

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



AURAT FOUNDATION

# **Annual Report**

## **2024**



**Aurat Foundation**

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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>API/AF</b>	Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation /Aurat Foundation
<b>BAP</b>	Balochistan Awami Party
<b>CdM</b>	Club de Madrid
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>CNICs</b>	Computerized National Identity Cards
<b>CVE</b>	Counter Violence Terrorism
<b>ECP</b>	Election Commission of Pakistan
<b>FF</b>	Feminist Friday
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>GDA</b>	Grand Democratic Alliance
<b>GEME</b>	Gender Election Monitoring Cell
<b>ICT</b>	Islamabad Capital Territory
<b>IWD</b>	International Women’s Day
<b>KCC</b>	Kadam Communications Consultants
<b>KP</b>	Khyber Pukhtunkhwa
<b>LG’s</b>	Local Governments
<b>LoC</b>	Letter of Collaboration
<b>LWP</b>	Legislative Watch Group
<b>MPs</b>	Member Parliamentarians
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MQM</b>	Muttahida Qaumi Movement
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NIP</b>	National Institute of Psychology
<b>PCMs</b>	Peace Committee Meetings
<b>PVE</b>	Prevention of Violence Extremism
<b>PWDs</b>	Persons with Disabilities
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SCSW</b>	Sindh Commission on the Status of Women
<b>SCHR</b>	Sindh Commission on Human Rights
<b>SFCG</b>	Search for Common Ground
<b>SOPs</b>	Slandered Operating Procedures
<b>WLP</b>	Women’s Learning Partnership
<b>WDD</b>	Women Development Department
<b>CSW</b>	Commission on the Status of Women
<b>SWD</b>	Social Welfare Department
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals

## Introduction

Aurat Foundation is actively supporting the Government of Pakistan's gender policies and working towards achieving the gender-related targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The United Nations' 2030 Agenda includes several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are directly related to gender equality and women's empowerment, including SDG 5: Gender Equality.

During the reporting year July 2023 to June 2024, the political, economic, and security situation was worsening due to Pakistan's government change. The return to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan has created more dangers. The return to power of the Taliban in Afghanistan has created more dangers.

Secondly, Pakistan is exceedingly vulnerable to climate change and faces rates of warming considerably above the global average, making extreme climate events more frequent and intense. The floods submerged one-third of the country in August and September 2022 led to the deaths of more than 1,700 people and 33 million losing their homes, land or jobs. The floods damaged most of the water systems in affected areas, forcing more than 5.4 million people to rely solely on contaminated water from ponds and wells.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) banned Khan from holding office for five years over accusations that he made false statements about his assets and liabilities in October 2022. The PTI held regular rallies nationwide after Khan was removed from office.

Thirdly, on 9th May 2023 Khan was arrested. It was triggering violent protests and demonstrations. Internet was blocked indefinitely and social media websites were blocked in Pakistan when the protests began, with YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook blocked indefinitely as of mid-May.

During the reporting period, Pakistani faced a bad economic crisis and part of the political unrest in Pakistan. It has caused severe economic challenges for months due to which food, gas, and oil prices have risen. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has caused fuel prices to rise worldwide. The Pakistani economy is currently trapped in low growth, high inflation and unemployment, falling investment, excessive fiscal deficits, and a deteriorating external balance position. We have faced many issues in the shape of poverty, terrorism, forced disappearance, shrinking space for civil society, honor crimes, violence against women, climate justice, violation the of right to freedom of expression, association, assembly, thought, unemployment, crime, low status of women, child marriage, rape, and gender inequality.

However, there is indeed a significant honor and recognition for AF that the Executive Director, Aurat Foundation, Naeem Ahmed Mirza received the HUM Women Leaders Award. was presented his outstanding contributions to women's rights and gender equality in Pakistan. Such awards not only celebrate individual achievements but also shine a spotlight on the vital work being done by organizations like the Aurat Foundation in advocating for gender equality and women's empowerment. It serves as an inspiration for others to join the efforts to create a more equitable and inclusive society. The award was presented by First Lady Mrs. Samina Alvi. The event was graced by esteemed dignitaries, including Dr. Arif Alvi, the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Australian Deputy High Commissioner Damien Donovan, the High Commissioner of Bangladesh.

## Board of Governors

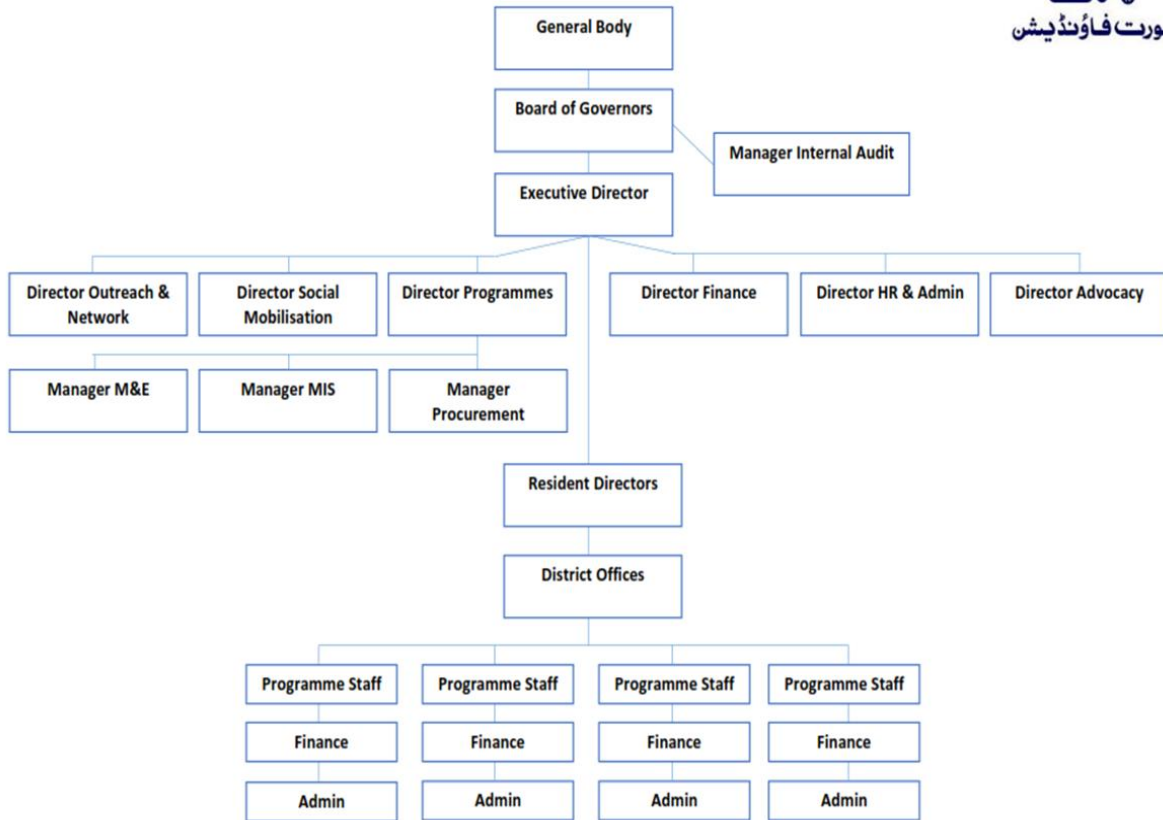
<p><b>Dr Masuma Hasan</b> <i>President</i></p> <p>Development Practitioner; former Cabinet Secretary &amp; Ambassador; Researcher</p>		<p><b>Dr Aliya H. Khan</b> <i>Treasurer</i></p> <p>Educationist; Economist, Development Expert</p>	
<p><b>Anis Haroon</b> <i>Member</i></p> <p>Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women; Women's Rights Activist</p>		<p><b>Samina Rahman</b> <i>Member</i></p> <p>Educationist; Women's Rights Activist</p>	
<p><b>Justice (Retd.) Nasira Javed Iqbal</b> <i>Member</i></p> <p>Eminent jurist International law expert</p>		<p><b>Roshan Khursheed Bharucha</b> <i>Member</i></p> <p>Women Rights Activist</p>	
<p><b>Suriya Amiruddin</b> <i>Member</i></p> <p>Ex-Senator, Human Rights Activist</p>		<p><b>Harris Khalique</b> <i>Member</i></p> <p>Secretary-General (HRCP)</p>	

## Executive Council of Aurat Foundation July 2023-June 2024

<b>Name</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
<b>Naeem Ahmed Mirza</b>	Executive Director	Male	25 years
<b>Mumtaz Mughal</b>	Director Programmes	Female	19 years
<b>Asim Malik</b>	Director of Outreach and Network	Male	25 years
<b>Shabina Ayaz</b>	Resident Director, Peshawar	Female	26 years
<b>Mahnaz Rahman</b>	Resident Director, Karachi	Female	13 years
<b>Alauddin Khalji</b>	Resident Director, Quetta	Male	5 years
<b>Saima Munir</b>	Manager Programmes, KP	Female	22 years
<b>Malka Khan</b>	Manager Programmes, Sindh	Female	19 years
<b>Shamaila Tanvir</b>	Senior Programme Officer	Female	17 years

# Organogram Institutional Structure

## Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation



## List of Operational Projects July 2023-June 2024

Sr. #	Project	Donor
<b>National</b>		
1.	WPP-JAZBA Democracy and Empowered Women (Jamhoriyat our Ba-Ikhtiar Aurat)	SAP-PK/Global Affairs Canada
2.	SHE THE Peacebuilder	Search For Common Ground
3.	To establish Legal Aid Desks to improve access to justice services for legal services for key population	UNDP
4.	Women’s Learning Partnership TOT Programme	Women’s Learning Partnership
5.	WE-The Leaders; To Promote Socio and Economic Rights of Apparel Women Workers (AWWs) in Pakistan	LEVIS
<b>Regional Projects</b>		
<b>Sindh</b>		
6.	Legislative Watch Programme-Women’s Voice and Leadership - Pakistan	SPO-Oxfam GB
<b>Lahore</b>		
7.	Pathways to Women’s Substantive Representation in Pakistan	IDEAS
<b>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)</b>		
8.	Feminist Friday - Women’s Voice and Leadership – Pakistan	SPO-Oxfam
9.	CSOs Engagement for Promoting the Rule of Law, Legal Literacy, and, Women’s Access to Justice in KP including newly merged districts	UN Women
<b>Balochistan</b>		
10.	Women’s Access to Justice in Balochistan (WAJIB)	UNDP

Chapter One

# Law and Policy Reform

## Law and Policy Reform

### 1.1 Laws Reform and Passed for the Protection of the Rights of Women and Marginalized Groups in Pakistan

During the annual reporting period from July 2023 to June 2024, several key pieces of legislation were introduced in Pakistan to protect and support citizens, with a focus on the rights and well-being of women, children, and other marginalized groups. These legislative measures reflect ongoing efforts to address social issues and promote a safer, more inclusive society.

The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Act, 2023; was unanimously passed by the Senate on August 9, 2023, and received the assent of the President on August 15, 2023. The Act aims to protect the rights of journalists and includes representation for the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists and Pakistan Broadcasters Association. The Act defines misinformation and disinformation in line with the UN human rights council and 12 other countries. It also includes a condition that news channels must not broadcast disinformation. The bill allows PEMRA to impose fines of up to Rs1 million for violations, and up to Rs10 million for severe violations.

The Elections (Second Amendment) Act, 2023, received Presidential assent on August 4, 2023. This amendment modifies Section 203 of Act No. XXXIII of 2017. In Section 203, subsection (4), the words "and persons with disabilities and transgender persons" are added following the word "women."

The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2023, assent on August 4, 2023, introduces several important provisions. Key highlights include increased penalties for indicting individuals without evidence, aiming to deter baseless accusations. The Act also penalizes medical professionals found criminally negligent in treating victims of sexual assault or rape. Additionally, new sections have been added to the Pakistan Penal Code to prohibit and punish the employment of children under 18 as live-in domestic workers, as well as those who consent to such arrangements.

The Sindh Protection and Promotion of Breast-Feeding and Young Child Nutrition Act, 2023 was introduced and passed in Sindh Assembly on 13 July 2023. The aim is to ensure safe and adequate nutrition for infants and young children up to 36 months by promoting, protecting, and supporting breastfeeding, encouraging healthy diets to prevent obesity and non-communicable diseases, and regulating the marketing and promotion of designated products. These include breast milk substitutes, feeding bottles, bottle valves, nipple shields, teats, and pacifiers. The Bill was transmitted to the Governor Secretariat on 21st July, 2023 by the Chief Minister's Secretariat which was returned by the Governor with a message as provided under Article 116(2) of the Constitution, to the Chief Minister's Secretariat on 11th August, 2023.

The Sindh Senior Citizen Welfare (Amendment) Act, 2023 passed by the Provincial Assembly of Sindh on 24th May, 2024 and assented to by the Governor of Sindh on 07th June, 2024. The Sindh Assembly amended Ordinance 2024 for enabling the provincial revenue authorities to maintain property record electronically. The House adopted the amendment law to pass an ordinance already promulgated in the province for introducing an electronic land registration system. A special committee of the assembly presented in the House its report on the

amendment law after properly evaluating its contents. The report said that the e-registration system would be helpful in digitising land and property records in the province to protect them from tampering and other fraudulent activities to deprive rightful landowners of their legitimate real estate possessions.

During this period, no pro-women or pro-children legislation was introduced or passed in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Chapter Two

# Capacity Building and Consultative Processes

## Capacity Building and Consultative Processes

Aurat Foundation's strategy of capacity building and consultation is an effective approach for advancing gender equality and empowering women within Pakistan's political and civil society spheres. This approach not only strengthens the skills and knowledge of individuals and groups advocating for women's rights, but also fosters collaboration and dialogue, enabling sustainable, community-driven progress toward a more equitable society. By prioritizing inclusive consultation and skill development, Aurat Foundation is making a meaningful impact on policies and social attitudes related to gender in Pakistan.

### 2.1 Professional Leadership Skills

Aurat Foundation organized a three-day training workshop on 'Professional Leadership Skills for WPAs of ICT, Punjab and KP' from 6<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023 at O'Spring Estate, Murree. The three-day workshop was facilitated by senior communications expert Mr. Farnood Alam. The main objectives of the three-day training workshop was to strengthen the capacities of WPAs in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, to reflect on conflict in their own lives, discussing and exploring the different approaches to managing the conflicts and to enhance their skills and knowledge regarding countering violent extremism in Pakistan's context. The topics were covered during the training; Women's Journey through Time, Leadership, Communication and Public Speaking, Lobbying and Advocacy, Women's Leadership historical perspective and Negotiation and BATNA.

A total of twenty-nine (24) people participated in the training workshop. 19 Women Peace Architects (4 from ICT, 9 from Punjab, 5 from KPK and 1 from Sindh) while the staff of Aurat Foundation and a Master Trainer also participated. The participants belonged to different walks of life and there was representation from different political parties, social activists, lawyers, media, students, teachers, etc. WPAs were from different ethnic groups and religious minorities including transgender people.

In closing ceremony of three-day workshop, Mr Naeem Mirza shared his thoughts that how are WPAs can apply best practices for Lobbying and Advocacy and become the future Leaders. All these women present here are great leaders and speakers but after this workshop you all will be able to professionally learn the skills and able to Communicate. Over the course of one year, the WPAs of ICT, Punjab and KP have grown and learned a tremendous amount of things and will continue to work for peacebuilding initiatives in their respective fields.

Mr. Shahid Raheem said that we made a new proposal in order to continue this project and that proposal got accepted. We have selected 100 youth members who are experts in different fields of life like sports, media, literature and social activist etc. All our existing 50 WPAs will work with them in future on their current action plans that they are already working on.

Mr. Naeem Mirza and Mumtaz Mughal thanked the organizing team and the gathered participants and said that we will continue to make efforts to empower the women of this country. In the end, the guests of the workshop awarded the certificates to WPAs. AF team presented the souvenirs to the guests.



## 2.2 Women's Involvement in Peacebuilding is Vital for creating Lasting Peace

A consultation on “Building Bridges for Women in Peace” organized by Aurat Foundation, Islamabad. The consultation focused on the role of women in promoting peace and building bridges within Pakistani society, and speakers shared their perspectives and expertise on the subject. Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Chairman Islamic Ideology Council, Ms. Naela Chohan, Special Federal Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Shabana Fayyaz Sahiba, Head of Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, Quaid-e-Azam University, Dr. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, Director General of the Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, M. Kashif Irshad Sahib, Advisor, Ministry of National Heritage and Culture of Pakistan, Ms. Beenish, Deputy Director FIA, Shahid Raheem, Senior Programme Manager Search and Mumtaz Mughal, Director Programmes and other spoke.

Dr. Qibla Ayaz, Chairman, of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) addressed the gathering and said that our understanding of religion has issues. He said that the government has taken the reins off public schooling and education and has handed this over to the private sector in order to make money and profit. He said that CII has given a recommendation that the national policy of education needs to be reviewed. Dr. Qibla said that we also have problems as individuals. He said that there is a mental construct among men in this country that women are weak and they cannot work. He urged organizations such as the Aurat Foundation to raise this issue. He added that men also have to raise their voices for women's issues and stand with them.

Ms. Naela Chohan, Special Federal Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that males and females both have separate responsibilities given by God Almighty. All young men and women should be taught how to respect and behave towards each other and we need an empowering environment as well. To ensure the peaceful society, there is a need more inclusive and equitable society where women's voices are heard, and their contributions are acknowledged and valued.

Dr. Zia-ul-Haq, Director General of the Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad spoke next and said that Aurat Foundation's data on women is considered the most authentic and original throughout the country. He said that a few people began the countering violent extremism (CVE) project of Paigham-e-Pakistan and now thousands of people are part of this movement. He said that primarily the Paigham-e-Pakistan project is about behavioral change. Dr. Zia further added that women in Pakistan these days are not safe

from their protectors. He said that although we claim to be a very religious society in actuality we are not the best followers of Islam.

Dr. Shabana Fayyaz, Head of the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, at Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad said that she was the only woman from her family to start working. She said that the general perception in society is that men cannot eat from a woman's income; however, these perceptions are changing. Additionally, she said that we have not invested in training the women of our country. As an educationist, we have to reduce the violence in our society.

Ms. Beenish Fatima, Deputy Director Cyber Crime Wing, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) said that first, we need to understand what is extremism. She said that extremism is prevalent in our society, in our educational institutions, etc. in different forms. Furthermore, she said that men in homes are in positions of authority but in their offices, they are not. She said that since the male has been given a dominant status in society we feel the need of males to accompany a woman everywhere. She said that the economy will never be able to grow if half of the society remains in their homes and does not engage in productive work.

Mr. Kashif Irshad, Advisor to the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture of Pakistan said that women's involvement in peacebuilding is vital for creating lasting peace, as they bring unique perspectives and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable solutions. Recognizing and supporting their roles is a key element of advancing peace and security worldwide.

Mr. Shahid Rahim spoke about the need and purpose of the SHE-The Peacebuilder project and introduced it to the gathered audience. He said that a house is created by a builder or an engineer but the beauty of the house is brought out by an architect. He further added that we will organize several other consultations in different provincial capitals in the coming months and will glean recommendations regarding peacebuilding and the role of women in peacebuilding.

Ms. Mumtaz Mughal, Director Programme said that it is vital to ensure adequate representation of women in decision-making processes, both in the public and private sectors. This can include mainstream policies that support women's participation in leadership positions.





### 2.3 Empowering Youth to Counter Extremist Content on Digital Platforms

AF organized consultation on Building Bridges for Women in Peace on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2023, at Shelton Rezidor Hotel, Peshawar. The speakers were Dr. Faiz Ullah Jan, Chairman, Journalism and Mass Communication Department, University of Peshawar, Ms. Zohra Aslam, Director General, Benazir Income Support Programme, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ms. Amna Durrani, Director Programmes, KP Commission on the Status of Women, Ms. Saeeda Shaheen, Gender Desk Officer, Police Department, Peshawar, Ms. Shabeena Ayaz, Resident Director Aurat Foundation, KP, Ms. Ishrat Batool, Educationist, Women Peace Architects, D.I. Khan and Ms. Samreen Hakeem Advocate, Women Peace Architects, Swat. A total of 81 participants, including 21 males and 60 females, attended the CWG in Islamabad. The event also attended by former local government members, political party representatives, law enforcement agencies, BISP, health and education authorities, human and women's rights commissions, prominent lawyers, academia, students, media, NGOs, CSOs, experts, and think tanks.

Dr. Faiz Ullah Jan, Chairman, Journalism and Mass Communication Department, University of Peshawar, said that understanding the context of extremism is indeed crucial for addressing issues related to peace and stability in Pakistan, as well as in any other region facing similar challenges. We should need to identify the common factors and drivers of extremism. Without understanding the historical and political context of extremism and terrorism, peace is not possible. He further said that education is a powerful tool to build learners' resilience to violent extremism. It helps strengthen their commitment to non-violence and peace, in particular by addressing hateful and violent narratives.

Ms. Zohra Aslam, Director General, Benazir Income Support Programme, KP shared that women who are economically empowered and have an active role in decision-making processes are less likely to be vulnerable to extremist ideologies. Women are well-connected within their communities. They can act as effective early warning systems, identifying signs of radicalization or potential threats and intervening before individuals become fully involved in extremist activities. She also emphasized that youth can play a significant role in countering

extremist content on digital platforms. They can use social media and other online spaces to promote positive narratives and challenge extremist ideologies. There is need to sanitize and train young women and youth in conflict resolution, mediation, and community leadership and common ground approach.

Ms. Amna Durrani, Director Programmes, KP Commission on the Status of Women, said that Commission is playing active role in law and policy making. A number of pro women laws has been passed. She briefly shared about laws and initiatives taken by KP government to protect women and marginalized groups. She said that preventing violent extremism, is a comprehensive approach that aims to address the root causes of violent extremism and prevent individuals from radicalizing toward violence.

Ms. Saeeda Shaheen, Gender Desk Officer, Police Department, Peshawar, said that law enforcement, including the police, plays a critical role in CVE and PVE. She said that to reduce GBV, violence against women and girls and to stop the radicalization process before it leads to violence, there is needed to strengthen the interagency and community coordination mechanisms. She said that collaboration and coordination among various government agencies, departments, civil society, religious leaders, community activists, women leaders, educational institutions and stakeholders involved in PVE efforts can build trust and contribute to early detection and prevention.

Ms. Shabeena Ayaz, Resident Director Aurat Foundation, KP talking about opportunities and spaces for women's inclusion in the implementation of CVE/PVE laws and policies, she said that women should be included in decision-making bodies, task forces, and committees responsible for shaping and implementing CVE/PVE policies. The active engagement of women in the formulation of policies can ensure that the diverse needs and concerns of women are considered.

## 2.4 Strengthening Democracy: Through Women's Political Participation

A significant seminar on Strengthening Democracy: Through Women's Political Participation was organized AF on 27<sup>th</sup> Nov 2024 at Sareena Hotel, Quetta. The event brought together diverse voices, including Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Mr. Jan Achakzai, and



Advisor to the Minister, Ms. Shaina Khan, who highlighted the importance of empowering women to take active roles in decision-making bodies. They emphasized that women's involvement is essential for building an inclusive political system that addresses the needs of all citizens.

Chairperson of the Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women, Ms. Fouzia Shaheen, underscored the barriers women face in political participation, including cultural constraints and lack of access to resources. She stressed the need for systemic changes to ensure women's representation in local and provincial assemblies.

Provincial Commissioner for the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) Balochistan, Ms. Farkhandah Aurangzeb, echoed these sentiments and called for policy reforms and awareness campaigns to foster greater inclusion of women in political processes.

Resident Director of Aurat Foundation, Mr. Alludin Kilji, highlighted the Foundation's efforts in promoting women's leadership and political awareness. He urged stakeholders, including political parties and civil society, to collaborate in creating an enabling environment for women's active participation in politics. The seminar concluded with actionable recommendations, including training programs for women leaders and strengthening gender-inclusive policies to bridge the gender gap in politics.

## 2.5 Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms to Address Violations of Pro-Women Laws

A consultation was organized on Women, Children Laws and Child Protection Authority on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023, at Moven Pick Hotel, Karachi. The event aimed to refine and finalize the draft rules, ensuring their alignment with the Act's provisions and the ground realities of Sindh. Representatives from government departments, civil society organizations, legal experts, and child rights activists participated, contributing valuable insights to strengthen the draft rules for effective implementation. During the consultation The draft rules of the "Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013" were reviewed.



کوئٹہ، ساؤتھ ایشیا پارٹنرشپ پاکستان اور عورت فاؤنڈیشن کے زیر اہتمام منعقدہ سمینار سے نگران صوبائی وزیر اطلاعات جان اچکزئی، مشیر وزیر اعلیٰ شانیہ خان، فرخندہ اورنگزیب، فوزیہ شامین، یاسمین مغل، علاؤ الدین علی اور دیگر خطاب کر رہے ہیں

In the consultation, Ms. Anis Haron, Member NCHR said highlighted the urgent need for the draft rules to address the gaps in enforcement mechanisms and ensure clear accountability for violations.

Ms. Nuzhat Shirin, Chairperson, Sindh Commission on the Status of Women emphasized the importance of sensitizing law enforcement agencies, including the police, judiciary, and local administration, to their roles in preventing child marriages.

Ms. Mahnaz Rehman, Resident Director AF Karachi also called for awareness campaigns targeting communities, especially in rural areas, to educate them about the harms of child marriage and the penalties outlined in the Act.



Speakers also discussed the socio-cultural challenges in enforcing the Act and the draft rules. They highlighted the importance of engaging religious and community leaders in the dialogue to address resistance to the law at the grassroots level. Participants agreed on the need for systematic capacity-building programs for government officials, social workers, and NGOs to effectively implement and monitor the rules. Recommendations were made to include provisions for rehabilitating and supporting victims of child marriages, such as access to education, counseling, and financial aid.

The consultation concluded with a commitment to refine the draft rules based on the feedback received. Aurat Foundation reiterated its resolve to continue advocating for the implementation of the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013 and its rules. The participants appreciated the collaborative effort and emphasized the need for a united front to eliminate child marriages in Sindh, ensuring a brighter and more equitable future for girls.

## **2.6 Advancing Women's Role in Peacebuilding: Adopting a Community-Based Approach**

A consultation on "Building Bridges for Women in Peace" was organized on 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec 2023 at Marriot Hotel, Karachi. Speakers were Dr. Syed Mohsin Naqvi, Religious Scholar, Ms. Nuzhat Shirin, Chairperson of Sindh Commission on the Status of Women, Ms. Mahnaz Rehman, Resident Director, Aurat Foundation, Shahid Rahim, Senior Programme Specialist, SFCG, Ms. Sania Asghar, Member, Women Peace Architects, Karachi, Mumtaz Mughal, and Malka Khan Senior Managers AF and WPAs from Karachi.

The consultation bringing together diverse voices to discuss women's pivotal role in fostering peace and stability. The event featured prominent speakers, including Dr. Syed Mohsin Naqvi, a respected religious scholar, Ms. Nuzhat Shirin, Chairperson of the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women, Ms. Mahnaz Rehman, Resident Director of Aurat Foundation, and Mr. Shahid Rahim from Search for Common Ground (SFCG). The consultation aimed to address challenges and explore opportunities to enhance women's contributions to peacebuilding processes.

Dr. Syed Mohsin Naqvi emphasized the importance of inclusive dialogue in conflict resolution. He highlighted how women's roles as mediators and community leaders could bridge societal divides, foster mutual understanding, and combat extremist ideologies. He said that we need to enhance women's role in peacebuilding and also adopting a community-based approach. He called for religious and cultural leaders to support initiatives that empower women to participate in peacebuilding efforts actively.

Ms. Nuzhat Shirin shared insights into the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women's initiatives to promote gender equality and women's inclusion in decision-making. She stressed that sustainable peace is achievable only when women are actively engaged in shaping policies and strategies. Highlighting successful examples of women-led peace initiatives, she encouraged collective action and stronger alliances among civil society organizations, policymakers, and communities.

Ms. Mahnaz Rehman and Mr. Shahid Rahim underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in creating an environment where women can lead and influence peace processes. They discussed the significance of equipping women with skills in conflict resolution, negotiation, and leadership. The consultation concluded with recommendations for integrating women's perspectives into peace policies, amplifying their voices in public discourse, and ensuring that women from all sectors are represented in peacebuilding initiatives.

During the consultation, Women Peace Architects (WPAs) shared insightful recommendations to enhance women's roles in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. They emphasized the need for capacity-building programs to equip women with skills in negotiation, mediation, and



leadership. WPAs advocated for including women in decision-making bodies, ensuring their perspectives are reflected in policies addressing conflict and extremism. They also stressed the importance of creating safe spaces for women to share their experiences and actively participate in peace processes.

WPAs highlighted the value of community-based approaches to fostering peace, suggesting collaboration between local leaders, civil society organizations, and law enforcement agencies to address root causes of conflict. They recommended integrating gender-sensitive approaches into education systems to challenge stereotypes and promote values of coexistence and mutual respect. Additionally, they urged for consistent monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of peace and pro-women policies.

## **2.7 Beyond the Ballots: Enhancing Women's Political Participation to Strengthen Democratic Culture**

The three-day workshop, titled "Beyond the Ballots: Enhancing Women's Political Participation to Strengthen Democratic Culture," was organized by Aurat Foundation in collaboration with the Women Leadership Program (WLP) in Lahore. The training, planned and coordinated by Ms. Rabia Hadi and facilitated by Ms. Sara, RD Lahore, brought together young leaders and activists to explore the critical role of women in politics. Sessions were led by Myra Imran, Senior Journalist at The News, and Kalsoom Rana from the Women Journalists Association. The aim was to highlight the challenges women face in political participation and provide them with strategies to navigate these obstacles, while fostering a democratic culture through gender-sensitive political reforms and inclusive decision-making.

The workshop focused on how women's involvement in politics can directly impact policy-making and governance. The sessions included a mix of practical activities, panel discussions, and presentations from experts in political activism, gender studies, and public policy. Participants were encouraged to think beyond voting and explore how women can influence political agendas through advocacy, coalition-building, and holding elected officials accountable. The training aimed to empower young women by equipping them with the necessary tools and skills to engage effectively in political processes.

Key topics addressed included the impact of gender bias in politics, the importance of women's representation in local and national government, and the steps to building sustainable political careers. Special emphasis was placed on identifying and overcoming the societal and structural barriers that limit women's entry into politics. These discussions encouraged participants to challenge existing norms and provided them with actionable insights on how to advocate for gender equality within the political sphere.

By the end of the workshop, participants had developed a deeper understanding of the barriers to women's political participation and were equipped with the knowledge and skills to actively contribute to political change. The event served as an empowering platform, inspiring many to take on leadership roles in their communities and advocate for policies that support women's rights, thereby strengthening the democratic process and ensuring broader, more inclusive representation in politics.

## **2.8 Press Conference and Charter of Demand of Young Political Activities**

A press conference was held on 29 Dec. 2024, it was led by young political activists Wajhat Batool and Imrana. The conference centered on the critical issue of women's active participation in the electoral process, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that women are fully engaged in every stage of the election cycle. The speakers highlighted the challenges

women face in the political arena, from voter suppression to lack of representation, and stressed the need for systemic reforms to enhance women's inclusion in the electoral process.



The press conference also shed light on the vital role that women play in shaping political agendas and policy decisions. The activists called for greater awareness of the obstacles preventing women from fully participating in elections and urged the government, civil society, and political parties to take proactive steps to create an inclusive political environment. By showcasing the collective efforts of women's rights advocates, the event sought to inspire both



women voters and political leaders to prioritize gender equality, thereby strengthening democratic participation and ensuring that women's voices are heard and represented in the political sphere. The following charter of demand was present

## 2.9 Dialogue Feminist Politics

A dialogue on Feminist Politics was organized to explore the intersection of feminism and political engagement, focusing on the importance of gender equality within political processes on 5<sup>th</sup> January



2024 at Mehran Hotel, Karachi. The session brought together activists, policymakers, and experts to discuss how feminist principles can be integrated into political decision-making. It provided a platform to reflect on the challenges women face in political participation and the steps needed to dismantle systemic barriers that hinder women's access to power. Ms Malka Khan emphasized the need for a feminist approach in policymaking to ensure that women's

### **Charter of Demand of Young Political Activists**

1. Ensure that women's rights are prioritized in the manifestos of all political parties.
2. Guarantee the effective implementation of women's quotas in political party structures, including decision-making bodies and candidate nominations.
3. Political parties should implement comprehensive training programs for women, focusing on leadership skills, political strategies, and issue-based advocacy.
4. Both political parties and the Election Commission must enforce strict anti-harassment policies within political parties and digital spaces to create a safe and inclusive environment for women to actively engage in the political process.
5. Launch public awareness campaigns to promote women's political participation and challenge stereotypes, fostering a supportive public opinion.
6. Allocate sufficient funds to support women candidates during election campaigns, addressing financial barriers that limit their participation.
7. Ensure transparent, merit-based selection criteria for the nomination of women to reserved seats.
8. The government must ensure that women make up at least 33% of local government representation.
9. The Election Commission of Pakistan should take measures to improve the accessibility of polling stations, considering the unique needs and challenges of women, particularly those in rural and remote areas.
10. Both political parties and the Election Commission should develop and disseminate gender-sensitive voter education programs to inform women about their rights, the importance of voting, and the electoral process.
11. The government must implement enhanced security measures at polling stations to ensure the safety of women voters and candidates, especially in areas prone to political violence or where women are barred from voting.
12. The Election Commission should ensure the transparent reporting and publication of gender-disaggregated data on electoral processes to track women's participation at all stages.

voices are not only heard but also respected in shaping the future of governance.

S Kousar S Khan discussed the significance of feminist politics in advancing women's rights and empowering marginalized groups. The conversation highlighted how feminist politics can challenge traditional power structures and promote inclusivity, equity, and social justice. It was emphasized that feminist politics is not just about increasing women's representation in political spaces, but also about changing the way politics is practiced to better serve the needs of all genders. This approach stresses collective action and solidarity, aiming to transform not only individual policies but also the political culture at large.

Participants also explored strategies to enhance women's political participation through gender-sensitive reforms and the creation of safe, supportive spaces for women in politics. Participants called for greater investment in women's leadership development, political education, and advocacy, as well as for addressing the structural violence and biases that women often face in the political arena. By incorporating feminist values into political movements, the dialogue underscored the potential for creating more inclusive, responsive, and democratic societies that uphold the rights and dignity of all people.

#### **2.10 Peacebuilding Efforts are Needed to Strengthen through Women-centric Legal Reforms**

A consultation on "Building Bridges for Women in Peace" at Chamber of Commerce, Quetta for newly Identified Women Peace Architects (WPAs) on January 31st, 2024 at the Chamber of Commerce, Quetta. This significant event brought together an array of distinguished speakers, including policymakers, law enforcement officials, human rights advocates, and civil

society leaders, to deliberate on the vital role of women in fostering peace and addressing violent extremism.

The speakers were Mr. Amanullah Kunrani, Caretaker Provincial Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Ms. Roshan Khursheed Brocha, Ex. Federal Minister for Human Rights, Ms. Farkhanda Aurangzeb, Provincial Commissioner, NCHR Balochistan, Fauzia Shaheen, Chairperson Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women, Ms. Jahan Ara Tabsum, Deputy Secretary WDD, Govt. of Balochistan, Zarghuna Tareen, SHO, Quetta Police Station, Asfand Yar Badini, Director Bureau of Curriculum, Balochistan, Ruqia Taj, Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department, Balochistan, Dr. Faiza, Child Protection Cell, Quetta, Abshe Bisharat, Trans Police Officer, Quetta, Shazia Riaz, Director Women Development, Quetta, Mr. Shahid



Rahim, Senior Programme Specialist, SFCG and Mumtaz Mughal, Alludin Kilji, Yasmeen Mughal and other participated.

Mr. Amanullah Kunrani, Caretaker Provincial Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs emphasized the critical role of legal frameworks in empowering women to participate in peacebuilding. There is need to strengthen peacebuilding efforts through women-centric legal reforms. He stated that the government is committed to implementing gender-sensitive laws that address the root causes of conflict and ensure women's voices are included in decision-making processes. He called for collaborative efforts to strengthen women's legal rights in Balochistan.

Ms. Roshan Khursheed Brocha, Ex-Federal Minister for Human Rights highlighted the importance of addressing human rights violations, particularly those affecting women and marginalized groups in conflict zones. She stressed the need for increased representation of women in peace processes and community leadership roles. Ms. Brocha urged policymakers to recognize women's unique contributions to fostering peace and stability.

Ms. Farkhanda Aurangzeb, Provincial Commissioner, NCHR Balochistan spoke about the role of human rights mechanisms in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. She emphasized that without safeguarding women's rights and addressing gender-based violence, sustainable peace cannot be achieved. She advocated for stronger institutional support for women peacebuilders.

Ms. Fauzia Shaheen, Chairperson, Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women underlined the importance of capacity-building programs for women, particularly in conflict-affected regions. She stated that empowering women as peace architects can transform communities and reduce violence. She urged for the integration of gender-sensitive approaches in government policies.

Ms. Jahan Ara Tabasum, Deputy Secretary, WDD, Government of Balochistan discussed the role of the Women Development Department in promoting gender equity and peace initiatives.

She emphasized the importance of involving women in conflict resolution strategies and ensuring they have access to resources and training to lead such efforts effectively.

Zarghuna Tareen, SHO, Quetta Police Station highlighted the role of law enforcement in maintaining peace and addressing gender-based violence. She shared insights on how community policing and building trust with women can play a pivotal role in conflict prevention and resolution.

Mr Asfand Yar Badini, Director, Bureau of Curriculum, Balochistan spoke about the role of education in fostering a culture of peace and non-violence. He emphasized the need for curriculum reforms that promote gender equality and equip young people with conflict resolution skills.

Ms. Ruqia Taj, Deputy Director, Social Welfare Department, Balochistan discussed the social dimensions of conflict and its impact on women and children. She advocated for community-based approaches to peacebuilding that involve women as key stakeholders.

Dr. Faiza, Child Protection Cell, shed light on the importance of addressing the needs of children in conflict zones. She emphasized that empowering women peace architects has a ripple effect on protecting and nurturing children in affected communities.

Abshe Bisharat, Trans Police Officer, Quetta shared her experiences as a trans police officer and highlighted the importance of inclusivity in peacebuilding efforts. She called for greater support and visibility for marginalized groups in conflict resolution processes.

Shazia Riaz, Director, Women Development, spoke about the need to create safe spaces for women to voice their concerns and lead peace initiatives. She highlighted ongoing efforts by the Women Development Department to integrate gender perspectives into policymaking.

Mr. Shahid Rahim, Senior Programme Specialist, SFCG emphasized the significance of community engagement and dialogue in transforming violent extremism. He encouraged fostering partnerships between civil society and government to ensure women are central to peace efforts.

Alludin Kilji , Resident Director, AF Quetta concluded the session by emphasizing the critical role of advocacy and awareness campaigns in supporting women peace architects. She called for sustained efforts to bridge gaps between policy and practice for inclusive peacebuilding.

## **2.11 WPAs Can Play Role for Inclusive Governance and Promotion of Peace**

A three-day training workshop for the Women Peace Architects (WPAs) of Karachi and Quetta on 6-8 March 2024 at Karachi to enhance their capacity in promoting peacebuilding, gender equality, and women's rights. The workshop aimed to equip the participants with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively address the challenges women face in conflict areas and to foster their active role in peace processes. Through interactive sessions, group discussions, and expert-led modules, the WPAs gained insights into conflict resolution strategies, leadership development, and advocacy for women's inclusion in peacebuilding efforts. This initiative underscores the commitment to strengthening women's leadership and empowering them to contribute meaningfully to sustainable peace in their communities.

During the closing ceremony of the three-day training workshop for Women Peace Architects (WPAs), Dr. Masuma Hasan, President of the Aurat Foundation Board of Governors, emphasized the importance of women's leadership in peacebuilding and expressed her

commitment to empowering women in conflict resolution processes. She also stressed the importance of women's agency in shaping a peaceful and just society, and the need for sustained efforts to bridge gaps in gender equality. Mr. Naveed echoed this sentiment, underscoring the role of legislative bodies in ensuring the implementation of pro-women policies. The event concluded with a collective commitment to continue working towards a society where every woman has the opportunity to thrive, contribute, and lead.



Mr. Anthony Naveed, Deputy Speaker of the Provincial Sindh Assembly, highlighted the vital role of women in shaping policy and contributing to peace, stressing the need for inclusive governance and the support of women in leadership roles. He also said that International Women's Day is a reminder of the critical role that women play in shaping the future of our society. The Sindh Assembly remains committed to supporting gender equality and ensuring that women's rights are protected at all levels of governance. Together, we must continue



working toward a more inclusive society where women have equal opportunities to succeed and contribute to nation-building. I believe that when women are empowered, society as a whole prospers.

Mahnaz Rehman, Resident Director of Aurat Foundation Karachi, expressed pride in the WPAs' achievements during the workshop, encouraging them to continue their efforts in advocating for gender equality and human rights. We will continue our work to ensure women have the tools, support, and platforms they need to lead in every sphere.

Ms. Indira Aslanova, Shahid Rahim, Sajjid Ali, Malka Khan, and Muneeza Saeed also spoke, about underscoring the collective responsibility to support women's active participation in peace processes and ensure their voices are heard in decision-making spaces.

## **2.12 Empowering Women Peace Architects for Peace: Building Bridges, Changing Lives**

Aurat Foundation successfully conducted a three-day training workshop on "Common Ground Approach (CGA)" for Women Peace Architects (WPAs) of Sindh and Balochistan at Marriott Hotel, Karachi from 22nd - 24th April, 2024. Through the training, WPAs received guidance and strengthen their capacities in peacebuilding and conflict prevention, to reflect on conflicts of their own lives. They were also able to enhance their skills and knowledge regarding counter-violent extremism in "Pakistan's context".

Ms Aya Abu Sitteh, Master Trainer, SFCG, Jordan facilitated the sessions in the CGA workshop. Aya is the Country Director, Search for Common Ground, Jordan. She is a Human rights advocate, passionate leader and eager peacebuilder for youth, women and security in the Middle East and North Africa. Expert in devising strategies, strong networking skills and policy advisor in social development. While the regional office staff of SFCG, Ms Anais Thizy, Project Officer, Regional Officer SFCG, Kyrgyzstan and Mr Kumarbek Kainazara, Regional Finance Specialist, SFCG, Kyrgyzstan was also a part of this training.



In the closing ceremony of the three-day training workshop, Mr Shahid Rahim, Program Manager, SFCG said that we are working with Aurat Foundation since 2 years now and our main focus is women empowerment and inclusion of women in decision making. As Aurat Foundation has a lot of expertise and great contributions towards women empowerment so we collaborated and designed a project in which we gathered women from all over Pakistan and created a diverse group of 75 Women Peace Architects (WPAs). We trained these women on Common Ground Approach (CGA), Transforming Violent Extremism (TVE) and Professional Leadership Skills (PLS).

Ms Shahid said that in our society women are most effected but still they are not made part of any decision making or policy making. Several factors contribute to this sidelining of women in policy-making. These include traditional gender roles and stereotypes that limit women's participation in public and political spheres, as well as structural barriers such as unequal access to education, resources, and decision-making positions.

Ms Mumtaz asked the chief guest to look for spaces present in Sindh Assembly for the inclusion of women in these peace committees. We prepared this group of 75 Women to have the appropriate skill and knowledge to perform well if they are made a part of such committees. They could know their role and how these women can play their role as dividers and connectors and how they can use this Common Ground Approach.

The Chief Guest, Ms Shaheena Sher Ali, Minister for Women Development Department, Sindh thanked Aurat Foundation for making her a part of this event. She said that she attended the first event of Aurat Foundation in 2013 and learned a lot from them. I also belong to Baloch community. The belief within the Baloch community that women cannot venture outside their homes without male accompaniment reflects a deeply entrenched patriarchal mindset. Such beliefs not only restrict women's freedom of movement but also perpetuate gender inequalities and limit their opportunities for education, employment, and participation in public life. But I broke this stereotype and stepped into politics.

She said that if we want to bring change in our society start from your home because change often begins at home. By fostering a positive and nurturing environment within our families, we can cultivate values of empathy, compassion, and respect that contribute to personal growth and strengthen family bonds.

Ms Shaheena said that Aurat Foundation has always been a great support for us in our journey. My office is always open for any service that is required by Aurat Foundation or these Women Peace Architects. She also said to ensure the inclusion of 33% women in Peace Committees. Ms Malka Khan, Regional Manager, Aurat Foundation Closed the event with a song related to women's empowerment

### **2.13 Building the Skills of WPAs on Development Action Plans at Karachi**

Aurat Foundation organized a one-day Co-Creating Workshop in Karachi aimed at developing action plans for Women Peace Architects (WPAs) on April 5, 2024 at Marriot Hotel, Karachi. The workshop brought together a diverse group of WPAs from various regions to collaboratively design strategies for advancing women's involvement in peacebuilding efforts. The event emphasized the need for actionable, community-based initiatives that empower women and provide them with the necessary tools to navigate conflict resolution spaces. Through brainstorming sessions, group activities, and expert-led discussions, participants were able to assess the challenges women face in peacebuilding and work on practical solutions to overcome them.

The workshop was structured to facilitate a participatory approach, where each WPA contributed their insights, experiences, and knowledge from their respective regions. By engaging in constructive dialogues, participants shared their ideas on how to strengthen women's voices in peace processes and enhance their roles in community leadership. The co-creation of action plans allowed WPAs to address the specific needs and challenges faced by women in conflict-prone areas, ensuring that their action plans were not only reflective of their unique contexts but also feasible and sustainable.

As a result of the workshop, the WPAs were able to draft detailed action plans that aligned with their goals of building a more inclusive and peaceful society. The strategies focused on advocacy, community engagement, and creating safe spaces for women to participate in peace dialogues. The workshop also served as a platform for networking and collaboration, with

participants exchanging contacts and resources to continue supporting each other's work in the future. This collaborative effort underscored the importance of a collective, gender-sensitive approach to peacebuilding, which is crucial for the long-term success of conflict resolution initiatives. Around fifteen (15) action plans were developed and presented in the end of training workshop.

## 2.14 Building the Skills of WPAs on Development Action Plans at Islamabad

A skill building workshop was organized for WPAs of Punjab and KP in developing effective action plans for community-based peacebuilding on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at Hill View Hotel, Islamabad. During the workshop, expert facilitators provided valuable insights into the development of action plans, emphasizing the importance of setting clear goals, identifying resources, and ensuring sustainability. WPAs engaged in hands-on exercises to craft detailed action plans that addressed specific challenges faced by women in conflict zones. They also learned how to monitor and evaluate their plans effectively to ensure their initiatives had a lasting impact on their communities.

Mr. Naeem Ahmed Mirza, Executive Director of Aurat Foundation, expressed his gratitude to



all the participants and facilitators for their active involvement and dedication throughout the workshop. He emphasized the importance of empowering Women Peace Architects (WPAs) to take the lead in peacebuilding efforts within their communities. Mr. Mirza highlighted how the action plans developed during the workshop would serve as critical tools for advancing gender-inclusive peace processes and addressing the unique challenges faced by women in conflict zones.

He also acknowledged the significance of collaboration and knowledge-sharing among the WPAs, urging them to continue working together to create meaningful change. Mr. Mirza reiterated Aurat Foundation's commitment to supporting women's leadership in peacebuilding and ensuring that their voices are heard in decision-making processes. He concluded by wishing all the participants success in implementing their action plans, with the hope that these efforts would contribute to lasting peace and empowerment for women across the region. In the end of works, nine action plans were developed and presented.

## 2.15 Capacity Building Workshops for EVAW/G Alliance

A Capacity Building Workshops for the EVAW/G Alliance spanned two days, were held on March 22-26, 2024, at the Rock City Resort, Swat with the primary focus on understanding the role of the alliance in promoting the rule of law and enhancing women's access to justice. A total number of 39 EVAWG members participated, including 24 women and 15 men. Attendees were strategically divided into two distinct groups to enhance agenda implementation. The workshop was designed to further enhance participants' capacity in tackling gender-based violence issues. It encompassed a range of topics that were suggested by the EVAWG Alliance members through need assessment during the Review & Planning meeting. Some of the topics were repetitive so as to have a fresh discussion as some of the new EVAWG members were participating.

Topics covered in workshop: Overview of gender as a social construct and its impact on society, Understanding Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Legal framework in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and women access to justice, Exploring the significance of Civil Society Organizations in advancing rule of law, Effective advocacy strategies for promoting rule of law and women access to justice, Strengthening Engagement Developing strategies initiatives beyond the project.

Ms. Samreen Hakem and Ms. Sanna Ahmad led a session on the legal framework in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa concerning women's access to justice. This session provided participants with an understanding of existing laws, policies, and mechanisms aimed at protecting women's rights and ensuring access to justice. Participants were encouraged to identify gaps and challenges in the legal framework within their districts.

Ms. Saima Munir then facilitated a session on effective advocacy strategies for promoting the rule of law and enhancing women's access to justice. Participants learned about various advocacy tools, techniques, and approaches to influence policymakers, raise public awareness, and drive systemic change.



*Ms. Saima Munir while delivering the session on Gender as Social Construct*



*Participants busy in discussion while group activity*

Following this, participants engaged in discussions on strengthening engagement beyond the scope of the project. Led by the facilitators, participants brainstormed and developed strategies and initiatives to sustain momentum and extend the impact of the EVAWG Alliance's work within their districts.

The workshop concluded with a closing session, during which participants shared their reflections, feedback, and commitments moving forward.

## 2.16 Para-Legal Training: A Key to Addressing Gender-Based Violence at the Community Level

The first three-day paralegal training workshop was held in Swat from July 31<sup>st</sup> to August 2<sup>nd</sup> with paralegal group Kohat, attended by 17 participants, including 11 women, and 7 men (out of total 3 minority members). The attendees included representatives from CSOs, LHW/LHVs, lawyers, psychologists, and officials from the police department, child protection unit, minority communities, and the Prison Department from district Kohat. The training aimed to enhance participants' understanding of the legal framework and processes related to GBV and to improve their paralegal skills and confidence in assisting GBV survivors in accessing legal services.

Over the course of three days, participants engaged in comprehensive paralegal training. The training covered a wide range of topics including the international and national legal frameworks surrounding GBV, the role of community paralegals, and practical case management skills. Key sessions included understanding GBV, the legal consequences and reporting procedures, and the critical role of community paralegals in providing support and referrals. Additionally, participants explored strategies for enhancing gender parity and the importance of women's involvement in justice systems. The training emphasized developing paralegal skills and boosting confidence to assist GBV survivors in navigating and utilizing legal services effectively.



The inclusion of minority members contributed to a more inclusive and representative training environment. Through case studies, participants developed referral pathways and identified services available for survivors within their district, applying the newly acquired laws and skills in practice.

*"I am supervised that how comprehensive the sessions were, each one deepening my understanding of the legal landscape in ways I hadn't anticipated. The discussions were not just informative and significantly broadening my legal knowledge. I found the analysis of women's representation particularly eye-opening, revealing layers of complexity that will undoubtedly enrich my approach to both my legal practice and my ongoing Ph.D. research."*

**(Fatima Majeed, Advocate High Court and Ph.D. scholar)**

Key achievements included the development of essential paralegal skills among participants, who learned about the legal consequences of GBV, reporting procedures, and the roles and ethical considerations of community paralegals. Comprehensive plans were developed, and thorough training was provided to a diverse group comprising individuals with backgrounds in law, social work, and various other departments and professions. This has contributed to making this training an effective platform for learning and exchanging ideas. The training

concluded with a post-assessment, ensuring that participants were well-prepared to navigate and utilize the legal system effectively to assist GBV survivors and promote gender parity in their communities. Pre- and post-training evaluations indicated a notable increase in both legal knowledge and essential paralegal skills. Initially, 40% of participants had no knowledge, 39% had minimal knowledge, 20% had moderate knowledge, and only 1% had advanced knowledge. After the workshop, no participants were at the no-knowledge level, 10% had minimal knowledge, 60% had moderate knowledge, and 30% had advanced knowledge.

## Chapter Three

# **Social Mobilisation and Citizens Engagement**

## **Social Mobilisation and Citizens' Engagement**

Social mobilization is seen at AF as a means to motivate economic sustainable change by bringing awareness among people and ultimately for ordinary citizens to demand and claim their rights. This is through engagement at all levels and the decentralization of policy and decision-making.

### **3.1 Role of Women and Youth In Prompting Peace in Communities**

AF organized a study circle on August 29, 2023, at Lincoln Corner, Institute of Management Sciences (IMS), Peshawar. The study circle was facilitated by Dr. Faizullah Jan, Head of the Mass Communication Department at the University of Peshawar, the session included WPAs from Peshawar and nearby areas like Haripur and Swat.

Addressing violent extremism requires a multi-faceted approach involving community engagement, education, economic development, and institutional reforms. Promoting dialogue and community-led initiatives raises awareness about extremism and fosters a sense of shared responsibility. Expanding access to quality education and vocational training equips young people with skills for employment and resilience against extremist narratives. Economic development is vital, with investments in job creation and entrepreneurship offering alternatives for unemployed youth.

He further added that Campaigns promoting tolerance and interfaith harmony help counter extremist ideologies, while strengthening law enforcement ensures the disruption of extremist activities in a rights-respecting manner. Engaging youth through sports, cultural activities, and creative platforms channels their energy positively. Counseling and psychosocial support are essential for individuals affected by conflict and radicalization. Collaboration with civil society organizations addresses extremism's root causes, while integrating refugees with international support mitigates associated risks.

Efforts must also counter online radicalization by promoting digital literacy and critical thinking. Political and institutional reforms to improve governance and transparency address grievances that extremists exploit. Early intervention programs and international cooperation further bolster strategies to combat violent extremism effectively.

At the close of the session, Ms. Shabina Ayaz, Resident Director of AF KP, expressed her gratitude for the engaging discussions and collaboration. She stressed the need for a comprehensive and multidimensional strategy to tackle TVE/CVE challenges, emphasizing the critical roles of government entities, civil society, religious leaders, educational institutions, and international partners. She called for unified and concerted efforts to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Ms. Mumtaz Mughal further highlighted that the session's recommendations would pave the way for enhanced governance and provide valuable insights for shaping peace initiatives targeted at policymakers and key stakeholders.



### 3.2 Goodwill Gift Distribution for Returning Afghan Families

AF and Feminist Friday extended a warm gesture of goodwill by preparing gift packs for Afghan families returning to their homeland on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023. This initiative aimed to provide essential items and comfort to these families during their transition, reflecting a spirit of solidarity and support. The gift packs contained basic necessities such as clothing, hygiene products, and food items, as well as small tokens of goodwill to make the journey more manageable and uplifting for the returning families.

This initiative highlighted the humanitarian commitment of AF KP and FF to stand with vulnerable communities during times of change and uncertainty. Afghan families, many of whom had lived in Pakistan for decades, expressed their gratitude for the thoughtful gesture. By offering these gift packs, the organizations hoped to ease the challenges faced by these families as they resettle in Afghanistan, fostering a message of peace and goodwill between the two nations.

The effort also served to strengthen cross-border relations and promote harmony by showcasing Pakistan's compassion towards its Afghan neighbours. The initiative was a testament to the shared cultural and historical ties between the two communities and the role civil society organizations can play in promoting empathy and care during critical moments. Through such actions, AF KP and FF underscored the importance of humanity and support in fostering regional stability and goodwill.

### 3.3 Women Water Network Meeting on Safe Water and Climate Impact

Aurat Foundation Quetta team hosted a significant meeting with the Women Water Network to discuss pressing issues related to safe water access and the impacts of climate change on

women. The meeting was organized on Women Water Network Meeting on Safe Water and Climate Impact on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024. Participants highlighted the challenges faced by women in Balochistan, particularly in rural areas, where access to clean and safe water remains a persistent issue. The discussion emphasized the gendered burden of water scarcity, as women are often the primary water collectors in their households, leading to physical strain and limited opportunities for education and employment.

The meeting also explored how climate change exacerbates water-related challenges, such as droughts and declining water quality, which disproportionately affect women. Participants shared experiences of how environmental changes are increasing women's vulnerability, particularly in agriculture-dependent communities, where water scarcity disrupts livelihoods. The group stressed the importance of incorporating gender perspectives into water management policies to ensure that women's voices and needs are prioritized in climate adaptation strategies.

Key recommendations from the meeting included the establishment of localized water management systems, increased investment in water conservation technologies, and community awareness campaigns about climate resilience. The Women Water Network pledged to advocate for policy reforms and collaborate with government bodies to address these issues. The session concluded with a collective commitment to empower women as active agents in water resource management and climate change mitigation efforts.

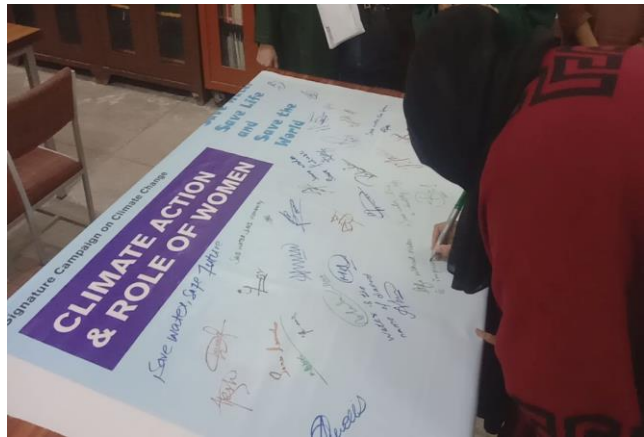
### **3.4 Climate Action and Role of Women**

Aurat Foundation organized an awareness-raising signature campaign titled "Climate Action and Role of Women" at Punjab University on 23 Nov. 2023., Lahore. Ms Raana Malik, Chairperson Gender Studies Department shared the objectives of campaign. |she said that the campaign would be educated the students about the critical role women play in addressing climate change and promoting sustainable practices. The event will provide a platform for dialogue on the challenges women face due to climate change, such as water scarcity, agricultural disruptions, and health issues, while also highlighting their potential as leaders and change-makers in climate resilience efforts.

Students, faculty members, and university staff actively participated in the campaign, signing pledges to support climate action and gender equality. Informational booths were set up to provide participants with resources on climate adaptation and the importance of women's leadership in environmental sustainability. The campaign encouraged students to think critically about how climate policies and actions must consider the unique needs and contributions of women to ensure inclusive and equitable solutions.

Through interactive sessions, participants discussed real-world examples of how women in rural and urban areas are innovating to combat climate change. From spearheading community-based water management projects to advocating for green energy, the role of women as key agents of change was emphasized. The campaign also touched upon the importance of integrating gender perspectives into climate policies to address systemic inequalities and build a more sustainable future.

The signature campaign concluded with a collective call to action, urging participants to take tangible steps in their personal and professional lives to mitigate climate change. Ms Sara Anum, Resident Director AF Lahore committed to continuing efforts to amplify women's voices in climate discourse, ensuring their active participation in shaping a sustainable future. The event left a lasting impression on attendees, fostering a sense of responsibility and empowerment among the youth to advocate for climate justice and gender equality.



### 3.5 Promoting Social and Economic Rights of Women Garment Workers

Aurat Foundation launched a project in Lahore to “promote the social and economic rights of women garment workers in Pakistan” on 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec. 2024. After the opening and welcome speech of Sara Anam Resident Director Aurat Foundation Lahore, Project Manager Shamila Tanveer informed about the goals and explained the details of the project.

She said that building the technical and professional leadership skills of women workers working in the garment sector, improving professionalism, health and safety measures are the main objectives of this project and Aurat Foundation is committed to support women workers in leadership and organizing them in apparel industries. She further stated that the aim of this project is to break the occupational segregation and precarious forms of employment for women and promote the social and economic rights of women garment workers in Pakistan as well as break barriers and challenge gender occupational segregation and ending the precarious employment situation for women. She explained that the project will promote active participation and integration of women as well as strategies for poverty alleviation and economic justice.



Various stakeholders such as government departments, Labour department, chamber of commerce, labor rights experts, women-led organizations and unions, representatives of technical training institutions, trade union representatives, Apparel Women Workers participated and strategic recommendations were made to identify the gender gap and barriers faced by Women Garment Workers (AWWs) and for economic justice which will help Aurat Foundation to chart a way forward.

Addressing the participants, Justice (R) Naisra Javed, said that working women are integral part of our society and their role has always been undermined by the society. She appreciated the

efforts of Aurat Foundation for women working in textile industries and assured all kinds of her support.

Hanif Ramey, General Secretary, United Labor Federation Punjab, discussed in detail the challenges and problems faced by textile women workers in Pakistan. Abdul Rehman Arif, Director Board of Textiles Industries in their address emphasized the importance of empowering women workers to make a prosperous Pakistan. Ms. Sabahat Jabin, Deputy Director Labor and Human Resource Department, Punjab presented a comprehensive review of the legal framework for improving the working conditions and environment for women workers. Dr. Shehla Javed Akram, Chairperson Women Chamber of Commerce and Industries mentioned the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce in strengthening the textile women workers and providing a safe environment for them.

Mr. Qazi Saddam, Provincial Focal Person SMEDA Punjab shed light on the steps taken by SMEDA regarding the development of women entrepreneurship. Ms. Mahrukh Qadeer, Business Woman shared her life struggle and motivated the apparel women workers to know their rights and avail them. She assured her support for women workers. In the end, Nabila Shaheen, Senior Program Officer, Aurat Foundation, thanked the participants for their attendance while highlighting the future plan of action.



### **3.6 Balochistan Youth Chess Championship & Painting Competition 2024**

The Balochistan Youth Chess Championship & Painting Competition 2024, organized by Aurat Foundation on January 6th, 2024, in Quetta. The objective of the event was to provide an opportunity for creativity and critical thinking among youth, providing them with a platform to express themselves through chess and visual arts. With a focus on engaging both boys and girls, the competition celebrated the achievements of young artists and strategists, encouraging the spirit of healthy competition and personal growth. The event was a significant step in promoting youth development and empowering the next generation of leaders and innovators in Balochistan.

The Prize Distribution Ceremony of the Balochistan Youth Chess Championship and Painting, Scratches, Competition was held with great enthusiasm in Quetta, where Mr. Jan Achakzai, the Minister for Information, and Ms. Shania Khan, the Advisor to the Chief Minister for Women Development and Social Welfare, were the Chief Guests. The event celebrated the remarkable talents of youth in the region, showcasing the importance of youth engagement in creative and

intellectual activities. The ceremony was attended by a distinguished group of leaders, including Mr. Sardar Khan Bughti, Secretary of the Women Development Department (WDD), and Mr. Tariq Javed Mengal, Director General of Social Welfare, who also played key roles in the event.

Notable personalities such as Ms. Rahila Durrani, the Ex-Speaker of the Provincial Assembly, and Ms. Roshan Bharucha, Ex-Senator and Member of the Board of Aurat Foundation, were also present, emphasizing the significance of youth development and the role of women in promoting such initiatives. The event highlighted the contributions of various individuals and organizations committed to the advancement of youth and social welfare. Local leaders, including Ms. Pari Gul Tareen, SP Police, and Ms. Jahan Ara Tabasum, Deputy Secretary of WDD, also attended the ceremony, reinforcing the commitment to supporting youth talent and fostering a positive environment for them to thrive.



The ceremony featured a celebration of both intellectual and artistic achievements, with awards presented to winners of the chess competition and the painting/scratches contest. The participation of key figures like Mr. M. Abduhoo, Divisional Director of Social Welfare, and Mr. Asfandyar Badini, Director of the Ministry of Human Rights, highlighted the collaborative efforts between various sectors to uplift and empower the youth of Balochistan.

The presence of community and union representatives, such as Mr. Pir Muhammad Kakar, President of the Labour Union, emphasized the importance of fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility in nurturing the potential of young people.

The event concluded with inspiring speeches from the leaders present, emphasizing the importance of nurturing creativity, intellectual development, and a culture of peace and unity among the youth. Mr. Sadiq Sumalani from the University of Balochistan (UOB) and Ms. Sadiqa Sultan, Project Officer at UNDP, also commended the youth for their participation and encouraged them to continue pursuing their passions. The prize distribution ceremony underscored the collective efforts of civil society, the media, and governmental organizations in creating an enabling environment for young people to excel in their chosen fields.

### 3.7 Discussion on Gender Dynamics of Balochistan in General Election 2024

On January 10, 2024, Mr. Allauddin Khilji, Resident Director of Aurat Foundation, and Mr. Asfand Yar Badini, Regional Director of the Ministry of Human Rights, visited the Provincial Election Commission office in Quetta. They met with key officials, including Joint Provincial Election Commissioner (Elections) Mr. Abdul Qayyum, Director (Elections) Mr. Wasim Ahmed, District Election Commissioner Mr. Nasir Harifal, and Assistant Election Commissioner Mr. Ghous Bakhsh. The discussions centered on the preparations for the upcoming General Elections, focusing on the mechanisms in place to ensure transparency, accessibility, and inclusivity in the electoral process.



Following the meeting, the delegation visited the Provincial Monitoring and Control Room of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Mr. Sarwar, Deputy Director of the Monitoring and Control Room, provided a comprehensive briefing on the monitoring processes at the district, divisional, and provincial levels. He highlighted the systems and tools being utilized to oversee electoral activities and ensure compliance with electoral regulations.

During the visit, Mr. Allauddin Khilji shared information about the Aurat Foundation's General Election Gender Monitoring Cell, established at their Quetta office. This initiative aims to monitor gender-related issues in the electoral process, ensuring women's active participation and addressing potential barriers they may face. Mr. Khilji emphasized the importance of collaboration between the Election Commission and civil society organizations in creating a more inclusive electoral environment.

In conclusion, Mr. Khilji requested the ECP to share the lists of candidates following the scrutiny process to enhance gender monitoring efforts. The ECP officials agreed to the request, marking a positive step toward greater transparency and cooperation in the lead-up to the elections. This visit underscored the importance of joint efforts between civil society and electoral bodies to uphold democratic principles and promote gender equity in the electoral process.

### **3.8 Needs to Integrate Gender-Sensitive Perspectives into Conflict Resolution Strategies.**

Aurat Foundation hosted a study circle with Women Peace Architects (WPAs) focusing on "Transforming Violent Extremism," held at Lincoln Corner, National Library, Islamabad. The session brought together participants committed to fostering peace and countering violent ideologies. The event aimed to explore grassroots approaches to address extremism and promote harmony, particularly through empowering women as agents of peace within their communities. This initiative is part of Aurat Foundation's ongoing efforts to integrate gender-sensitive perspectives into conflict resolution strategies.

Ms. Rehma Hyder, Director of the Centre of Excellence on Population and Wellbeing Studies at NUST University, led the discussion. She shared insights on the root causes and triggers of violent extremism and emphasized the critical role women play in identifying and addressing early signs of radicalization. Ms. Hyder highlighted the importance of investing in education, community engagement, and inclusive dialogue to prevent extremism. The discussion also touched on the need for policy reforms that amplify women's voices in peacebuilding and address the socio-economic factors driving extremism.

The study circle provided an interactive platform for WPAs to share their experiences, challenges, and recommendations for tackling extremism in their regions. Participants discussed strategies to counter extremist narratives through community engagement and digital platforms, focusing on creating inclusive spaces that promote understanding and resilience. The event concluded with a call to action for strengthening women's roles in peace initiatives and fostering collaboration among stakeholders to build sustainable peace.

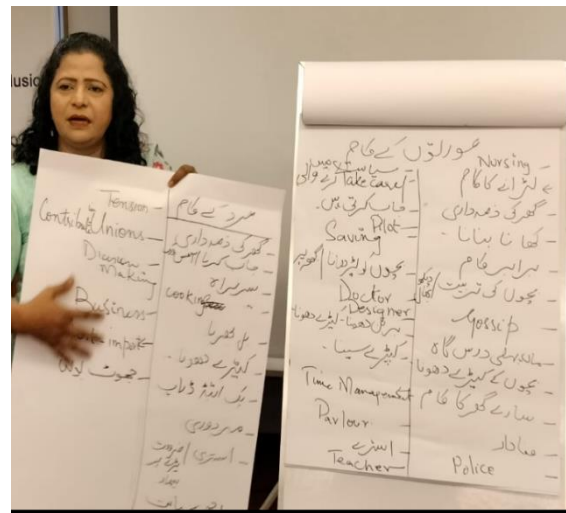
She also focused on gender-sensitive strategies should also include targeted initiatives to empower women as peacebuilders. This involves providing training in conflict resolution, mediation, and leadership while addressing socio-economic barriers that limit their participation. Addressing structural inequalities and cultural norms, Mr Shahid Rahim said that perpetuate gender biases is critical to fostering a supportive environment for women's involvement in peacebuilding. Finally, policies and programs must incorporate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the gender impact of conflict resolution strategies. Data collection should be disaggregated by gender to identify gaps and measure progress effectively.

Ms Mumtaz Mughal said that collaborative efforts between governments, civil society, and international organizations are necessary to ensure these strategies are implemented meaningfully, creating inclusive pathways for lasting peace and stability.

### 3.9 Promoting Gender Equality and Human Rights: Training on Pro-Women Laws for Water & Sewerage Board Officers

A one-day training workshop focusing on Human Rights, Gender, and Pro-Women Laws for the officers of the Water and Sewerage Board, Sindh was conducted by Ms. Malka Khan, Senior Programme Officer on February 29, 2024. This initiative was part of ongoing efforts to promote awareness and understanding of critical human rights issues and to foster a gender-sensitive workplace culture. The training emphasized the importance of recognizing the legal frameworks that protect women’s rights in Pakistan and highlighted the roles and responsibilities of institutions in ensuring these rights are upheld.

The workshop provided a comprehensive overview of the key challenges faced by women in accessing their rights, particularly in workplaces and public institutions. Participants engaged in discussions about gender-based discrimination, workplace harassment, and the lack of representation of women in decision-making processes. Ms. Khan outlined the significance of implementing pro-women laws, such as the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, and stressed the need for proactive measures to create an inclusive and equitable environment for all employees.



Through interactive sessions and case studies, the officers of the Water and Sewerage Board gained valuable insights into their role in promoting gender equality and protecting human rights within their institution. The workshop concluded with a commitment from the participants to take actionable steps in fostering a workplace that respects diversity and ensures the empowerment of women. This training served as a vital step in integrating gender-sensitive practices into the operations of public sector institutions in Sindh.

She recommended that to ensure the effective implementation of pro-women laws across all sectors, including public institutions like the Water & Sewerage Board. Regular capacity-building sessions for officers should be conducted to enhance their understanding of gender-sensitive policies and legal frameworks. Additionally, gender-responsive mechanisms must be established within organizational structures to address workplace inequalities and promote an inclusive environment. Strengthened collaboration between institutions and civil society is also crucial to foster accountability and sustained progress in empowering women and safeguarding human rights.

## Chapter Four

# Advocacy, Awareness-Raising and Lobbying

## Advocacy, Awareness-Raising and Lobbying

Aurat Foundation is essentially an advocacy organisation that has established a wide network around the whole country, lobbying and creating awareness around gender-related issues, including pro-women laws and women's political participation. Below we showcase what we have worked towards, celebrations and protests on causes and issues we hold close to our hearts and minds.

### **4.1 Interface Dialogue on Women's Political Participation with Legislators and Political Parties**

AF organized an interface dialogue with legislators and political parties to discuss the pressing issues related to women's rights, political participation, and gender equality on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 under JAZBA programme. The dialogue brought together key political leaders, policymakers, and representatives from various political parties to engage in meaningful discussions on how to strengthen the role of women in the political landscape of Balochistan. The dialogue aimed to build bridges between civil society and political stakeholders to advocate for gender-sensitive policies and inclusive governance.

Allaudin Khilji, focused on the need for legislative reforms that would ensure equal opportunities for women in politics and decision-making roles. Mr Nazir Ahmed, Director ECP emphasized the importance of creating policies that support women's active participation in local and national governance. They also addressed the barriers women face, including social stigma, cultural constraints, and lack of access to resources, that hinder their political involvement. The dialogue highlighted the role of legislators in passing laws that promote gender equality and empower women at the grassroots level.

Ms Fouzia |Shaheen, Chairperson NCSW, participants discussed the importance of political parties adopting inclusive strategies to encourage more women to run for office. She emphasized the need for internal party policies that allocate seats for women and ensure equal representation in leadership positions. She also explored the idea of mentorship programs and capacity-building initiatives to prepare women for political careers. The dialogue underscored the necessity of breaking down the political and social barriers that prevent women from fully engaging in political processes.

The event concluded with a collective commitment to work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable political environment for women in Balochistan. Participants agreed on the importance of continuous collaboration between political parties, civil society, and government institutions to ensure the full implementation of gender equality policies. The interface dialogue proved to be an important step in fostering greater political will to address women's issues and support their leadership in politics, ultimately contributing to a more just and democratic society.

## 4.2 Advocacy on Amendments to Discriminatory Laws and Pro-Women Legislation

Ms Mahnaz Rehman, Resident Director Aurat Foundation, Karachi along with her team hold meeting with Provincial Minister and Secretary Women Development Department, Sindh on amendments in discriminatory laws and effective implementation on pro women laws on October 7, 2023 and meeting with WDD on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

In meeting, Provincial Minister and Secretary of the Women Development Department, Sindh discussed vital amendments to discriminatory laws and the effective implementation of pro-women legislation. The session focused on identifying existing legal barriers that perpetuate gender inequality and exploring ways to reform these frameworks to ensure justice and equality for women in Sindh. Emphasis was placed on harmonizing laws with international conventions and commitments to safeguard women's rights and address issues like workplace harassment, domestic violence, and gender-based discrimination.



The participants also highlighted the importance of ensuring the proper execution of pro-women laws already in place. Strategies such as capacity building for law enforcement agencies, raising public awareness, and fostering collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations were discussed. The Women Development Department expressed its commitment to working with stakeholders to create a society where women's rights are protected, and their contributions to social and economic development are fully recognized and supported.

Mahnaz Rehman, Resident Director of Aurat Foundation, Karachi, along with her team, held a significant meeting with the Secretary of Law, Sindh Government. The discussion centred on proposing amendments to discriminatory laws and ensuring the effective implementation of pro-women legislation. This meeting aimed to address the systemic legal barriers faced by women and emphasized the need for creating a more equitable and just legal framework. Through these efforts, the Aurat Foundation seeks to advance women's rights and strengthen mechanisms to combat gender discrimination in Sindh.



### 4.3 Open Court with Students in Bajour

Aurat Foundation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) office organized an impactful event titled "Open Court with Students" in Bajaur as part of its Rule of Law program, supported by UN Women. This initiative aimed to create a platform for young minds to engage with legal experts, government representatives, and community leaders on issues related to justice, gender equality, and the importance of upholding the rule of law. The interactive session encouraged students to openly discuss their concerns, challenges, and aspirations while fostering a deeper understanding of their rights and responsibilities as active citizens.

The event also focused on promoting gender equality and sensitizing students about the critical role of women in decision-making and leadership. Legal awareness sessions were conducted to highlight key aspects of the justice system and the significance of addressing gender-based violence and discrimination. By organizing such forums, the Aurat Foundation, with the support of UN Women, continues to empower youth in remote areas like Bajaur to become advocates for social change and champions of justice in their communities.



### 4.4 Explore Strategies for Inclusive Environment for Marginalized Groups in Balochistan

A significant meeting was held with the Caretaker Provincial Information Minister of Balochistan, Jan Achakzai, along with Afghan Nazam-ul-Amor, Mr. Gul Hassan, Fouzia Shaheen, Chairperson of the Provincial Commission on the Status of Women and Allauddin Kilji, Resident Director of Aurat Foundation. The gathering focused on critical issues affecting women and children in the province, emphasizing the urgent need for enhanced legal protections, access to education, and healthcare services. They highlighted the challenges faced by marginalized communities, including gender-based violence, child labor, and lack of representation, and called for collaborative efforts to address these pressing concerns.

The discussion also explored strategies for creating a more inclusive environment for marginalized groups of society specially women and children in Balochistan. Proposals were made to strengthen existing laws and policies, establish support mechanisms for victims of

violence, and ensure effective implementation of gender-sensitive programs. The stakeholders stressed the importance of engaging community leaders, government institutions, and civil society organizations to drive meaningful change.

The meeting underscored a shared commitment to improving the socio-economic conditions of women and children, fostering an environment where their rights are protected and their potential is fully realized.

#### **4.5 Public Transport Awareness Initiative to End VAWG**



Aurat Foundation's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) office launched the 16 Days of Activism Campaign in Peshawar with the aim of raising awareness about gender-based violence and promoting women's rights. As part of the campaign, awareness messages were prominently displayed on public transport across the city, targeting a wide audience and ensuring that the messages reached individuals from all walks of life. The posters highlighted the importance of ending violence against women and girls and encouraged the community to stand against gender-based violence.

In addition to the public transport awareness initiative, a sensitization session was organized for drivers, who play a key role in interacting with the public on a daily basis. The session focused on educating drivers about the impacts of gender-based violence, the importance of respecting women's rights, and how they can contribute to creating a safer environment for women and girls. By targeting this often-overlooked group, the session aimed to create a ripple effect of awareness that could extend to the wider community.

The session also included discussions on how drivers can help identify and report instances of harassment or abuse they might witness in their daily routines. Emphasizing the role of everyday citizens in preventing violence, the initiative aimed to foster a culture of accountability and respect for women's dignity. It also encouraged drivers to act as allies in the fight against gender-based violence and become advocates for women's safety.

The campaign was part of a larger effort to engage the community in the 16 Days of Activism, which is an international movement aimed at combating violence against women. Aurat

Foundation's efforts in Peshawar underscored the importance of raising awareness in diverse spaces and engaging various sectors of society to address gender-based violence. By using public transport and engaging with drivers, AF KP reached a broad audience, ensuring that the message of ending violence against women resonated throughout the city.

#### **4.6 Awareness Session with Police on Gender-Based Violence in Swat**

An awareness session with police officials in Swat as part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign was conducted on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at Swat. The session focused on the critical role of law enforcement in addressing and preventing gender-based violence (GBV) and ensuring women's safety and rights. By engaging with police personnel, the initiative aimed to strengthen their understanding of GBV-related issues and equip them with the knowledge needed to respond effectively to such cases.

During the session, key topics such as recognizing different forms of gender-based violence, understanding the legal framework for protecting women, and the importance of timely intervention were discussed. Police officials were sensitized to their responsibilities in handling cases of violence against women, ensuring survivors receive justice while maintaining a survivor-centered approach. Practical strategies for addressing harassment, domestic violence, and other forms of abuse were also highlighted.

The participants were encouraged to foster collaboration between law enforcement agencies and civil society organizations to create a more supportive environment for women and marginalized groups. Special emphasis was placed on building trust between police and the community to enhance reporting mechanisms for GBV cases. The session also addressed the need for gender-sensitization training within the police force to improve interactions with survivors and promote equality.

The activity was an essential step in fostering a more inclusive and responsive police system in Swat. By involving police officials in the 16 Days of Activism campaign, the Aurat Foundation reinforced the significance of law enforcement in creating a safer and more equitable society. This initiative underscored the importance of multi-stakeholder efforts to combat GBV and highlighted the transformative impact of awareness and sensitization within key institutions.

#### **4.7 An Awareness Session on Pro-Women Laws at Central Jail Peshawar**

A session on pro-women laws was successfully conducted at the Central Jail Peshawar in on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023. The session was a collaborative effort involving prominent stakeholders, including Mr. Maqsood from the Directorate of Human Rights, Shagufta Gul representing UN Women, Mr. Bacha, Deputy Superintendent, Mr. Farjad, Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Nadia, Assistant Superintendent, and the team from Aurat Foundation. The primary objective was to educate and sensitize both the staff and inmates on the significance of pro-women laws and their effective implementation.

During the session, key legal provisions related to women's rights, protection against gender-based violence, and the importance of gender equality were discussed in detail. Participants were made aware of existing laws such as the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, the Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, and the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act. The experts emphasized the critical role these laws play in safeguarding women's rights and ensuring justice for survivors of violence and discrimination.

The interactive nature of the session allowed participants to engage in meaningful discussions, seek clarity on legal provisions, and explore avenues for building a more inclusive and respectful environment within the correctional system. The involvement of stakeholders like UN Women and the Directorate of Human Rights highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts in promoting awareness and addressing challenges related to women's rights in institutional settings. This initiative is a significant step toward fostering a culture of awareness and accountability regarding pro-women laws.

#### 4.8 Awareness Session on Pro-Women Laws with Students

An awareness session on pro-women laws was organized for students in Sindh, on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024 at Center for Excellence for Women's Studies, University of Karachi. The aim of session was to educate and engage the younger generation about the importance of gender equality and the legal frameworks supporting women's rights. The session highlighted key legislation such as the Sindh Domestic Violence Act 2013, the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013, and workplace harassment laws. Students were informed about the significance of these laws in protecting women's rights and promoting a more equitable society.

During the interactive session, participants discussed challenges faced by women in Sindh, including domestic violence, early marriages, and workplace discrimination. Facilitators emphasized the role of youth in advocating for women's rights and fostering a culture of respect and equality. Students actively engaged in the discussion, sharing their perspectives and exploring ways to raise awareness about pro-women laws within their communities.



The session concluded with a commitment to empowering students as change agents. Educational materials on women's legal rights were distributed, and participants were encouraged to spread awareness among their peers and families. The event underscored the importance of involving young people in the promotion and implementation of pro-women laws to ensure a progressive and inclusive society in Sindh.

#### 4.9 Unit Invest-Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls

On 7th December 2023, Aurat Foundation Quetta, in collaboration with Mercy Corps and the Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Alliance (EVAW&G Alliance), hosted a mega event in Quetta as part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign. The event organized in partnership with the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) and the Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women (BCSW), brought together over 250 participants from diverse backgrounds. The primary objective was to raise awareness about gender-based violence and to advocate for collective action to end violence against women and girls.

The panellists were Mr. Muhammad Ali from State Bank, Ms. Pari Gul Tareen SP Traffic, Ms. Sana Durrani, Mr. Arsalan Manzoor from FIA, Ms. Fauzia Shaheen Chairperson BCSW, Ms. Sabira Islam Ex. Ombudsperson, Dr. Atta ur Rehman Islamic Scholar, Mr. Ashraf Gichki DG BCRA, Prof. Faiza Mir, Prof. Farkhanda Aurangzaib NCHR, Mr. Tariq Javed Mengal DG Social Welfare, Mrs. Roshan Khursheed Buruchha, Allauddin Khilji Aurat Foundation, Mr. Khalid Kasi feom Mercy Corps, Mr. Ishfaq Mengal from SPO were the Panelist. More than 250 peoples participated from different walk of life.



The event served as a platform for thought-provoking discussions on critical issues affecting women and girls in Balochistan. Speakers from various organizations highlighted the importance of creating safe spaces for women and promoting their rights through effective laws and policies. Key stakeholders, including policymakers, civil society representatives, and members of the local community, shared their insights on how to address systemic challenges and cultural barriers that perpetuate violence against women.

In addition to the discussions, the event featured stalls showcasing the products of home-based workers, providing them with an opportunity to exhibit their skills and entrepreneurial talent. These stalls not only highlighted the economic contributions of women but also

emphasized the importance of empowering women economically as a means of reducing their vulnerability to violence. The inclusion of home-based workers in the event underscored the need for inclusive strategies to support women across all sectors.

The mega event concluded with a call to action for all stakeholders to strengthen efforts in combating gender-based violence and ensuring the safety, dignity, and empowerment of women and girls in Balochistan. Participants expressed their commitment to supporting initiatives that promote equality and justice while fostering a culture of non-violence. The event was a significant step toward building a collective movement to end violence against women and girls in the region.

#### 4.10 Closing Ceremony of 16 Day Activism Campaign in Balochistan

The closing ceremony of the 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women and Girls was held at the Directorate of Women Development Department, Balochistan, in collaboration with Aurat Foundation, UNDP, BCSW, and NCHR. The event highlighted the collective efforts to address gender-based violence and emphasized the importance of continued advocacy for women's rights. The ceremony was attended by key stakeholders and professionals dedicated to creating a safer environment for women and girls in the province.

Mr. Jan Achakzai, Minister for Information, graced the event as the Guest of Honour, expressing his commitment to supporting initiatives that combat violence against women. He emphasized the government's responsibility to ensure effective implementation of laws and policies for the protection and empowerment of women. His presence reinforced the significance of partnerships between governmental and non-governmental organizations in advancing gender equality.



The event was chaired by Mr. Sardar Khan Bughti, Secretary of the Women Development Department (WDD), who highlighted the achievements of the 16 Days campaign and the importance of interdepartmental collaboration. He commended the efforts of the stakeholders involved, including the Gender Desk and Helpline teams, for their continuous support in addressing gender-based violence.



Prominent speakers, including Ms. Fauzia Shaheen, Chairperson BCSW, and Mr. Muhammad Ali from NCHR, shared insights on the progress made during the campaign and the challenges ahead. They stressed the need for sustained efforts to raise awareness and remote legal and social reforms.

#### **4.11 Humanitarian Support for Afghan Refugees: Distribution of Winter Essentials**

In collaboration with Feminist Friday, Aurat Foundation team organized a humanitarian initiative at the Landi Kotal Afghan Refugees Camp on December 13, 2023. The activity



focused on supporting Afghan refugee families by providing essential items such as blankets, warm clothing, and food supplies to help them cope with the harsh winter conditions. The initiative aimed to alleviate the struggles faced by the refugees, particularly women and children, who are among the most vulnerable during this challenging time.

The distribution event brought together representatives from the Aurat Foundation, Feminist Friday, and community volunteers, who collectively ensured the smooth and organized delivery of aid. Each family received a package tailored to meet their immediate needs, including food staples and winter essentials. This gesture not only provided tangible support but also symbolized solidarity and care for the refugee community.

Participants emphasized the importance of such collaborative efforts in addressing the pressing humanitarian needs of Afghan refugees. The event served as a reminder of the power of collective action in creating a meaningful impact. Aurat Foundation reaffirmed its commitment to supporting marginalized communities and stressed the need for sustained efforts to address the challenges faced by refugees through advocacy, resource mobilization, and direct interventions.

#### **4.12 Role of Media in Monitoring Women and Labour Laws in Sindh**

A networking meeting with media allies was held on December 15, 2023, at Mehran Hotel, Karachi, to discuss the critical role of media in monitoring the implementation of women and labor laws in Sindh. The discussion highlighted the challenges women face, especially economic violence, a form of exploitation that limits their access to opportunities and resources. Mehnaz Rehman said that media was recognized as a powerful ally in advocating for the rights of marginalized groups, particularly women workers in Sindh's rural areas.

Ms Farhat Perveen said that rural workers and peasants, constituting over 70% of the labor force in Sindh's rural areas, are increasingly vulnerable due to exploitative labor practices. These individuals, who work long hours in agriculture, brick kilns, and farms, are often deprived of minimum wage, social security, and decent working conditions. Despite the Government of Sindh's commitment in 2019 to ensure a minimum wage of Rs. 25,000 for unskilled laborers, millions of rural workers, including women and children, earn meager amounts ranging from Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 10,000 per month. Many of these laborers are forced to work under hazardous conditions, picking crops like cotton and chilies for negligible pay.

Advocate Shazia Ahmed said that illegal contractual labor system, despite being prohibited by the Supreme Court, persists across the province, even in government departments. This practice excludes workers from vital benefits provided by the Sindh Employees Social Security Institution (SESSI) and Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI). Shockingly, less than 1% of workers are registered with SESSI, and only 5% of factory workers are registered with EOBI. Furthermore, even registered workers face delays and inefficiencies in accessing their entitled benefits. The participants of the meeting emphasized the urgent need for media to amplify these issues, hold stakeholders accountable, and advocate for comprehensive reforms to ensure fair labor practices and the protection of workers' rights.

#### 4.13 Invest in Women-Accelerate Progress

On March 7, 2024, Aurat Foundation, Mercy Corps, the Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women (BCSW), EVAW Alliance, and the Provincial Office of NCHR joined hands to celebrate International Women’s Day in Quetta. The event brought together stakeholders from various sectors, including government officials, civil society representatives, and women’s rights activists, to honor the contributions of women in shaping society and to highlight the persistent challenges they face. The theme of the event emphasized women’s empowerment and the importance of ensuring gender equality across all spheres of life.

During the event, panel discussions were held focusing on pressing issues such as gender-based violence, the economic empowerment of women, and the implementation of pro-women laws in Balochistan. Speakers underscored the need for collective action to address societal and structural barriers hindering women’s progress. Success stories of women breaking barriers and excelling in various fields were shared to inspire participants and highlight the transformative impact of gender-inclusive policies and practices.

Ms Fouzia Shaheen, Chairperson, Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women reaffirms its commitment to advocating for the rights of women across the province. This year’s theme emphasizes the importance of women’s participation in peace and development processes. We believe that empowering women is central to building a prosperous, just, and peaceful society. The BCSW will continue its efforts to ensure that women’s voices are heard in all spheres of life, from local governance to national decision-making. Together with our partners, we will work towards eliminating gender-based violence, ensuring access to education, and promoting women’s economic independence.

MS Sana Baloch said that he EVAW (Elimination of Violence Against Women) Alliance stands united in celebrating the strength, resilience, and contributions of women across the world. Today, we reaffirm our dedication to eradicating violence against women and advocating for a society where women live free from fear and violence.



Ms Farkhanda Aurngzaeb, Member, National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) is proud to join today's celebrations, as we honor the resilience and contributions of women in all sectors of society. We are committed to advancing women's rights and ensuring their protection through the full implementation of human rights laws and policies.

The celebration also featured cultural performances, showcasing the rich heritage of Balochistan, and stalls displaying products made by local women entrepreneurs. These stalls served as a platform to support and promote women's economic initiatives. The event concluded with a call to action, urging all participants to play their role in fostering a gender-equal society where women can thrive and contribute fully to the development of the province and the nation.

#### **4.14 Building Safe Digital Spaces: A Focus on Women's Security**

Aurat Foundation (AF) in collaboration with the Center of Intelligent Systems & Networks Research (CISNR) at UET Peshawar organized an insightful session on cyber harassment on March 8, 2024. The event aimed to raise awareness about the growing concerns of online harassment, particularly targeting women, and to discuss strategies to combat this digital menace. The session provided a platform for students, experts and activists to engage in meaningful discussions about the psychological, social, and legal implications of cyber harassment. It also highlighted the importance of fostering safe online environments for women and marginalized groups.

The session featured in-depth presentations and discussions led by experts from AF and CISNR, focusing on the role of technology in facilitating or curbing cyber harassment. Participants were educated about various forms of online abuse, such as cyberbullying, identity theft, and online stalking, and were introduced to digital tools and legal resources available for victims. Ms Shabina Ayaz, Resident Director AF emphasized the need for better laws, stronger enforcement mechanisms, and educational campaigns to reduce online harassment and promote digital safety. Special attention was given to empowering women with knowledge about their rights and the importance of reporting incidents of cyber harassment. She said that AF is committed to addressing the growing issue of cyber harassment, particularly the challenges faced by women in the digital world.



Representative of CISNR, we believe in leveraging technology for the betterment of society, including promoting digital safety and security. Cyber harassment is a pervasive issue that affects millions of individuals, especially women, and we are proud to partner with Aurat Foundation to address this challenge. The session held on March 8 provided crucial insights into the role of technology in both enabling and combating online harassment. Our goal is to contribute to the development of technological solutions that can help prevent digital violence, empower women to protect themselves, and foster a culture of respect and accountability in the digital space.

#### 4.15 Strengthening and Resilience of Violence against Women



Strengthening the resilience of women survivors of violence is crucial to helping them rebuild their lives and regain their sense of agency. This involves providing comprehensive support, including psychological counseling, legal aid, economic empowerment, and community reintegration. By addressing both immediate needs and long-term recovery, survivors can overcome the trauma they have endured. Empowering women through education, skill-building, and creating safe spaces fosters self-confidence and independence, enabling them to lead fulfilling, productive lives. Strengthening resilience not only supports individual healing but also contributes to breaking the cycle of violence within families and communities.

In this context, AF organized a special event to celebrate International Women's Day with the survivors of violence at Dar-ul-Aman, Rawalpindi. The occasion provided an opportunity to honor and uplift the voices of women who have endured various forms of abuse and violence. Through a cake-cutting ceremony and interactive sessions, the event aimed to promote solidarity, healing, and empowerment among the survivors. It was a symbolic gesture to build harmony and encourage a sense of community among the women, reinforcing the commitment to support their recovery and to create a society free from violence.

The event aimed to honor and support these women, providing them with a platform to share their stories and experiences. A cake-cutting ceremony was organized to promote a sense of unity and harmony among the survivors, emphasizing solidarity and strength in their shared journey toward healing. The event was designed not only to acknowledge their struggles but also to empower them by fostering a supportive environment where they could feel valued and heard.

Ms. Shamaila Tanvir, Programme Manager at Aurat Foundation, expressed her deep admiration for the resilience of the women in Dar-ul-Aman. She spoke about the importance of solidarity among women and the need for continued efforts to end violence against women, emphasizing the role of both the government and civil society in supporting survivors.

Shahid Iqbal, Deputy Director of Social Welfare, and Rana Shahid, District Protection Officer, highlighted the importance of providing safe spaces for women who have faced violence,

ensuring that their rights are protected and that they are given the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

In her remarks, he also spoke about the ongoing work of Dar-ul-Aman in offering a safe haven for women in need, while Huma Naqvi emphasized the importance of collective responsibility to tackle gender-based violence in all forms. The event was a reminder of the strength and resilience of women and the ongoing need to create a society where survivors can thrive without fear of further violence. The ceremony successfully united the participants, fostering a spirit of hope and empowerment for the future.

#### **4.16 Introductory Meeting Strengthen the Role of Parliamentarians for Reduction of Tobacco in Pakistan**

Aurat Foundation organized an introductory meeting with members of the National Assembly to discuss and strengthen partnerships under the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK) on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 at Marriot Hotel, Islamabad. The meeting, which was attended by key stakeholders. Mr. Naeem Ahmed Mirza, Executive Director of Aurat Foundation, warmly welcomed the attendees, setting the stage for meaningful discussions on the role of legislators and civil society in advancing tobacco control measures.

The meeting was attending by a group of parliamentarians, including Ms. Zeb Jaffar (MNA PML-N), Ms. Naeema Kishwer (MNA JUI), Dr. Sahzia Sobia Aslam (MNA PPPP), Ms. Syeda Shehla Raza (MNA PPPP), Ms. Seher Kamran (MNA PPPP), Ms. Mahreen Razzaq Bhutto (MNA PPPP), Ms. Neelum (MNA PPPP), Ms. Akther Bibi (MNA PML-N), Ms. Asyia Executive Director, SPARC, Mr. Ali Imran, Country Representative CdM, Dr. Khalil Ahmed Manager SPARC, Dr. Mehboob ul Haq Executive Director HDF, Mr. Zahid, HDF, Dr. Madhi Siddiqui, Indus Hospital, Mr. Shari Khan and Tayyab Raza from Chromatic, AF team Mumtaz Mughal Director Programmes, Safdar Raza, Project Lead, Areas Jabeen and others participated.



During the meeting, Mr. Anees provided a comprehensive introduction to the CTFK initiative, emphasizing its focus on reducing tobacco consumption, particularly among vulnerable groups. He outlined the current challenges and gaps in tobacco control legislation, urging the members of the National Assembly to take stronger steps towards implementing policies that can protect public health and ensure a tobacco-free future. The meeting served as an important platform for dialogue between civil society organizations and lawmakers to work towards a common goal of public health promotion.

Ms. Naeema Kishwer, MNA JUI said that as parliamentarians, it is our duty to ensure the health and well-being of our citizens. We must take immediate action to address the dangers of tobacco use and the devastating effects it has on individuals and families. I am committed to supporting legislation that will curb tobacco consumption and safeguard the health of our people.

Ms. Zeb Jaffar, MNA PML-N said that It is vital that we take a proactive stance in tackling tobacco use, particularly in young people, as it has long-term health consequences. I fully support the efforts of CTFK and Aurat Foundation, and I believe that by working together, we can push for more comprehensive tobacco control policies that will protect the future of our country.

Ms. Syeda Shehla Raza, MNA PPPP said that we need stronger policies to ensure that our future generations are not trapped in the cycle of tobacco addiction. Tobacco-free kids are the key to a healthy future for Pakistan, and I am committed to working on laws that will ensure their protection.

The meeting concluded with a call to action, with parliamentarians and civil society representatives pledging to collaborate in advocating for stronger tobacco control laws and raising awareness at the grassroots level. This initiative is a crucial step towards ensuring that legislative efforts are backed by both public and governmental support, ultimately aiming for a healthier, tobacco-free Pakistan.

Chapter Five

# **Support for Civil Society Organizations**



## 5.2 Commemoration of 16 Days of Activism at Aurat Foundation, Islamabad

16 Days of Activism was kick started with its launching ceremony at Islamabad Office with the students of QAU on 28th November, 2023. Students of National Institute of Psychology were warmly welcomed in the event; they tied wrist bands of orange color. The sitting was started with formal round of introduction and welcome note by Maqsooda Solangi. Young people interest in notorious social issues like Gender based Violence builds great hope, and emphasizes dire need of their involvement towards solution she said. Violence engraves long history but viciousness and intensiveness is increased in the current era. She thanked students of Psychology department approaching and extend AF's support to new generation at any level.

Shamaila was called to talk on the Aurat Foundation's Introduction. Building history and foundation of women's struggle in Pakistan and legislation for women rights in the country was center of the Shamaila's talk she threw light on the 16 day of activism and Mirabel sisters' struggle. Three sisters (Mirabel) also known as butterfly sisters struggling against the dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo were brutally killed with torture on November 25, 1960. Later on by United Nations 16 days of activism were announced as to end violence against women globally.



This was followed by an ample and comprehensive presentation on history of women struggle spread over a hundred years by Naeem Ahmed Mirza. The presentations enfolding 112 years of women's' achievements and representation in political representative roles, women as heads of state, speakers and deputy speakers, ministers, right to vote, right to education, involvement in games, science etc.

The presentation reveals women leading roles in eighteenth centuries were not thinkable. Revolutionary changes emerge with the passage of time and now we can witness women leaders are ruling a half of world in all walks of life. This zeal can predict the world to be a better place if women leaders adhere more leading roles in future. Naeem Mirza also revealed women's leadership in Pakistan. With the passage of time and evolving world, there is a remarkable increase in awareness and visibility of women's rights issues in Pakistan. Now we witness 33% women's seats reservation in the local government, reservation of 17% seats for women in national/provincial legislatures, women parliamentarians performing better than men. In legislative business, increased social acceptance of women in leadership roles, establishment of National & Provincial Women's Commissions, HR Commissions, record gender-based legislation in the last 15 years, ratification of international human rights treaties e.g. CEDAW, CRC, CAT, ICCPSR etc he added.

### 5.3 Empowering Minority Women: Advocacy for Rights and Opportunities

A press conference was organized by WPA Niomi Bashir in Karachi Press Club on 9<sup>th</sup> August to demand justice for minority rights and minorities in Pakistan. The panellists were Ms. Mangla Sharma (MPA, MQM Pakistan), Mr. Naveed Anthony (MPA, PPP), M. Tosha Patel (Member of the Parsi Community), Niomi Bashir from PTI, (Member, WPA), Ms Asiya Munir (Advocate & Member of WPA) and Mahnaz Rehman, Resident Director, AF Karachi

The speakers called for stronger legal protections against discrimination based on gender and religion, emphasizing the full implementation of existing laws to safeguard minority rights and ensure gender equality. They demanded comprehensive measures to address violence against minority women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and forced conversions, proposing specialized law enforcement units. The importance of quality education and affirmative action policies to increase minority women's participation in the workforce was stressed.

They advocated for quotas for minority women in political representation and leadership roles, along with capacity-building programs. Protection of cultural and religious rights, alongside media representation to challenge stereotypes, was also highlighted. Additionally, calls were made for economic empowerment through financial assistance and skill development programs, legal aid centers, and faster trials for minority women, as well as increased awareness and education to foster tolerance and gender sensitivity in communities.



### 5.4 "No Excuse" Approach Needs to Promotes to Change Attitudes

Mr. Naem Ahmed Mirza, Executive Director AF spoke on "historical background of 16 Days of Activism & importance of Unite! invest to prevent VAWG". He said that said that VAWG is a violation of their fundamental human rights and denies them the right to live free from fear and harm. For the sustainable change comes from addressing the root causes of violence and investing in initiatives that promote gender equality, education,

and social justice. There is a need to focus on prevention lays the foundation for long-term, transformative change in attitudes and behaviours. Prevention measures can include educational programs, community awareness campaigns, and policy initiatives aimed at changing societal norms and attitudes.

Professor Dr. Rubina Hanif, Director at National Institute of Psychology gave a presentation on "Impact of Violence on Human Psyche" to sensitize young students. She emphasized that violence has far-reaching social and economic consequences, affecting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. The "No Excuse" approach promotes awareness, education, and activism to challenge and change the attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate violence. It underscores the idea that, irrespective of circumstances, there is no justification for abusive actions. We should encourage men and boys to be allies in the fight against gender-based violence by challenging traditional notions of masculinity and promoting healthy relationships.

Ms Alyia Mirza, Artist, Poetess, Human Rights Activists read her poetry on "women's empowerment". Ms. Alyia Mirza's poetry is a call to action, inviting all to contribute to a world where women's empowerment is not just an ideal but a lived reality. She inspires and ignites the flame of change through her powerful verses, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts and minds of those fortunate enough to witness the transformative power of her art. #

Ms. Maqsooda Solangi, Coordinator, Women's Empowerment Unit gave presentation on 112 years of women's achievements in the world. She shared that only 33% women got nobel prize in different walk of life. Today, women are far more visible in sports than ever before. The huge change can observe about women's representation and participation in traditional and no traditional institutions. They break the glasses. Struggle is going on.

Ms. Shumaila Tanvir, National Manager AF hold an assessment session with student on "Gender and human psyche" for exploring various aspects related to the intersection of gender and psychological well-being. She emphasizes that collective actions play a pivotal role in advocating for and promoting gender equality. In this regard, education serves as a catalyst for behavioural change, promoting a culture that rejects violence and embraces equality and respect. In the end, she offered vote of thanks to all.

**"No Excuse" Approach Needs to Promotes to Change Attitudes Celebration of 16 Days of Activism at Quæ0Azam University, Islamabad**



Mumtaz Mughal, Director AF, she said that VAWG is a multifaceted issue deeply rooted in societal norms, power dynamics, and cultural attitudes. Addressing it requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving various stakeholders. The "Unite! Invest to Prevent VAWG" message encourages stakeholders to allocate resources strategically, advocate for policy changes, and work collectively to create a world free from gender-based violence. Seminar was moderated by Ms. Areas Jabeen Awan, Programme Officer AF. Ms. Nelofar Kiran Rauf, Assistant Professor, National Institute of Psychology, Mr. Asim Malik, Director Outreach and Network AF, Zoya Mufti, Programme Officer, Huma Naqvi, Shahzad Ashraf, Mr. Irfan Ul Haq, (AF team), faculty members of department, students and media were there.



### 5.5 Lets Communities Leads- World Aids Day

Aurat Foundation with collaboration of District Women Protection Center Rawalpindi commemorated World Aids Day. The was being attended by Social Welfare Departments, Darul Aman, Kashana Institute, lawyers, survivors of GBV and others at District Women Protection Center- Rawalpindi. Ms Rizwana Bashir, In charge District Women Protection Center welcomed to all the participants. She said that AF has been a great support and enhancer of creating laws and its working bodies for women protection units in country. They have created environment and support mechanism to make the protection centers functional and also in identifying their roles. AF have been creating several opportunities for training of staff working in protection centers whether it comes to training and awareness sessions on pro women laws or functional challenges, we found a best companion she said.

Ms Rizwana Bashir, In charge DPC, Rawalpindi extended aptitude gratitude to AF for providing another opportunity of getting information and learning. She also talked on aids and the severity of the cases they have been witnessed in last many years.

Shamaila Tanveer elaborated the importance and reasons to celebrate international days. Taking social issues in account these days emphasize governments for allocate resources and

masses to contribute towards betterment of people on the globe. She said that we should show solidarity with HIV affected people. In Pakistan about 2 million people, women and children are affected by this hurricane disease. It is reportedly increased by over 50 percent in the era of 2010 to 2018 she shared. Unfortunately, people facing this disease are stigmatized in the society that makes persons with HIV more vulnerable in the society.

In Pakistan we witnessed mismanagement from medical staff and they are proven to be the major vector for the spread of disease. Shamaila threw light on the fundamental human rights, she spoke about article 25 of constitution of Pakistan, in which all citizens of Pakistan are equal and provide special provision of protection for women and girls added at the end of the presentation. Meanwhile, the assistant director of Dar ul Aman joined the session, he was warmly welcomed by Shamaila Tanveer. The next session was being led by Advocate Bano Advocate on pro-women laws.



### 5.6 Protest for Justice: Condemning the Jaranwala Church Attacks

A protest outside the National Press Club (NPC) in response to the Jaranwala incident on 21st August 2023. The demonstration saw active participation from various Rawalpindi/Islamabad-based WPAs, who condemned the tragic burning of churches in Jaranwala, Faisalabad, and voiced their opposition to the inhumane act.

The demonstration was attended by a large number of women’s rights activists, including members from various women’s political associations (WPAs) based in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. These participants voiced their outrage over the attack on religious and cultural sanctity, calling it an inhumane act of religious intolerance. The protest highlighted the need for stronger legal protections for religious minorities and an end to violence and discrimination based on religion.

By gathering at NPC, the activists sought to amplify their call for accountability and justice, demanding that the perpetrators of the attack be held responsible and that measures be put in place to protect the rights of religious minorities across Pakistan. The protest also served as a platform to advocate for peace, tolerance, and religious harmony in the country.



## 5.7 Role of Police in Ending VAWG

Ms Shabina Ayaz along with representatives of District Police |Swat and line departments launched the 16 Days of Activism Campaign in Peshawar with the aim of raising awareness about gender-based violence and promoting women’s rights. As part of the campaign, awareness messages were prominently displayed on public transport across the city, targeting a wide audience and ensuring that the messages reached individuals from all walks of life. The posters highlighted the importance of ending violence against women and girls and encouraged the community to stand against gender-based violence.

In addition to the public transport awareness initiative, a sensitization session was organized for drivers, who play a key role in interacting with the public on a daily basis. The session focused on educating drivers about the impacts of gender-based violence, the importance of respecting women's rights, and how they can contribute to creating a safer environment for women and girls. By targeting this often-overlooked group, the session aimed to create a ripple effect of awareness that could extend to the wider community.

The session also included discussions on how drivers can help identify and report instances of harassment or abuse they might witness in their daily routines. Emphasizing the role of everyday citizens in preventing violence, the initiative aimed to foster a culture of accountability and respect for women’s dignity. It also encouraged drivers to act as allies in the fight against gender-based violence and become advocates for women’s safety.

The campaign was part of a larger effort to engage the community in the 16 Days of Activism, which is an international movement aimed at combating violence against women. Aurat Foundation’s efforts in Peshawar underscored the importance of raising awareness in diverse spaces and engaging various sectors of society to address gender-based violence. By using public transport and engaging with drivers, AF KP reached a broad audience, ensuring that the message of ending violence against women resonated throughout the city.

**25<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2023: AF KP Office hold awareness session with Police Officials on 16 Days of Activism Campaign at Swat**



## Chapter Six

# Research and Publications

## Research and Publications

As the organization's full name suggests -Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation - we are committed to the publication and wide dissemination of material to create awareness among women and men regarding the rights of women and girls. In addition to raising awareness, the aim of publishing and disseminating advocacy flyers and posters is to help create awareness around fundamental human rights and create a demand from ordinary citizens to fight for change. Every year and under every project AF publish vast amounts of literature ranging from basic information for grassroots level communities, analysis of relevant laws, women's political participation to socio-economic issues that relate to women. Amongst our research, we include data on reported cases of violence against women.

AF in collaboration with JAZBA programme produced a study on "Pakistan's Perspective on Climate Action and Role of Women". The report highlights long-term, mid-term and short-term recommendations and also provides a macro-economic framework to drastically reducing global warming and eventually shifting to renewable energy resources to save life on Earth. All this requires action by governments around the world under the forum of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its annual climate conference – the Conference of Parties or COP, the latest being COP 27 held from 6 to 18 November 2022 – to implement joint decisions, fulfill global commitments and think about human survival and welfare instead of the greed for wealth accumulation and profits. This research was undertaken under the JAZBA project, which is being implemented jointly by South Asia Partnership-Pakistan and funded by Global Affairs Canada. I am grateful to Mr. Irfan Mufti, the Team Leader of JAZBA, the author of the report Ms. Simi Kamal, the Programme Director AF, Ms. Mumtaz Mughal and National Programme Manager of JAZBA, AF, and the entire team of Aurat Foundation, who contributed in the making of this report





Many Congratulations to Naeem Sb for receiving the Women's Empowerment Award



14 Sept. 2022: Women Leader Group Quetta hold press conference on Flood Situation at Press Club



کوئٹہ، سول سوسائٹی کی متحرک خواتین بلوچستان میں سیلابی صورتحال سے متعلق پریس کانفرنس کر رہی ہیں

Lahore Edition

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# CITYNEWS

Lahore Edition

## 'Engage women in peacebuilding'

Saadia Salahuddin  
LAHORE

PEACE is possible with inclusivity and access to justice. We need to engage women in peacebuilding and oversight, and build effective and inclusive institutions at all levels.

These views were voiced at a consultative working group meeting on 'Building bridges for women in peace under SHE—the peace-builder project' held by Aurat Foundation here. The participants from various departments; women development, police, law, human rights, education and social welfare, identified challenges that

withhold women from effective participation in national life. Rights activists and media also gave their input. The participants also suggested measures to overcome the challenges. Some of the views pronounced were:

Structural changes are needed to encourage women to actively participate in society. Interconnected, safe, cheap and efficient transport system emboldens women to venture out and explore their potential. Also, an environment where the children are taken good care of while mothers are at work. In short, make the work environment more flexible and humane to

encourage educated women to step out and contribute. Also, create more opportunities for them so that we succeed in inducting 33pc women in all sectors.

The people in the consultation were Sumaira Samad, Secy Women Development Dept, Nabila Javid, Secy PCSW, Nadeem Ashraf, Member Punjab National Commission for Human Rights, Imran Masood, former education minister, Dr Raghb Naeemi, Principal Jamia Naeemia Lahore, Dr M Nizamuddin, former chairman PHEC, Sarmad Saeed Khan, former IGP Shamimur Rehman, and others.





# The Financial Daily

11-August-2023

## National Minority Day to be observed today

**Imran Zakir**

**KARACHI:** All Minorities in Pakistan will observe National Minorities Day on Friday across the country with the aim to highlight their religious and socio-economic rights stated by minorities' rights activists in a Press conference on Wednesday held at Karachi Press Club.

The Universal declaration is to mark as part of the of Human Rights to help and secure minorities to practice their religion and other religious activities and seeking the support of Government.

Our Constitution guarantees the rights of minorities and Qasid-i-Azam laid much stressed.

The purpose of observing the Day is to highlight the message of Father of the Nation Qasid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who had pronounced equal rights to all citizens of Pakistan.

The Government of Pakistan declared 11 August as the National Minority Day in 2009. It has always been the endeavor of the government to safeguard the fundamental rights, safety, security, honors, life, liberty and prosperity of minorities in line with the historic speech of the founder of the nation Qasid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah at the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947.

The National Minorities Day not only expresses gratitude for the contributions, made by these religious communities, but also professes that future development of Pakistan hinges crucially on their efforts.

On this occasion Former MPA Anis Haroon and Mangla Sharma, Nurzat Shireen, Pastar Safina Javed, Nomi Bashir, Mehnaz Rehman, Malika, Tusna Patel and other minorities activists addressed from the media.



پریس کانفرنس میں شرکت کرنے والے اہل حق اور اہل امن کے رہنما اور صحافیوں نے کہا کہ حکومت پاکستان کو اپنی ذمہ داری ادا کرنے اور اہل حق کے حقوق کو یقینی بنانے کی ضرورت ہے۔

قائمین امور اور اہل حق کے رہنما نے کہا کہ حکومت پاکستان کو اپنی ذمہ داری ادا کرنے اور اہل حق کے حقوق کو یقینی بنانے کی ضرورت ہے۔



کوئٹہ، سول سوسائٹی کی مشترک خواتین بلوچستان میں سیلابی صورتحال سے متعلق پریس کانفرنس کر رہی ہیں

## Press Coverage Lahore

### Violence against women: awareness walk held

**Our correspondent**  
LAHORE

A 16 Days of Activism campaign is held from November 25 to December 10 every year. This year the theme is "Unite! Activism to End Violence against Women (VAW) and Girls." The success of this campaign rests on daily individual and collective actions. Aurat Foundation in collaboration with Punjab Women Protection Authority and Gender Studies Department Punjab University organised a poster competition and awareness walk to mark 16 days of activism on weekend in Punjab University. A large number of students and civil society rep-

resentative participated in the rally. Students displayed posters with slogans that motivate to act now to end violence against women and girls. Sara Anum, Resident Director Aurat Foundation Lahore, Dr Raana Malik Head of the Gender Studies department, Punjab University and Chairperson Punjab Women Protection Authority appreciated students' efforts in making posters and gave certificates to them. Sara Anum said that situation of VAW is alarming in Pakistan and 'we should do more with the collaboration of government departments and public representatives to make pro women laws effective'.



کوئٹہ، پارلیمانی سیکریٹری برائے انسانی حقوق و اقلیت امور خلیل چارج، بلوچستان کمیشن آن سٹیٹس آف وومن کی چیئر پرسن فوزیہ شاہین، یاسمین مغل و دیگر سیاسی عمل میں خواتین کی شمولیت کے عنوان سے تقریب سے خطاب کر رہی ہیں۔





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