



## From the Desk of Aasim Siddiqui

Through our projects assessments we have now realized that our efforts towards poverty alleviation have started making visible financial impact on our focus communities. As a social policy institute, we are now finalizing an overall policy required for an effective poverty alleviation strategy, as well as individual program policies relating to health, education, livelihood and food security.

The wealth of our research on projects, along with the feedback of our focus families have now established our various poverty alleviation related programs on a much stronger footing. In the last two years we have learnt a lot, done a lot, and are now focusing on developing indicators for our exit strategy from these communities. Financial empowerment is the only answer in these difficult times and as our projects grow, the indicators to support our policies are getting very encouraging, enabling us to better gauge and calculate the safety nets that we are creating within the communities. I hope these newsletters provide our readers a clear picture of our activities and as usual we look forward to their valuable feedback.




### HIGHLIGHTS

#### Livelihood Assistance Program

1062 acres Financed in Total  
574 acres financed in Phase V  
314 animals Financed in Total  
110 animals financed in Phase IV

#### Community Development Program

3 Temporary Learning Centers with a total of 247 students  
2 adopted government schools with 110 students  
5701 screened for Hepatitis B & C in Total  
5554 vaccinated on Hep B & C in Total  
Polio Campaign with 3,192 children vaccinated  
School Based De-Worming Project with 2,001 children  
2 Primary Healthcare Centers with 632 beneficiaries  
Mobile Health Camps with 794 beneficiaries in Total  
School Health Initiative in TLCs with 108 beneficiaries  
150 toilets constructed

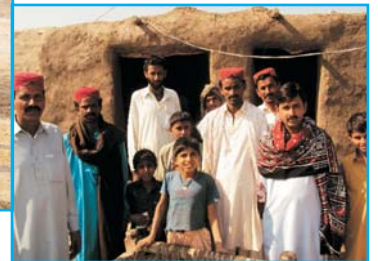
#### Food Security Program

69 animals distributed to 39 families  
113 households provided with kitchen gardens

## Greeting from the OSDI team

Organization for Social Development Initiatives is a project-based think tank dedicated to improving living conditions for the poorest communities in the rural areas of Pakistan through sustainable poverty reduction strategies and economic development. In its unique approach, OSDI's each initiative is done in consultation with community members to ensure ownership of the project in the four focus districts in Sindh and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

This newsletter sheds light to recent successes in the various projects taking place under three programs focusing on Food Security, Community Development and Livelihood Assistance. OSDI takes pride in reaching more families project by project. For example, in agricultural project the land cultivated in the current phase equals to the total acreage in all past phases. Find this and more success stories in this newsletter.



## Livelihood Assistance Program

The purpose of LAP is to alleviate poverty through increasing the income and saving potential of rural households through a process that integrates best practices in agriculture farming, small enterprises, and livestock rearing practices in the field with micro-financing. OSDI provides farmers with affordable loans along with thorough guidance on how to improve crop yields, better care of their animals and invest in asset creation to enhance savings in the future.

## Community Development Program

This program aims to reduce poverty by providing access to services and resources such as improved education, health, drinking water and community infrastructure. Recurring expenditures in each of these tend to exacerbate inter-generational poverty. OSDI has made community contribution a part of each project in order to ensure ownership and sustainability.

## Food Security Program

Rural households that are susceptible to socio-economic shocks are facilitated with means and resources that enable them to grow their own food at home. This ensures that extremely poor and vulnerable families are provided with food security in times of crisis as well as improved quality of nutrition intake during normal circumstances.



## FOOD SECURITY PROGRAM

### Kitchen Gardening –Phase I

In November 2011 the first phase of Kitchen Gardening started in Khairpur, Shikarpur, and Matiari districts in Sindh to provide food security and a balanced diet of vegetables to vulnerable families. 113 families with approximately 240 square yards each were provided with seeds, fertilizer and training to grow their own vegetables in order to improve nutritional intake and reduce daily expenses.

The families are cultivating seasonal vegetables in a 3-4 month cycle. Especially spinach, turnip, onion and tomato grew nicely and families saved Rs 50 to 70 per day on the vegetables they did not need to purchase anymore. The first phase was a success with over 70% families securing a steady supply of vegetables from their kitchen gardens for up to 6 months.

The 25 families in Food & Nutrition Kit project have become a part of the Kitchen Gardening project to ensure their progress towards food security.



### CASE STUDY 1: KITCHEN GARDENING

Every evening all members of Hussain Buksh's household, including 2 sons, 4 daughters, and a wife, sit down to have dinner. The dinner consists of an assortment of vegetables grown in Hussain Buksh's own kitchen garden. For the retired army pensioner the threat of food insecurity loomed large in face of market supply shocks and rising inflation. *"My pension of Rs 5,000 was not enough to cover my food expenditures at all. I had to make a lot sacrifices and cut down on other expenses,"* he said.

OSDI provided seeds of four vegetables including tomatoes, onions, spinach and okra, as well as fertilizer for them. The beneficiaries including Hussain Buksh were also provided training and expert consultation on best vegetable cultivation practices by OSDI appointed agriculture scientist.

After OSDI's assistance, not only did Hussain Buksh's vegetables begin to grow but within a few months, the vegetables were sustaining his household's dietary needs. *"Previously I had to spend between Rs 1,000 to Rs 1,500 of my pension on vegetables. Now all I have to do is pick them from there,"* he points to his kitchen garden.

Not only is he saving money but fresh produce from his kitchen garden is also providing a balanced diet to his family for more than four months now. He plans to grow more in order to sell his vegetables in the market and generate income from his newly acquired skills. For the time being he is happy to share excess vegetables with his father, brother, and sometimes his neighbor as well.

### Livestock Distribution

In addition to the 44 goats distributed earlier in Matiari, another 25 female goats were provided to 17 poor female-headed families in Khairpur district. The primary purpose is food security for families through domestic consumption of milk, butter, yoghurt and *Jassi* to improve nutritional intake and create savings. Secondly, these female goats give assets and protection to the households and can lead to herd increases resulting in a much needed boost in income for the families.



## LIVELIHOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### Agricultural Project – Phase IV (finished)

OSDI financed 54 families for cultivating cotton in Khairpur and Matiari districts on 198 acres combined and 25 families for cultivating rice crop in Shikarpur over 73 acres.

The rice farmers were extremely successful and many experienced double the production than they had estimated. Farmers on shared land earned in total Rs. 60,000 and farmers on own land Rs. 186,000 on average. Unfortunately, the cotton crop was damaged by the floods in the autumn of 2011 but nevertheless the farmers were able to generate income.

### Agricultural Project – Phase V (on-going)

OSDI has financed 160 families for wheat crop this winter covering 574 acres in all focus districts in Sindh. After testing the soil and having consultation with our agricultural expert changes such as seeds, bio fertilizer, humic acid and weedicides have been made in the inputs in Khairpur and Matiari districts. Visits to the field have shown these changes are proving to be successful as the wheat financed by OSDI is twice the size to wheat cultivated with traditional methods, the colour is brighter and there are no gaps on the field indicating that there will be higher crop yields during harvest.

### Livestock Project –Phase III (finished)

OSDI provided loans to 21 families in Khairpur and Mardan to purchase 81 animals in March 2011 for fattening purposes to be sold with profit on Eid-ul-Azha. Goats turned out to be more profitable and families have earned on average Rs 5,500 per month as opposed to families with oxen earning an average of Rs 2,800 per month during the 7 month period of the project.

### Livestock Project – Phase IV (on-going)

In the fourth phase the project is taking place in Khairpur and Matiari. In total 110 animals have been purchased for 22 families. Furthermore, as goats are more profitable than oxen each family will be given 4 male goats for fattening and one female goat for milk production and breeding to create assets and food security for families. For this phase, the main improvement in the project is introducing a fattening process with special compound fodder that will ensure maximum weight gain of the animals. In addition, vaccination, check-ups and follow-ups take place regularly by the OSDI vet. The breed has also been changed to Kamori for herd and Pateri for fattening.

### Small Rural Enterprises Project

The project is rapidly advancing with data collection and selection of candidates. Currently vast research, including interviews, is being done to identify the best candidates for small start-up businesses in the focus villages. OSDI will provide micro-loans to educated, unemployed youth for starting small businesses such as grocery or mobile shops, transport and dairy businesses, fish farming, handicraft and stitching opportunities for women. The main aim is to create more sources of income and higher levels of income in rural areas and promote the importance of education through widened opportunities.

## CASE STUDY 2: LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT

*"They are like a part of family to me. Every day I wake up at dawn, give fodder to my goats and walk them sometimes late in the afternoon. It brings great joy to me."* Abdul Ghani is one of several livestock farmers benefitting from OSDI's Livestock Development Project where livestock is provided through affordable loans along with training and consultation by experts appointed on best farming practices.

Abdul Ghani Baloch has been a beneficiary of OSDI's Livestock Development Project for over 3 years. Before tending to livestock animals he used to work as a mason. Even the back-breaking toil of masonry work was barely enough to make ends meet. *"Not even the local shopkeeper would give me credit for food items because he knew I did not have any money to pay it off,"* he recounts.

The 3 female goats have increased to 7 providing him and he has sold seven oxen that he purchased under the program for a hefty profit that have made a huge impact on his finances.

With OSDI's training and consultation he has also been able to take better care of his livestock than he otherwise would have. Abdul Ghani's new found prosperity has even enabled him to send his nephews to school.

He says the most important thing for him is earning his means with dignity as he recalls the difficulties he had to face when he was weighed down by the burden of usurious debt. *"I am very happy that I don't owe anyone anything,"* he gleams with pride.

## CASE STUDY 3: AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The month of December is a time of nervous anticipation for Rasheed Burriro as he prepares to sell his rice harvest in the market. Not too long ago all of his earnings from his hard earned labor were used to pay off his local village money lender as debt repayment. *"There was no choice but to take loans because I didn't have the money to buy fertilizer or seed,"* he explained.

Furthermore, his financial constraints kept him from running a small shop of general items for some additional income. *"I was about to close my shop down, my fields were lying fallow and it was difficult to repay my debts,"* he added.

When he heard about OSDI's Agricultural Development Project, through which small holding farmers like him are provided easy, affordable loans for purchasing farm inputs such as fertilizer, pesticides and seeds, he walked up to the field staff asking to be included in the program. Aside from being provided microfinancing, Rasheed Burriro and many like him have routinely been provided training on best cultivation practices such as application of farm inputs and modern farming techniques. Rasheed Burriro has especially benefitted from sowing hybrid seeds through OSDI's consultation. *"My yield used to be around 50 mounds of rice and it increased to 80 mounds after using these seeds,"* he exclaimed.

Free from usurious debt for the first time, Rasheed Burriro is finally accumulating savings. *"I am calm and content. I am not in debt and do not owe anyone,"* he says with a reassuring smile.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

### School Adoption

OSDI has adopted two non-functional government schools. One was renovated with the help of the community and started operating at the end of February in Godho Shar village in Shikarpur district with 20 students. The enrollment of more students is currently being done by the teacher. OSDI provides full time teaching staff and subsidized stationary and textbooks to ensure that the students are motivated and excited about education.

The second school adopted is Government Boys Primary School in Sukhio Mir Jut village in Matiari district. OSDI is currently renovating the school, two teachers have been appointed and 90 students have been enrolled for the adopted school. The school will be operational by first week of April.

### Temporary Learning Centers

The village of Kamal Khan Lashari in Khairpur district has long lacked an opportunity for girls to receive education as only a government school for boys exists. OSDI has therefore opened a TLC for girls where currently 70 girls aged between 5 to 10 years who have never stepped inside a school before study. Due to the flux of students enrolled, two classrooms with two teachers are ready to provide better start on life and hopes of a brighter future for the young students. The teachers are currently enrolling more students due to popular demand.

The two TLCs set up by OSDI in Malhee village, Shikarpur district have seen an increase in the number of students in TLC1 from 40 to 90 students and in TLC2 from 46 to 60 respectively. Incentives such as free tuition and books for students are available and the families who are part of the agriculture and livestock program receive loans with the condition of children being in school.

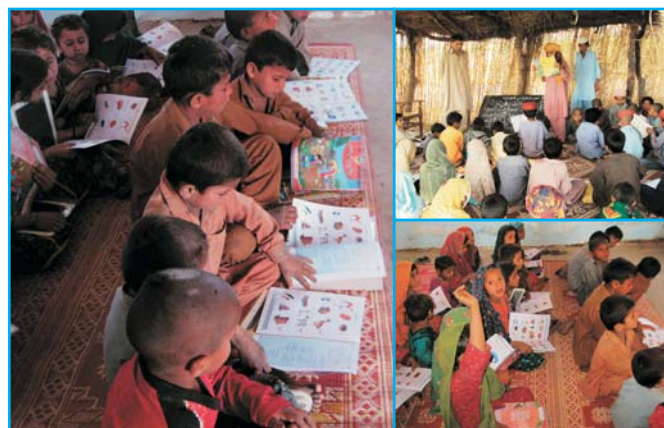
### CASE STUDY 4: EDUCATION

For approximately 150 students at the TLC in Malhee village in Shikarpur district, this is their first experience at formal education, something which was inconceivable for them not very long ago. The nearest was a 3 km walk to a rundown government school in Bulbulao.

Proximity has made a world of a difference for many girls that have been enrolled in the TLC. *"I was so happy to find out that there was a school in my village, otherwise I wouldn't have been able to go to one,"* smiles Nusrat, a female student of the TLC.

Taking the financial constraints into consideration, OSDI has kept its TLCs affordable with uniforms, curriculum and shoes provided to the students as well.

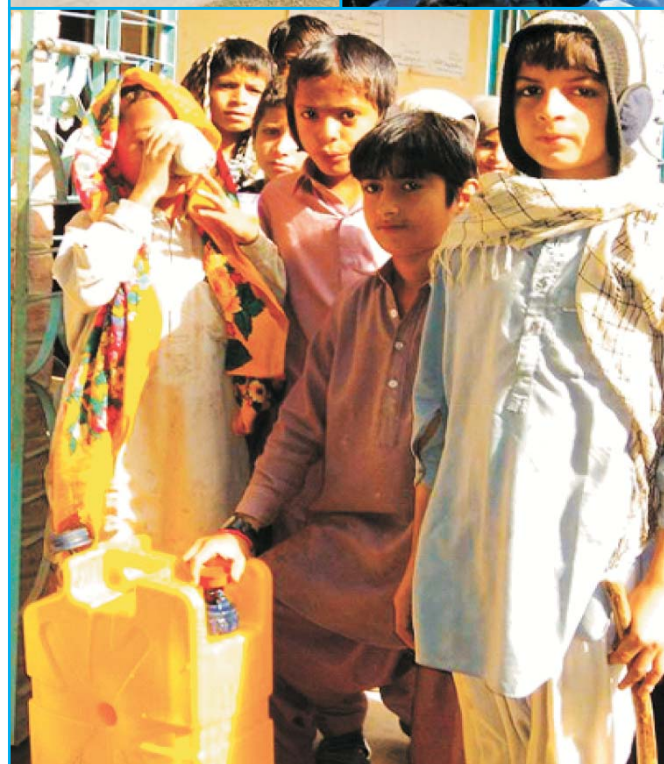
There is no greater endorsement from the community than the steady rise in the number of students in the TLCs which stand currently at around 150 from an original 30. The sense of a better future is reflected in these children's aspirations when they are asked on what they want to be when they grow up. Zakira Hussain wants to be a soldier, while Sanaullah Solangi wants to become an engineer, and Imtiaz wants to be a pilot. If recent progress of the TLC is anything to go by, they might have a chance to realize this dream one day.



### Water & Sanitation

OSDI has distributed 957 life-straws, 71 jerry cans and 485,920 aqua tabs in the focus villages to prevent water borne diseases. For families the best option is aqua tabs as it is easy to access and use. Water purifying tablets dissolve in water, ridding it off its impurities to make it safe for drinking. In addition, school-based jerry cans are being used by 90% of the children and teachers. On community level OSDI teams work hard on water promotion in all focus districts by continuing distributing aqua tabs and holding awareness campaigns.

Construction of 150 toilets in the flood affected village of Jamal Hajano in Matiari district finished in February and are now completed with roof, plaster and installation of commode. Furthermore, 50 septic tanks will be installed to manage the waste water.



## Health

OSDI is involved in many healthcare projects under the Community Development Program, ranging from hepatitis vaccinations, primary healthcare, medical camps, school-based de-worming and health initiatives to polio campaigns and health and hygiene awareness sessions.

**Hepatitis Prevention and Control Program** has successfully continued the vaccination drives under the Chief Minister of Sindh's Initiative in all four focus districts and in total 5,701 have been screened and 5,554 vaccinated for the fatal disease since February 2010. The camps organized by OSDI have succeeded in completing 2-3 vaccinations for every Hepatitis B negative individual in the targeted villages in Sindh and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and the treatment is commencing for patients with Hepatitis B or C.

A new **Weekly Health Camp** has started in Saeedabad village in Mardan district in January 2012 in addition to the camp held fortnightly in Jamal Hajano and Sukhio Mir Jut villages in Matiari district since April 2011. In the absence of timely care many common diseases in these communities go untreated, becoming fatal and unaffordable in the process. OSDI is providing access to services, reducing costs of services and subsequently increasing livelihoods and savings.

OSDI's latest **Primary Healthcare Center (PHC)** started operations in January 2012 in Saeedabad village in Mardan district to provide primary healthcare and run hygiene awareness programs in the area. Staff hired by OSDI include a doctor visiting weekly and a dispenser being available six days a week. The steady influx of new patients seeking treatment at the PHCs is due to subsidized medicine, nominal medical fees and the availability of quality healthcare. The PHC staff also provides students with school health services in the area.



**School-Based De-Worming Project** Phase I reached 2,000 students in all focus villages in Shikarpur, Khairpur and Matiari districts in Sindh. In addition to providing de-worming treatment, the project also emphasized personal hygiene by teaching students proper hand wash, nail hygiene, dental care, and the importance of physical activity and daily bath. Moreover, the children were provided nutritional supplements in the form of milk and biscuits during all school visits by our partner Engro. Students, parents and teachers welcomed the project and there is notable change in the well-being of the children in this project.

**Polio eradication** is essential and OSDI continuously supports the local government's efforts by helping with logistics and maintaining the cold chain of the vaccines. Tremendous efforts have been made to inoculate thousands of children in OSDI's four focus districts bringing the figure to 3,192 only in the past 2 months.

**An initiative on maternal health** has taken its first steps and OSDI has trained 24 traditional birth attendants with focus on safe motherhood. In addition to providing medicine, health and hygiene sessions are conducted for pregnant women and CBAs (child-bearing aged ladies) where they are advised to pay pre-natal and post-natal visits to the doctor. Pregnant women are encouraged to give birth in health facilities. In addition, OSDI staff provides facilitation in case of complications.

OSDI is also determined to help the health facilities by **building capacity** in Khairpur district. The focus will be on repairing and maintaining the existing government health facilities, identifying and filling gaps in equipment, medicine and work force to benefit nearly 50,000 beneficiaries.



## Tools for Planning the Future -Training

A training on “Planning for the Future: Tools for Communication and Coordination” for OSDI’s field staff was held between January 12 and 13, 2012 in Karachi. The aim was to improve understanding of OSDI’s internal policies among the field staff as well as to enhance reporting techniques and communication. The program managers gave presentations to keep all staff informed on the latest updates. In the end all participants received a training certificate.

## UPCOMING PLANS

### Food Security

- Kitchen Gardening will start its second phase in March. Currently the data is being collected for the best selection of seasonal vegetables with an agro expert. An additional 122 families to the previous 113 families will join the program in the focus districts in Sindh.

### Livelihood Assistance Program

- Improvements are made in the Livestock Project to make sure of its success in the future. More emphasis will be put on the breed, colour and patterns of the goats to fetch higher prices during Eid-ul-Azha in addition to compound feed to ensure maximum fattening.
- After the harvest of wheat the summer crop will include cotton and rice in all focus districts of Sindh with more families included in the Agricultural Project. As a pilot project we have provided inputs to 7 families to cultivate sugarcane in Khairpur district.
- Small Rural Enterprises Project will move on to the next phase in the coming months. After analyzing the data and identifying the entrepreneurs, the loans will be finalized in the next quarter.

### Community Development Program

- OSDI is looking into the option of converting the two TLCs into a formal building in Malhee village in Shikarpur. Data of non-school going children is being collected in Mardan in order to specify the best possible location for a TLC.
- An ambulance service is in plans to facilitate the PHCs and Mobile Health Camps to take emergency patients to referred hospitals at a nominal cost. It would also provide transportation during natural calamities.
- OSDI is looking to partner with government and NGOs in an Integrated Malaria, Diarrhea and Typhoid Program for rapid diagnosis, treatment and referrals of these diseases and extend the project to include community awareness campaign.
- The Maternal Health Program will be extended to Shikarpur and Matiari to redress malnutrition of mothers and small children with screening, diagnosis and nutritional intervention.
- Biohazard Waste Management Initiative will be in the pipeline to improve sanitation in the focus areas.



## BE A PART OF OSDI

### Partner with us

OSDI provides many possibilities to potential organizations and individuals for partnership. These can be in the form of:

1. Donor
2. Research support
3. Volunteer
4. Knowledge-sharing

### Donate to OSDI

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Address: United Bank Limited. City Branch I.I. Chundrigarh Road, Karachi.

Branch Code No: 0605

PLS A/C No: 0605-1200048-4

Swift Code No: UNILP-KKA

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