



**SPO**

Strengthening  
Participatory  
Organization

اداره استحکام شرکتی ترقی

**16**  
**DAYS OF ACTIVISM**  
November 25 - December 10

# SPO's Activities

in Marking the Efforts of UN Women's -16 Days of Activism



## ***SPO's Activities in Marking the Efforts***

### **UN Women's - 16 Days of Activism**



The Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) is one of the largest renowned development organizations in the country with its geographical outreach in all the four provinces through the presence of eight Regional Offices. With the passage of time the activities of SPO has diversified to cover the emerging issues in the particular socio-economic and political context of Pakistan. Currently, SPO's core areas are democratic governance, social justice and peace and harmony. Human and gender rights promotion and advocacy is the cross cutting theme of all the programme areas.

SPO's flagship program has four components; namely, Democratic Governance, Social Justice, Peace and Social Harmony, and Institutional Strengthening, which are presently being implemented in over 75 districts.

Under the umbrella of this program, numerous rights-based institutions and activists have come to the forefront that include **Women Local Resource Persons** who play critical roles in promoting the rights and status of rural women, **District Steering Committees** comprising representatives of mainstream political parties who seek to bridge gaps between rights-holders and duty-bearers, **Civil Society Networks** representing collective voices and aspirations of civil society actors; and **Health and Education Monitoring Committees** serving as citizens' watch groups to bring accountability and transparency in service delivery mechanisms of public institutions.

### ***Actions Speaks louder than Words***

The flagship programme is implemented across the country with its base of technical support from SPO's Islamabad based headquarter called National Centre (NC). Recently SPO has marked the UN Women efforts of 16 days of Activism on '**Ending Violence against Women and Children**' by organizing a few seminars and activities with the local activists, gender specialists, experts, religious and political leaders, women and youth groups across the country. All these activities were executed by the Regional Offices of



SPO from Nov 25<sup>th</sup> to Dec 10<sup>th</sup> 2011 through the technical support from SPO National Centre,

Islamabad. The organization endorsed the efforts of ending violence by **signing 1,000 Action cards** titled **'Million Names Million Voices'** under UN women campaign of signing 1 million signature cards ending violence against women and children.

In this pursuance of 16 days of Activism, SPO DI Khan office in collaboration with Daman Society Network & Women leaders organized a programme titled **"Violence against Women (VAW) & Our Responsibilities"** on Nov 26<sup>th</sup> 2011 in DI Khan. The objective of the event was to create awareness among different stakeholders on fulfilling their responsibilities against the violation of women and children rights as the keystones of social society. The event was attended by eminent religious scholars, Lawyers, District In - charge Social Welfare Department Protection Center, NGO representatives, Journalists, Women Leaders and Women Rights activists etc.

SPO Lahore Office in collaboration with Gender Studies Department, Lahore College for Women University organized a seminar titled **'Gender Based Violence in Pakistan-Issues and Challenges'** on Dec 8<sup>th</sup> 2011. The objective of the event was to create awareness among youth on the importance of raising voices against the brutal acts and stereotypical attitudes towards women rights in the society. The students who will be the future leaders were sensitized by the political leaders, social activists and experts on the vital role of women in socio economic growth of the country. The event was attended by renowned human rights activists, scholars and experts namely Ms Mehnaz Rafi (ex – MNA), Mr Humayun Ehsan (Principal, Law College Lahore), Ms Naureen Tawakkal (Programme Manager, Shirkat Gah), Dr Sara Shahid (In-charge Gender Studies Department, Lahore) and Mr Salman Abid (Human Rights Activist and Regional Head, SPO Lahore Office). In talks all



Seminar at Gender Studies Department, Lahore College



Politicians, Experts and Activists at Sensitization Talk, Lahore

the speakers urged the need of active role of youth in combating violence against women and abuse of child rights. More than 100 students participated in the seminar. Another seminar was held in the gender studies departments of Fatima Jinnah College, Chuna Mandi, Lahore. The guest speakers for this seminar included were Ms. Shamsa Ali Advocate, Ms. Bushra Khaliq (Executive Director, WISE) , Shehnaz Kausar (Principal) and Mr. salman Abid. More than 200 students and teachers attended this seminar.

A comprehensive talk on the **'Importance of Domestic Violence Bill'** was organized by SPO Lahore Office on Dec 8<sup>th</sup> 2011. The talk opened with a speech stating Victims of domestic violence have long faced a double injustice - abuse at home

and then no protection from the government. The speech was delivered by Umm - e - Laila Azhar, Executive Director Home-net. She said 'the proposed law has widespread support in Pakistan, and the government should make passing it a priority.' It was also realized in the talks that violence against women is considered wrong globally and in Pakistan but still this is socially accepted in most of our rural and semi urban settings; reason being lack of awareness and sensitization on the issues of violence against women including domestic violence . In order to combat these, the forum suggested relevant government departments, functionaries and civil society to adopt measures for proper punishment of violators and rehabilitation of the victims.

SPO Lahore Office with the financial support of Oxfam GB organized a dialogue on the '***Role of Media for elimination of violence against women***'. ***The dialogue was organized*** under Oxfam GB and SPO's project of **Ending Torture and ill treatment against women.'**



Sensitization Seminar at DI Khan

Apart from these seminars, talks and events, radio programs with FM 95 and 103 titled ***Chanan***, visit to Dar – ul - Aman with women protection forum team, and a culmination seminar during the 16 Days of Activism were also organized to mark SPO's efforts towards ending violence against women and children in the country.

All the other regional offices of SPO are also executing some activities in continuation of the struggle for combating violence against these marginalized segments of our society.