



Main Contributor and the people:

Safeer, 12, Male, Khairpur, Pakistan

- Nehalan, 34, Female, Khairpur, Pakistan (Safeer's mother).

Story Summary:

In a remote village of Khairpur, nestled within the vast and rural Sindh province, lives a 12-year-old boy named Safeer, whose resilience shines through, despite his delicate frame. His family comprises of his parents, two sisters and four brothers. Born without arms, Safeer has developed an impressive skill – he writes with his foot. Despite facing significant challenges since birth, he has honed this unique ability, that shows his determination and adaptability in overcoming obstacles.

Lack of proper nutrition has had a profound impact on Safeer, making him appear far smaller than his actual age. A combination of insufficient nourishment and physical disability has given him a frail appearance- a characteristic that is also distressingly noticeable in the emaciated condition of his chicks and a kitten, both appearing as mere skin and bones.

Safeer has a simple morning routine which includes playing with his hens, chicks and goats. He makes a distinctive sound, coupled with a knowing smile to call his chickens, displaying the special bond he enjoys with the animals. This heartwarming connection shines a light on his gentle spirit- a glimpse of which can be seen sparkling in his eyes. *"I love to play with hens,"* he shared. *"They give an egg to me after I give them grains, food, and water from me. I fry the egg and eat it,"* Safeer says with a shy smile.

He likes to play football when he is not studying with his cousins and two closest friends Naveed and Farhan. He mentions how the weather has become hotter and how the children avoid going outside to play because of the heat. He likes to go to the Temporary Learning Center in the morning and enjoys learning English and Urdu alphabets, as well as counting. Safeer takes pride in showing people how he can write with his foot.

Bent over in an unusual and uncomfortable position, he holds the pen with his right foot, as he diligently writes the alphabets on the notebook provided by Save the Children. His determination and resourcefulness are evident as he tries to overcome the physical challenges posed by his condition to engage in learning.

While recounting the tragic events of flood 2022, Safeer's face bore a sad expression. He recalled how the floodwaters surged rapidly, forcing his family to abandon their



home. With urgency, they gathered their belongings and carefully placed them on the embankments. Since the jeeps were no longer accessible, they embarked on a journey on foot, seeking refuge at their grandmother's house amidst falling rain. Safeer's heart was filled with longing for his old school and home, reminiscing about the time he would play with the fellow students there. Amidst his emotions, he passionately shared his aspiration of becoming an engineer. He also expressed a deep longing to travel to Karachi, a place that he had only heard of so far.

The ability to write with his feet is a remarkable talent which not only demonstrates Safeer's individuality and sets him apart from other children of his age but also emphasizes the importance of empowering children with disabilities to unlock their full potential and talents. Through support and inclusive practices, Safeer's remarkable accomplishment can inspire and pave the way for greater opportunities for children facing similar circumstances. This display of strength and resilience underscores the significance of providing inclusive education for children like Safeer, empowering them to embrace their abilities and pursue their dreams, despite the obstacles they may face. Save the Children's commitment to fostering an inclusive learning environment has allowed Safeer to showcase his talents, reinforcing the belief that every child deserves equal opportunities to thrive and succeed.

Strong quotes:

"I enjoy going to the TLC because it has become like a second home to me."

"We shifted to our grandmother's home during floods, and I used to miss my old house and school."

"My classmates and I used to play football at my school, but after the floods, we were separated, and I used to miss my old house and school".

"I have noticed temperatures rising and stronger sunshine. I cannot play with my friends now. We avoid going outside due to the heat because the sun's beams are so intense."

"Since the jeeps had been taken away, we put our luggage on the embankments and set out on foot for our grandmother's house".

"We were drowning in water because our land was at a lower level than the surrounding area, which caused the water to flow to our land".

"In order to protect ourselves from flooding in the future, we are asking for homes in a safer location."



How is Save the Children helping (or did we help) that child or family:

Save the Children established a Temporary Learning Centre (TLC) in Safeer's village where Safeer where the local public school was destroyed by the floods. Safeer is enrolled in Save the Children TLC to continue his education and has received a school bag and learning kit.

Interviewee's story in their own words (Quotes):

"I'm Safeer, and I'm twelve years old. My parents, siblings, and I live in Khairpur. I have six siblings: two sisters and four brothers.

Every morning when I get up, I wash my face and gargle. Then I drink tea and head off to the learning center. I enjoy visiting the TLC. It has become like a second home to me I learn the English alphabet, the Urdu alphabet, and counting there. I love playing football and star game with my two friends, Naveed and Farhan and my cousins. I also love my goat and chickens and playing with the hens. They offer me an egg after I give them grain, food, and water. I fry the egg and enjoy it.

While we were inside our home, we suddenly heard people shouting and screaming loudly, followed by the flood. As the floodwater filled our entire house, we were in grave danger of drowning. We were drowning in water because our land was at a lower level than the surrounding area, which caused the water to flow to our land. Since the jeeps had been taken away, we put our luggage on the embankments and set out on foot for our grandmother's house. We shifted to our grandmother's home during floods, and I used to miss my old house and school. I missed my friends and our football games at school.

Now I have noticed temperatures rising and stronger sunshine. We avoid going outside due to the heat because the sun's beams are so intense, I cannot play with my friends now. I want to be an engineer when I'm older because it will allow me to make more money. I would really like to see Karachi. I have only heard the name of the city, Karachi, and I am quite interested in visiting it. I'm currently enrolled in a temporary center. The government school has reopened, but I was unable to go. Nevertheless, I enjoy going to the TLC because it has become like a second home to me. In order to protect ourselves from flooding in the future, we are asking for homes in a safer location."

The Temporary Learning Center has allowed children like Safeer to continue their education. Save the Children has also assisted Safeer by attending to his special needs and offering an inclusive environment to learn.



Additional interviews: Safer's Mother- Story in her own words

I'm Nehalan, the mother of Safer. Since my spouse is in the military, we were alone at home when the flood hit. The floods intensified after the embankments were broken. It was raining relentlessly, and the locals opened their own embankments to protect their homes which exacerbated the flooding in our area. We were drowning in floodwater because our land was at a lower elevation than the surrounding area, which caused the water to flow to our land. We rebuilt our homes after they were entirely damaged and destroyed. Our cattle also passed away. My brothers helped me manage the situation in my husband's absence. We had to travel alone to my parent's house. Some of the villagers took refuge at a higher ground while others relocated to their relatives' house.

Notes from the interviewer:

Khairpur is the capital of Khairpur District and lies in north-eastern Sindh and south-central Pakistan. It is the third largest city in terms of area and the fifth most populous district of Sindh province. Characterized by a hot desert climate, the city is marked by scorching and hazy summers, coupled with mild winters that bring little respite. This region is renowned for its exceptionally hot summers. Summer temperatures routinely soar above 40 °C (122 °F), subjecting the population to harsh dry heat from April to early June until the monsoon season commences. The arrival of monsoons further contributes to considerably high heat indices. Heavy monsoon rains in June 2022 brought catastrophic floods in their wake, submerging one-third of Pakistan. Khairpur was the second worst district impacted by floods, causing heavy losses of life and livelihoods.

These extreme climatic conditions have a profound impact on the local community, particularly during the scorching summers and monsoon rains, posing significant challenges to their well-being, health, and livelihoods. Save the Children aims to explore the impacts of this climate on vulnerable populations, devise appropriate interventions, and develop strategies to safeguard the children and families from the adverse impacts of such extreme weather conditions.

Background / Project information

Background:

In August 2022, Pakistan faced one of the most devastating flood events in its history, primarily caused by exceptionally heavy monsoon rainfall. This catastrophic natural disaster left a profound mark on the lives of approximately 33 million people



nationwide. Among the hardest-hit regions were the highly productive Indus plains, where agricultural and livestock losses escalated, posing a significant threat to food security in the country.

Khairpur was one of the worst affected districts of Pakistan with floods impacting 1,265,477 people which had a far-reaching impact on communities, particularly vulnerable populations, exacerbating existing challenges and vulnerabilities. Khairpur is one of Pakistan's highly food insecure district and food security was further undermined due to disruption of livelihoods and loss of purchasing power incurred as a result of flooding. Flood waters remain stagnant in Khairpur, where damaged schools remain abandoned.

Project Information:

Save the Children, along with its local partner is provided safe and inclusive learning opportunities to girls and boys through 14 Temporary Learning Centers (TLCs) in Sindh for 4 months until June 2023. When the nearby public school was destroyed by the floods, Save the Children established a Temporary Learning Centre (TLC) after the floods of 2022 in Ahmed's village. Ahmed Khan has been given a school bag and learning material and is registered in Save the Children TLC to continue his education.

Interview conducted by: Amina Agha

Interview translated by: Rizwana Soomro

Date of interview:

Story Notes: Guljana Mehboob

Story Written by: Amina Agha

Story Edited by: Amina Agha

Story Approved by:

Country/region of interview: Sindh, Pakistan

Village, Haji Abdul Ghani Shar, DEC-II Project

Interview language: Sindhi