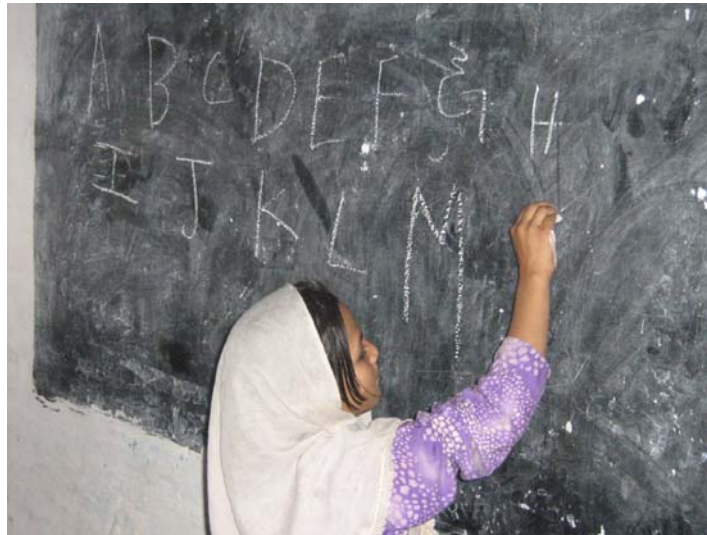




## **REPORT ON**

# **Establishment of Child Friendly Centre (CFC) for out of School Girls**

## **At Konodass Gilgit**



**Reading & Writing a Real Step towards Empowerment**

### **CFC A PROJECT OF AGHE**

*Report Submitted By*

**Women & Children Section of AGHE**

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## **CHILD FRIENDLY CENTRE FOR OUT OF SCHOOL GIRLS**

### **Konodass Gilgit**

#### **Background**

Kofi Annan, the former United Nations Secretary General, once said: “There is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls. If we are to succeed in our efforts to build a more healthy, peaceful and equitable world, the classrooms of the world have to be full of girls as well as boys.” Unfortunately, in spite of all agreements between the State Parties and all efforts at world level, still there are 62 millions girls who are not in primary schools. There are so many reasons behind the violation of this basic right (education) of the children like poverty, gender discriminations, cultural taboos, traditions and so on.

The main reason why girls fail to attend school is because they come from poor families. Faced with the choice between sending a son to school or a daughter, parents will almost always choose the son. A survey in Pakistan showed that girls’ enrolment in schools increases with a rise in family income. Household survey data from all developing regions show that children from the poorest 20 per cent of households are 3.2 times more likely to be out of primary school than those from the wealthiest 20 per cent. Even when education is ostensibly free, there are often a number of hidden costs such as transport, school uniforms or books that mean a family cannot afford to educate its children. A girl may be kept at home to look after younger siblings and run the household while her parents work to earn a living and her brothers go to school. Or she may be kept out of school in order to work and contribute to the family income. There are 211 million children between five and 14 years old who are working, mostly in agriculture. That is 18 per cent of the world’s children in this age group.<sup>1</sup>

Northern Areas of Pakistan which is relatively a conservative society and has limited options for female education. Anyhow, over the last two decades with combined efforts of the government and the NGOs have succeeded in bringing about a gradual change in the general attitude towards schooling. Still, there are some areas and communities where literacy rate is very much low particularly, the female literacy rate is not more than 5% or less.

The residential area of Konodass colony was basically allotted to the retired soldiers of Pakistan Army hence majority of the allottees sold their properties to other non local people outside from the Gilgit city. The Konodass colony consists of more than ten thousand population with one middle school each for girls and boys. Some other private schools are also working and charging high rates of fee as compare to the public schools. Majority of the population residing at Konodass are migrants from other parts of the region like Districts Ghizer, Diamer and Astore. The health and hygiene condition of the colony is also very poor. Dirty and dusty streets with broken water pipe lines and open drains are reflecting the overall living standard of the people of colony. Most of the people residing in the Konodass colony are lowest paid government servants, some other are labours and businessmen.

AGHE’s volunteers conducted a baseline survey in one major portion of the Konodass named as Mujahid colony to identify the out of school girls. There were more than fifty girls from eight to fourteen years old who never attended schools and were engaged in domestic workload. Majority of the families of the identified girls were migrated from

District Diamer and were very low income generation families. After negotiating, with families of the out of school girls and taking into confidence to the public representatives, AGHE established the Child Friendly Centre for out of school girls at Konodass. The AGHE has already gained experience to run a child friendly centre for labour children at Gilgit city level.

### **Introduction**

Basically, the child friendly centre for out of school girls is established for those girls who have never got any opportunities to attend school due to certain reason yet afterward the school dropped girls were also allowed to get admission in the CFC centre. The CFC was established in November 2006. Fifteen out of school girls were enrolled and the classes were started in a building of a private school at evening time. Two teaching staff members were engaged for the purpose. Initially, this project was designed for three months, later the project was extended for six months more.

The main focus the centre was to provide teaching and learning facilities to the girls along with some recreational activities. Due to cultural limitations and parents' concerns male teachers and staff were not allowed to access the centre so the female volunteers of AGHE and other members were usually visited the centre and coordinate the center's activities. Anyway, a male volunteer named as Saaeed Ahmed was responsible for overall look after and coordination of the project activities. All the basic teaching and learning aids were provided by the association which include text-books, story and note books, copies and other stationeries and some other material which include tooth brushes and pastes, towels, soaps, heaters, mates, charts, flash cards, white board, and some material for indoor games etc.

### **Achievements**

The project ran for three months successfully and there were tangible results of the project in terms of active involvement of the girls' parents and improvements in teaching and learning conditions of the centre. Following are some main successes during the first three months of the establishment of the centre as the record of the centre showed and the staff reported:

1. The attendance of the girls is considered as main achievement during the first month of the project as majority of the girls remained cent percent regular during the first three months of the project.
2. The learning capacity of some young girls was extremely satisfactory, very soon within one month they learned how to read and write English and Urdu Alphabets, counting up to 100 and some other basics of Urdu and English languages.
3. The parents and families involvement in the center's activities were tremendous. The mothers often visited the centre, see their daughters' teachers and asked about their progress. This indicator showed the high level of motivation of parents to educate their daughters.
4. After three months, some students (girls) showed their desire to join formal schooling which was the ultimate goal of the project to bring the girls into mainstream of formal education system.
5. Association of Global Humanists & Ethics (AGHE) organized an award ceremony for its volunteers. The volunteers of the CFC projects were awarded and titled as volunteers of the years. That step of AGHE was important to promote volunteerism

and also highlight the importance of girls' education and the issue of child labour in Gilgit city.

6. A one week training programme was arranged for the teaching staff of both centres at Aga Khan University -Professional Development Centre North Gilgit.

### **Challenges**

As newly established NGO, AGHE was facing the main challenge of lack of resources to undertake all the planned activities for 2006. Establishment of one child friendly centre for worker children in Gilgit city was duly approved project but initiating another CFC for out of school girls was purely need based and was opened on the community demand, that is why the CFC project team has had to face so many challenges like:

1. Lack of human and monetary resources
2. Cultural and traditional values were another big challenge as the parents showed their concerns to involve male volunteers and staff in the CFC centre so the project management has had to identify female staff and volunteers which was another challenges in such a conservative area.
3. The hard weather was still another challenge to continue the project activities as there was temperature at below minus CG in the months of December, January and February and it was very expensive to bear the heating expenditures even for a single classroom.
4. Some girls showed very good progress in learning while some others were very much behind in learning than their fellows consequently the teaching staff have had to pay more attention to these children to meet the expectations of their parents.
5. Some children and parents were very much ambitious and were also demanding as they were expecting some monetary benefits from the project.
6. The utmost and interesting challenge was faced by the project team when some children were recommended to enroll in the formal schooling after three months. The parents' meeting was called by the project team and they were asked to enroll their children in nearby government school. The parents were agree but this dream of children, parents and the project team could not realized because the head teacher refused to enroll these children in grade one because of their age factor and made excuse of admission closed. After two weeks negotiation and request the head teacher was agree to allow the children to sit in class conditionally but the parents and children did not agree with the conditions.

### **Future Directions**

Keeping in view the enthusiasm of the children and active participation of the parents, AGHE principally decided to extend the project for next six months until June 2007. AGHE is developing a comprehensive plan to undertake a one year project for thirty out of school girls. The proposed activities of the project will be teaching of languages English and Urdu and basic mathematics through non-formal mode of learning and developing life skills of the children. Vocational training in embroidery, cooking and sewing shall also be the part of that project.

AGHE is developing a funding proposal for that purpose which will be submitted to the donor agencies or to the government of Pakistan which is the main education provider agency in the Northern Areas of Pakistan.

**1:** *Because I am a girl, the state of the world's girls 2007*, Plan UK

## Some Snaps of CFC



A group photo of CFC staff and children with Malik Maskin speaker Northern Areas Legislative Council on the occasion of international volunteer day 2006.



Out of School girls are learning basic Maths and life skills at CFC



Developing health and hygiene habits of the children at CFC is the main focus of the project.



Girls are very much enthusiastic to learn how to read & write



Teaching students, how to care their health while at the home



The girls are playing & enjoying local games while at CFC