

## 1<sup>st</sup> Draft

### The limits of development

By

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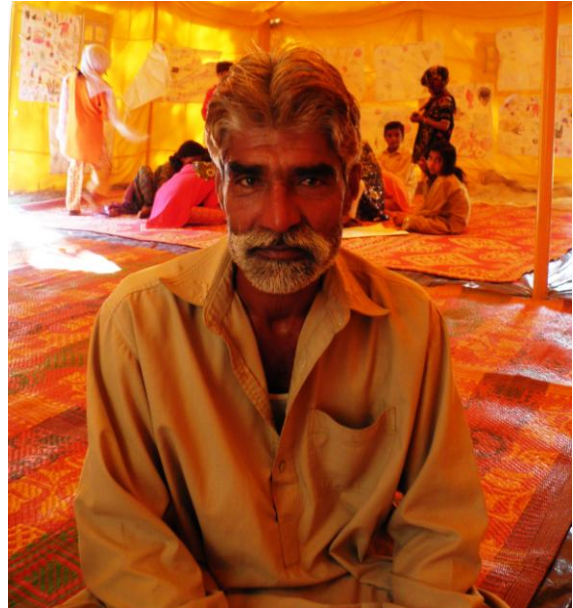
How then shall we describe the process of establishing the Child Friendly Centre? “Well, the coordination visits were initiated to ascertain the intensity of conflicts that existed between the Dulos and Kotla Haji Shah,” replied Zahid, of DOABA Foundation.

Amidst the stout mango orchards in Union Council Thal Jandi Kotla Haji Shah, Tehsil and District Layyah stands a tidy Child Friendly Centre. At one side of the centre Plan Pakistan has installed a water pump to provide clean drinking water for the children. The other side is occupied by a washroom and a latrine.



With around 60 boys and girls registered so far from all 37 families in the village, the centre is a fine example of reducing intra-community conflicts through child centered development.

“We first approached the Mehars for establishing the CFC. They were reluctant to accommodate it. We then contacted Aziz in Kotla Haji Shah. He called for a meeting of the community that approved the proposed CFC.”



Aziz volunteered his three Kanals of Land for the centre.



The moment, Dulus got to know this they too jumped in to cash in the opportunity of doing something beneficial for children. They came in with a tractor to level the ground. The community happily accepted their offer.

“A simple act of offering and receiving a tractor helped iron out age-old difference if not totally then mostly between the adjoining communities.”

“Aziz had volunteered his arable land. Given the fact that farmers in this part of the world possess only 3-5 Kanals of land this really is commendable.”

You mean the land for the centre was provided by Aziz, the tractor by the Dulus and labour by the community. “Yes; and DOABA provided the technical expertise in designing and mapping the lands with ropes. Plan Pakistan of course provided funds necessary to establish and run the centre.”



Is this centre sustainable, as when the Plan Pakistan shall stop funding it?

“Perhaps not in the present form but in some other form obviously. We have transferred its ownership to the community. We have a Management Committee, the Nigran (look after) Committee, and a Child Protection Committee. Every member of each community is a local. Even the caregiver has been selected by the community.”

The centre--all in a tent- can survive for a long time. The activities and the material used to engage the children is all too expensive to sustain its availability in the long run. For instance how will you provide expensive copies, paints, pencils, charts, slates, footballs, cricket bat and balls and etc over a longer period of time?



“It seems difficult. The community may never be in a position to provide it at its own in any foreseeable future. They are poor, very poor in fact.”

Perhaps we need to use more local materials than external... I mean shouldn't we try to contextualize the activities. “We shall try in due course of time. It's just the beginning.”



We see a lot of social cohesion in the village. What role has the center played so far towards child protection? "It has set them free from psychological impact of floods. They are happy. Their parents are happy. The community as a whole owes it. It is a common property of them all. We are really very much desirous of linking it with activities of the government. We hope it will mainstream a whole lot to schools."

Yes, although an outsider I too see great potential here. Wish you good luck. Thank you. Thank you too!

**--Ends**