

The Citizens Foundation Celebrates Education for Women on UN International Literacy Day

TCF, a non-profit providing quality education for underprivileged girls and boys in Pakistan, has also taught 150,000 adult women to read and write.

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, September 8, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today is United Nations International Literacy Day. It has a special meaning for 150,000 adult women in Pakistan who missed out on going to school altogether. These women are proud 'graduates' of an innovative Adult Literacy Program – Aagahi.



TCF's Aagahi Adult Literacy Program has taught 150,000 women how to read and write

When men and women do not know how to read and write, its social impact can be profound. They may experience low self-esteem or go through emotions such as shame, fear, frustration, or powerlessness. This is especially true for women living in some of Pakistan's poorest urban and rural communities, unable to read the bus route numbers, help their children with homework or find what they want in stores, or do simple arithmetic. Most women do not have a voice in the controlling, patriarchal society. They are confined to the roles of homemakers and to raising the family.

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A literate man receives education only for himself. But a literate woman educates her entire family. Aagahi is carrying out an important mission for everyone.”

*Gul Bano, Aagahi Learner, TCF
Abdullah Rakhla Campus,
Karachi*

Enter [The Citizens Foundation* \(TCF\)](#) – the game-changing catalyst for good education on a national scale and arguably the world's largest private network of low-cost formal schools delivering quality education with gender parity in its network of 1,687 schools with an impressive enrollment of 275,000 students. Nearly half of them are girls.

In addition to educating thousands of girls, TCF has a huge role in transforming many adult lives through its [Adult Literacy Program, Aagahi](#)—a community-based four-month curriculum,

teaching basic numeracy and literacy skills including learning modules for life skills to enable reading the newspaper, reading and writing simple notes and letters, filling in a form, opening and maintaining a bank account, basic arithmetic for household expenses and budgeting, paying bills, reading and sending messages on Smartphones, and other essentials.

This day is important because in 2017, Aagahi was awarded the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy. With the UN recognition, the Aagahi program has grown to more locations (learning centers), making literacy and learning of life skills more easily available for women and young girls who missed out on proper schooling.

More on Aagahi

Aagahi (literally 'awareness' in Urdu) aims to empower communities through education. It is a community-based literacy program primarily for women who missed going to school at an appropriate age. The program also includes young girls who either dropped out of school or have never been to school.

Women are nearly half of Pakistan's 220 million population. According to a government survey*, only 50% of women and girls 10 or older have attended school or are able to read and write in any language. Low literacy levels are a key barrier to women's participation in skilled jobs, and why most women are limited to low-paying work as rural farm laborers or domestic helpers in urbanized areas.

Aagahi has evolved as a pathway especially for women from disadvantaged communities—and for out-of-school girls—to learn to read and write. Since its inception in 2005, over 150,000 women have completed the program and now have the capability to make more independent and informed decisions and be more involved in their children's education and progress in school.



Becoming literate has changed the lives of Aagahi students



TCF empowers women and girls through education

The classes are held in the evenings either at TCF schools or at independent learning centers in homes or other locations in the community. Classes are in four-month sessions.

TCF partners with the Literate Pakistan Foundation to provide learning materials and training for TCF instructors.

The Aagahi Curriculum

The mothers and girls are taught to read and write in the local language, typically Urdu, plus basic math skills and reading and writing of alphabets and simple words in English. The curriculum utilizes workbooks to learn phonetics-based recognition of alphabets, words and sentences, and a book to learn basic numeracy. Financial literacy modules have been added to the curriculum.

Topics on personal health, hygiene and sanitation are also covered including prevention of common ailments (malaria, diarrhea, etc.), and maintenance of a clean environment.

Expanding Aagahi

TCF plans to extend the program to other school sites and communities as well as industrial worksites. Aagahi was piloted at a worksite for factory workers at a textile plant.

(*Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey, 2018-19.)

About TCF

TCF is the largest private employer of women in Pakistan. In addition to 13,000 teachers and school principals, many women work in TCF departments involving strategic planning, academics, quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation of teachers, curriculum development, marketing, and school management.

Through funding by generous Pakistani and international donors, TCF school alumni girls and boys from the poorest slums and rural communities are going to university, becoming teachers, engineers, physicians, lawyers, and joining the civil service, police force, and defense services as officers.

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