



cover

مؤسسة إدهي  
الابداع التخصصي في الخدمة الإنسانية

**Edhi Foundation**

**Professionalism and leadership in humanitarian work**





جَائِزَةِ إِعْلَمِيِّيِّ خَدْمَةِ لِلْإِنْسَانِيَّةِ  
ISA AWARD FOR SERVICE TO HUMANITY

Edhi Foundation  
Professionalism and leadership in humanitarian work



# Contents

- **1. Introduction**  
pag 6
- **2. About the Founder's Life**  
page 7
- **3. The Beginning of Edhi Foundation**  
page 8
- **4. Financial Resources of Edhi Foundation**  
page 8
- **5. The Services of Edhi Foundation**  
page 9-18
- **6. The Edhi Family**  
page 19-20
- **7. The Beneficiaries' Experiences**  
page 19-20
- **8. The Funeral of Abdul Sattar Edhi**  
page 22
- **9. Local and International Awards**  
page 23
- **10. Conclusion**  
page 24-25

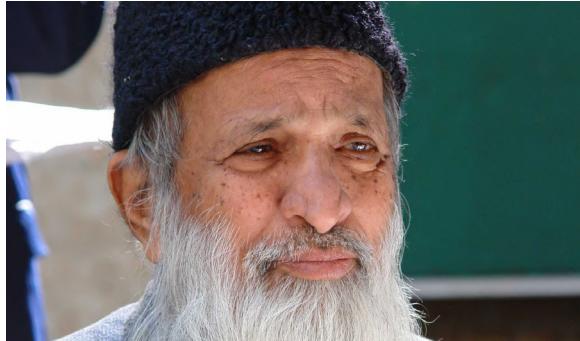
# 01 Introduction

## **Receiving the torch, with the same determination!**

The sound of an ambulance' siren is often chilling and frightening. It is a sound that no one wishes to hear, showing that someone is in pain or about to die. It tells you to get out of the way, so that a friend or a relative's death might be delayed.

That sound perhaps encapsulates a mixture of pain and sadness, but in Pakistan, with 200 million people or more, it reminds every one of the legend of a great man who forever changed the face of volunteer humanitarian work in the world, and gave it a meaning that neither anyone talking about him, nor all books introducing him could give. He is a man who perpetuates a deep and vivid definition of this concept, which we will not understand until we look into the 60 years of his life, underlining such a concept in both his country and the whole world. He is the piously humble man: Abdul Sattar Edhi.

Abdul Sattar Edhi took the responsibility of reshaping the destiny of his poor countrymen, by teaching all world decision makers who complain about limited capacity and low budgets, that such causes are resonant statements. He is one illiterate, poor, powerless man with no eminence, who could transform thousands of people, with his sincere desire to give, deepening his faith in humanity, and with a clear goal he has set for himself and his countrymen, to give an example of what the human soul can achieve, despite any circumstances or challenges. He showed everyone complaining about harsh life that there are millions of people or more dreaming about this life. If you want to feel the value of your life, give something to the lives of others, by living their pain, weakness and helplessness, to realize how lucky you are with what you have.



The presence of a person like Abdul Sattar Edhi may seem like a plot imagined in a writer's folktale. But once you set foot in Pakistan, you will actually find that this angel does exist in all its streets and his name is on everyone's lips, which will make you realize that he is a living legend. The arrival of the team representing the Isa Award for Service to Humanity to honour this man is a good example that demonstrates his presence as crossing the boundaries of time and space to reach the whole world; an arrival accompanied by a mixture of astonishment and joy, that men like him are real, and that the beauty of this life is still present within people's souls. It only lacks those who highlights this beauty to the world.

This is the truth of a man who taught an inspirational lesson for generations, a lesson that tells us that hope still exists and is available to all, and that no parentless person becomes an orphan, until he/she receives no care from his/her community. Congratulations to Pakistan for the angel of mercy, and the father of all, Abdul Sattar Edhi, who, until his death, has provided a safe haven to protect his needy countrymen throughout the decent life he provided to them. He left those people with his children and volunteers who received the torch, with the same determination.

## 02 About the Founder's Life

Abdul Sattar Abdul Shakoor Edhi was born on March 1st, 1928, in the city of Bantva (Currently Gujarat) in Western India. In 1947, Abdul Sattar immigrated with his family to Pakistan, began his career as a street vendor, and later became a clothing agent at the wholesale market in Karachi. But he had a different dream that began with his sick mother, Hor, who had diabetes and then a stroke that resulted in paralysis. Hence, Abdul Sattar devoted his life to taking care of all his mother's needs of cleaning, feeding and care at the age of 11, until her death when he became 19, which prevented him from completing his schooling. The seeds of compassion for human suffering were planted in his soul because of the suffering of his mother. This experience led him to think about his community, which was full of the homeless, the poor and the sick. Hence, his life took a different turn, where the world of suffering became his mentor and source of wisdom. Abdul Sattar took the challenge of developing service systems to reduce human suffering. Such a mission was nearly impossible, since he had no resources. But with his persistence and patience, he began to set up a small dispensary that today has become the Edhi Foundation, Pakistan's largest non-profit welfare institution.



## 03 The Beginning of Edhi Foundation

When Abdul Sattar Edhi arrived in Karachi, he told his father that he wanted to work in humanitarian services since they were in a new country, and he wanted to be very close to the people. Abdul Sattar had a lot of interest in ambulances. He started to establish an administration and an office that was so small he could not sleep inside. He bought a pickup, made it an ambulance, called it "The Car of the Poor" and learned how to drive. He also bought and kept a mobile phone beside him around the clock. Once anyone called asking for help, Abdul Sattar took him to the nearest hospital. He spent most of his time between hospitals and was obsessed with the desire to establish a global charity to help the poor.

The Edhi Foundation started as the "Edhi Trust" with an initial amount of 5000 Pakistani Rupees. An appeal was made to people for money. The response was good, and 200000 Pakistani Rupees were obtained. As public confidence in the Foundation's activities grew bigger and bigger, further donations were received. A maternity home has been established, and an emergency ambulance service has been launched in the sprawling city of Karachi, with a population of more than 10 million.

The Edhi Foundation's work covers all faiths, religions and nationalities without distinction. Over time, the people gave him the titles of "Angel of Mercy" and "Father of the Poor."

## 04 Financial Resources of Edhi Foundation

The Edhi Foundation relies entirely on donations. It employs 3500 people and tens of thousands of volunteers from across the country, in a spirit of enthusiasm for the betterment of society and humanity. The management and spending of funding on various welfare departments is controlled by Abdul Sattar's children: Faisal and Kubra. The two personally handles all financial transactions related to the Edhi Foundation.

Abdul Sattar used to reject millions of dollars in donations from heads of state, government and international organizations for fear of imposing subsequent conditions that are not accepted by the philosophy of the voluntary institution, the desire of the foundation to remain independent and the responsibility of the Pakistani people themselves. Therefore, the Edhi Foundation only accepts the funds and donations of Pakistanis from inside or outside Pakistan. Those who wish to adopt are also not allowed to make donations to the Foundation. "We don't sell babies here," Bilquis, Abdul Sattar's wife, explained.

## 05 The Services of Edhi Foundation

### Ambulance Services

The Edhi Foundation entered the Guinness Book of World Records in 2000 for the largest fleet of volunteer ambulances in the world. Edhi is the main source of emergency medical assistance in Pakistan, with more than 1800 ambulances. The Foundation has an air ambulance service where it has two planes and one helicopter to provide relief and assistance during natural disasters, with the aim of providing air transport services to those stranded or injured and are immediately transferred to the nearby hospital, during any anticipated natural disaster. The Foundation also provides a maritime ambulance service, which has 28 rescue boats to provide assistance and search for people from flood-affected areas, in addition to the recovery of people submerged on coastal areas. The Foundation's emergency telephone number (115) is known throughout Pakistan.

Abdul Sattar kept a 24-hour ambulance with him, driving it himself and touring the city regularly. He may find a destitute or injured person anywhere on the road.



**“After so many years, there were still many people to complain and ask: “Why should you take Christians and Hindus in your ambulances?” to which I responded: Because ambulances are more Muslim than you!”**

**Abdul Sattar Edhi**

## Free hospitals and care centers

The Edhi Foundation operates 335 24-hour care centers in all major cities and towns of Pakistan. The main task of these centers is to provide all the Foundation's services to the needy at their doorstep. In Karachi alone, the Foundation operates eight hospitals offering free medical care, eye hospitals, diabetes centers, surgical units, medical laboratories, a cancer hospital, a tuberculosis clinic, mobile clinics, as well as two blood banks. This comes in addition to providing oxygen cylinders, toilet chairs, patient beds and more. More than 1 million people are transported annually to hospitals. And more than one million children were born at the Edhi Maternity Centers.

## Rehabilitation Centers

The Edhi Foundation provides support systems for people with special needs by providing free wheelchairs and crutches, counseling for family planning, arranging free marriages for destitute girls and boys, rehabilitation of drug addicts, financial and medical support for prisoners, care and feeding of women and the elderly who have been tortured or neglected by their families. Since its establishment, the Edhi Centers have saved more than 20000 abandoned children, rehabilitated more than 50000 orphans, and trained more than 40000 nurses; all of these services are so distinct and excellent, they truly emphasize the role of the Edhi Foundation as an unprecedented example of the services provided to Pakistan and to humanity throughout the world.



## Edhi Child Adoption Centres

In most of the Edhi emergency centers, a cradle is installed for children, encouraging people to shelter any unwanted child in the cradle, rather than throwing them into the street and garbage containers or even killing them. The Foundation receives these children in Edhi's homes, where they are provided with medical and nursing care. These infants are then given for adoption in the care of appropriate eligible families that have no children of their own. Bilquis Edhi herself examines the credentials of the adoptive parents and regularly monitors the situation of the child through a central nursery system to manage this service. All documents of this service are kept confidential in order to save the child from facing future social problems. Until now, more than 23000 infants and children have been provided to couples and families with no children.



**“DON’T KILL. Leave the baby in the cradle.”**

**Abdul Sattar Edhi**

## Edhi Homes

They are homes for the mentally handicapped, orphans, abandoned children, homeless people, and women fleeing domestic violence. There are 18 such houses in Pakistan, seven of which are in Karachi. About 6500 people currently live in Edhi homes. The destitute or the displaced become members of the Edhi family once they enter one of these buildings. All accommodation and clothing arrangements are completely free. If a person dies inside these houses, the burial arrangements are made according to the religious rites of the deceased (whether Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Christian, etc). At Edhi homes, there is a team of specialists who encourage and train the residents in taking care of their personal needs and special problems themselves, which instills a spirit of self-help within themselves, and keeps them engaged in useful activities, where they are encouraged to do their own work to gain self-esteem and to feel that the benefits they receive in return are not charity, but a reward for their efforts.



**“My mother’s plight forced me to think about those who suffer with no one around to help”.**

**Abdul Sattar Edhi**

## **Educational Services**

The Edhi Foundation runs 10 primary, intermediate and secondary schools in Karachi and other remote areas. Students studying at Edhi Homes also receive basic education in the Foundation's schools. Some of these schools are free to the poor in Pakistan.

All students receive satisfactory results in schools, as well as an average of 80% during the Matric Council Exams.

## **Langer Service (Free Kitchen)**

The Foundation provides kitchen facilities to guests of Edhi Foundation and Homes. Edhi kitchens feature clean and elegant food. The Foundation also runs an internal bakery for residents and employees. The main purpose of the bakery was to obtain fresh and delicious consumables at the lowest prices.



## Missing Persons Service

Due to social problems, many children and adolescents leave their homes or are separated from their families during emergencies. Similarly, mentally handicapped people who leave their homes cannot return. Instead, they continue to roam the streets. The organization uses its own wireless network, state radio and television channels to find them, or arranges local ads in the press. As a result, the organization has managed to bring thousands of these people home.

Similarly, unidentified bodies are kept in mortuary. Every effort is made to identify the closest relatives. This service is also available to Pakistanis living abroad and is coordinated through the embassies of Pakistan or the Foundation's overseas offices.

## Mortuary and Burial

The foundation provides large-scale air-conditioned morgues to keep coffins of unknown bodies that are usually killed, either because of accidents, bomb blasts, and gunfire or taken out after drowning. These coffins are kept for 3-4 days in the morgue, and are duly buried. Edhi cemeteries have been established in different cities in Pakistan, where an average of 250 to 350 bodies are buried monthly. Shrouds and coffin boxes are arranged for free to those who are not in a position to bear or pay burial ritual fees themselves.

**“Open your heart and look at the people of God. In their plight you will find Him”.**  
**Abdul Sattar Edhi**



## Edhi 50 Kilometers Project

Before his death in 2016, the late Abdul Sattar Edhi founded Edhi 50 kilometers project. It aims at providing essential and basic services to rural and urban residents. The project focuses on saving the lives of the passengers exposed to the many traffic accidents, especially train accidents, on internal and external roads in all regions of Pakistan. Services include treatment of the poor and those injured in traffic accidents and ambulance for difficult births. The project also trains women in these areas in nursing and delivery. The idea of the project was to build small hospitals within 25 square kilometers, each with a capacity of 50 beds. The hospitals serve a range of 300 km.



## Animal Hostel

During Abdul Sattar's road trips, he had often encountered a wounded horse, an abused donkey, a disabled animal, or a sick cat. He stepped out of his ambulance to help or treat those animals. The idea of setting up a center for the care of these animals had been confirmed by such cases. Abdul Sattar bought a land, surrounded it with high walls, planted trees and roses, and left a large area in the middle for the movement of animals. The center was attached to a veterinary hospital and animal and bird cages. The shelter is currently used to house displaced animals after treatment, in addition to the treatment of animals brought by owners who take them home after treatment.





**“When you stop living for luxuries, you understand the real meaning of life.”**

**Abdul Sattar Edhi**



## International aid

- The Foundation has carried out relief work in Africa, the Middle East, the Caucasus, Eastern Europe and the United States, like the following:
- Assistance to Afghan refugees from 1978 to 1988 and from 2001 to 2003.
- Donating 2000 US Dollars to the Palestinians in 1976.
- Relief to those in need in the civil war in Lebanon in 1983 (10 ambulances donated to the Red Cross in Beirut, following the Israeli attack, and three kitchens in 2005).
- 1 million Pakistani Rupees for flood relief in Bangladesh in 1986, as well as providing an ambulance.
- 1 million Pakistani Rupees in aid for drought and disaster-stricken areas in Ethiopia in 1985.
- 34 tons of rice and clothes for drought and famine in Somalia in 1986.
- Assistance to earthquake victims in Armenia in 1989.
- Assistance to those affected and refugees from the 1991 Gulf War amounting to 4.5 million Pakistani Rupees.
- Assistance to earthquake victims in northwestern Iran in 1990, and £ 6000000 was donated to the Red Crescent Society for the rehabilitation of victims of the 2002 Iran earthquake.
- Assistance during the 1984 earthquake in Cairo.
- Supply of food to Somalia in 1993, in cooperation with the Pakistani army.



- Relief supplies for Bosnian refugees in Pakistan and supply of relief and assistance materials in Croatian camps from 1993 to 1994.
- Relief camps in April, 1999 in Albania and Kosovo for \$ 0.1 million, plus 75 tons of relief items.
- A team of volunteers in the tsunami disaster in Sri Lanka and Indonesia.
- Relief work in Kashmir earthquake in October 2005.
- Donating 10 ambulances for the 2010 Haiti earthquake with \$ 500000 worth of relief goods.
- Donating \$ 100000 to Hurricane Katrina 2005.
- Donating \$ 200000 to Bangladesh Cyclone 2007 and £ 2 million to the High Commissioner in Bangladesh for flood victims in 2009.

**“People have become educated, but have not yet become human.”**  
**Abdul Sattar Edhi**



## 06 The Edhi Family

In 1966, Abdul Sattar Edhi married Bilquis, who worked as a nurse at the Edhi dispensary. Bilquis currently runs the free maternity home and organizes the adoption of illegal and displaced children. In 2015, she received the Mother Teresa Memorial International Award for Social Justice, for her relief work both inside and outside Pakistan. The Edhi couple shared the common vision of dedication to the cause of alleviating human suffering and a sense of personal responsibility in responding to every call for assistance without any discrimination in colour, class, creed or social status.

Despite his massive fame and the huge sums of money that went through his hands, Edhi committed himself to a very simple and modest lifestyle. He and his family lived in a two-room apartment next to the foundation's headquarters. Neither Abdul Sattar nor his wife Bilquis received any salary. They lived on income from the government insurance that Abdul Sattar bought many years ago to take care of their personal needs for the rest of their lives, thus devoting themselves to their humanitarian mission, until Abdul Sattar died in 2016. The couple have not built their own house yet.

They spent fifty years of their marriage days and nights in the Edhi centres. Abdul Sattar was not worried about the Edhi Foundation. He believed that his children would take care of the Edhi Foundation and carry the torch forward. He remembered that his children were competing for charity work, and wished to do better than he did because they preceded him with two important steps, namely completing their education and being good at English. He stated that

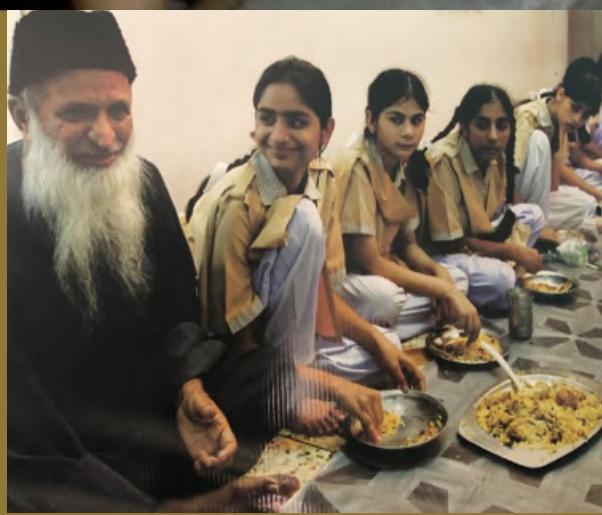


his son Faisal was very intelligent and active in charity work in the Edhi Foundation in Pakistan, and has provided a lot of time, proposals and plans that contributed to the expansion of the Edhi Foundation's activity. He also talked about the passion of his son Kutub and his daughter Kubra, who have worked on a charity committee in America, as well as his daughter Almas, who helps her sister in women's services and child care. He believed that they would all be able to complete the projects he started and develop existing ones.



**“I hope no one will invite me to attend social events and opening ceremonies, because that is a waste of the time I have dedicated to serving my community.”**

**Abdul Sattar Edhi**



# 07 The Beneficiaries' Experiences

## Bader's Experience

Currently I only know Abdul Sattar as my father and Bilquis as my mother, because I don't know who my real parents are. I was only two years old when I came to the Edhi Foundation. After that I started my real life, where I live here happily. The foundation tried its best to find my parents, but it did not succeed. Now that I am 30 years old, my life is dedicated to the foundation. I am truly grateful to them and thankful for their care for me throughout my life. They took care of me a lot and never made me feel lonely. They gave me feelings of warmth and affection. With their help and support I got married and had one daughter, and I have no words to express my gratitude.

## Ahmed's Experience

Ahmed is a boy with special needs (He is deaf and mute). He studied at the Edhi Foundation, which helped him acquire technical skills until he became a very hard working young man in the foundation. He married an anonymous girl who also lived in Edhi's homes, so he and his wife had a happy life. They are fully committed and dedicated to promoting the cause of the foundation.

## Ameer's Experience

These are memories of 1989 when my father died. At that time I was living a lonely life. Although I did my best to overcome my problems, I did not succeed. So I finally decided to go to Edhi's homes. Since then I have started dealing with the Foundation, and now I am very happy with the kind help I have received here. My uncle Abdul Sattar showed a deep interest in treating me like as his son, as if I live in my real home. I have no words to express my feelings.

## 08 Edhi's Funeral

Abdul Sattar Edhi died on July 8th 2016, at the age of 88, after suffering for three years of dialysis. The government had offered to transfer Edhi by air for treatment abroad, but he refused, saying he wanted to be treated in a public hospital in his country. Abdul Sattar had recommended that all his organs should be donated to the poor after his death, but only his eyes were donated because his organs were severely damaged. Immediately after the news of his death, former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif ordered the setting of an official funeral and declared national mourning in Pakistan for one day. "There are few men who have done a lot of good things and made a big difference to the lives of the Pakistani people like Abdul Sattar Edhi," P.M Sharif said. The announcement of his death sparked a wave of honours on television and social media, while the army commander and government officials attended his funeral. Pakistani media have described his funeral as the biggest in Pakistan's history.



# 09 Local and International Awards

The late Abdul Sattar Edhi and his charity have received tens of local and international awards and honors. He received an honorary doctorate from the Charity Foundation in Karachi with Nishan-e-Imtiaz (A Badge of Excellence), the Human Rights Award from the Pakistani Government, the Gandhi Peace Prize, the South Korean Peace Prize, the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service Support in Manila, Philippines, the Lenin Peace Prize and the International Foundation Prize for Peace and Brotherhood and Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum Award for Medical Sciences.

He was repeatedly nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. The Bank of Pakistan also issued a 50-rupee coin with a picture of Abdul Sattar Edhi in memory of his efforts and in recognition of his services to his country.



## 10 Edhi's Funeral

Abdul Sattar Edhi strongly believed in protecting fundamental human rights. His religion “serving humanity” has been stretched for over 60 years, which is why his efforts and services have been highly appreciated and praised by all schools of thought, throughout Pakistan and many parts of the world. If anything, it demonstrates the ability of man to achieve miracles with true will and a deep belief in the message he wants to convey in his life. Change does not necessarily require large sums of money and human soldiers. Sometimes one person who believes in a genuine will and willingness to give is enough to bring about change in his/her society for the better. Before his death, Abdul Sattar mentioned that he was satisfied with his life. The satisfaction that he found in his heart is the satisfaction and happiness that he created in the hearts of those satisfied with his work.



**“When you go to charity, don’t just donate to a charity or a relief committee. But go yourself to the needy. Do not accept to be represented by anyone in doing good things to people, as you can.”**

**Abdul Sattar Edhi**

**References:**

**Yahya Mohammed Al-Masri (2017):” Abdul Sattar Edhi: The Richest Poor Man”, 2nd edition, Sama Publishing House 2017**



