



LEADERS

A Quarterly News Letter of STEP Issue: January - June 2012

Reaching People with Disabilities after Devastating Flood in Pakistan



All assistive devices, particularly wheelchairs, not only mobilize person with physical disabilities, they also assist them to contribute in the society as active member. It is impossible to find active, light weight and fold-able wheelchairs in Pakistan. Until now, the standard wheelchairs available in the country are mostly those which are specifically designed for patients to use in hospitals. Special Talent Exchange Program (STEP) in collaboration with Mahvish and Jahangir Siddiqui Foundation and US- based Walkabout Foundation distributed 300 customized wheelchairs which are light, fold-able, durable according to the requirements of infrastructure in developing countries. The initial phase of distribution was held at Marriot Hotel phase of distribution was held at Marriot Hotel Islamabad. The chief guest for this event was Deputy Chief of Mission, Richard E. Hoagland. In the ceremony it was emphasized that it is important that persons with physical impairment be brought back into society and one of the most important steps in their mainstreaming is mobility in and outside their premises.



Further, these wheelchairs were distributed in different cities of Pakistan.

- 141 Wheelchairs - Multan through Society for Special Persons.
- 91 Wheelchairs - Hyderabad through Nawab Shah Disability forum.
- 34 Wheelchairs - Islamabad for flood affected people with disabilities in Naushera through CHEF International.
- 28 Wheelchairs - Karachi through Disabled Welfare Organization.

U.S. Embassy Alumni Mentorship Program



STEP was proud to be one of the organizations selected by the U.S. Embassy for its Mentorship Program 2012. Three mentees were interviewed by STEP and selected for duration of four months (June- September). The object of this program was to familiarize the mentees with STEP's mission of mainstreaming disabled people in society. For this purpose, the mentees participated in all projects running during their tenure and were encouraged to contribute ideas to further the vision and mission of STEP.



724-G, Street 178, G-11/1, Islamabad Ph: 051- 2220110

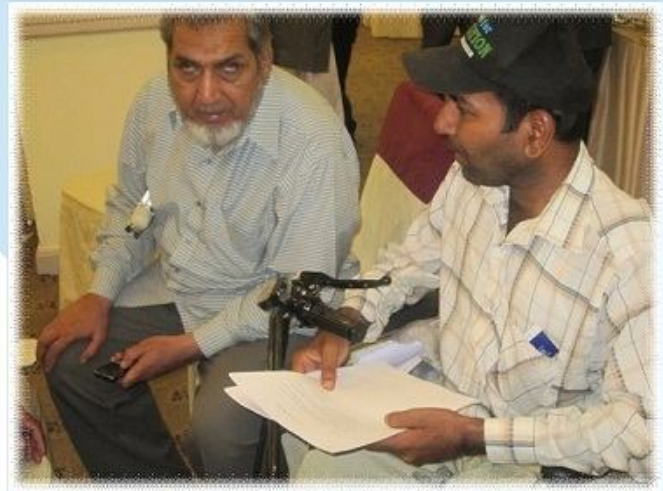
E-mail: office@step.org.pk URL: www.step.org.pk

Latest Research Done on the Livelihood of the Persons with Disabilities



ESCAP in partnership with STEP, conducted an action research encompassing both quantitative and qualitative indicators to generate new data on the livelihoods of persons with disabilities. The research is being carried out in eight countries in the Asia-Pacific region by UNESCAP partnering with disabled persons organizations (DPOS). Two focal persons from STEP attended a capacity building workshop organized for the project partners at Social Development Division ESCAP, Bangkok on 16-18 January 2012 with an objective of developing robust strategies for the research based upon reflection and discussion.

The participatory approaches have been adapted and used for the research in Pakistan and to achieve the purpose, three teams of persons with disabilities were formed including persons facing physical, visual and hearing disabilities. Each team was constituted of 5 to 6 people with disabilities were given one day formal training. Special



instructions were given to the trainees to fill up the Questionnaires as per experiences shared in capacity building workshop and guidelines from ESCAP. A focal group discussion session was also convened with the key stake holders/employees, numerators and some of the participants. One of the uncounted population of the country, how we can be part of decision making.

International Representation



Asia Specific Regional Workshop On Hard Of Hearing and Deafened, Bangkok

Jawad Ahmed, a member of STEP was selected to attend the Asia Pacific meeting for Hard of Hearing held in Bangkok, Thailand. He will be receiving a seat in the forum next year.

Study of the United States Institutes for Scholars

Asfandyar represented STEP in the United states for the USEFP program SUSI for student leaders which is an intense program whose purpose is to provide undergraduate young leaders with a deeper understanding of the United States.



Workability International Conference Taiwan

Atif Sheikh, president of STEP was invited to Taipei, Taiwan for the Workability International conference 2012. The main theme of the Conference was "Discussion on the Promotion of Employment of the Persons with Disabilities Under Global Economic Recession"



First Ever Dialogue on “Defining Disability”



The Dialogue on ‘Defining Disability’ has been organized by Special Talent Exchange program (STEP) in collaboration with the Director of Special Education and Social Welfare, Pakistan Institute for Social Welfare, Pakistan Institute for Social Research and Advocacy (PISRA), Sightsavers Pakistan and Such TV on April 11, 2012 at Helen Keller Friendship Center, National Library and Resource Center, Islamabad. In the dialogue it was discussed that the definition of the word “disabled” has a direct influence on how the rest of the society treats the disabled. Even though there is a need for a proper definition of the word, the understanding of disability socially is influenced so much by social and cultural norms that it is virtually impossible to come up with a universal definition of the word.



4 Year Long Development Project Concludes in Punjab



Leadership Session

Leadership Session took place at the end of February where STEP Collaborated with CHIP, DFID, and Sightsavers. STEP went from village to village in Tehsil Jhelum and Tehsil Sohawa. 15 Villages from each Tehsil were chosen on the basis of extent of backwardness, prevalence of disabilities and health and education issues. Members of STEP mentored these PWD'S for a mentoring program that lasted 4 years with a training session that took place every 3 months. Each session had 30 people each. The project resulted in an elected community citizens Board and the establishment of DPOS within the villages to benefit the rest of the community. Each Tehsil created 5 self-help groups and 1 DPO. The annual final review was conducted by Agha Khan Foundation and the project was reviewed at the end of April. Positive results emerging from the project resulted in an extension.

National Stakeholder Workshop

In collaboration with CHIP, DFID, STEP and Sightsavers completed a 4 year project of leadership training and mentoring of PWDs in Jhelum and Sohawa. The villages were made models for the government and other



organizations to replicate in other rural areas. At the National Stakeholder Workshop, STEP invited local and international NGO's as well as the government to present on the results of the leadership training. More importantly, the workshop briefed the NGO's and the government on the guidelines to replicating the same model in other backward areas.



STEP and Plan Joins Hands for Empowerment of Youth for Development



STEP and PLAN Pakistan joined hands in a project called EYPAD where regular workshops were conducted in Christian slums in Islamabad: France colony, Charles colony, 64 Quarters and 100 Quarters and also included a village near Islamabad called Mehra Bhagwal. The sessions lasted 4 months and trained 20 kids from each community. They were trained in IT, journalism, communication and were taught English as well.

Four Youth Groups emerged as a result of this training:

- o Peace voice
- o Youth Visionaries
- o 100 Masters
- o Super Tigers

They worked for the development of their communities towards sustainable solutions. These groups participated in the PLAN conference called National youth Council and won the top prizes in photography, theater performances and debate competitions.



Accessibility in Schools Leading Towards Inclusive Education



CHEF INTERNATIONAL
Cooperatives Health & Education Forum (CHEF)

Inclusion in education is an approach to educating students with special educational needs. Under the inclusion model, students with special needs spend most of their time with non-disabled students. Inclusion rejects the use of special schools or classrooms to separate students with disabilities from students without disabilities. For this purpose, CHEF International initiated a project in Charsadda to make

Villages with inclusive education in partnership with STEP. STEP conducted access audit for 15 schools in Charsadda in May. STEP had to check and report the extent to which the schools were accessible i.e. to check whether the furniture, classrooms, building etc were accessible for persons with disability. The schools were mainly middle and primary level schools.

In the future STEP plans on conducting teachers' training, curriculum training and creating a parent-teacher committee to promote the inclusion of children with disability in schools for the non-disabled.

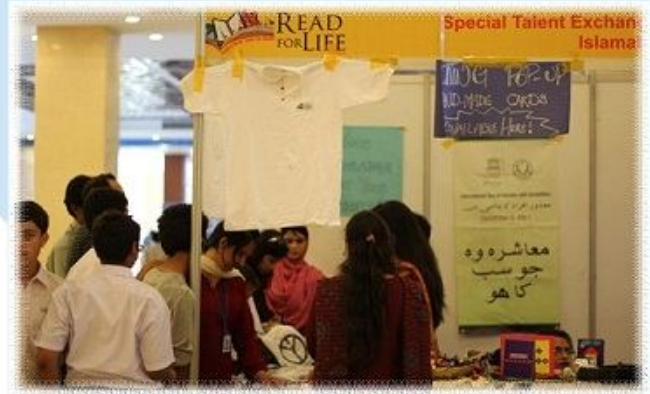


Sensitization of School Kids on Disability



National Book Foundation celebrated National Book Day by holding a four day exhibition in Pak China Friendship Center from 23rd to 26th April. The event was inaugurated by former Prime Minister of Pakistan,

Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani and the exhibition received around 20,000 visitors in five days. STEP set up a disability stall at this exhibition to raise awareness about people with disabilities and create disability sensitization. As a result, almost 12,00 people registered with STEP at the exhibition as volunteers. 12 students from Fauji Foundation University participated as volunteers to run this awareness campaign about rights of people with disabilities during the nation event.



Research on The Role of Education in the Lives of Women with Disabilities



STEP acted as a critical friend to facilitate a research on the role of education in the lives of women with disabilities in Pakistan. The research was conducted by Tehmina Hammad as part of her studies at the University of Cambridge. The purpose of this research was to understand the links between levels of education, educational experiences and outcomes in adult lives. The research enhances the understanding of the lives of women with disabilities in the context of Pakistan, on which, presently, literature is limited.

STEP's President Mr. Atif Sheikh, worked collaboratively with the researcher and developed an interview schedule plan. STEP also arranged two introductory meetings for the researcher with the Program Manager Sightsavers, Ms Munaza Gillani, and Women Coordinator, disabled people International and Liaison and Capacity Building Advisor, Handicap International, Md Abia Akram, where the sampling frame and potential participants were identified. These meetings also informed the sample selection criteria and etiquette of conducting research with persons with disabilities in Pakistan. Documents on current research on disability were also made available.

The research thereafter conducted seven interviews with women with disabilities, in addition th three

Session on Volunteering for Children with Disabilities



STEP and Children Society (UK) conducted a seminar focusing on Child rights. Youth related projects conducted by STEP along with British Council and Volunteer Services Organization were highlighted. Hayles Nicholls, a representative from Children Society discussed The Buddying Project being executed in the UK, where a disabled is paired with a companion. In the seminar, the possibility of The Buddying Project in Pakistan was being discussed.



Partnership Continues for Inclusive Business



Volunteering For Disability In Development

In 2011, Telenor Pakistan launched a new and unique CSR initiative called 'Telenor Hum Qadam' in which nationwide employees are to contribute a total of 50,000 paid working hours in programs supporting fellow citizens in Pakistan. The focus was to shift from charity based model to contribution based model of community development. Telenor pledged 50,000 hours to the disability movement from November 2011 to March 2012. Each employee had to contribute 20 hours, thus this was also referred to as Mission 20 hours. STEP facilitated 1800 Telenor employees. The objectives Included:

As part of Hum Qadam, Mission Count was launched by STEP to count the number of disabled persons in Islamabad in 6 months. The number of people counted by STEP in F sector were 28,000 out of which 18,000 had not seen the sun in the past 20 years. This is a reflection of how our society ostracizes the disabled.

Ingrid from Telenor Group

Ingrid Ihme Annete, a representative of Telenor's Open mind program from Norway visited STEP's office in Islamabad and discussed the possibility of Open Mind program in Pakistan. Open mind program trains disabled persons for a year and then they are employed on merit. As part of her visit, she visited National Institute of Special Education in Islamabad where she discussed future collaborations with DGSC and the implementation of Open mind program. She also met disabled persons in NISE.



Khuddar Pakistan Continues

Khudar Pakistan is a three year project run by STEP in collaboration with Telenor's CSR department.

1st year: Sensitization towards the disabled
2nd year: Accessibility for the disabled. Telenor offices were accessible to a certain extent. Since most of the offices are in a rental area. They could not be altered completely to cater to the disabled, however all telenor offices were made accessible atleast at the minimum level.

3rd year: Focus shifted to inclusion through the open mind program.



Disability incorporated in Active Citizens Program



Extension Of Active Citizen Program

STEP's partnership with British Council continues to strengthen in 2012 through the Active Citizens Program which included:

- 10 Workshops
- December 2011 to March 2012
- 422 Participants trained
- 41 Social action projects



Impossible Campaign

The session of Impossible workshop was organized by STEP in collaboration with British Council. There were a total of 45 participants which included people with disabilities who took oath as ilm Ambassadors. An initiative to spread awareness about article 25-A that states that every child in Pakistan aged 5-16 years has a right to free education.



International Study Visit (ISV)

As part of the bilateral exchange, STEP partnered with British Council to host 36 people from various countries who had come to visit Pakistan through the International Study Visit. The purpose of the exchange was cultural exchange between the participants and their Pakistani hosts. They were introduced to the urban and rural life in Pakistan so as to experience the different lifestyles that exist in the country.



Social Action Projects

The Top 3 Social action projects that were executed as a result of the Active Citizens Program went abroad through a bilateral exchange.

- Momal Mushtaq initiated The Voice of Youth Blog, an award-winning network of over 500 young talents from 75 educational institutes of the world. She went to Kenya.
- Fatima Raza started an anti-pollution awareness campaign through seminars. This project focused on emphasizing on the importance of walking, cycling, and using public transportation to save the environment. She went to London.
- Saad Mian arranged the International Leadership Conference along with STEP. He went to Oldum, UK for an exchange.



Sports Festival of Persons with Disabilities Reaches 20th Year in Abbottabad



20th Abbottabad National Sports Festival was held on June 26, 2012. It included a number of sports designed specially for persons with disabilities such as Blind Cricket, Wheelchair Cricket, Wheelchair Marathon, etc.

The organizations which attended the event were Milestone, Leonard Cheshire Disability, USAID, SADA, A STAR Association and CHEF International. The chief guest was Mr. Atif Sheikh, President of STEP.



Epoch Making Inclusive Fashion Show



STEP welcomed 2012 with a unique Fashion Show. STEP united with Pakistan Special Magazine and Amber & Shehzad (designers) to provide a runway for disabled people. 20 PWDs walked the ramp and proved to the world that people with disabilities can wear the latest designs and look good in them. The objective to bring attention to this unique fashion show highlighting disabled models was fulfilled through publicity by the media. 9 TV channels reported this fashion show and leading news papers such as Dawn and Express news.



Inaugural Forum on the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities



On September 14-15, UNICEF hosted the first Forum of the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities. Abia Akram, the Coordinator of the Disabled People's International Global Network of Emerging Young Women Leaders with Disabilities, spoke at the opening of the Forum saying "girls and women with disabilities should be empowered to participate in decision making processes that impact their lives. Their voices must be heard so they can contribute to their community in the spirit of 'nothing about us without us'".

