

THEME 5

STRIKING A CONNECTION BETWEEN INNOVATION, GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IS ESSENTIAL

- I** Sukhdev joined CEQUIN as a volunteer in 2013 in the Mardo Wali Baat programme. Coming from a family where girls are thought to be inferior to boys, Sukhdev's attitudinal change has been transformative. Within a week of volunteering, he got an opportunity to facilitate community mobilization on his own, leading to an exponential growth in his leadership skills. Today, Sukhdev has connected more than 40 girls from the community into the football programme and counsels their parents on a regular basis. He also facilitates various gender and leadership training sessions and health camps in the community for CEQUIN. Along the way Sukhdev has re-enrolled himself for higher education, improved his articulation and English speaking skills, and from being 'aimless' had transitioned into a purposeful young man.
- J** Mohammad Azad Hussain has been associated with CEQUIN for the last 5 years. From being a shy and quiet boy, Azad today is a confident young man dreaming of becoming a journalist and bringing about social change. Azad became a part of the Mardo Wali Baat programme, attending gender training workshops conducted by CEQUIN and becoming aware of gender inequality around him. From a mere participant, today Azad has become a lead trainer, conducting various gender training with boys in schools and communities. Azad has emerged as an excellent public speaker, and had been awarded by his educational institute. After his sister's marriage, he started helping his mother with kitchen and household chores, leading to ridicule from his brothers and friends. Azad continues to set an example through his actions and behaviour, optimistic that social change towards gender equity will happen with time and one has to constantly work towards it.