



2010

PEACE SCHOOL FOR AFGHAN CHILDREN



FACES PAKISTAN

ABOUT FACES PAKISTAN

FACES Pakistan – Formation, Awareness, and Community Empowerment Society – is a non-profit organization striving to empower the underprivileged in the society. We, at FACES Pakistan, help them embrace cultural and religious differences through interreligious and cross-cultural dialogue. This facilitates collective action for sustainable development. We focus on capacity building of the underrepresented sections and advocating their views, particularly in multi-religious communities, to achieve the broader aims of peace, harmony, social justice and gender equality.

The underlying theme of the activities of FACES Pakistan is peace building and fostering co-existence. We collaborate with private institutions and government bodies to maximize our outreach and better the lives of as many as possible. Our projects attempt to enhance the lives of children, youth and women in different areas across Pakistan by plugging the gap created by overburdened administrative systems and nascent political setup. We take initiatives to aid in the uplift of disaster struck areas and work towards capacity building of the disaster management structures. The plight of marginalised individuals is brought to attention and addressed through advocacy and organizing various activities including conferences, workshops etc.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FACES Pakistan has set up Peace School for Afghan Refugees living in Lahore, Sialkot and Gujrat district. There are a total of 1026 children enrolled in these Afghan schools, who are provided with education up to primary level- starting from the foundation year. In order to cater large number of children in between 3.5-5years, FACES Pakistan set up pre-school sessions to train toddlers who are young enough to be enrolled in school. In Peace schools these children are taught universally accepted subjects; ranging from Mathematics, Science, Religious Studies, English and Peace Studies, so to promote the concepts of interfaith harmony and tolerance. Apart from the educational training received by these Afghan children- they are also taught ethics, behavior, hygiene which adds up to the positive development of these children. In order for children to have a familiar environment, FACES Pakistan has hired all Afghani teachers and have taught children Dari language as well (native language of Afghanistan), so that the parents do feel comfortable sending their child/children (especially girls because Afghan's have strong cultural affinity concerning women and their movements). Also, by teaching them Dari, these children when they return back to their homeland- they would not feel isolated. These schools are located in the targeted areas/localities having great chunks of Afghan refugee population. These areas are in deplorable conditions, lacking even basic necessities, however peace school for these children is a positive step to build the future of these children, so as to when they return back to their homeland- they do not feel alienated and could utilize their education to earn livelihood. In order to engage children and motivate them; FACES Pakistan conducts different co-circular activities, such as giving gifts to these children, so to maintain the enthusiasm of the child and to encourage him.

However, funds are required to sustain the pilot school for Afghan refugees situated in Lahore- having a total enrollment of 500 children and funds are required for the salaries of teachers and necessary supplies like bags, books etc. for these children.

DONATIONS

Total funds required = \$ 5000

Break up;

\$ 10 for one child's one year supply

CHALLENGES

Decades of war and civil strife have made Afghans the world's largest refugee population. Three million Afghans still reside in Pakistan. Their homes in Afghanistan have been destroyed. Prospects for re-establishing themselves in Afghanistan today are poor because of ongoing violence and the lack of shelter, clean drinking water, and sanitation. As repatriation efforts continue, Afghan refugees need to advance their education in Pakistan so they will be prepared for life back home. These Afghans are living in deplorable conditions and have been completely neglected. Many of these refugees are not even willing to send their child/children to these schools, as they simply do not trust anyone. Also, Afghans have strong cultural linkages and traditions which are conservative in nature, which henceforth restricts movement of these children (especially women). Furthermore, due to the unavailability of resources many parents are confronted with this problem of being unable to send their child/children to school, and with more and better facilities- only then would more children be enrolled in school. Without proper education, these Afghan children would have no future, and when they return back to their homeland; they will feel alienated and wouldn't be able to earn livelihood or support their families. Since Peshawar Attacks (16th Dec 2014), Afghan community is facing a lot of harassment by the Authorities (police, agencies etc.) Afghan refugees are even caught and put behind bars for several days; for not carrying POR. This situation causes low number of attendance at Peace school. Also, teaching children universally accepted curriculums and Afghan culture at the same time, proves more time consuming and requires extra effort-not just from the teachers, but from the child too.

SOLUTIONS

By setting up Afghan schools in the district of Lahore, Sialkot and Gujrat, FACES Pakistan has provided a hope for these children to succeed and attain education. The schools are engulfed with properly articulated courses (keeping in mind the Afghan culture) so that these children should always be connected with their Afghan traditions, and through Peace Studies; the motive is to teach children about the concepts of peace and tolerance. Through community mobilizers, FACES Pakistan has developed an understanding with the community members and gained their trust in sending their child/children to school and with each passing year, FACES Pakistan has experienced growth in enrollment. Through partial funding, the Lahore pilot school can be maintained by providing salaries to teachers, giving necessary supplies to children and for hygienic environment- Maintenance of infrastructure is also important. FACES Pakistan has experienced positive attitude from the parents and many are willing to send their children, so more funds could also cater the enrollment of more Afghan refugees. Also, FACES Pakistan monthly monitors and evaluates the performance of children.

LONG TERM IMPACT

Afghan children who are studying at Peace school, initially when they were enrolled- their self-esteem was low and they lacked confidence. However, after attaining education these children have become more confident, more aware about their surroundings and have started dreaming big of becoming either doctor or engineer someday. These children have understood the value of education and in fact, have started persuading other Afghan children to be part of peace school. After gaining primary education, these children can join public schools; where they can continue on with their education. The level of education that is being provided to them; when they return back to Afghanistan- they will not feel alienated and it would be easy for them to re-settle. This can in the long run, help to bridge the gap between two diverse communities; Afghans and Pakistanis. Furthermore, by setting up educational institutions for the Afghan

refugees, more awareness would be created and would ultimately force the government to take refugee crisis seriously and develop centers for their rehabilitation/development. The toddlers who are young enough to be enrolled in school are also looked upon and educated/trained in different activities so when they grow up, they can be enrolled in school without any adjustment issues.