



NO BRIDGE TOO FAR!

CDLD Programme: Bridging People, Saving Lives

When we look at a bridge, what do we see? We look upon an iron will defying odds like deep chasms, tumultuous waters, unfathomable distance and heart wrenching disconnect. To us the simple combination of supports, span and foundation appears as a symbol of strength, connection, timelessness, and grace. However, between the precipitous mountains of Shangla, these bridges, majestic or humble, are more than that—they are people’s lifelines. They save lives and livelihoods alike. The Community Driven Local Development (CDLD) Programme of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that works in close collaboration with the European Union (EU), endeavors to build and restore these lifelines so that the communities of Shangla can have an equitable access to work, markets, healthcare, and educational institutions. An example of CDLD’s remarkable interventions in Shangla is the restoration of the Kass Bridge, in union council Lilownai, tehsil Alpuri.

The Kass Bridge connects two vertiginous mountains and provides a safe foot and vehicular passage over a rough river crossing. Prior to the restoration of the bridge, the people of the small village of Kass, Shangla, suffered not only isolation from relatives and loved ones but also from basic facilities. Pedestrians would have to travel on foot for 40 minutes and more through a treacherous terrain to get to the Basic Health Unit (BHU), schools or market in the nearby Lilownai town. Expectant mothers, sick children and elderly would at times succumb to the perils of this arduous journey and precious lives would be lost. To avoid such heart-wrenching tragedies in future, CDLD forged a close alliance with the locals of Kass to repair the Kass Bridge. Due to CDLD’s strong advocacy of gender equity and its espousal in all its social delivery projects, the female CBO of Kass felt encouraged to take initiative in the repair of the bridge. The female community based organization



(CBO), Gulbahar proposed and prioritized this project over others because women and children were among the most stricken from inaccessibility to health facilities. CDLD facilitated them every step of the way and allocated Rs. 2,199,800 for the repair of the bridge.

The community of Kass carried out the repair work with the collaboration of the government's appointed engineers. However, it is the community that supervised the project through its various stages of completion and now ensures its functionality and maintenance. The feature of 'community ownership' is embedded in the social delivery of CDLD and it devolves fiscal, management, and supervisory powers to the locals instead of retaining them as have been done previously. Due to the synergy between the government and community, this bridge is successfully catering to 2,194 members of the Kass community and the people of neighboring villages are benefitting from it as well. Locals of the adjacent villages are now able to send their children to the Government High School for Boys, Kass, which has already spiked the school's enrollment. The bridge sustains both foot and vehicular traffic and facilitates the surrounding communities in accessing the

Shalizar Basic Health Unit of Lilownai. This timely access to healthcare is a considerable relief from the unnecessary and avoidable suffering that had riddled these communities for years. In short, the Kass bridge is a lifesaver.

It is the mission of CDLD to build new bridges to increase accessibility, mend the broken ones to strengthen bonds and to ensure that no bridge is too far for people to access safety, get an education, earn their livelihoods, or take a loved one to a healthcare facility in time.



The impact story has been researched and authored by Lalai Abbas (Media Content Specialist) and published by the Strategic Communication Team of the Community Driven Local Development Programme.