



Ray of Hope





**Thematic Area:
Education**

**"Hope Through
Education and Skill:
Transforming Lives
of Street Children
and Women in
Maskeenabad"**

WHO WE ARE

Network for Human and Social Development is a not-for-profit non-government organization which is registered with Social Welfare Department ICT, Pakistan Center of Philanthropy and Economic Affairs Division. Since 2012, NHSD has been a successful implementation partner for more than 60 national and international organizations, including SGAFP/USAID, OXFAM/NOVIB, Hashoo Foundation, Muslim Aid, RedR UK, VSO Pakistan, UNFPA, UN Women, Omprakash US, Global-Giving US, Give2Asia Friends Fund US, Malteser International, German Red Cross, GTZ Germany, Embassy of Germany, Caritas International, National Bank of Pakistan, CDA Islamabad, MCB, and Akhuwat Foundation. On May 8 2023 NHSD Board of Directors were recipients of “The Corporate Humanitarian and Strategic Achievement Shield” (Presidency, Chief Guest: His Excellency The President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan).

NHSD has also received recognition from Global Giving, Give2Asia, Junior Jinnah Trust, Salani Welfare, and Akhuwat Foundation for their endeavors.





NHSD substantially changed the lives of my community. Were it not for GlobalGiving and NHSD, we would have faced significant hardship (Kimchand Kandhro, Tharparkar 2023)



Peacocks from NHSD Project “Bountiful Heritage” (September 2023 to August 2024)

Photos of Project Implementation









Introduction of Project:

Maskeenabad, a rural settlement in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, faces significant socio-economic challenges, especially among its children and women. Many children in this community are denied their fundamental right to education, instead being forced into child labor to support their families. These children work in harsh and often unsafe conditions, to build a better future for themselves. At the same time, the women and girls of Maskeenabad face severe gender-based economic limitations. Without access to formal education or vocational skills, they remain financially dependent, struggling to contribute to their households. This proposal aims to address these issues by constructing a school for street children and establishing a vocational training center for women and girls. By doing so, the project will provide education for children and offer skills training to women, empowering them to break free from the cycle of poverty and create a sustainable livelihood for themselves and their families.

Objectives of the Project:

Provide Free Education to Street Children:

Establish a school to offer free, quality education to children involved in child labor, helping them escape the cycle of poverty and illiteracy.

Empower Women and Girls with Vocational Skills:

Construct a vocational training center to equip women and girls with practical skills such as tailoring and handicrafts, enabling them to contribute to their family income.

Promote Gender Equality:

Encourage gender equality by providing educational and economic opportunities for girls and women, helping them gain independence and improved social status.

Break the Cycle of Poverty and Child Labor:

By providing education and vocational training, reduce reliance on child labor, and open new pathways for economic advancement in the community.

Foster Community Development:

Promote long-term social and economic development by building local capacity, empowering families, and creating opportunities for sustainable livelihoods.

Increase Access to Education and Skills Training:

Ensure that children and women in Maskeenabad have local access to essential educational and vocational resources that were previously unavailable.

Improve Quality of Life:

Elevate the overall quality of life for the Maskeenabad community by reducing poverty and improving income levels through education and vocational empowerment.

Findings of Baseline Survey

The baseline survey was conducted by NHSD to assess the community's needs. The survey sampled 100 households to understand the demographic, educational, and economic conditions of Maskeenabad, as well as the community's interest in vocational training. This survey highlights the pressing challenges faced by the community, primarily due to severe poverty and inadequate infrastructure. With 73% of families earning less than PKR 20,000 per month, most households are

struggling to meet basic needs such as food and shelter. Overcrowded housing conditions further exacerbate the strain on these families. The absence of schools and vocational training centers in the area has left the community trapped in a cycle of poverty, with limited opportunities for economic advancement. Despite this, the survey reveals a strong desire among residents for educational and vocational training opportunities, particularly for their children and women. However, the lack of financial resources and facilities remains a significant barrier to achieving these goals.

This survey underscores the urgent need for interventions, particularly in the areas of education for children and vocational training for women, to break the cycle of poverty and provide sustainable opportunities for the community's future.

Challenges:

The community of Maskeenabad is deeply impacted by child labor and poverty. For many families, sending children to work rather than school seems like the only option to ensure survival. The absence of local, accessible schools compounds this problem, as there is little infrastructure to support the education of street children. These children often work long hours in unsafe environments, missing out on their childhood and the education needed for a brighter future. At the same time, women in Maskeenabad face their own struggles. Without vocational training or economic opportunities, they are left dependent on their husbands or families, reinforcing a cycle of poverty. Social and cultural norms also play a role in limiting the opportunities available to girls and women, as traditional gender roles often prevent them from pursuing education or employment. These combined challenges create a severe barrier to progress in the community, locking families into a cycle of hardship.

Objectives:

The primary objective of this project is to ensure that street children in Maskeenabad have access to education and that girls and women are empowered with the skills they need to earn a living. By constructing a school, we will provide free, quality education to children who are currently trapped in labor, giving them a chance to develop their potential. The vocational training center will be designed to equip girls and women with marketable skills such as tailoring, stitching, and handicrafts, which can help them generate income. This dual approach—focusing on education for children and skills training for women—will not only uplift individual families but also contribute to the overall socio-economic development of the community. Another key objective is to foster a cultural shift in Maskeenabad by promoting the value of education and gender equality, encouraging families to invest in the long-term future of their children rather than relying on child labor for short-term gain.

Solution:

This project will be implemented through the construction of two facilities: a school for street children and a vocational training center for women. The school will cater to children who are currently working instead of attending classes, offering them a safe and nurturing environment to learn and grow. It will provide a comprehensive curriculum that includes literacy, numeracy, and life skills, ensuring that children receive a well-rounded education. To address the specific challenges faced by these children, teachers will be trained to provide trauma-informed support, helping students who have experienced difficult circumstances. The school will not only focus on academic subjects but also aim to build

students' confidence and sense of self-worth, empowering them to pursue further education or employment opportunities as they grow older.

Simultaneously, the vocational training center will be built to provide women and girls with the skills needed to enter the workforce or start small businesses. Training programs will focus on practical skills like tailoring, stitching, and handicrafts, which are in demand in local markets. Women who complete the program will have the opportunity to sell their products, either locally or through cooperatives, thus contributing to the family income. In addition to skills training, the center will also offer workshops on financial literacy and business management, ensuring that women can effectively manage their earnings and become financially independent. By empowering women with vocational skills, the project will help reduce their reliance on child labor income, enabling families to prioritize education for their children.

Methodology of the Project:

The implementation of this project will follow a community-centered approach, focusing on two main interventions: the construction of a school for street children and the establishment of a vocational training center for women and girls in Maskeenabad, Rawalpindi. The methodology will ensure that the project is tailored to the specific needs of the community, promoting sustainable and long-term impact.

1. School Construction:

A site is identified by NHSD within Maskeenabad for the construction of the primary school, with input from local stakeholders. The school will be built using durable, cost-effective materials to ensure longevity. The design will include classrooms, a small playground, and basic facilities like toilets and drinking water. During the construction phase, local labor will be employed wherever possible, providing short-term income to community members.

Once the school is completed, teachers will be recruited and trained to provide trauma-informed education, particularly for children who have experienced child labor. The curriculum will include literacy, numeracy, and life skills, alongside extracurricular activities that encourage holistic development.

2. Vocational Training Center Construction:

Simultaneously, a vocational training center will be built in close proximity to the school. This center will offer training programs specifically designed for women and girls, with a focus on marketable skills such as tailoring, stitching, and handicrafts. The center will also include a workshop area where women can practice and refine their skills, as well as a resource room for training materials.

3. Implementation of Education and Training Programs:

After construction, the school and vocational center will begin their respective programs. The school will enroll street children and provide free education, with a focus on engaging children currently

involved in labor. The school will operate with flexible schedules to accommodate students with prior work obligations and gradually transition them into regular schooling hours.

The vocational training center will offer structured courses in skills that are in demand in the local and regional markets. Each course will last between three to six months, after which women will receive certification and guidance on how to use their skills to generate income. Workshops on financial literacy, business management, and cooperative marketing will also be provided, ensuring that women can effectively monetize their skills.

4. Community Involvement and Capacity Building:

To ensure sustainability, the project will establish a community-based management committee comprising local leaders, parents, and project beneficiaries. This committee will oversee the operation of the school and training center, ensuring that they continue to meet the needs of the community. Capacity-building sessions will be provided to committee members on topics such as project management, monitoring, and evaluation.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation:

A robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework will be implemented throughout the project. Key performance indicators such as enrollment rates, retention rates, completion of vocational courses, and income generation by women post-training will be tracked. Regular progress reports will be shared with stakeholders, and adjustments will be made to the project as necessary to ensure effectiveness.

NHSD will conduct quarterly evaluations to assess the impact of the school and vocational center, collecting both quantitative data (e.g., number of children attending school, women trained) and qualitative data (e.g., feedback from beneficiaries). These evaluations will be used to measure the long-term impact of the project on the reduction of child labor, improvement of household incomes, and overall community development.

6. Sustainability Plan:

To ensure the sustainability of the project, NHSD will work closely with local government agencies to seek ongoing support for the school and vocational training center. The project will also explore partnerships with local businesses and cooperatives to provide market linkages for women who complete their training. Additionally, NHSD will encourage the establishment of a revolving fund that can provide micro-loans to women starting their own small businesses.

This community-driven, participatory approach ensures that the project not only addresses immediate educational and vocational needs but also creates a foundation for long-term social and economic development in Maskeenabad.

Long-Term Impact of Project:

The long-term impact of this project will be transformative for the community of Maskeenabad. By providing education to street children, the school will break the cycle of child labor that has held back generations. These children will grow up with the knowledge and skills needed to pursue higher education or meaningful employment, enabling them to contribute positively to society. For the women and girls who attend the vocational training center, the opportunity to learn a trade will lead to financial independence and improved economic security. This will have a ripple effect, as empowered women can contribute to household income, reduce poverty, and make better educational choices for their own children in the future.

Over time, this project will promote greater gender equality in Maskeenabad by changing traditional perceptions about the role of women and girls in the community. As women become more economically active, their status within the household and society will improve, leading to broader social change. The combined focus on educating children and empowering women will have an intergenerational impact, ensuring that future generations have the tools they need to succeed. Ultimately, this project will create a sustainable model for community development, one that reduces poverty, fosters education, and promotes gender equality in Maskeenabad.