



News Release



Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Embassy

Towards Healthier, Better Educated and Economically Empowered Lives for Pakistani Women

Islamabad, November 28, 2006: Commemorating the International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women (November 25th), the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan has reaffirmed its special commitment to the women of Pakistan by ensuring that they directly and continually benefit from all of its ongoing assistance programs in the country.

USAID/Pakistan is working to strengthen women's education, health care and economic growth, while also providing support to women of the earthquake-affected areas. Through various programs in these key sectors, it is helping Pakistani government and civil society to make the process of development inclusive of women. These initiatives are ensuring that women become healthier and better educated to aspire for social consciousness and economic opportunity that can help them tackle the many problems they face in their daily lives.

In Education, USAID/Pakistan and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) have awarded over 130 need and merit-based scholarships to Pakistani women, helping them receive college degrees in agriculture and business administration.

Over 5,400 school improvement grants have been awarded in 13 districts across the country funding school repairs, new construction, new sanitation facilities and walls around the school that especially benefit girl students.

Nearly 500 parents—the large majority mothers—have graduated from the USAID-funded family literacy program that strengthens literacy efforts within the family. Initiatives, such as the USAID/Pakistan's numerous teacher training programs, have increased the availability and quality of women teachers nationwide.

At 190 primary girls' schools in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), USAID/Pakistan is also building water systems and new sanitation facilities. These steps will improve the local educational environment and allow more girls to attend primary school.

Through a nation-wide Health program to improve care for mothers and newborn children, USAID/Pakistan is funding the training of 2000 community midwives for

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conducting safe deliveries; the orientation of 1,900 traditional birth attendants for clean delivery practices and referrals; equipping 31 health facilities to manage complicated cases; training 10,000 LHWs; and 32 local NGOs to undertake effective community mobilization activities for demand creation & awareness at the household level.

USAID/Pakistan is also facilitating Pakistani women's economic empowerment through its Economic Growth programs. These programs are increasing women's access to financial and business services, while promoting economic freedom policies.

By providing credit in areas which were considered non-bankable in the past, USAID/Pakistan is reaching out to more than 64,000 women entrepreneurs in the country. It is helping local NGOs, microfinance institutions, and commercial banks to diversify financial services in a way that they can be offered to women entrepreneurs, who are normally excluded from formal financial markets. Through its competitiveness programs, USAID/Pakistan is encouraging the reform of laws, regulations, and policies to facilitate women entrepreneurship. It is also helping providers of business development services to support women entrepreneurship.

With agriculture being a very important economic sector of Pakistan and a vast majority of poor rural women depending on it for their primary income, livelihood and subsistence, USAID/Pakistan is working with more than 5,000 women in remote districts of Balochistan to help them improve their quality of life.

In its Earthquake Reconstruction programs, USAID/Pakistan is actively involving local women. With 35% of its livestock and agriculture grants designated for them, the Livelihoods program is targeting a large number of quake-affected women as beneficiaries.

As part of USAID's commitment to girls' education in the quake-affected areas, the Education program is creating new ways to bring together women teachers from nearby schools so that they work on community education issues in a comfortable environment.

Similarly, the Health program is strengthening a Lady Health Worker system in the earthquake areas that supports one lady health worker for every 1,000 villagers to improve health services for pregnant women, mothers & children, and child vaccination rates.

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