

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



Small Grant (SG) Project assigned to TOLANA Members

## 'Promotion and inclusion of peace education in government school's curricula through advocacy and community mobilization in district Charsadda'

SG-8

**TOLANA Members:** Sakina Durrani (Group Leader),

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

**Target Area:** District Charsadda

**Beneficiaries:**

**Direct:** 1,050 including students, teachers, community influential/religious leaders, Government officials, local councillors and community elders.

**In-direct:** 5,000 parents of students and other community members.

### 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.

### Project Background:

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA regions of Pakistan have been highly affected by violent extremism. This has resulted in huge physical, human, intellectual, psychological and economic loss. Due to strengthening of extremist approach in society, the basic elements of a peaceful society like tolerance, interfaith harmony, mutual respect have diminished and promoted religious extremism and political and economic instability in society.

Charsadda district, thirty kilometer away from the provincial headquarter Peshawar, was at a time a calm and prosperous region which advanced in education. Its per capita income was much higher than that of other districts. But ever since it became a target of violent extremism, it has faced huge losses. When PAIMAN announced its small grants under ICAN project, a women's volunteer group under the leadership of Ms. Sakina proposed '**Promotion and inclusion of peace education in government schools curricula through Advocacy and community mobilization in district Charsadda**'.

This project proposed that in the youth tolerance, interfaith

harmony, avoiding hate speech can only be promoted if peace education is included in the curriculum. Apart from that voices should be raised against intolerance and hate speech. The proposal after review was selected and awarded a grant to women's group from Charsadda and the project was to be implemented in Charsadda. This project goal was to encourage the teachers and students to demand for inclusion of peace education in the curricula of their educational institutions.

### Project Goal

"Promotion and inclusion of peace education in government school's curricula through advocacy and community engagements at district Charsadda"

### Project Objectives

- To create awareness among communities (teachers, elected members and students) about the importance of peace education.
- To build capacities of communities to raise voice for inclusion of peace education in curriculum in govt. schools.

- To organize advocacy campaign at district level with stakeholders to influence policy makers for inclusion of peace education in curriculum.

#### Activities:

- Three (3) capacity building sessions with communities, elected councilors and school teachers on how to raise their voices against intolerance and hate speech along with connotations which convey negative messages.
- Eight (8) awareness raising sessions at school level with students/ teachers on importance of peace education.
- One (1) seminar at district level with communities, elected members, school teachers, parents, CSO/CBO members, community influential/ religious leaders/ activists and media personnel for mass awareness on impact of intolerance and hate speech.

This was a challenging project because it was a pilot effort for a major change. The project can be replicated in future with increased coverage for more influence on policy makers toward enrichment of syllabus.

#### Summary of Activities:

| S. No | Activities                             | Participants |
|-------|--|--------------|
| 1     | Govt. Middle School Bosa Khel          | 120          |
| 2     | Govt. Sintenental girls high school    | 70           |
| 3     | Govt. Sintenental girls high school -2 | 75           |
| 4     | Govt. Middle school Khan Khel          | 150          |
| 5     | Govt. School Barbara                   | 120          |
| 6     | Mudrassa Khadija tul Kubra             | 105          |
| 7     | Govt. school Ibrahim zai -1            | 115          |
| 8     | Govt. school zai -2                    | 85           |
| 9     | Islamabaad village (community)         | 42           |
| 10    | Rajjar-1 compound (community)          | 46           |
| 11    | Utmanzai (community)                   | 44           |
| 12    | District meeting                       | 42           |



#### Other Activities:

- Coordination with stakeholders involved in projects was an important activity. This coordination was done with Principals of educational and religious institutes and local councilors.
- Arrangement of meeting venue, coordination with participants and logistic arrangement were also important tasks which were accomplished with the help of staff members of PAIMAN Trust in district Charsadda.
- Agenda's for meetings were prepared by the group in consultation with PAIMAN staff.
- Coordination was done with education department for conducting awareness sessions in different schools.

#### Activities Details:

##### • Sessions with students and teachers:

In 8 sessions including one sports gala about 860 students and teachers participated. In these sessions the trainers discussed the importance of peace and told students about tolerance being an effective tool against extremism. The trainers focused on countering extremism through non violent ways.

During these sessions since students were the target audience therefore the message of peace and harmony was conveyed in such a manner so as to affect their sensitivities. They were given examples of their own surroundings as to how they studied in the same class & the same school in spite of the fact they came from different religion, sects or ethnicities.

They were told that diversity should be valued and not criticized as all are equal in the eyes of God Almighty. These values can be attained if such courses are included in the school curriculum which advocate peace.

The sessions were well received by teachers and students and they expressed their desire to have peace education as part of their curriculum.





A teacher on this occasion shared, ***"Since children in school are in their formative years, therefore having peace education as part of the curricula will definitely be instrumental in inculcating values of tolerance, empathy, acceptance, accommodation and co-existence in them at a very young age".***

inclusion of peace education in school curriculum. The advocacy campaign can be strengthened if such projects are scaled up with larger TOLANA teams.

The TOLANA members were well trained to do the job, but still need more capacity to shape the advocacy campaign to bear more effective results. The present learning can be a base for further advancements.

### Voices of Community:

Lady councilors commented that TOLANA members were very courageous. They further said that, 'Now we feel that we as representatives at local level should make some efforts. They also expressed their ambition to work for peace and offered their services to work with TOLANA members in the area. Lady councilor Taj bibi told that she along with other members of the area will propose to government to initiate more of such capacity building programs. She also ensured that, 'We will work and speak for the inclusion of peace education in the school curriculum because it will be a foundation stone for positive change'.

Teachers admired the TOLANA effort and wished to continue such session in schools. Ms. Rahima from Madrassa told that it was quite a novel approach and definitely the syllabus of religious institutes must focus on peace education.

During community session Ms. Rabia shared that People don't have any idea as to how they can participate and play an active role in bringing back peace to the region, but these sessions can direct them onto the path of peace. She also added that people consider that peace and security are the sole responsibility of the law enforcement agencies, but after these sessions we know what role we can play as members of our communities to build peace and harmony in our ranks.



### Pictorial view:



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