



## Centre for Peace, Development and Reforms (CPDR)

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### Press Release

## First ever Youth Social Action Projects Expo concluded in Muzaffarabad

Muzaffarabad: 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2017



Youth from all divisions of Azad Jammu Kashmir, selected through a rigorous process, showcased their projects in Muzaffarabad. The showcasing event was organized by Center for Peace, Development and Reforms in collaboration with the British Council.

People from all walks of life were present on the occasion who appreciated the efforts of young community leaders who had come up with social action projects for the improvement of living standard in their respective constituencies. Most projects were of entrepreneurial nature ranging from ideas like rehabilitation of heritage building to spreading awareness about voting rights etc.

While talking to the youth in panel discussion held before the showcasing, the Youth Minister Ch. Muhammad Saeed announced that his ministry is very much interested in financing and supporting new ideas of income generation and cultural renaissance presented by the youth. He appreciated the young people for their efforts and asked them to support him in his current endeavor of increasing the youth budget.

The Youth Minister Ch. Muhammad Saeed who chaired the panel discussion session, focused on the need to strengthen and sustain such efforts so that these kinds of activities become a key component of larger societal narrative and discourse. He appreciated the organizers for this event who agreed with his viewpoint. The Executive Director CPDR, Mr. Ershad Mahmud pressed upon key issues that youth in AJK is currently facing, claiming that their efforts at the civil society level aren't enough to counter problems like unemployment, lack of quality education and exposure to jobs



and wider political and social circles. So it is the responsibility of the incumbent Government to enabling environment, provide support and safety to civil society organizations working in this regard.

Mr. Umair Tamim from the British Council spoke at length on the hard work that was put into these social action projects and appreciated youth for their commitment. Mr. Umair expressed his delight over the creative showcasing and shared new ideas with young leaders on how to market and project their ideas in a more appealing way.

Dr. Waqas Ali, Director Programmes stated that the young people of AJK have huge potential to develop the region if provided necessary skills and resources. He urged the Government to develop liaison with the civil society organizations to improve accountability and ensure good governance.

Nearly 180 persons came from Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and across the AJK actively participated in the event and asked critical questions to the Minister for Youth and urged him to multiply Youth Ministry's budget and work hard to include AJK into the next round of PSL. A young woman requested him to create more spaces for youth for interaction and political engagement with the political leadership.

Upon conclusion, the activity became a family gathering event where people from all walks of life showed up and demonstrated great interest in social action projects. People were of the opinion that these kinds of activities must be held in open so that whole city can participate. Such events are very necessary to generate a pluralistic and action oriented progressive discourse in the society, they said. Raja Abbas, AJK Secretary for Ministry of Youth, Supports and Culture and Mr. Numan ul Haq, representative of Youth, Women for Peace and Development also shared their views in the event.