

Responsive Education and Awareness for Child Protection (REAP) Pakistan



Type of intervention



Public Education

Target group/s, level/s of prevention and sub-group/s:



Primary prevention

Young Adults (18-20 Years), Adults (21 Years +) | Male & Female | Public Education | English

Target population

Adults.

Delivery organisation

Sahil Charity, Pakistan (supported by the Royal Norwegian Embassy).

Mode and context of delivery

The Responsive Education and Awareness for Child Protection (REAP) programme aims to educate members of the community (e.g. teachers, doctors, religious leaders, parents) about the reality and signs, of child sexual abuse (CSA) via public education methods, such as posters. It is hoped that by raising awareness of CSA in the wider community, as well as training some of these individuals with para-counselling skills, that CSA will no longer be a taboo subject and children as well as adults concerned about children will find the courage to speak up and alert the relevant agencies. Para-counsellors are not professionally trained counsellors. They do not have formal counselling qualifications, but are people who need to provide some forms of counselling to people they interact with.

Level/Nature of staff expertise required

No professional qualifications are required. 30 community members from each of the 19 villages were provided basic awareness training through exposure to Sahil's six child protection posters. 59 individuals further participated in a five

day “para-counselling” training event, run by Sahil facilitators, to improve their ability to effectively communicate with children.

Intensity/extent of engagement with target group(s)

The REAP programme has engaged with 19 villages across four regions of Pakistan. REAP has been operating in these villages in Pakistan since 2012. It is hoped that the REAP training will provide a lasting community-wide child protection system.

Description of intervention

Sahil is a non-profit organisation based in Pakistan which has been working to develop a protective environment for children, free from child sexual abuse and exploitation. Sahil works to empower parents, teachers and communities with knowledge and skills to prevent children from experiencing all forms of abuse, with a particular focus of child sexual abuse. Via training and awareness-raising, whole communities are involved in establishing a community-wide child protection system in the REAP programme.

The REAP programme operates in 19 villages across four regions of Pakistan. A group of 30 community members, male and female, from each village were provided Child Protection training through Sahil’s six child protection posters. These 30 trained village members select members of their village’s Child Protection Network (CPN). A CPN is a seven to nine member committee at the village level. Their responsibility in the community is to collect data on child abuse cases. Two members of each village’s CPN represent their village at the Union Council: there is one Union Council per each of the four regions of Pakistan represented by the REAP programme. Members of the Union Council are responsible for referring complaints of child sexual abuse to the district level (for example education department, social welfare department, police department, lawyers, NGOs and doctors/clinics).

Community members who were trained in Child Protection included doctors, religious leaders, teachers, parents, students, activists and counsellors. The posters these individuals were trained with included information on parenting skills (for example “Do: Stay informed about your children’s activities and friends”; “Don’t: Be angry with your children due to your own stress”), child protection tips to share with children (for example “Tell parents immediately if anyone asks you to keep a secret”; “Never take anything for free because you can be asked for something in return”), child rights and responsibilities (for example “My right: Protection from all forms of abuse”, My responsibility: In case of any danger, protect myself by shouting or asking for help”) and general awareness raising (for example “Be Aware!!! Ignorance regarding child protection and development can lead to decline in the child’s performance”).

As part of the REAP programme, members of the CPNs and other NGO representatives attended a five day “para-counselling” training course facilitated by Sahil staff. The aim of this course was to build community members’ capacity to use counselling techniques to effectively communicate with children. For example, such counselling techniques may be used by teachers to communicate with children to uncover any reason behind unexplained absences from school. A total of 59 individuals attended this training.

Evaluation

A qualitative and case study evaluation of the REAP programme is included in Sahil’s 2013 Annual Report (<http://sahil.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Annual-Report-2013.pdf>). For example, one individual who undertook the “para-counselling” training by Sahil commented that: “We demand our children obey the elders under every circumstance – which is very harmful”. According to this individual, the para-counselling training enabled her to understand when this “obedience” should not be obeyed, for example if the demands of an elder are harmful to the

child. She mentioned that the training helped her to realise children should be taught to say “No” if the demands of others are harmful.

References

<http://sahil.org/>

<http://sahil.org/posters/>

<http://sahil.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Annual-Report-2013.pdf>

<http://sahil.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/CPN.jpg>

<http://sahil.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/village-eng.png>

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