



Ali Hasan Mangi

Memorial Trust

Changing Lives. One Village at a Time

Newsletter
Summer 2020

Dear donors and friends,

We hope that this newsletter finds all of you well and safe. As with everyone across the world, it has been a difficult year for us and the communities we serve due to the pandemic.

In early March, we began closing our public facilities starting with the public library, public art hall, children's activity hall and clinic. Then, a few days later, we shut down our children's playground and public park as well. As of July 1, all these facilities remain closed as we continue to monitor the data on Covid-19 cases.

Before the closure in January, we organized the first inter-village volleyball tournament in the district at our Community Playground in which six teams participated. We hope to be able to continue supporting sporting activities for the youth once the situation normalizes.



Our offices in the area have remained operational throughout this period with protective measures in place including physical distancing, masks and frequent handwashing. Members of the public continued to visit our offices to apply for assistance in installing water hand-pumps, building toilets and homes and constructing bridges and sewerage systems. Our referral system and medical assistance program has also continued to operate through which we helped patients with testing, medicine, specialist referrals and surgery.

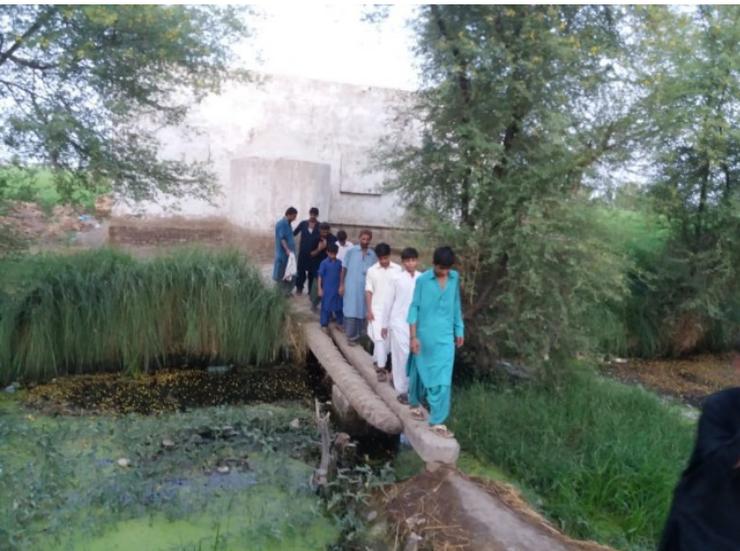
In April, we ran a limited scale food distribution program for those families whose income was entirely dependent on surrounding cities that were locked down. We helped 25 families in which the primary income earners were rickshaw drivers, donkey cart transporters, daily wage construction workers or shop assistants. Our assistance was sufficient to take care of one month's dry food provisions for a large family.

A major focus for us in these six months was helping communities build essential infrastructure that the government has failed to provide. In Village Bachal Veesar, which had been plagued for years by violence on account of fighting between tribes, the government had been unable to enter the area to build sewerage drains. The village, which has over 400 households, had no sanitation system to speak of. This spring, we worked with the communities to help them understand our model of participation. As a result, we were able to built over 2000 feet of sewerage drains in three neighborhoods of the village, covering about 80 percent of households. We provided construction materials, families organized the labour among themselves and the community pooled their funds to pay the technicians who built the drains. This is the fifth village where we have helped a community build a basic facility they had done without for decades.



Another important area for us during this period was bridges or culverts in communities where people have to cross water courses to get in and out of their homes or to transport produce from their fields. This year, we helped three more communities build this essential form of infrastructure. Once again, we worked with the communities to put in the labour and pool their savings to pay the technicians who built the bridges. We provided building materials and coordinated the project. And here's the most interesting aspect of it: No bridge has cost us more than Rs 80,000 (\$480) in materials and the construction is so sturdy, communities can easily transport their crop loaded onto tractors cross the bridge or send their flock of buffalo across. Previously, it was a struggle to get livestock across the water course and there were frequent reports of children drowning as well. We have so far helped eight communities build bridges to make life easier for village residents. Needless to say, the fact that these communities lead their own development gives them a vital sense of independence and dignity.

A BRIDGE BEFORE CONSTRUCTION



A BRIDGE AFTER CONSTRUCTION



In these six months, we helped about 70 patients in need of medical attention for urgent or chronic problems. Of these, several needed assistance with expensive tests, some needed surgery and others needed long-term medicine or specialist care. Of these, four patients received help under our special program for congenital heart disease before the pandemic threw medical services into disarray. We have several children waiting for surgical procedures for birth defects of the heart and we hope to get them treated once it is safe to transport them to Karachi and get them admitted to hospital.



Our family assistance program has also continued to operate through these times. We have focused on three primary areas: construction of toilets, installation of hand-pumps to provide clean water and assistance to build homes to create safe shelter for families.

In 2020, we helped 335 families in 27 villages build toilets at home to improve sanitation. These were all made for families who had to use makeshift toilets that were nothing more than a partition made of straw with no disposal or for those where women wait until after dark to go out into the field. We provide all the materials and families put in the labour so each toilet cost our donors about Rs 8000 (\$50). We are already funded to build another 250 toilets by December which will then take the total toilets built by us to 1100. We will launch an appeal later in the year with the budget and plan for toilets in 2021.



We also helped another 60 families in 14 villages install water hand-pumps that will provide them with clean water at home, leaving women with time they would normally spend fetching water from a community hand-pump. We have so far helped over 500 families in dozens of villages install water hand-pumps.



Under our housing assistance program, we helped 35 families in 13 villages build shelter so that they no longer need to live out in the open in the extreme winter cold and intense summer heat of the area. We selected families who have spent decades living in mud-and-straw huts unable to build brick rooms. We work with them to save up enough to be able to pay the mason who will build the one-room structure and then the families put in the labour themselves and we provide building materials. Each home costs our donors about Rs 70,000 (\$435). Some families have spent years building a room brick by brick and then approach us seeking assistance to install just the roof which then costs us up to Rs 20,000 (\$120). We have helped about 250 families so far to build shelter.

A FAMILY HUT BEFORE CONSTRUCTION



A FAMILY HOME AFTER CONSTRUCTION:



Our primary challenge as a result of the pandemic has been related to our children. Since our schools run by The Citizens Foundation have remain closed since February, we have about 800 children who have spent the last four months with nothing to focus on. Our Community Center has also been closed which is why these children haven't had recourse to the playground, activity and art halls and sport. Moreover, given the lack of consistent electricity, the scarcity of smart phones and the absence of Internet, online schooling hasn't been an option either. We have experimented with small scale measures such as delivering library books to students and collecting back from them, introducing the concept of pen pals to encourage letter writing and an exchange of ideas and the limited distribution of educational videos where possible. We're still trying to work out how we can do more by keeping communities safe so any advice or help would be most appreciated.

For the rest of 2020, we will continue to monitor the situation with regards to the pandemic and plan to take a decision on reopening facilities once things are clearer. Meanwhile, we will continue to assist our patients by helping them reach a diagnosis and get access to treatment through various medical facilities in the cities. This is a vital part of our services so that patients with other conditions do not suffer while all attention is on Covid-19 care. We will also continue our projects that focus on building community and family infrastructure as we expand to several more villages in the area. And we will also be watching out for any families in our communities who need urgent food assistance as the economy takes a hit in the months to come.

We would like to sincerely acknowledge our small team of dedicated workers who have continued to show up for the communities we serve despite all the risks. They work extremely hard in summer temperatures that exceed 50 degrees Celsius or 120 degrees Fahrenheit, spending hours on the road traveling from one village to the next on nothing but a beat-up old motorbike. We would like very much to be able to buy a Suzuki Bolan Van and a new motorbike to be able to provide

safer and more comfortable transport. If anyone is interested in helping out in this area, we'd be more than happy to discuss that separately. We are incredibly proud of our team and we take special pride in the fact that each and every one of them are members of the same communities they serve.

We would like to end this newsletter by offering our grateful thanks to all our donors who have continued to support our initiatives in these very difficult times. Everything we do is possible only because of your support and we are so appreciative of your generous assistance.

Please write to us at mt@alihasanmangitrust.org with your thoughts, ideas and feedback. We would love to hear from you. You all remain in our thoughts and prayers. Stay safe.

The Team
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