EDUCATION: A GIRL'S RIGHT

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"I could not go to school because I would have had to travel far to another village. I was very sad and cried for many days but my wish for education did not fade." - Fozia, 12

Fozia's story begins when ActionAid staff were visiting the parents of children who weren't going to school in Bhakkar, Pakistan.

One of these ActionAid staff was called Umer. He explains why they were working so hard to get girls to go to school:

> **"Education brings girls into society. An educated girl understands her rights and is empowered to make her own decisions about her own life."**

However, when Umer and the ActionAid team visited Fozia's father, he wasn't convinced. He was worried that Fozia wouldn't be safe.

This is a common reason for parent's to keep their daughters out of school, but as ActionAid speaks to more parents, girls are starting to return. Umer said:

> **"Many parents did not want to send their girls to school, but girls are now demanding their rights."**

The ActionAid workers were unable to convince Fozia's father and went home for the night. They returned to Fozai's home the next day. Fozia hadn't given up and neither had they.

Fozia explains what happened next:

> **"Initially he refused, but after a long discussion he was convinced and I was re-enrolled. I wasn't the only one – 83 girls went back to school!"**

Pakistan: Country fast facts

Capital: Islamabad

Area: 796,095 sq km

Population: 196 million (2014 estimate)

Money: 1 Pakistani rupee = 100 Paisa

Life expectancy: men = 65 years, women = 69 years

Climate: Mostly hot, dry desert but mild in the northwest and arctic in the north

Shares borders with: Afghanistan, China, India and Iran

Highest point: K2 mountain (8,611m)

Find out more about ActionAid's work in Pakistan here:

www.actionaid.org.uk/about-us/where-we-work/pakistan

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Education is a right for everyone, but in many places, it is girls who are more likely to miss out.

Bhakkar in Pakistan was one of these places until an ActionAid campaign encouraged parents to send their daughters to school and **girls to stand up for their rights**.

Along with educational programmes for girls of all ages, this campaign has seen a lot of success. **Here are three of these amazing stories:**

Ayesha's pre-school

Ayesha is four years old and enjoys going to playgroup in Bhakkar:

"Today I did hand painting and it was fun. Sometimes I do leaf painting and drawing with shapes and I get to use different colours."

Sadia's second chance

"I felt sad when I left school, but it was too far away. My parents couldn't afford the travel. So I was really happy when ActionAid supported me and 13 girls from my village to start a course in tailoring."

"We have decided that after completing our training, we will start our own tailoring business and teach what we have learned to other girls in our community. We also intend to save some of our money so we can apply to University to continue our education. The new skills we have gained have empowered us and will allow us to support our families."

A brand new school

Nearly 200 girls have finally been given a space to get an education with the construction of a new school in Bhakkar.

Student Wajiha said: **"I love our new school building. It looks like a real school! Now we can focus on our education."**