

# Children’s burden cleansed away from clean water



Photo: UN-HABITAT

*Improved Well equipped with Hand-pump*



Photo: UN-HABITAT

*Empowered Community Members Gathering Together*

*“I prefer death rather than fetching water 5km away from my house!”* said an eight-year old boy, because there was no water collection point in his neighborhood. Sameeti, located in the heart of Lashkar Gah city, is an informal settlement area where a large number of people have been residing for the last four decades due to the war. The boy is one of these residents.

Incapacity of government to deliver basic needs to those families in the informal area has caused lack of trust with the municipality, increased perception among the citizens that the municipality is unwilling or unable to respond to their needs, and even lack of confidence in governing authorities. Sameeti is one of the forgotten informal settlements where the people live under the threat of eviction.

Over 500 people participated in the large gathering organized in 2008 to intervene between the residents and the municipality. UN-HABITAT addressed an urgent need to improve the local governance and establish a functional governance system where communities and local authorities can interact meaningfully and collaboratively to enrich quality of life and security. Successfully two community groups were created in financial support of the DFID to initiate undertaking construction of main-drainages, culverts and wells equipped with hand-pump for clean potable water. Secondary drainages were completed by the communities themselves only.

One 70-year old woman was crying with smile in the village because her grandchild did not have to die for fetching water. More accessible water collection points with hand-pumps have increasingly made impact on changing people’s life. Clean water provides the people and children with time to study and loss of water-borne diseases. The people learned importance of community to be united as a strong governance to equally discuss with the municipality. United community members presently lobby the Ministry of Urban Development Affairs for considering the Sameeti formal settlement.