

Dear Readers,

Our September 2016, newsletter provides glimpse of the interactive activities and events undertaken by our team to promote peace education and social accountability in Pakistan. We have made it our prime goal to bridge the gap between public and authorities, especially facilitating youth to strive for a sustainable development goals. Enjoy reading!

### Activities undertaken during the month

#### School Council Convention in PP-5, Rawalpindi

Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) in collaboration of Alif Ailan organized a School Council's Convention with the title 'Waldain Ki Awaz' to strengthen the role of parents and members of school councils in public schools of PP-5. The basis of the convention was the surveys conducted by the Youth Ambassadors in 100 public schools of PP-5 questioning the SMC members about the conditions of the schools and problems faced by them. The convention was presided by significant people in education sector including the Chairman Punjab Education Foundation Mr. Qamar-ul-Islam Raja (Member Provincial Assembly PP-5), and Qazi Zahoor-ul-Haq Executive District Officer (Education), along with the welcome note from the Principal Miss Nabila Noreen. Among these people the attendees were the members of school councils of schools visited, District education Officers and the local notables. The event was focused on discussing the role of members of student councils and the issues faced by them. The discussion part included the address of the honorable guests and the CEO Syed Kausar Abbas which shed light on importance of the SMC's and the reforms that can be brought to the system to facilitate students and committee members. The enthusiasm of the council members was appreciated and their part for betterment of the schools was said to be the basis on which schools were running. Qamar-ul-Islam chairing the event as the chief guest was of view that, Punjab government was making efforts for promoting education and the School Councils had been made functional across the province.



Photo: A Glimpse of the event where the stakeholders including member provincial assembly Qamar-ul-Islam Raja and EDO Education Rawalpindi are present.

### Media Coverage:

- <http://pakobserver.net/pef-educating-2-1-million-drop-out-students-chairman/>
- <http://nation.com.pk/islamabad/04-Sep-2016/pef-educating-2-1m-drop-out-students-says-chairman>
- <http://news.anoat.com/link/pk/2016090117077/nation.com.pk/islamabad/04-Sep-2016/pef-educating-2-1m-drop-out-students-says-chairman>
- <http://e.jang.com.pk/09-05-2016/pindi/pic.asp?picname=44.gif>
- [http://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1103729250&Issue=NP\\_ISB&Date=20160905](http://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1103729250&Issue=NP_ISB&Date=20160905)
- [http://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1103729250&Issue=NP\\_ISB&Date=20160905](http://www.express.com.pk/epaper/PoPupwindow.aspx?newsID=1103729250&Issue=NP_ISB&Date=20160905)
- <http://e.jang.com.pk/09-05-2016/pindi/pic.asp?picname=44.gif>

## A Step towards ending “Early Child Marriages” in Pakistan

SSDO in collaboration of Swiss Embassy and Aizan Development Foundation organized awareness seminars and workshops on Early Child Marriages in three districts of Punjab including district Rawalpindi, Lahore and Toba Tek Singh. The seminars focused on mass awareness about Early child Marriages to reach out to relevant, vulnerable individuals and educate them on the disadvantages of getting their children married in an early marriage. The seminar intended to provide a flow of information on the legal and ethical boundaries of early marriages and present case studies on how they can affect innocent lives.

The seminars were organized in different localities starting from Rawalpindi, Lahore and Toba Tek Singh. The seminars were attended by large number of child activists, legal practitioners, media, civil society and political stake holders of the districts. These seminars will further planned to be arranged in other big cities of Punjab including Multan, Bahawalpur, Muzzafargarh, Rahim Yar Khan, Chiniot and Faisalabad.



*Photo: A Glimpse of the event where Panelists of Seminar Barrister Fawad Chaudhry (Anchor), Beenish Saleem (Anchor Capital TV), Rana Zia President Lahore High Court Bar, Ms. Sadia Sohail Member Punjab Assembly, Uzma Nawaz Advocate, Makhdoom Waseem Qureshi (Chairman PGI), Shehnila Naz (ADF)*

### Media Coverage:

- <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/148713-Union-council-structurebe-strengthened-to-control-underage-marriages>
- <http://www.pakistangendernews.org/union-council-structure-strengthened-control-underage-marriages/>
- <http://e.jang.com.pk/09-05-2016/pindi/pic.asp?picname=44.gif>

## Informal Interactive Discussion: Learning RTI & Anti-Corruption Tools

We have realized that reaching out and providing awareness to youth is best possible in a casual and interactive environment. To achieve this purpose, SSDO arranged an informal meeting with youth (volunteers) in F-9 Park, Islamabad over a cup of tea. The participants were informed about the Right to Information laws of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and issues of corruption and coping them were discussed over tea. Besides this it was agreed to continue arranging such informal discussions on various social issues; impacting and effecting people in general and hampering the development in particular.



## Kashmir Peace Vigil

In the wake of recent events and human rights violations in Kashmir, Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) in collaboration with Chanan Development Association (CDA), Young Parliamentarians Forum of National Assembly and Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) organized a 'Kashmir Peace Vigil' to show solidarity with the victims of Kashmir. Over 500 young activists across Pakistan attended the walk and raised demand for peace in Kashmir.

### Media Coverage:

- <http://www.pakistanpoint.com/en/pakistan/news/youth-asked-to-set-up-digital-connection-with-37638.html>

## National Youth Peace Festival

A three days National Youth Peace festival was organized in collaboration with Chanan Development Association (CDA), Young Parliamentarians Forum of National Assembly and Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services (PIPS) in National Library, Islamabad. The conference brought together about 550 young leaders across Pakistan to enlighten them on the theme "Youth for Peace & Countering Violent Extremism". The different sessions with expert panelists were arranged to take opinion on how peace and tolerance can be ensured in all fields of life. The electronic and print media provided full coverage of the festival. The festival was divided in six sessions, mentioned as under;

- National Action Plan and Pakistan CVE Initiatives
- Online and Offline Spaces for Civil Society and Dialogue
- Sustainable Development Goals and Vision 2025
- Interfaith Harmony and Countering Hate Speech
- South Asia Peace Initiatives (SAPI)
- Kashmir: An Unfinished Agenda





### Media Coverage:

- <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/154021-More-than-500-young-people-take-part>
- <http://tribune.com.pk/story/956932/young-guns-600-delegates-to-take-part-in-youth-peace-festival/>
- <http://enewspaper.com.pk/over-500-youngsters-attend-youth-peace-festival/>
- <http://pakistanvoices.com/talkshow/Pakistan-holds-3rd-National-Youth-Peace-Festival/93107/32>
- <http://www.theeducationist.com.pk/7th-national-youth-peace-festival-2016/>
- <http://www.pakistanpoint.com/en/pakistan/news/islamabad-7th-national-youth-peace-festival-36772.html>
- <http://dailytimes.com.pk/islamabad/29-Sep-16/national-youth-peace-festival-kicks-off>
- <http://www.ypf.org.pk/press-release/collaboration-ghanan-development-association-%E2%80%9C6th-national-youth-peace-festival-2015%E2%80%9D>
- <http://lahoreworld.com/tag/national-youth-peace-festival/>

### Jawab Dahi Mera Haq Campaign (Endorsements)

Our campaign Jawab Dahi Mera Haq, which was started some few months back and which aimed at making our elected representatives, government officials to account on the issues of public interest. The campaign is very successful till date as many faces from government, political parties, and celebrities have endorsed it. To name but a few who endorsed the campaign includes; Senator Javed Abbassi, Ibrar-ul-Haq (Singer), Jamal Shah (actor/artist), Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry (Minister CAD), 18 young leaders of GOZest, Senator Rehman Malik, Arif Abbasi (Member Punjab Assembly), Blair Glencorse (Head of Accountability Lab), Rubina Khalid (Senator), Taranjeet Singh (actor and director), Ali Muhammad Khan (MNA), Justice Ali Nawaz Chohan (Chairman Human Rights Commission of Pakistan), Kaleemullah Khan (Commissioner RTI- KPK) and Mukhtar Ahmed Ali (Commissioner RTI- Punjab)