

Pakistan: Labour Education Foundation Annual Report 2022

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In Pakistan, ESSF supports the Crofter Foundation (CF) and the Labour Education Foundation (LEF). We have already posted online the CF and PKRC activity reports. We are now publishing the LEF's 2022 report, intended for all its donors (the main ones are listed at the end). It gives an overview of its aims and activities.

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LEF was established in 1993 as a non-government organization. LEF is an initiative of renowned trade union leaders, human rights and women's rights activists to organize, capacitate and advocate for workers' rights and provide informed input to trade unions and various civil society organizations for promoting rights. LEF has a national-level General Body of 39 members, who are nominated for a two-year term by trade unions and workers' organizations affiliated with it. The General Body elects a seven-member board for two years. LEF has its head office in Lahore and operates throughout Pakistan.

VISION

A democratic, progressive, just, peaceful and developed society where working-class—men, women and youth—is empowered to claim and protect its social, economic and political rights.

MISSION

Conscious, informed and gender-sensitive workers, women and youth groups challenging the existing situation as part of the movements for ensuring economic emancipation, gender equality, promoting constitutional, legal and labour rights, eradicating violence, and working for a democratic and nuclear-free society

PROGRAM STRATEGY

STUDY CIRCLES/DISCUSSION GROUPS Every year, LEF arranges scores of study circles and discussion groups for workers to discuss relevant issues and to gather data for its research. LEF designs the content and structure of these groups and steers the discussions. **CAPACITY BUILDING** LEF conducts training workshops, orientation sessions, seminars and conferences every year on trade unionism, democracy, peace, human rights, gender equality, health, violence against women, sexual harassment at workplace, and family laws, to raise awareness and train workers to take action. **NETWORKING AND SUPPORTING TRADE UNIONS** LEF is affiliated with a number of international and regional labor alliances with which it launches campaigns on relevant labor issues on a regular basis. LEF has also supported the development of 20 trade unions/federations - including those in the textile sector - which are now actively claiming their rights. **LEGAL HELP** LEF has formed a panel of lawyers that provides legal help and support to workers, in terms of information and linkages to relevant institutions. **RESEARCH** LEF maps public issues and develops and publishes situation analyses to highlight the realities of workers' lives, build opinion, influence policy, and envisage subsequent collective action. Our advocacy work is based on research and policy analysis, including gender analysis. A core part of our research work is to link issues of gender inequalities at the workplace with health, environment, peace and other areas of human rights. In addition, we use integrated and highly gender sensitive participatory approaches to gather data for all our researches. In addition to specific research projects, LEF produces user-friendly training manuals, publishes a monthly newsletter "Labour Education", and produces quick and user-friendly information packages, issue-based and motivational posters and leaflets to meet immediate and long-term needs of workers.

Strengthening the trade union in Pakistan

MAJOR PROJECTS IN 2022

Promotion of Workers' Rights in Pakistan

Labour Education Foundation with the support of Bread for the World is implementing the project "Promotion of Workers Rights in the Formal and Informal Sector in 4 Districts in Pakistan (Charsadda and Mardan districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Lahore and Faisalabad districts of Punjab)". This project was signed in 2020 for three years. It has three outcomes for the period 2020 to 2023. The main goal of the project is to protect economic, social and political rights of workers. Through this project, LEF conducted orientation sessions and capacity-building trainings, and provided legal help and support to workers. These activities help in mobilizing, educating and organizing formal and informal workers.

The above-mentioned activities led to strengthening of trade unions in Pakistan, especially in the provinces of Punjab and KP, to ensure the rights of workers.

Achievements

In 2022, LEF staff conducted 99 field visits in four districts i.e. Lahore, Faisalabad, Charsadda and Mardan. Through these field visits, LEF conducted the situation analysis of workers' positions & conditions, gave information to the workers on LEF work, provided them basic knowledge on labour laws and facilitated women in getting Computerized National Identity Cards. Through these field visits, LEF identified potential labour leaders from the grass-root level and linked them with relevant trade unions. These potential leaders were educated through orientation sessions – a formal labour education module. This year, a total of 26 orientation sessions were conducted in which 778 workers, including 269 men and 509 women, participated. Out of these participants, LEF shortlisted the workers for further detailed leadership training. This year, LEF conducted five capacity-building trainings – two in Lahore, and one each in Faisalabad, Mardan and Charsadda. These trainings were attended by a total of 204 potential labour leaders, including 123 women and 81 men. One training was conducted for home-based workers on developing marketing strategies and linked them with the Lahore market. A total of 21 home-based workers from Mardan, Charsadda and Lahore attended this training. To strengthen the labour movement and develop its linkages with other trade unions and civil society organizations, LEF facilitated 217 trade union members to participate in International Workers Day, International Women's Day, and Home-based Workers Day. As human rights-based approach to development has risks like job dismissal etc. therefore LEF provided legal support to workers to mitigate the risks. This year, LEF provided legal aid to 51 workers. The major cases were related to wage compensation, illegal dismissals from jobs and implementation of the minimum wage rate.

The programme activities have strengthened the trade union movement in Punjab and KP. The membership of trade unions has increased and the members are paying membership fee to their respective trade unions. These trade unions succeeded in protecting the rights of workers. Here are some glimpses of it:

- The management of Rehman Cotton Mills fired more than 900 workers without any reason. With the efforts of the Mehnat Kash Labour Federation, 200 workers of Rehman Cotton Mills were reinstated.
- Ittihad Workers Union Philip Morris and People Workers Union Rehman Cotton Mills influenced the Labour Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and succeeded in the issuance of minimum wage notification for the year 2022-2023 in the province. Following that the Unions ensured the payment of minimum wages for permanent and contract employees of Pakistan Tobacco Company and Philip Morris Pakistan Limited.
- Ittihad Workers Union also succeeded in registering all workers of Philip Morris Pakistan Limited with the Social Security Department.
- This year 52 new members joined the Home-based Women Worker Union KP and the members began paying PKR 50 per month as membership fee.
- Home-based Women Workers Union KP supported the flood-affected people in Charsadda. The union distributed food items, warm clothing, hygiene kits and some cash grants. The union also succeeded in getting a cash grant of PKR 5,000 per head for 100 women from the government.
- Entrepreneurship training enabled the Home-based Workers of Mardan to increase their monthly wages from PKR 4,000 to PKR 8,000.
- Mobility of home-based women workers has increased. In 2022, HBWWs of Mardan and Charsadda districts participated in two exhibitions which were held in Peshawar.
- As a result of entrepreneurship training, the home-based workers have developed two cooperatives/business groups, one in Mardan and the other in Lahore. Leaders of the groups would get orders from the market by themselves and distribute work among the group members, leading to increase in their income.
- Home-based Women Worker Union KP facilitated 35 HBWs in getting their Computerized National Identity Cards in Mardan and Charsadda. Later, these workers were registered with Ehsass program, a cash grant scheme by the government. Of them, 13 HBWs have begun receiving PKR 14,000 every two months.
- In Faisalabad, approximately 90% of power-loom workers succeeded in increasing their wages by 14%.
- Textile Power-loom Garment Workers Union Punjab succeeded in getting official welfare grants for workers. 1,700 workers of different factories in Lahore and Faisalabad received cheques for marriage grants and death grants.
- Textile Power-loom Garment Workers Union Punjab succeeded in reinstating 187 workers of Al-Fatah Textile Mills Faisalabad.
- Legal support was provided to 51 workers in district Faisalabad and Lahore. These cases were related to wage compensation, in which some are still in process, however 4 workers received the amount of PRS 1700000/-. While 20 workers' case was filed in 2021 and its judgement was made in 2022, through which workers received PRS 2227000.

Strengthening the Rights of Brick Kiln Workers to Challenge Bonded Labour

Labour Education Foundation implemented a project with the support of the Norwegian Human Rights Fund. The main objective of the project was to Promote, Respect and Protect Rights of Bonded Labourers in Outreach Areas of Toba Tek Singh and Lahore districts. To achieve the objective, LEF conducted orientation sessions and capacity-building trainings. LEF supported brick kiln workers to hold meetings with government institutions, join District Vigilance Committees, get Computerized National Identity Cards and Birth Registration forms. LEF also provided legal support to brick kiln workers. LEF held a tripartite meeting to address the issues of brick kiln workers. Through these activities, LEF reached 1,045 brick kiln workers directly, while indirectly it reached out to more than 32,000 workers, out of them 35% were women. These activities strengthened the Pakistan Bhatta Mazdoor Union, which is one of the largest trade unions for brick kiln workers in the country.

Achievements

- Ø Pakistan Bhatta Mazdoor Union successfully negotiated with brick kiln owners and got a raise of PKR 220 at 271 brick kilns in four districts (Lahore, Toba Tek Singh, Vehari and Khanewal). Thus, the wages for making 1,000 raw bricks went up from PKR 1,080 to PKR 1,300. The rise in wage rate has benefited 54,200 workers. The official minimum rate is PKR 1,850 but workers are happy to get so far PKR 220 raise.
- Ø Knowing the importance of unionization, 289 brick kiln more workers, including 132 women and 157 men, became members of the Pakistan Bhatta Mazdoor Union. The PBMU membership has increased from 12,060 to 12,349.
- Ø Claiming the right to better working conditions, the PBMU succeeded in getting clean drinking water and washroom facilities at around 233 brick kiln units.
- Ø 124 brick kiln workers, including 49 women, were registered with the National Database Registration Authority (NADRA). 10 children, including 5 girls, got Birth Registration Forms (B-Forms) and 5 children were enrolled with public schools. After registering with NADRA, all 124 were able to get the support of free medication in the official Insaf Health Card program, a universal medical facility for citizens.
- Ø Four labourers with 61 family members were provided legal support as they were facing serious threats from kiln owners for agitating against unlawful bonded labour. Release of three out of four workers prisoned under false charges was secured, their illegal advance payments were waved off and arrears of underpaid wages were claimed under the Payment of Wages Act 1936.
- Ø Through the monthly newsletter Labour Education, workers enhanced their knowledge about labour laws and got information about other trade union leaders/workers.

Pay Your Workers: Fixing the Broken Apparel Industry in the COVID Era

Pay Your Workers is an international campaign to ensure the payment of minimum wage rate for apparel industries, which are making products for international brands. In this campaign, women workers were the main focus. Labour Education Foundation implemented this campaign in Punjab

and Textile Power-loom Garment Workers Union Punjab (TPGWUP) is a major partner in this campaign. LEF facilitated TPGWUP in designing the campaign and provided training to its members. The TPGWUP also organized demonstrations in front of the labour department. The major slogans of this campaign are What's Disgusting - Union busting, What's Outrageous - Stealing Wages, Unionization is Our Right, ADIDAS Stop Stealing Wages, and Implement the Minimum Wage. Through this campaign, LEF and TPGWU reached out to 230 workers through training and now they are members of TPGWUP. This training helped the workers in understanding the supply chain and how their wages are stolen. The workers were also trained on the use of social media and now are effectively using social media for strengthening the campaign.

Achievements

- The workers of Sadaqat Textile Mills Limited Faisalabad were not being paid the minimum wages. They moved the labour court, which issued an order to pay them the minimum wage of PKR 25,000.
- The Masood Textile Mills (MTM) Faisalabad did not pay gratuity to the workers, as a result of training and sessions, 17 workers raised their voice and filed their case in the wage compensation court for their gratuity. Adjudication of the case is pending.
- Seven workers of Nishat Textile Mills, Crescent Mills and Sadaqat Textile Limited were reinstated during the reporting period and were paid their dues. They had been sacked from their jobs without any reason. They contacted the TPGWUP, which facilitated them in their legal fight.
- Benefitting from the sessions, women and men workers of both the districts have regained their self-confidence and started participating in union activities.
- As a result of awareness sessions, workers of US Apparel 3, 4 and 5 Lahore became aware of their legal right to a yearly bonus and 5% profit share. So, at the end of the year 2022, they collectively bargained to receive the bonus and 5% profit share from the factory.

Improving Equines' Condition through a Rights-based Approach

LEF and Brooke signed a one-year project in November 2021. The main goal of the project was to assess and establish that the enhanced knowledge base and income of equine owners will result in the improvement of the welfare of the animals. This project was implemented in Sheikhpura district. Major activities included capacity-building training, developing district-level advocacy groups, and supporting brick kiln workers, especially donkey-cart drivers (Rehray Walas) in getting CNIC.

Achievements

Training name	No of participants		Total	Accumulative pre-assessment	Accumulative post-assessment
	Men	Women			
Gender equality	60	24	84	38%	74%
Labour laws and the functions of Labour and Livestock Departments	55	36	91	29%	55%
Occupational health and safety of workers	75	10	85	31%	57%
The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1890, The Punjab Animal Health Act 2019	66	25	91	34%	61%

· Developed a district level advocacy group, which lobbied with brick kiln owners and Labour Department officials. Thus, the donkey-cart drivers (*Rehray walas*) succeeded in getting an increase of PKR 40 in their wages, which benefited 540 workers of 30 brick kiln making units. Although the wage rate is not at par with the official minimum wage rate notification, it has put a positive effect on the life of donkey-cart drivers' families and their equine. Similarly, brick kiln workers influenced the Livestock and Dairy Development Department and succeeded in regularizing visits of the mobile dispensary.

· CNICs of 147 workers, including 66 male and 73 female workers and 8 applications of children B Form, were successfully processed. LEF paid the fee of CNICs of 147 brick kiln workers, including travel fees of the workers whose CNICs were processed at NADRA field office in Sheikhpura. After getting the CNICs, brick kiln workers can register themselves for government facilities like the Punjab Health Card and Benazir Income Support Program.

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Economic and Gender Justice in the Global Apparel Supply Chain: A Worker-Driven Solution

The government is failing to enforce laws that could protect millions of garment workers from serious labour rights abuses. It includes failure to pay minimum wages, social security and pensions, suppression of independent labour unions, forced overtime, insufficient office breaks, and disregarded regulations requiring paid maternity and medical leaves. Domestic and international apparel brands do not take effective measures to prevent and correct labour rights abuses in their supply chain.

LEF signed a project with the Clean Cloth Campaign (CCC) to address the issue of garment workers. The objectives of this project are: 1) Strengthen women's empowerment; 2) Strengthen regional and national coalition building; 3) Contribute to the Pay Your Workers campaign; and 4) Contribute to the project progress campaign. This project was signed in December 2022 and activities were started in January 2023, which will be reported in next year's annual report.

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Online training of workers

LEF and The International Federation of Worker's Education Association ("IFWEA") jointly conducted an online training for workers on climate change. After completing the training, the participants built a network and developed an action plan on climate change and highlighted their

concerns with a government institution. The participants and LEF staff also participated in other countries' study circles that had the same topic and shared their experiences.

Promoting Empowerment of Informal Sector Women Workers

Labour Education Foundation implemented PEISWW with the support of Secours Populaire Francais. The main objective of the project was to develop the leadership of home-based workers at the grassroots level for strengthening their union and claiming rights. While there were two specific objectives: 1) Teaching of Urdu language reading and writing, and basic mathematics skills to 50 women workers of the informal sector through establishing two literacy and facilitation centres in two areas of Lahore for 12 months; 2) Improving knowledge base of informal sector women workers through participation in 20 discussion sessions (10 in each centre) on human rights, workers' rights, decent work, minimum wage, the importance of organizing, gender equality, violence against women etc.

Both the literacy centres have been developed in which more than 50 home-based women workers have so far learned reading and writing of Urdu and basic mathematics skills. They are now able to maintain their business accounts. LEF also educated these home-based women workers on labour rights and occupational safety and health. Now all 50 HBWWs are members of the Home-Based Workers Union Lahore and they are in a better position to protect themselves from their job-related hazards.

Labour Education Foundation's Humanitarian Response

During the flood emergency, Labour Education Foundation through its countrywide network collected data on daily-wagers, labourers, peasants, and home-based workers belonging to the flood-hit districts and after consultations with representatives from the affected areas planned urgent interventions to counter the humanitarian crisis.

Jacobabad, Shikarpur and Khairpur districts were selected from Sindh province, Qila Abdullah from Balochistan, Dera Ghazi Khan from South Punjab, and Charsadda and Mardan districts from KP province for the planned interventions. These interventions included distribution of cash grants to meet immediate needs of the affected population, provision of winter-bedding and warm clothes in view of the approaching harsh winters, arranging medical camps for treating those flood victims suffering from mosquito-bite and water-borne diseases, provision of fertilizer to the farmers, repairing irrigation channels damaged in the floods, and installing solar water-pumps meant for drinking water. Initially, cash grants at the rate of Rs5,000 per person were given to 650 most vulnerable flood victims. The amount was increased to Rs10,000 for around 156 women victims from Sindh's Khairpur district as an overwhelming majority of them were widows. Blankets or sets of quilts plus mattresses, warm clothes, jackets and shoes were provided to around 1,300 people and children. Eleven medical camps, including one for skin diseases, were organized where disease diagnosis facilities and medicines were also offered free of cost. One solar water pump was installed

in Qila Abdullah, Balochistan, for providing clean drinking water. An irrigation channel was repaired and restored in Shikarpur to benefit around 500 small farmers.

Our Donors

Clean Cloth Campaign (Netherland)

The Norwegian Human Rights Funds (NHRF)

South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication (SAAPE)

Global Labor Justice - International Labor Rights Forum

Pakistan Institute of Labour Education & Research (PILER)

Friendrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Pakistan

Bread for the World (Germany)

BROOKE

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