Taking Peace Advocacy Higher

Sajid Ali now consciously understands dynamics of social peace – and conflict, and advocates for peace in a much better way.

Sukkur is highly heterogeneous, ethnically and religiously. We have people of nearly all mainstream Pakistani ethnicities, religions, sects and subsects. It was much more difficult to understand and engage on conflicting issues but my training made things easier.

If Karachi is mini Pakistan, then Sukkur is mini Karachi, says Sajid Ali, Director of the Sustainable Development Program (SDP), an NGO based in Sukkur, Sindh. Before becoming an alumnus of the Search for Common Ground (SFCG) Pakistan training titled “Primary and Advance Peace building Training for Youth Representatives” Sajid engaged himself and his organization in traditional paradigms of development, humanitarian response and assisting the larger NGOs implement their projects in the same thematic areas.

It is not that Sukkur has not seen its part of the social, religious and ethnic conflicts but only that “we took such conflicts as patterns of our social life and carried on from one conflict to another without understanding them in details.” Sukkur city has some economy but smaller and rural areas surrounding the city do not have much resource and then the floods also played their role in destruction over the past three years. “Suddenly there was an upsurge in various kinds of conflicts between people, groups, communities and tribes after the 2010’s mega floods. Generally attributed to the scarcity of the economic resource, we handled these conflicts in the traditional manners without having any knowledge that such conflicts can be mitigated, dealt with or even prevented from happening via the Common Ground Approach,” he states.

After the training, Sajid has established and started a advocacy program in his organization that specifically focuses on peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and community/group/individual trainings. Starting anything new is difficult, Sajid admits and adds that changing from the traditional tracks of the development to a new, and more challenging one, has been demanding. “But it is also immensely rewarding to see many other people getting trained on the issues of peace and conflict. I also have to say that most people say that they had had an intuitive understanding of the concepts that my organization now advocates but after the training, their intuition gets converted into a conscious and knowledge.” And that’s SDP’s achievement that could not have been possible “had I not received the thematic training and implemented what I had learned in my organization.”

Sajid not only received training for his own development but also worked harder and kept in contact with SFCG Pakistan to further build his capacity as an informal trainer for his own and other organizations. Most of his staff is now aware and trained in the concepts of peace and conflict and have further engaged with individuals from other nongovernmental organizations, community leaders and civil society leaders as “impact multipliers.”

“The training has not only helped me to understand the scientific dynamic of the conflict but also developed my capacity to pursue the path of trainings for great impact,” Sajid mentions.

“I am happy that SFCG Pakistan gave me a new direction to follow,” he says.

Search for Common Ground

Pakistan works to transform the way communities and societies deal with disagreement – away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative problem solving. We work with local partners to find culturally appropriate means to strengthen societies’ capacity to deal with disputes and disagreements constructively: to understand the differences and act on the commonalities.

For more information, please contact infopk@sfcg.com