LAUNCH OF CHALO PARHO BARHO SHAH DARAH VILLAGE ISLAMABAD
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Introduction

The data from Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Pakistan 2010, which assessed 54,062 rural children, 5-16 years of age for up to grade II & grade III competencies, revealed poor results in both reading and mathematics. The overall reading ability of story level was only 34% and Mathematics (subtraction) was, only 19%. 51% of grade V children could do grade II reading at story level and only 34% of grade V children could do division level Mathematics at grade III level.

To address this learning level problem ITA has launched a citizen led campaign by the name of Chalo Parrho Barrho (Let’s Read and Grow). Under the campaign children of primary school going age would be targeted and special classes would be held in the local school for children with poor learning levels in language and arithmetic. The aim of these classes would be to build a strong base among children in learning language (reading, writing and comprehension,) and arithmetic (number recognition, addition-subtraction, and multiplication-division).

CPB is a citizen led initiative and has been designed in a manner where it is the citizens’ of the community that are working towards improving the educational status of their community’s children. Educated volunteers are recruited from the villages and then trained by ITA to conduct CPB classes in the local government schools. Volunteers are trained in the Combined Activities for Maximized Learning (CAMAL) methodology, which is a highly effective technique for teaching language and arithmetic in a short span of time. The classes are held for children of primary school going ages who are unable to read properly and are not able to do basic arithmetic operations. The program also caters to out of school children. Accelerated catch up classes are held after school for these children. The objective is to mainstream these out of school children into the formal school system.

The pilot phase of the campaign was launched in Multan and Rahim Yar Khan. Two villages; Rawani in Multan and Wahid Buksh in Rahim Yar Khan were targeted. There were two
government schools in both the villages. Rawani has a boys’ primary school and a girls’
elementary school which has now been upgraded to a high school. Wahid Buksh Lar has two
primary schools, one for the boys and the other for the girls.

The program was initiated in all 4 schools. 2 volunteers were attached to a school.
Morning CPB classes were held for in-school children and afternoon classes were held for out of

**SHAHDRA VILLAGE: EDUCATION PROFILE**

ASER survey was conducted in the Shah Darah village. According to the survey, the
village lags behind in education. Of the total children age (3-16) surveyed, 72.5% of the boys
were enrolled in some sort of education facility as compared to 28.5% girls. Therefore, a bias
towards the education of boys was found, as was made clear by a much higher proportion of
boys being enrolled as compared to girls.
This was true for both private and government schools. As the graphs below illustrate, the proportion of boys in private schools (71.7%) was much higher than that of girls (28.3%). Similarly, the proportion of boys attending Government schools (75 %) was much higher than that of girls (25%).
Overall, the reading levels were also found to be disappointing. Amongst the children surveyed, only 36% could read up to story level in Urdu. This was even worse for reading levels in English where amongst the children surveyed; only 20% could read up to Sentences level.
Performance in Arithmetic was found to be even more disappointing where amongst the children surveyed only 20% could perform arithmetic up to division level.

Overall, the statistics had shown poor reading levels, as well as a high prevalence of boys’ education at the cost of female education.
Launch of Chalo Parho Barho in Shah Darah Village

Therefore, after seeing such disappointing statistics, a need was felt to take steps for the immediate rejuvenation of the current deplorable state of education in Shah Darah village. Therefore, the Idara Taleem-o-Aagahi team decided that steps need to be taken immediately to turn Shah Darah village into a model of education for others to follow. To achieve this aim, the project of Chalo Parho Barho (CPB) was launched in Shah Darah village.

The formal launching Ceremony

To celebrate International Literacy Day on September 8th 2011, a formal launching ceremony of Chalo Parho Barho (CPB) was held in Federal Government School for Girls (Shah Darah Khurd). To make people aware of the importance of literacy and education of both girls and boys, posters depicting the need for education were put up in all important public places of Shah Darah. Further, leaflets publicizing the need for education as well as the main aims of Chalo Parho Barho were distributed. To make sure that the voice of education reaches to all and sundry, special announcements were made about the program ceremony throughout the village, as well as invitations were sent to village notables through the help of social mobilizers. They were invited to the Baithak to be held at the Federal Government School for Girls on 8th September 2011.
Baithak

A Baithak was arranged in the Federal Government School for Girls on the occasion. In this Baithak, village notables, people from the education sector as well as local people were present. Results of Shah Darah village from ASER survey was shared with those present on the occasion. The case for need for intervention to improve the current deplorable state of education in Shah Darah village was put forward. A chance was provided to the school administration as well as the local community to discuss their problems amongst each other, and to come to consensus. The community was requested to nominate amongst themselves educated
volunteers who would be willing to volunteer to teach children of their locality under Chalo Parho Barho.

The community responded to the call with enthusiasm. In fact, during this very session names had been put forward by community elders as well as volunteers themselves who were willing to take part in the Chalo Parho Barho survey as well as in the teaching itself. On this occasion, the Head Mistress of The Federal Government School for Girls voiced her concern about the indifference prevalent in the local community regarding the education of girls. She stressed on the need for active involvement of parents in girls’ education to help bridge the gender gap in education that has been prevalent in Shah Darah village.
Chalo Parho Barho Walk- Start of a movement for change

The Baithak was followed by a walk through the village to highlight the importance of education. In this walk, the leading members of the community as well as local youth and school children participated with great fanfare. The walk started from the Federal Government School for Girls. The participants carried with them placards highlighting the importance of education and the significance of International Literacy Day. The youthful
exuberance of the participants was very impressive as many started singing songs as well as raising voices to highlight the importance of literacy day. The numbers increased with time as more volunteers as well as curious onlookers joined the call. What was most encouraging was the participation of number of girls as well as village women in the walk. Some elders of the village also played a symbolic role in the walk by walking small distances with the participants as and when their age allowed. On this occasion, the participants were apprised of the Chalo Parho Barho Movement, its aims and methodology.
Survey Workshop

A complete household survey is being conducted throughout the Shah Darah village. For this local educated volunteers have been handpicked. To apprise them of the methodology for Chalo Parho Barho survey, a workshop was specifically conducted. In this workshop, the volunteers were briefed about the norms for conducting survey. This included an information session on filling household and school survey sheets. They were given a briefing on the expected norms needed in the survey, as well as techniques that could be employed to ensure the authenticity and correctness of data. They were given a one-by-one insight into all the columns that are to be filled in the Chalo Parho Barho survey, and the information that each column requires. This was followed by a Question and Answer session where all concerns of the volunteers were addressed.
After a break, a demo of the survey was conducted. Two volunteers were asked to go to a household and conduct a survey, while the rest were instructed to fill in the information individually in their forms.

**Survey:**
A complete survey of each and every household is being conducted in Shah Darah village. This includes a survey of approximately 180 households, as well as two government schools.
The Way forward:

Volunteers have been identified who will teach in the Shah Darah village under Chalo Parho Barho. They will now be given training on CAMAL methodology of instruction. After that, they will start a 20-week teaching sessions of 4 hour a week under CPB to bring those children who lag behind in English, Urdu as well as Arithmetic at par with their fellow students. Before this, a comprehensive test will be conducted of all the school children to identify those children who need help in education.