

Collective

January 2004 - March 2004

Of RCC and Other Things

It's been an interesting, not to mention hectic, few months for SEF as RCC (phase I) finally concluded with a conference in Islamabad.

Then professor Anita Ghulam Ali's "Sitara-e-Imtiaz" has given all the more reason to SEF's entire team to work twice as hard. The award is an inspiration to say the least and one hopes that the accomplishments of the organization and indeed the individuals responsible for making it successful will continue to receive due recognition in future.

Finally the visit to chief minister house arranged for students by SEF proved to be a useful opportunity as children were given a chance to talk about the problems they faced at school. This brought a much-needed voice at the table.

So sit down and relax as this issue of *SEF Collective* guides you through RCC and other activities that have made the organization an eventful place.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samina W. Perozani".

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Releasing Confidence and Creativity (RCC)

Releasing Confidence and Creativity program RCC (phase I), which is a pilot program for Early Childhood Development (ECD) funded and sponsored by Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID), focuses on supporting ECD practices and structures in communities, schools, NGOs and the government. The program also lays emphasis on developing techniques and models that can be replicated by schools as well as NGOs. Apart from that, the program attempts to:

- Improve the quality of teaching-learning process in primary education and strengthen management in primary education.
- Increase public-primary partnerships in support of students in public schools.
- Improve the learning environment in schools especially that of the *kachi* class.
- Set up school management committees for schools.
- Change attitudes, particularly those of parents, teachers, community members and the government, regarding early development and learning.
- Evaluate results of the program and disseminate the same with target audiences.

Monitoring & Evaluation of RCC

One of SEF's major responsibilities under the RCC program has been to develop a Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) strategy, and facilitate and conduct all associated M&E activities. Monitoring and evaluation for RCC included both a baseline survey for acquiring information on the situation and a monitoring survey for collecting data on the situation after implementation.

Training workshops on the baseline survey were then held which included three parts:

- Introduction to RCC and Early Childhood Development (ECD).
- Overview of monitoring and evaluation concepts and data collection methods.
- Discussion of baseline survey tools.

The data collection and entry of the survey was undertaken by implementing partners while the database was designed by SEF. In order to ensure appropriate use of the database, there was a two-day training of partners' data entry staff. Finally an intensive data cleaning and analysis process was undertaken. Based on the analysis, a baseline survey analysis report was developed providing a comprehensive picture of RCC children, teachers, schools and families.

Subsequently the monitoring survey was designed after evaluating the baseline survey and so monitoring tools were developed accordingly. These included child assessment and classroom observation both of which were revised to ensure better data collection in the field. Subsequently, training workshops for the monitoring survey were held for field staff of implementing partners which included discussions of the tools and a field visit for practice in using the monitoring tools. These tools were revised later on.

A preliminary analysis of monitoring data and comparison with baseline data was conducted, the results of which were presented at the meeting of the working group on Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Islamabad, April 9th 2004. Results showed improvements in child outcomes and teaching practices. Currently a full fledged analysis of the monitoring data is underway.

RCC Partners Participate in Policy Dialogue

RCC's concluding seminar was preceded by a policy dialogue in Karachi on 9th April 2004 where the five partners of the program in Sindh, AKESP, HANDS, TRC, SEF and HDP discussed the challenges that came up during implementation. The dialogue, which had Mr. Irfanullah Khan Marwat, Minister of Education as chief guest, was highly interactive as functionaries gave candid opinions about the problems. The local government and department of education also gave their input. Five key problem areas were identified and each of the partners was asked to give a presentation:



- Ownership and sustainability (SEF): the real success of RCC can be measured if and when it is considered as a model by the government to be taken on and implemented in primary schools all over the country.
- Age (HANDS): the federal policy dictates, on one hand, that children below five years cannot be admitted to class one, whereas on the other, the age group that has been fixed in the national curriculum for *kachi* class is three to five years. So children who are four years old when they finished with the *kachi* class cannot be sent to class one.
- Scaling up (AKESP): this included the need for expanding the RCC program horizontally and vertically.
- Quality of education (TRC): all indicators and aspects which contribute toward the quality of education were listed and discussed in detail.
- Linkages (HDP): this topic focused on the often missing or weak linkages which exist between various government departments and NGOs.

At the end of the presentations the partners met with a panel and discussed issues that were highlighted during the day. This in turn led to recommendations proposed by the panelists, which later on were forwarded to the Secretary and Minister of Education with promises of due consideration.

Islamabad Conference Concludes RCC (Phase I)



The concluding RCC (phase I) conference in Islamabad was successful as RCC partners came together to discuss the outcomes and achievements of the program. The program has made progress in modifying teaching and learning experiences and has generated a great deal of enthusiasm in parents. One is confident that the program will continue to do so.

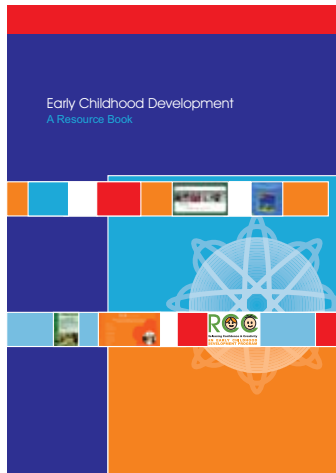
The conference was divided into two broad sessions – a morning session where implementation and milestones were discussed. This session also included the launch of *Nurture*, Pakistan's pioneer publication on Early Childhood Development (ECD), an ECD website and a case study booklet, providing detailed accounts of children and parents affected by the program.

The second session centered on the second meeting of the National Working Group for Early Childhood. It also comprised of a presentation, analysing the impacts of RCC and its possible outcomes thus bringing RCC (phase I) to a close.

RCC Promotional, Reference, Survey Material

Developed by SEF

SEF's invaluable technical support to the RCC program gave rise to the production of a plethora of promotional, reference and survey material each of which was designed for a specific purpose. Some of them include:



- **Resource book** – this ECD resource book is a repertoire of all ECD related activities undertaken so far by any agency within or outside the program.
- **Baseline survey tools** – they have been developed to establish a frame of reference for evaluating the impact of RCC intervention as an aid in fine-tuning the intervention strategy. Tools such as a family profile form, community profile form, classroom observation form and school survey form (available in Urdu, Sindhi and English) will help in ECD intervention.
- **Brochure** – this was created keeping in mind that RCC is an Early Childhood Development project and so explains the important features of the program along with information about RCC partners.
- **Signboards** – these signboards will be put up in RCC schools, containing the program title and logo to differentiate between an RCC and an ordinary school.
- **Posters** – they display images and minimal text to

raise awareness about ECD and RCC. The posters are available in both Sindh and Urdu.

- **Awareness raising letters** – as the name suggests these letters have been designed to raise awareness about the programs. Introductory letters have been prepared for local government officials, DoE officials and teachers and parents.



- **Checklists** – they provide guidelines for the management, teachers, parents and members of the school management committees.
- **Baseline instructional manual** – this will be helpful for surveyors conducting baseline surveys.
- **Giveaways** – caps and school bags bearing the RCC logo have been produced to generate interest about the program, especially in kids.
- **Flyers** – they contain information about

ECD and RCC and will help in reaching a larger segment of the targeted communities, which is more accessible for a rural population.

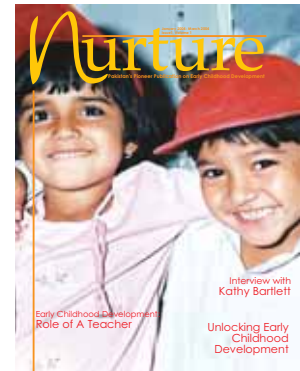
- **ECD website** (www.ecdpak.com) – this website creates an interface between Pakistan-based ECD initiatives and international programs. It will serve as a forum for sharing information and exchange of ECD-related experiences for international NGOs, social development agencies and like-minded organizations all over the world.



- **Baseline database** – this database makes it easy to transfer data from the systems of partner NGOs to the SEF system. It is an invaluable tool for the Foundation and the RCC program.
- **Appreciation certificates** – they have been awarded to parents, school management committee members, teachers, and local government and DoE members for extending their services to the program. It will help in increasing their motivation levels.

Nurture

Pakistan's Pioneer Publication on Early Childhood Development



Early childhood development has been at the forefront this time around what with the completion of RCC (phase I) and plans to begin work on the second phase of this program. However the dearth of published material that specifically focuses on early learning and childhood development has been neglected all-too-often. So SEF managed to fill the gap when *Nurture*, a pioneer publication on Early Childhood Development (ECD), was launched with aplomb on 9th April 2004 at a concluding RCC (phase I) conference in Islamabad. This thirty-or-so page magazine hopes to fill the gap by catering to all those that wish to learn more about early learning and development. Also *Nurture* hopes to:

- Simplify approaches and theories about ECD.
- Create awareness regarding ECD concepts and practices.
- Serve as a platform for linkage formation with national and international organizations.
- Disseminate community-based case studies, lessons learnt and suitable ECD practices.

Though the magazine is still making its ground, *Nurture* looks promising enough and is a welcome step towards providing much-needed published material on ECD.

To receive the first two issues of *Nurture* absolutely free, please contact SEF.
E-mail: nurture@sef.org.pk
URL: www.ecdpak.com

SPEIP Makes Steady Progress

SEF's repeated emphasis on improving the quality of education in academic institutions led to the initiation of Support to Private Education Institutions Project (SPEIP), a need-based approach to the ailing education system of the country. The qualitative objectives of the project are as follows:

- To pioneer a new culture of viable organizational vision and institutional development for innovative learning and improvement of educational practices in private and non-profit NGO schools.
- To forge an enduring public-private partnership by including a sizeable number of private schools' beneficiaries of the program.
- To devise mechanisms in private schools and districts to enable them to carry out their own training.
- To design a meticulous framework of process support, quality improvement and continuous accountability of private education providers.
- To provide subsidies to NGOs on the basis of its efforts towards attracting more children for education.
- To launch meaningful research projects to build models for "low-cost and high quality" institutions of learning, thus far failing structures.

The project in the first phase is expected to cover 141 low-cost private schools scattered all over the rural and urban areas in six districts of Sindh. Earlier this year an orientation of the project was conducted in which SPEIP's team was briefed about the project and key interventions.

The team also devised an operational plan through which the process of identification of private schools will begin, followed by a district level orientation program. All partners i.e. private school heads, principals, parents, teachers, community members, EDOs, ADOs and DOs will also be invited to participate in this program. This session will provide an opportunity to understand the project and its approach. Later, MoUs with private schools will be signed followed by baseline surveys and capacity building activities.

CLEP Encourages Social Interaction

Pakistan Day Celebrations

The Child Labour Empowerment Program (CLEP) celebrated Pakistan day on 23rd March 2004 with the mothers of children at the Child Development Centre (CDC) located in Sher Shah. More than 20 mothers were invited to participate in celebrations that included discussions on personal hygiene and other related health activities. Not only this but the children also managed to put up interesting presentations on a wide range of subjects pertaining to health, hygiene and education. The celebration also featured a quiz competition and a prize distribution ceremony appreciated by children and their mothers.



Visit to Hill Park

CLEP's continued emphasis on increasing social interaction skills in children is often manifested through outdoor trips to recreational centers. This time around the children were taken to Hill Park where they spent the entire day frolicking in the park, playing cricket and other games. Later on the children were treated to lunch arranged by CDC.

Computer aided Education

Besides educating through books, the children at CDC are also given the opportunity to learn through technology and so a computer lab equipped with P-4 computers is maintained at CDC. Children of five classes have been taught to create a document using Microsoft word. They have learnt how to copy and paste a text file and this learning process turned into an enjoyable affair for it is a far cry from the mediocre teaching practices that are prevalent in public school classrooms.



Fun and Games

In the spirit of making learning an interesting experience, CLEP organized a kids' "Neelam Ghar" on 7th March 2004. Since the activity was aimed at incorporating an element of fun, the children were asked questions pertaining to general knowledge, apart from including a few things here and there from their syllabus. Later on rewards were distributed in an effort to motivate them to expand their sphere of knowledge.

Visit to Karachi Shipyard

The students also visited the Karachi shipyard on 8th and 9th March 2004 where they were treated to a trip aboard MSS Rehmat along with a boat ride. They also met with sailors and were keen on finding out more about ship operation and how their efficiency could be improved upon. Furthermore they were briefly told about the daily activities of sailors and differences between national and international ships. Thus the trip turned out to be an enriching experience for the students of CLEP and one hopes that such activities will continue to be an important part of the program.

Professor Anita Ghulam Ali receives "Sitara-e-Imtiaz"

At the end of March Professor Anita Ghulam Ali celebrated her receipt of "Sitara-e-Imtiaz" award at the monthly hi-tea at SEF. The award was given on 23rd March 2004 by President Pervez Musharraf, to recognize her lifetime contribution towards educational and community development issues of the country. Contrary to the popular belief which suggests that the road leading to it was fairly easy and that it was a surprise move, she received the President Pride of Performance Award in 1998, acknowledging her accomplishments. The hi-tea was thus organized in honour of her receiving the second highest civil award in the country. SEF colleagues paid tribute to her for her dedication over the years. Professor Anita's service to SEF and to education in general was just cause for celebration as the entire team lauded her for her bold stand on many issues.

Professor Anita Ghulam Ali is an expert in her field and has devoted her life to the cause of bringing about a change. She's won several



accolades from various educational councils and committees and cultural institutions. She has also served as the education minister of Sindh twice and it was during this period that she made noteworthy contributions to the education system of the province. Clearly her 28-year service as a microbiology teacher as opposed to other more lucrative occupations shows her strength of character and the resolve to actually change things instead of just thinking about it.

Perhaps it is her vision, which focuses on providing education to everyone irrespective of the class, culture and religion, that has managed to take this foundation to the top. Professor Anita Ghulam Ali is certainly an inspiration for her young team-mates at SEF for rarely does one see such a dogged struggle. The strife is never-ending, but the outcome is certainly worth it.

پروفیسر انیتا گھلام علی



وزارت تعلیم
حکومت سندھ
کراچی

پروفیسر انیتا گھلام علی



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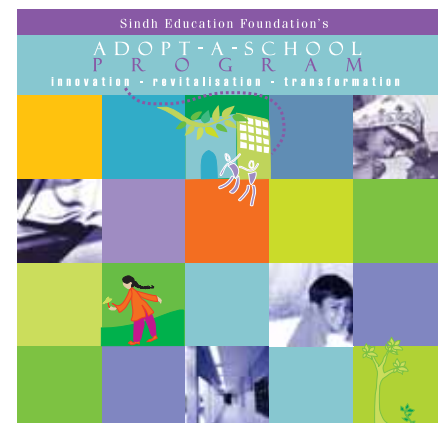
Adopt-a-School Brochure



Given the success that the Adopt-a-School program has managed to achieve, a brochure has been created to generate awareness about program objectives, outlining its outcomes. The brochure is simple enough and highlights important aspects of the program such as the:

- Target areas.
- Procedure for adopting a school.
- Program operation.

The brochure takes the reader through all the information one would need to know about the program and this is aided by the clear and simple design. However the most significant feature of this brochure is the adoption form for people and/or organizations that are interested in adopting schools or plans related to it. So for all those who are interested but do not know where to begin, this brochure will definitely provide the required direction.



For information on the program or receipt of the brochure, contact SEF at: Plot 9, Block 7, Kehkashan, Clifton, Karachi. Or call us at our UAN: 111-424-11, or e-mail us at: www.sef.org.pk

Students Meet with the Chief Minister

To celebrate "Education For All" (EFA) week a delegation of 55 students each from SEF's and various government schools visited the chief minister house on April 21st, 2004 and reported to him the problems of their schools. The education minister, Sindh Mr. Irfanullah Khan Marwat and the education secretary, Sindh Mr. Ghulam Ali Pasha introduced the purpose of the dialogue. The chief minister, Sardar Ali Mohammad Maher welcomed the children.



A question-and-answer session followed during which the chief minister patiently answered all queries and listened to the problems that were articulated with the promise of bringing about a change in the appalling condition of their schools. A number of issues were raised in this session – most schools were in desperate

need of textbooks, teachers and classrooms and requested the chief minister to do something about their predicament. Then there were other students who felt that space for playgrounds should be allocated and basic amenities like electricity, gas, furniture and water should be provided to them.

Having heard first hand about the condition of public schools, Ali Mohammad Maher conveyed positive messages to the children. For starters, he urged them to study hard and to apply their skills professionally. He also encouraged them to help all their friends who were unable to study and was pleased to have the children visit him. SEF arranged to have these children picked up from and dropped back to their schools. Marketing kits were distributed to the audience to help them understand the purpose of the meeting.

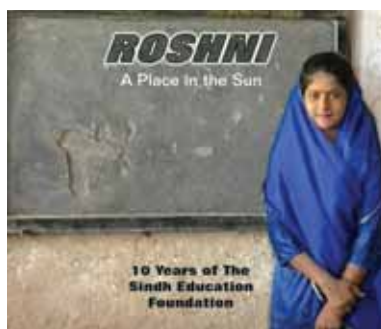


SEF Documentary Launched

Roshni, also named as *A Place Under the Sun: Ten Years of SEF*, is a forty-minute documentary that marks milestones in SEF's ten-year history. Directed by M. Irfan Ishaque, this documentary traces the evolution and achievements of the organization, while focusing on the problems faced by communities. It includes case studies, interviews of parents, teachers and students and provides a synopsis of the programs.

In addition the documentary includes opinions of the management, emphasizing on the struggle that is involved when it comes to educating the girl child or even women for that matter. It highlights some of the success stories of the women empowerment program.

Roshni is not only informative and interesting but it is also useful because it will hopefully help in generating awareness about the Foundation as most people are unable to find the time to read up on it. It is for this reason that it is compact and does not beat about the bush – the interviews are short while the case studies are just long enough to sustain one's attention. Slickly executed by Prometheus Productions, *Roshni* is interesting because it is visually appealing and persuasive and reflects ground realities. The documentary is available in three languages (Sindhi, Urdu and English).



Update on EDucate!



For those of you who are simply too lazy to pick up a hard copy of *EDucate!* (lest it causes permanent damage to the tender sinews of your arms) SEF's computer wonder boys have given you a reason to peruse through the magazine – without moving a muscle, so to speak. *EDucate!* is now available in an interactive CD format. Neatly tucked away in a sleek, no nonsense case, the CD contains seven issues of the magazine that can be browsed through at will, provided that you have Acrobat Reader of course. The page format is identical to the hard copy and so the colourful presentation is interesting to read. The CD is valuable reference material for libraries and schools, and is a great way for the bright young things of tomorrow to learn more about development issues. The piece de résistance? The CD is user-friendly and is not quite the nightmare that most interactive CDs turn out to be. So click your way into the very heart of *EDucate!*, available now for Rs. 250/= only.

Cards for Sale



Women from WLEP have designed hand-embroidered greeting cards that are available for a nominal price. The cards, which were originally created for Eid, have been painstakingly crafted and are different from the ordinary, average-looking greeting cards that are found in the market. The proceeds of the sale will go to the women of the program.

For further details please contact SEF at: Plot 9, Block 7, Kehkashan, Clifton, Karachi. Or call us at our UAN: 111-424-11, or e-mail us at: www.sef.org.pk

SEF and Shehri Organize Environment Mela



SEF in collaboration with Shehri-CBE (Citizens for a Better Environment) participated in the environmental education mela organized by the latter on 24th April

2004. The venue? St. Patrick's High school. The purpose? Information with entertainment. The theme of the mela "Environmental issues of Karachi – Valuable use of Recycled Material" proved to be encouraging for students from adopted schools as they came up with environment-friendly projects made from recycled material. SEF had a stall in which things made in adopted schools were displayed.

The students were actively involved in preserving Karachi's environment. It was a good opportunity for students to use their imagination and come up with innovative projects that have possible practical usage. The projects were informative and were able to communicate the issue without making it sound too monotonous. The mela also featured games, food stalls and other interesting activities designed to raise funds, making the entire affair entertaining for participants and visitors. Needless to say, the mela turned out to be a fun-filled event and so keeping this in mind, the school is planning to use the funds generated to organize a beach cleaning activity due later this month.

WLEP Visits Sehwan Office; Sets up ID Card Camps



Visit to the Sehwan office

February 2004 saw WLEP's field visit to the Sehwan office where learners were tested on a variety of different skills and the team was pleased to discover that the students were making good progress. For example their handwriting, comprehension of text and dictation was up to the mark despite the fact that these women have a lot of other responsibilities. Their hard work and determination was quite remarkable considering that they are required

to take care of their children and do household chores all at the same time. The women also explained how this literacy program enhanced their self-esteem, speaking abilities, social interaction and comprehensive skills. Having said that the learning process needs to be improved upon to motivate more and more women to participate in the program.

WLEP Sets up ID Card Camps

WLEP was also actively involved in providing camps for women in rural areas of Malir so that they could obtain their ID cards easily. A camp was set up in Khalifa Jat village where women from nearby areas such as Mohammad Siddique Khaskheli and Chasma Goth came for their cards. Interestingly enough the camp managed to solve other problems that these women faced and so a large number of these people were able to get their *nikah nama* and birth certificate problems sorted out. However one feels that 75 rupees charged by Nadra was a bit too much for most of these women, and a concession should have been offered. Nevertheless it was a good effort and one hopes that WLEP will continue to improve the quality of life of women in rural areas.

CSS Organizes Taleemi Mela



The "Education for All" week also found its way into Community Supported Schools (CSS) program. CSS organized a series of events for two consecutive days in Larkana, which included the largely successful Taleemi mela that took place on 25th April 2004. The mela was aimed at:

- Providing an outlet for their creativity.
- Promoting public-community partnership.
- Creating an environment for quality education at various levels.
- Establishing a connection between different schools in the area.

Primarily for parents, students and teachers of 40 participating schools, the mela consisted of displays on teaching aids, pictures, charts, projects, clay models, and wood work, to name a few. To add to the festivities the students put up skits, puppet shows and tableaus that were reflective of social messages that need to be disseminated in society. Additionally stalls by publishers and booksellers sustained interest in the mela as both parents and children were keen on buying and exploring display items and books.

The mela was a good effort because it attempted to persuade children to explore their creativity. Thus one was pleasantly surprised to see a rural population participate so enthusiastically.

Earlier on (24th April) a preliminary celebration of EFA was organized where children participated in: a miniature assembly where children addressed the speaker and voiced their concerns through placards; a debate competition on "the role of parents in education in the 21st century" amongst students; a talk show for teachers on "the role of schools in the 21st century" where teachers of private, government and community schools discussed their contribution towards development.

Releasing Confidence and Creativity (Phase II)

ECD received due attention from SEF in collaboration with the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) RCC was launched and implemented. Given the reasonable degree of success that the first phase of the program managed to achieve, plans are underway to begin work on the second part of this project, RCC (phase II).

This phase, like its predecessor, is divided into five main thrust areas: (i) human and institution capacity building (ii) community level interventions (iii) improving the physical learning environment (iv) training for local government under devolution plans (v) learning, dissemination of lessons and policy dialogue.

Thus the proposed objectives of RCC (phase II) are organized as follows:

- Encourage community and parental involvement in ECD efforts inside and outside the classroom.
- Develop technical competencies for ECD in teachers, school officials and NGOs in RCC communities.
- Facilitate a network of concerned parties in which policy dialogue and coordination, advocacy, resource mobilization and sharing of best practices can occur.
- Conduct research on the cost-benefit of early childhood interventions and effective practices from RCC schools and disseminate to audiences in Pakistan.
- Address cross-cutting issues in ECD delivery, including attention to vulnerable populations, replicability, and adaptability, institutional development, leadership development and government ownership in program interventions

The success of the second phase remains to be seen. One hopes that the full potential of this program can be realized given the extended time frame and that the success of the first phase will carry on through the second as well.

Learning with Friends: A Case Study from the RCC program

Saboor Ahmed hated school. He was four when his parents first decided to enrol him in a private English medium school but soon enough realized that their son was just not interested in learning. He was repulsed by the classroom and behaved carelessly towards his classmates, staying away from school as much as possible. Concerned, his parents were not quite sure what to do and so when they first heard about RCC's *kachi* class in Shahzoi School they were all-too-happy to put their son back in school. Saboor however was anything but happy and it was with a heavy heart and preconceived notions that he went back to school. However his perceptions changed after a few days of exposure to the RCC *kachi* class environment. The teacher's attitude, teaching techniques and child-friendly class environment restored his shattered confidence and he started participating actively in class activities. The positive change in Saboor continued through the year; he has attended the RCC *kachi* class very regularly and has only missed two days because he fell ill.



His teacher, Ayesha feels that Saboor has a lot of potential and says that he loves to draw pictures especially those of animals. He is quick to pick up concepts and a review of his portfolio shows that Saboor was one of the first children in his class to learn and write the alphabets properly. He does not ignore his classmates anymore. In fact he has made a lot of new friends and is very close to Arfah, his classmate. Ayesha says that they sit together all the time and tell each other everything. Saboor is more likely to tell Arfah if something is bothering him than Ayesha. He agreed to perform in a tableau, which was a part of an inter-school competition, despite the fact that he was the only boy. Saboor performed quite well along side Arfah and the school won first prize in the competition.



Needless to say Saboor's parents are very satisfied with the change in their son's performance in school. They say that apart from reading and writing he has become very confident and expresses himself very well at home. They recognize the hard work put in by his teacher Ayesha and consider RCC to be an extremely effective program for enhancing young children's learning abilities.