



Teaching to Appreciate Life

“I hear these simple words from my little students, “I know how to count and write”. My biggest satisfaction in life is looking at my students actively learning and quickly responding to my lessons. Rest assured, I am a very happy man.”

Safiullah, Teacher in the LPH NFE School, Larsaddin valley, Bajaur Agency

I remember when my father worked as a labourer in Karachi and we would only get to see him during Ramadan, when he would visit home. He would tell us, “I work as a labourer because I am not educated. If I were educated I would have changed your lives”. Both my father and grandfather were

illiterate. My mother worked hard as a domestic servant to give us two meals a day. But what a wonderful woman, she made sure that we got to receive our education. Can you believe we are 6 brothers and are all educated despite our financial circumstances? I have two masters' degrees, one in Islamiat and the other in Economics. Unfortunately, my sister could not attend school as there were no schools for girls nearby. So she remained at home and took the responsibility of household chores. I regret this sad fact and realize that I could have tried to teach her at home. I look forward to educating her now, no matter what her age is.

The dilemma of not having a school in or near our village always upsets me. There is a primary school located at a walking distance of 5 km from our village. With no transport facility and lack of parents' interest, children were not sent to school rather they were engaged in chores at home and on the fields. In 2011, LPH opened a non-formal primary school in my village. Their criteria for teacher selection was very appealing, they made sure a local graduate/teacher is selected so I submitted my resume. Since I was the only educated person in



my village, I was called for an interview. I was too scared to be interviewed before a panel as it was my first time. The panelists were very friendly and my interview went very well and I made it.

Now as a teacher, I had a responsibility of admitting children in the school. Most of the parents were reluctant to send their children. But with the support of the LPH and SPO1 staff I managed to motivate parents and to create awareness on the importance of education. I was happy to see children pouring in to learn in my school. A total of 32 boys and 16 girls got to be enrolled. But disappointingly after a few days, the girls' parents canceled the admission because they wanted them to work at home.

I again launched a campaign on the importance of girls' education. It was a continuous process of motivating parents. We succeeded in forming a Village Education Committee (VEC) who were also involved in this campaign and by 2015 we succeeded in enrolling the girls. Now their enrollment has increased and parents happily send their daughters to receive education. My teaching in a school located in a tribal area has many rewards and challenges. I get to play with children, teach them, conduct activities with them and open doors for my students to learn. All I want is to hear these simple words coming from them, "I know how to count and write".

My lessons are such planned that the students can understand. They need to see the bright side of life and appreciate the beautiful things around them. I find it comforting to know that the community within my school is as strong as the roots in our fields, and I appreciate the many benefits that a tight-knit community has to offer. Many students who graduated from my school return and appreciate the encouragement I gave them to continue their education. One of my primary graduated students, Badshah

Hussain who is now in grade 8 in the Government Higher Secondary School for Boys often comes to meet me and discuss his studies. I feel proud when he confidently talks to me and respects me.

¹ Strengthening Participatory Organization-Implementing Partner of LPH

I am content to see my first six primary graduated boys continuing their education in the Government Higher Secondary School for Boys and Islamic Children Academy which are located in Dehrakai. They score high and confidently compete with other boys. I am proud to announce that my school has now merged with the government programme of Basic Education Community Schools (BECS). My dream is to educate all in the village, not just my son Talha and my daughter Fauzia but all the children.

