

# CASE STUDY CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES

"I CAN EVEN HEAR BIRDS CHIRPING AND MY CAT MEOWING AROUND ME"

**Muhammad Ilyas** is a nine year old boy living in Ama Khel Village in District Tank with his parents, six brothers and seven sisters. His father is a religious cleric, or *imam*, in a local mosque and draws a very nominal monthly salary of Rs. 3,000. He also gets support in the form of food and cash as *zakat* and *sadqa* from the local community. Ilyas and his brothers are enrolled in a nearby government school, although his sisters are unable to attend school because of financial constraints.

Ilyas has had a hearing problem since early childhood and was given a hearing aid by a local philanthropist. However, he lost the device while playing more than a year ago and his father has been unable to afford a replacement. Since then, Ilyas has been facing difficulties in his daily life, particularly at school where his grades have suffered and his teachers complain about his inability to pay attention. His father worried about him, but felt that since he could only afford one choice, sending him to school was more important than purchasing a new hearing aid.

When FIDA established a Child Friendly Space (CFS) through its Child Protection Project in Ama Khel Village, Muhammad Ilyas was amongst the children registered. In the Child Registration Form it was mentioned that Ilyas has hearing problem and a FIDA supervisor noticed the same. Although the supervisors gave more attention to Ilyas, did not take interest in educational or recreational activities.

FIDA's CFS supervisor recommended that Ilyas receive support in the provision of a hearing device. Luckily, there was a provision for such support in the project, so Ilyas got the hearing device. The entire project team could see a change in Ilyas, who was now interested in all activities and playing with his friends. The School Management Committee of the local school also noticed a change in Ilyas and thanked FIDA for the intervention.

When he asked how he feels now, Ilyas was a bit shy but said, "I'm very happy. I can even hear birds chirping and my cat meowing around me."

