



Centre for Peace, Development and Reforms (CPDR)

Annual Report 2016-17



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Introduction to CPDR

The Centre for Peace, Development and Reforms (CPDR) is a nongovernmental, nonprofit and nonpartisan research, training and advocacy organization dedicated to promoting peace, development and reforms through dialogue and reconciliation.

Founded in 2010, the CDPR is registered with the Government under the Societies Act 1860 (Act XXI of 1860), having specified Memorandum of Association.

Our Vision

Promoting and encouraging peace and development at all levels through dialogue, reconciliation and reforms.

Our Mission

Strengthening civil society to ensure transparent and participatory governance through peaceful interaction between stakeholders and government and to propose necessary reforms for peace and development. Promoting accountability, cultivating civic culture, values of freedom, tolerance, economic development and democracy. Providing an effective platform for conflict resolution with special reference to the divided State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Objectives

- Empowering civil society; promoting peace, participatory governance, transparency and reforms through dialogue and reconciliation.
- Support democratic values, accountability, and human rights while striving for economic development and social justice.
- Promoting ethical values, civic culture, and tolerance and due attention to the marginalized and vulnerable sections of society.
- Providing an effective platform for conflict resolution with special reference to the State of Jammu and Kashmir.



Next Generation Kashmir (AJK) Voices from the Valley, Enhancing Youth Political Participation

The project titled “Next Generation Kashmir Voices from the Valley (AJK), Enhancing Youth Political Participation” was carried out by Center for Peace, Development and Reforms (CPDR) in collaboration with the British Council. The time span of the project was four months, from 10th December 2016 to 30th March 2017. The project was divided into four core activities aiming to enhance youth political participation in AJK.

First it involved two trainings in Islamabad and Mirpur respectively, total of 61 young people were trained over two successive four-day trainings. Trainings were followed by a group activity that involved social action projects on pertinent issues of youth. Twenty social action projects were shortlisted by the review committee for further action.

The second major activity of the project was policy dialogues; that were held in all three divisions of AJK and Islamabad; Muzaffarabad, Mirpur and Rawalakot, respectively. Key influencers like Prime Minister, President and Speaker of the AJK Assembly attended these dialogues. Around 800 young people participated in these dialogues.

Third activity of the project involved exposure visits to the assemblies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and AJK, a total of 45 participants that were selected from the trainings were involved in these visits, and the purpose of these visits was to familiarize them with democratic norms and decision-making processes.

Last activity of the project was media related, two radio interviews and two interviews were aired on cable networks. Three articles were contributed in the local press regarding the significance of the local bodies system.



Executive Summary of the Project

The project aimed to enhance youth political participation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), through trainings, policy dialogues, consultative meetings, exposure visits, and campaigning through the media, which was completed over a period of four months.

These trainings were followed by Social Action Projects (SAPs) that were carried out by trained young people on pertinent issues of their respective areas ranging from education, health, local bodies, civil liberties and religious tolerance. Best SAPs were selected after rigorous process and were showcased in an expo where political representatives, policymakers, young people from across Pakistan and experts from various walks of life observed and visited the showcasing event.

Additionally, four policy dialogues on key socio-political and economic issues were organized in all divisions of AJK and Islamabad involving around eight hundred young people who got an opportunity to interact with key policymakers, legislators and political leaders of AJK including the President and Prime Minister, on the above mentioned areas.

One of the significant events was the experience of these young trained participants to the Assemblies of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and AJK. It enabled young people to understand the process of legislation in both assemblies and have an eyewitness account of the intricacies and values of a democratic form of governance, which came along nicely.

A comprehensive media campaign which included two radio shows (FM) Rawalakot and Muzaffarabad along with two cable TV shows were recorded, aired and telecasted to help garner support of the wider public on local government and its significance.

All the activities of the project were received really well by the people in general and civil society. Proper coverage in press, electronic media and radio followed by articles in the top newspapers are key highlights from the project. A briefing paper is under process that will be a key resource for the policymakers and researchers working on the issues of youth in AJK. This paper will also carry recommendations for the youth policy of AJK that in liaison with the youth minister will be incorporated fully in the government's policy.

On the whole, this initiative got great feedback from the general public, received wide support from both electronic and print media, and witnessed highest-level political and executive participation.

Project Accomplishments & Activities

The project was intended towards enhancing youth political participation by making them a part of the decision-making circles in their respective political parties. It was an arduous task as the political structure of AJK lacks enough spaces for youth to manifest and mainstream themselves in a meaningful and positive way. The



project was designed in a way that it involved capacity building workshops, trainings, exposure visits and policy dialogues to broaden the political spectrum of youth. The process witnessed several outputs that are listed below;

1. Capacity Building

Two capacity building workshops were held in Islamabad and Mirpur on advocacy, campaign building, conflict analysis and transformation along with personal development and management. Over 61 young people were trained in two 4-day long trainings coming from various wings of political parties, youth groups, active students and cross section of the civil society. Most of the participants stated that these trainings were a lifetime event for them and consider it as empowering and enriching experience. A diverse,



energetic, dedicated and motivated group of young people were selected from these two trainings after rigorous process of selection from political parties, different educational institutions, youth groups, lawyers, government departments etc. to ensure equity and inclusiveness.

As a part of training thirty Social Action projects (SAPs) were completed on key socio-political issues like environmental issues, promotion of religious tolerance, to showcasing of Kashmir's culture and history, local bodies election, awareness on democracy, child labor, gender issues etc.



One of the important outcomes was the level of female participation in trainings. It is always challenging to bring in women in trainings as in a society like AJK women lack spaces and cultural issues in participating such events. Despite this, a substantial number of females came forward for the trainings and SAP's that is a real contribution in changing the patriarchal structures of domination in our society.

2. Exposure Visits to Assemblies of KPK and AJK

The participants from both training workshops who completed Social Action Projects (SAPs) were shortlisted on the basis of their performance for the exposure visits to the provincial Assembly of Khyber



Pakhtonkhawa and the legislative assembly of AJK. These delegates the two whole days in assemblies and other government offices interacting with top level policy makers, lawmakers, bureaucrats other government and political functionaries. The participants were briefed the functions and departments of assemblies and government especially legislation and policy making and how it works. For majority of participants, assembly visit was a unique opportunity

as none of them had any chance to attend assembly sessions and see their elected representatives pleading for their rights in the parliament. It generated huge interest in the participants and many of them aspire to be politicians in their respective domains which if happens anytime soon will be a huge contribution to the political process of AJK.

Already, around 40% of the trained youth are active in their political parties and some of them are even working with party presidents and senior leaders as research and personal staff officers.



3. SAP Showcasing

SAP showcasing was one of the historic events for all of us as more than 40 young people presented their work to a large gathering of young people coming from various parts of Pakistan. Besides, members from cross section of society, academia, lawyers, media and government officials took great interest in the event.



Best 22 SAPs were reviewed and shortlisted with the support of British Council for showcasing and success stories in front of large gathering. These projects contributed immensely towards raising awareness on political development in the region. For instance, one SAP was carried on

issues faced by internally displaced people who have migrated from Kashmir Valley after the breakout of violence in 1990. This project attracted attention of the policymakers and legislators in the showcasing event.



Participants stated that the activity was very encouraging and it helped them share their work and stories with people for more informed decision-making. It was their first public appearance. Simultaneously youth Minister took great interest in showcasing of project based on environmental issues, wildlife protection and invited members to help him for legislation on such important issues.

Many of them had this opportunity to interact with their political leadership first time, which really increased their interest in politics and activism.

4. Policy Dialogues

One of the largest sustained mass advocacies in the history of AJK was carried out through our policy dialogue series in AJK, which not only changed the local political discourse but set a new trend and culture of political participation in AJK. Four policy dialogues were organized in all three divisions of AJK namely, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Mirpur, and one in Islamabad which involved around 800 dedicated active, civically engaged young people.

Young people got an opportunity to interact with senior political leadership to convey issues and challenges closer their hearts.

First policy dialogue that held in Muzaffarabad, was chaired by Prime Minister, Raja Farooq Haider Khan, the first ever such interaction of PM AJK with approximately 200 plus young people from all walks of life. This policy dialogue turned into a intensive interactive discussion as PM extended his time of interaction and spent around three and half plus hours with young people.

Speaking on the topic “**Creating Socio-economic Spaces for youth**” PM AJK had to face some tough questions and remarks from young generation as this was the first public appearance of Prime Minister that was solely focused on issues of youth. Young people raised some very serious and pertinent issue of governance and over all constitutional



structure of AJK which is least empowering. Most of them urged PM to take initiative to further empower AJK legislative assembly by initiating constitutional amendment process in AJK interim act 1974, which gives maximum powers to AJK Council, a parallel body to AJK legislative assembly which assumes executive, financial, and administrative powers.

It turned out to be a great success as PM has consented on some very important policy decisions like, allocation 25 percent quota to young people below the age of 35 in upcoming local body's election which is historic in the context of AJK. He promised young people to bring massive reforms in Kashmir Council, restoration of student unions, after the consultation with all key stake holders with new shared terms and conditions and formulation of youth policy of AJK with the support of BC and CPDR. He also committed that he will be supportive to such initiatives and suggested both CPDR and BC should arrange wider AJK level youth dialogue of larger scale by involving all parties to explore their vision on youth. Basing on this he announced the idea of setting up Task Force comprising of young professionals and Experts to guide government on good governance and reforms and he ensured that young educated professionals people will be given chance to become part of it.

The opportunity allowed young people to interact with the Premier himself directly and sought his guidance and advice on ways to join politics. Prime Minister announced early making of a youth policy and pledged that the youth trained under this process will be included in the Prime Minister's youth task force that shall prepare recommendations for the youth policy.

President Masood Khan addressed second policy dialogue on education and socioeconomic empowerment, which again was first ever such interaction of head of State with young people. President not only took keen interest in policy dialogue but also had a very fruitful interaction with young people. President remarked that ***"I am impressed by the quality of questions and level of discussion that was generated here and I appreciate British Council and CPDR for organising such an important event with young people"***.



More than 450 young people got opportunity to listen to their President both in Rawalakot and Mirpur besides posing some very sharp and critical questions on education and socio-economic empowerment including issues of mal practices during inductions, quality education, uplifting standards of higher education, job prospects, and gender empowerment.

One of the important breakthroughs that emerged out from the policy dialogues the culture of drawing out consensus points from the audience and seeking commitments from the elected leadership. Young people those who travelled from far flung remote areas of AJK spoke their hearts out, and almost all the leadership acknowledged the fact that most of their issues were unheard and something new for them. One of the young participants raised the question of protection of minority rights in AJK, restoration of temples, the chronic issues of Internet service and most importantly identity crises due to larger issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

A diverse representation of leadership from mainstream political parties of AJK is a new trend and first of its kind that for the most of the participants, was a unique experience. Though young people sought commitments from President on selecting the right person for a right job in universities, minimal political interference and initiation of new degree programs compatible to the market needs and demand but they also showed opposition to reps from previous governments and hold them accountable.

Such opportunities introduced a new culture of connectivity, accountability between young people and their elected representatives and introduced process of informed policy making.

Most of the young people were very excited to have gotten such platforms and stated that their motivation level has really increased after listening to the personal stories of the President and other political leadership that how hard work and dedication overcame every shortcoming in their ways.



The culture of cross party representation in policy dialogues which received greater appreciations in past was further sustained as six senior leaders from almost all the major political parties of AJK participated in a Islamabad policy dialogue which again the context of AJK was unprecedented. The interaction proved so powerful that on the demands of youth, Minister of youth, Sports and Culture announced the initiation of a consultation process for youth policy formulation in AJK and promised to convince government to raise the budget of youth ministry.

On the whole policy dialogues involved a huge constituency of young people from diverse backgrounds wherein some momentous decisions like revival of student unions, uniform education system, revival of local bodies and allocation of 25 per cent quota for youth, enactment of youth policy, ensuring merit and transparency in all sectors was ensured which is

a benchmark for others to follow besides the highest level participation from AJK government and other mainstream political parties.

5. Media Campaign

This project received wider attention from both print and electronic media, which is again a very promising development in the context of our work. Both national and vernacular media of AJK has given massive media coverage to almost all of the events. Almost every newspaper of AJK has given published stories and news on these policy dialogues and some of workshops.

As a part of our scheduled activities, one article was published on policy dialogues and two radio interviews were recorded and aired in Muzaffarabad and Rawalakot FM radio stations respectively. Besides that vernacular media of AJK has published leading stories, banner headlines and detailed features on youth empowerment, which generated a new debate, and discourse on youth empowerment in AJK. One of the promising developments was the attention of media on the consensus points or commitments that political leadership made during our policy dialogues. Allocation of 25 per cent quota for youth in local body elections, restoration of student unions, merit based induction in education sector, commitment to take up issues of constitutional reforms were the main lead which not only generated huge debate but also motivated civil society activists to further explore areas and produce articles and features on these areas.

Pakistan's top National English dailies including, Dawn, The News, The Nation, Pakistan Observer, Daily Heights, Express Tribune, The Nation, Daily Times and web papers/sites like Pakistan point, the fortress, daily Parliament, Times of Islamabad, Lead Pakistan, Pak-China News etc. published stories which again is remarkable coverage for such sort of events. Story from one of Pakistan's leading English paper Dawn has a great value as hardly reports or news of such events is given coverage.

Electronic media has also given a great coverage to our work, which again is an encouragement, and appreciation to our work. Pakistan biggest state owned News Channel, PTV News has aired a comprehensive documentary of around 20 minutes exclusive to our policy dialogue in which around 10 young people participated along with political leadership on the eve of policy dialogue. ATV, has also given a detailed report on our events which again was a recognition and larger acceptance to BC-CPDR efforts of youth empowerment. We surely can

state that so far none of the programs of this duration received such an unprecedented coverage and attention from national and local media.

On the eve of showcasing event, national channels like Samaa has also aired a report and interviewed Minister Youth on the importance of such events.

One of the unique features is the coverage given by the papers from Indian Administered Kashmir (IaK), which again is a rare phenomenon. Leading English papers like Greater Kashmir, Rising Kashmir (Srinagar) Kashmir Monitor and many others published stories on the event.

CPDR's Executive Director and Director Programs were invited on various electronic media channels on the current youth work and its impact.

So on the whole, this project has received one of the largest media coverage in AJK in the context of youth activism and advocacy.

We also posted events photos, news and key commitments and activities on social media pages and our groups, which received huge feedback and generated debate from wider audience.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

A series of five focus group discussion (FGDs) with youth representative and stakeholders were conducted in Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot and Mirpur. The FGDs aimed at exploring the nature dimensions and dynamics of the youth policy in AJK and aspirations of youth and their expectations from the governments with respect to youth development in the region. The FGDs were attended by prominent youth icons from civil society and main stream political parties along with other stakeholders i.e. Minister for Sports, Youth and Culture, Secretary, Ex-Secretary, Director General and directors of the



Department of Sports, Youth and Culture. Youth representative and stakeholders had intensive discussion about the formation and implications of youth policy in AJK. The findings of these FGDs have been shared with government of AJK.

Equity (Gender & Diversity)

The entire program was carefully prepared and planned keeping the equity aspect in backdrop. The presence of young people was ensured from all the ten districts in policy dialogues and trainings at maximum. We had young people from far flung areas hit by cross Line of Control shelling like Neelum

Valley district, Hajira, Bagh, Forward Kahuta.

A careful selection was also made on the basis of political affiliations, like political parties, and groups who represent religious parties, migrants from IHK, and young people from



various youth forums. Though gender component was given greater focus in all the events but this was the most challenging task due to cultural context as, it is quite challenging for women from rural areas to travel and participate in the events without support from male members. We managed to ensure required participation of females in trainings but lacked to ensure in Policy dialogues. Though policy dialogue in Mirpure and Islamabad had a decent female representation but fell short of the desired number. Exposure visits also had a substantial number of participants who were from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds and political ideologies. Around 40% of the youth trained comprised of young female participants and policy dialogues had a 22% female presence. Largely this happened due to cultural barriers, which needs consistent efforts through such efforts.

As stated, on the whole this project was inclusive to almost all political affiliation, geographical spread, various stratum and rural urban divide.

1. Key Commitments on Most pressing issues and needs of young people

The pressing demands and direct interaction of young people resulted in the key announcements and commitments from political leadership including PM AJK, which is unprecedented. The revival of local bodies elections in AJK, allocation of 25 per cent quota for young people in upcoming local body elections, revival of student unions, merit based selection in AJK, initiation of the process of youth policy, access of young people to various governmental offices for information and learning, ensuring quality education, reforms in existing AJK interim Act 1974, are historic development and successes from our work. These commitments were exclusive made in our policy dialogues.

2. Created a culture of democratic accountability and strengthen civil society voices

The unique activity of policy dialogues helped in setting up a accountably forum for an active civil society members where they hold them accountable of their past actions and promises. It served as a forum of accountability of the elected legislators as the organizers are committed to strengthen this initiative of public/government dialogue in future. Leadership was exposed to huge gatherings and received a wide range of ideas from them and gave importance to civic actors resultantly strengthened the civil society actors. Young people wrote on their social media forums, hold direct discussions with leadership, built their connectivity with leadership and created space for interventions as civic actors.

3. Motivated young people to take part in active politics

As a result of acquired trainings, numbers of young leaders are aiming to contest upcoming local bodies' elections and elections for legislative assembly in future. This is remarkable as acquired training has given them confidence besides political training and empowerment which resulted in motivating them to take this decision.

4. Image building of BC-CPDR

Wider coverage on electronic and print media, social media, participation of a large number of leadership and young people were instrumental in shaping up positive image of both CPDR which is key for future course of work.

List of Key Influencers Engaged

1. Sardar Masood Khan, President AJK
2. Raja Farooq Haider Khan, Prime Minister AJK
3. Shah Ghulam Qadir, Speaker AJK Assembly
4. Chahudary Muhammad Saeed, Youth Minister AJK
5. Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, President All Jammu Kashmir Muslim Conference
6. Chahudary Latif Akbar, Ex-Finance Minister, Secretary General Pakistan People's Party AJK
7. Abdul Rasheed Turabi, Ameer Jamat-e-Islami AJK
8. Raja Abbas, Secretary to the Government of AJK to the Ministry of Youth, Supports and Culture
9. Mr. Saqib Javed Raja, President, Women, Peace and Development
10. Mr. Noman-ul-Haq, Women, Peace and Development.
11. Sardar Pervaiz Khan, Director General to the Ministry of Youth, Supports and Culture
12. Syed Saleem Gardazi, Additional Secretary Education Govt. of AJK
13. Mr. Majid Khan, Member AJK Assembly and leader Tehreek-e-Insaf, AJK
14. Mr. Tariq Mahmood, Additional Secretary AJK Assembly
15. Mr. Amjad Latif Abbasi, Additional Secretary, AJK Assembly
16. Mr. Fayyaz Abbasi, Secretary, Government of AJK
17. Mr. Attaullah, Secretary KPK Assembly
18. Ms. Anisa Zaib Tahirkheli, Minister for Mineral and Labour Development, KPK
19. Mr. Ahmed Raza Qadri, Member AJK Assembly
20. Mr. Saghir Chughtai, Member AJK Assembly
21. Ms. Meraaj Humayun Khan, Chairperson Women Parliamentary Caucus KPK Assembly
22. Mr. Asad Qaiser, Speaker KPK Assembly, PTI
23. Mr. Aftab Iqbal, Director (company) at Pakistan Centre for Development Communication (PCDC)- CPDR Facilitator
24. Ms Shaheen Kousar Dar, Ex-Deputy Speaker Azad Jammu and Kashmir Assembly and Peoples Party AJK's leader

25. Dr. Habib ur Rehman, Vice Chancellor MUST, Mirpur
26. Mr. Umair Tamim, Head of program TACS, British Council
27. Ms Shazia Khawar, Director South Asia, Youth and Society
28. Mr. Zulfiqar Ababsi, President CPDR
29. Dr. Syed Asif Hussain, Additional Chief Secretary (Dev.)
30. Mr. Mansoor Qadir Dar, Secretary Tourism, Information & IT

Capacity Building Workshop of Young Political Leaders

A two-days training workshop was organized for young political leaders, workers and office bearers of political parties as well as their youth and student wings. 25 young political workers from the age groups between 20-40 years, representing various political parties such as Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) PMLN, Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), All Jammu Kashmir Muslim Conference (AJK MC), Jammat-e-Islami and others, participated the workshop. In this first ever cross party setting, young cadre from political parties underwent rigorous training to equip and engage mid-career political workers in a holistic debate and discussion regarding Intra-party democracy, improving political communication, and the role of young leaders in the Kashmir conflict.

One of the key themes of the workshop was to empower young leaders to play a more responsible role in Kashmir conflict and help political parties build more informed policy on Kashmir.

The President of AJK PPP, Chaudhry Latif Akbar graced the occasion as chief guest of the workshop and emphasized the importance of young, vibrant and active second and third tier leadership of political parties for bringing real change and democracy in AJK.

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About CPDR

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