

## Rizwan, Pakistan

Rizwan, 14, is from a village near Lahore in Pakistan called Chachey Wali. He is the third oldest child of eight children in his family. He has three brothers and four sisters.

Rizwan's mother has not been well since she suffered from an electrical shock four years ago. His father does not work because there is no employment available to him. Thus, Rizwan and four of his siblings (ages 5-13 years) are forced to work. His three-year-old brother and two oldest sisters do not work. These sisters,

who are 16- and 18-years old, are married. In Rizwan's society, it is out of the question for them to go out to work.

In Chachey Wali there are twelve brick kilns. Rizwan started working in the kilns at the age of seven. Rizwan gets up at 4:00 a.m. and makes bricks eleven hours a day, 6 days a week. He works all day long outside in the hot sun. Rizwan earns 500 Pakistan rupees (\$8.35) a week for making about 1,000 bricks.

Brick making is tough work. Bricks are made outdoors, meaning that the children who make them have to sit in the open air facing exposure to harsh sun all day long. Most people who make bricks have to sit on their heels and bend forward all day long, hurting their spine, neck, feet and knees, causing extreme discomfort. The most common side effects of this work are postural pains, skin infestations, and lung infections from inhaling a lot of dust all day long in hostile climate. Rizwan thinks poorly about his future and that of his brothers and sisters. He thinks that they will be physically unfit to continue working by the time they turn 25-years-old, because of the physical strain and long hours of their work.

Rizwan does not like his several bosses, who abuse and humiliate him and his brothers and sisters when they make mistakes by calling them names and/or beating them. Once, a supervisor hit his younger sister for laying her foot on a brick before it had dried. Rizwan has been injured at work. He has a scar on his forehead from a nail. When he is sick, Rizwan does not get paid.

Rizwan receives informal education only 2 hours an evening, six evenings a week, through an organization called Godh Lahore. He has completed four years of school.

When he grows up, Rizwan would like to have a "normal life" and work in cool conditions. He feels that children need more schools with *good* teachers. He expects a



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miracle to happen so that children like him can stop worrying about work and start attending *full*-time school instead.