

# STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF YOUTH AND MOTHERS/WOMEN FOR PEACE BUILDING AND SOCIAL COHESION



## Small Grants (SG) Project assigned to TOLANA Members 'Inclusion of peace education in government schools curricula through a study in District Charsadda'

SG-4

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**Project Duration:** 1st Jan-15th Feb, 2016

**Target Area:** District Charsadda

### **Beneficiaries:**

Direct: 265 including School Teachers, Parents, Local elected representatives, Education Department, media personnel, Religious/community influential, Students.  
In-direct: 1325 through IEC material dissemination

### **About PAIMAN:**

PAIMAN started work in 2008 on an initiative "Let's Live in Peace" in the most affected region with the objective to empower communities to counter violent extremism in the region. PAIMAN trained a large number of selected youth and mothers (Women) as peace activists to bring a positive change at grass root level under different projects. These trained peace practitioners are called "TOLANA". TOLANA is a Pushto word which means "Together". It means group or collection of likeminded volunteers and activist for collective initiatives to bring positive change in society through addressing various aspects of prevalent violent extremism. The capacity of TOLANA members has been built as an ongoing process.

### **Background:**

It has been observed with grave concern that for the last two decades violent extremism has spread and it is largely affecting our lives badly. There is constant fear, religion based hatred among communities, intolerance, destruction of human values e.t.c. The overall impact of this whole phenomena has damaged the social fabric of communities and diversity (which adds richness to culture) has lost its essence. Specifically our youth is confused and under great mental stress. They seem to have lost their ability to distinguish between right and wrong, in other words they seem to be lacking proper guidance. Young children on the other hand have developed serious psychological problems which are not only affecting their growth but also affecting their education. Parents of such children are also facing different social and economic issues at community level. It is important to counter violent extremism in society if we want to have a healthy, vibrant and tolerant society which values diversity as an asset. Peace Research was a small

grants project implemented in District Charsadda with financial aid of PAIMAN Alumni Trust/ICAN. The main objective of the project was to conduct a study in order to gauge the need for inclusion of peace education in school/college as part of the curricula and to involve local councilors, media and education department in promoting peace education to address the menace of violent extremism.

### **Project Goal**

Research Study for Inclusion of peace education in government school's curricula in district Charsadda.

### **Project Objectives**

- To conduct a research for inclusion of peace education in school/college as part of the curricula.
- To involve local councilors, media and education department in promoting peace education to address the menace of violent extremism.

## Activities

- Survey questionnaire (Qualitative and Quantitative) for the research was designed after consultation with different stakeholders.
- The Questionnaire was pre-tested with a small sample and required changes were made to meet the requirement of the study.
- The methodology for the research was decided and a sample size for the study was chosen.
- Arrangement of venues for conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) & Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were made along with logistic arrangements.

## Target Audience of the Research:

### Quantitative

The quantitative survey was conducted and the entered data was analyzed. For this survey random sampling was done and respondents were from different walks of life.

### Qualitative

For the qualitative research key informant interviews and Focus Group Discussions were conducted. The respondents of the research included the following;

- Key Informants Interviews were conducted with school teachers (Male/Female separately).
- Key informants interviews were conducted with parents and their view points were recorded.
- Local elected representatives who are the most dominant force in the society since the local government elections 2015, therefore their opinion is important. Thus separate interviews were conducted with them for getting their views on the issue.
- Women being an integral part of the society cannot be over looked. The women's voice holds significant weightage as she is equally impacted by violent extremism. Hence women were also included in research as prime respondent.
- The importance of the Education Department cannot be denied if the initiative revolves around striving for inclusion of peace education in the school curricula. Interviews were planned and conducted with the education department for getting their input and recording their feedback on the subject matter.
- Media plays a vital role and has always been very

instrumental in influencing the views of the civilians in traditional societies, thus media personnel were also included in the said research.

- District Charsadda is a traditional society, where half a dozen political heads of different political parties are residing. It is home to different Religious leaders/activists and community influential, and in the current scenario these people cannot be ignored and their opinions hold immense weightage. These leaders have a large following in their respective areas and their word is considered the final word in most cases. Keeping this in mind the religious leaders/activists and community influential were also interviewed and their opinion regarding inclusion of peace education was also taken into account.
- Students studying in educational institutions were included in the research as they are the ones who are directly affected by the current situation more than any other group. Besides their opinion was considered for inclusion of peace education in the curricula important or not.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were also conducted with different stakeholders at the district level, like CBOs, Government officials, Education Department, religious Ulamas, parents, students, and civil society members.

S.n	Activities	Target	Remarks
1	Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	8	Conducted
2	Key Informant Interview (KII)	12	
3	Quantitative survey	40	

## Some Major Research Findings:

The research illustrated that different respondents understand peace education differently as per their own contexts. The responses varied, because peace education was perceived by some as a lesson on living in harmony with others, while some considered it to be a character building exercise. There were a significant number of respondents according to whom peace education is a tool for creating a peaceful environment for everyone and for some it was a way to help people



to resolve their problem without conflict. The overall gist of the finding leads to a perception that peace education results in a utopia where happiness is all around and no one fears the other. Another important aspect of the research tried to gauge what kind of conflicts can acquisition of peace education respond to. Different views were put forth that if peace education was included in the school curriculum many conflicting issues that have arisen today would not have reached alarming stage. Thus inclusion of peace education in school curriculum will affect the mind sets of our future generations and enable them to reflect and foresee all issues which may potentially affect and disturb the socio cultural dynamic of their communities and take timely action to prevent adverse situation.



## Challenges

- The traditional society of Charsadda especially women didn't want to commit their view points openly. People were mostly reluctant to discuss peace and security issues out of fear.
- There was a general fear and frustration in the minds of the people regarding peace and security, and they believed that it was the government's duty to take steps to address the issue of violent extremism.
- The security situation in the district was also a big challenge faced while conducting the research.





## Recommendations:

Following recommendations came from the community to address violent extremism through peace education:

- Text Books Boards should define peace education in the specific socio-cultural and security context of Pakistan as Peace Education programs around the world have different natures.
- Federal as well as provincial governments should take necessary steps to include peace education in the curriculum of schools, colleges and universities.
- The education departments and Federal Government should also focus on including peace educations in Madrassas curriculum too. This should include the teachings of Islam that leads to positive and sustainable peace.
- Government should develop mechanisms to include peace education in the education curriculum of both teacher's training diplomas and degrees like PTC, CT, B.Ed and M.Ed.

## Conclusion:

After conducting the study, it was analyzed that communities are aware of their problems which have resulted due to violent extremism. They strongly believe that peace education should be included in our educational curriculum so that our children and our youth can learn the values of peace, tolerance and social cohesion at an early stage of their life.



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