



USAID | PAKISTAN

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUCCESS STORY

Education Beyond Disabilities

The odyssey of a young deaf-mute girl child as she learns to read through Sindh Reading Program's leveled readers to make out the meaning of everyday life.

Learning the Ropes of Life



Anisha studies with her father in a single room house. "Being a teacher, I could see my own child failing in life. I was distraught. Learning for Anisha is more important for her survival in this world. I'm glad to see how she has started communicating with us through SRP's levelled readers." said Rehman.



Anisha's class teacher, Zakia, giving her a completely new learning experience in the class.

It doesn't appear on any map; is barely visited by authorities; its people live in almost medieval conditions.

For the world, this is a faraway village, Lal Buksh Sheikh, in Larkana city in northern Sindh; but for Aqeel-ur-Rehman and his 8-year old daughter, Anisha, this village is their whole world.

Born deaf and mute into a family whose daily income is less than USD 10, Anisha's life is the epitome of struggle with varying degrees. The twin impairment have a compounding effect on Anisha's learning as a student.

Ideally, a physical or any impairment should not have any effect on a student's ability to learn to read and write as long as the appropriate resources are given to the child from the start. However, in Anisha's case, and in the case of many like her, the 'appropriate resources' are not only lacking, but are completely unheard of.

"Her inability to speak and hear never deterred Anisha from attending school along with her sister. In fact she is more regular and attentive than other girls. But we really didn't know what to do with her. She'd just sit in the classroom, trying to make her fellow students and teachers understand what she was saying, but all in vain," told Zakia Begum, class teacher of Grade 1 at Lal Buksh Girls Primary School.

"However, after receiving Sindh Reading Program's teaching and learning materials, and getting a training on implementing them in the class, I knew exactly how I'd teach Anisha. I will teach her like any normal student in my class.

"SRP's classroom materials have played a vital role. Unlike regular textbooks, letters and illustrations in SRP's levelled readers are large and relevant. I apply interactive techniques like drawing letters in the air, and use pictures to connect them with words. There is a vast improvement in Anisha's recognition of words and lips movements to identify objects." Added Zakia Begum.

Sindh Reading Program has developed and distributed a set of highly specialized teaching and reading resources, which are introducing the public school students to read-alouds and levelled readers for the first time in Sindh.

Appreciating these efforts, Rehman, 46, said, "Given that there are not many schools, let alone a special education center for children with impairments, the efforts being made by SRP trained teachers are making a gradual impact on Anisha's learning curve.

SRP has gone extra mile in creating its learning materials on a scientific framework, which studies and factors in font style and size, illustrations, book size and number of words per page to ensure that these resources are age and grade-appropriate.

You can watch Anisha and Zakia reading together on this [link](https://vimeo.com/164083623): <https://vimeo.com/164083623>