South Punjab and district Kotli Azad Jamun & Kashmir (AJK) by installation of 41 Deep Wells and 967 Shallow Hand Pumps according to SPHERE standards, formation & strengthening of 150 community level WASH committees and promotion of safer WASH practices. Through WASH interventions in 03 selected districts, 72,866 vulnerable community members including women, men, children, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and transgenders benefited. After the installment of water facilities and community mobilization, sensitization and training; 83% households adopted safer health and WASH practices, water borne diseases decreased & promoted healthy lives and livelihood of people by cultivation of kitchen gardening, fruit trees and domestic level livestock farming. Well oriented and trained 150 community level WASH committees are playing a vital role for monitoring & supervision, Operation & Maintenance of water facilities and sustainability.

Rural Aid's supporting partner rural communities in order to improve their quality of life & productivity, ensure water-stricken communities have adequate & sustainable access to clean water, improve knowledge, capability and skill for adoption of safer WASH practices, conservation and use of natural resources through community productive infrastructure schemes and improved water & sanitation facilities.

Gender wise Beneficiaries



Activity wise Beneficiaries



Rural Aid is providing sustainable WASH services and ensuring open defecation free communities through affordable, appropriate technology and behavioral change.

Rural Aid is implementing the virous community-based WASH initiatives and contributing the Rural Aid strategic plan 2023-2027 Strategic theme -2 “Increase equitable access to quality social services, including health, education, WASH and Strategic Objectives “Improved access to clean drinking water, public and environmental sanitation and hygiene promotion, strengthening of institutional mechanisms.”

Rural Aid’s WASH program provides expertise and interventions aimed at saving lives and reducing illness by improving access to healthy and safe water, adequate sanitation, and improved hygiene. The WASH program works on long-term prevention and control measures for improving health, reducing poverty and improving socio-economic development as well as responding to emergencies and outbreaks of life-threatening illnesses. Rural Aid’s approach towards community led WASH includes promoting access to safe water, household water treatment options and water safety plans, which identify water quality threats in community water systems and water utilities, while implementing solutions to those threats; Improving the efficacy, sustainability and integration of hygiene and sanitation interventions into communities and institutions, such as schools; improving access to safe water, improved sanitation, sufficient hygiene infrastructure and adequate waste management in healthcare facilities in order to improve access to quality healthcare.

1

THE RETURN OF HAPPINESS



When the sun is setting down and its dim rays spread a sense of joy and silence all across the village Keri Narakot district Kotli AJK. Then the sounds of happy chatter and pleasant laughter of some adolescent girls in the courtyard of a small house at the foothills of the village add more glory and magnificence in the environment. Their life is simple and sweet, and they like it that way.

Their father, Abdul Qayyum, says life didn't always feel like this. Few years ago, in an accident my leg was amputated, I was not able to bring water because it was far away, on a hilltop, so every evening my wife, and daughters spent time fetching water.

Persons with disabilities, especially those living in mountainous areas, encounter cumbersome challenges in access to water. Abdul Qayyum is one if he lives in Keri Narakot village of district Kotli AJK belonging to a marginal income segment. He has a five-daughter age ranging from four years to fourteen. While living in a water scarce village, fetching water from far-flung and unprotected springs is a hard-hitting problem that makes life miserable, but this suffering turned into a state of torment when in 2013, my leg amputated as a consequence of a mine blast.

“Water is life, but to get this life my daughters have lost their childhood” Said Qayyum , while saying this, his eyes became wet.



Says Qayyum, “Before that disability, I used to fetch water myself, because the spring was fairly far from our house, and the hilly track leading to the spring was not so favorable for a lonely woman and girls. But my inability came in my way - my wife and daughters reserved this responsibility, even our 3 years youngest daughter joined her sisters in daily water exercise.”

Qayyum says, most of her daughters' time would have been spent on water fetching - at least 2 hours in the morning and more or less in the evening, but this huge effort would not helped us bring adequate water for entire household chores e.g. washing, bathing and animals etc. Earlier, I also had some livestock, which I trimmed because of water dearth.

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The water gave them back their time to play and study.

"Qayyum's daughters have sufficient time to play in the evening and go to school regularly, without absenteeism and delays," Qayyum says.

Having more time has returned back evening play and pleasant laughter's of her daughter.



Once the community had water access, they elected Qayyum the leader of the community water management committee. With the knowledge he gained in the hygiene sessions, he has built an accessible latrine for himself at his home and introduced healthy hygiene habits to his family. He has redeemed some goats and a milking cow because of close access to safe water. His wife has cultivated a small land and grown vegetables to meet their kitchen needs.

2

Cultivating Change, Nurturing Hope



45-year-old Shamim Mai is belonging from an ultra-poor social and economic background. She lives in a small mud made house in village Beraywala district Khanewal. She has 04 children (1boy & 3 girls) age ranges from 13 to 22 years. Shamim's husband is a laborer in carpenter shop in another city and visiting home after 2 – 3 months and hardly earns 16-18 thousand PKR in a month.

Shamim and her two daughters used to wake up very early in the morning to go fetch water," She had others in her community who would also lose hours each day walking to fetch water for the household needs.

Shamim and other community women brought water from a water course one kilometer away, which always caused diseases like typhoid and diarrhea among children and adults. The mud made house consisted on one room a kitchen with very poor condition.

Shamim and their daughters wasted a lot of time walking for water instead of focusing on their education. The local community including Shamim family suffered from water borne disease, which affected the family health. Shamim and their daughters spent a lot of time fetching water instead of doing productive work. In dry seasons, when the water receded in the water course in such cases, she would walk to another water point and spend hours to fetching water.

The shortage of water not only affected the health and hygiene of Shamim's family but also limited her chances to keep livestock or cultivate vegetables for her livelihood.



In 2021, all of that changed suddenly, when local WASH committee selected Shamim household and Rural Aid installed a clean drinking water pump at her home, which is also open for the whole community. Shamim is very pleased to have a clean drinking water facility in her yard.

The Rural Aid field team build the confidence and knowledge of Shamim on safer health and WASH practices by conducted various activities in their village. Shamim also participated in training course on climate smart agriculture practices and kitchen gardening conducted by Rural Aid. Because of the clean drinking water facility at her house, she can now complete tasks like cooking, washing clothes and kitchen utensils efficiently and hygienically.

Shamim Says “the water facility changed my family life and is a great source of our livelihood and health. Due to my learning from Rural Aid, my knowledge and confidence is enhanced in many ways. Now we cultivated various vegetables and fruits trees in my home and I also educated 07 other my neighbors and they also cultivated vegetables and fruits trees. I renovated my mud made house with one new room. My and my children adopted safer health and WASH practices in daily routine as well I educated and changed the behaviors more than 25 my friends, neighbors and relatives on safer practices. These all happen due to the water facility at my home and learning opportunities provided by the Rural Aid.”

The active participation and learning played a vital role to develop Shamim as a good community WASH promoter and environment friendly volunteer.

Says Shamim, "Clean water and knowledge of good hygiene practices have greatly impacted our lives, we know the importance of good hygiene and health. I am grateful to all Rural Aid teams who have given us such a precious gift of life which has changed everything in our life".



3

A DROP FOR LIVELIHOOD



Located amidst the mid-altitude hills of the Himalayas ranges, besides a dirt track in a remote village of Kotli district and you will find Amjad Mehmood, irrigating his vegetables by a newly built water point -- It is Amjad who has changed the destiny of his family by turning water in to productivity.

With his dynamic spirit and warm heart, it is no wonder that Amjad has emerged as an entrepreneur who is becoming self-sufficient and changing the economic situation of his family. This man is thriving in the rural area of District Kotli, – and it started when the Rural Aid and Penny Appeal just added water to his land.

Amjad Mehmood resides in Sania Ghai village of Charoi in Kotli district Azad Kashmir. He has three children including two daughters aged between 1.5 and 5 years. He was an unskilled laborer who worked on demand in the local market. His earnings remained confined within 10,000 to 12,000 thousand rupees per month.

Six months ago, Rural Aid and Penney Appeal installed deep-water well on Anwar's land through the community engagement and participation and the well now provides reliable water service to 27 families in the village, which means Amjad and his village community employ less time walking for water, children of his village can dedicate more time to their education -- this means households don't have to worry about the health consequences of consuming unsafe water and can thrive.

Before the intervention of Rural Aid Pakistan and Penny Appeal a year's back, the entire village was facing a shortage of safe drinking water; the villagers were barely able to meet household water demand.

Women and children walked long distances everyday to fetch contaminated water from open sources. Amjad was no exception, even his 4 years old son was also engaged in water fetching. Amjad and his family had to walk for an hour to fetch drinking water – at least 2-3 rounds per day cost him physically and economically.

Amjad would cultivate a chunk of land near his house, but dependency on rains and shortage of readily available water would not ever encourage him to cultivate.

Through the village WASH committee' consultation, Amjad volunteered to provide a piece of land for installing a deep well. After a detailed survey, Rural Aid Field Engineers approved the site for installation of a deep well.

After the well was built, the local community WASH committee – a group of people in charge of monitoring and maintaining the deep well. It was no surprise that the community chose Amjad to lead this committee.

Says Amjad "Before this safe water facility was built in our village, people used to get diarrhoea, malaria and other diseases all the time - today everyone in my village has safe water and no one has diarrhea, typhoid is on the decline. It's all because of the blessing of safe water."

Amjad says, " Now I devote more time to my work, I planted fruit trees and cultivated the various vegetables on my small land, which gives me good return, and I have also raised 4 goats through which I can collect sufficient milk for my family use. My children are getting healthier and dedicating more time to their schooling."

This deep well is an important source of livelihood and healthy living for my family, my community and myself. The entire village community is overjoyed to have this blessing at our village.

Amjad's influence has spread beyond the community WASH Committee' role – he has also become an ambassador of hygiene promotion.

Having good knowledge of personal hygiene, Amjad is demonstrating how families and his surrounding community can adopt safer health and hygiene practices. **This all is because of the safe drinking water at my doorstep.**



4

Small Efforts, Big Change



Access to safe drinking water at your doorstep is a huge blessing of God, “says Zarina. “A two-year-old sleeping and tied on the waist along carrying a pitcher full of water on the head and walking a kilometer, the pain of this burden can only be owned by those who have suffered it.”

Sometime back, before the installation of a hand pump at her home, Zarina's life was miserable. Her children were confronted with many water-related ailments, and due to the lack of water, they were not even able to keep animals. Zaina, "Today, everyone in her home has access to clean water – nobody has diarrhea – she is now keeping three cows on a sharing basis. It is all because of clean water."

Zarina, a middle-aged woman, belongs to an ultra-poor segment of society. She has eight children, three boys and five girls, ages ranging from 2 years to 18 years. Zarina and her family live in Basti Walayat, a remote and far-flung village in the district of Multan. Zarina's husband is engaged in agriculture farm labor, which pays marginal rewards, while Zarina takes care of the household chores and partially works in farming on a seasonal basis.

Their small brick house is located in the same village, which lacks a water facility nearby. It was hard for her to walk long distances to get water daily. Says Zarina, "It became so tiring after the birth of her first child. She was alone, and nobody was there to help her until her first daughter reached eight years and joined her in water fetching. Zarina Says, "Before installing a hand pump in our house, my children and I spent hours every day fetching water from an open spring. My elder daughters devoted more time to water than schooling – arriving late, leaving early, and sometimes absent from school to fetch water.

In 2022, Rural Aid through a community lead approach, installed a clean drinking water hand pump in her house. Zarina and her family were excited to have a clean water facility at their doorstep. This facility has brought a big change in Zarina's life, and her children are now giving more time to their schooling.



Because of the easy access to water, Zarina has kept three cows on a sharing basis, resulting in her daughter's improved economic and nutritional needs. Zarina is now giving more time to farming, which is rewarding in household income gains.

"It's a big change having water readily available day and night," Zarina said. "We are delighted." Zarina is thankful that her children won't have to spend hours carrying water, and they will have more time for school. With improved knowledge of health and hygiene awareness, Zarina has emerged as a respected woman committed to the health of her family and community.

5

Precious Drops of Water (Story of PWD)



Mr. Mazhar ul Haq is a Basti Motha resident in Kotla Chakar, Jalalpur Peerwala Multan. Haq lives with his mother, wife, and three kids (2 daughters and a son). Trapped in the mire of marginalization and vulnerability for generations, this family is still deprived of the basic amenities of life. Mazhar's father was a farmer, and by working hard in the landlords' fields throughout his life, he found nothing but a piece of land he was buried in. Mazhar's whole universe consists of a small house covering a few yards, which consists of two rooms and a toilet.

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In most parts of the world, inhuman and draconian laws have been abolished, but Mazhar's severed arms still trace the horror and cruelty that still appears somewhere in his society. Mazhar's arms were amputated by one of his relatives with an axe due to a political disagreement.

Hands are the only earning tools for a poor person; if they are separated from the body, then begging becomes the only medium to fill gastronomic needs. But saluting Mazhar's independence, he did not choose to beg. He adopted reciting Naats (Religious recitations) at bus terminals and around the city and sustained his earnings.

Mazhar used to leave home early in the morning for his job, and his wife and children took care of all the household affairs. As his house was deprived of basic life amenities, half of the day was spent by his wife and children only on the water as the only water source was an open-well miles away from his home.

Before the installation of the hand-pump Mazhar and his family used the contaminated water for years to quench their thirst, cook, bathe, and perform other household chores.

But using that open-well water was not only time-consuming for the wife and children who engaged in fetching but also a source of contaminated water, a risk factor for epidemic diseases such as diarrhea and cholera.

To improve the situation and ensure access to safe water in his house, Rural Aid, with the support of partner Penny Appeal installed a hand pump in Mazhar's house. This cooperation started when his house was identified during a participatory O&M committee meeting, and Rural Aid field teams approached Mazhar for help.

With the support of the Penny Appeal, Rural Aid equipped the identified households with a clean drinking water facility. The project also included awareness-raising sessions to improve personal hygiene behaviors.

Says Mazhar, "Fetching water from far away wells was a real concern for us. My wife and daughter dedicated themselves to water. Especially when my wife or any of my daughters fell ill, even a single drop of water would become precious to us in those days. In such a case, I had to leave work to assist my wife in water labor partially".

The accessibility to clean drinking water impacted Mazhar's life in many dimensions. The suffering of fetching water from far away is now eliminated. His family is getting clean drinking water whenever they need it. Ample water mixed with health and hygiene awareness resulted in the adoption of a greater behavior change - his children are wearing clean clothes, taking daily baths, and washing their hands before meals and after bathroom use.

The availability of ample water urged Mazhar's wife to start homestead gardening. She is cultivating seasonal vegetables off and on, which in turn is relieving the cost burden associated with cooking.



6

SQUAD OF HYGIENE PROMOTOR



Seema seems middle-aged but her intentions are youthful, she is a force for hygiene promotion at her community, in Kotli. She along with her five daughters has become a squad of hygiene promoters who are passionate to promote health and hygiene awareness in the village. Once a week, the squad holds a hygiene session in their community, everyone at her village in district Kotli knows that hygiene ensures health.

“Water is important because it helps keep our bodies healthy,” shares Seema. “Better hygiene practices also help prevent the spread of diseases. If we are sick, we can't go to school,” said her daughter Abida.

Before the safe water facilities were installed at her village, Seema along her community women would have to walk two miles everyday to fetch water. Because the village is situated on a hamlet a mile from open water source, the mother along with her daughters would usually walk twice and even thrice when they needed extra water on some special events or occasions, but that would lead to absence from school or time away from class.

“Now her daughters and other girls of her village don't miss classes because of devoting more time for water fetching,” says Seema.

Seema Bibi, 50 years old widow, a mother of nine children (5 daughter) lives in Munil Kallar Gibran village of Kotli district. Hailing from a lower economic background she does not have any other means of earning except buffalo and subsistence agriculture to make a living by getting milk from it and selling it at the local market. Her monthly income from selling milk is eight to ten thousand Pak Rupees. She owns a small rain-fed agriculture land in front of her home where she grows wheat crops for her family use.

Village Munil Kallar Gibran falls under severe water scarce zones of the district Kotli , communities in these villages everyday confront tremendous challenges of water shortage. Fetching water from the hilly terrain further elevates security and life risks that have been observed in the past.

Water shortage not only made these people suffer, but Seema and other women of her village were also not familiar with basic health awareness, due to which water-borne diseases were quite prevalent in the entire village, especially among children.

A few kilometers away from the village was a basic health center, which was always overcrowded by the diarrheal patient inflow.

Availability of water and hygiene awareness has changed the destiny of our community." Says Seema.

Seema got an opportunity to participate in this great cause when her villagers through a group consultation elected Seema as their leader and nominated her as their ambassador for embracing this change. Her passion for this big change was so high; she happily donated land for the installation of deep well.

"The village community came to me because I've always been passionate about hygiene and health promotion," Seema said.

Seema's passion about hygiene promotion spread beyond herself – she partnered her five daughters in her campaign and conducted various sessions with other women on how to maintain better hygiene.

Whenever I used to go to the hospital, I used to feel a lot of pain especially seeing the children suffering from diarrhea.

I feel very satisfied that now women of my village have started adopting good health and hygiene habits. It is very important for women to be part of hygiene promotional activities because women have more responsibility for households' hygiene.



7

Water Gives Joy



Alia and Khadija, 11 years old adolescent girls of Mohajir Camp village district Kotli, are feeling relaxed about having safe drinking water facility at their village, because, both of the girls have now enough time to focus on study and play. The deep well has relieved their burden of fetching water from a 2-kilometer water source, which was also not safe.

Mohajir Camp village in Kotli is a settlement for the refugees of Indian occupied Kashmir who were migrated during the 1971 war between India and Pakistan. Mohajir Camp (Refugee camp) comprises 21 households situated in a hamlet in the village of Kotli. Since its establishment in 1971, the population of these settlements has been facing severe challenges of water facilities at their village.

Says Iqbal a handicapped person of the Mohajir camps-“Bringing water was not easy for us, we have to fetch water from a vicinity far from our home about half an hour walk, even the water we used to bring was also not clean and suitable for households due to which children of our village were facing health issues”.

As fetching water is traditionally the responsibility of the women and girls therefore, the adolescent girls were dedicating more time on water fetching rather than education and other recreational activities. Due to which the girls' enrollment of this village was significantly lower than the boys.

Says Alia - I along with my friend Khadija were assigned the responsibility of bringing water to our homes because other members of our families were busy with their work. Khadija's father is a disable person therefore, he cannot help her, and similarly my father works in the city and visits us after months. Therefore, we have been assigned the duty to fulfill the water needs of our families. But this was not easy, there came a time when we missed our school and we had no time to play and get relaxed. We are so delighted to have this safe water facility at the center of our village. It has saved us from the daily labor and time we used to spend. We are so thankful to Rural Aid and all those who helped us because, either way, we could not even dream of having such a facility nearby our doorstep.

As the community of this settlement is not economically well off and due to limited resources, the community were not able to install any clean water facility at their village. Rural Aid Pakistan conducted an assessment of the area and installed a deep well for the community to overcome the water shortage. One deep well is now sufficiently serving 23 households of this hamlet. The deep well helped the community in providing clean drinking water at their doorstep. Girls like Alia and Khadija have no longer bear the burden and pain of daily water fetching. They have enough time to study and get involved in other productive activities.

Alia and Khadija say - “We are very much thankful to Rural Aid for installing the deep well for us and supporting us to get clean drinking water. We were in a difficult situation before and we had to walk for hours to get water, now that the water has come to us at our doorstep.

8

Changing the Lives



Twins in Jabri Dana village are happy to have a deep well in their village. Because they are benefitting from its clean water every day. Now they are not absent in school and the daily drudgery of fetching water has been relieved.

Jabri Danna village, At Kotli district in AJK, is one of the district's poorest areas. Communities living in this village were facing severe water scarcity. Because of Its hard geogra-phy it has remained neglected for any development and humanitarian aid and assistance. Access to and consumption of water from the open and contaminated sources has led to increased caseloads of diarrhea and hepatitis.

Says Ramzan Ali - "Before the installation of deep-wells in our village, we faced so many challenges, children and elderly people of our village were exposed to water borne diseases. Shortage of water and drinking of contaminated water has always affected the health and education of our children".

It was observed that the population of this village was confronting with two challenges the one "Shortage" and the second "Contamination" which has had negative impacts on child's health and education. This restraint disproportionately affected boys, girls and elder people of the village Jabri-Children often sacrificed their education to trek long distances for water. In the same vein, it was not feasible for pregnant and lactating women to fetch water. Lack of clean and safe drink- ing water was always a serious threat for pregnant mothers and under five children.

The water scarcity not only hampered the child's education but people also faced challenges for practicing religious rituals. A mosque (Muslim Prayer Area) in the village had always remained void because of the scarcity of water. People often faced difficulty-making ablution before prayers. Most importantly, the children getting Quran education at the Mosque had no clean drinking water facility.

Rural Aid felt the pain deeply and decided to ease the suffering of this village community. Therefore, Rural Aid installed a deep-well in the much-needed location to help those who were in need.

Says - Ahmed a resident of village Jabri- "We are so thank-ful to the Rural Aid Pakistan for helping us, giving us this deep-well. The deep well has changed the life of our village. Now our children are going to school, they also go to a mosque for Quran education. Because of clean drinking water availability at our village, the children and elderly people of our village are no longer exposed to ailments. The health of our children has improved."

At present, the Jabri Danan village breathes a sigh of relief since safe drinking water reaches every household with no long distance and time wastage and most importantly, families are adopting safer health practices because of awareness raising and hygiene promotion.

9

Water
Reduces
Sufferings



"Availability of clean drinking water was like a dream to us," Razia says, "we have never thought that we would have more time and clean clothing, but my children are healthier and our livelihood improved".

Razia, hails from an ultra-poor social and economic background. She lives in a small mud house at Basti Basira district Multan. She has three children (1boy & 2 girls) age ranges from 4 to 14 years. Even her 4-year son was her companion in water fetching. Razia's husband is a farm laborer who hardly earns 12 thousand PKR in a month.

Razia and her family used to wake up very early in the morning to go fetch water;" She had others in her community who would also lose hours each day walking to fetch water for the household needs. Razia and other community members brought water from muddy swamps, which always caused diseases like typhoid and diarrhea among children and adults.

Says Razia, "My daughters wasted a lot of time walking for water instead of focusing on their education. Various members of our community including my household suffered from water borne disease, which affected the education of my daughters because of illness they have to stay at home. I spent a lot of time fetching water instead of doing productive work and sharing with my husband. In dry seasons, when the water receded in the swamp in such cases, we would walk to another village's water point and spend hours waiting for our turn".

The scarcity of water not only affected the health and hygiene of Razia' family but also limited her chances to keep livestock for her livelihood.

In 2022, all of that changed suddenly, when Rural Aid installed a clean drinking water tap at her home, which is also open for the whole community. Razia is proud to have a clean drinking water facility in her yard. Because of the clean drinking water facility at her house, she can now complete tasks like cooking, washing clothes and kitchen utensils efficiently and hygienically. She has also grown homestead vegetables in her yard and raised one calf and 2 goats on a sharing basis.

Says Razia, "Clean water and knowledge of good hygiene practices have greatly impacted our lives, we know the importance of good hygiene and health. Now my daughters have time to play and concentrate on education, because my daughters spend less time fetching water. I am grateful to all those who have given us such a precious gift of life which has changed everything in our life".

10

Precious Drops
for Livelihood



When Rural Aid installed the hand pump in my home, I felt God had sent a young son to share my burden. We now understand that if we take good care of our hygiene, we will not be more ill. Since we had our water pump and hygiene education, our diarrhea and abdominal pains have gone”.

Nazakat Ali, the 32 years old man, belongs to an ultra-poor family and shares a single-room mud-made house with eight family members in Jahan village of district Multan. He lives in an extended family consisting of a brother, his wife and their three siblings. Nazakat works on a daily wage and uses his donkey cart to transport bricks to the villagers on demand from a brick kiln situated in the nearby place. This harsh labour merely fulfils the food needs of the whole family, which is even lesser than 2 dollars a day. His wife subsequently, in his support, engages in seasonal cotton-picking labour in the nearby villages, which can occasionally add one to two dollars a day. Nazkat's house lacks the basic needs of life, even the toilet and water facilities - the entire family practice open defecation in a nearby field, which becomes havoc in the rainy seasons.

Says Nazakat, " I had assigned the responsibility to earn the food and economic needs of my family, whereas my wife used to fulfill the water needs of our family. Fetching water from far-flung sources had never liberated my wife for economic earnings.



Sometimes when my wife got sick or pregnant or engaged in other necessary chores, I had to leave work to fetch water, which badly affected our earnings and overall livelihood ". Nazakat's eyes are filled with sadness when he remembers those days when his wife was pregnant, and for four months, she could not bring water.

Subsequently, Nazakat sometimes requested other family members to help him out, but for a long time, this could not continue. Nazakat explained that his family's situation was unfavorable due to contaminated water intake. His family suffered greatly from diarrhea, parasites, and stomach pain. Nazakat was identified during the local WASH committee meeting and equipped with a hand-pump facility by Rural Aid in December 2022, along with water provision. His family was educated on personal hygiene.

Says Nazakat," Rural Aid gave us safe water in our house. It was like a miracle because I could not even think of installing the hand pump at my home by ourselves. We also received important information on personal hygiene, which was new to us, and by adopting those practices, our health has improved. Rural Aid taught us activities that we could do ourselves to improve our health and hygiene. And they taught us that it is unnecessary to have a lot of money to do it. When Rural Aid installed the hand pump in my home, I felt God had sent a young son to share my burden. We now understand that if we take good care of our hygiene, we will not be more ill. Since we had our water pump & hygiene education, our diarrhea & abdominal pains have gone".

The clean water provision at his doorstep is benefitting Nazakat in many ways. He is planning to adopt kitchen gardening at the corner of his yard. He has been able to buy two goats on sharing basis (the offspring will be given back to the actual owner at the time of birth, and the person taking care will keep the mother goats). He feeds his goats with the water available at his home.

His family is happy because the water pump solved their big challenge, and his wife has been able to switch to earning side rather than consuming most of her time fetching water which has improved their economic status.

Mr. Nazakat gave his feedback in the following way, At last, I request the concerned authorities to build a room with a toilet at my house as the situation is in front of you. We live in a joint family in one room, which is in a pathetic condition. I pray for the success of the organizations who have played their part in installing this hand pump for us."

11

Helping Girls Reach their Dreams



"Saima is the only girl in her tribe who goes to school. To achieve this, she had to walk 3 km daily to school and then 4 km to fetch water."

Everyone has dreams, some are big, and some are small. 12-year-old Saima, from a backward family in village Baqir Pur district Khanewal, has a big dream, she wants to become a school teacher and is studying to achieve it. **It's hard to fathom how access to water once stood between this girl and her dream of becoming a teacher.**

Saima says - "My whole village consists of 28 families; I am the only girl in my village who goes to school. I was very fond of going to school since childhood and after that I want to become a teacher. I am very lucky." I was able to get admission in school and it was all because of my father's support. Despite the fact that girls in our tribe and the entire village do not tend to get education, my father kept my passion in front. Allow me to study.

All other girls in my village do housework and fetch water for household use. They don't go to school. Being a girl, I also had to do housework and fetch water. **The water well was located about 2 km from our village. Due to which I had to walk 4 km daily...and again an extra 3 km daily to fulfill my desire to study.** One day our village was blessed. I saw people coming to my village. They conducted a survey and after that installed a water pump in our village. **I cannot express my happiness in words that this water facility in my village has changed my life. Now only 3 km distance to school and that's it.**

The facility of clean water has also made life easier for the people of the entire village. Other girls and women in the village now have easy access to clean water. We are relieved of the grind of fetching water.



It has been observed that due to provision of clean water facility in village Baqir Pur, people's attitude towards girls' education has changed. **The community has realized the importance of girl education. Families are now sending their daughters to school instead of engaging in daily water parade.**

12

Including the Excluded



Mr. Muhammad Sharif is a person with disability resident of Basti Ameer Pur district Khanewal. Mr. Sharif lives with his, wife and six children (3 daughters and 3 sons) ages 04 to 15 years. Mr. Sharif belonging from a low-income family and working with his wife as unskilled labour in agriculture field with monthly income PKR 8-12 thousand.

Mr. Sharif 's right arm were amputated after an accident in early age. Hands are the greatest capital of every person and if they are separated from the body, then begging becomes the destiny to fill the gastronomic needs. No schooling of their 05 children due to the poverty and non-availability of the school. Mr. Sharif and his wife is used to leave home early in the morning for agriculture labour work and his youngest daughter take care of all the domestic work. As his house was deprived of the basic life amenities, therefore, half of the day was spent Mr. Sharif and his wife and young girl only for water as the only source of water was an open-well ½ kilometer away from his home. Before the installation of hand-pump, Sharif and his family used the contaminated water for years to quench their thirst, cooking, bathing and other domestic tasks. Non availability of the water is a biggest challenge for their family especially for women & girls bathing, washing cloths and the health and hygiene status is very poor.

But using that open-well water was not only time consuming for Shrif, his wife and children who engaged in fetching, but also a source of contaminated water, a risk factor for epidemic diseases such as diarrhea and cholera. The local community WASH committee selected the household of Mr. Sharif to improve the situation and ensure access to safe water. According to the WASH committee decision and verification of field engineers, Rural Aid installed a hand pump in Sharif's house. Rural Aid field team build the knowledge of Mr. Sharif and his wife through interactive activities and sessions for the promotion of safer health and WASH practices.

Says Sharif "Fetching water from far away open wells was a real concern for me and my family. I, my wife and my children dedicated themselves to fetching water for drinking and other domestic needs. Sometimes we had to live without or little water especially in nights and during the rains".



The accessibility to clean drinking water impacted Sharif's and his family life in many ways. The suffering of fetching water from far away is now eliminated. His family is getting clean drinking water whenever they need it.

Sharif Says "The handpump makes me and my family life easier with safe and clean water. The training and knowledge changed my family behaviors regarding personal health and hygiene. Me and family adopted safer health & WASH practices by drinking clean water, taking daily bath, using clean cloths & kitchen pots and proper hand washing. Now due to the availability of water in my house, I have one milking cow with a baby cow on sharing basis and I cultivated some vegetables for domestic use. Really the handpump is a blessing for us and a main source of happiness."

13

Knowledge
Makes
Difference



Leaving her 2-year-old son weeping at home in the morning to fetch water, Maqsuda felt very sad when she talked about her previous situation. She says, “I have been fetching water for the last 40 years, and I could not even dream that one day I will have a clean water tap in my house”.

Maqsuda, who belongs to the village of Sheni Miani district Multan, is forced to live a life of extreme poverty. She has seven children (3 boys and four girls). Maqsuda lives in a small house that shares with 16 people - the house is deprived of the necessities of life, including natural blessings like water.

With the rising of the sun, the sound of pots rustling used to appear in her house - from the youngest daughter to an elder son, everyone would pick up his water pot and get into an endless toil - fetching water.

Water was brought from a nearby village. Sometimes, Maqsuda and her children would walk beyond the village to a neighboring community to get water from an open well 2 kilometers away from her house. The well operated on a seasonal basis. Water would come on rainy days and also get exhausted in dry seasons.

The drudgery of fetching water early in the morning exhausted Maqsuda halfway and affected the next chores. After toiling in the fields all day, in the evening, she would hardly get something to reduce her children's hunger. The labor associated with fetching water may have become the destiny of Maqsuda and her children.



Maqsuda, “Clean water hand pump facility at our doorstep has changed our lives. We are now drinking clean water every day, washing our hands, and taking baths. Due to this tap, our hardness has decreased, and 10 to 15 other families in our community are also benefiting from this hand pump.

Thanks to health and hygiene awareness, my knowledge has increased significantly, by which I not only take care of children and myself, but I also teach it to other women. Although Maqsuda has spent her entire life – 40 years – each day walking for water, her children are now part of a new generation that is spared from the long, daily walk for water.

14

Creating Better Possibilities



Saddiq and his eight children were waiting for safe water. We used to get up early every morning and fetch water from a distant house. "We used to wake up in the morning because the first thing we did as the whole family was "collecting water," Saddiq explains. "We had no choice but an open well, far away from our house."

Muhammad Saddiq lives in a remote village in the "PiladPur" district of Multan. He lives with his wife and eight children (4 boys and 4 Girls). He is an unskilled laborer and hardly makes two dollars a day. Saddiq's wife, one elder son, and three daughters used to walk a mile round-trip to an unprotected well to fetch water for drinking at a house far away from their house. Between walking to the open well and waiting for their turn, this daily routine took at least an hour – sometimes more. Says Saddiq," This distance and dependency on water well was a hell for all of us - we could not bring enough water for washing clothes and bathing. For washing clothes and bathing, we used to go to the river one and a half kilometers away from our home. Even my four-year-old daughter was engaged in the daily water parade. Sometimes, my wife would also take her along to the well, and on her return, she would carry a small bottle to prepare as a future water carrier for our family.

Saddiq further stated. "My children have not had the time to play and live like other children".

The lack of access to clean drinking water in his house deprived his children's childhood juvenile, and he also faced health and economic deprivation. His children were frequently ill due to water-related illnesses like diarrhea. Additionally, he could not raise any animals because of a water shortage.



With the hand pump installation in his house, Saddiq's life has changed dramatically. His children are not spending hours collecting water from a remote house- his wife regularly washes clothes at home. He is raising four goats on a sharing basis because of the water facility at the doorstep.

Says Saddiq, "My knowledge has increased due to participation in health awareness sessions - my family members and I are now taking care of our hygiene - I am grateful to all those people, who helped me with the blessing of water because of water, my life has improved a lot, now the whole family and I gets up early, but not for water parade - for Prayer. "

15

A drop for Education



Mushtaq Ahmed lives in Sagyam Dheri village of Dungi District Kotli AJK. By profession, Mushtaq is a laborer and earns his livelihood at the local market. He has three sons and two daughters. His children are enrolled in a local Government school in the village.

Mr. Mushtaq emphasizes more on his children's study because the future is of the younger generations and he wants his children to be prepared for the future challenges. His wife looks after the household chores being a homemaker. The whole village faced difficulties in getting clean drinking water. They had to walk miles far away from home to collect drinking water and the same exercise had to be done twice a day to store drinking water at their homes. The study of their children got disturbed due to walking long distances to fetch drinking water for household use. The personal health and hygiene was not properly given attention by his family members.

Mushtaq owns some piece of land at the front of his home. Through participatory approach Mr. Mushtaq voluntarily donated a piece of his own land for the installation of a deep well. After a detailed survey of the field engineers the space allocated for the deep well was finalized and installed. The deep well changed the lives of the people of the village. Now they have easy access to clean drinking water at their doorstep. Another 14 households are taking advantage of the deep well.

The children have not to travel far from their homes to bring clean drinking water. They use the deep well water for washing clothes, cooking, and feeding cattle. Moreover, the health and hygiene practices of the community have improved through health and hygiene activities and community adopted safer WASH practices.

Mr. Mushtaq gave his feedback about the changes in his life and said,



“Today the shortage of clean drinking water has been resolved. We have clean drinking water available at our doorstep. We can use the water for improving our health and hygiene. I have attended the health and hygiene sessions conducted by Rural Aid and they have trained the community in such a way that the safe health and hygiene practices have been improved. Now, I am properly following the safe health and hygiene practices at my home and teach other community members about the best practices too. I cultivated various vegetables and fruit trees near my house. We are thankful to Rural Aid Pakistan who played their untiring role to install this deep well at our village. We pray for their success and hope the same schemes be installed at other communities where there is severe shortage of clean drinking water.”

16

Stand Up for Hygiene Action



The mothers of village Sarda in Kotli district are now contributing financially for the hygiene and sanitation of their village. At home we provide latrines to poor families who cannot afford it but this is not possible without the financial support of other generous women and we are grateful to those who are providing such support - Hajra Bibi chair of Women WASH Committee village Sarda.

Hajra Bibi says – “Women and men in our village had wrong beliefs which interfered with their poor health. It also often prevented them from taking action. People in our village had different concerns. They believed that building a bathroom inside the house was not without danger as its openings could allow the entry of various insects and reptiles, which could prove dangerous. Also, some houses in the village were still deprived of facilities like latrines. The main reason for this was poverty.

After receiving education and training about safer health and WASH practices from Rural Aid, we realized the importance of personal hygiene and sanitation. Before that, most of the women in our village were throwing garbage in the open fields, some children and men were also defecating in the open in the fields. The learning from hygiene promoters of Rural Aid sensitized me and I built a toilet and hand washing facility with soap for my family. I strictly follow and practice personal hygiene and cleanliness for my children and myself. I found that we had no diarrhea after that.

This change inspired me immensely, and I started a campaign for other women to join this life-changing activity. At first no one paid attention to my words. But with time other women started joining hands after listening to me.

Now, the majority of women in my village are sensitive and united to promote safe health and sanitation practices.

Even men are very supportive of our work and have realized the importance of improving hygiene and sanitation. The women of our village have developed a mutual savings fund. Using this fund, we have built a latrine for a widow living in our village. There was no latrine facility in her house. She was defecating in the fields with her children.

Environmental hygiene information and education from Rural Aid made us realize that open defecation in our village can be harmful to all the residents of our village. So the women of our committee have decided to make our village free from open defecation and for this we have set up a savings fund through which we sponsor households that have no latrine facility. Up till now we have provided support to two-widowed household for building latrine in their premises.

I am perhaps most proud of how my women and men in my village now talk about the importance of using toilets, washing hands and other good hygiene practices. I wish I had known earlier. I am grateful to Rural Aid for helping us and providing us with clean water and educating us on safe health practices that have changed the lives of many of us in our village.



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