This report illustrates the key highlights and activities of the Sahara Fund Programme for the period 2009-2014, which was initiated for the affectees of Islamabad Marriot Hotel blast on September 20, 2008.
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Hashoo Group and Hashoo Foundation (HF) initiated the Sahara Fund Programme to provide relief and rehabilitation to the bomb blast affectees of Islamabad Marriott Hotel, on September 20, 2008, which killed 54 and injured at least 266 people. The Hashoo Foundation and Hashoo Group implemented these relief and rehabilitation plans in collaboration with government, non-government and international donors in 2008, soon after the tragic incident providing emergency medical assistance to the blast affectees. The Sahara Fund Programme was formally started in January 2009, aiming to provide financial assistance for the families to ensure their basic needs. This programme continues to assist its beneficiaries.

Under the Sahara Fund Programme, a mechanism for fund disbursement was developed to provide medical, financial and educational assistance to 65 families since 2009. Each family’s financial position was evaluated in order to provide the family members with the same income level they had as before. For acquiring financial assistance, specific policies and procedures were developed by the Social Welfare department of Hashoo Foundation. Based on individual interviews with family members and a review of their dependents, distinct groups were created accordingly to cater to their needs.
These distinct groups were categorized as:

A. Deceased Hotel Staff
B. Injured Hotel Staff with Disabilities
C. Deceased Outsiders
D. Injured Outsiders with Disabilities.

2. RELIEF AND REHABILITATION

The Hashoo Foundation (HF) in collaboration with Hashoo Group (HG) took the following relief and rehabilitation measures immediately after the tragic incident:

1. All staff and outsiders, affected by the bomb blast were supported by the Foundation in terms of medical treatment in government and private hospitals.
2. The Foundation provided transport to injured staff and outsiders from Islamabad to their homes.
3. HF’s management recognized the fact that relief alone was not enough; there was a need for an elaborate mechanism of support to help the survivors regain their lost livelihoods. Based on this realization, a support system for the affected families was developed to ensure these families met their basic needs.
The relief and rehabilitation measures were taken as per the criteria:

a. Nature of disability and severity of injury of the staff and outsiders.
b. Number of dependents and economic condition of the family in terms of family size and a reliable source of income.
c. Extent of families’ needs.

3. SUMMARY REPORT OF TOTAL FAMILIES

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<tr>
<th></th>
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4. DETAILS OF PHASED OUT BENEFICIARIES

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<thead>
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<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number of Phased out Beneficiaries (Year Wise)</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Deceased Outsider</td>
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<td>Injured Outsider</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

¹ Families were phased out during 2009-2014 who during the period of time became financially sound and medically rehabilitated. Some families were provided lump sum amount for small business initiatives and they were phased out after their successful small business set up.
5. DONATIONS

The generous contribution of local and international partners has made possible the implementation of the rehabilitation plan for the affected families set by the Hashoo Foundation. Marriott employees worldwide showed their care and concern and sought out ways to help fellow employees and their families who were victims of the attack.

The Islamabad Marriott Assistance Fund was quickly established, while employees’ worldwide- mobilized creative fund-raising activities such as car washes, bake sales and book sales or made individual contributions. Marriott International and The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation also made contributions to the Fund. The money raised was used to assist the victims and their families with education, food, medical and social support as set forth by the Hashoo Foundation.

*Family of Marriott Islamabad blast victim with MD Pakistan Baitul Mall at Marriot Hotel Islamabad.*
6. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRESS

- HF Social Welfare Programme (SWP) team had great success in securing donation of PKR. 2 million from Pakistan Bail- ul- Mal for the beneficiaries of Sahara Fund during 2010-2011.

- Out of 65 families, 23 families have been phased out (18 medically recovered and 5 families have been supported for small scale business initiatives; these families are successfully running their businesses.

- HF’s SWP and Monitoring, Evaluation and Research (MER) team carried out an impact study of the program in 2012. The study revealed that 73% of the families were female-headed whereas, 27% were male-headed families. The study also showed that major part of the programme fund had been utilized on children’s education and food ration for the family. Without the support of this programme it would have been really hard for these families to continue their children’s education and feed them properly.

Similarly, a statistical survey was conducted in 2013 from all the existing Sahara Fund beneficiaries regarding their level of satisfaction with financial assistance, team behavior and overall sufficiency level of the support. The survey outcome showed that most of the beneficiaries (67%) were satisfied in terms of the services, financial assistance, team’s behavior, sufficiency level of assistance in meeting their urgent needs.
Six (6) women beneficiaries were given skill trainings in different trades, two (2) women beneficiaries were given Marble Mosaic work training in collaboration with UNIDO (United Nation Industrial Development Organization) & First Women Bank, Pakistan, in 2013. Two (2) women were trained in beautician and the rest of the two (2) in Chic work in 2012.

Two (2) women beneficiaries who were trained in Marble Mosaic work were supported for home based business in 2014, to utilize their skill and strengthen their source of livelihood so they could become financially self-sustained.

The trained women beneficiaries in Chic work and Marble Mosaic were facilitated and supported for exhibition of their products on different events including cultural exhibition at Lock Virsa, Pakistan, Women’s Day, First Alumni get together of Hashoo Foundation Scholars in 2012 and 2014 respectively.

One (1) beneficiary’s son was admitted in a university in England and he is planning to complete his CA as well as Diploma in Business Management and Marketing by Dec 2015.

One (1) beneficiary was employed in a renowned national school in Islamabad. Now, she is earning an income, which is sufficient to help her in meeting the additional expenses of her children.

42 out of 65 families have been receiving regular financial support.
10. SUCCESS STORIES

HF provided a one-time support to establish home based employment to encourage families to become self-sustained. If it was not for the support given by the Sahara Fund many children would have had to leave school to earn menial wages to support their families. There are excellent examples of success stories of beneficiaries who with the continued financial support of the Foundation, had completed their education, found employment, established small business, and now, financially self-sustained. Some interesting success stories are given below.

\[I.\] Zeeshan Murtaza,
From Loss to Achievement

Zeeshan Murtaza, is the son of late Murtaza-Uddin-Ahmed who was a shift engineer at Marriott Islamabad.

A studious and hardworking child, Zeeshan was awarded a Bronze medal for securing 3rd position in Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education. Based on his performance, he was granted full fee concession by Punjab College of Commerce. After his father's death, the family found it very difficult to support Zeeshan's academic aspirations. In 2010, Zeeshan managed to complete his Master's degree in Business Administration from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, through a 20% Scholarship and a contribution of 80% of his tuition fees from the Sahara Fund Program.

Wanting to support his family as much as he could, Zeeshan started his professional career with a two-month internship at Pakistan International Airlines' HR Department in year 2009. Currently he is working in IT Company, Nayatel, as Senior Human Resource Executive.
II. Dreams and Aspirations

Bashir Wali Khan, a young Chitrali, was a dreamer. He had a dream to banish the haunting woes of poverty from his family and especially empower his sister, Bibi Seeda, to become an independent and capable woman. This was not a dream that could be easily achieved since he belonged to the remote area of Bang, Upper Chitral (KPK), where female education is still frowned upon by the strong traditionalist forces. Adding to it, a family of eleven, and being the sole bread earner, his aim seemed impossible to achieve.

Bashir, however, had not learnt to cave-in to the difficulties that life was throwing at him. He moved to Islamabad in search of better opportunity, started working as a restaurant cashier in Islamabad Marriott Hotel and life became a lot more bearable for his family. It was the result of this steady source of income that Bashir got married and was blessed with two beautiful sons and a daughter.

On the fatal evening of September 20, 2008, when a deafening sound snatched away his life, taking away all his aspirations. His family was devastated by an utter sense of hopelessness at the loss of their sole supporter.

It was in these circumstances that Hashoo Foundation stepped in through the Sahara Fund. His family was provided with monthly financial support to meet their household expenses, and get their children educated in good schools. Bashir's widow was also provided computer training. His sister, Bibi Seeda, was supported by the Sahara Fund, for her Master's degree in Education Planning & Management (EPM) from National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad. She is currently working with a reputed organization in Islamabad.

At present, his elder daughter, a brilliant student, got merit based admission in class 8th in the Aga Khan Higher Secondary School in Kuragh, Chitral.

III. Khushi Maseh

Mr. Khushi Masih survivor of Extreme injury

Mr. Masih was working at the Baluchistan House as a sweeper and was on duty during Marriot bomb blast. This bomb blast affected him severely and he lost his left leg. After the incident Masih was unable to continue his job. Hashoo Foundation provided him with medical assistance through provision of PKR. 8,000 per month untill his recovery.
Meanwhile, Hashoo Foundation developed linkage with Life Orthopethic Centre, where an artificial limb was created and implanted; thus, helping Mr. Masih with his mobility. Now, Mr. Masih is employed and earns a sufficient amount for his family. The entire family has extended their gratitude to HF for helping him sustain their family.

III. Aftab Mehmood

Due to Muhammad Din’s sudden death all his responsibilities shifted onto the shoulders of his son, Aftab Mehmood. The Hashoo Group has always considered all its employees as family. Keeping in view the financial problems and needs of struggling families, Hashoo Foundation introduced the Sahara Fund Programme under which, families like Muhammad Din have been provided with monthly financial assistance since 2009. In order to become self-sustainable and acquire financial independence, Mr. Aftab Mehmood and his brother expressed their desire to initiate their own general store. For this purpose, Hashoo Foundation provided an amount of PKR. 90,000 (USD 983) to start their grocery store named, Rana General Store located in Sadiqabad, Rawalpindi.

“If tears could build a stair way and memories a lane, I’d walk right up to heaven and bring you home again.” A word from the son to his beloved late Father
As per the survey of Social Welfare Team, Aftab Mehmood has been earning a net profit of PKR 21,000 (USD 229) per month.
While interviewed, he said that he was looking forward to expand his business as he has been earning a considerable amount of profit. Aftab and his brother were thankful to Hashoo Foundation for its tremendous support.

IV. **Azhar Mehmood**

Azhar Mehmood a young, talented and dynamic Kashmiri, lost his right eye, and his liver was damaged. During this time of helplessness and grief, the Hashoo Foundation played a role by supporting the family. Due to severe liver and internal injuries, doctors had prescribed him medical treatment. Hashoo Foundation financially supported him with the medical expenditures, although he has recovered from his internal injuries but permanently lost his right eye sight.
Azhar and his wife, Rasila expressed their desire to initiate their own small home based dairy business. Hashoo Foundation encouraged them by accepting their request and provided an amount for the purpose of purchasing a cow. His business has been smoothly running and the family has financially become self-sustained.

V. Ms. Jahan

Ms. Jahan, 28, resident of district Baltistan, lost her husband in the tragic incident of Marriott Hotel Islamabad suicide attack in 2008, leaving behind three little orphans. His sudden death left the entire family with extreme financial deficit and huge burden on her shoulder.

Realizing the family’s condition, Hashoo Foundation provided financial support on monthly basis to cater to the emergency and domestic needs of his children. After three years of the death of her husband, she was asked to marry the younger brother of her late husband, who is currently running the business.

“Hashoo Foundation provided regular financial support to my family for four years enabling us to meet our basic needs. Now, I do not have fear about my children because the business will secure their future and they’ll be able to get higher education” Ms. Jahan, the direct beneficiary.
Hashoo Foundation believes in making its beneficiaries financially sustainable in the long run and encourages them towards self-reliant initiatives. Foundation helped the family setup a mobile and computer hardware repair shop. To date, the business is being successfully run and making PKR 20,000 (USD 218) net profit, which almost doubles the monthly assistance of PKR 9,600 (USD 104) he received from the Foundation.

VI. Mr. Aqib

Mr. Aqib is from Kohat district. He became an orphan when his father M. Nawaz died due to the blast at Marriott hotel Islamabad on 20 September 2008, while working at Phoenix security service. The Foundation has been helping out the family with monthly financial assistance of PKR 5,500, it does not only support the family in emergencies, but also believes in providing long term and self-sustained initiatives to its potential beneficiaries.

Mr. Aqib was found a potential beneficiary for starting a small-scale business as he had automobile-repairing skills, therefore, the team motivated the family to initiate a small scale
business relating to auto repairing shop. SWP team helped the family business plan and supported the underprivileged family in starting up this business.

At present, the business is being run smoothly with net monthly profit of RKR. 12,000 (USD131), which is twice as much the monthly financial assistance from the Foundation.

VII. Mr. Amjad Ali
A Success Story

Mr. Amjad Ali was a driver by profession and he was on duty when his right arm and left leg got severely injured in the Marriott bomb blast on September 20, 2008.

He lost his left leg and fell into an uncertain situation regarding his mobility, as he was the sole bread earner of the entire family including his old aged parents.
His family members were also concerned about his rehabilitation. He lost his job for the time being as he was unable to work without the left leg.

Hashoo Foundation came forward in the dire need of the family and tried its best to get him come back to his normal life and support his family. Hashoo Foundation provided medical and financial assistance to him and his family respectively.

He underwent treatment at *Life Orthopedic Center* Islamabad, where he got his artificial leg, the Foundation paid PKR. 120,000 (USD 1,311) for the treatment. Due to the continued support of the Foundation, Amjad Ali has medically recovered. Currently, he is working in a private local construction company as a bookkeeper and earning income, which is at least sufficient to provide for his family’s needs.

**VIII. Nasir Hafeez**

Hafiz was living a carefree life as any boy of his age would when he faced the tragic incident that changed his life entirely. On the unfortunate day of the Islamabad Marriott bomb blast, he was on his way to the market. In a split second, Hafeez could see blood oozing out of his left arm and leg and he was blinded by excruciating pain. Pieces from the shattered glass had hit Hafeez and cut through his flesh, he was rushed to the nearest hospital where his initial emergency treatment was carried out. He underwent surgery within hours of the injury in the Poly Clinic Amjad standing with the help of artificial leg

Hafeez added, “Hashoo Foundation is an exceptional organization that targets the people in extreme need of support. I find it a hope for the underprivileged people of our community after my own experience with it. I pray to Allah that He gives this stupendous organization, the potency and will to be of assistance to the needy in the years to come.”
Hospital Islamabad, and had been admitted in the hospital for the next 18 days. After that, he was shifted to PIMS (Pakistan Institute of Medical Science) Islamabad, where he spent almost a month during the recovery process. Hafeez was a student of 6th grade when he met with this heartrending incident. He had to suffer great loss in his studies as he got bedridden for a long time. Hashoo Foundation helped him in this ordeal, and assisted him with immediate emergency support of PKR. 30,000 (USD 327) to pay for his surgery.

HF provided Hafeez with this monthly financial support without any delay or suspension for a period of three years. Not only this, the Foundation also provided the surgical instruments, equipment and medicines needed for his surgery at PIMS Islamabad. Hafeez has now recovered and rejoined his school where he had been previously studying.
7. CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

The Sahara Fund Programme had been initiated by the donations received from different donors, organizations and individuals, which helped out the smooth functioning and delivery of the programme services to the affectees for the last 6 years. Hashoo Foundation’s team is reviewing and analyzing the existing families, and planning to execute a mechanism for the families during the course of time.

At present, the existing families and beneficiaries have been categorized into two divisions, beneficiaries who need long term support and beneficiaries who need to be phased out gradually. Beneficiaries who need long term support totally depend on the monthly financial assistance from the Foundation in terms of food, children’s education and house rent. Beneficiaries who need to be phased out can be made financially self-sustained through job placement and establishment of small-scale businesses.

Since the received donation amount has been utilized during the last 6 years, therefore, funds availability for the programme is a great challenge and the short fall is being managed through HF core funding. Considering the families’ situation and vulnerability of the existing families, their sustenance could be difficult without the monthly financial support from the Foundation; funds shortages in future will surely affect the existing families.

According to the prevailing situation, roughly, there are 22 families who needs long term support and 20 families who need to be phased out in short term gradually.

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<th>Families’ Categorization</th>
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<td>Long Term Support</td>
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