

# **Access & Quality Education for All Children through Community- School Networks**

Pilot Project  
Completion Report  
May-Dec 2013





We are passionately committed to tackling the root causes of poverty, environmental degradation, conflicts, social and economic imbalances and exclusions by providing practical solutions that, when accepted in good faith and translated into positive actions, build on authentic growth, social transformation, justice and sustainable development.



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# Introduction

GRACE Association Pakistan's mission is to empower and improve the quality of the life of marginalised and disadvantaged people in the least developed parts of the country such as Gilgit-Baltistan.

GRACE chief executive, Khadim Hussain did a research on how to foster inclusive education in Pakistan at the Centre for Universal Education, The Brookings Institution during 2012. His study found an effective approach, a tool called Community-School Networks (CSNs) which helps to remove barriers stopping children especially girls and disabled children from education. In 2013 Khadim developed his post research action plan to pilot the CSN approach to foster inclusive education in Skardu district of Gilgit-Baltistan.

## OUR KEY OBJECTIVES

- Promote inclusive quality education, early childhood care and economic development opportunities.
- Build and strengthen human and institutional development through training, skills enhancement and education.
- Enhance the access of marginalized and deprived communities to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, health services and prevention of HIV/AIDS and care.
- Mainstream of marginalized, extremely vulnerable and socially excluded groups and populations such as people with physical disabilities.
- Undertake initiatives for the reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction of the displaced populations affected by natural disasters.





# PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Piloting Inclusive Education through Community-School Networks

GRACE Association Pakistan launched this project aiming at assessing the situations and needs of public and private primary schools to foster inclusive education through formation of Community-School Networks (CSNs) in Skardu Gilgit-Baltistan with support of the Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution.

This project is running as a campaign to sensitize the masses especially parents, teachers and the academia for creating accessible and friendly environment in schools especially for girls and children with disabilities. The campaign is entitled “Access & Quality Education for All Children through Community-School Networks”.

GRACE is promoting the concept of inclusive education gradually in the communities by involving parents (mainly mothers), volunteers, institutions, teachers, students and other stakeholders to raise awareness and create an inclusive environment to improve learning outcomes for all children in primary schools. An important aspect was to also raise consciousness against discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, language, religion, nationality, social origin or economic condition.

GRACE believes that all children should have access to quality education that meets their basic learning needs not only in the region we work but also throughout Pakistan and the world. The campaign includes awareness seminars, advocacy meetings,

and data collection in and out of schools. One of the prime goals of this campaign is to enhance community participation in school programs and to create:

- An institutional infrastructure,
- Community-school networks,
- Encourage parents and general communities to identify issues related to their children education,
- Share experiences and educational resources,
- Meet and plan schools development programs,
- Develop linkages with government and other actors in the area,
- Mobilize resources for schools and network with other schools or support organization to promote access and quality for all children.

GRACE Association invites all interested individuals and institutions to participate in this campaign by sharing views, and spreading the message.

GRACE Association is thankful to the Brookings Institution for their support in piloting this inclusive education project. Their supports enabled GRACE to collect data from 80 public and private primary schools through baseline surveys which was in 53 villages of Gilgit-Baltistan. The baseline survey helped to assess the needs of fostering inclusive quality education for all children in that least developed part of Pakistan.







# MAIN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## PERIOD MAY - DECEMBER 2013

Our projects address issues of poverty, environmental degradation, conflict, deprivation and exclusion. Addressing these needs have required focus on policy advocacy, promotion of justice and equality and development through community empowerment. Below we share 15 key successful projects.



### **1 GRACE Inclusive Education Committee**

and female members in April 2013, who are now actively involved in project implementation.

GRACE created the Inclusive Education Program Committee comprising 5 male

### **2 Organized Community Volunteer Teams**

School Networks (CSNs). Involved volunteers will help form CSNs in Kowardu, Kachura, Shagari Kalan and Shagari Khurd Valleys.

GRACE has active volunteers in villages that have supported the formation of Community-

### **3 Pilot Project Team**

dedicated staff members travelled to far communities in the mountainous villages in Skardu for smooth operation and implementation of the project.

This project pilot team is comprised of a Project Director, Grant Writer, and Training & Data Collection Coordinator. This small team of

### **4 Networking and Fundraising**

showed interests in partnering with GRACE in its education program. Also a meeting was conducted with the representative of Japan International

Two project project proposals were developed and submitted to the Korean Embassy and UNICEF. The Korean Embassy



Cooperation Agency (JICA) to build a partnership regarding an Inclusive Education Program in Islamabad. JICA is inviting Khadim Hussain, Chief Executive GRACE to be the Guest Speaker and Facilitator for JICA's inclusive education awareness and capacity building programs in KP province.

## 5 Awareness Seminars

Two awareness seminars were organized to raise awareness on the needs and importance

## 6 Advocacy and Networking Meetings

Advocacy meetings on education in Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad were conducted with District Health and Education Officers as well as other organizations. The health department head Skardu cooperated in mobilizing the lady health workers (LHWs) in rural villages for conducting baseline survey and data collection. The district education department consent has been taken to collect



of inclusive education especially for girls with disabled children. Also a third awareness event was organized at Al-zahra school in Skardu where health and hygiene kits were distribute to students for encouraging them to adapt good and safe hygiene habits.

data from public and private schools and involve teachers and students in behavioral assessments, sensitization and consultation meetings. GRACE team also met Secretary Education Gilgit-Baltistan and requested permission to launch an inclusive program through community-school networks throughout Gilgit-Baltistan.

# 7

## Awareness Raising Through Media

A one day Awareness Seminar on "Access and Quality for All Children" was organized. The event involved a big number of participations from the local community, students, government officials, teachers and the local media bodies. The awareness seminars consisted of speeches, talk shows and skits presented by GRACE team members, students and Art Council Skardu. More than 400 people attended the event including assistant Commissioner of the District Skardu who was the Chief Guest that highly appreciated the efforts of GRACE Association in promoting quality education for all children. This awareness program aired throughout Baltistan on all local cable networks and local community radio.

rural villages,

- Number of girls and children with disabilities in and out of schools,
- Number of teachers,
- School buildings and their accessibility and missing facilities,
- Teachers and parents views on disability and girls education etc.

A detail survey and need assessment report will be developed on completion of the data collection process.



سکرو: گریمس ایسوسی ایشن کے زیر اہتمام منعقدہ تقریب "Access and Quality for All Children" کے افتتاحی اجلاس میں شرکت کرنے والے افراد کی تصویریں۔

# 8

## Data Collection and Training on Data Collection

Two training events were organized in Kwardu and Kachura valley of Baltistan for Lady Health Workers. Around 40 LHWs participated in the training workshops. Khadim Hussain Project Director and Ms Sehrish Bashir facilitated the training sessions. Data collection practices have been done on prescribed forms and work plan developed in consultation with the trainees/ data collectors. The data collection questions are on:

- Public and private primary schools,
- Number of in and out of school age children in

# 9

## Volunteer from Australia

Sarah Caufield from Australia applied to volunteer at GRACE and assisted the organization

in securing future funding for the inclusive education program. Sarah Caufield is working with GRACE to develop project proposals and fundraising materials to submit to potential donors including the Australian High Commission Islamabad to continue fostering inclusive education in Gilgit-Baltistan.





# 10

## GRACE-MIUSA Networking

GRACE was invited by Mobility International USA to participate in a Disability Leadership

Exchange Program in Eugene Oregon during May 2013. The delegation included twenty professionals working in fields related to policy and legislation, education, employment, health, disaster relief, emergency response, gender inclusion, advocacy, youth leadership and community development.

The program helped improve knowledge and building leadership skills to strengthen the organizations working to empower people with disabilities in Pakistan. The opportunities provided were good to develop new ideas and plan in promoting inclusion of people with disabilities in civil society and political leadership.

The most important event for GRACE in the program was the visit to the Oregon University Education Centre and Bartha Halt Model's Primary School in Eugene. This opportunity provided a practical exposure on how to run inclusive primary schools as well as how to help continue education for people with disabilities after graduating their primary, elementary and secondary schools. Pakistan needs to follow the successful model of inclusive schools.

# 11

## Increased Enrollment Learning outcomes

Girls' access and retention in primary school education system

is considered a significant challenge in rural Pakistan. As such, the chief aim of GRACE Association Pakistan's project is to improve upon this situation.

Many strategies are used to address this challenge, including providing students and families with incentives. Experience has demonstrated that the most successful strategy is involvement of the community, including parents, community stakeholders, local educational leaders and the local education department.

GRACE Association believes in most cases the primary barrier to girls' education is not poverty but cultural norms that prevent girls from participating

in general community life, and the undervaluing of education for girls and children with disabilities. It was discovered that by encouraging parents and community involvement in school programs such as the Community-School Networks (CSNs). This increases the effectiveness of school programs, to raise general awareness of the importance of education, which both impact significantly on the enrolment and retention of children in primary schools.

A culture change has been seen through:

- Communities supporting many schools,
- GRACE Public School Skardu,
- Khar Government Primary School,
- Federal Government Model Primary School Handu,
- Girls Middle School Nazimabad,
- Community Girls School Chamang village and
- Skardu Gilgit-Baltistan district of Pakistan.

About 600 children enrolled in private and public primary schools in Shagari Khur, Shagari Kalan and Kowardu, including girls and children with disabilities (2%) enrolled in primary schools during the 2013-14. The previous year's drop-out rates of 20% have been reduced, according to school Government primary school Katpana, Primary school Kowardu, Al-zahra girl school, and GRACR Public School Skardu reports.

With the support from the golable community GRACE Association will continue to endeavor ensuring access to primary education for all children by 2015 and to achieve the retention until graduation of all out of school age children enrolled in the Skardu and Khaplu primary school systems.

# 12

## Community - School Networks start

GRACE Association's inclusive education program plans to form four Community-

School Networks (CSNs), namely Kachura, Kowardu, Shagari Khurd and Shagari Bala, for 80 public and private primary schools in 53 villages in the district of Skardu. The first CSN has been established in Kowardu to promote inclusive quality education for all children including girls and children with disabilities. Kowardu CSN consists of 16 public and private primary schools, comprising of 32 members





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and a 7 member CSN council and committees. Other CSNs are in the process of formation. Promoting inclusive education by organizing public and private school communities on a platform such as the CSN is both challenging and time-intensive, particularly for a developing country like Pakistan.

## 13 Center for Community School Networks (Skardu under construction)

A significant hurdle to school communities throughout Skardu is being able to gather and work collaboratively towards education solutions for local children and the lack of a central meeting space. GRACE Public School Skardu originally provided space for such meetings, but an increase in student numbers at the school, as well as in the number of community members participating in these meetings meant that this option quickly became unviable. As such, GRACE plans to establish a new center for CSN communities, affiliated with the GRACE school near Skardu's largest city.

A local community member donated the land upon which the building will be situated. Construction of the building commenced on October 2013, however construction was halted by harsh winter conditions, and is due to recommence in April 2014. Upon completion, the center will provide free meeting space to school communities, enabling them to meet and discuss educational issues and learn from each other's experiences. The centralized location of this center would mean this facility has the potential to play a key role in promoting quality primary education for all children in the area.



## 14 A Public Primary School Transformed Into An Inclusive School

The CSN approach was put to good use through the case of CSN Kowardu; a public boys-only primary school with two teachers, in Khar village. The village has no schools that may accommodate girls, the nearest girls/co-educational school is in another village 3 kilometres away – a distance too great for parents to send their daughters.

A number of children with disabilities live in Khar village and with the physical inaccessibility to the local school (due to irrigation channels in front of the facility), as well as the lack of a children's toilet, meant this school was ill equipped to take on students with disabilities. These physical hindrances were compounded by a lack of motivation on the part of teachers to enroll girls and children with disabilities.

CSN Kowardu reported these issues to GRACE Association, seeking support to resolve this situation and improve access to education for local girls and children with disabilities. As a result, the GRACE team, including CEO Khadim Hussein, visited the village and met with community members, teachers and the parents of two disabled children living nearest to the school. During these meetings, the parents reported that, upon attempting to enroll their children in the school, they were told by the school's head teacher that he "had no time to take care of their disabled children". The parents reported that this caused them embarrassment, which prevented them from persevering with the issue.

As such, the GRACE team visited the teacher at his home and discussed the issue, which led to the teacher saying that he recognized the importance of education for all children, and promising to enroll local children with disabilities and girls from that point onwards. However, in making this pledge, he also requested support from GRACE Association to improve the school's accessibility and range of learning materials, as well as assistance in approaching the government's district education department to assist with the enrollment process for children with disabilities. Consequently, the GRACE team assisted with the construction of a culvert to "bridge" the irrigation channel, a wheelchair-accessible ramp into the building, and also met with representatives of the district education department, receiving verbal permission for teachers to enroll





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children with disabilities.

To facilitate the enrollment of girls at the facility, Khar Primary School teachers requested the construction of two additional classrooms, toilets, and the appointment of an additional teacher, to enable the school to accommodate a further 70 girls and children with disabilities. The CSN council and GRACE team plan to work further towards these infrastructure goals by mobilizing resources from a range of local, regional and international sources. Center for Universal Education at the Brookings' guidance and support would be pivotal to this endeavor.

## 15 Partnerships and Networking For Inclusive Education

GRACE Association is in the process of developing partnerships

and networking with national and international organizations such as:

- Association of Global Humanist and Ethics (AGHE),
- Leonard Cheshire Disability and Development Program Pakistan,
- Idara Taleem-o-Agahi
- international donor and support organizations such as Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) along with a Japan-based nonprofit JIPPO,
- the Australian High Commission's Direct Aid Program, and
- U.S. Embassy Islamabad.

Several meetings have already been conducted with the JICA in Pakistan on inclusive education.

GRACE has also submitted application/project proposals to the Korean Embassy. They were interested in supporting GRACE. GRACE is interested in building partnerships with the Global Fund for Children (GFC) USA as GRACE program objectives match with GFC. GRACE is looking forward towards the Brookings help in building our partnerships with GFC in Washington DC to achieve mutual objectives of promoting access and quality learning for all children in the Gilgit-Baltistan and Pakistan.

## 16 Learning & sharing through Center for Education Innovation

The Center for Universal Education at The Brookings

Institution suggested GRACE connect with Tara Hill at Center for Education Innovation in Washington DC. GRACE had a host of positive online meetings with Tara and created a project page: <http://www.educationinnovations.org/program/grace-association-access-and-quality-primary-education-all-children-through-community-school>. This site gives GRACE the opportunity to not only promote the progress of its programs, but also to connect with other education innovators and benefit from the sharing of information and skills.

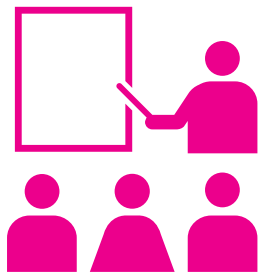
## 17 The CSN concept is growing, but not less challenging

The CSN approach is gradually becoming more popular in

Pakistan. GRACE Association chief executive officer Khadim Hussain and team members have been invited by JICA along with other organizations to share the association's experiences and to train other groups in promoting inclusive education via the CSN model. Other civil society organizations in Khyberpukhtoon Khuwa, Chakwa and Gilgit-Baltistan have also expressed an interest in learning more about the CSN approach; however regional bureaucracies and complex government hierarchies often create barriers to the provision of written government permission for communities to establish their own CSNs. Despite the fact that GRACE Association is still waiting for a letter of permission from Gilgit-Baltistan's education secretary, the organization is determined to continue its promotion of CSNs and achieve its inclusive education goals by 2015.







# LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

- Creating conducive environment for an elusive and unwanted trend which believes education for girls and children with disabilities have no importance and economic benefits is very challenging but interesting;
- Bottom up approach is very slow and time consuming but impacts are sustainable;
- Involvement of government institutions is slow in implementation process due to institutional structure and hierarchy.
- Government hesitation to cooperate with NGOs and it's very hard to obtain. Government bodies to create a clear policy to promote education for all children by encouraging the civil society and other actors of development to work providing them conducive environment.
- Personal contacts work to run the program;
- Without baseline data development of solid project proposal is not possible. Use of data needs high care and responsibility;
- Teachers from our project schools demanding professional development.
- Both public and private primary education institutions are under resourced in rural villages and need special attention to improve learning outcomes for students.





This pilot project started in April 2013 and successfully finished on December 31, 2013 making some significant progress changing the mindset of the community in Skardu towards the need and importance of education for all children in Skardu. Though this pilot project started on a small scale the GRACE team is seeing impressive results to scaling up the inclusive education programme through the new knowledge, skills and field experience gained to influence the mindset of society and policy to promote universal primary education for all children including girls and children with disabilities throughout Gilgit-Baltistan and other provinces in Pakistan.

In this regard GRACE Association Pakistan has developed a project proposal in consultation with all stakeholders to address the issues and needs of schools, out of school children especially girls and children with disabilities and disadvantaged families from data have been collected and problems and needs have been assessed. The need is to make existing 80 public and private primary schools accessible and friendly for all children. In collaboration with provincial/district governments and the CSNs, GRACE will be able to serve approximately 80,000 population from the surveyed 53 rural villages and enrol 10,953 children (5,953 girls and 1,083 children with disabilities) in existing public and private primary schools. These children

are out of schools in addition to currently enrolled 14,317 children.

The future project would serve 25,270 children including 10,897 girls and 1,230 children with disabilities. The project aims to form more Community-School Networks (CSNs) that will help build capacity and strengthen the districts to establish Resource Centres for teacher training, school development planning and fundraising for education. GRACE believes that making all existing public and private elementary schools into co-educational and inclusive schools is necessary, not only for ensuring access to fundamental rights of education to all children, but also to address the time and cost effectiveness in a poor developing country like Pakistan. GRACE is looking forward to cooperation and support from the support and funding community to achieve these mutual objectives achieving national and international educational millennium development goals by 2015 and beyond. Your support for this cause is highly important to GRACE.

# FINANCIAL REPORT

The project activities represented above have been accomplished with the financial support from the Brookings Center from Universal Education Echidna Global Scholars Program through New Venture Fund (NVF), which was received in two installments. This was supplemented by in-kind and cash contributions from GRACE Association Pakistan. The overall receipts and payments financial report is given below.

The total approved budget of the project was U\$40,000 which was received in two installments. GRACE Association contributed U\$2,374.00 in cash/ kind/services. The detailed receipts and payments statement is given below:

## As At December 31,2013

S No	Account Heads	Payments (US Dollars \$)	Receipts (US Dollars \$)
1	GRACE Contribution		2,374.75
2	NVF Grant		44,094.06
3	Bank Profit		325.48

1	Establishing Inclusive Schools	11,998.17	
2	Advocacy & Awareness Campaigns	4,302.44	
3	Data Collection Expenses	5,711.11	
4	Operational Expense	24,627.87	
5	Bank Charges	7.44	
6	Acct Payable	0.00	
7	Bank Balance	147.25	

Total	46,794.28	46,794.28
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# TAKE ACTION VOLUNTEER

## BECOME A GRACE VOLUNTEER

GRACE seeks the valuable support of volunteers' online/in person to help us make our goals a reality. Please join us in improving the lives of impoverished people in Pakistan. If you are interesting in Volunteer at GRACE, please write us via our website contact form [http://grace.org.pk/take\\_volunteer.php](http://grace.org.pk/take_volunteer.php) we will be in touch with you shortly!

## GET INVOLVED

GRACE relies on the generosity of individuals and donors to help our educational and community development programs especially to ensure access plus quality primary education for all children in the least developed rural areas in Pakistan. If you would like to support a specific project, please make your wishes known at the time of donation. You can donate now online: <http://www.grace.org.pk/donate.php>

GRACE confirms all donations in the form of an official receipt. If you have any questions, please contact us.



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