“SFCG and PAIMAN’s training on mediation and dialogue has opened many new avenues for me to bring about a change in the society. And this is only the beginning.”

Zeeshan Ullah, a dedicated youngster, makes a difference by engaging communities in a dialogue for social development.

Zeeshan Ullah is a youngster who aspires to lead a peaceful life in these violent times. He belongs to the volatile and terrorism stricken district of Bannu in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Bannu has experienced the worst forms of militant violence through campaigns of suicide and car bombings by terrorists in recent years, which have shattered the very fabric of daily life of the people.

Bannu and its different tehsils lack quality education and health facilities, and other civic amenities such as proper sanitation and water supply systems. In these trying times, Zeeshan Ullah came forward to honor his national duty for the cause of peace.

Zeeshan was invited by PAIMAN Trust and SFCG to the training program on “Youth Capacity Building on Mediation and Dialogue” held under SFCG’s flagship project “Promoting Peace in KPK and FATA - Connecting Youth and Policymakers through Mediation and Dialogue.”

After attending the training, Zeeshan went back to his native town and commenced his efforts to resolve local conflicts and promote peace through the techniques he had learnt. He invited community members to be part of his efforts and trained the enthusiastic members as well. Zeeshan, with the support of other members, established a local development organization called Thall Development Organization (TDO) to resolve many issues giving rise to conflict in the district.

He shared that with the help of techniques learnt during the training, he was able to play an active role in resolving various disputes in his native town. Through TDO, he played a crucial role in resolving the kidnapping of Dr. Nawaz, when even the traditional Jirga failed to resolve the dispute.

Another years old dispute over a local girls’ school was also resolved by TDO. The conflict involved the school owner and community members. The school’s owner had refused to open the school premises as he was using the building as his “Hujra.” Through mediation techniques learnt during the training, Zeeshan, along with members of his Peace Team, brought both parties to the dialogue table and tried to find a solution. After a few weeks, a solution was agreed upon and implemented. Today, the girls of the area are once again attending school peacefully.

Zeeshan has a promising vision for the future of his native town. He aims to commence indigenous projects to spread awareness among the community about the need to resolve conflict and pave a path for the development of a peaceful and true welfare society, where justice and development are prioritized.

“I could not have gone this far, with my vision, without SFCG’s Common Ground approach. I am extremely grateful to SFCG for introducing me to such helpful methods for resolving issues and conflicts.”

For more information, please contact infopk@sfcg.com