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SUCCESS STORY

Hindu Minority Community Children Get To Go To School For the First Time – Ever!

The Sindh Community Mobilization Program (CMP) continues to maximize community support for the Sindh Basic Education Program's (SBEP) investment in the future of education in Sindh Province by mobilizing communities to increase SBEP school enrollments.



The newly enrolled Marwaari tribe children in school.

Photo by: USAID/CMP

“The decision of the Marwaari to send their children to school is a real break with a damaging tradition of allowing them to work instead of attend school. It's an inspiring example of how people working together can perform wonders. Thank you USAID for helping create this wonder!”

Mushtaque Ali Sahito, Head Teacher,
GBPS Ali Nawaz Sahito, Khairpur
District

The Marwaari, a small marginalized Hindu tribal community, first came to the attention of CMPs' Khairpur team during the selection process for CMPs' Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey of mothers in relation to the health of children aged 5-9 in the village of Ali Nawaz Sahito. Three mothers, two Muslim and one Hindu were selected. Azra Marwaari, the selected Hindu mother said she felt honored: “Organizations doing this kind of thing usually only visit homes of Muslims. You've shown the Marwaari respect. We'll be pleased to cooperate with you again at any time.”

When CMP's Community Mobilization Team started working closely with the local Government Boys Primary School (GBPS) Ali Nawaz Sahito and its School Management Committee (SMC) to get the level of enrollments up, they made a point of leveraging this initial contact with the Marwaari; because it had led to the discovery that the Marwaari had never sent any of their children to school.

The SMC and CMP team facilitated a meeting of representatives from both the Hindu minority and Muslim majority communities. The meeting provided an opportunity to stress the importance of education for all the children of the village and publicize upcoming CMP community mobilization activities. “Marwaari children don't go to school - they work,” confessed the group of Marwaari tribe elders attending, “it's always been our tradition. But we understand that in today's world it's wrong. Our children need to be educated.”

The next day, 19 children were newly enrolled in the school - including 12 Marwaari boys.