Pakistan Youth Initiative (PYI) 2
Engaging Youth for Building Community Resilience and Promoting Social Cohesion

Outcomes:
Volunteer personal development: More than 200 youth volunteers from Rawalpindi/ Islamabad developed their skills, knowledge and understanding to engage with communities to promote peace, resilience and social cohesion.
Cross cultural Learning: Youth from one part of country have opportunity to meet their peers from other part of country which enables cross cultural learning for national integration and harmony.
Youth takes action: Motivated youth groups to commit their time and effort to involve on community level dispute resolution and developing resilience.
Active citizens: The long term impact of the project is youth and community members becoming active citizens with clear leadership skills and development awareness and increased sense of responsibility.

Project Summary:
The project is implemented in two regions of Pakistan that are Islamabad/Rawalpindi and Multan.
The project aims to mobilizing the youth for promoting peace and social cohesion for which 36 community youth volunteers/master trainers were engaged who were underwent in 10 days capacity building training on mediation, dialogue, dispute resolution, social accountability, social inclusion & gender and resilience approaches. The purpose of training was to capacitate them as active citizens for promoting resilience and social cohesion in their own and host communities. The 36 youth volunteer master trainer's composition was, 6 youth volunteers from Islamabad/Rawalpindi and 12 from Multan as host volunteers and 18 youth volunteers from other parts of Pakistan paired with them having equal proportion of male and female.
The initiative included youth volunteer living in the host homes, which promotes cross cultural experience and enable peer to peer learning. After the capacity building training the youth volunteer master trainers were divided in 6 groups of 6 member each, amongst which 4 groups were based at Multan and 2 groups based at Rawalpindi/Islamabad. These master trainers were placed at 2 regions to implement social action plans promoting resilience, peace and cohesion the respective communities for a period of 3 months. Apart from implementing social action plans the youth volunteer/master trainer further identified and trained 300 volunteer at the community level on community resilience and social cohesion targeting 200 volunteers at Multan and 100 at Rawalpindi/Islamabad. During the project Punjab Emergency Service Rescue 1122 provided support on training community youth volunteers for better preparedness to natural disasters and enhancing community level resilience.
After the completion of action plans youth came together and presented the successes and lessons learnt from their action plans in a one day reflection workshop. This enabled youth in critical thinking on what went well and what needs to be improved for future. The reflection also enables to document case studies and strategies for future improvement in programme implementation.
District level dialogue was also organized which involved identifying issues around youth participation and engagement, key disputes in the society and mechanism of support available to address these issues.
A training for 50 university youth volunteers was also arranged in Islamabad for sensitizing youth volunteers on SDGs, social cohesion, resilience and social accountability and mobilizing support for youth volunteering.
During the project implementation youth volunteers were supported by National Volunteers (Project Supervisors) who ensured the learning of exchange visit, active citizenship trainings and SAP implementation.
Recruitment of volunteers:
For the recruitment of youth volunteers two expo’s were arranged in which 247 candidates appeared for interviews and 18 Community Youth Facilitators (CYF) were selected for the exchange program having equitable representation from male and females.

Activities Conducted:

Training of Trainers on active citizenship community resilience and social cohesion for youth volunteers:
10 days Training of Trainers on “Developing Community Resilience & Building Social Cohesion” was conducted for the capacity building of 36 Community Youth Facilitators (CYFs) as a part of project from December 04 to 13, 2018. The objectives of the training was to build the capacity of CYFs focusing on training skills, developing understanding enthusiasm about volunteerism among the CYFs and making them able to learn about developing and implementing social action projects in their assigned union councils.

Placement of youth volunteers at Host homes and communities:
In order to ensure cultural diversity and social cohesion within community, 18 volunteers were identified from Rawalpindi/Islamabad. Out of these volunteers, 12 were chosen for placement in Multan and 6 were chosen as hosts for volunteers in Rawalpindi. Pairing was made on basis of compatibility seen in training conducted earlier.

Identification & training of community youth on resilience and social cohesion:
Trained Community Youth Facilitators (CYFs) identified 100 youth from their respective UCs to sensitize them on to take forward the role as active citizen and to transform communities level disputes, build youth skills for community engagement, develop resilience and promote social cohesion. 10 youth were selected each from 5 UCs of Rawalpindi and 5 of Islamabad. 4 batches of training were conducted. To support the process of community level trainings a tool kit was developed which was used by community youth facilitators/master trainers. The community resilience part of the training was supported by Punjab Emergency Service Rescue 1122 (Community safety wing).
Activities Conducted:

**Action Plans:**
Two Social Action Plans (SAP’s) implemented by CYF’s with support of national and community volunteer in their respective union councils. Each group had 6 members having a lead and Co-lead. Group’s formation included equitable representation from male and females. Two SAPs were made and shared with VSO. After approval from VSO, SAPs were implemented in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. One Sap focused on “Providing access to education for out of school children” while other was based on “Promoting safe and hygienic environment by raising awareness on solid waste disposal”.

**Connecting of youth with stakeholders and creating support platforms:**
The program implemented networking activities which helped youth to network with different stakeholders at different levels. Youth were connected at community level to individual stakeholders for mentoring coaching and seeking support in their actions. They were connected to CSOs, public representatives and governments at institutional level. Community Support Groups (CSGs) were formed in each UC and their meetings were conducted by CYFs. These CSGs not only supported collective actions at community level but also enabled advocacy at policy level. This platform also mobilized community support around youth issues to enable youth to take necessary action.

**Collaboration with universities at Islamabad/Rawalpindi:**
To deepen the impact of VSO’s youth engagements more stakeholder and partners were engaged which includes partnership with Federal Urdu University at Islamabad. 51 youth from this university were sensitized and trained, in a 2 days session, on resilience, social cohesion, social accountability including SDG monitoring and social inclusion and gender.

**Community and Policy Dialogues:**
To promote social cohesion in communities requires not only bringing changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors but also the identification of issues causing disintegration and conflict in the society is of key importance. For this purpose, 2 community level dialogues were organized for the process of identification of issues and mobilizing support for action. The issues highlighted from community dialogues were taken forward for dialogues sessions at district level in Rawalpindi. The recommendation from all these dialogues helped stronger advocacy on youth issues especially regarding recognition of their role as active member of community. The dialogue is also expected to feed into advocacy for policies impacting youth so that they are developed in an inclusive and participatory manner with inclusion of relevant stakeholders.

**Reflections & Learning:**
At the end of implementation of actions plans, one day reflection event has been organized on 18th March, 2019. In this event, youth volunteers will present the successes and lessons learned from their action plans. This would not only aid youth in critical thinking but will also enable to document case studies and strategies for future improvement in program implementation. Both SAPs would be elaborated by CYFs. Apart from that, parents are also invited for sharing their