

Unleashing the Power of Teachers for Improved Learning

How UNICEF's intervention empowered teachers

30 January 2024 | Sadaf Fatima Bokhari |

Shrinagar, Karachi: "I have been teaching for over twenty years. Over my tenure, lecture-based lessons were embedded and inculcated in my style of teaching for decades." said Sadaf Fatima Bokhari aged 40 with a grim smile, at the Government Boys Secondary School (GBSS), Shantinagar in Karachi district.

The sound of children's laughter and the scribbling of chalk on blackboards filled the air. Here, a passionate secondary school teacher, stands before her classroom, reflecting on her journey.

Sadaf explained that lecture-based teaching methods had dominated government schools for decades. These outdated practices compelled children to lose interest, resulting in a subpar standard of education. "My heart ached over how traditional pedagogical ways failed to promote genuine understanding and learning among pupils."

Like other teachers, Sadaf's way of teaching was limited to a board. This made the standard of education questionable.

Shantinagar is a town located in the East district of Karachi. The town is largely populated with diverse ethnic groups including minorities. For several people in the neighborhood, it also plagues them with child labour.

The uninspiring learning environment further fosters widespread absenteeism. The pressing need for more engaging and effective teaching methods became increasingly apparent.

To engage students and improve their learning, attention needed to be veered to adapting new pedagogical approaches.



©UNICEF/Pakistan/ Sadaf Fatima Bokhari teaching in class at GBSS Shantinagar, Karachi

To fill that gap, UNICEF's Sindh Technical Assistance for Developing through Enhanced Education Programme (STA-DEEP), with funding from the European Union (EU), is addressing the key issue. Implementation of the School Clustering Policy 2021 which is part of STA-DEEP is intended to address issues of isolation of rural schools with scarce resources, teachers and the non-availability of professional development for teachers.

STA-DEEP launched a training program to train guide teachers to support teachers academically in their cluster. It is being implemented across 14 districts and 20 cluster schools. The guide teachers mentor teachers in their cluster schools, observe classes to ensure modern practices are implemented with daily follow-ups and feedback.

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UNICEF/Pakistan / Sadaf (Left) training teachers from her neighbouring cluster schools as a Guide Teacher

Many teachers noticed that when learning is fun, it positively affects students' performance. Sadaf observed that active-based learning increased class participation and boosted students' self-esteem and confidence to perform.

Over a few months, student attendance improved as they began to take an interest in their studies. "Our student attendance at GBSS Shantinagar has improved drastically by 30 percent and I can't stop feeling overwhelmed about the progress."



UNICEF/Pakistan/ Children participating enthusiastically in class during an activity.

GBSS is one of the few pilot cluster schools that is undergoing a transformation. Frustrated by the limitations of traditional lecture-based teaching methods, it is now embracing an innovative approach that is changing the lives of both students and teachers.



UNICEF/Pakistan/Sadaf Fatima Bokhari (Left) observing one of her trained teachers Abdul Majeed (Right) during class at a feeder (primary) school from her cluster.

In addition to obtaining training from STA-DEEP, Sadaf works in an additional role of a Guide Teacher. She has been mentoring several teachers, one of whom is Abdul Majeed. He is a teacher at Government Boys School (GBS) located in Gulshan Iqbal. It is a primary feeder school associated with the main cluster school. "I have been teaching for over 30 years but had limited knowledge about activity-based learning," shared Majeed. He further shared that Sadaf's training enabled him to apply advanced teaching methods. The ripple effect of this support was evident in his students' performance.

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Amongst several teachers benefiting from STA-DEEP's training and SE&LD's School Clustering Policy 2021, Sadaf Fatima reached the zenith of her potential in teaching. She stands in her classroom, a fulfilling smile on her face, grateful for the transformative change she witnesses.

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