



ACTIVE CITIZENS

Social Action Projects Guide

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Who We Are

The Active Citizens programme links civil society, community leaders and networks of young people and organisations in Pakistan, the UK and other countries. The overarching aim is to deepen trust and understanding within and between communities.

Young participants gain various skills including cross-cultural communication and intercultural dialogue, and their effective role in community action. They are encouraged to play a bigger role in their communities by addressing social issues through volunteering and engaging with community influencers and local civil society organisations.

The programme also offers partnering civil society organisations the opportunity to join an expansive platform that offers internationally developed resources for youth leadership development, standardised programme development and delivery frameworks, access to national and international advocacy opportunities and prospects of interaction and collaboration with partners in South Asia and the UK.

According to the 'Pakistan: The Next Generation' report, more than half of Pakistan's young population is under the age of 30. This could mean great things for Pakistan's future, provided young people are given direction, guidance and, most importantly, the confidence to play a part in their country's development.

Core Components of the Programme

Capacity Building

A national network of expert facilitators is actively supporting learning and development of young Active Citizens. Young people acquire a wide range of skills in leadership, communication, advocacy, citizenship, volunteering, Social Action Project delivery, fundraising, social entrepreneurship, partnerships and network building skills.

Youth-led Social Action Projects

Young people address their unique local priorities with projects to help their communities. Read about some of the projects on our facebook page.

Active Citizens

Policy Dialogues

Young people are encouraged to share their opinions and perspectives with policy makers and opinion makers through neutral platforms encouraging further debate and exchange of ideas on critical youth centric policies.

Developing Networks (International/National)

The Active Citizens programme provides young people with opportunities to meet with other Active Citizens from around the country and the world, build new friendships, develop international linkages, gain cross-cultural understanding and learn from one another.

The Active Citizens Programme aims to equip young leaders with skills to help them:

- A. Address social issues
- B. Be actively involved in decision making
- C. Uniting people of all generations to build stronger communities

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top tips for peacebuilding SAPs

Dear Active Citizen,

This guide contains a collection of successful Social Action Projects (SAPs) that have been delivered by participants in the Active Citizens programme. These SAPs show how young people across Pakistan are carrying out projects that are preventing conflicts, making their communities safer and bringing together diverse groups of people.

These case studies come from young people working in very different parts of the country, both rural and urban, and in all provinces. The approaches used by the young people are as diverse as the communities they work in. Each case study is presented in 4 key stages – ‘Problem’, ‘Planning’, ‘Action’ and ‘Impact’. This structure is used to encourage you to think about the key steps the Active Citizens have taken in order to achieve their goals. We don’t intend you to use this guide to copy exactly what any of the groups have done. Instead, we want you to read it for ideas, inspiration and useful tips that will help you design your own SAPs which will be most appropriate for your community.

1

Analyse the conflicts in your community.

In any community, anywhere in the world, different conflicts and tensions will exist. Your training organisation is able to help you carry out a conflict analysis. This means sitting down and discussing the various issues to find out what the most important ones in your community are and to identify the actors involved. It will also help you know who the best people to collaborate with are.

“All of us had worked as volunteers in other community projects before, so we knew the community and its problems very well. We first met up to develop a strategy and analyse the conflict.”

Bushra Amin, Out of Debt

2

Pick the issue that matters to you, and where you can make a difference.

You have identified what the most important issues in your community are. Now you need to think about which of these issues are most important to you. What do you feel most passionately about? Where do you think you could have the biggest impact?

“I understand the power of pictures and their ability to bring to surface things that we often do not notice. I decided to use this power to show wealthy people in the city what they did not see themselves - the lives of poor people outside the city.”

Aneeq Inam, Getting the Picture

3

Draw up an action plan.

Working together as a team can be complicated, so draw up a plan of what activities everybody will be undertaking. Planning will also allow you to better manage the resources for your project and give you an idea of the estimated budget for the project and its efficient allocation.

“Planning is the most important thing. It has helped us to identify what resources we had available and how to use them well.”

Nasrah Khan, Keeping the Peace

4 Think about the resources you will need.

Your biggest resources are your ideas and your energy! Many amazing SAPs have been completed using only the time and energy of Active Citizens. But sometimes you will need more resources, such as funds, equipment or volunteers. Think about what you can do to mobilise these resources. You can always try and gain support for your SAP through fundraising, which is a great skill to acquire.

“I was very proud to see how well our group worked together when we were fundraising on the street. I knew we were working for a good cause and that everybody appreciated our efforts.”

Muhammed Musa, Bright Idea, Safer Street

5 Use social media.

Much of peacebuilding work is about changing attitudes. To do this, you need to reach people with your message, and social media is increasingly important for this, especially amongst young people. Facebook and Twitter can help you raise awareness about the issue that you are addressing, and encourage other young people to be proactive.

“Using social media enabled us to gain support from our local community and brought awareness on this issue, inspiring other people to address it in their communities.”

Hassan Nasir, Children of Hope

6 Link up with influential community leaders.

Some people might not pay you enough attention because you are young, particularly if you live in a very traditional community. Think about who you can bring on board in your local area. If you can get the support of influential community leaders, it might help you achieve the change you want to see.

“I managed to get three men from the community involved to support me. One of them is a community leader who knows the history and background of both families very well. With their help, I was able to collect enough information about the situation to start talking directly to the family members.”

Samina Bano, Burying the Hatchet

7 Work as a team.

The best SAPs draw on the different skills found in a group. Regular communication amongst your fellow members and a clear understanding of who is responsible for which task will result in an effective and supportive team. This helps the team not only achieve its purpose but also allows one to enjoy being part of a team.

“Without tolerance and a good understanding of the community’s opinions you cannot solve a conflict. Also, how you speak to people matters a lot. So make sure to get training in communication skills.”

Naseebullah Aumbrani, Putting Conflict in the Waste Dump

8 Pick the right moment to bring people together.

Many conflicts are simply the result of a breakdown in communication, or where people have no safe opportunity to speak to each other openly. You can help solve conflicts simply by bringing people together to talk. You don’t even have to come up with the solutions – just by getting people together, they will start to understand the other person’s situation better and they can come up with their own solutions. Bringing people together in this way is called mediation, and can be very effective. However, you need to make sure everyone is ready to meet the people they are in conflict with, and that they want to find a solution. Bringing people together too soon, or when they are too angry, can backfire and make the situation worse. In these cases, it’s important to work with people separately first and make sure they are ready to meet the other side.

“First, we had a meeting with a Hindu religious leader. Then, we had a meeting with the Principal of an Islamic school, who supported our idea and organised a meeting with teachers speaking to them about supporting the children on their return to school. It wasn’t easy to bring the Muslim and Hindu representatives together; there was a communication gap and they were unsure as to how the meeting will progress. Once they were all together though, it was great to see people listening to each other and understanding that the issues were caused by a lack of cooperation between the two faith communities. Patience is the name of the game.”

Subhana Salamat, Harmonising Education

9 **Not everyone will agree with you. Be ready for that.**

Working on conflict issues means confronting issues that people have different opinions about. Sometimes you will need to challenge people about the things that are important to you, such as female education. It is always worth listening carefully and respectfully to people even when you don't agree with them. This will help you understand their position, learn and know better how to persuade them. You might think of other ways to help change people's minds.

"If you are a young person in Pakistan and want to do a Social Action Project in your community, you have to realise that it is a lot of hard work, that you will face criticism from people around you and your capabilities will be challenged. But you will get through this if you remain motivated, persistent and practice tolerance. Believe in yourself!"
Khalil Haider, *In Good Faith*

10 **Involve the community to help you achieve your goal.**

In some cases, you may need to get an important senior decision maker, such as a local politician, to change their minds. This can be tricky, and the most effective way to do this can sometimes be to reach out to the community members first. If you manage to get diverse community groups to support your cause and create the pressure for a particular change, the decision maker will be more likely to be persuaded.

"We knew that without the community support, the project would fail, no matter how good our theatre work was. Our strategy was to first get support from the community and then talk to the heads of the tribes, and this was a good decision."
Kamran Khan Baloch, *A Safe Haven*

11 **Link up with other young people.**

When working in the community, you may be able to create instant rapport with other groups of young people. Despite your differences in not belonging to the same tribe or cast, one thing that you will always have in common is your age and the potential to change the future together. Think of the things you might have in common, like love of sports or the arts as starting points for making connections.

"The majority of the people were young (under 35), the significance of this being that we have begun addressing the thinking of Pakistan's potential future leaders."

Makhdoom Shahzad Shah, *From the Same Cloth*

12 **Be inclusive.**

Think carefully not just about who you are involving in your plans, but also about who you are leaving out. Are there any groups of people being excluded? This could be a particular religious group, or people in rural areas, or women. Remember that the groups that you leave out might be the people who need help the most.

"It was important to have a female member in our team who could work with women groups, as mothers can influence their sons."
Tajdar Alam, *Playing it Safe*

13 **Have a positive message.**

Sometimes, the issues that you are trying to address are sensitive and some members of the community might find them challenging or hard to talk about. When naming your activities, whether they are workshops or community events, make sure you present them in a positive way. This will attract participants and prevent putting you in a difficult position.

"Community members and religious leaders also opposed the work at the beginning. I realised I had to make sure my workshops were acceptable to everybody to start challenging attitudes. I chose to work on the theme of "humanity" and "peace" as a widely accepted idea. I managed to convince religious leaders to attend the workshops, and once I had a positive relationship with them, it changed the whole situation. I was, then able to reach out to the whole community and begin to change attitudes".
Khalil Haider, *In Good Faith*

14 **Have a mentor, continue to learn.**

How do you know you are on the right track? Having a mentor, who can guide and support you during difficult and challenging times will be of a great benefit to you. Your mentor might be able to link you up with the right people, support you in areas that you might not feel that confident in or teach you

new skills that will make you a stronger leader in the future. They may also offer you protection or credibility to work on difficult issues.

“With support from my organisation GSF, I discussed my plan to play referee between the brothers with my father – who was my mentor for this project.”
Sajida Rani, *Mending Rifts*

15

Document your work.

How will you know you've achieved your goal or made a difference? You need to keep a record of all the activities that you do and the results they achieve. This will help you plan even better for next time, as you will be able to learn from your past mistakes and improve your projects in the future. Don't forget to take photos, write down what people have said, monitor how many people you've worked with and keep track of your progress. Being able to provide evidence of your hard work will always pay off!

“We put a lot of effort into documenting everything that we did, and all the information turned out to be very useful, especially when reporting.”
Fazal Moula, *Goals for Peace*

16

Respect and work with tradition and gender.

When planning your project, it is important to find a balance between respecting traditional cultures and working to empower certain groups, in particular women. Sometimes your work will be challenging and difficult for some people. In such situations, it can be particularly useful to get support from influential community leaders. They can offer support and help win people over to your work.

“I knew that this problem had existed for a very long time, but today, Pakistani culture is changing and we have the chance to empower women. The Active Citizens programme inspired me to attempt to solve this conflict by bringing together people from different areas across the Charsadda district. I knew this issue was too difficult to confront on my own, so I worked with a team of other young people who cared about women's rights”.

Imad Ali, Inheriting a Better Future

17

Inspire other young people to take part in the Active Citizens programme.

As a young person who wants to bring about positive change by addressing difficult and challenging issues, you are likely going to inspire and motivate other young people to do the same. As a representative of the Active Citizens programme, don't forget to tell other young people about the programme and help them to gain the necessary skills that are needed when addressing 'live' issues in their community. Let's mobilise like-minded people and make Pakistan a better and more peaceful place!

“Every young Pakistani who is interested in positive change for their community should try to get youth-focused training to build their skills.”
Kamran Khan Baloch, *A Safe Haven*

18

And finally... take care and know when to ask for help!

Conflicts are complex and can easily get out of control. Even when you have good intentions, sometimes the work you do can have negative consequences and can bring about risks, both for other people and yourself. You need to think carefully about what you plan to do and assess the possible consequences of your actions. You should not take risks with safety to complete any SAP.

Remember that the partner organisation that trained you as Active Citizens is there to support you. They can help you analyse the conflicts you want to address, and advise you on what is safe to do.

Active Pakistan: The Scope of SAP



PROJECTS IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

- Goals for peace
- Inheriting a better future
- Keeping the peace

PROJECTS IN FATA

- Playing it safe

PROJECTS IN BALOCHISTAN

- Putting conflict in the waste dump
- Safe environment for learning
- Bright idea, safer street

PROJECTS IN PUNJAB

- Children of hope
- Burying the hatchet
- In good faith
- Harmonising education
- Getting the picture
- Out of debt
- From the same cloth

PROJECTS IN SINDH

- Mending rifts

Stories of Inspiration

Bringing positive change in a community does not require super powers or wealth; all you need is the determination to do something and a passion to make it happen. The stories that make up this guide are of ordinary young people doing extraordinary things - by sheer force of will and a bit of training. This is what makes a citizen, an Active Citizen.

These Social Action Projects are meant to serve not just as a guide for those who want to make a difference, but as an inspiration for those who think they can't.



Children of hope

Theme: Peace Education; Community Mobilisation; Human Rights

City, Province: Multan, Punjab

Project Duration: 4 months

“If you had not been here for us, our child would be still living in the age of darkness.”

Parents of a child working in an automobile workshop.

Problem

In Pakistan, the rate of child labour is unfortunately very high. Children who work in factories and automobile workshops are paid very little money and are often physically and sexually abused.

These children, who are not educated, are a prime target for extremist groups that recruit

Planning

A group of 7, we decided to address this issue by engaging and persuading the owners of the workshops to create a friendly and better working environment for the children and allow us to provide them with ‘edutainment’ on a regular basis. We wanted to help the children by engaging them in fun and educational activities that would minimise

communicate with each other on a regular basis. During the planning stage we didn’t have specific roles; however the tasks were allocated to us by our leader, so we knew exactly what we were supposed to do. Our organisation WRA had supported us by linking us with a donor, who was able to provide us with financial support. A well-to-do member of the community also

them by offering them some money. Because they are poor and have nothing to lose, they are vulnerable to these extremist ideologies.

their stress from work and also help them to resist joining extremist organisations. We held 8 planning sessions and used social media to

kindly donated money towards some games equipment and food for the children.



Action

First, we worked on understanding the thoughts and feelings of the children through discussions and interviews. This data was processed by 3 of our members, clinical psychologists, who came up with a plan on how to support the children through our activities. Our next step was to engage and persuade the owners of the workshops to create a friendly and better working environment for the children. We did this through one-on-one talks and joint workshops for owners and employees of the automobile workshops. Once the owners understood what we were trying

to do and were more aware of the issues of child labour, they allowed us to provide ‘edutainment’ to the children on a regular basis in their factories.

During our project we collaborated with the Women’s Rights Association (WRA), Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), local community members, volunteers from universities, owners and employees of automobile workshops, donors, charity workers and the children who we tried to help. We were greatly supported by 35 volunteers from different universities, who worked really well alongside our team. Also, using social media has enabled us

to gain support from our local community, and has brought awareness on this issue - inspiring other people to address it in their communities.

Not every owner was immediately on board with our project - out of the 66 automobile workshops we approached, 51 owners showed resistance at the beginning. We were determined and continued to contact them frequently, providing them with explanations as to why the situation needed to be improved. If this approach didn’t work, we reached out for support from a local community member who would pressurise the owner, who eventually gave in.

Impact

Overall, we worked with 66 automobile workshops, from which 20 have significantly improved the working conditions for the children employed. We have provided 86 children with fun activities that enabled them to be aware of potential abuses and to be more guarded towards extremist ideologies. Through our Facebook page, we have reached over 4,000 supporters, from which some are addressing the issues of child labour in their communities.

Profile of the **Active Citizen**

Name: **Hassan Nasir** Age: **24** Gender: **Male**

Useful skills gained through Active Citizens programme:

- Planning
- Understanding of local issues
- Cooperation
- Teamwork

Proudest moment:

A child came up to us and told us that after our workshop [edutainment] session, his parents allowed him to go back to school. He was really happy, couldn’t stop hugging us and his smile will stay with me forever.

Partner organisation: **Women’s Rights Association (WRA)**

“Regular communication between team members is crucial, especially when working on a large scale project.”

Hassan Nasir

My SAP notes

Active Citizens

Things to remember

What I would have done differently



Playing it **safe**

Theme: Community Safety, Community mobilisation

City, Province: Jamrud Khyber, FATA

Project Duration: 8 months

“Aerial firing doesn’t just kill one person; it is the killing of a whole family – it has to be stopped at all costs.”

Community member.

Problem

In FATA province, during wedding ceremonies and sport tournaments, especially cricket, aerial firing is a major part of the traditional celebrations. Young

Planning

After receiving the call about the death of my friend, I knew I had to do something to address this issue. I was joined by four friends and together we decided to carry

Action

We went to schools where we delivered presentations to young people about the dangers of aerial firing, which resulted in other young people repeating the



men, who can buy bullets and arms in our province for a very little amount of money, engage in aerial firing very often - during weddings it goes on for two days! Unfortunately too many deaths are caused by accidental shootings - I lost a very good friend because of it.

out an aerial firing awareness campaign in schools and communities around FATA. We had an ambitious strategy and during the planning phase we approached many schools and organisations in FATA, preparing presentations and speeches for different groups.

presentations to their friends who carried on the message to their schools and communities.

Through our presentations and meetings with various community-based organisations we have managed to find an agreement, according to which any person involved in aerial firing

will have to pay a fine of Rs.10,000. We have also approached Islamic scholars to help us bring awareness in mosques, madrasas and universities. With the help of our friends we took part in radio shows and were provided media coverage, which was a great way to reach people we could not meet directly.

During our campaign, we worked with a range of influential individuals and organisations,

namely Islamic scholars, mosque leaders, young people in the community, teachers, schools and community-based organisations. We thought it was very important to collaborate with Islamic scholars, because the dangers of aerial firing can be explained through their teachings. Islamic scholars are also the most respected people in the community, so having them on our side made a big difference.

We didn't have any financial

support or any equipment, so it was hard to prepare the presentations and find relevant information for speeches. Also, at times people were wary of the fact that we were working for an NGO and we had to explain that we were trying to do good for the community and did not have any other agenda. But I believe the communication skills learned at the Active Citizens workshop gave us the confidence to fulfil our initiative.

Impact

Apart from delivering a presentation in 40 schools to 5,200 young people, one of our biggest achievements was having the community-based organisations working with the community to punish anybody involved in aerial firing by fining them Rs.10,000. We also worked with 20 Islamic scholars, who talked about the danger of aerial firing to approximately 24,000 people. Through media coverage, we were able to reach over 1,000 listeners and readers.

As a result of our campaign, 18 villages in Jamrud Tehsil have now introduced a new chapter on aerial firing in their constitutions, which resulted in a significant decrease in injuries and deaths of local residents.

Profile of the **Active Citizen**

Name: **Tajdar Alam** Age: **24** Gender: **Male**

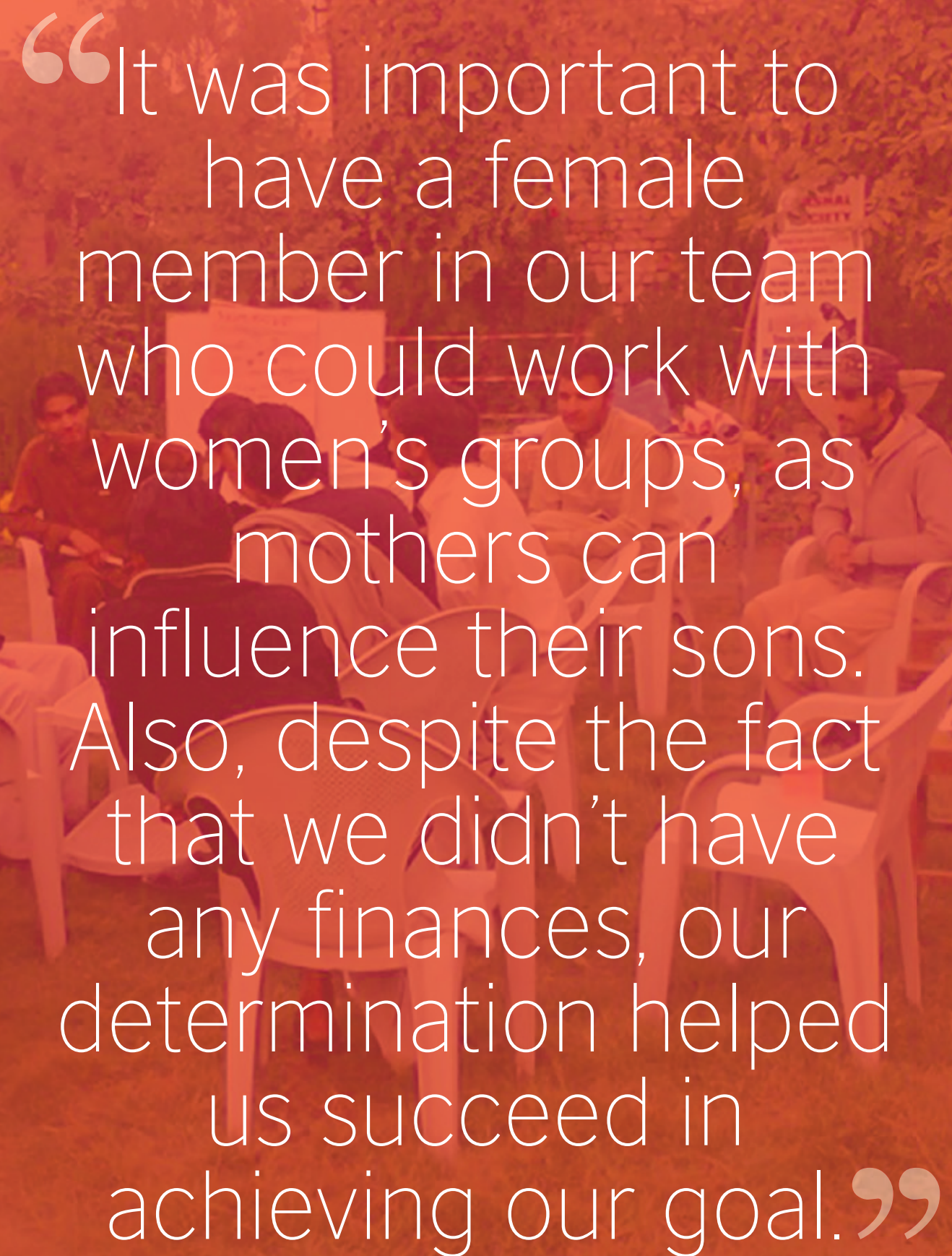
Useful skills gained through Active Citizens programme:

- Communication
- Self-confidence

Proudest moment:

I was extremely happy when my family members – brothers, cousins and uncles - promised me that they will never do aerial firing again and that they will help me with the awareness campaign.

Partner organisation: **DOST Welfare Foundation (DOST)**



“It was important to have a female member in our team who could work with women’s groups, as mothers can influence their sons. Also, despite the fact that we didn’t have any finances, our determination helped us succeed in achieving our goal.”

Tajdar Alam

My SAP notes

Active Citizens

Things to remember

What I would have done differently



Burying the hatchet

Theme: Mediation; Community Safety
City, Province: Alipur, Punjab
Project Duration: 4 months

“You have saved our lives from disputes, tension and depression. You are a hero for us.”

A member of the disputed family.

Problem

In Alipur, families are the core of all community life and relations between families are so important that they can lead to peace or conflict. I live close to a married couple who have had a difficult relationship for some time. Both the husband and the wife come from large families in the area, and when it reached the point that a divorce looked likely, the

reason for this escalation was the struggle over what would happen with their house and land.

Even though this conflict could have resulted in a bloody family feud, nobody in my community wanted to do anything about it. The problem lies in the tradition that you should not interfere in the personal lives of other families. Nobody was prepared to risk breaking this tradition.

could not resolve the conflict through lawyers and judges. So I decided that I had to do something to resolve this conflict and I started by talking to the other neighbours first to find out more about the background to the conflict. Here, the dialogue skills I learnt at the Active Citizen training helped me to get the information I needed.



conflict escalated to involve both families. The family members on both sides became so angry that they confronted each other on the street and threatened to kill members of the other side. The

Planning

I knew that they had already gone from the local court to the High Court and even the Supreme Court without a solution, so they

I managed to get three men from the community involved to support me. One of them is a community leader who knows the history and background of both families very well. With their help, I

was able to collect enough information about the situation to start talking directly to the family members.

Action

I knew that the women in both families were more open to talking about the issue and so I went to them first. I met the sisters of the husband and the wife separately because there was so much anger between the families that a joint meeting would have escalated the conflict. My strategy to first talk to the women of both families helped me to

better understand both sides, but it also helped that I could afterwards talk to the heads of the families. It was better to talk to the families separately first, because of the massive anger on both sides. Through talking to them about it, I tried to bring the families and, most importantly, the husband and wife closer together, showing them what their actions would mean for their own future, their families and especially their children.

The Pakistani tradition that nobody should get involved with

the issues of other families has created walls in people’s heads and made all my efforts to resolve this conflict peacefully very difficult. Even my own family did not believe in the project and thought it was too dangerous. They pleaded with me to not continue and were worried about me being blamed if things would go wrong. A big issue was also that Pakistani culture is so dominated by men that when I, as a woman, began to address this conflict, people started to get suspicious and insulted me many times.

Impact

Through my intervention, the husband and wife and their families resolved their issues. They are not getting divorced and are now living together happily. The proof that they are happy and the conflict is resolved is that they have decided to expand their family and the wife is now pregnant. If this conflict had continued it would very likely have escalated into full violence which would have been dangerous for the whole community.

Profile of the **Active Citizen**

Name: **Samina Bano** Age: **29** Gender: **Female**

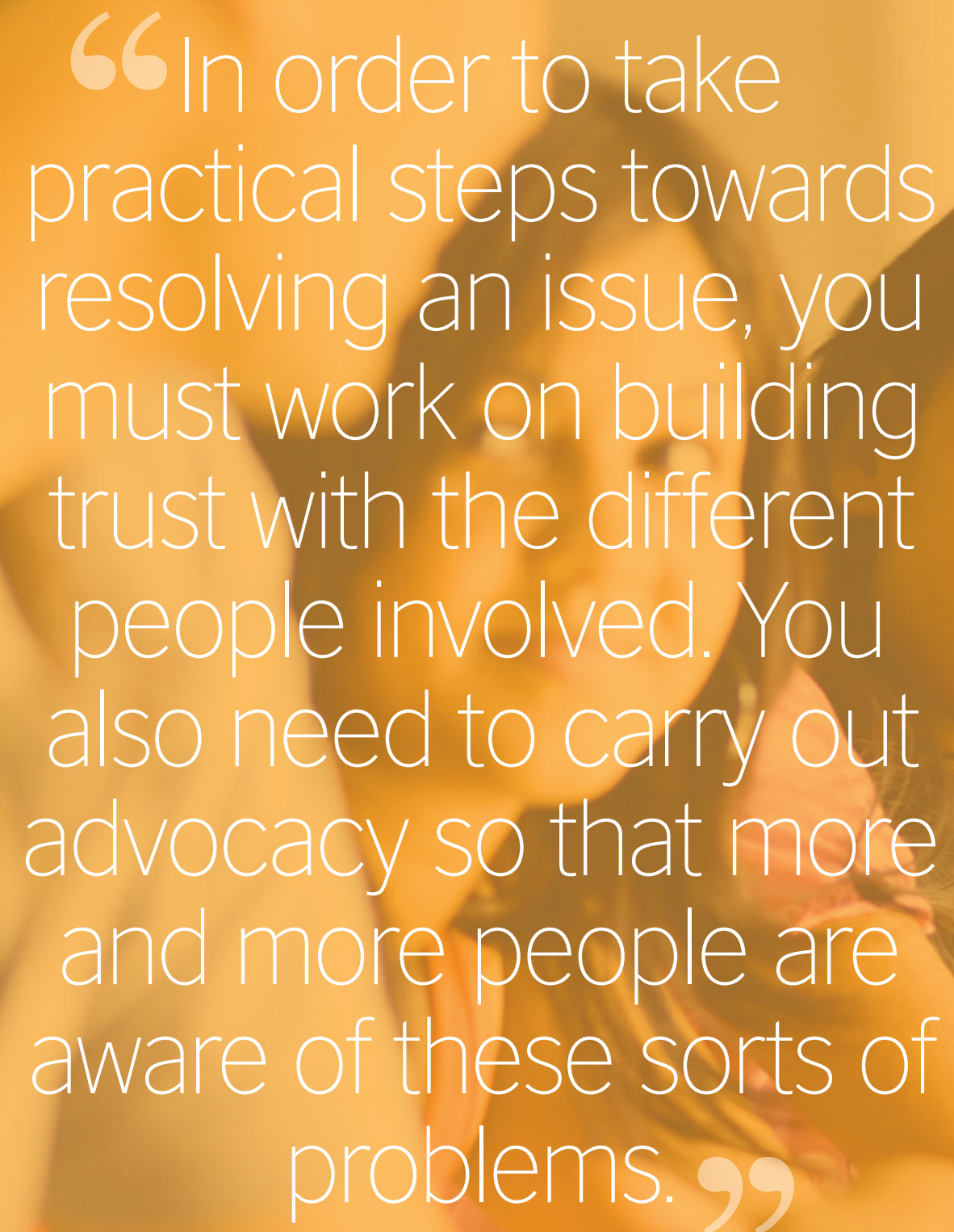
Useful skills gained through Active Citizens programme:

- Confidence to speak out
- Feeling of empowerment to take on problems myself
- Advocacy

Proudest moment:

When I saw that the family is now living happily and when they come to visit me again to tell me that they are so thankful and are happy together.

Partner organisation: **AWAZ Community Development Services**



“In order to take practical steps towards resolving an issue, you must work on building trust with the different people involved. You also need to carry out advocacy so that more and more people are aware of these sorts of problems.”

Samina Bano

My SAP notes

Active Citizens

Things to remember

What I would have done differently



Goals for peace

Theme: Arts and Sports; Interfaith Harmony

City, Province: Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Project Duration: 1 week

“You are the real future of the country and Swat Valley.”

Chairman of a Peace Committee of Swat.

Problem

Swat is a district of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, not too far from the Pakistan-Afghan border. It was once renowned, and still is, for its natural beauty; but Swat also has a troubled past.

Skirmishes between extremist elements escalated in 2007 to an occupation of the region by militants. It took two years of on-and-off armed conflict

violence have left a lasting impact on the people of Swat. Skirmishes and armed operations may be over, but unfortunately the memories and fears linger on.

Planning

To show that the era of violence in Swat is over, a group of 10 of us decided to organise a football tournament between young people from different tribes,

tasks amongst each other throughout the 4-day planning process. We wanted our spectators to be representing different faiths and tribal groups, which is why it was important to plan thoroughly and decide who was going to be responsible for contacting different groups.

We managed to secure finances from the College of Youth Activism and Development, who

should live together in peace. In order to bring together a diverse crowd of spectators for the football match, we collaborated with the College of Youth Activism and Development, teachers from different schools & colleges and community & faith leaders.

Two days before the tournament, there was a bomb blast and people were worried about their safety. Thanks to the support of the community leaders, we managed to continue the preparations for the football match and had plenty of people

attend. We feel that through role playing, we managed to convey the message of peace to the spectators. It was something unusual and, most importantly, it was challenging the stereotype of youth in our community. It showed that we do want peace and that there are many of us doing something to achieve this goal.

Action

We organised a ‘peace football tournament’ in the region of Kabal, district Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in one of the most conflict ridden areas of Swat Valley. The match was attended by young people from schools, members of different communities & faith groups and local organisations, resulting in an audience of over 1,000 people. After the match, the football players took part in a ‘role playing’ activity about peace, which was a fun exercise showing spectators that we do not have to fight to resolve our conflicts and that we

Impact

We organised an interfaith tournament between two football teams that was attended by over 1,000 people. The theme of peace was appreciated by all, especially the older generation who were very proud to see young people taking part in positive activities.



between the Pakistani army and militant forces for stability to return to the region. Like all communities that have experienced an extended period of conflict, the two years of

which would be followed by a ‘role playing’ exercise that would focus on the importance of peace and harmony between people. Our team had a leader, but we all took part in the process of allocating

kindly donated money for the transport and prizes for both football teams at the end of the tournament.

Profile of the **Active Citizen**

Name: **Fazal Moula**

Age: **25**

Gender: **Male**

Useful skills gained through Active Citizens programme:

- Planning and organising
- Teamwork

Proudest moment:

It was an honour for me to convey the message of peace and showing people that young people can make a positive impact in the community.

Partner organisation: **College of Youth Activism and Development (CYAAD)**

“We put a lot of effort into documenting everything that we did, all the information turned out to be very useful, especially when reporting. Don't underestimate the support from a local community and do as much as you can in remote areas, as that is where it's needed the most.”

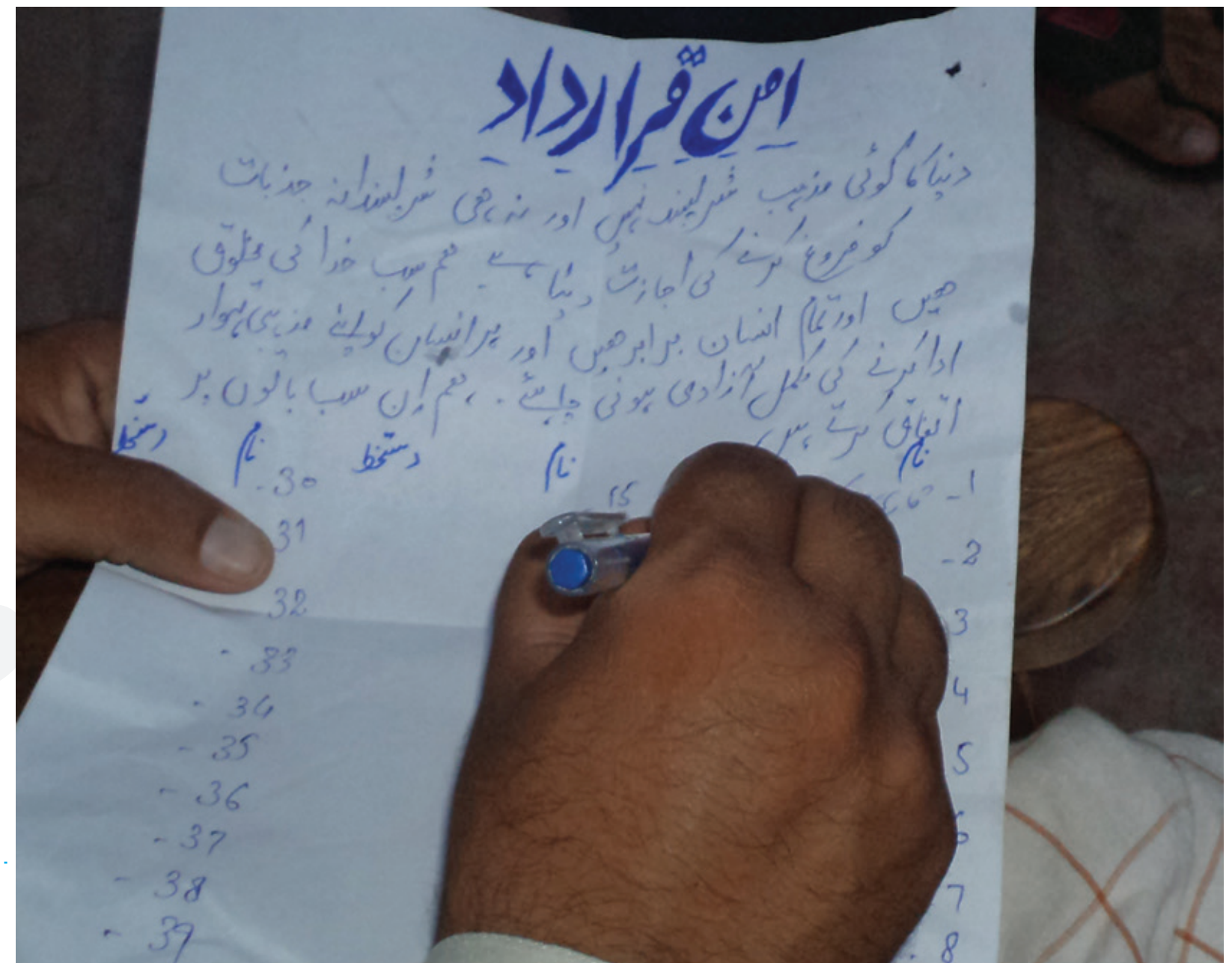
Fazal Moula

My SAP notes

Active Citizens

Things to remember

What I would have done differently



In good faith

Theme: Interfaith Harmony; Community Mobilisation; Peace Education

City, Province: Multan, Punjab

Project Duration: 1.5 years

"Sustaining peace on our planet is one of the most important issues of the current era. Pakistan too is unfortunately going through difficult times. No matter how small the effort, what young Khalil and his group is doing can help bring about tolerance and patience among people of different faiths living together."

A religious leader.

Problem

My home city of Multan in Punjab has a history of conflicts between different religious groups - Muslims, Hindus and Christians. There is a lot of intolerance and

different faith groups are inescapable. Almost everyone is possessive about their religious group in Punjab, so interfaith tensions and resulting hatred affect the lives of every citizen.

way to do this was to bring people together to pass on the message of peace and compassion from the Active Citizens Programme. So I developed a workshop on respect and tolerance towards



even violent attacks, such as the riots in nearby Gojra in 2009.

We are a religious society, and the opinions of religious leaders are very important to us. The high levels of tension between

Planning

I was inspired by the Active Citizens programme and decided to address the issue of religious conflict and rivalry in my community. I knew that the best

other religious groups by using the key messages of peace found in all religions. As I was aware of the power of religious leaders, I first arranged meetings with them and presented my idea, and then I went to the congregations.

Action

Our initiative was called "Peace Please", and we organised monthly workshops where we showed participants how different religions promote peace and tolerance, how spreading these values can help Pakistan prosper, and encouraged them to start discussions. At first very few people showed up, but soon the workshops became very popular.

When I decided to start a Social Action Project to create more understanding in the community, many people were against such an idea. The anger about this project went so far that even my own family did not want me in their house anymore. Community members and religious leaders also opposed the work at the beginning. I realised I had to make sure my workshops were acceptable to everybody to start

challenging attitudes. I chose to work on the theme of "humanity" and "peace" as a widely accepted idea. I managed to convince religious leaders to attend the workshops, and once I had a positive relationship with them it changed the whole situation. I was then able to reach out to the whole community and begin to change attitudes.

Impact

I organised two workshops every month for one and a half years. Over this period, more than 100 community and religious leaders turned up. In addition to this, I reached out to nearly 5,000 people in my community. The nomination of my project for the Active Citizens Award helped me to gain more recognition and approval from my family and the community. Before the workshops, conflicts and tensions between the religious groups were very frequent. Now the number of conflicts in my community has gone down a lot and there is more mixing between religious groups. They have understood that they don't have to hate and fear one another.

Profile of the **Active Citizen**

Name: **Khalil Haider** Age: **19** Gender: **Male**

Useful skills gained through Active Citizens programme:

- Conflict resolution
- Teamwork, cooperation
- Confidence to stand up for what I believe in

Proudest moment:

My proudest moment was when the religious leaders and the people in my community finally started to overcome their fears and hatred.

Partner organisation: **Shirkat Gah**