

Three-day training workshop on Common Ground Approach (CGA)



Group photo of all participants after the certificate distribution ceremony.

The major activity of the month was a three-day training workshop on Common Ground Approach (CGA) from 23rd – 25th January 2023. The workshop was held at Hill view hotel, Islamabad. The participants of the training were from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Islamabad and overall there were thirty-one (31) participants.

The below-mentioned content was covered during the workshop.

- Understanding your role as facilitator (Trainer? Coach? Teacher? Facilitator?)
- What makes a good facilitator?
- My identity- key concepts
- Defining conflict and violence
- The visible and invisible dynamics in conflict
- Responding to conflict
- Perspectives and perceptions
- Conflict analysis
- Peace and climate justice
- Revealing common ground

The method of training was participatory. The trainer

used participatory and interactive training techniques including presentations, group work, role play, experience sharing, and plenary discussion. Energizers were also done to keep participants active and ready to learn. Feedback from each session was taken.

In addition, handouts and other IEC materials were provided in the training to support the learning process. The training was conducted in the national language Urdu however, the reference material which was used was in English.



Participants during a group activity during the three-day training workshop.

Harmony, unity and acceptance strengthen the process of peacebuilding in a society, says Aeras Awan (WPA)

Interview Q&A with Women Peace Architects (WPAs)

Q1. For the interest of our readers please tell us a little bit about yourself.

Answer: My name is Aeras Jabeen Awan. I'm a women's rights activist and political analyst. I have worked with several NGOs in the domain of women, children, persons with disabilities, and religious minorities issues. Currently, I'm working as a program associate at Aurat Foundation. I'm also a resource person in narrative building and perception at Paigham-e-Pakistan, and a member of the women empowerment committee of Dukhtaran -e-Pakistan.

Q2. Where was your childhood spent? (City, locality, school etc.)

Answer: I spent my childhood in Sahiwal and my early education has been from The City school.

Q3. Tell us a little bit about your educational background.

Answer: I got my early education from The City School, Sahiwal and I did my Intermediate from Kinnaird College, Lahore. After that, I did my bachelor's in Political Science and Sociology from Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan. Later on, in the year 2019 and 2022, I did MSc in Sociology and MSc in International Relations respectively. Recently, I have completed my post-graduate diploma in Gender Studies. Currently, I'm doing MPhil in Gender Studies from Riphah International University, Islamabad.

Q4. Why did you choose this specific line of work?

Answer: The primary mission of being a human's rights activist and a social worker is to enhance human well-being and help meet basic and complex needs of all people, with a particular focus on those who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. My work provides me with an opportunity to interact with diverse groups of people and it allows me in my capacity to help them.

Q5. What do you like most about your work?

Answer: I feel that social work allows me to connect with, mentor and help others achieve their goals and it provides me a space where I can interact with people and spread awareness regarding their rights and responsibilities.



Q6. What is the most challenging thing about this career?

Answer: In this field of work we interact with people at the individual level as well as at the level of community. So, it could be quite difficult to make people unlearn toxic gender norms.

Q7. Who is your biggest inspiration in life?

Answer: My biggest inspiration is my mother. Despite having a feudal background, she never gave up on the quest of establishing her own individuality. She initiated a lot of welfare programs for women in our village and she is a symbol of resilience for me. She has always been a strong and independent woman, and she has always been there for me.

Q8. Who were your heroes/who did you idolize while growing up?

Answer: I have always been taken by the books of Helen Keller. In essence, they are textbooks meant to teach us how to observe life. Her life teaches us the value of hope and inner peace. Nelson Mandela inspired me to live my life with dignity and, respect and, to seek justice and equality. His struggle and leadership for freedom, equality, truth, love, peace and justice is exemplary.

Q9. According to you, what are the main issues faced by Pakistani women today?

Answer: The current population of Pakistan stands at 225.5 million. Out of this number, men approximately comprise around 51% of the population

while women form 48.76%, and trans-genders are 0.24% of the population. Statistically speaking, the difference between the ratio of men to women is not significant; but when we deal with the subjectivities of considering what it means to be a woman in Pakistan, the disparities between the two genders are vast. Behind the power dynamics are powerful gender norms, gender norms are still regressive in Pakistani society. According to the statistics, almost 49.2 percent of ever-married women aged 15-49 had no education whatsoever. Only 13.1 percent of women in Pakistan have attained an education level of Class 11 or higher. Poorly educated and with little to no prospects of employment, it is also very common for Pakistani women to experience physical violence.

Q10. According to you, why is peacebuilding important in Pakistan's context?

Answer: In a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country like Pakistan, the quest of creating harmony can be fulfilled through peacebuilding process. Peacebuilding is the development of constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, and national boundaries. It aims to resolve injustice in nonviolent ways and to transform the structural conditions that generate deadly conflict. Peacebuilding can include conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution and transformation, and post-conflict reconciliation.

Q11. What role can women play in peacebuilding in our society?

Answer: Women's participation in peacebuilding is linked to their social, economic and political participation in the country. Women are important to the process of peacebuilding as they constitute almost half of Pakistani society and the difficult task of peacebuilding must be done by men and women in partnership. Women are the central caretaker of families and everyone is affected when they are excluded from the process of peacebuilding. Women can play a key role in the design and implementation of post-conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities. Higher levels of gender inequality are associated with a higher propensity for violence in society.

Rise and shine and believe in yourself, says Ishrat Batool (WPA)

Interview Q&A with Women Peace Architects (WPAs)

Q1. For the interest of our readers please tell us a little bit about yourself.

Answer: I am Ishrat Batool by default, a teacher, a trainer. As I love peace and harmony so like to create such settings that support in inculcating positivity among individuals. Ultimately leading to a harmonious society. Penning down thoughts in the shape of poetry, is a source of satisfaction for me.

Q2. Where was your childhood spent? (City, locality, school etc.)

Answer: My hometown is Dera Ismail Khan and the area I live in is Mohallah Bammu Shah. My city in general and the locality I live in is unfortunately a terrorism stricken area. Facing massive target killing and bomb blasts resulting into taking and clipping lives.

Q3. Tell us a little bit about your educational background.

Answer: The school I studied from is known as Saint Helen's high school. The principal of which, naming John Kellever, was an inspiring personality because of being epitome of humanity service. Formal education includes masters in English literature and masters in education. In professional education, I have different certificates and diploma courses like leadership and management courses, train the trainers, curriculum designing, early year education program etc.

Q4. Why did you choose this specific line of work?

Answer: Because that suits my soul. Starting career as a teacher gave me a chance of character building along teaching course contents. Then, soaring a bit higher and getting a chance of leading an organization made my span of effectiveness wider. I can train the team to be effective in conveying the ethics to the younger generation.

Q5. What do you like most about your work?

Answer: My work is soul nourishing! My work is impactful! That gives me an open opportunity to contribute to my society with a positive impact.

Q6. What is the most challenging thing about this career?

Answer: Keeping oneself selfless and utterly



connected to your purpose. The lot we deal with, come from different families, religions, sects, social status etc. So, we need to stick to humanity and keep them all growing and shining equally.

Q7. Who is your biggest inspiration in life?

Answer: My father. The one who taught me that there is nothing in the world you cannot do because of being a female. He made me understand it's not biological sex that decide the gender, but its strength of personality traits that decide it.

Q8. Who were your heroes/who did you idolize while growing up?

Answer: From my mother to mother Teresa, all the strong, brave and independent ladies working in whatever capacity and making difference, have been my hero throughout.

Q9. According to you, what are the main issues faced by Pakistani women today?

Answer: First and foremost is that they themselves are unaware of their potential so they underestimate themselves. Secondly, family set ups hinder the growth of girls in the name of family norms and societal taboos.

Q10. According to you, why is peacebuilding important in Pakistan's context?

Answer: We ourselves have experienced a horrible phase of massacre killing around us. We have generations getting physically and psychologically hampered because of this. We have experienced the spine chilling fear of losing lives and belongings. To save our coming generations from such brutal acts in the future, peacebuilding is the huge cry of the day.

Q11. What role can women play in peacebuilding in our society?

Answer: Home is the base of society and mother is the base of a home. The more vigilant, aware and educated the mother is, the safer the off springs are. Outside the home, wherever on professional places women are involved, they can put a vital impact on the community around.

Q12. What are the issues in your local community regarding peacebuilding?

Answer: People have a set mindset built on intolerance and that too is centuries long travelling heart to heart. So, breaking that stream to bring acceptance and openness is a big issue. I must say hope should never fail and track of positive contribution in peacebuilding must go on.

Q13. What are your future plans regarding your career?

Answer: To develop a formal platform that will aim on Harmony, Education, Resources and Awareness for All.

Q14. What advice/message would you like to give to our readers?

Answer: Universe bears huge lessons hidden in it that are disclosed to those who ponder upon it. So my dear readers, rise and shine, believe in yourselves and make the miracles possible with your effective presence. Nothing can stop you from making a difference.

رات آخر ہوئی اماوس کو جیت جگنو کے ہاتھ آئی ہے
رات کے آہنی شکنجے سے صبح سورج نکال لائی ہے

عشرت بتول

We need to empower our women and make them financially independent, says Nishla Anjum's (WPA)

Interview Q&A with Women Peace Architects (WPAs)

Q1. For the interest of our readers please tell us a little bit about yourself.

Answer: I am Nishla Anjum. I have done Cambridge O & A Levels from Keynesian Institute of Management & Sciences. I graduated with a degree in English Literature and Political Science from the University of Punjab and am pursuing a Master's degree in Criminology & Security Studies from the same university. I am currently working for Aurat Foundation and have previously worked with organizations such as Alif Ailaan and Asavari Development Organization to gain invaluable experience in advocacy skills, project management, and report writing expertise. To work on my English Language fluency, I have worked in call centers, Mindbridge and SwiftPerl. I also have some experience from working with M.R. Consultants, a study abroad consultancy firm where I usually prepare students for their interviews.



Q 2. Where was your childhood spent? (City, locality, school, etc.)

Answer: I was born in the city of Gujrat and spent my childhood there. I moved to Lahore 15 years ago for my mother's renal failure treatment. I have two brothers. One is two years older than me and the other one is 7 years younger. We lived with our grandparents; both were retired government teachers and were very well-reputed in our locality. I have a very strong memory of how people used to occasionally visit our place, bringing conflicts of all sorts, and my grandparents used to meditate to find a solution to their matters. This quality of them is somehow ingrained in me as I work with people from different walks of life and promote the message of peace and tolerance.

Q3. Tell us a little bit about your educational background.

Answer: As I mentioned before, I completed my basic education at Beaconhouse School System. My parents weren't financially stable enough to afford our education at this school but my mother always dreamt that we, would get a quality education and we did. Even after her sickness, she didn't let it affect our studies. After completing my O & A Levels, I received a degree in English Literature and Political Science. Also, I am currently pursuing a Master's degree in Criminology and

Security Studies from University of Punjab.

Q4. Why did you choose this specific line of work?

Answer: My parents have both worked as social activists for half their lives. I used to accompany them in their office, training workshops, and protests and when they used to perform social theatre. I have since developed an interest in this field.

Q5. What do you like most about your work?

Answer: So, I am Christian by religion. Hence, I have been a minority in school and at work and there have been innumerable times when I faced prejudiced comments from classmates and even friends that have hurt me. But, I have been so fortunate to experience the exact opposite, working in social organizations, especially in Aurat Foundation, where they make minorities feel so welcome, secure and comfortable and even celebrate our religious festivals with us which feels amazing.

Q6. What is the most challenging thing about this career?

Answer: There was an incident I recall when I was conducting a training session with women on Gender-Based Violence. One of the participants shared that she has never realized that the

violence she has been suffering at the hands of her husband is a crime/injustice. She thought that she had to bear it with patience and it was very normal. So, I believe countering these problems and telling them about the solutions to these problems is one thing, but the biggest challenge is for the victim to realize that he/ she is a victim and is going through a problem.

Q7. Who is your biggest inspiration in life?

Answer: My mother has been my biggest inspiration in life. She is extremely hard-working and all credit to her for giving us quality education and working effortlessly on our upbringing. She has outperformed all her roles, as a wife, mother, social worker, daughter, and sister.

Unfortunately, her kidney failed at the age of 40, but she has been so brave, brave enough to go through multiple surgeries, a failed transplant, and about 15 years of dialysis. Her fighting spirit inspires me to fight with all the challenges life puts me through.

Q8. Who were your heroes/who did you idolize while growing up?

Answer: My early childhood heroes were the PowerPuff girls (90's cartoon show). This was probably the first ever cartoon on feminism, portraying three strong super-powered female leads – Bubbles, Buttercup, and Blossom, who are up against the odds to save the world. Then I used to idolize Hermione Granger (from Harry Potter) for her qualities of intelligence, never apologizing for who she was, courage, and loyalty towards her friends.

As I grew up, I have been truly inspired by Malala Yousafzai and Asma Jehangir, who I believe are both epitomes of everything we look for in inspiration. Malala is a true peace architect, global education advocate, and the youngest recipient of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize. She stands for Bravery, Justice, and Inclusion.

Asma Jehangir, too, was a true champion of justice and freedom. She spent her whole life defending human and women's rights, the rights of religious minorities, and the children of Pakistan.

Formation of consultative working groups in four provincial capitals and federal capital

Aurat Foundation (AF) regional teams have constituted consultative working groups (CWGs), in the regional capitals of Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta. The CWG has two purposes:

- to build working relationships among women peace architects and diverse state and non-state actors, and
- to support critical thinking around women's inclusion in TVE strategies and policies.

The composition of a consultative working group is between 15-19 members. Overall, 80 members of participate in the national and provincial level consultations. The representation of the CWG are from members of the provincial committee on SDG task force, standing committee on human rights, law, gender mainstreaming, & minorities affairs, lawyers, academia, media, representatives of EAWG and office bearers of mainstream political parties.

Below are the lists of 5-CWGs.

List of Islamabad CWG

Sr.	Name	Organization
1.	Dr. Arshi S. Hashmi	National Defence University (NDU)
2.	Mossarat Qadeem	PAIMAN Alumni Trust
3.	Sabohi Ali	Shoor Foundation
4.	M. Amir Rana	Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies
5.	Dr. Riffat Haque	National Defence University (NDU)
6.	Mumtaz Mughal	Aurat Foundation
7.	Shaza Fatima Khawaja	MNA, PML-N
8.	Ehsan-ul-Haq Bajwa	MNA, PML-N
9.	Sahibzada Sibghatullah	MNA, PTI
10.	Imrana Komal	Media
11.	Mehak F. Jaffery	Media
12.	Shumaila Kanwal	Lawyer
13.	Adv. Saqib Bhatti	Lawyer
14.	Dr. Kashif	NACTA/MOD
15.	Khadija Ali	Lawyer
16.	Dr. Raheem Awan	DG, Legal aid and justice authority
17.	Rabeea Hadi	Gender expert
18.	Mudassar Altaf	MoHR
19.	Mehreen Baloch	Ministry of Interior, (Director labour)

Sr.	Name	Organization
9.	Rizwan Ahmad	National Commission on Human Right KP
10.	Madiha Nisar	MPA
11.	Uzma Haleemi	UNDP
12.	Imran Takker	Group Development Pakistan
13.	Jamila Gilani	National Democratic Party
14.	Subhash Chandr	Minority affair
15.	Naqash Bhatti	Minority affair
16.	Shazia Hina	Khwendo Kor

List of Quetta CWG

Sr.	Name	Organization
1.	Ms. Fauzia Shaheen	Chairperson, Balochistan CSW
2.	Farkhanda Aurangzaib	Member, NCHR
3.	Ms. Zeenat Shahwani	MPA
4.	Ms. Shania Khan	Coordinator to Chief Minister
5.	Ms. Sana Durrani	Chairperson EAWG/G Alliance
6.	Mr. Gul Hassan	Executive Director Today's Women Organization (TWO)
7.	Dr. Aurangzaib Alizai	Chairperson Gender Studies Dept. University of Balochistan Quetta
8.	Dr. Nasreen Samar	Gender Studies Department University of Balochistan Quetta
9.	Ms. Zarghoona Barrech	Lawyer
10.	Ms. Farzana Khilji	Lawyer
11.	Sheikh Abdul Razzaq	Associated Press of Pakistan
12.	Mr. Matiullah Khan	Online News Agency
13.	Mr. Ashraf Gichki	Director Social Welfare Department
14.	Ms. Jahan Ara Tabasum	Deputy Secretary (Gender) WDD
15.	Ms. Rubina Zehri,	Manager, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women Center (Shelter Home)

List of Peshawar CWG

Sr.	Name	Organization
1.	Fatima	Hum TV
2.	Muhammad Fahim	Daily Mashriq
3.	Dr Samina Afridi	Professor UoP
4.	M. Kashif Irshad	Center of Excellence on CVE, KP
5.	Tahira Kaleem	EVAWG Alliance
6.	Dr Riffat Aziz	EVAWG Alliance
7.	Mehvish Muhib	Lawyer
8.	Khushnood Zakir	Lawyer

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