



### Emerging from the ruins of conflict

*“I still keep the old Jhonpri (tent) intact as it reminds me of what I was and what I am now. Today my endless struggle has started to reveal fruits. But when I look into the past, I see the night when I lost my parents and brothers in a conflict. At that time I was weak.... I had seen the devastation of my family in front of my eyes. But now the world is upside down. I am financially stronger, I am respected by the people, they come to me for settling disputes and they accept my advice.”*

**Azizullah, a livestock middleman, master trainer and businessman, village Tappi Kanda, union council Mattakhel, district Karak**

At the age thirty-two I know what it is like to deal with loss. I have buried my parents and three brothers in the same soil that turned deadly for them. While struggling with severe injuries myself, I saw my older brother grappling with life. Though saved, he was ultimately left paralysed. That same brother and his family I have indemnified. My life is a saga of a poverty stricken but bloody, feud-filled story to become a trained, successful and peace-loving businessman.

I was mindlessly orphaned at 15, but I willed myself to gather courage, because I knew I had to survive if not for myself, then at least for my remaining family. I started off as a broker in fixing deals on the sales and purchase of livestock, going by the small commissions. My initial struggle was very tough, I worked so hard but the reward was too little. On arrival of the LPH Project in my village, I got to meet

Mr. Fayyaz of the LPH project and Mr. Naeem Shah from the Livestock Department. This was the turning point of my life. I showed my interest and got noticed. I received trainings in livestock management, vaccination and de-worming. Selected as a master trainer, I went on to train a 100 people from the village and was also involved in imparting advice (in consultation with the livestock department) on the same. Four years later, I am now also serving as a middleman in the livestock fattening interventions for which I have formed groups of interested people and provide guidance in the techniques. Surprisingly about 75% of the participants are women and still increasing as they are taking more interest in the business and often come to me for assistance and guidance. I have at my disposal a herd of animals raised through livestock fattening. In this way I get to fulfill the demands for bigger lots by clients from bigger markets in no time.



There was a time when I did not own any animal but now I own a herd of 200-400 cattle and goats. This number I maintain throughout the year on the grazing land. Apart from these, I keep a reserve of 40 – 50 animals in a barn in my home. Even my children are presented with a calf or goat which they raise themselves, as does my wife. It is meant to instill a sense of responsibility, care and of course the profit is all theirs if I get to sell it. I also provide free of cost consultation services to the aspirants on livestock management. If anyone cannot afford the expenses of a treatment for their livestock, I meet the expenses out of my own pocket and that is because of two reasons. Firstly, being a Muslim I want to do something for the wellbeing of the poor. The other is that if I don't help in the treatment of livestock they may lose one but if the disease is contagious then the loss in the community and also mine will be manifolds as I have hundreds of cattle and goats; this means one infected and all will be gone.

The journey has been incredible! I remember fetching water for my mother from afar and now I have a water pump in my house, along with solar panels for electricity. I have also purchased a 100 Kanal agricultural land as well as a two roomed house in Dera Ghazi Khan. Recently my wife got herself some gold bangles from her own profit made after selling her animal. I can even afford hiring help from four workers. My ultimate success is being able to send my children and nephew to school. My present life is, of course much better than the bloody, poverty stricken end I was sure to meet. Would you believe that I, a poor orphan with half a family perished to mindless quarrels, am now sought for settling disputes and for advice? Interestingly, besides practicing what I have learnt from trainings, I have also explored experimenting and producing cross breeds. Besides the local market, my linkages now span over the cattle markets in Afghanistan, Balochistan, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Peshawar and Mardan and I have little time to look back. But sometimes I still do look back, I remember the time when I had only one tent (Jhonpri<sup>1</sup>) to give shelter to my family. I own a lot more now, however I still keep the Jhonpri intact as it reminds me of what I was and what I am now.

---

<sup>1</sup> A slum dwelling typically made of mud and other locally available stuff

