Winds of Change – Volume II
Celebrating the Stars of Tehsil Jehlum

Case Studies of Persons with Disabilities from
Tehsil Jehlum, District Jehlum, Punjab, Pakistan

July 2012
An Overview of Our Work on Inclusive Development in District Jehlum

We aim to set up a model of inclusive community development in Pakistan. Under this programme we establish inclusive community organisations in District Jehlum, Punjab Province of Pakistan which are being facilitated to enable people with disabilities to participate in communal decision making processes which affect their lives. Some of the major thematic focuses of our includes inclusion of children with disabilities in education, inclusive of young people in livelihoods, inclusion of middle aged and elderly people in community organizations and social and recreational inclusion of all age groups regardless of gender and disability type. It is our approach to reach out to as many PWDs as possible.

So far we have been able to include:

1. 67 children with disabilities in mainstream education
2. 146 young and elderly persons with disabilities became member of community organizations
3. More than 300 people with disabilities received disability certificates
4. 57 young people with disabilities have established their small scale enterprises
5. 30 Self Help Groups and 02 Disabled Persons Organizations formed in District Jhelum
6. 30 Sports Committees formed with membership of 73 persons with disabilities

In this regard we also hold consultative workshops in all provinces to mobilize Disabled Persons Organisations to suggest measure for making national action plan for PWDs more inclusive. It is our aim to raise awareness of families and neighbourhood of PWDs regarding inclusion and rights of PWDs in social, economic educational, communal and recreational activities. The financial support for programme comes from DFID while CHIP, STEP and Sightsavers jointly implement the programme in Pakistan through designated roles and responsibilities.
Preface

Winds of Change Volume II – Celebrating the Stars of Tehsil Jehlum maps the victories, dreams of ten PWDs, seven males and three females, ranging in age from five to fifty-two that were successfully mainstreamed in the themes of education, health, livelihoods, social inclusion and empowerment under the pioneering project on Inclusive Development through Mainstreaming People with Disabilities. Under funding from DFID, the project was implemented across 30 villages in District Jehlum between 2008 and 2012 by CHIP in collaboration with Sightsavers and STEP.

Through this collection of case studies, we learn how PWDs, who had been previously resigned to a lifetime of dependency by their families and peers found the inner strength to identify and apply individual talents to a variety of opportunities provided under the project. Through this, they were able to achieve extraordinary milestones to become productive, active citizens who overturned centuries old discriminatory practices and attitudes against disabled persons in their communities.

The inspiring lives of the Stars of Tehsil Jehlum, provide us insights into the spectrum of obstacles PWDs have overcome during their quest to develop individual identities – ones that are no longer derogatorily tied to their disabilities. They illustrate that at least in the rural areas of rural Tehsil Jehlum, with a few exceptions, the future for PWDs is no longer marred by socioeconomic exclusion and ostracization, but promises equal access to educational, economic and social opportunities and support for the achievement of their dreams and hopes. However, many more challenges remain to be overcome.

The struggles and victories highlighted in this edition are only the beginning of a long journey. As their experiences demonstrate, in a climate of rising poverty and unemployment, even the Stars of Tehsil Jehlum, may continue to find themselves struggling with a faction of families, teachers, employers and communities that are still not entirely convinced of the benefits of investing time and scarce resources in their development – despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

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## Acronyms

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A. Overturining Negative Stereotypes – One Lesson at a Time

Saqlain Mushtaq is deeply engrossed in writing out English alphabets as neatly as he can into his notebook at the Boys Primary Elementary School Noorpur, a neat block structure situated in the village of Noorpur, one of the largest and most densely populated agricultural villages in Tehsil Jehlum.

The clock is about to tick one and the English lesson for nursery class is ongoing. “When he first joined us in April 2011, he would be extremely agitated, throw tantrums and would often run away during sessions” explains seven year old Saqlain’s class teacher, Javaid Hayat. One of the most senior teachers at the school, he is about to complete his nineteenth year of service. “But I had already taken a three day training in sign language and also participated in numerous awareness raising activities and trainings on the needs and rights of PWDs in Noorpur led by CHIP which is why I remained patient with him. I used to let him leave and if he were to cry and scream, I would console him but not force him to stay. I knew he was feeling unsafe and insecure in alien surroundings as the school is far from his home.”

The patience Saqlain’s teacher showed paid off. “Slowly, he realized that there was no reason to be scared here. All the teachers are supportive of him and the students know not to misbehave with him during school hours.” He points out a mistake Saqlain has made in his note-book and sends him back to his seat to correct it. “It is hard to believe it will almost be a year today since his first day in school- he is a completely different child! He is punctual, always well-groomed, wears his uniform and is one of the best behaved children in his class.” Hayat returns his attention to Saqlain and urges him to try and pronounce the English alphabets he is writing.

“He can say a few words, almost completely. For instance he can say c for ca which means cat. He can also say b. His speech is not very clear, but he is not regular with putting on his hearing aids. Taking that into account, his ability to pronounce is even more miraculous. Also, his disability in no way, keeps him from outperforming his class-mates academically. He picks up concepts at the same pace as his classmates do and can write all the alphabets and numbers till 100.” Hayat straightens his starched white shalwar kameez before excusing himself. He has to give the class English home-work for the day.

Two years ago, it was unimaginable for Saqlain, or his family, to believe that he would be attending school regularly until CHIP provided him with hearing aids in 2011. His father, a tractor driver, was too poor to have Saqlain evaluated by a medical doctor as he was unwilling to pay even the 70 PKR transportation costs to Jehlum. “They didn’t believe he could recover so they didn’t see the point of sacrificing hard earned money” explains Saqlain’s first cousin Matloob Hassan. He has been recently recruited in the army and will be leaving the village soon. His father, like Saqlain is hearing impaired – most likely due to generations of cousin marriages that have occurred in the family.

Attitudes such as those of Saqlain’s parents towards children with disabilities are not uncommon in Noorpur. The tough decision of prioritizing expenses for access to healthcare and education instead of food pushes families into the belief that disabilities, such as those of Saqlain’s should be accepted as one’s destiny.

Although they were not supportive when he started attending school, his parents have begun to doubt their pessimism. “They say that if he successfully completes the 8th grade, they will send him to a special educational vocational training center in Jehlum where he can learn a vocational skill and fend for himself” explains Matloob while lifting Saqlain’s school bag.
Post Situation

Pre Situation
B. Who Says I Can’t Become an Army Officer?

In the agricultural village of Jagta in the Tehsil of Jehlum, luxurious houses stand next to impoverished mud and brick huts. In each home, at least one male works overseas in the Middle or Far East. Some find employment as laborers, sending just enough money for their families to survive, whereas others have established businesses. Classes are underway at the concrete Government Primary School Jagta. Five year old Muhammad Umair sits shyly on a rug on the floor of the nursery class as his teacher, Arshad Mehmood, administers a Math lesson. Under CHIP support, in May 2012, Umair’s was enrolled in school and provided a schoolbag.

“He joined us barely a few weeks ago which is why does not have a uniform,” explains Arshad while summoning Umair to the front of the classroom. “My mother has promised me she will buy it for me at the beginning of June, when my father gives her his salary. I can’t wait to wear it!” Umair breaks into a smile. His father works as a soldier in the Pakistan. He bears Umair’s educational expenses – including a 20 PKR fee, without hesitation. Sending Umair back to his seat, Arshad quips, “He too wants to join the army when he grows up – but only as an officer!”

Umair’s enrolment is nothing short of a miracle. He suffers from a strain of cerebral palsy which limits his ability to walk and the strength of his limbs. Although he is able to speak, he has trouble stringing sentences together coherently at times.

Umair’s mother is running an errand outside the village. His grandmother, sixty year old, Reshma Bibi, has come to check up on him in school. Exceptionally vibrant for her age, she explains how Umair was saved from certain death through his parent’s unfortunate experience with his elder sister, Iqra. “When the disability was triggered by a fever she had at the age of four, they thought she would recover by herself. The neglect took its toll, and she passed away soon after,” she pauses to rub her eyes. “When we noticed he was showing the symptoms Iqra did, lying listlessly all day, during a fever he contracted as a one year old, we did not waste any time taking him to the doctor.”

Umair scribbles in his notebook intently. His best friend, Tayyab, who sits next to him points out a mistake Umair has made and giggles. “He attended a literacy school briefly prior to his enrolment here. But it was not a good experience. A couple in the village who were residing in the same building as the school had a fatal fight in front of him. He became so fearful of the murder he witnessed, that he refused to study ever again.” Reshma Bibi glances at her grandson worriedly. “It has only been a few weeks since his enrolment, but we are noticing an improvement in his attitude and temper. Before, he used to be very angry and would throw tantrums if he were to have to ask for something twice. He is slowly becoming less shy and is learning to be patient. Of course there are other reasons for this change too. Earlier, if he were to venture out of the neighborhood, children would try to trip him for fun, hit and tease him. Now his mother has explained to the children that they must not bully him and at school, such behavior is not condoned.”

As Reshma Bibi gets ready to return home, she adds, “His parents are strongly committed to his education. We believe that he has the ability to learn and even work when he grows up - may God give him long life – regardless of the problem he has.” Smiling cautiously as she walks away she exclaims, “And I even dare to dream that he will be married and have a family of his own one day!”
Pre Situation

Post Situation
C. The Winds of Change are Blowing in Hasnoot

Sixteen year old Nouman Asad sits on a rag in the living room of his meek three bed-room brick and mud house. The electricity has been gone all morning, and will not return for another six hours. He points towards a pot holding water outside the door. His forty five year old mother, Safiya Arif, bends over to wipe away saliva from his chin with a handkerchief before serving it to him.

Suffering from cerebral palsy, Nouman cannot move, feed, clothe, bathe himself or speak coherent words. “He was born healthy but on his first birthday, he contracted a fever. We took him to Mandi Bahauddin immediately which is several hours away from our village with much difficulty to see a doctor. He prescribed medicines which we gave to Nouman for a month. They did have a notable impact. But we noticed his disability was still becoming more pronounced and decided to discontinue treatment- we could not afford to spend all of our already limited financial resources on him” explains Safiya Bibi while cradling her four year old daughter- the youngest of her seven children – in her arms.

Illiteracy, unemployment and poverty is rampant in Hasnoot, Tehsil Jehlum located approximately four hours away from Jehlum city. Past the barren Jalalpur Sharif Mountains, roads transform into sandy paths in the treacherous desert terrain. Its’ isolated location forces residents to rely on limited agricultural opportunities for livelihoods whereas some, like Nouman’s father, set up small businesses. It is not surprising then, that in households such as Nouman’s, expenditures for healthcare for the disabled are not prioritized.

Requesting nineteen year old Sobia, her second eldest daughter and Nouman’s primary care-giver - to prepare lunch, Safiya Bibi continues, “I am not saying that we did not care about his health. We took him to a local soothsayer and doctor for relief giving prayers and numerous check-ups afterwards.” The ‘local doctor’ Safiya refers to is a man without any certification whose only medical qualification is that of administering injections - the cheapest alternative to acquiring healthcare from qualified city doctors.

In 2009, after a gap of fifteen years, CHIP arranged for Nouman’s medical evaluation following which he was provided a Cerebral Palsy chair and latrine to develop his independence. His father was also taught physiotherapy exercises by the local Community Mobilizer, Gulbaz Khan. “He enjoys his exercises very much and can’t stop laughing when he is doing them! I administer them everyday at 5 pm for 15 minutes” explains Sobia, who was trained by her father. She has re-entered the room to collect plates. “Before he could not even sit up, as his spine too weak – after all, he has been bed-ridden from birth. But because of the chair, we have noticed an improvement in the strength of his spine and leg. He can now sit up without support and straighten his legs and feet.” Pausing momentarily to observe her bother rummaging through the shelves, she adds, “He also has learned to communicate his basic needs, as I always talk to him now! For instance if he wants water he points to the water pot and if he is missing our father, he says ba,” Sobia’s face brightens up as she explains more of Nouman’s achievements. “Also, because of the latrine, my care responsibilities are declining.”

Although Nouman’s condition has improved in notable leaps over the span of the past three years, it is uncertain whether his rehabilitation will continue at this pace. Girls in Hasnoot are married in their teens and Sobia will be wed within the next few years. “I have 6 other children to take care of. How do I find time to help him with exercises and remember to put him in his (CP) chair in addition to looking after all his basic care needs! Obviously, he is my son, and I will take care of him. I just cannot do it to the extent Sobia does” rationalizes Safiya Bibi. Regardless of the uncertainty of his future, Nouman’s glowing smile is proof that the winds of change are in place in the village of Hasnoot – even if Sobia’s mother may find herself unable to give him the time he needs, it is very likely that his other siblings will be inspired by his improvement and step-up in Sobia’s absence to give him a better tomorrow.
Pre Situation

Post Situation
D. Adjusting to Physical Disabilities, One Day at a Time.

In a squalid one room house in the prosperous village of Noorpur, an away from the city of Jehlum, eighteen year old Uzma Riyaz sits on a charpai¹, reading a tattered fashion magazine. The hot, dry weather makes the atmosphere in the makeshift room, the only one in the house, suffocating. Its’ roof was blown off during a dust storm and has since been put back together shabbily with the sides of wooden crates. A torn piece of cloth serves as a door.

The heat impacts Uzma’s mood negatively. Her mother, Imtiaz Bibi, nudges her to show the diary where she records her favorite poetry. “She ripped them apart!” she points angrily at her five year old sister. “I had written down verses of poetry girls in my neighborhood found in digests and narrated to me.” Smiling politely, she returns her attention to the magazine.

As a result of paralysis triggered by an attack of typhoid, for the past seven years, Uzma has been paralyzed from the waist down. Even in her upper body, movement is restricted due to the weakness of her muscles. Imtiaz Bibi glances cautiously at Uzma before speaking. “She was very healthy until the age of eleven, and attended the local school regularly. Then she contracted a fever. As the disability was taking root, we were unable to get it treated as my husband is a daily wage laborer- we barely make ends meet. Eventually, she lost all movement in her legs.” Uzma smiles uneasily as her mother narrates the tragic turn of events that led to her disability.

“Before her paralysis, she used to go out all the time. Slowly, she began to refuse going out to events she used to enjoy, like weddings and started preferring to stay in all day. Even now, she depends on girls to make the effort to socialize with her. If they don’t, she doesn’t care,” explains Imtiaz Bibi. “What am I going to do outside?” retorts Uzma. “Afshan got married last year and Kiran the year before. My best friends are gone.” Uzma irritated by the topic under discussion.

Returning to her health, Imtiaz Bibi continues, “Still, Uzma’s temper has improved immensely since she received the wheelchair and toilet seat, as she does not have to rely on me for everything now.” In 2008, Uzma was medically evaluated under support from CHIP, following the findings of which it provided her with a wheelchair in 2010 and a toilet seat in 2011 in order to enable her independence.

“That is true. Although my arms are too weak to drive the wheelchair around, at least my mother does not have to carry me around in hers all the time,” adds Uzma. Pleased that Uzma does not mind the conversation, Imtiaz Bibi adds proudly, “Since she got the wheelchair she has started attending weddings again. Also, because of her knowledge of the importance of personal hygiene she received from CHIP, she has a strict grooming schedule. She even imposes hygienic practices on her brothers now – the have to wash their hands all the time!”

Uzma’s mobility can further be enhanced if her mother administers physiotherapy regularly – a feat she has not found the time to complete until now. “I take care of all her needs– I wash her face, bathe her, dress her, feed her, carry her to her wheelchair and help her use the toilet. Helping her exercise is just one thing I do not always have the time to do. I have five other children and a husband to take care of!” justifies Imtiaz Bibi, handing Uzma a reed hand fan. Despite its’ irregularity, Uzma has developed the ability to straighten her legs – a harbinger of what is to come, when her mother is convinced of the need to administer regular physiotherapy.

¹A bed generally used in rural areas for sleeping or sitting on.
Post Situation

Pre Situation
E. My Old Age Will Not Stop Me from Becoming Independent

Near the banks of the Jhelum River, nestled within a winding range of cone-shaped, barren hills, is the village of Malikpur, Tehsil Jhelum. Connected to the city of Jhelum through a largely uninterrupted two-lane road, traffic remains minimal. Occasionally, a donkey driven cart can be seen nudging along. Unlike many surrounding villages, residents of Malikpur have access to public transport at their doorstep due to a bus-stop that was recently constructed.

Located centrally within a maze of narrow, neat bricked streets, and high stone-walls is fifty two year old Amina Arshad’s *pakora* and water-melon shop – she sells fried snacks made of gram powder during the winter months and water-melons during the summer, taking into account the extreme weather in the area that changes local demands for snacks.

“It is our aim to help PWDS in our village become economically independent. We, the CCB and community, have given Amina Bibi, who is an aged, respected member of our village this storage room and makeshift shop free of cost,” explains Muhammad Ashraf who wears a white turban and speaks with conviction. He has been serving the community of Malikpur as the CCB secretary since 2009.

“In addition to the location, with the help of CHIP, we support their business by refusing to purchase goods they sell from anywhere else.” From surviving on her husband’s nominal, daily wage income as a blacksmith, due to her enterprise, Amina Bibi has grown her business to earn approximately 4000 PKR each month. She spends 3000 PKR on buying consumables for running the business and spends the rest, an average of 1000 PKR a month, on household expenses and visiting her two daughters who have been married off in neighboring villages.

Amina Bibi busily re-arranges water melons on a wooden bench. Her henna colored hair falls softly on her weathered face. Through extensive community and family support, Amina Bibi established herself as a businesswoman in Malikpur. By transforming herself from a house-wife whose only focus was cooking and cleaning her three room home, she has emerged a beacon of hope to PWDS across Pakistan by proving that it is never too late to become independent.

Arshad Mehmood, Amina’s husband, hands over the remaining stock of watermelons to her. “She contracted typhoid when she was 25 years old – a few years after our marriage. I took her to a hospital over 15 km away from our village when she started complaining about pain in her ears. The doctor gave us medicines, which helped, but we could only continue treatment for a few weeks as it was too expensive.” He strokes his beard while turning his attention towards unused firewood. Pushing them into the corner of the shop, Arshad makes room to squat on the floor before continuing. “She also began to neglect her health as our first daughter was born shortly afterwards and she had to take care of all our household duties. Slowly, her hearing began getting worse till it was gone altogether. But she did not bow down to her disability, and continued living with the same zest she had prior to her it.”

“Her shop is her main priority” explains Arshad “She opens it everyday between 12 pm and 4 pm, spending the time before opening to prepare batter for the *pakoras* at home or cleaning the shop. To facilitate her, I help maintain records for sales, buy consumables from distant towns and nearby villages, and help her when she has trouble communicating with customers.”

“Her priority is the shop, and my priority is to make sure my wife’s business is a success. Our children have left the home and if tomorrow, I am no longer here, I just want to make sure that her disability will not force her to rely on the charity of others for survival.” It is time for the shop to open and Arshad excuses himself to put up the shop banner outside door of the store room.
Post Situation

Pre Situation
F. The Barber of Noorpur

On a dusty intersection leading into the village of Noorpur in Tehsil Jehlum, thirty two year old Nasir Mehmood lifts the shutter to his barber shop, one of many in a row of businesses on Noorpur Stop that offer services and goods varying from motor repairs to edible goods. He dusts a rickety wooden barber’s chair as he opens for business.

“I bought the furniture, mirrors and tools required for running this barber shop from my uncle in October 2011 with financial help from CHIP. Prior to that, I worked with him as an apprentice for many years. Those were trying times as we were very poor, and I was under a lot of stress as he would often verbally abuse me. Even though I worked very well–he paid me as he pleased. Sometimes he would give me a PKR 100 note and sometimes PKR 300,” he explains sadly while rinsing his barber tools. His bright green eyes light up under the reflection of sunlight that enters the shop through the open doors of his shop.

Against even his own expectations, today, Nasir earns upto PKR 6000 each month that he spends to support his family of seven, including his elderly parents, wife and two infant daughters. “Every month I pay 500 PKR rent for the shop. My daily earning ranges between PKR 300 to PKR 200 and I do not close for holidays, unless I have some urgent business out of the village. After all, it is only with consistence, that a customer can be retained.”

Nasir’s first customer, who needs a shave, has entered the shop. As he wipes beads of sweat away from his forehead, he narrates how the barber shop changed the course of his life. “Before I used to have a bad temper, and had no time for socializing as I was working at all hours as an apprentice. I had no other options, as I am not educated and was also limited because of my disability.”

Nasir was born with a hereditary disability – night blindness – which afflicts both his parents “During my medical assessment in 2009 by CHIP, the doctor said that my disability was from birth and there was no chance for recovery. I also learned that such disorders happen due to cousin marriages. I am grateful that none of my daughters have contracted this disease, as my wife is my cousin but I will make sure I wed my daughters outside the family.”

Smiling he continues, “Now I am independent, I have a prosperous shop in the centre of a village and have made many friends – some are my customers and others are workers at neighboring shops. I also plan to start setting aside some money each month, as I want to expand my business and set up four more barber shops in this area. There is a lot of demand for the services I offer – this is the only area where men from four villages can get a haircut or acquire shaving services.”

Despite the limitations imposed by his disability and impoverished upbringing, Nasir’s spirit has not been broken. In addition to the responsibilities of running his business and home, Nasir is also an active member of the CCB and local SHG. Wiping residual shaving cream off the customer’s face with a towel, he explains his future goals as a community member, “I am inspired by the way CHIP helped me as a person and changed the course of my life by helping me start up my own business, I want to help other disabled persons in our village the same way and change their lives. Recently, I participated in a CCB decision to make a street passing by our house accessible. It is a small but only my first step.”
G. Finding Happiness Again

In the village of Hoon, Tehsil Jehlum, a shanty brick home looks into the scenic mountains of Tilla Jogian. A walk past a parched lake, unpaved streets with overflowing sewerage leads to the house, where Saba Rehman, who was born hearing impaired resides with her family.

“My husband is my second cousin but we never had any hearing impairments in either side of our families – Saba is the only one of my daughters with this handicap” explains Rubina Kausar, Saba’s energetic forty five year old mother. Despite the difficulties she has faced raising a family of eight with an unemployed husband, she exudes positivity – a trait that she successfully projected onto twenty one year old Saba.

“I am not entirely certain when we realized that she was hearing impaired – but when she was two and a half years old we took her to the combined Military Hospital in Jehlum city as we felt all was not well. The doctor there advised us to give her healthy food, which we did, as he determined weakness of nerves to be the cause of her low hearing. But then we consulted another doctor who said that her disability was genetic so we discontinued her special diet, and her hearing receded completely. She never learned to speak but can communicate through sign language.”

Saba smiles brilliantly as her mother speaks. The second eldest in her family, Saba endured several struggles growing up. “She had a strong desire to learn and make friends. To achieve this, she attended the Government Girls Elementary Hoon Hamwala until the 5th grade. It was only after her teacher sent her home saying that she didn’t know how to teach her and that girls were teasing her so much because of our disability so we should spare her (teacher) and Saba from avoidable troubles, that she was forced to sit home.” Explains Rubina Bibi as she fans herself with a book. “Since then she has been sitting at home. She used to be negative, extremely aggressive and fight with us (family) all the time. She would wake up late and not help in household chores. But this all changed when CHIP intervened in our village 2008.” Under inclusive development interventions in the village, CHIP organized a series of interventions to facilitate the participation of PWDs in recreational and communal activities.

“She attended the Vocational Training Center where she learned to stitch and makes clothes for me and all our sisters now.” On her mother’s suggestion, Saba points out table runners she prepared for the living room. It is an intricate floral, cross stitch design made in red thread. “By participating in the WO meetings, she has also made supportive friends. She often goes to their homes to discuss designs for stitching and to look at TV dramas. Also her attitude has improved towards us and life in general, as her friends; including the local CM Soniya Bibi tells her to not fight unnecessarily and to be positive.” During the sports events organized in Dhok Bidr where PWDs from four surrounding villages including Hoon participated, Saba won first place in ludo and also participated in football and rope skipping. While chuckling she communicates through sign language “I fell so many times in the sack race that day!”

Rubina Bibi looks in to the mountains of Tilla Jogian through an open door as she contemplates Saba’s future. “I really do want her to get married and am willing to marry her outside the family.” Saba smiles as she adds through sign language “but he has to have a clean shaven face, a motorcycle and must take me abroad for holidays on an airplane!” Her mother gleams at her daughter and adds, “We can dream, but of course destinies do not lay in our hands. But I do believe that she now has the skills to lead a happy life now, regardless of what direction it takes.”

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2 A board game
Pre Situation

Post Situation
H. Opening the Door to a Fulfilled Life

In the village of Dhok Shadi in Tehsil Jehlum, Ehsan Mehmood stares intently at a 10 inch TV screen where the highlights of a cricket match are being televised. At first sight, the liveliness in his eyes and health of the well-built seventeen year old betrays the hearing and vocal disability he has been afflicted with since infancy. The doctor his parents consulted when he was a child recommended a surgery to remove a knot in his tongue to allow him to make sounds. But, the surgery could be afforded.

“He never went to school as he was unable to hear. He is the second eldest amongst his six siblings and is one of the three children who moved to his mother’s maternal home six years ago, when she got divorced. His father does not support them, and his mother takes care of the fields for a local landowner for PKR 4000 a month. It is barely enough to meet the family’s monthly expenses,” explains the energetic community mobilizer, twenty eight year old Basharat Hussain.

“When we began implementing inclusive development interventions in the village, as early as 2009, he was completely anti-social and not at all interested in making friends. It is not surprising, as he never attended school. He would wake up late, have food and loiter around the village. If an elder or a peer were to make an effort to speak to him, he’d gesture them away with his hand and start walking in the opposite direction,” as Basharat speaks, Ehsan’s aunt, twenty eight year old Shagufta Bibi enters the room. She takes a seat next to Ehsan, in front of a pedestal fan, to cool down.

“In 2010, I took a training on activities of daily living for disabled persons after which I communicated key concepts in cleanliness to him through sign language during one on one sessions.” His aunt, Shagufta Bibi adds “Since then, he takes care of his cleanliness. His clothes are clean, his nails are clipped and he makes sure he washes his face everyday!”

“Most importantly, he has begun getting involved in communal and recreational activities. He developed a strong interest in sports while participating in a sports day event held in 2011 where he won first place for bowling during a cricket match. It increased his confidence and created a sense of connection to the community. He even becomes a member of the CCB during the same year!” Ehsan turns his attention towards Basharat. He senses that he is being discussed and attempts to determine what is being said about him by communicating with Basharat in sign language.

The next two months are crucial for Ehsan. He has decided to take up a job in order to support his family. “He comes from a family of poultry farmers and livestock grazers so it made sense. He already knows the basics of this occupation, as he has observed it throughout his life and has at times, even helped his uncle. He is going to begin working for a local landlord in July.”

The family matriarch, seventy year old Sakina Bibi, bursts into the room to demand Ehsan be allowed to have his lunch while it is still warm, in the courtyard. Basharat asks Ehsan through sign language if he wants to get married.”Ofcourse my grandson will get married!” interrupts Sakina Bibi. Ihsan nods his head eagerly. “Once he begins working, it is the natural next step!” she adds gleefully. With support from his family and community, Ihsan is now setting goals for his future – ones he grew up feeling he had no right to growing up under the shadows of the taboo of arising from a broken home and being disabled. By rising above his fears and overcoming adverse circumstances, he has become a torch-bearer for the potential of young disabled persons to lead a productive life.
Pre Situation

Post Situation
I. Preaching by Example

“We have no regular income. During Eid-ul-Fitr, the community gets together and gives Maulvi sahab approximately 1500 to 2000 PKR for his dedicated services during Ramadan and throughout the year. Every six months, they also thank us by giving a crate of apples or other seasonal fruits or vegetables,” explains Ansar Bibi, Maulvi Usman Ghani’s wife. Forty-seven year old Maulvi Usman has been serving as the religious leader in the thriving agricultural village of Dhok Shadi, Tehsil Jehlum, lying 45 km away from the city of Jehlum since 1996.

He shuffles into the courtyard of his neatly bricked home as his wife arranges food on a plate for their eighteen year old son Ejaz, who suffers from polio. “But it is not right to discuss our income, as Maulvi sahab serves the community with no expectations.” He is returning home after leading the call for the first prayers of the afternoon at the village mosque - a beautiful white structure with minimal embellishments. Usman’s face radiates peace and positivity, entirely deceiving the pain caused by his disability – he suffers from spinal compression which restricts mobility in his lower body. His legs are weak, and although he is able to walk with a slight limp, he cannot carry any weight or engage in activities that put pressure on his lower back and legs.

Taking a seat in the courtyard, he narrates when he first realized the onset of his disability. “I had a severe fever when I was 23 years old after cutting wood in the jungle in the heat. It stayed for many days after which I felt the nerves in my legs were being pulled painfully. Since then, my legs have been getting weaker and are shriveling.” he taps his fingers on the chair as he continues to explain the trajectory his disability took. “In 2007, I had medical check-up in Jehlum city. There, the doctor said I should pay 40,000 PKR to have spinal surgery as the problem was in my spine, not my legs as I had always believed. But I consulted our local doctor about the procedure who said such surgeries usually are not successful and could leave me bed-ridden for life. So I decided against it. I accept that losing mobility in my lower body is imminent, but it will not hinder my service to this community”

Usman took on the role of being the religious leader of Dhok Jumma when he received a calling from his father, the previous religious leader, who was on his death bed. “Prior to that, I was working in private clerical jobs in cities like Rawalpindi.” His calling was a blessing for PWDs- from this platform of the CCB, where he is a member, and the influential platform of the local mosque he has placed an active role in including disabled persons in communal activities and ensuring they have access to basic human rights.

“There was a fair at Nathwala which I made sure all PWDs attended- where families weren’t willing to take them, I arranged for volunteers from the mosque to. To counter a culture of teasing PWDs, I gave a sermon on the mosque loudspeakers reminding the community that as Muslims, we are warned not to make fun of others. My objective is to make sure no PWD feels isolated and alone in Dhok Jumma- I make sure to help them in my personal capacity by mobilizing funds and support from the community when possible. For instance, we held Islamic hymn evening at the mosque recently. Prior to the event, we went door to door informing residents to bring disabled relatives and had a 100 percent PWD turnout because of that.”

Adjusting his red turban he describes what the future holds for him. “This is just the beginning of my work. There are people like Matloob’s parents who still don’t take care of disabled persons. Just the other day, he was lying on sewerage in the street. He was unable to move away as his legs are paralyzed and he cannot see- I do not even know how he managed to get there in the first place. I have spoken to his family numerous times about their lack of empathy for the boy. Now they start fighting with me when I tell them to take care of him, saying it is an internal family matter, but I will not give up till Matloob, and all PWDs in the village, receive respect and their rights as human beings.”
J. Creating a Path for the Sustainable Empowerment of PWDs

A puppet show on disability equality is underway in the village of Wara Gujran at the Government Elementary school. Playing a puppet representing the father of a disabled child is twenty five year old Ghazanfer Ali. As the show stops momentarily for a break to the thunderous applause from community members. Ghazanfer walks to his house, located right opposite the school with a slight limp. A latrine is being constructed for him under CHIP support, and he must check its’ progress. The only son, in a family of six, Ghazanfer contracted polio as a one year old. “We took him to the best doctors in the area, as far away as Jehlum and did not cut any corners getting him regular medical care. When the prescribed medicines stopped working, the doctors suggested electro-shock therapy to his legs. We were afraid, but allowed it– sadly even that did not work.” Raj Bibi, Ghazanfer’s fifty year old mother narrates the events leading to his disability while sitting on a comfortable brown sofa in her modest home. “But I never gave up, I used to massage his legs everyday. I believe he was able to retain some mobility because of this.”

Even before receiving assistive devices and support from CHIP, Ghazanfer, due to his parents’ care, maintained a structured schedule and life goals. “I completed 12 years of education, and traveled to villages such as Darapur to acquire secondary education. Traveling everyday on public transport to complete my FA was proving challenging so I decided to complete it privately,” he explains as his mother hands him a glass of cold water. “Under CHIP support, I was medically evaluated and provided a KAFO in 2010.” He lifts up his shalwar to show the special shoes and device. “I cannot explain how much this changed my life. Although no one ever teased me at Wara Gujran, even then, as a grown man, I used to feel so humiliated when I’d fall while walking, as it was hard to balance myself. Now I am more confident when I walk on uneven streets. Instead of fearing when I will fall next, I can focus on more important things.”

Since 2008, Ghazanfer has emerged as a leader for disabled persons in the Tehsil of Jehlum. “As the Chairman of the Disabled Persons Organization, Kahkshaan, I am working to change the fate of disabled persons in fifteen villages. I believe that economic independence is key to raising the status of disabled persons. A person who doesn’t earn can never be respected in a community. At Kahkshaan, we will conduct fund raising efforts in villages to help disabled persons start businesses and also provide them avenues for acquiring counseling. We will als establish linkages with NGOs like CHIP to help meet any needs of disabled persons that Kahkshaan won’t have the capacity to meet independently.” Stretching his legs, he continues.

“I know the importance of community and familial support for living a productive life as a disabled person. As the Community mobilizer of Wara Gujran since 2009, I have been trained in and administer physiotherapy whenever the need arises and have even acquired training for making assistive devices for disabled persons such as KAFOs and wooden splints. I will make these for my peers free of cost whenever the need arises.”

Glancing at a wall clock to check the time, he describes his duties as a community mobilizer further. “I visit each disabled person and their families in the village twice a month. In addition to helping them with resolve any problems they maybe facing, my message to them is always the same – make yourself independent instead of asking others for help. This philosophy turned the course of my life around. I am sure it will have the same impact on each disabled person who can understand and apply it.” The puppet show must resume. Hurrying back to the school premises, Ghazanfar stops to quickly speak with a laborer installing the latrine. It will be completed in another two days.
Pre Situation

Post Situation
An Overview of CHIP

Who Are We
Civil Society Human and Institutional Development Programme (CHIP) is a not-for-profit company created under Section 42 of the Companies Ordinance and registered with Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan under registration number 0000004052/20041001. CHIP has been designing and implementing development programmes on wide range of development topics in remote rural and urban areas since 1993.

Our Vision
An Aware and Organized Society Capable of Realizing its Own Development

Our Mission
Enabling individuals and organizations to make more effective and efficient development efforts through the provision of value-led Human & Institutional Development (HID) services.

Our Approach & Strategy
CHIP’s operations and strategic orientation is based on the experience that HID interventions have had in shaping current development perspectives. Using this approach, CHIP provides professional services to a wide array of organizations that add value to local development interventions. Human and Institutional Development as an approach has the following key principles:

- Develop local individuals and local institutions. We believe that the key to enhanced efficiency and effectiveness of development efforts lies in strengthening local individuals and local institutions that are responsible for the implementation of development interventions;
- Promote an element of ‘inclusion’ in all our efforts so that we do not miss out any person because of a disability.
- Wherever work on development is to be conducted, its contribution towards the bigger picture i.e. national development has to be kept in mind;
- Positive values when combined with skills and knowledge excel the efficiency and effectiveness of work.
- Use research and advocacy as a tool for bringing positive change at all levels.

What Do We Offer
CHIP offers the following two distinct strategic services:

- Project Implementation Services
  Under project implementation services CHIP designs and implements development projects or selected project activities directly through its field offices. The major thematic focuses are health, disability, education, human rights, water, sanitation, natural resource management and livelihood development. CHIP also responds to emergencies in the country for both relief and rehabilitation.

- Project Management Services
  Project Management services consist of supervision and management of project on behalf of international development agencies or INGOs, in particular those that choose not to establish their own offices locally. This management services includes fund management, operational planning, and establishing a partnership with civil society organizations, recruitment and management of project personnel and procurement;

Our Values
Practice and promote honesty, dedication and commitment