



Boy Scouts in Pakistan support girls' education

The Results

40,000 Scouts in Balochistan have joined forces with UNICEF to help improve the situation for girls in one of the least developed regions of the Pakistan. Scouts have been trained to help local communities understand the importance of educating girls. This result has been an increase in the female literacy rate, an increase in the immunisation rate and a reduction in diseases due to a lack of hygiene.



"Meena" - The Cartoon Character created by UNICEF

The project is called '*Brothers Join Meena*' and it now runs in 23 of the 27 districts in the Balochistan. '*Meena*' is a cartoon character of a nine-year old girl created by UNICEF in 1990. '*Meena*' promotes girls' education and is popular throughout South Asia.

The Reasons

Balochistan is the largest province in Pakistan, covering around 45% of the country and it has a population of 7.5 million people. It is also one of the least developed regions of the country with a literacy rate of around 27%. Gender discrimination exists too. The number of boys attending school is low at 50% but only 5% of girls in the region have the opportunity to attend school. This situation results in a very low level of female literacy in the region and very poor living conditions for families.

Scouting is strong in Balochistan and the number of Scouts has risen from 30,000 in 1996 to 70,000 in 2004. The

Balochistan Boy Scouts Association formed a partnership with UNICEF to help improve the situation for girls in their communities.

The Methods



Girls' education is the key objective of the project

The Scouts, who are in the adolescent age-range, receive training on children's rights and data collection. They are also helped to develop interpersonal communication skills. Once they are trained, each Scout goes out into his local community and collects information on 10 homes in his neighbourhood where there are children under 9 years of age living.

The Scouts help parents in each of these homes to understand the importance of girls' education. They also help the parents to understand the need to have their young children immunised. The Scouts also help each family in a very practical way; constructing latrines in every home that does not have one.



Pakistan Boy Scouts Association

Strategic Priority 3

Girls and Boys, Women and Men – respecting differences, promoting equality and sharing responsibility



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The Scouts are provided with materials to help them spread the message of girls' education. 'Meena' film shows and other programme related materials can be distributed. The Scouts are also encouraged to hold seminars in their local districts and to seek partners to gain further support so that their projects can be extended. District camps are also used as an opportunity to provide training so that more Scouts can participate in the project.

Our Learning

A unique partnership has developed between 'Meena' as a girl child and Scouts as her brothers. The project has helped the communities to explore the issue of 'Son's Preference' and begin to change their attitude and behaviour towards the girls in the region. Local people now understand the importance of educating girls,

- Through Scouts and the 'Brothers Join Meena' project a debate has been stimulated on gender discrimination. Within local communities fundamental issues relating to culture have been explored and attitudes and practices have begun to be change. Female literacy rates have increased in the province as a result of the changes in attitudes and practices towards girls' education.
- The Scouts involved in this project will take their learning into their adult lives; helping attitudes to be changed in the long-term and contributing to the sustainability of the work. Starting co-education in a traditionally conservative society is a significant step forward for the community and Scouts in Balochistan have played an important role.
- The project has also helped Scouting in Balochistan to receive significant recognition from the Governor and Ministers in the province. Scouts and their project partners from selected districts gather in the capital every year for a 'Grand Meena Rally'. This event, attended by the Governor and officials, gives them an opportunity to listen to the Scouts to learn of

their experiences and recognise their good work.



Scouts also help to immunise children against polio

Our Future Plans

This project is going well and there are positive results for the Scouts and for girls in the Regions in which it operates so the project will continue.

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