

Umair, Pakistan

Umair, 15, lives in Lahore, Pakistan. His father has had mental health problems for many years. Umair's mother is a domestic laborer.

Umair is the oldest of four children. He has three younger brothers and one younger sister. All of the children both work and attend school. Umair's sister works with their mother doing domestic work.

Umair attends school from 8 a.m.- 1 p.m. everyday except Sundays. He is in sixth grade. For eight hours from 2 p.m.-10 p.m., he works with his brothers in a goldsmith shop making jewelry (e.g. necklaces, rings, and locket). He earns 250 Pakistan rupees (US \$4.17) a week. While it depends on the day, in general, Umair does not like his boss, who hits him when he makes a mistake.

Umair finds it hard to both work and go to school. He is sad because he thinks that if he has to continue working that it will be hard for him to continue studying and realize his dream of becoming a pilot. Umair's days are generally very long, first going to school and then working until late at night. He has no time left to study and read his school books after work. He is just too tired, and working all evening "breaks" his back. In the jewelry shop he sits on the ground and works with his back bent forward. As a result, he has suffered postural pain for as long as he can recall. Several persons work in one small dingy room. Umair also has to inhale a lot of smoke emanating from the furnace, in front of which he sits. The fumes choke him as he has to inhale it all evening.



Umair, 15, Children's World Congress on Child Labor and Education, New Delhi, India, September 4-8, 2005