

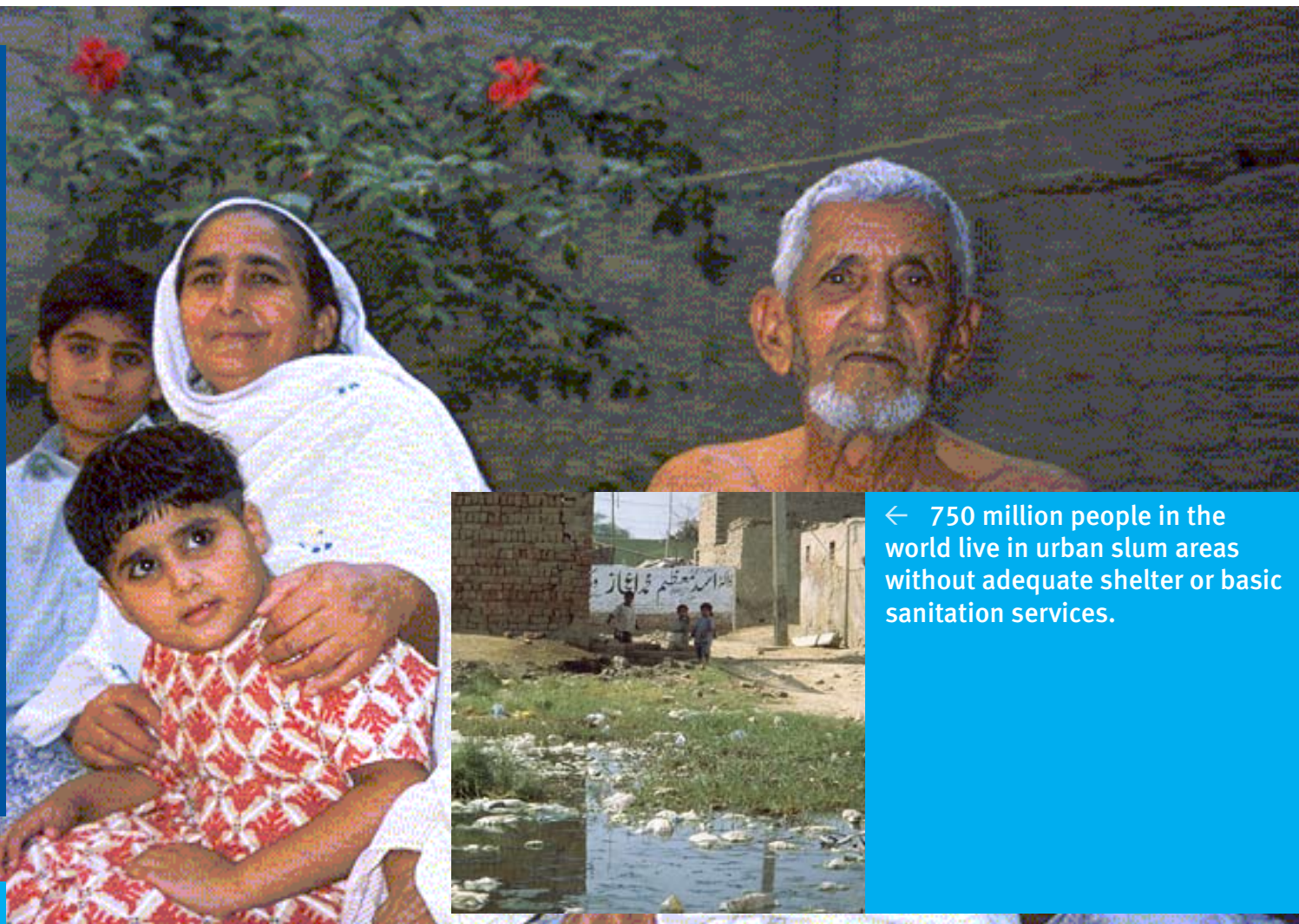
Abdul Rezark, Pakistan

Abdul lives with his family in Faisalabad, an industrial city in Pakistan. They moved here from the countryside in 1973 and, like thousands of other poor migrants, settled in Hasan Pura slum.

Hasan Pura is extremely cramped. It is estimated that areas originally built for 200 people are now housing an average of 7,000. Until recently, it had few services. Sewage flowed into the streets forming stinking ponds close to houses and in areas where children played.

Abdul believes his community has a right to sanitation. Here, he explains how he set about improving life for his family and community. >>

Abdul Rezark with his family. →



← 750 million people in the world live in urban slum areas without adequate shelter or basic sanitation services.

Q&A

The situation started to improve in 1996 when Abdul, together with others in his community, contacted a local organisation called ASB (Anjuman Samaji Behbood) about the sewage problem. They got WaterAid involved too and together came up with the idea of underground piping. The plan was to take sewage from Hasan Pura to the main municipal line in the city.

How did WaterAid and ASB support you?

“They provided the technical know-how. They did not give us money as our community wanted to pay for everything. We wanted to build it, maintain it, and pay for the labour.

“This is a self-help project. We don't want anything for free.”

So, what does your job involve?

“As a lane manager I look after the collection of maintenance

money from the local residents, procurement (of supplies) and I manage the labour. In 1996 I was nominated as a lane manager by the residents on the street. I was then given training and technical assistance for this job by ASB.

“My main job is to look after the credit system and ensure that it is benefiting everyone. The local residents all agree to play a small amount which will pay for the project. If residents cannot afford it, ASB can loan them the money but they must pay it back over several months.”

WaterAid opened its office in Pakistan in May 2006. It has since concentrated entirely on improving the lives of people living in the sprawling, unplanned slum areas surrounding Pakistan's major cities.



↑ Abdul's wife, Irshad Bibi, describes how her life has improved since the piping was laid:

Before, sewage was sitting on the streets and making our homes subside. The streets were very dirty. Quarrels between neighbours would be bad. We would argue about whose rubbish and waste was causing a smell and children would find it hard to play. The children would get sick from being in the sewage.

We have been healthier since the sewage is piped away. Children play cricket in the street, the smell and the flies have gone. Life is happy because we no longer argue.



Pakistan

Population: 152.1m
Infant mortality: 98/1000
Life expectancy: 63.4 years
Water supply coverage: 91%
Sanitation coverage: 59%
Below poverty line: 32.6%
Adult literacy: 49%