

# Pakistan Girls Education Foundation

## SOMOP



**Annual Report 2024**

*Thanks to the contributions of our donors, the Foundation for Girls' Education Pakistan (SOMOP) has once again been able last year to contribute to the education of hundreds of underprivileged girls in difficult to access areas in Northern Pakistan. In total 554 children from the poorest families attended the three schools supported by SOMOP.*

*This financial support is of great value, but given the difficult circumstances in which girls' education takes place in this region, it also provides mental support for the students, teachers and employees of our local partner Bint-e Malakand in Pakistan.*

*We would like to thank our donors wholeheartedly and hope that we can count on your contribution to our education initiatives for girls in Pakistan in the coming year.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Foundation for Supporting Girls' Education Pakistan (SOMOP) was founded in 2007 with the aim of giving girls from the poorest families in Pakistan the opportunity to go to school. Since its foundation, SOMOP has supported a unique education project in Malakand, the traditional Pashtun tribal area in Pakistan. These are primary schools for girls who are often forced to work at a very young age due to tradition, poverty and family debts. The education of these girls contributes to the abolition of child labour, the prevention of forced marriages and increases their chances of a better future. The local organisation that founded and manages these schools is called Bint-e Malakand, literally: *daughter of Malakand*. This is an NGO by and for women in the Malakand district.

SOMOP sees the schools of Bint-e Malakand as its core activity. As an exception, SOMOP spends money on things other than education, such as food parcels during the last flood in that area and during the corona crisis.

This annual report provides an overview of the activities of the Pakistan Girls' Education Foundation (SOMOP) and its partner Bint-e Malakand in 2024.



## **2. OUR PROJECT WITH BINT-E MALAKAND**

### **2.1 Background**

According to United Nations data, Pakistan has the second highest number of out-of-school children in the world, more than 20 million (aged five to 16). Twelve million of them are girls. Of those who do attend school, the dropout rate is high.

The literacy rate has improved little in recent years. According to the most recent official sources, the literacy rate is 59 percent, which means that more than 40 percent of the population is illiterate. The literacy rate has virtually stagnated for the past five years or more, and spending on education has also fallen. 61 percent of women in rural areas are illiterate.

In the Malakand district, in northwestern Pakistan, many children also do not attend school. Existing schools in the district are often inaccessible to children from the poorest families, because the schools have strict entry requirements regarding age and school hours. Bint-e Malakand operates an education system that follows the government curriculum, but at the same time allows for flexibility in admission standards and school hours. This allows for older children to still enroll and takes into account the agricultural season.

Throughout the region, girls are far less likely to attend school than boys. Education is generally considered more important for boys than for girls by the population. Boys are expected to earn an income in the future and support their parents, while girls are expected to take on a domestic role as a mother and wife. Parents sometimes marry off their daughters at (too) young an age, so that they no longer weigh on the family income.

The Bint-e Malakand Welfare Organisation is a local NGO and was founded in 1996 by two local women, Fauzia Bibi and Fatima Bibi, with Fatima in charge for the past fifteen years. The teachers are women from local villages and the organization also consists largely of women. This fact in particular makes Bint-e Malakand a very exceptional initiative. It is located deep in the traditional Pathan tribal area, where men dominate social life and women's freedom of movement outside the home has traditionally been very limited. Bint-e Malakand focuses, in close cooperation with the local population, on schools for girls, although boys are not excluded. At the end of 2024, Bint-e Malakand had three schools with a total of 554 pupils, of which less than 10% are boys. The schools are located in the villages of Alladand, Dargai and Matkanai. Bint-e Malakand is also very committed to its immediate environment. It especially encourages women to learn skills with which they can earn money.



## 2.2 Progress Bint-e Malakand in 2024

We would like to present some results of the past year in the Bint-e Malakand-project.

### 1. Monitoring and school results

The management of Bint-e Malakand visited each school weekly last year. In addition, the schools were visited regularly by female members of the Department of Education to support the teachers in case of difficulties and in applying training.

The department and the local management also held the exams again this year in March.

The exam results of the students were excellent: all 68 students who participated passed.

The diplomas are valid at all educational institutions in the country. The majority of all girls ended up in further education for girls in their immediate vicinity. However, Bint-e Malakand had to make an extra effort to place their ex-students, especially in Dargai.



### 2. Drop-outs and new students

The total number of drop-outs in 2024 was 36, due to parents moving to find new work elsewhere or due to marriage. A total of 153 new students entered.

In total, there were 554 students on December 31, 2024.

**Table: Number of students per school in December 2024**

Group	Alladand	Dargai	Matkanai	Totaal
0	30	45	55	130
1	25	40	52	117
2	21	47	53	121
3	24	20	29	73
4	17	16	25	58
5	16	16	23	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>554</b>
<b>Girls</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>510</b>
<b>Boys</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>44</b>

### **3. Teacher education and training**

Teachers have been trained to teach by downloading educational videos. They have also been trained to use headphones for teaching programs and to manage a library for students. The libraries were opened in all schools two years ago with financial support of SOMOP.

### **4. Contact with environment**

1. Bint-e Malakand has organised two large discussions with mothers in connection with the research report, which SOMOP had carried out through an expert researcher, see point 3.1.
2. Bint-e Malakand has set up three new women's organisations to promote the economic position of women in Qalanga Banda, Saro Koto and Mata.
3. Bint-e Malakand has also participated in an exhibition of women in Lahore to show their handmade products.
4. Bint-e Malakand has set up business centres for women in Malakand where products made by mothers can be sold.
5. Bint-e Malakand has provided a wheelchair at workshops.

### **5. Challenges**

1. The owner of the school in Dargai demanded too much advance rent. The organisation could not afford this amount and was forced to move the school to another location.
2. This year the government could not provide the annual school books. So Bint-e Malakand bought the books from open markets.
3. Another challenge was that a large number of students who left Bint-e Malakand schools after their exams, were not given a place in a secondary school. Bint-e Malakand took this matter up with the Department of Education, which allowed these schools to admit them.



## **2.3 Plans Bint-e Malakand for coming year**

What are Bint-e Malakand's plans and new objectives for the coming year?

1. Bint-e Malakand wishes to open a few new schools in the area Malakand with support from SOMOP, where girls do not yet have access to education. If there are sufficient means Bint-e Malakand wishes to buy land on which to build a new school building. The organisation is convinced that this will improve the quality of education.
2. Bint-e Malakand wants to further train staff to improve the quality of education and the organization.
3. The organization wants to conduct research into women and children with disabilities.
3. Bint-e Malakand wants to open more business centers for women.

## **3. ABOUT SOMOP**

### **3.1 Activities in the previous year**

SOMOP raises donations for Bint-e Malakand and monitors the project. We maintain monthly contact with the management of Bint-e Malakand about the progress, both in practical and financial matters. We also have regular contact with our contact person in Pakistan. Based on the progress and the planning, it is decided when and how much money is transferred.



## Evaluation study

In addition, SOMOP had an evaluation study carried out in 2024 by the independent Pakistani expert Javaid Iqbal with the cooperation of the management of Bint-e-Malakand. The aim was to evaluate the positioning, the right to exist and the functioning of the schools of Bint-e-Malakand as an organization.

The conclusion of the research showed that Bint-e Malakand has a right to exist and fills a gap in educational facilities. On the one hand, because Bint-e Malakand is particularly strongly rooted and accepted in the immediate area, and on the other hand, because the government schools on site do not function sufficiently or are not available for the intended target group, as the government currently sees no opportunities to establish new government schools in the area.

However the organization must be improved in the sense that it is less dependent on the management of one person.

More in detail the following recommendations emerged from the study.

### **SOMOP's relationship with Bint-e Malakand**

- SOMOP has been providing money to Bint-e Malakand on a regular basis, which is highly appreciated by the organization and the parents. However, in order to improve the quality of education and to be able to cover a larger geographical area, it is recommended that the flow of money be made more generous and frequent.
- A one-time budget can be provided to Bint-e Malakand for the purchase of land and the construction of school buildings, so that the schools become more stable and sustainable.
- SOMOP can also provide a one-time grant for the development of a better policy structure for Binte. This can lead to the transformation of Binte from a people-driven organization to a more sustainable organization.

### **Education, teachers and schools in the short term**

- Teacher training is a constant necessity. Trainings are always needed to better equip teachers in cognitive skills, multi-grade teaching etc.
- Increase in teachers' salaries is required to maintain their motivation.
- The number of teachers needs to be increased to achieve a good student-teacher ratio.
- Bint-e Malakand often replaces furniture and mats to sit on with second-hand material. Regular replacement of this material is necessary because it cannot be reused for years.
- Bint-e Malakand needs paid staff for cleaning (currently this is organised by the parent association).
- Purchase of specific sports equipment can improve cognitive energy in children (board games, badminton rackets).
- Provision of first aid kits in schools.

### **The Future of Bint-e Malakand as an Organization**

- Strengthening Bint-e Malakand as an organization in the near future is essential to maintain its role in the education sector in the region.
- Bint-e Malakand needs to have a functional and active governing body, which will reduce the dependency on one person, namely the director Fatima. Her commitment and diligence are exceptionally high, but there is a need to include more active people in the management of the organization. The Board of Directors should meet at least twice a year, elect the board members in turn and play an active role in the policy matters of Binte.



### **The Future of Bint-e Malakand in Education**

- There is a huge gap in the demand and supply of educational facilities, especially for girls in Malakand and in general in the whole of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Director of Higher Education and Focal Person Education for All stated that it is almost impossible to establish new government schools at this time. In this situation, it is imperative that NGOs like Bint-e Malakand continue to share the government's responsibility to get out-of-school children into schools.
- Upgrading of the three existing schools to intermediate level is desirable so that the students can continue their education at least up to intermediate level. Once they have completed intermediate level, they may be able to study independently and take entrance examinations for further education.



### 3.2. Financial Overview SOMOP 2024 (per 31-12-2024)

#### Income and Expenses

	Debet	Credit
Bank account balance 01.01.2024	7.721,51	
Received donations	9.250,00	
Payment Bint-e Malakand		8.090,00
Payment Javaid Iqbal		1.250,00
Payment Neelam Bhatt		2.775,00 *)
Payment costs		608,53 **)
<b>Balance 31-12-2024</b>		
Reservation		3.000,00
Bank account		1.247,98
Totaal	16.971,51	16.971,51

\*) Labeled donation Scholarship University Neelam Bhatt, India

\*\*) Due to restrictions by the Pakistani government, monetary transactions to our partner Bint-e Malakand-e Malakand unfortunately entail relatively high transaction costs.

#### Balance per 31-12-2024

	Debit	Credit
Reserve account	3.000,00	Capital 1.247,98
Current account	1.247,98	Reservation 3.000,00
Total	4.247,98	4.247,98

#### Budget 2024

#### Realisation per 31-12-2024

	Debet	Credit	Debet	Credit
Donations	8.500,00		9.250,00	
Payment Bint		8.090,00		8.090,00
Payment Neelam Bhatt				2.775,00
Audit		1.250,00		1.250,00
Costs bank transfers		650,00		608,53
Unforseen		310,00		
Total	8.500,00	10.300,00	9.250,00	12.723,53

Excess 1.800,00 3.473,53 of which 2.775,00 payment N. Bhatt

**The Foundation has no assets and/or possessions other than those stated in this overview.  
Every euro goes to the education projects in Pakistan**

## **ANBI status: your donation is tax-free**

SOMOP has the status of Public Benefit Organization (ANBI status). This means that you can declare your donation as a **tax-free gift** to the tax authorities (tax number RSIN 817273967). It is also possible to include SOMOP in your will through **a legacy or inheritance**. When you donate your estate to SOMOP, the money goes to charity for one hundred percent, because charities do not have to pay inheritance tax.

## **Every euro goes to the education projects in Pakistan**

The SOMOP foundation consists of a board of five people in the Netherlands and a number of volunteers in Pakistan, one of whom is our permanent contact person. Everyone is committed to the foundation's goal based on their own expertise and motivation. This is done 100% on a voluntary basis and **no board or overhead costs** are charged. This means that every euro you give to the foundation is actually donated to the educational projects.



## **Would you like to continue supporting us?**

Please deposit your donation into **account NL67INGB0003072841** in the name of Stichting Ondersteuning Meisjes Onderwijs Pakistan, Zaandam.

For more information, please call board member **Marlijn Lelieveld (06-47556809)** or e-mail to **infosomop@gmail.com**.

You can find more information about our work on the website **[www.meisjesonderwijspakistan.nl](http://www.meisjesonderwijspakistan.nl)**.