

Strengthening Voices

2012-13



Volume III



SPO
Strengthening
Participatory
Organization

اداره استحکام شرکتی ترقی

20 years
1994 - 2014
Empowering Communities

Strengthening Voices

Volume III

2012-13

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BESSI	Balochistan Employee Social Security Institution
BHC	British High Commission
BHU	Basic Health Unit
CBI	Capacity Building Indicators
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CM	Chief Minister
CNIC	Computerized National Identity Card
CR	Conflict Resolution
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSN	Civil Society Network
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DCO	District Coordination Officer
DEMC	District Education Monitoring Committee
DEO	District Education Officer
DG	Democratic Governance
DHMC	District Health Monitoring Committee
DHO	District Health Officer
DHQ	District Head Quarter
DMC	District Monitoring Committee
DPO	District Police Officer
DSC	District Steering Committee
EDO	Executive District Officer
EKN	Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
EMC	Education Monitoring Committee
FRs	Frontier Regions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoP	Government of Pakistan
HMC	Health Monitoring Committee
HR	Human Rights
HRD	Human Rights Defender
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
ILO	International Labor Organization
IPRI	International Property Rights Index
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LC	Literacy Center

LRP	Local Resource Person
MA	Masalihat-e-Anjuman
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MHO	Municipal Health Officer
MNA	Member National Assembly
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPA	Member Provincial Assembly
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
NCHD	National Commission for Human Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OM	Organizational Management
PO	Partner Organization
PP	Political Parties
PPC	Pakistan Penal Code
PSDP	Public Sector Development Program
PWD	Persons with Disability
RHC	Rural Health Centre
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
SPO	Strengthening Participatory Organization
SSP	Senior Superintendent Police
TMA	Tehsil Municipal Administration
UC	Union Council
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAW	Violence Against Women
WAPDA	Water and Power Development Authority
WG	Women Group
WHO	World Health Organization
WO	Women Organization

Message from the Chief Executive

The year 2012, similar to its preceding years, witnessed yet another bout of political, social and religious turmoil in Pakistan that at one end, further alienated the masses, while on the other, strengthened dissenting elements within the society. Pakistan witnessed an array of crisis and calamities including recurring natural disasters, militancy crisis, increasing instances of violence, rising poverty levels and discernable gaps in delivery of basic social services. But, amidst all this turmoil and disorder, what is most impressive to note, is the resilience and fortitude of the people of this country against all insuperable odds. Some of the most prominent issues of this year included targeted killings, attacks on aid workers and human rights activists, unprecedented price hikes, severe energy crisis, ingress of new political figures, bomb blasts, increasing instances of blasphemy cases, Taliban insurgency, loss of thousands of lives in war against terror, displacement of flood victims, unchecked deaths caused by virally transmitted diseases and food insecurity. The growing intolerance in our society and violations of basic human rights plead for a radical change in our society; a shift in the overall paradigm based on the principles of equality and justice.

Amid this volatile political, social and economic situation of the country, SPO continued its endeavours for creating a just and tolerant society characterized by the true essence of democracy and good governance. The extensive outreach of SPO, enabled by its diverse and wide-spread program portfolio, is self-evident of the confidence placed in us by our funding partners and program implementation arms i.e. civil society institutions across the country, and the citizens who constitute the most pivotal part of this significant intervention.

SPO's 'Citizen's Voices and Accountability Program' deals with governance issues at the macro, meso and micro levels, by building on the strengths and capacities of a well trained team of staff members and partner entities, mainly civil society institutions and networks. These entities are represented by community level stakeholders including youth, women and minority groups, organizations and networks, intelligentsia, think tank forums, and religious and political leadership. SPO has further deepened its own access to, and engagement between the rights-holders and the duty-bearers throughout the country, which has had visible impact at the grassroots by creating opportunities for promising public-private partnerships at district, provincial and national levels. It has already begun to indicate avenues for potential engagement of research and policy circles on reforms within policy environment in future.



This volume of case studies gives an insight into the success stories, pertaining to the local people that have succeeded in one way or another to attain their basic citizenry rights through a participatory approach adopted by SPO. I would like to mention here that I am deeply indebted to our funding partners for their continued faith in us, our implementing arms for their relentless commitment and dedication, and lastly to my colleagues at SPO for their hard work and perseverance that has lead to achievements, which are a source of pride for the entire organization.

Naseer Memon
Chief Executive

Strategic Thrust of the Programme

The programme is designed around four major outcomes which are further categorized into corresponding outputs activities and sub-activities. Under the programme, 'Outcome 1000' deals with Democratic Governance, 'Outcome 2000' with Social Justice, 'Outcome 3000' with Peace and Social Harmony and 'Outcome 4000' with Institutional Strengthening.

Outcome 1000: Enhanced capacity of community organizations and public interest institutions to exercise and promote democratic governance at all levels of state and society

- Output 1100: Increased capacity of community organizations to undertake knowledge based programs for promotion and protection of human rights, and address governance and conflict related issues at local level
- Output 1200: Increased capacity of community workers in setting-up well managed, accountable, transparent and participatory organizations
- Output 1300: Enhanced capacity of political workers to respond to local conflicts and development issues

Outcome 2000: Enhanced capacity of community organizations including Monitoring Committees and Police Departments, to oversee and advocate for social justice with a special focus on health, education, women empowerment, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian support

- Output 2100: Enhanced ability of Education and Health Monitoring Committees to ensure provision of quality education and healthcare services at local level
- Output 2200: Formation of women groups, and their mobilization for collective action to elevate social status of rural women and improve their means of livelihood
- Output 2300: Increased capacity of local partners to develop and implement community-centric Disaster Risk Reduction plans

Outcome 3000: Improved social harmony and consensus on local and national issues among different segments of society for securing their rights regardless of caste, creed, colour or gender

- Output 3100: Increased capacity of civil society networks in promoting social harmony and tolerance among diversified groups
- Output 3200: Increased capacity of civil society networks in designing and executing successful advocacy campaigns for achieving desired policy reforms
- Output 3300: Development of effective and efficient pool of pressure groups through linkage building with regional and sectoral organizations

Outcome 4000: Increased recognition of SPO by society at large as a participatory, effective, transparent and accountable organization

- Output 4100: SPO remains transparent and accountable to development partners and promotes integrated learning based development models
- Output 4200: Improved mechanisms for planning and management of programme, financial and human resources at SPO

Enhanced capacity of community organizations and public interest institutions to exercise and promote democratic governance at all levels of state and society

The 'Democratic Governance' component of SPO's Citizen's Voice and Accountability Program emphasizes mainstreaming of communities in decision-making processes for the realization of their basic human rights as enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Constitution of Pakistan. SPO enhances the capacity of community organizations and public interest institutions to exercise and promote democratic governance, at all levels. This is achieved through extensive and sustained social and political education that is provided to both, the duty-bearers as well as the rights holders. Emphasis of political education drive of SPO remains on capacitating the rights-holders to participate at fullest, in all forms of endeavours directed towards desired reforms in the governance environment.

1. Safeguarding the Rights of Indigenous Community through Environment Protection

Bahrain is a scenic town, located in the northern part of the beautiful Swat valley. It is home to the indigenous community of Torwali, with an estimated population of 120,000. Bahrain is a prime tourist resort that attracts many tourists from all parts of the country, especially from the scorching hot, southern belt. The local population is settled alongside the banks of River Daral, which provides water for irrigation, drinking and running turbines of private Hydel powerhouses. During the late 90's, a report was submitted to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) by the Sarhad Hydel Development Organization (SHDO), requesting a loan of PKR 5.56 billion for a renewable energy project. The project proposed diverting River Daral into a tunnel that would open into a penstock near a village, at a distance of 2 km from Bahrain. For one reason or the other the project had been shelved until 2009 when SHDO again approached ADB for funding.

A group of five local community based organizations formed a network called Environmental Protection Network (ENP) in 2008, for the preservation of environment and awareness building about environmental issues, particularly in the context of human rights. Idara Baraye Taleem-o-Taraqi (IBT), a partner organization of SPO, is an active member of this network. IBT with the support of other members of the network mobilized resources to establish through research the feasibility of the proposed project and analyze its merits and demerits. The research revealed that a total population of over 30,000 would be directly affected by the project in the villages of Laghan, Jail, Niam, Thelba Right, Thelba Left, Kambelai, Habibabad, Punjigram, Purana Gaun and Osha. Moreover, the project proposed cutting off of over 40,000 oak trees to build an access road that posed potential environmental hazards. EPN approached ADB to take into consideration the community's concerns, which were further substantiated by research findings.

Through their concerted and well-planned advocacy strategy, EPN members were successful in convincing ADB about the adverse implications of the project. This resulted in withdrawal of the project by ADB. EPN has been successful in raising awareness about the issue at district and provincial level with the technical guidance and financial support provided by SPO. On 3rd April, 2012 Express Tribune; a daily newspaper, reported that EPN had moved Peshawar High Court against construction of the hydropower project



demanding redesigning of the project and provision of 10% of royalty for the uplift of local community.

The network continues to create awareness about environmental conservation and human rights. In doing so, it envisions to convince the government to re-evaluate the project design to minimize the adverse impacts and maximize the benefits for the local people from agriculture, forestry, natural habitat, as well as the local economy, particularly tourism.

2. Harnessing Social Cohesion for Conflict Resolution

Interwoven complexities within Baloch society have resulted in a weakened social fabric and restricted access to the abundant natural resources available in the province. Social organization of the Baloch is primarily dominated by blood kinship, thus giving rise to strong patriarchal tribal systems. All members of the tribe give their allegiance to the tribal head; who is both an administrative and judicial head of the tribe. Members within a tribe extend unconditional loyalty to fellow tribesmen. Any atrocity inflicted upon a single member is taken as an offence towards the entire tribe, which often leads to retaliation by the entire tribe. Besides the strong and often binding kinship, ownership of land and natural resources is also of extreme importance to the people of Balochistan. These factors play a fundamental role in determining the power dynamics within the province. The power play between different tribes, wherein each group fights to reinforce its dominance over the other, has resulted in innumerable disputes that inordinately end in bloodshed. The history of Balochistan is etched in the blood of countless lives lost as casualties of wars; wars rooted in tribal feuds that have lasted over decades.

In these increasingly turbulent times, SPO is working with its allies to combat, resolve, and where possible, neutralize the various multi-dimensional societal conflicts prevalent in the province. One such dispute that was successfully addressed by a partner organization of SPO, involved two tribes, namely Killi Waschoom and Killi Kan who came at loggerheads, owing to a dispute that erupted on account of access over water resources. The dispute claimed the life of a tribal woman and, in a span of five years, numerous locals sustained injuries as a result of this conflict. Day to day life of the local residents was severely disrupted due to the fear of violence from the opponents.

To resolve this issue amicably, a peace dialogue was organized by partner organization of SPO, in which members from both the tribes were invited, and urged to put their petty issues aside for the social and economic emancipation of their area. As a result of peaceful negotiations, the tribes reached a mutually beneficial decision of forming a committee with equal representation from either sides, to work collectively on options to combat the issue of water scarcity in their area. Mediators from the partner organization informed the committee about a water storage dam, which was easily accessible due to its close proximity. Upon inquiry, it was found that the dam had ample water reserves to cater to the needs of the people from both the tribes, for foreseeable future. The PO is now working closely with members of both the



tribes and regularly invites them to various seminars and workshops to further sensitize them about the importance of human rights and conflict resolution. The intended outcome of this intervention is to create social harmony, and a general understanding and awareness among local community about the issues impacting their lives and measures needed to address them.

3. Enabling Disadvantaged Segment's Access to Quality Education

After the devastating floods of 2011, an estimated 11,000 affected people from Sindh were displaced to Gadap, one of the largest towns in Karachi. Gadap is located in the north-western part of Karachi, lying on the provincial border of Sindh and Balochistan. The area is renowned for its ethno-diversity, with Sindhi, Balochi, Muhajir, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Seraiki and Pashtun residing together. Despite its large geographic spread and rich ethnic fabric, Gadap remains one of the most economically marginalized towns of Karachi. However, despite its impoverished economic condition, Gadap successfully bore the additional burden of 11,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), who were provided temporary settlements in various government school and college buildings. Prior to its conversion into a temporary shelter camp for the IDPs, Gadap Public School was non-functional. The huge infrastructure of the school spread over 50 acres comfortably accommodated 4000 IDPs, who were hosted by numerous non-profit organizations including Gadap Development Social Welfare Organization (GDSWO), a partner organization of SPO. GDSWO was a front runner in providing relief services to the IDPs by working hand in hand with other non-profit organizations such as Sindh Graduate Association (SGA). After the floodwaters receded from affected areas, the IDPs moved back to their ancestral lands. Subsequently, the vacated school building was handed over by the Government of Sindh to SGA, which manages a vast network of educational institutes. A successful public-private partnership was forged between the Government of Sindh and SGA to ameliorate the educational services for the local communities of Gadap through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

As the news of the partnership made its way to the local communities, a sense of unrest and discomfort spread. The locals were disquieted by the news because SGA was seen as an elite institution charging exorbitant fee. The locals voiced their apprehension regarding financial constraints and inability to bear higher fee structure as charged by SGA's other schools. Having previously worked with SGA, GDSWO rose to the occasion by initiating a dialogue between both interest groups. During the meetings, plans for making the school operational were discussed and concerns of the locals who felt that they had an inherent right to send their children to schools within their own community were also voiced. To build public consensus on this issue, an advocacy campaign focused on the 'right to admission of local students in Gadap Public School' was launched by the GDSWO.



Following rigorous negotiations, SGA management agreed to allocate representation to two members from Gadap Town, on the Board of Gadap Public School and reserve 50% quota for meritorious students of Gadap who would be eligible to receive fully funded scholarships. As a result of the successful advocacy campaign, during the first academic year i.e. 2012-2013, out of 300 new admissions for grade 6 till matriculation 150 belonged to UC Gadap who received full scholarships worth Rs. 63,000 per student per quarter. The students were also provided books and uniform, free of cost. Through the efforts of SGA and GDSWO, a former ghost school was transformed into a centre of excellence offering quality academics and state of the art facilities to the impoverished but meritorious students of Gadap.

4. Empowering Citizens through Protection of Consumer Rights

In 2003, the Balochistan Assembly passed a Consumers Rights Act (CRA), which is yet to be implemented in its truest spirit. Pameer Consumer Society (PCS), a Quetta-based partner organization, working for the protection of consumer rights, planned an advocacy campaign to mobilize rights-holders and duty-bearers for the implementation of CRA. In addition to various media campaigns launched to underline burial of CRA after its enactment, numerous probing and sensitization meetings were also held with provincial law-makers and officials of the line departments mandated with CRA's translation into practice. Outside the Provincial Assembly, peaceful protests were also organized, which were widely covered by the media. Eventually, the efforts of PCS paid off, as the issue was successfully brought to the notice of Provincial Assembly, where it was tabled and deliberated upon at length. Upon the directives of the lawmakers, the district consumer rights committees, mandated to ensure compliance with CRA, were formed. So far, four committees have been formed. Additionally, PCS drafted and submitted a memorandum for Consumer Rights incorporating the views of key stakeholders, to the Provincial Assembly. This particular draft is currently being deliberated as a point of reference to adopt a policy framework by the provincial assembly.

PCS strives to safeguard the rights of consumers by serving as a volunteer vigilante. Pursuing its aim, PCS carried out survey in the local market to assess quality of consumable items being sold; and, during survey, it identified a famous local bakery shop that was selling low-quality items. Subsequently, PCS approached local government line departments to draw their attention to this issue. In reply, district administration collected and sent samples to the laboratory where they were tested and proved inferior and hazardous. Based on this, PCS sued the bakery owner, who despite having strong political connections was heavily fined by the court.





5. Youth Taking Leadership Roles to Challenge Taboos

A sitting MNA, who is also a landlord, was reported to have taken a girl from interior Sindh in his own illegal custody. The girl was also reported to have been harassed by the landlord. The girl was in love with a local boy, which offended the landlord, therefore, he declared her to be 'Kari'; an act of labelling a woman as immoral on the basis of her perceived or actual relationship with a man outside a marital relationship. Young Generation Development Forum (YGDF), a partner organization comprising over 80 local boys and girls from underprivileged families, protested against the wicked act of the landlord who after initial resistance and sending threats to the families of the members of YGDF, eventually submitted to their pressure, as YGDF carried out protest rallies besides holding a press conference to expose his nefarious intentions. The landlord was pressurised so immensely that finally, he made an apology to the girl and her family, besides publicly renouncing the centuries old inhumane ritual of 'Karo-Kari'. He also vowed to refer all such matters to YGDF and pledged his entire families support to the cause of YGDF in future.

In the wake of floods, Masoom Rights Development Society (MRDS), a partner organization, designed a sustainable livelihood development program for the uplift of affected women led households. MRDS provided entrepreneurial trainings in poultry, sewing, stitching and kitchen gardening to local women, besides helping them develop business plans and secure interest free and/or soft loans. Saiqa Bano efficiently utilized the learning from her training to start a poultry business with only 5 hens. As the number of hens increased, she started selling eggs, and now she has developed linkages with the market, where the eggs are regularly purchased and that's how she now generates a steady stream of income for herself and her household.

6. Drivers of Social Change

According to a report by the National Center for Justice Planning, 74% of minority women living in Pakistan faced harassment during 2010-11. Harassment has remained a widespread concern in the country, particularly for women belonging to minority groups. Recently, Government of Pakistan passed two laws for protection of women against harassment at workplace. The new Harassment Law requires displaying the code of conduct in all organizations, forming a three-member inquiry committee and conducting awareness sessions for its staff members. Harassment at workplace is increasingly seen as one of the most egregious forms of violence against women. Being an integral part of the nation's workforce, women's role is as important as men's. Young brave women who leave their homes to bring food on the table for their families are subjected to intimidation, bullying and verbal attacks at workplaces as well as other public spaces.

Working Women Development Foundation (WWDF), a partner organization which attended SPO's training workshops on environment, gender, political participation and human rights, courageously unearthed a decade long trail of heinous crimes against female school teachers by the school Headmaster—a Christian community school operating in an economically disadvantaged area of Lahore. Most of the female teachers of the school were locals and Christians. These young teachers stepped out of their houses with an aim to earn honorable living for their families, but the wicked headmaster's acts put their honour and integrity in jeopardy. Taking advantage of their vulnerabilities, he subjected them to harassment.

After becoming aware of this issue, WWDF made an intervention by approaching the victims and their families. During the discussions, one of the teachers of the School gathered courage to narrate her sorrowful tale of victimization. WWDF sought the assistance of teacher in reaching out to the other teachers of the school. In their meeting with WWDF representative, three other teachers shared similar woeful tales. WWDF with the support of the teachers mobilized local community to raise their voice against the wicked conduct of the headmaster. Next, they organized a protest rally for the expulsion and legal action against the headmaster, besides administrative reforms to make workplace safer for female teachers. WWDF brought all the victimized teachers together who jointly filed an application against the headmaster with the local Bishop. The Bishop took immediate notice by sacking the headmaster who was then publicly confronted and reprimanded. The bishop also made him apologize to the community and the teachers for his offensive acts.



The message that this incident brings home is that women in our society ought to stand up for themselves and voice their grievances to be able to exercise their basic human rights. An immediate need has been felt to train and sensitize these women on their civil and human rights. The Government of Pakistan has passed a bill for the protection of women, however, what lacks is the awareness about it among the masses, particularly women.

Doctors of the government hospitals in Quetta went on a strike. Resultantly, hundreds of patients with serious medical conditions went un-attended and some of them even passed away. District Steering Committee (DSC) in Quetta decided to respond to this critical situation, and approached all nationalist and national political parties leadership to form a committee to dialogue with the doctors in order to bring them back to their duty stations. Upon DSC and political parties pledge to support legitimate and peaceful demonstrations of the doctors in future, they agreed to resume their duties, as in a press conference at the Quetta Press Club, they announced end of their strikes to resume duties on humanitarian grounds.

7. Transforming Youth into Socially Responsible Citizens

Killi Ismail, a socially and economically backward area in District Quetta, is notorious for its rampant drug dealings, leading innumerable youngsters astray, into a life of immorality and violence. Youth Educational Society; Balochistan (YES), a partner organization of SPO, has been ceaselessly struggling to create awareness about the evils of drug abuse, mentoring drug abusers through their rehabilitation process and helping them in becoming socially responsible individuals. For the purpose, awareness campaigns, consultations and meetings were carried out involving local youth, government officials and police departments to counter the escalation of drug abuse in the area. As a result of their consistent efforts, YES, supported by the local police, was successful in cracking down drug warehouses. Besides, YES supported a three-month rehabilitation of 13 drug addict boys, out of which six have successfully completed the rehabilitation process and are now leading normal lives. To create opportunities for these boys beyond the rehabilitation phase, YES provided them with computer and language courses. YES organizes sports day events to give the youth a taste of a normal, violence-free life to transform them into productive citizens.

Mr. Ahmed Baloch, a member of YES, works tirelessly for the socio-economic uplift of Killi Ismail. In pursuit of eradicating the evils plaguing the society, Baloch met with a young boy who was a drug addict and spent all his time at a local hotel indulging in decadent activities such as gambling and drug abuse. Over the years, he became entrapped in the cesspool of gambling to such an extent that, ultimately, not only did he lose his entire savings, but also accumulated huge amounts of debt, which he owed to the hotel owners. Instead of finding a job to pay off his debt, he physically assaulted his mother forcing her to handover her life savings. Baloch took personal interest in the case, counseling the boy and offering to provide financial support for his education. Baloch's consistent efforts paid off when after a number of meetings, the boy agreed to quit the life of depravity, and pursue his academic career. Today, the boy is enrolled in his undergraduate studies with active participation in extra-curricular activities.

The struggle of 'YES' over the past many years, while still ongoing, has been fruitful. Thus far, its efforts have indeed yielded satisfactory results. Not only have the local criminals been cornered, but majority of the youth is now fully cognizant of the dire consequences of drug abuse.





8. Living on the Margins: Minorities in Balochistan

Balochistan, throughout its history, despite being the most resource-rich region of the country, has remained excluded from mainstream development. Owing to the continued red-tap, nepotism and exploitation of the most marginalized by the local landlords, tribal heads and the state apparatus, the socio-political and economic situation in the province has remained bleak and deteriorating continually. Additionally, ever increasing influence of the radical elements in the society has allowed greater space for the exploitation of those who already suffer from multiple forms of harassment, exploitation and discrimination.

Al Falah without Walls (AW), a partner organization of SPO in Quetta, noticing the lacunae and attitudes impeding minority students' access to the available educational facilities, launched 'support a minority child education campaign'. AW, through its consistent efforts, galvanized support for the education of 363 boys and girls students belonging to Christian, Hindu, Sikh and Balmeek communities. These students were enrolled at the mainstream schools and colleges. Presently, besides looking after their educational expenditure, AW actively mobilizes the majority students and their parents to build the confidence of minority students, in order to eventually integrate them into mainstream development as equal, responsible and active citizens.

Rashida Roberts, a local Christian girl, was supported to complete her matriculation as well as a vocational training course. Taking the confidence that she gained from her studies and vocational course into a campaign that she embarked upon single-handedly, she galvanized support of her community members to advocate for the provision of drinking water in her area. Consequently, after various meetings with the line department, Rabia and her fellow community members secured funds for the installation of the tube well.

9. Diffusing Tribal Disputes through Dialogue

The sub-continent has for centuries been scarred with countless invasions; displacing native settlements and bringing with it a diverse group of outsiders, resulting in an atmosphere of hostility, resentment and enmity locally. As the settlements organized into clans, the centuries old, deep-seated animosities grew and metamorphosed in the shape of tribal feuds, claiming countless human lives. In Pakistan, owing to the complex social construct, tribal feuds are most prevalent in Balochistan and interior Sindh. These conflict-ridden areas have been economically, socially, politically and culturally paralyzed, depriving the inhabitants, especially the women and children of their basic rights to education and healthcare.

Sachal Development Organization (SDO), a partner organization, identified a tribal feud that carried the potential to blow out of proportion, if it was not diffused at its nascent stages. Pitafi and Bozdar tribes belonging to District Ghotki, Sindh, came to loggerheads with each other, when a man belonging to the Pitafi tribe was caught robbing a Bozdar household. The person was shot on the spot, and sustaining fatal injuries, soon passed away. To avenge the death of their fellow tribesman, members of Pitafi tribe killed an innocent member of the Bozdar tribe, and thus they marked the beginning of a probable bloody conflict. As the tension between the two tribes grew, mobility of people, and educational and agricultural activities came to halt on either side. In order to avert any major future conflict, SDO mobilized local police department, and with the support of Superintendent Police, approached elders of both the tribes. In response to the appeal of SDO, a group of people including social activists, political representatives, media persons, students and revered village elders rallied together with the sole purpose of requesting both tribes to set their differences aside and live at peace and harmony with each other. Consequently, heads of both tribes responded positively to the rally's appeal by publicly announcing ceasefire and vowing to resolve mutual disputes peacefully and amicably in future.





10. Celebrating Diversity

The minorities across Pakistan in general and those living in rural and semi-rural areas in particular, suffer from multiple forms of discrimination. Disengagement with, rejection of, and prejudices against minorities is a common phenomenon. Their free access to civic amenities, expression as free and equal citizens, and religious practices are often denied, obstructed, and ridiculed. Minorities continued and forced disengagement from the mainstream society and state institutions, poses a direct challenge to the state's role to treat its citizens equally, regardless of their caste, colour and creed. The ever widening gap between minority Christian community and the mainstream majority has been another serious challenge to the peace of D.I. Khan where conflict has so far been merely attributed to religious divide between two Muslim sects. Gomal Islahi Tanzeem (GIT), a partner organization, has been working with local Christian and Muslim communities to bring them at lasting peace with each other. Towards this end, and to GIT's credit, there is decades of consistent lobbying with and among liberal and enlightened groups from either side to harness appreciation for mutual diversity, and support and strengthen mutual cohesion. It was only recently, when leadership of Christian and Muslim communities agreed to sit together to listen to differing views of each other. Drawing further on their earlier peace building efforts, they agreed to celebrate religious events of their respective sects jointly. As a gesture of goodwill, and to assume the role of an elder brother, the Muslim community's leadership proposed to celebrate Christmas with their Christian brothers and sisters at the local church. A delegation of Muslim community, led by a cleric, was warmly received by the Christians. At this occasion, Christian children performed festive dances, introduced Christmas tree and played Christmas songs. This historic event was attended by over 300 individuals who were all full of praise and excited about this rare joint gathering of the Christian and Muslim communities, which according to them was the first ever in the history of D.I.Khan. They were all hopeful that this unique gathering, on the auspicious occasion of Christmas, would bring unity, interfaith harmony, peace and prosperity to their region. Among the notables who attended this event included the Bishop, religious leadership of Sunni and Shia communities, District Presidents of Pakistan People's Party and PML-N and District Ameer of Jamat-e-Islami. These key leaders of the area expressed their collective resolve to combat miscreants, respect and tolerate difference in each other's belief and practices, strengthen and support mutual peace and harmony and celebrate religious events jointly.

11. Despair Turned into Joy

The Special Ones (TSO) is a partner organization in Quetta working for the protection and empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). TSO has been actively pursuing the cause of uplifting and restoring the dignity of PWDs through provision of equipments, exposure and learning opportunities and advocacy for their mainstreaming in the society. Dreams of Akhlaq, a student of Balochistan University, were shattered by an accident that rendered him disabled. After encountering this ill-fate, Akhlaq lost all hope - a drastic change occurred in his life that turned him from an optimist to a pessimist.

His case was identified and brought to the notice of TSO by a volunteer human rights activist. TSO organised special mentoring, counselling and socio-psycho therapy sessions for Akhlaq, besides allowing him cross-cultural learning and experience sharing opportunities. Ironically, his participation in these extremely important initiatives was denied by his family. However, following his return from a youth Leadership Conference in Islamabad, his family witnessed miraculous changes in him. The exposure and linkage building opportunities that were made available to Akhlaq allowed him to gain access to government departments where quota seats were available for PWDs. In response to his application against one such position in the district government, he was hired, and is now living a fulfilling and dignified life. Akhlaq has become an iconic figure and a role model for PWDs across the country, and is often invited as key note speaker, observer and participant to various regional and national forums aimed at addressing concerns, rights, needs and priorities of the PWDs.





12. Provision of Clean Drinking Water in Schools

Pakistan's 62% of urban and 84% of rural population drinks untreated water resulting in over 100 million cases of diarrhea registered each year. Unsafe drinking water causes diarrhea, typhoid, intestinal infection and hepatitis. From water-borne diseases, an estimated 250,000 deaths occur each year. One-third schools in Pakistan have no access to drinking water, and there is not a single example of safe water supply by the government in any part of the country.

Alliance for Human Development (AHD), a partner organization in Lahore was approached by a local community to draw government line departments' attention to high prevalence of waterborne diseases among children. What came as a surprise was that majority of the affected children belonged to two government schools. Upon AHD's intervention, the schools administration revealed that despite numerous letters written to the higher authorities, funds for repair and maintenance including cleaning of the water tanks were not released.

Through workshops AHD oriented parents and teachers about waterborne diseases, besides mobilizing them to approach Provincial Ombudsman to seek redress to the issue of contaminated water supply at the schools. Responding to the local community's collective complaint, the ombudsman constituted a commission to survey all schools in the area. Based on the commission's report, the ombudsman mobilized education and other relevant departments to make short to long term arrangements to ensure continued supply of safe drinking water to the schools.

This is a perfect example of citizens' activism. Governments may only try to bring about reforms, but to materialize a substantial and sustained change; citizens must have the will to harness their energies to drive the process of real change.

13. A Social Catalyst for Behavioral Change

In a patriarchal society like Pakistan, except for a negligible percentage, majority of the women form the marginalized segment are incapable of exercising their basic rights. The accumulated biases towards women have transformed into discriminatory practices over time, supplanting any legal and social protection means for women. In rural settings, matters related to women are treated purely as family issues, with zero tolerance for intervention by judiciary and law enforcement agencies. Cases of domestic violence, harassment, inheritance and forced marriages are unilaterally decided upon by the Panchayat or Jirga comprising and influenced by local male tribal heads and landlords. In general, most of their decisions go against women, and particularly against those women that represent low income and social strata. Such pervasive attitudes and practices contradict all other laws including those of the state that seek to protect women's right to life, education, health, property and freedom of choice, speech and practice.

Women are not given their due share in family property despite the legal and religious provisions, but in contrary the practice of 'dowry' in marriages has been strengthened much more. In many families, the provision of 'dowry' implies that the bride has ceased her right of inheritance because she has received 'dowry' at the time of her marriage. Despite the changing social dynamics in which women are increasingly becoming recognized labor force, especially in the agriculture sector, they are still denied their right to inherit or purchase any property in their own names. This denial further reinforces their economic vulnerability by perpetuating their dependency on men.

'Women's rights in, access to, and control over land, housing, and property is a determining factor in women's overall living conditions, particularly in developing countries. It is essential to women's everyday survival, economic security and physical safety and, some would argue, it is the most critical factor in women's empowerment and their struggle for equality in gender relations.' – United Nations Centre for Human Settlement, Nairobi, 1999.

Mama Haji, an elderly local social figure and a senior member of a partner organization in Tando Muhammad Khan is working tirelessly to induce an attitudinal change within the male strata with respect to women's rights. He realizes that the task he has taken on is tedious, but is optimistic about the end outcomes. He believes that the trainings and constant coaching that he received from SPO in turn gave him the strength to combat chauvinist customary practices towards women. To begin with, Mama Haji replicated



the trainings (those that he had received from SPO) at the community level; both, for men and women in order to sensitize them about their own and the rights of others besides the legal means to secure their rights. Resultantly, a number of women organizations have mushroomed in his village promoting education, health, human rights and gender equality. These organizations are providing platforms required to the other women to raise their voices and concerns. The levels of acceptance for girls' education have substantially improved among the local men now, as a number of local girls have now begun to seek admissions in higher education as well, which was not a widely accepted norm previously. Leveraging the respect that he enjoys among locals, Mama Haji successfully convinced brothers of six local married women to give them their due share in the property they inherited from their parents. Mama Haji is enthusiastic about the indirect and slow changes taking place at present, which according to him are the indicators of a greater and sustainable change in the longer run.

14. A Beacon of Light in Rural Sindh

Pakistan has witnessed an unprecedented increase in the crimes against women in the past few years. While a small percentage of these cases come to the fore, a large number of them go unreported. Sadly, the ratio of domestic abuse in Pakistan remains one of the highest in the world. Acceptability towards unjust and discriminatory social practices is pronounced in the areas with deeply entrenched patriarchal social structures, where supremacy of the male gender is bred into the mindsets; generation after generation. The societal taboos disallowing space for girls and women in accessing their social, political and civic rights, particularly in the rural communities; exacerbates the situation further.

Hameeda is a resident of a remote village named Kaladi in the Ghotki District. While other girls of her village were restricted to domestic chores, Hameeda on the other hand aspired to become a teacher. However, due to lack of education facilities in her village, she was unable to pursue her dream. Nevertheless, Hameeda did not lose hope and through her persistent efforts, persuaded her parents to send her to a girl's school in an adjoining village. This was not well received by her relatives, who pressurized her parents to withdraw her from the school. In the meantime, Hameeda successfully completed her matriculation. However, soon after, surrendering to the pressure of their relatives, her parents decided to marry her off to a relative. With shattered dreams, she agreed to marry her cousin, hoping it might be the beginning of a new blissful life. Sadly, that was not meant to be, instead of the content marital life she had envisioned, Hameeda was subjected to mental and physical torture by her husband and in-laws. Left with no recourse, she ran away and took refuge with her parents. To her utter dismay, her parents refused to support her decision and encouraged her to go back to her husband.

Refusing to accept the unjust fate being forced upon her, she contacted Ms. Tehmida Nusrat, Chairperson of Gul Welfare Organization (GWO); a partner organization of SPO, that works for the protection of human rights and provides legal assistance to victims of abuse. GWO hired a lawyer to file a divorce petition on Hameeda's behalf in the court of law. The court granted the decision in favor of Hameeda, who not only gained her independence but also proved to her family that an educated and emancipated woman has the self-reliance to stand against any adversity thrown her way.

Hameeda is now one of the proponents of women liberation in her village, where she is working tirelessly for fulfillment of not only her own dreams but



those of the other young girls in her village as well. Through persistent efforts, she successfully opened a primary school for girls in her village; a luxury she did not enjoy in her childhood. This, however, is not the end for her. She has now resolved to establish a college in her village so that the future of other girls, who would otherwise face a similar fate, is secured, which is only possible through the pursuit of education.

15. Women's Right to Property in Pakistan

Pakistan has been ranked the 93rd country out of 115 in reference to protection of property rights, and 86th in reference to gender equality in the International Property Rights Index (IPRI) 2008. 98% population in Pakistan is Muslim, and according to Islamic belief system, the right of inheritance is granted to both male and female heirs. Thereof, the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Muslim inheritance laws protect and guarantee women's right of inheritance as per the Sharia. However, the technical and procedural requirements of reclaiming land and other property rights make it nearly impossible for women to get their rights secured.

Women's right to inheritance and ownership of land is the most neglected subject in Pakistan. The existing laws or at least the environment around them do not encourage equal opportunity to women to inherit or own land. There is a considerable diversity in the status of women across classes, regions, communities and rural and urban settings in Pakistan. However, in general, women's status vis-à-vis men, is that of systemic servility determined by the forces of patriarchy.

Naseeba, a young girl from interior Punjab embraced misfortune following the untimely death of her father. She was denied the right to marry out of her own will by her maternal uncle, who was her guardian after her father's death. She was subjected to sheer injustice, as her entire family was dependant on her uncle who exploited the situation and cannily forced her to forfeit her share in inheritance. Naseeba inherited 10 acres of land worth over Rs. 200 million, which was legally transferred in her name. Her uncle denied her marriage out of her free will owing to the fear of losing illegal occupation of her inherited land property. Dejected by the perpetual pressure from her uncle, Naseeba took refuge with her paternal aunt in Multan, where, Hope Voluntary Women Development Organization (HVWDO), a partner organization, agreed to provide legal assistance and protection to her and her mother. Not only did HVWDO assist Naseeba in securing legal possession of her inherited land property, but also arranged for her marriage out of her free will. HVWDO successfully counseled her fiancé to transfer some of his own landholding in Naseeba's name to ensure her safety in her in-laws.





16. Protecting Domestic Workers against Sexual Harassment

In Pakistan, thousands of women and girls serve as domestic servants to earn their livelihood. Often, they have to make extraordinary sacrifices to support their families and are among the most exploited and ill-treated workforce. Sexual harassment and abuse is one of the key issues majority of them suffer from. The abuse occurs by and at the homes of the rich and empowered, whose acts remain hidden from the public eye. The forms of exploitation of the domestic workforce by the employers and agents includes physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, besides forced confinement in workplace, non-payment of wages and unpaid excessive working hours.

Neena is a fifteen year old orphaned girl living in the under-developed suburban area of Lahore. She has five siblings, and is the only supporting arm of her mother. Neena worked as a housemaid at a posh residence in Lahore, where she was sexually harassed by her employer's son. After getting to know about this atrocious act, only thing her mother could do in response was to stop her from going to work. But the boy, due to his affluent background, went to Neena's home and publicly threatened her to return to work or to face the consequences. Neena's mother approached Working Women Development Foundation (WWDF), a partner organization, to seek support and protection for her children. Initially, WWDF contacted the family of the culprit; however, they denied the allegation and warned WWDF to stay out of the issue or be prepared to face their retaliation. Therefore, WWDF took the matter to police and judiciary. This move, in return, pressurized the family of the culprit immensely. The culprit and his family apologized to Neena and her mother, besides giving written undertaking to the judiciary and police stating that they will not harass or harm Neena and her family in the future, and for any future negative ramifications they will be held fully responsible.

17. Resolving Conflicts for Promoting Peace and Harmony

Besides the State's utter failure to deliver justice and ensure safety of the citizens, there is a visible divide and resultant discontent among and within families, communities and societies. Often times, negligible issues blow out of proportion, to result in serious consequences, just because of the fact that society has become extremely fragile.

Karim Memon, a resident of District Badin, had always been at loggerheads with his uncle's family. Karim erected an obstacle on a passage by the boundary wall of his courtyard which was being used by his uncle's family. What started as a petty dispute, erupted into violence, involving supporters of either side. Seeing no end to the dispute, Karim's uncle lodged complaint against him with the local police.

Friends Development Organization (FDO), a partner organization of SPO, after coming to know about the dispute, probed into it at their personal level. Sniffing the sensitivities involved in the dispute, they formed a committee comprising well-respected local elders. Owing to the mediation by the committee under the patronage of PO, both the families agreed to live at peace with each other. With consensus among either side, the obstacle was removed to let the passage free, and complaint lodged with police was withdrawn. This timely intervention averted a potential dispute that could have easily claimed human lives and passed from one generation to another.





18. Defying Forced Marriage

Under the garb of 'wata sata', a tribal custom of exchanging brides between two families, 19 year old Nasira of District Ghotki was being coerced to marry a 59 year old man. Surrendering to the pressure of their own and the family of the old man, Nasira's parents agreed to marry her off. A member of Sachal Samaji Bhalai Traqiati Tanzeem (SSBTT), a partner organization, got wind of this news and brought it to the notice of his fellow social activists. These informed Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), trained by SPO, immediately approached the girl's family to apprise them about the injustice they were trying to impinge on her, and aware them of the adverse legal implications that they may have to face, if they didn't retreat their immoral and illegal decision. After showing resistance and reprisal in several face to face meetings, the family of the girl and 59 year old man finally backed off from their decision. Nasira was allowed to choose her life partner out of her free will; and ironically, her choice was none, but the son of the old man she was being coerced to marry initially.

District Steering Committee (DSC) Bahawalpur, a voluntary network comprising representatives from four mainstream political parties of the district, has been actively engaged in addressing local issues of key concern and has emerged as one of the leading supporter of local development initiatives. Efforts of DSC Bahawalpur have gained due recognition from the district government, which has formally notified this voluntary network in order to give it a legal status. DSC Bahawalpur, as a result of numerous advocacy initiatives, has to its credit among others, successful lobbying with district government to ensure treatment of high content arsenic water for provision of safe drinking water to the local residents, deputing of 20 new constables and approval for construction of ring road to address traffic congestion problems, abrogating illegal parking fee, and release of funds by local government for restoration of Qila Darwar, a historical landmark.

19. Minorities Articulating their Citizenry Rights Objectively

Krishna Bhawna Welfare Organization (KBWO), a partner organization, works for the uplift of Hindu community of Bahawalpur. In Bahawalpur, Maqbool colony is home to the largest Hindu population which has for long been deprived of basic civic amenities. Mal-administered sewerage system was the most serious concern for the residents whose routine lives, health and surrounding environment was being gravely affected by it. In the absence of a sewerage system, the residents were compelled to transport human waste to vacant plots to dispose it off. However, owing to the increased resistance from the owners of the plots and resultant conflicts, the Hindu community had gotten into an unmanageable crisis situation. No one from the local administration responded to the issue of sewerage in the colony, despite numerous written requests made to them. With SPO's technical assistance, KBWO resorted to mobilise local community and reach out to the local political fraternity and social activists to galvanise their support in seeking redress to the sewerage issue. After gaining support of key local political and other civil society activists, KBWO led numerous peaceful protests followed by meetings with the duty-bearers. Consequently, Chairman of the Chief Minister's Task Force sanctioned repair of existing and construction of new primary and secondary sewage lines in the colony. After effective articulation of their demand for proper sewerage system, the local community members and KBWO now feel more empowered and confident to continue their struggle for the realization of their other basic rights as equal citizens.





20. Minority Voices – Making the Difference

Makli is home to a large Christian community, where devotees regularly visit the Church on Sundays for worship. However, the women worshippers had to endure multiple forms of physical and mental harassment en route to the Church, as they passed by a busy and narrow street occupied by the encroachers' i.e. shopkeepers' and hawkers on either side. With the technical assistance of SPO, Christians Reform and Welfare Society (CRWS), a partner organization, approached trade union's leadership in a bid to apprise them regarding the sense of insecurity that prevailed among Christian women. CRWS persuaded the Trade Union's leadership to hold a face to face meeting with them. The meeting turned out to be an ice breaker, as it allowed the Christian women to share their experiences of humiliation. The positive, encouraging and supportive attitude of the trade union's leadership boosted confidence and morale of the Christian women, who were assured full protection and security in future. Subsequently, the trade union's leadership held a series of meetings with the individual hawkers and shopkeepers of Kabarh Khana (the street Bazaar) in a bid to persuade them to sign an undertaking to assume responsibility for their own moral conduct and ensuring respect and safety of the Christian community, and women in particular. Following this, as part of their agreement, now the hawkers and shopkeepers keep their businesses closed on Sundays to allow safe mobility of the Christian community, besides ensuring respect for their religious practices.

21. Learning the Art of Living Respectable Lives

Aqeela is a member of Masoom Rights Development Society (MRDS), a partner organization in Quetta. After receiving four trainings on Human Rights and Violence Against Women (VAW), she gathered sufficient confidence to voice concerns over the atrocities inflicted upon her and her sisters by her maternal uncle and aunt. After her mother's death, Aqeela along with her four sisters and father lived with her maternal uncle whose wife treated them miserably. Aqeela boldly voiced her concerns to her maternal uncle and his wife, and convinced her father to move her and her sisters to a safer place. This move by Aqeela and her father was not expected by her uncle and aunt; however, when they actually decided to part ways, they realised their mistakes and apologised to Aqeela's family for all their wrongdoings and callous acts. Following this, Aqeela's family moved to a new home where her father, she and her sisters worked day in night to earn respectable living for themselves. While their father marketed confectionary items and candles in the market, they all helped him with making these items at home.





22. Building National Consensus

Balochistan is a conflict-ridden region, faced with a serious divide among the local political forces and between the local political forces and the federation, i.e. state, who have been at odds against each other for decades now. Over time, the void between these forces has deepened to such an extent that some of the local aggrieved political forces have gone aboard with armed separatist movements. While the current political turmoil may be attributed to numerous state and non- state elements, one factor that clearly stands taller among the rest is the lack of development opportunities for the locals. This has further aggravated the already volatile situation. The launching of 'Aghaz-e-Huqooq-e-Balochistan' and substantial raise in the share of the province in the 'National Finance Commission Award' were two initiatives by the federation that were aimed to attract deviant forces back into the mainstream political process. However, desired results couldn't be materialized, as through this initiative; the resources were transferred merely from the 'federal elite' to the 'provincial elite', leaving the majority i.e. general masses with yet another sense of deprivation and discomfort. In view of this, SPO's regional teams in Turbat and Quetta persuaded the leadership of nationalist and local chapters of national political parties to sit across the table and to listen to each other's perspectives on possible remedies to citizens' annoyance. The purpose of this 'All Parties Dialogue' was to harness collective resolve among the parties to delegate rights and powers to the lowest tier i.e. the masses. This unique 'All Parties Dialogue' aimed at strengthening the province to ultimately strengthen the federation, was attended by the leadership of Awami National Party (ANP), Hazara Democratic Party, Balochistan National Party, Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party, Peoples Party, PML (N), and others.

While tangible outcomes of this much-needed dialogue are yet to become evident, this important first ever initiative in itself has shown the leadership of key political parties, the possibility of going together into future, successfully and purposefully, notwithstanding mutual differences.

Enhanced capacity of community organizations including Monitoring Committees and Police Departments, to oversee and advocate for social justice with a special focus on health, education, women empowerment, disaster risk reduction and humanitarian support

Under the 'Social Justice' component, SPO establishes and strengthens community-centered mechanisms in order to secure the well being of people, irrespective of their caste, creed, color or gender, by striving to improve their quality of life. Within these mechanisms, stronger representation of the aspirations of women, minorities, youth and civil society groups is particularly ensured by advocating for desired reforms in the overall governance environment i.e. at the policy as well as the implementation levels. In order to achieve equal status and quality living conditions for the marginalized sections, SPO forms, capacitates and mobilizes constituency specific groups, forums and networks, such as, Women Groups and Health and Education Monitoring Committees. This in return creates opportunities for the most vulnerable stratum of society to articulate a common commitment in terms of a meaningful demand for the realization of their basic human and citizenry rights.

23. Promoting Accountability in Healthcare System

Pakistan has for long been struggling with disorganization, resource scarcity and inefficiency of its public healthcare system. Government spending on public healthcare is minimal resulting in an under-resourced yet overburdened sector. Even the extensive network of Basic Healthcare Units (BHUs) across Pakistan has not been able to produce desired results, owing chiefly to lack of resources; both human and financial. Inefficiency of government structures is not the only element to be blamed in the entire equation. Lack of awareness and inability of the general public to hold public offices accountable, is an issue that remains unaddressed.

In order to inform its subsequent actions, i.e. rights and issue-based lobbying, SPO provided technical assistance to District Health Monitoring Committee (DHMC) in Tehsil Ahmadpur and Bahawalpur to assess healthcare facilities at 71 Basic Health Units (BHUs). The survey report revealed that none of the BHUs had lavatories, while basic equipment such as nebulizers, BP apparatus, thermometers and even stethoscopes were missing. Out of 71 BHUs surveyed, provision of necessary facilities was created at the 10 most ill-governed BHUs. The survey report covering detailed findings about 71 BHUs triggered immediate action by the district government, as Vigilance Committees (VC) at BHU level were formed, notified and tasked with the responsibility to oversee attendance and attitude of medical and para-medical staff. In order to reinforce their oversight function, VCs at 42 BHUs were provided with V-Wireless sets to report to the line department of any wrongdoings; lapses and/or any other related matters. Upon the complaints of VCs, doctors reported to be not serving at BHUs, were terminated and replaced with new staff. Besides this, a complaint handling mechanism was also put in place. At these BHUs, names and contact details of director health and EDO health were displayed, enabling the patients to raise their concerns and solicit remedies, on the spot. Based on the complaints of patients, monthly salaries of seven doctors were forfeited who then overcame their behavioral and disciplinary issues to avoid any further disciplinary actions against them. According to the Health Department, as a result of the reforms at selected BHUs, in a short spell of six months, the monthly patient turnover has increased from 21,670 to 47,583. SPO believe that similar research studies will further bridge the gap between duty-bearers and rights-holders, by fostering an environment of citizen's engagement and public accountability, thus resulting in improved and efficient public service delivery systems.





24. Ensuring Improved Service Delivery through Dialogue

Governance, in its simplest form implies the inclusion of citizens as primary decision makers in order to ensure effective delivery of services. Public service delivery in Pakistan is in dismal state resulting in increased unemployment, poverty, corruption and conflicts. Poor development indicators, especially for education, paint a discouraging picture reflecting the inherent problems in Pakistan's education system. Good governance of the education systems is urgently required to assess whether the overall education objectives set by the State are being fulfilled or not, and to ensure provision of quality education and optimal utilization of public resources. Since the 18th Amendment, Education Monitoring Committees (EMCs) have assumed a supervisory role of monitoring the quality of services and identifying the critical problems affecting the education sector. SPO with an aim of strengthening the service delivery mechanisms has worked closely with EMCs by creating strong linkages between citizens and government functionaries. SPO provided financial and technical assistance to mid-level NGOs to carry out research studies, survey of ground realities and identifying problems at grassroots. Findings of these studies have been shared with EMCs and subsequently with relevant government officials for further action. Often times these studies have revealed lack of training to teachers, disproportionate student-teacher ratio, teacher absenteeism, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient investment and lack of communication and coordination between stakeholders, as the major factors impeding the progress and growth of this sector.

Ilm Dost Committee, EMC Mianwali, works closely with civil society organizations and School Management Committees (SMCs) to address issues affecting service delivery of education in their district. With the assistance of Help Foundation, a partner organization, members of EMC identified schools with poor infrastructure and lack of basic facilities such as safe drinking water, electricity, lavatories, play grounds, furniture and textbooks. The survey carried out by Help Foundation in 10 UCs of District Mianwali revealed that a number of schools had no teachers, various school buildings had been declared unsafe, teacher absenteeism was unparalleled and budget allocation by education department was insufficient and disproportionate. Findings of the survey were presented to the committee, which was subsequently followed by meetings with the EDO and DCO. As a result of successful advocacy, overtime 436 teachers were appointed for district government schools. The committee in collaboration with 'Pakistan Coalition for Education' conducted dialogues with district government to ensure transparency in budget

allocation for schools. They also organized various seminars to create a general understanding among masses about the existing issues facing the education sector. In the pre-2012-13 budget meeting, attended by representatives from the education department, finance and planning department, DCO and MPA, EMC presented their recommendations for an increase in budget allocation for School Management Committees. As a result of their efforts, on 30th May 2012, 15 SMCs were allocated funds whereby primary school SMCs were awarded Rs. 20,000 each and elementary school SMCs were allocated Rs. 50,000. Moreover, four elementary girl's schools were upgraded to High school level so as to encourage higher education among girls' students; a service which was previously unavailable in this area.



25. Eradicating Exploitation at the Hands of Corrupt Duty Bearers

With rampant corruption deeply entrenched across all sectors, the social and economic situation of Pakistan is becoming increasingly vulnerable and unpredictable. Public sector is the worst affected, with education and health sectors leading the way. In 2012, Transparency International ranked Pakistan as the 33rd most corrupt country in the world; a ranking that can be attributed to the country's governance model.

Healthcare sector in Pakistan is over-shadowed with corruption embedded at all tiers. According to a report published by Transparency International in 2009, approximately two out of five people used 'alternative processes' in order to access public sector medical care services i.e. by paying the fees directly to the doctors rather than to the hospitals. The report identifies a number of reasons for the deteriorating state of healthcare sector including; financial leakages, embezzlement, illegal fees, kickbacks, theft of supplies and equipment, over-invoicing, selling public positions and dual medical practices by doctors. Under Pakistani law, all publicly employed doctors are forbidden to set up private practices. To encourage doctors to follow this, government has introduced a non-practicing allowance. Despite these legal provisions, many doctors practice privately, often times providing sub- standard services to poor patients during their duty hours at government hospitals and subsequently referring them to their own private clinics. Staff absenteeism, theft, pilferage, siphoning of funds, insufficient medicines/equipment, dual job holding together with a bureaucratic mindset and abuse of power are some of the most critical issues, eroding the nobility and credibility of the medical profession.

In order to give voice and legitimacy to the demands of citizens with particular reference to health and education services, SPO actively engages with grassroots civil society actors to identify and investigate most common local concerns, needs and priorities. A similar survey by Health Monitoring Committee (HMC) in Mianwali, followed by informed advocacy, abated malpractice at local healthcare facilities. Survey revealed that patients were being exploited by doctors and paramedical staff in a bid to divert them from public healthcare facilities to their own private clinics. In order to do so, they would usually disappear from their duties, would not attend patients, would not issue medicines, and often behave badly with the patients. However, with the moral support of HMC and notwithstanding the exploitation by doctors and paramedical staff, some of the locals registered complaints

with district administration, besides highlighting their concerns through electronic and print media. Resultantly, the District Health Department got under immense pressure and suspended some of the medical staff posted at different healthcare facilities, and where need was felt, it made fresh hiring to post honest medical staff, besides providing equipment and medicines to previously ignored healthcare centers. The consistent evidence-based advocacy of the HMC has so far yielded several other tangible results including provision of hygienic water supply at Waam Bachran healthcare facility and appointment of a Cardiologist for the first time in the history of Mianwali at district headquarter hospital.

Provision of uninterrupted electric supply to hospitals is essential to save human lives in emergency situations. However, the rural health centers are particularly worst affected. Drawing informed actions from its survey report, HMC set out to address frequent breakdown of electricity and instances of non-existence as well as disconnection of electricity supply lines at healthcare facilities in Tehsil Piplan and Tehsil Esakhel. HMC solicited DSC Mianwali's support to ultimately secure grants from the provincial government for the provision of backup generators and air conditioners at District and Tehsil Headquarter Hospitals in Mianwali, besides seeking exemption for BHUs from load shedding.



26. Reviving Health Centre for Better Living

In Balochistan, the communication infrastructure has usually been weaker in comparison to the rest of the country. Long distances, tough terrain and scattered populations have always challenged the policy makers and planners to implement schemes beneficial for a wider audience. Each year, development and maintenance cost of the road infrastructure draws major chunk from the provinces budget, leaving bare minimum funds for two equally, if not more important sectors, namely; health and education. This is further marred by poor administration. Owing to poor healthcare facilities and lack of access to safe drinking water, the overall health of the people of Bolan has gone from bad to worse. Their condition has deteriorated further due to the absence of roads and telecommunication services. Patients in critical conditions could not be transported to the hospital in time nor could doctors be called in, from neighboring cities in case of emergencies. In order to respond to this crisis situation, SPO with assistance from PEACE Balochistan, one of its partner organizations, carried out a survey to identify missing facilities in local healthcare facilities. In a joint meeting, the survey findings were presented to community members and key decision makers i.e. District Government's Health Department officials. The discourse between key stakeholders i.e. rights-holders and duty bearers, paved way for formation of union councils and district level Health Monitoring Committees (HMCs), mandated to oversee the provision of missing facilities at 10 identified healthcare units and facilitate dialogues among local community and health department. The active role of HMCs, reinforced by an informed local community and endorsed by the health department resulted in revivification of the identified 10 healthcare facilities, and resultant increase in patient turnover from an average 100 to 4500.

27. Local Schools and Local Needs

The education system of Pakistan presents a dismal picture with various political, social and economic factors contributing to its rapid deterioration. Like its predecessors, the PPP government also introduced so called reforms in the education sector, which soon met their ultimate destiny; a grave failure. Among various other common issues that hurt education system include political influence by the landlords and mafia in the rural areas; and, institutionalized corruption by the education departments, both in the rural as well as urban areas. Among the most common missing services or facilities at the local schools include able and qualified teachers hired on the basis of merit, clean drinking water, electricity, laboratories, libraries, class rooms, furniture, toilets, playgrounds and transportation.

Shajar Development Organization (SDO), a partner organization of SPO in District Bahawalpur undertook a survey to identify gaps between school communities and line department, and missing services and facilities at 103 local schools. Following on-site visits and consultations with school communities and line department, wherein the missing facilities were identified and documented, a comprehensive report was compiled and published. Each school specific key findings of the report were presented to the District Education Committee, Education and other related Departments, School Management Committees (SMCs), teachers, political representatives, media, local leadership and school communities, through a series of mobilization events.

As a result of this evidence- based campaign, besides hiring of teachers against vacant posts, expulsion of non-performing corrupt and incapable teachers having links with local mafia and exploitative groups such as teachers association, funds for provision of missing facilities including latrines, water pumps, boundary walls and renovation of school buildings were released by the education department. In the aftermath of the introduction of necessary reforms at the selected schools, a marked change was observed in the student enrolment with an overall increase by 600 students. Moreover, additional annual grants for the uplift of schools were secured from the line department. The ripple effect of this meaningful and well constructed mobilization was witnessed in a neighboring Tehsil as well where a grant of PKR 100 million was issued by the same district education department for school improvement.





28. Social Empowerment: A Tool for Bridging the Rich-Poor Divide

In order to boost the national economy, it is imperative that the potential of all citizens be capitalized to the fullest extent. Rural population of Pakistan, which comprises 63% of the overall population size, offers vast potential in terms of its contribution towards the economic growth of the country. However, the widening gap between the elite and the proletariats, threatens not only the economic stability of the country, but also creates societal imbalances. Marginalized groups, particularly women, are most vulnerable to economic deprivation primarily due to patriarchal social structures, gender disparities, unequal employment opportunities and non-holistic decision-making processes.

In order to mainstream women in the development agenda, SPO has designed customized interventions to nurture leadership among underserved women groups. For the economic and social emancipation of rural women, SPO is working with a pool of local resource persons (LRPs); women leaders identified from isolated rural communities. These skilled LRPs have successfully established Literacy Centres (LCs) in rural communities; a platform through which these agents of social change are creating a critical mass of socially conscious women. These centers also serve as informal educational institutes where rural women are provided basic education focused on enhancing their literacy and numeracy skills. Through the availability of such social spaces, rural women now feel a sense of empowerment, which is reflected in their willingness to bring to the fore, issues of common concern including means to support themselves financially.

One gleaming example of social empowerment of rural women comes from the land of Maari Indus, Kalabagh; an under-developed area of District Mianwali. LRP, Zahida Bibi has proved herself to be one of the most enterprising LRPs identified by SPO. Not only has she replicated her learning with fellow women members, but has practically applied it, by transforming her learning centre into a vocational school, where women acquire skill development trainings in the areas of embroidery, pottery making, candle-making, shoe making, table mats and other handicrafts. The proceeds generated through these small enterprises are contributing towards the financial sustainability of the centre itself. Her success, however, did not materialize over night. While still in its rudimentary stage, the vocational center was singled out by quite a few organizations and individuals, who in a bid to exploit, the heretofore economically disadvantaged women of Maari Indus, approached Zahida to

purchase the work of her students, offering rates far below the prevalent market rate. Zahida, who was well aware of the worth of the goods being produced by her students, refused such measly offers. Rather, utilizing the linkages she had been able to harness for her centre over the years, she vocally advocated for, and successfully negotiated fair and competitive prices for her students. To open other windows of opportunities, she worked closely with other non-profit organizations and small- to medium enterprises. Her endeavors paid off, as some of her older students are now working formally, on contractual basis, with organizations like NCHD, Aahang, USAID, Karwan and Homnet. These organizations, under their development programmes, are sub-contracting bulk orders to Zahida's students, and selling their products in exchange of fair wages. Her students narrate with joy their journey in becoming self-empowered individuals; fully cognizant of their worth, not only as women, but as equal citizens of Pakistan.

Youth Organization, a partner organization in Ziarat, conducted a survey to assess the condition of healthcare facilities in the district. For the purpose, 14 BHUs were identified that lacked basic facilities such as medical and paramedic staff, medicines, surgical equipment, particularly for catering to delivery cases, etc. The survey report was presented to District Health Department, local healthcare facilities as well as community member following which Health Monitoring Committees (HMCs) were formed at district level. These HMCs carried out advocacy campaigns with concerned government departments for development of District Health Plans and provision of required equipment and basic amenities to identified BHUs. As a result, the Health Department issued notification for immediate provision of missing facilities in all 14 BHUs. A noticeable change was also witnessed in the attitudes of BHUs' staff as evidenced by higher staff attendance and improved quality of service delivery.



29. Claiming Her Honor and Respect

Farzana, at the tender age of 19, is successfully running a literacy centre in Waam Bachran, District Mianwali with a commitment for the emancipation of women of her area. In addition to replicating the trainings received from SPO, Farzana sensitized her students between the age of 18-40 years about the importance of democracy and claiming the right to vote, zero tolerance for violence against women (VAW) and various redress mechanisms available for women in case of violation of their rights.

Being a visionary, Farzana approached SPO with a proposal to turn her literacy center into a vocational training center, in an effort to provide an opportunity to the rural women with a source of livelihood, and to ensure long-term financial sustainability of her literacy center. A grant of Rs. 80,000 was disbursed in favor of Farzana's center, on receipt of which she purchased sewing machines and other required supplies. The new fully- equipped Centre attracted many a new students, following which formal short courses were initiated. However, the success of the Centre, being run by a young girl, was not taken well by a few radical elements in the village. A group of young boys endeavored to smear Farzana's reputation in order to discourage the locals from sending their women to the Centre. They accused her of vile activities and spread repulsive rumors about how NGOs exploit young girls. This nefarious plot had the desired result, whereby local elders disallowed their female family members from attending any classes at the Centre, lest similar rumors be heard about them. Undeterred by the accusations, Farzana stood resolute and with the support of her family pressed charges against the perpetrators. Utilizing her learning from a training on 'Gender Roles', under Section 509, she filed a complaint with local police authorities against her accusers. Taken aback by this bold step, the boys approached Farzana's family for reconciliation. Not only this, they publicly apologized to Farzana and her family for their misbehavior that had caused Farzana's family undue distress and humiliation. This incident, among others, is a harbinger of the social change that is unfolding in rural communities across the country. Farzana, in the face of adversity, was not only able to stand tall but was also successful in inspiring other young girls to stand up for what they believe in. Her students, who were forced to break all ties from their teacher, are now even more committed to follow in her footsteps and become as confident, bold and strong.

30. Rural Women Seeking their Identity

LRP Fatima, from Paki Shah Mardan, has been working with SPO since 2009 and has been actively involved in development initiatives aimed at enhancing social and economic empowerment of rural women in Mianwali. District Mianwali is overshadowed by a patriarchal social structure; giving rise to discriminatory practices that exclude women from mainstream development. Gender- based crimes are rampant in the area and have overtime become an accepted norm.

In 2010, the rain- fed floods that wrought catastrophic devastation across the country, left District Mianwali, inundated in water. Thousands of people were displaced, as houses were declared unsafe by local authorities. IDPs were accommodated at various camps and were provided rescue and relief services. While aid was being provided to the flood affectees, to Fatima's utter disappointment, most of the women from her community were denied relief goods owing to their inability in furnishing CNICs. When Fatima, approached the authorities, pleading on behalf of her fellow women, who were being denied due to no fault of their own, she was largely ignored. Witnessing this injustice, Fatima approached SPO to gain support for her cause. SPO immediately extended a helping hand, and arranged meetings between Fatima and NADRA officials, where this grave injustice was highlighted. In a parallel fashion, awareness raising sessions were organized with women community members to educate them about the inherent benefits of becoming registered citizens of Pakistan. CNIC registration events were arranged where NADRA mobile vans provided services for on-spot CNIC registration. As a result, over 300 local women got registered as citizens of Pakistan, and were consequently, able to claim the much-needed relief goods for their families.



Renovation of Government Boys Primary School, Syed Mohammad Aghbarg Sanjavi in District Ziarat by LAFAM, a partner organization, through SPO's financial support. Prior to LAFAM's intervention the school was in dismal state, lacking basic amenities such as teachers, furniture, electricity, stationery, etc. With a dilapidated building that did not even have doors to secure the school premises, classrooms were filled with animal and human waste. LAFAM mobilized the community members and District Education Monitoring Committee through various awareness raising campaigns, as a result of which, in addition to SPO's grant, funds were collected from community members, which were then utilized for a complete overhaul of the school premises. The mobilized community members were also successful in lobbying with the Education Department for appointment of a new teacher. Following the improvement in educational services, a marked increase was observed in student enrolment.

Help Foundation, a partner organization based in Multan, in collaboration with SPO, launched a project for provision of basic facilities such as electricity, clean drinking water, latrines, furniture, school boundary wall and classroom repairs, etc. in government primary schools. The schools were selected from the most underprivileged rural areas that are largely ignored by government functionaries. Following provision of missing facilities, the student enrolment rate, particularly of girl students, increased manifold. According to surveys conducted in selected schools, after provision of facilities, an estimated increase of 18% in student enrolment was observed.

Outcome 3000

PEACE AND SOCIAL HARMONY

Improved social harmony and consensus on local and national issues among different segments of society for securing their rights, regardless of caste, creed, color or gender.

Through the 'Peace and Social Harmony' component synergies are created between various civil society entities such as the networks and forums, local, mid-level and national not-for-profit organizations, faith-based groups and institutions, media activists and organizations, associations and unions, political parties, and local opinion-makers; so that they connect with the idea that men and women are equal. Hence, they should have equal opportunities to make their contribution and utilize their energies at their fullest. This particular component provides common space for collective action; as it enables the civil society to engage with state level institutions in terms of monitoring and commenting on their actions in a most purposeful and rewarding manner.

31. Recognition of Fishermen Community as Formal Labor Force

With a coastline spanning 1,120km and a fishing area of approximately 300,270 sq. km, Pakistan is home to a rich and commercially important marine life. Marine fisheries plays an important role in the national economy by providing employment to over one million fishermen directly, and some 400,000 people through ancillary industries. Over 50% of fishery products are exported, chiefly, to Europe, US, Japan and Middle Eastern countries. Despite its huge potential, the fisheries sector's percentage contribution in the GDP remains at 0.8%. Government's negligence, lack of investments and absence of formal development planning in the fisheries industry, are some of the key factors responsible for the deteriorating state of fisheries industry in Pakistan.

The negative effects of the lack of economic opportunities in fisheries sector have trickled down to the fishermen community, who are one of the most vulnerable labor groups in the country. Not only are they exploited by the industry moguls who pay bare minimum wages and no social security whatsoever, but their very livelihood, is often at the mercy of a capricious nature. Rapid climatic change leads to the disruption of natural marine habitat, forcing fishermen communities to migrate to new areas, thereby further increasing their vulnerability. Prior to 2009, the fishermen community had no representation, either at the provincial or national level; however with the formation of Balochistan Mahigeer Network (BMN) in 2009, a collaborative effort of SPO, Fishermen Folk Forum (FFF) and other local community organizations, voices of these vulnerable communities are now being heard within the highest echelons of the government. SPO and its allies have been successful in bridging the gap between the fishermen communities of Sindh and Balochistan and concerned state actors. Through collaborative efforts, SPO and BMN successfully advocated, and demanded for the recognition of fishermen communities as labor force, both under national and provincial legislations. The purpose was to promote and protect the rights of community members by ensuring fair treatment, better working conditions, provision of social security, equitable access to formal employment opportunities, and most of all, provision of minimum wages. In the absence of these civil rights, the community had for long been exploited, often times forced into bonded labour. The success of this Forum can be gauged from the fact that policy makers are now giving due credence, and prioritizing the needs and interests of these groups while drafting National Fisheries Policy.



The draft fisheries policy was formulated with the combined efforts of partner entities in Sindh and Balochistan. Through the successful efforts of DSC Gawadar, who engaged with, and mobilized different civil society and political activists to lobby with key parliamentarians and government representatives, the draft policy was presented to the Provincial Assembly by the Minister of Fisheries. The policy has now been formally accepted and adopted by the respective provincial governments by virtue of which, fishermen communities of Sindh and Balochistan are now recognized as formal labour force. To integrate this newly recognized labor force into the mainstream, BMN worked closely with Balochistan Employee Social Security Institution, working under the Labor and Manpower Department, to successfully complete the labor registration process; thus giving the fishermen fraternity, the legal status of Pakistan's labor force.

Promulgation and subsequent implementation of Fisheries Policy by Sindh and Balochistan provinces and fuller implementation of Minimum Wage Policy under Labor Law, were the results of the perseverance of BMN and local fishermen community, who despite all odds, stayed true to their cause. The fishermen community of Balochistan and Sindh are now considered as part of the labor force, enjoying all the inherent benefits, as defined in Pakistan's Labor Policy, which they were not entitled to, previously.

32. Enabling Access to Higher Education

Balochistan, despite its huge economic potential, remains the lowest ranked province on the development index. A multitude of factors are responsible for the poor development indicators. The dispersed settlement pattern; 5% of the total population are inhabiting 44% of the country's total land mass; remains one of the biggest challenge, as it raises the per capita expenditure for service delivery and development reforms. Weak communication networks, poor infrastructure and difficult terrains, further impede the development process. Educational services face similar challenges, whereby access to education is extremely skewed in favor of males belonging to affluent backgrounds. According to some estimates, only half of the total population of the province has access to primary education facilities, majority of which, are concentrated in the provincial capital, Quetta. The state of affairs in the higher education sector is far worse; where out of a total of seven public sector universities, five are located in Quetta. The long distances, coupled with the volatile security situation that restricts student mobility, particularly for girls, hinders local youth in pursuing higher education.

Peace Gender and Development Network (PGDN), a civil society network in Turbat, highlighted the lack of higher education facilities for the youth of District Kech. Kech is one of the largest districts in Balochistan province, having the second largest population after Quetta. With no degree awarding university in the entire region, students, in order to pursue their education, had to travel long distances amidst the instable security situation. The situation for girl students is far worse. Every year 1500 girls complete their education from District Kech, out of which a mere 100 have access to university education. In order to address this critical issue, PGDN approached SPO to garner support for lobbying with provincial legislators for establishment of an independent university in Turbat, the administrative centre of District Kech. An advocacy campaign targeting political party representatives, academia and like-minded civil society organizations was launched that eventually resulted in the establishment of a sub-campus of Balochistan University, in Turbat. Pursuant to the establishment of the sub-campus, PGDN continued its endeavors with the vision to convert this sub-campus into an autonomous institution, with an independent Board and faculty. As a result of their continued efforts, PGDN was finally successful in influencing the provincial legislators, who, acknowledging the need for an independent university passed the resolution for establishment of the University of Turbat.





33. Challenging the Taboos; Women Asserting their Political Voices

Mainstreaming gender and ensuring gender equality is imperative for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. The situation of women's rights varies across countries. While women in some parts of the world are fighting for their right to equal pay or equal employment opportunities, in other areas, they are petitioning for the right to stay at home in order to raise their children. Some women are seeking greater representation in business and politics, while others pursue for equal opportunities in health-care and education. Comprising over 50 percent of the world's population, women continue to be under-represented in all walks of life.

Although the constitution of Pakistan promises dignity, freedom and equality to all citizens and discourages discrimination on the basis of gender, women remain marginalized in various aspects of public participation. This includes political participation, both in terms of holding office as well as availing their right to vote. Not only do women face formidable problems in entering the public sector, but are exceedingly disenfranchised; thus eroding their political stake and diluting their political power. Women are under-registered in electoral rolls, face opposition when trying to vote, and in certain parts of the country, even unaware of their right to vote

Paikhel, an administrative subdivision of District Mianwali, is one of the two union councils in Pakistan, where women have never cast their votes. In 1963, some political elders from Rokhri and Akramullah tribe made a pact disallowing their women to participate in the electoral process. This pact was re-enforced by the current MNAs, who not surprisingly, were also tribal elders from both tribes. Despite the hostile and rigid attitudes of the community, CSN Mianwali and PO, Al-Rehman Development Organization (ARDO), organized an awareness building seminar in village Paikhel, on the 'Right of Women to Vote'. The turnout was overwhelming, with over 150 men from both the tribes participating in the seminar. However, this was just a drop in the bucket. Convincing the community members, particularly the village elders, to allow their women to participate in the upcoming elections was the biggest challenge. Considering the patriarchal mindset of the community, ARDO realized the need for a more passive approach. Initially, one-on-one meetings with some of the more progressive members were held which opened doors for further dialogues with the more rigid community elders. This cautious approach yielded positive results when the community elders from both the tribes along with the local religious leaders consented to hold group

discussions to further deliberate upon their decision that restricted women in participating in upcoming polls. Simultaneously, both ARDO and other CSN members engaged with the local political leadership to get their buy-in for inclusion of local women in the electoral processes. For the purpose, political party representatives who were members of the District Steering Committee; another civil engagement network supported by SPO, were encouraged to utilize their linkages with key political leaders, who wielded some clout with the tribal elders.

Their constancy of purpose paid off. These socially conservative individuals, who are in general wary of any outside influence and fear corruption of their moral fiber, both of which, in their perception, are inherently interconnected, unanimously decided to allow their women to participate in the elections, henceforth. This was in no way a light decision on their part as any change in the social paradigm is often associated with loss of power over the common man. In such a situation, allowing women to access their right to vote, for the first time in the history of the district, was a major and much-needed step towards the social emancipation of local women.



34. Farmer's Petition Against the Irrigation Department

The Government of Pakistan, following numerous international and domestic health standards and regulations, is legally obligated to provide adequate supply of safe, uncontaminated water for both domestic and commercial purposes. However, cities across the country are facing severe water crises due to lack of proper, government operated water and sanitation infrastructure. The reasons behind failure of the state to meet its water related obligations are cross-dimensional. Corrupt and incompetent governmental functionaries, lack of accountability and transparency of water regulatory authorities, systematic organizational deficiencies within the regulatory framework and no substantive coordination between the relevant departments are few of the root causes of the current water crisis being faced by the citizens of Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan's irrigation system has been a frequent victim to water theft in which influential landowners, with the help of government authorities, deprive small farmers of their due share of water.

A glaring incident of water theft took place in District Hyderabad. Under the influence of a local landlord, officials from the irrigation department dismantled a watercourse that was the only source of water for adjoining irrigable lands of poor farmers in village Sher Muhammad Langha. The affected farmers approached the concerned irrigation officials but all their efforts proved futile. The dejected farmers approached Sujag Development Organization (SDO), a local non-profit organization working on human rights in Tando Muhammad Khan. SDO, being a partner organization of SPO as well as a member of Civil Society Network; Tando Muhammad Khan (CSN-TMK), brought this issue to the notice of SPO-Hyderabad as well as other members of CSN-TMK. Utilizing the unique platform offered by CSN, all stakeholders conducted a joint meeting and devised a plan of action for addressing the issue. As a result the PO, CSN and residents of village Sher M. Langha, together with other human rights activists, organized a rally to protest against the preferential and self-serving actions of the irrigation department. The rally was followed by a press conference, where the media fraternity was contacted to create mass awareness about the discriminatory behavior of concerned government department. Resultantly, a petition, signed by over 100 community members, was filed against the irrigation department in Sindh High Court. After due deliberation, and subsequent to presentation of concrete evidence showing the duplicity of the government officials, the court passed the ruling in favor of the residents of Langha village. Today, the once dejected farmers of Village Langha, are not only reaping the benefits of

their united efforts but over the course of their campaign, have become more conscious and aware of their civil rights.

This small yet significant incident is one of the many that are being faced by urban and rural communities alike. The crisis of governance and management of water resources in Pakistan is observed in all aspects of development and allocation, storage and conservation, leading to inefficiency, inequity and unsustainability of water resources. This in turn leads to unfair competition and conflicts between the demand and supply side of the governance equation. According to International Network on Participatory Irrigation Management's (INPIM), farmer organizations in Pakistan have come up as an effective solution to stop water pilferage, effective management, policing, and owning their irrigation systems. It is praiseworthy that in the absence of an effective government supported mechanism, Pakistan farmers, empowered with rules to run their own irrigation systems, have found alternate ways to deal with problems that successive governments have failed to resolve in decades.

The current state of higher education in Balochistan is deplorable; characterized by lack of educational institutions, missing infrastructure and restricted access to educational facilities, either due to dispersed settlements or increasingly volatile security situation of the province. Presence of political student unions at universities, who perpetrate their political agendas, often through disruptive and violent behaviours, has further compromised the quality of educational services. In order to combat the increasingly violent tendencies observed in university students, Civil Society Network Loralai organized a series of seminars aimed at creating awareness about the importance of peaceful coexistence amongst university students. As a result of the awareness building campaign, the participating students unanimously decided to form a Students Advisory Council, comprising representatives from all youth wings that would be responsible for promoting peace and harmony amongst different political wings. The attending students, subsequently, conveyed their commitment amongst their peer groups to ensure mass acceptance of the advisory committee. Presently, all academic issues are being referred to the advisory council that is effectively addressing them through peaceful engagement and consensus building between different political factions.



35. Access to Clean Drinking Water for Desert Dwellers

Cholistan, the world's seventh largest desert, is spread over an area of 6.65 million acres across Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalnagar districts. With a population size of 1.5 million, Cholistan is home to the severest living conditions. During the scorching summers, temperatures rise above 52 degree Celsius. Coupled with a bare minimum annual rainfall ranging from 3 to 5 inches, the local inhabitants, in search of new sources of water and livelihood, are often forced to migrate to more inhabitable areas. For centuries, rainwater has been the mainstay for the people of Cholistan and their livestock, which is the main source of livelihood for the residents. Previously, there were only four sources of water in the area namely; i) Traditional Water Reserves (Kacha Toba), ii) Dam (Paka Toba), iii) Underground Water Reserves (Kund) and iv) Wells. The underground water being brackish was unfit for drinking purposes, leaving the inhabitants entirely dependent upon rainwater. The region would spring to life during rainy seasons when Tobas were replenished with much-needed fresh water. The water outlet from the tobas, was one and the same for the inhabitants as well as their livestock. This rendered the collected water unhygienic for human consumption. Moreover, the Tobas required regular cleaning and maintenance work, atleast once every three years. However, due to the negligence of concerned government departments, majority of the tobas have now become useless for the local community.

During 2004-05, Cholistan Development Authority (CDA) laid out two potable water supply lines, but due to non-payment of electricity bills to WAPDA by the district government, supply of electricity to the turbines was cut off, which subsequently stopped the supply of water to households in Cholistan.

Riaz Ahmed Baloch, President Al Sadiq Desert Welfare Organization (ASDWO), a partner organization, brought this issue to the notice of Civil Society Network (CSN) Bahawalpur, who after assessing the situation launched an advocacy campaign, for reviving the project that, due to mismanagement of government departments, was shelved by CDA. The first step of the campaign included initiation of a research study that would inform policy makers about the actual ground realities. The study was jointly undertaken by SPO, CSN Bahawalpur as well as the research department of Islamia University, Bahawalpur. As part of the study, out of the 300 households in UC Derawar, Cholistan, 100 households were surveyed. A documentary was made simultaneously, which provided visual evidence of the plight of the people of Cholistan. Both the research findings and video documentary were

then presented to the Assistant Commissioner Bahawalpur and other key stakeholders. 'Khuli Kacheris' were also organized wherein all stakeholders actively engaged in constructive dialogue to delve deeper into the issue.

The efforts of ASDWO bore fruit, when CDA resumed the supply of water to the households in UC Derawar. Presently, water supply to almost all of the 300 households in the UC has been reinstated. The quality of water being supplied is in accordance with international standards set by WHO; a vast improvement from the quality of water being previously consumed from 'Tobas'. As informed by the local residents, subsequent to the supply of safe drinking water, overall health of the community members has seen a marked improvement. The benefits are not, however, limited to improved health of the residents only. The area has also witnessed a decrease in livestock mortality owing to a corresponding decrease in water borne diseases. Quality and quantity of livestock by-products as well as yield from canal irrigated crops has also improved noticeably.

Observing a spike in cases of Hepatitis C being reported in the area, CSN Loralai conducted a survey in order to identify and assess the cause of this anomaly. Survey findings revealed a general lack of awareness among the masses and ineptness of laboratory staff, both government and private, in adhering to the standard blood transfusion procedures. The network devised a plan of action wherein awareness raising seminars and rallies were arranged in order to sensitize the masses about this disease and its preventive measures. Meetings with officials from health department and hepatitis control program were also arranged to ensure compliance to standard procedures in all laboratories. Resultantly, the health department notified all labs to conduct pre-hepatitis test prior to blood transfusions. The citizens have also been sensitized about the importance of hygienic transfusion procedures and are now demanding pre-test and use of disposable and hygienic injections while visiting healthcare facilities.



36. United We Stand !

The unprecedented torrential rain-fed floods in 2011 ripped across the country leaving in their wake destruction and mayhem. Sindh was the worst affected province with 16 districts severely affected. The low lying areas of Sindh were inundated in floodwaters which, according to some sources, displaced over 18 million people, washing away entire communities. The severity of the catastrophe pulled in many national and international humanitarian organizations for provision of relief and rescue services.

One such organization, Research Development Foundation (RDF) was tasked by an international donor agency for distribution of relief goods to the affected community members in District Hyderabad. The primary focus was to distribute items among all flood victims, ensuring equal distribution without any discrimination. The Chief Executive of RDF, Mr. Masood Mahesar was approached by the MNA of District Dadu, who tried to coerce Mr. Masood to put a halt to the distribution of relief goods and instead demanded that the items be handed over to him so that he could distribute them in his own district. When the chief executive refused to oblige, he was threatened by the MNA, but he remained resolute and did not give in to the demands of the MNA. Later that evening, five bandits broke into the CE's residence and abducted his elderly uncle. Hoping to intimidate Mr. Masood, and force him to change his mind, his uncle was tortured and finally returned home in battered shape. Mr. Masood, left with no other option, approached the police, however, instead of cooperating with the victim's family, the DPO, unwilling to go against the MNA, refused to register an FIR. Mr. Masood, however, did not give up and approached various NGOs working in the area, to generate support for his predicament. Some of the NGOs contacted, were partner organizations of SPO. They referred the matter to the district CSN, who had in its membership, a large number of influential community members. SPO Hyderabad's Regional Head; Mr. Mustafa Baloch, personally intervened and led the entire campaign.

Under his leadership, it was decided that as a first step, an SMS- based mass awareness campaign would be launched whereby the MNA's duplicity and negligence of the police officials would be widely circulated amongst the civil society in order to generate their support. This was to be followed by a press conference and a peaceful rally protesting this outright extortion by government officials. However, soon after circulation of news about this atrocity through SMS based campaign, the MNA, fearing reprisal and unwilling to face the consequences, fled the country. Later on, faced with public outcry, relatives of the MNA approached Mr. Masood for reconciliation

and settlement. The outraged civil society activists unanimously decided that unless the MNA himself publicly apologized to Mr. Masood as well as the flood victims, the protests against the MNA would continue. In what was a historic achievement, the MNA was forced to return to the country and, at a press conference held in the village, made to publicly apologize not only to the people he had indirectly tried to harm but to Mr. Masood in particular, for his unscrupulous behavior.

Twenty five year old Asma, belongs to Killi Badein; District Noushki, where, to this date, majority of the women are illiterate and unaware about their basic rights. Asma is one of the rare individuals, who broke the mold, and despite facing cumbersome obstacles, pursued her matriculation studies. To give voice to the concerns of women of her district, this self motivated proponent of women rights, joined SPO's umbrella networks, namely Civil Society Network (CSN) Noushki, where she got the opportunity to enhance her learning about various human rights standards. Witnessing the unending series of physical and psycho-social abuse, perpetuated against women of her community, Asma together with another member of CSN Noushki, formed a woman organization, namely 'Noushkhali Khawateen Taraqiati Tanzeem' that is striving to elevate the status of women of her village. Over the years, she has become one of the leading voices representing women of her area at various local and national platforms. Her struggle has not gone unaccounted for, as she has gained the respect of leading political parties of the province. Recognizing the clout that she wields within her community, a tremendous achievement for a young woman belonging to one of the most conservative areas of the country, members of Balochistan National Party, recently elected her as a member of their central committee. Asma is hopeful that through this platform, she will now be able to exert more influence in order to address issues facing women, not only of her village, but even those hailing from other parts of the province.



37. Diversity is a Strength

Vehari Civil Society Network (VCSN), established in 2008, has shown tremendous capacity in addressing issues of public interest in District Vehari. Prior to its inception, community based organizations were rampant in the area, however, due to their limited capacity, these organizations were struggling to provide recourse to the local residents who faced an array of issues ranging from lack of education facilities, proper sanitation, safe drinking water to environmental hazards. VCSN gave these organizations a common platform, through which they were able to collate their individual strengths to give effective voice to the concerns of the common man.

After its inception, VCSN carried out series of consultation meetings with community members to identify and prioritize governance and development issues prevalent in the district. The first and foremost problem highlighted was the presence of an oil depot in the heart of the city, responsible for heavy traffic jams, caused by illegal parking of heavy tanker-trucks. The oil depot was also a grave environmental hazard; a serious threat to the lives of innumerable residents living in adjoining areas. Grasping the severity of this issue, VCSN held meetings with the Chief Minister of Punjab, who was apprised of this perilous situation. Resultantly, the Chief Minister took immediate notice and, as a first step, issued orders for relocation of parking space of oil tankers to outside the city limits. Furthermore, members of VCSN were also given firm assurance that the oil depot would be shifted to the suburb areas at the earliest.

VCSN also has to its credit, establishment of a Girls' College in Ludan, a tehsil in District Vehari. The college was initially approved as a Boys' College by the Education Department Vehari. Prior to this, girl students had to travel 30 to 35 km daily, to access the nearest educational facility. VCSN, in collaboration with a local partner organization, launched a campaign to create awareness about the absence of educational institutions for girls of the area. Persistent efforts of VCSN yielded fruitful results as the education department, eventually agreed to convert the formerly boys' college into the first girls' college in Tehsil Ludan.

Water-borne diseases, caused due to contaminated underground water, which oftentimes result in untimely deaths, is another key concern for the residents of district Vehari. The root cause of water contamination is the appalling state of the local water and sanitation infrastructure; an area that remains the lowest priority of government authorities. This issue was brought home to members of VCSN when five local residents lost their lives after

consuming contaminated water. To address this issue, VCSN, with the support of prominent political party members, arranged a series of seminars, to create awareness about the hazardous effects of contaminated water and the need for a proper sanitation system. As a result of their ceaseless effort, VCSN was successful in lobbying with the Water and Development Authority for replacement of underground water supply pipelines. So far, 55,000 ft of water supply pipelines have been replaced successfully in UC-4 of District Vehari.



38. Bridging Social, Political and Religious Divide

In a bid to improve the governance and social environment, Sanjhok Civil Society Network (SCSN), a partner umbrella civil society entity, delved into a range of issues facing District Lodhran. The issue of higher arsenic concentration in underground water has been a major cause of hazardous waterborne diseases in the district. Therefore, in order to respond to this issue, SCSN designed an advocacy campaign, and to begin with, it collected and sent samples for laboratory testing. The laboratory reports were based to sensitize the local communities regarding the potential hazards, the underground water posed. This was followed by local community's activism demanding provision of safe drinking water from the government authorities. Besides approaching local line agencies in the government, a written appeal endorsed by the community, local journalists, lawyers' fraternity and civil society actors, was forwarded to the Chief Minister. SCSN's continued support to the community ultimately paid off the desired dividends, as Rs.9 billion for the installation of water filtration plants were released by the Chief Minister of Punjab. With SCSN's support, sites for the plants were identified. As of today, a total of eight plants benefitting over 1.2 million local residents have been installed.

Christian Farmer Development Organization (CFDO) is an active member of SCSN, working for the protection of the rights of minority communities in District Lodhran. CFDO, by utilizing the diverse network offered by SCSN, has been quite successful in resolving range of community disputes. One such instance was that of a land dispute between Aslam, a Muslim community member and David, a Christian community member. David entered into an agreement with Aslam to sell 4 kanals of land for Rs. 120,000, for which Aslam paid an advance of Rs. 50,000, as token money. However, Aslam did not pay the remaining amount, and instead filed a petition against David, claiming breach of contract, on the grounds that David had failed to transfer the land in his name, despite receiving full payment. The matter was brought to the notice of CFDO, who in collaboration with SCSN, formed a local committee comprising representatives from both the communities, in a bid to resolve the issue amicably. This arbitrary committee requested both the parties to bring forth evidences justifying their respective claims. While David was successful in producing a witness testifying in his favor, Aslam, on the other hand, was unable to bring forth any such evidences. After due consideration, wherein evidences and hearings of both the parties were deliberated upon, the committee gave the decision in favor of David, following which he was

able to regain possession of his land. Moreover, Aslam was given fair warning to refrain from such misdemeanors in future or else face severe repercussions from the community. Seeing no recourse, Aslam was forced to abide by the committee's decision, and consequently, withdrew the suit filed against David from the court of law.

In another instance, CFDO was successful in resolving a long-standing water dispute between Muslim and Christian communities of District Lodhran. A tube-well was installed by a Christian community member, which was the main source of water for both the communities. Over the years, due to diminishing flow of water, the tube-well was no longer sufficient to meet the needs of both communities. The situation turned grave when some miscreants from the Muslim community cut-off water supply to the Church and Christian graveyard, with further threats to cut off supply of water to their households as well. Matters escalated towards the worse, when members of both communities took up arms against each other. CFDO requested members of SCSN to intervene immediately before the situation blew out of proportion. SCSN, subsequently, organized a dialogue between religious leaders of both the communities where they were urged to air out their grievances. As a result, not only was the water supply to the Church and Christian graveyard reinstated but both the communities were also successful in devising strategies for equal distribution of water resources for future use.



39. Combating Consumer Rights Violation

In the absence of an effective state supported consumer protection mechanism, consumers at large are left at the mercy of an often self-centric business community and local mafia, who pursue the capitalist agenda with a myopic zeal, aimed at maximizing personal gains at the expense of the consumers. The situation is worse in economically disadvantaged areas such as D.I. Khan where there are severe gaps in supply and demand, coupled with lack of awareness about consumer rights. Daman Civil Society Network (DCSN) D.I. Khan, to promote fair trade in the region, launched an awareness campaign aimed at educating the citizens, business community and concerned government departments about their rights and obligations. Following the campaign, the sensitized community formed a Price Review Committee (PRC), comprising representatives from District Food Department, traders, political party representatives and local informal leadership, to act as a price control body by fostering an equitable and fair marketplace. PRC has proved to be quite effective in its desired intent. On-spot inspections and market research to assess unjustified price variations have brought forth numerous cases of consumer rights violation, which were duly reported to the local Price Control Magistrate. On the behest of PRC, the magistrate conducted detailed inquiries into the reported cases, and those proved to be guilty were penalized.