

Youth Political Leadership Program (YPLP) 21st Quarterly Progress Report

July 2024 – Oct 2024



Young women leaders discussing issues and challenges for women leaders in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during a group work session.

Association for Behaviour and Knowledge Transformation (ABKT)

www.abktpakistan.org

Basic Information:

Project Title: Support Youth Political Leadership in Pakistan

Project Target Area: Three Districts (Lower Dir, Upper Dir and Malakand)

Project Target Group: Youth (Emerging Emerging Political Leaders)

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Dates covered by this report			Report Submission Date		
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Project Summery:

Through this project, ABKT aims to create a critical mass of 30 youth leaders from 5 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan where youth are vulnerable to radicalization in the face of militancy and corruption. Giving them a platform to understand and engage in democratic processes, this project will train and support the 30 youth leaders in organizing a campaign around a political issue that affects their community, bringing them together in an important space of civic engagement.

Accomplished Activities during the 21st Quarter (July 2024 – October 2024) of the project:

1. Local consultation with grassroots young women activists/leaders:

Both online and in-person consultations were organized with around 30 grassroots young women activists/leaders to assess the challenges they face during their work and how their needs for leadership development skills can be addressed during the leadership development training workshop. The majority of the young women expressed a high interest in attending such capacity-building programs. It is very challenging for us to accommodate only 15 young women leaders as we are receiving numerous requests from many young women leaders who are willing to join this leadership capacity-building program. However, we will include all these potential women in our list and engage them in future cohorts.



2. Selection of 15 promising young women leaders across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Newly Merged Districts:

The selection process for promising young women leaders across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Newly Merged Districts began with both longlisting and shortlisting candidates who demonstrate a strong commitment to creating a conducive environment and opportunities for women in conflict-affected regions. The project support committee also nominated additional candidates, resulting in a total of 48 applications.

With the project target set to train a limited group of 15 young women leaders, we are making concerted efforts to ensure representation from all regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Newly Merged Districts. This approach aims to empower these women leaders to carry forward the network and insights gained and share them with more young women in their respective areas. By doing so, we hope to facilitate their participation in this project and foster their active engagement in the network we intend to establish. After careful consideration, we selected 16 young women from the 48 applicants.

3. Development of Toolkit for HRDs – Leadership skills for Capacity building:

Following the procurement policy and procedures, an expert was hired to develop a toolkit for Young Women Leaders (YWLs) on leadership development skills training. The workshop covered the following topics:

1. **History of Feminist and Women’s Movements in Pakistan:** Challenges, gaps, and achievements.
2. **Introduction to the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda.**
3. **Gender-Sensitive Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Strategies.**
4. **Understanding Gender-Based Violence:** Strategies for prevention and response.
5. **Intersectionality:** Exploring the interconnected nature of gender with other identities, such as ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic status.
6. **Advocacy and Lobbying Techniques for Policy Change.**
7. **Building Resilience in the Face of Adversity:** Coping mechanisms and community support networks.
8. **Self-Care:** Including trauma healing.
9. **Media Literacy and Strategic Communication for Effective Messaging.**
10. **Networking and Resource Mobilization for Women-Led Initiatives.**

The toolkit was used in a four-day residential training held in Islamabad. Feedback was compiled based on reviews from each session's resource person and shared with the expert to incorporate changes into the toolkit and produce a final document. This toolkit is an asset and will be regularly used in all upcoming training sessions for youth leadership development in Pakistan.

4. Six potential resource persons were identified and selected for the Young Feminist Leadership Development Workshop, keeping in mind the aims and objectives of the training. They were thoroughly briefed on their session objectives and expected outcomes and were provided with the training toolkit for guidance. Each resource person developed a PowerPoint presentation tailored to their specific session and supplied reference materials where required. They also incorporated various activities and exercises to make their sessions more interactive and

participatory, ensuring that the participants could engage actively and benefit from practical learning experiences.



Dr. Aisha Anees Malik, PhD & MPhil (University of Cambridge); MBA (FJWU), Director / Associate Professor (Tenured), Centre of Excellence in Gender Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad delivering a session during the four-day workshop.



Ms. Sidra Saeed, Program Manager at FES Islamabad delivering a session during the four-day workshop.



Ms. Farzana Ali, Bureau Chief at AJJ TV, delivered a session during the training.



Ms. Amanda (Mandy) DeSadeleer, First Secretary of Political & Public Affairs at the Canadian Embassy in Pakistan, also joined a session during the training and had a productive and interactive conversation with all participants.



During the meetup session with inspiring women leaders at the training, three inspiring women leaders joined and shared their experiences, challenges, and successes while working in media and advocating for the rights of ethnic and indigenous communities.



Ms. Aysa Sujaat, Founder Girls for Girls Paksitan deliering an online session about girls empowerment

5. Capacity building Training Workshop:

The key intervention of the Young Women Leadership Development Program (YWLDP) was a four-day residential training workshop titled **“Young Women Leadership Development Course.”** The training took place at Mera Man in Islamabad and was attended by 16 inspiring young women from 10 districts, including Chitral, Malakand, Abbottabad, Kohat, Peshawar, Orakzai, Swabi, Swat, Haripur, and Mardan. The participants enthusiastically engaged in the training, which aimed to equip them with the necessary tools and knowledge to understand their rights, strengthen their agency, and effectively advocate for women's empowerment.

The Young Women Feminist Leadership Course provided comprehensive training that focused on civil society coalition building, understanding personal rights, and empowering women and girls. The course also emphasized alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Participants were involved in discussions and activities that helped them develop skills in these areas.







During the training, facilitators emphasized the importance of understanding provincial dynamics, undertaking regional analyses, and engaging in cross-border strategizing to foster societal vitality, political stability, and lasting peace. All participants recognized the need to establish a vibrant network of young feminist leaders dedicated to driving social and political change at the provincial level, with plans to expand this network nationally and regionally in the coming years.

Participants expressed that the four-day residential capacity-building workshop provided them with valuable insights, skills, and resources. The active participation of these 16 young women leaders from the districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) not only benefited them personally but also contributed to the collective empowerment of women in Pakistan.

On the last day, all the participants shared their detailed feedback and were very determined to utilize the tools and knowledge they gained from this training. They were hopeful that it would help them maximize the impact of their work in their communities. They committed to visiting each other's work in their communities and building stronger connections in the best interest of their cause to contribute to an equal and just society.



Ms. Rukshanda Naz, KP's ombudsperson delivered an online session about the Anti-Harassment Act and later concluded the training workshop.

6. Formation of Young Women Leaders Network:

During the residential training, all participants were quite keen and had many conversations during training sessions, lunch breaks, and dinner about the need to establish a vibrant network of young feminist leaders dedicated to driving social and political change at the provincial level, with plans to expand this network nationally and regionally in the coming years. On the last day, all the participants jointly agreed and established the **KP Young Women Leaders Network**, aiming to make it a successful and effective network for continuing to share their learning and resources among themselves and other emerging young women in their communities. Each network member agreed to work on a maximum of three issues in her community to raise awareness about inclusive democracy, gender equality, social cohesion, and climate adaptation. The participants decided to organize their meetings online regularly to stay connected, keep up to date about each other's efforts, and support each other where required. The 16 members of the network are connected via a WhatsApp group they established during the training for instant communication. The members agreed to develop proper Terms of Reference (TORs) for the network and assign appropriate roles and responsibilities to each member, ensuring its effectiveness in engaging more young women and working together to promote inclusive democracy, gender equality, social cohesion, and climate adaptation.



Challenges:

This initiative is a six-month project aimed at reaching and empowering 15 young women leaders in KP and the NMDs. To extend the initiative and ensure the engagement of a larger number of emerging young women leaders, as well as to expand its outreach to include more participants from Balochistan, additional funding is required. In this regard, the project coordinator has already begun reaching out to potential donors. Nonetheless, we will make every effort to engage both national and international donors for potential partnerships.