

Promotion of Peace and Development Initiatives in the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

2021-2024



HelpAge

International

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Acronym	Description
BCC	Behavioural Communication Change
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
CBO	Community Based Organizations
CDO	Community Development Organizations
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EU	European Union
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GO	Government Organization
HAI	HelpAge International
HR	Human Resources
TDP	Temporary Displaced Persons
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IT	Information Technology
KII	Key Informant Interview
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMD	Newly Merged Districts
NRM	Natural Resource Management
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
OP	Older People
PWD	People with Disabilities
OPA	Older Peoples Associations
PE	Physical Education
PTC	Parent-Teacher Committees
SCC	Senior Citizens Committee
SRSP	Sarhad Rural Support Programme
ToT	Training of Trainers
UN	United Nations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and Background

The 'Promotion of Peace and Development Initiatives in the Province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan' project was implemented in partnership with the Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), a non-profit organization that has been a cornerstone of development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and parts of the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) since 1989. The project's primary objective was contributing to the peace and development process in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province through the promotion of social and economic structures. It advanced the rights and inclusion of older people and people with disabilities through targeted advocacy, training, and community engagement initiatives. Designed to address critical gaps in the representation and participation of these vulnerable groups, it aimed to integrate ageing and disability considerations into broader development efforts and promote their active involvement in community and peacebuilding activities.

HelpAge International (HAI) provided technical support to SRSP, ensuring the inclusion and well-being of vulnerable groups, particularly older people (OPs) and persons with disabilities (PWDs), in the project. HelpAge Pakistan focuses on building the capacity of local partners with a particular emphasis on the inclusion and well-being of older individuals. The organization collaborates with community-based entities including Community Organizations (COs), Village Organizations (VOs), and Local Support Organizations (LSOs) to implement projects that enhance the quality of life for older adults. HelpAge Pakistan's team consists of experts in gerontology, social work, public health, and community development, all of whom are deeply committed to social justice and improving the lives of vulnerable populations. SRSP's team comprises highly qualified professionals with expertise in community development, economics, agriculture, and social sciences.

Overarching objective

Contributing to the peace and development process in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by promoting social and economic structures.

Project Goal

Stabilising social cohesion in 65 communities of Khyber District with at least 800 households being economically empowered.

The project was launched in response to the need for greater awareness and inclusion of older people within development and peacebuilding initiatives. In regions like Khyber District, these groups often face significant barriers to accessing services and participating in community activities due to ageist attitudes, lack of accessibility, and insufficient representation in decision-making processes.

Focus Areas:

- Senior Citizen Committees and Conflict Resolution
- Cultural Meetings and Sports Facilities
- Documentation and Sensitization Workshops
- Livelihoods, Natural Resource Management, and Enterprise Governance Capacity Building
- Advocacy for the Rights of Older People

Key Achievements

The project achieved notable success across multiple dimensions, significantly advancing the inclusion and representation of older people and people with disabilities within development and peacebuilding initiatives. Each milestone reached during the project's implementation has contributed to a more inclusive environment and demonstrated the effectiveness of the strategies employed.

Enhanced Knowledge and Skills

A primary achievement of the project was the substantial increase in knowledge and skills among stakeholders and community members of Khyber District. The project implemented a series of well-structured training sessions and workshops, focusing on peacebuilding, vocational skills, natural resource management, ageing, and inclusive development. These sessions provided participants with a deep understanding of the challenges faced by older people and people with disabilities.

Youth Engagement and Social Cohesion

The project successfully integrated youth and older people into its broader set of activities through providing platforms for each to showcase their skills and abilities. There were many recreational events organized for the youth including sports competitions that enabled them to positively spend their energies. This also allowed the seniors of the community to positively engage with the youth.

Stakeholder Engagement

The project successfully engaged a diverse group of stakeholders through a national learning workshop that convened 63 representatives from various sectors, including national and provincial governments, civil society organizations, and older people. This workshop served as a platform for exchanging ideas, sharing best practices, and discussing policy frameworks related to ageing and inclusive development. The diverse participation fostered a collaborative environment, leading to a richer understanding of the roles and contributions of older people in community development and peacebuilding.

Communication and Advocacy

The project made significant strides in improving communication strategies and supporting community-led advocacy efforts. These training emphasized understanding the sensory changes associated with ageing and offered practical techniques for effective communication. Participants also learned how to document success stories, which further facilitated the sharing of positive experiences and outcomes.

Development of Behavioural Communication Change (BCC) Strategy

One of the project's notable achievements was the development of a comprehensive Behavioural Communication Change (BCC) strategy. This strategy aimed to address and transform ageist views and stereotypes prevalent in the Khyber District. Through extensive consultations with government and community stakeholders, the project crafted a detailed strategy designed to foster positive attitudes towards older people and ageing.

INTRODUCTION

The Newly Merged Districts (NMDs), formerly known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), are among the most impoverished regions in Pakistan, as indicated by various socio-economic indicators. Situated on the North-Western border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Khyber District serves as a critical juncture between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province and the eastern regions of Afghanistan. The district has been profoundly affected by decades long ongoing conflicts, particularly in Bara Tehsil, which displaced approximately 600,000 people, known as temporary displaced persons (TDPs), forcing them into precarious living conditions.¹

The enduring conflict in Afghanistan and the region's unstable security situation have disrupted communal practices, such as the hujra, which traditionally facilitated political dialogue and cultural transmission between elders and youth. The fragmentation of these social structures highlights the need for intervention, with both youth and elders playing pivotal roles in community revitalization. An impact assessment of the "Promoting Peace in KP & FATA" project identified poverty, intolerance, and lack of economic opportunities as key conflict drivers. This project strategically engages local communities through peacebuilding initiatives, leveraging community dialogue and the jirga system for conflict resolution.

During the merger of FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the government, in consultation with local leadership, identified key areas for intervention, including community awareness, leadership development, livelihoods, youth engagement, and gender inclusivity. Khyber District's rich cultural heritage is vital for community cohesion and the reintegration of displaced populations. Older individuals, often overlooked, are crucial for transmitting traditional knowledge and bridging generational gaps. The project aims to foster long-term social harmony by revitalizing the traditional hujra system and incorporating elders into leadership roles. It also seeks to improve dialogue between isolated communities and state authorities for better governance. The project's design involved extensive consultations with government departments and existing community organizations to address the unique needs of the region.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The NMDs, formerly known as the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, are among the poorest regions in Pakistan, as indicated by various socio-economic indicators. Khyber District, located on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, serves as a crucial geographic link between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and eastern Afghanistan. According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023 Census, Khyber District has a population of 1,146,267 people spread across 2,576 square kilometres. The severe conflict that began in Bara Tehsil displaced around 600,000 people, leading to perilous living conditions for the TDPs. Since 2009-2010, the number of TDPs have surged, causing a significant decline in economic opportunities and development potential in the region.

Project feasibility and baselines studies were carried out in 2019 and 2021, respectively, that identified poverty, intolerance, politico-religious factors, and lack of economic opportunities—especially for youth—as key drivers of conflict in the region. These assessments underscored the importance of meaningful community dialogue. They also identified a pressing need for training in conflict management and peacebuilding, alongside greater involvement of older people and tribal older people in leading conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts within their communities.

The shifting influence of militant actors, military intervention by the Government of Pakistan, and other overlapping conflicts continue to impact the lives of residents in the NMDs. Despite some stabilization in security, threats from terrorist groups persist in the Khyber District. Returning populations need robust support to strengthen their communities against these threats. The 2019

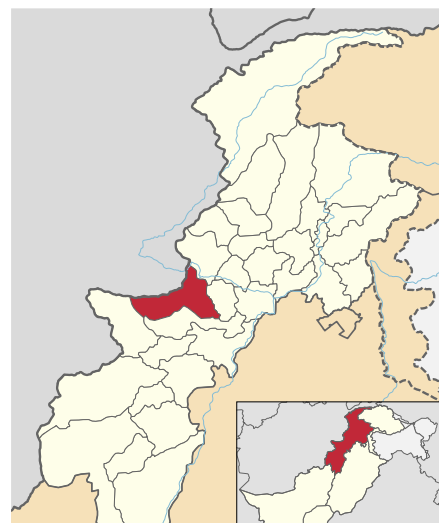


Figure 1 Map of Khyber District (CC-BY-SA-3.0)

¹ FDMA, Govt. of Pakistan. (2016). Impact Assessment of FDMA's Cash Assistance on TDPs and Returnees in the FATA. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA) and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

feasibility study confirmed the value of the project's focus on equipping communities through intergenerational activities, guided by and involving the older population.

In 2018, the tribal areas were merged with KP province, forming a new administrative unit. This merger allowed residents of Khyber District to elect representatives to the National and Provincial assemblies, as well as local government representatives. However, the merger occurred without the originally planned transition period, creating significant challenges. Following the merger, elections were held, but the local population lacked awareness of the new political structure and the constitution. The provincial government has plans to introduce local governance in the NMDs, which would be a completely new political entity for the people of Khyber District. This project aimed to fully inform the community about these new political measures, fostering understanding and acceptance of the new administrative unit.

As the region recovers from conflict, development actors are striving to develop a common understanding of the rehabilitation and development needs of TDP communities in the tribal areas. In 2017, Pakistan's parliament passed comprehensive reforms addressing key policy areas, including peace and security, TDP issues, the judiciary, the constitutional system, and the restructuring of political jurisdictions. The main challenges include the marginalization of certain groups, insufficient public participation in planning and decision-making processes, inadequate basic services, and a lack of income opportunities.

Community Social Structures

The purpose of community organization is to mobilize, educate, and unite people to strengthen their collective influence over issues impacting their welfare. Effective community organization enhances the ability to address problems and foster sustainable development. Recognizing the significance of organized community groups for peace and development, the baseline study assessed the status of community-based organizations (CBOs) in the evaluated villages.

SRSP's social mobilization model is structured around three tiers: Community Organizations (COs), Village Organizations (VOs), and Local Support Organizations (LSOs). COs operate at the grassroots level, typically representing households within a village, while VOs coordinate COs at the village level. LSOs, on the other hand, link multiple VOs across a union council, serving as an overarching body for community development. These structures have historically facilitated community participation and resource management for various projects.

However, the baseline study for the project revealed that there were no organized groups of senior citizens present in these areas. This gap in representation for older people highlighted the need for forming Senior Citizens Committees (SCCs). The SCCs aim to ensure that older people, particularly those who are often overlooked, have a formal platform to engage in community decision-making and advocate for their specific needs, thus fostering their inclusion within the broader community structure.

Sports: In District Khyber, one of the newly merged districts grappling with underdevelopment, internal displacements, and infrastructure decay, the landscape is predominantly hilly with only a few flat areas. Consequently, the baseline study identified only four sports grounds across the assessed villages. These facilities are inadequately developed, with many areas left in disrepair; local youth have built makeshift cricket pitches on a self-help basis, while the rest of the grounds remain uneven and overgrown with bushes and trees, lacking proper seating for spectators.

The absence of formal sports facilities compels youth to travel considerable distances for leisure, often leading to disengagement from positive community activities. Establishing well-equipped sports grounds would serve as a crucial platform for youth development, providing an avenue for physical and mental growth while addressing psychosocial issues for both young people and older individuals.

For older people, the availability of sports activities and the inclusion of youth in these events foster intergenerational interaction, promoting community harmony. This involvement can address the psychosocial challenges that OPs often face, such as isolation and inactivity. For the youth, participating in organized sports helps divert their energies from potentially harmful influences, such as joining extremist groups or engaging in illegal activities, and instead encourages discipline, teamwork, and social interaction.

Reading Spaces: In addition to the need for sports facilities, the study also focused on evaluating the availability of public information points and libraries. The baseline survey revealed that none of the assessed villages have formal information points or public libraries. Residents typically travel to the nearest market towns to access internet and printing services for job applications and other needs. The primary obstacle to establishing these information points is the lack of resources.

In some villages, community organizations have set up communal offices, but due to inadequate infrastructure and resources, they have not been able to create proper information points or libraries. During focus group discussions, community members expressed a strong preference for establishing these facilities in existing government schools. Schools are viewed as ideal locations for such interventions because they are central to the community and can provide significant benefits to both students and residents. Access to internet, newspapers, and a variety of books could enhance students' educational experiences and increase school enrolment.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Target Area

Khyber District

Khyber District, situated along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border between KP province in Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan. According to the 2017 census, Khyber District had a population of 986,973 residing within an area of 2,576 square kilometres. During the intense conflict that erupted in Bara Tehsil, approximately 600,000 TDPs endured precarious living conditions.

The project was implemented in 65 villages within the Bara Tehsil region of KP. These villages were identified using a needs-based methodology and baseline sampling, with a particular emphasis on the Tirah Valley, which has been significantly impacted by refugee movements, as highlighted in the FATA Security Report for the second quarter of 2017. A list of 65 villages was compiled for the implementation of the project, with a total population of 80,925, including 38,844 males and 42,081 females, across 10,790 households.

Target Groups

The project primarily targeted older people (60 years and above), youth, and people with disabilities as its direct beneficiaries, with 45 percent of the older beneficiaries being men and 55 percent women. Indirect beneficiaries included family members of direct participants, who benefited from improved community support and awareness, local community members who experienced positive changes from the project's advocacy, and project staff and volunteers who gained valuable skills in working with older people and PWDs .

Government Agencies, Community-Based Organizations, and Stakeholders

The project involved multiple government agencies, including provincial ministries that contributed to policy discussions and integrated project objectives into provincial development plans, district administration representatives who facilitated access to communities, and social welfare departments that provided insights on the needs of older people and PWDs . Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) played an essential role in advocacy, support services, and training, focusing on raising awareness and meeting the needs of older people and PWDs . Key stakeholders included local older people, community members, women, youth, athletes, internally displaced persons (TDPs), NGOs, and various government departments at both district and provincial level.

SENIOR CITIZEN COMMITTEES AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A total of 65 SCCs were established over the course of the project, with an average membership of 18-20 individuals per committee. Notably, 35 percent of the membership in these committees comprised women, reflecting the project's commitment to inclusivity and gender equity.

Key achievements

65 community-based Organizations (SCCs) have been formed

130 older people have learned conflict resolution strategies

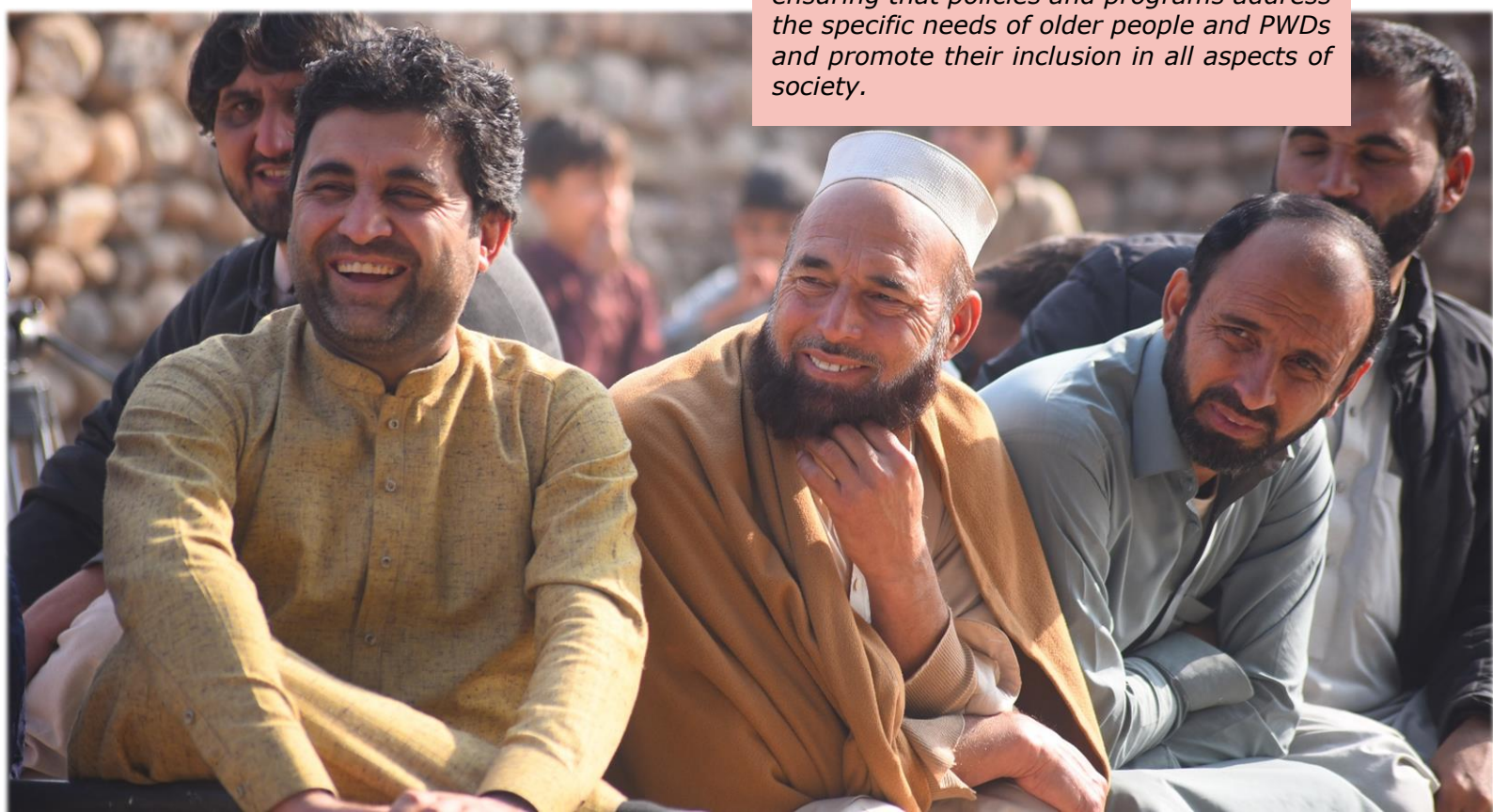
In the District of Khyber, the formation of Senior Citizens Committees (SCCs) has emerged as a transformative effort aimed at fostering peace, resolving conflicts, and driving socio-economic progress within the communities. These committees, made up of both elderly and younger members, act as crucial platforms where the life experience and wisdom of older individuals are utilized to address and solve entrenched community issues. The SCCs are instrumental not only in mediating disputes but also in bolstering community cohesion and advancing social empowerment.

Reflecting the deep cultural respect for elders, SCCs have adeptly managed to mediate complex disputes that could have otherwise resulted in violence. They play a vital role beyond mere conflict resolution, contributing significantly to community development and peacebuilding efforts. Their work includes tackling urgent issues like drug abuse and improving access to healthcare. The success of these committees stems from their dual ability to effectively resolve conflicts and inspire younger generations. By actively involving youth in their initiatives, SCCs foster a sense of collective responsibility for the community's future.

The intergenerational collaboration promoted by SCCs is crucial for nurturing a resilient and empathetic society. This approach ensures that the wisdom of older generations guides the vigour and creativity of younger ones. The SCCs in Khyber District are a powerful example of how community-led initiatives can bridge generational divides. They demonstrate that combining the experience of older adults with the ambitions of youth can address immediate problems while setting the stage for long-term peace and development. As these committees continue to expand and influence more areas, they are poised to make a lasting impact on empowerment and social harmony across the villages of Khyber District, creating a legacy of unity and progress.

Policy Recommendation:

Incorporation of Ageing and Disability Issues into Policy Frameworks: Policymakers should integrate ageing and disability considerations into national and regional development frameworks. This includes ensuring that policies and programs address the specific needs of older people and PWDs and promote their inclusion in all aspects of society.



Impact and Sustainability

In newly merged districts, particularly in Tehsil Bara, District Khyber, these activities improved citizen engagement with public service delivery, helping communities understand the processes and procedures involved in availing such services. Social issues addressed during these activities included enrolment campaigns in schools, anti-drug abuse campaigns, plantation drives, and other initiatives contributing to the social development of the targeted areas.

The establishment and operationalization of the SCCs have had a profound impact on community dynamics in Khyber District. One of the most significant contributions of SCCs has been their involvement in resolving long-standing disputes that have historically strained community relations.

Success Story

Senior Citizens Committee's Success in Resolving a Land Dispute Among Brothers

In a close-knit community, an intense land dispute had been escalating among seven brothers, weakening family bonds and disrupting community cohesion. The root of the conflict was the uneven distribution of land, which had given rise to deep-seated animosity and tension among the siblings. This growing dispute not only strained the brothers' relationships but also jeopardised the social harmony within the community. Against this backdrop, the SCC of Silak Abad Mandi stepped forward to mediate the complex dispute. The SCC members recognised that achieving a harmonious resolution required more than just legal solutions; it demanded an approach that integrated cultural norms and individual aspirations.

Adhering to this understanding, the SCC members initiated a series of discussions with the conflicting parties. These discussions provided a safe environment for grievances to be aired and for goals to be clarified. The SCC members acknowledged that a sustainable resolution needed to transcend mere financial considerations and property rights. Instead, it required the restoration of fraternal bonds and a shared commitment to collective well-being.

Following careful negotiations and thoughtful dialogues, the SCC members facilitated an extraordinary breakthrough. They convinced the seven brothers to agree on a solution that was both fair and acceptable—a unanimous decision to redistribute the land equally among them. "This outcome was achieved not through coercion but through a profound understanding of the brothers' concerns and a collective desire to restore the unity that had once defined their relationships. Indeed, the SCC members rekindled the spirit of brotherhood in their hearts," remarked Haji Hikmat, SCC President.



Beyond conflict resolution, the SCCs have made considerable strides in community development. In Bara, District Khyber, an SCC played a pivotal role in resolving a dispute over irrigation water allocation, which had escalated to physical violence and agricultural losses. Through patient dialogue and a focus on cooperation, the SCC guided the community toward a consensus-based solution that restored peace and improved agricultural productivity. Additionally, SCCs have proactively initiated community development projects such as anti-drug campaigns and collaborations with government agencies to address public health and social issues, further solidifying their role as agents of positive change.

CULTURAL MEETINGS AND SPORTS FACILITIES

By the end of the project, 14 barrier-free reading and meeting places were established and furnished, providing spaces for information exchange and intergenerational dialogues. Additionally, four recreational facilities were renovated, serving as hubs for community sports and cultural activities. The SCCs played a pivotal role, organizing 85 sports events that brought together participants from communities, schools, colleges, and universities, including older adults, to engage in traditional sports. Furthermore, 130 athletes were identified and received professional training, sports equipment, and support for their participation in regional and national competitions. The project strategically utilized existing government infrastructure by rehabilitating and functionalizing these facilities, demonstrating an efficient use of resources while strengthening intergenerational bonds within the community.

Key achievements

Formation of 14 barrier-free reading and meeting places for information exchange

Renovation of 4 recreational facilities for community sports and cultural activities

Organization of 85 sports events with competitions between communities, schools, colleges, and universities

Sports training and allocation of equipment to 130 athletes for participation in regional and national sports events

This project area focused on the creation and enhancement of cultural and sports facilities within communities, aiming to foster social cohesion, promote physical activity, and encourage intergenerational dialogue. The project targeted both the physical development of facilities and the professional growth of athletes, with a clear emphasis on promoting peace and community development. The initiative was particularly focused on integrating younger and older populations, as well as people with disabilities, into community life through structured cultural and sports activities. The project made significant strides in promoting cultural exchange and sports within the communities.

Impact and Sustainability

The impact of the training and allocation of sports equipment extended beyond just athletic performance, fostering a broader sense of community cohesion and mental well-being. As 76 percent of respondents acknowledged the alignment of support with their sport's needs, the activities also served as critical outlets for promoting Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS).

These sports programs offered not only physical development but also served as essential platforms for stress relief, particularly in conflict-affected areas, contributing to peacebuilding efforts. By providing structured entertainment and positive outlets for youth, these initiatives supported peace promotion and facilitated community development, promoting social harmony and resilience.

Establishment of Barrier-Free Reading and Meeting Places

Introduction

The establishment of reading spaces was a strategic move to integrate educational and recreational infrastructure within the community, ensuring accessibility and usability for all segments of the population. The focus on creating barrier-free environments underscored the commitment to inclusivity, allowing individuals from diverse age groups and abilities to benefit from these resources. By the project's conclusion, 14 reading and meeting rooms were successfully established, three recreational facilities were renovated, and a new recreational ground was created to support community sports. These developments not only provided immediate benefits but also laid the groundwork for long-term community development.

The introduction of reading rooms has had a profound impact on both schools and the broader community, serving as key spaces for intellectual and social engagement. These rooms have connected parents to school activities, fostering stronger ties between families and educational institutions. After school hours, the reading rooms are utilized by community members for gatherings and discussions thereby enhancing social cohesion.

They have become integral in promoting peacebuilding activities, offering a neutral space for dialogue and learning, and contributing to the development of a more informed and connected community. The long-term effects include sustained literacy improvements, increased community involvement, and a positive shift towards inclusive and collaborative growth in the region.

The impact of the established barrier-free reading and meeting spaces, as well as the renovated and newly created recreational facilities, has been significant, touching various aspects of community life. The reading rooms have become essential hubs for intellectual growth, providing a dedicated space for study, research, and lifelong learning. They have particularly contributed to improving literacy rates and educational outcomes among students, thereby enhancing the quality of education within the community.

Rehabilitation of Sports Grounds

The rehabilitation of four sports grounds within the community is a cornerstone activity under the broader framework of promoting peace and fostering community engagement through sports. This initiative aligns with the project's overarching goals of utilizing cultural and recreational activities as catalysts for social cohesion and development. By focusing on the rehabilitation of existing sports facilities, the project aimed to revitalize communal spaces, particularly for the youth, while efficiently utilizing resources to achieve sustainable outcomes.

The sports grounds, once underutilized and in disrepair, were identified as key venues for promoting healthy lifestyles and encouraging intergenerational interaction.

Policy Recommendation:

Support for Inclusive Development Initiatives: Governments and donor agencies should prioritize funding for initiatives that promote the inclusion of older people and PWDs. This includes supporting projects that address barriers to access, enhance communication and advocacy efforts, and build local capacity.



Recognizing the importance of these spaces in the social fabric of the community, the project sought to restore their functionality and accessibility. This initiative also emphasized the formation of local sports committees, composed of both youth and elders, to ensure that these rehabilitated facilities would not only be maintained but also effectively utilized for the long-term benefit of the community.

Impact and Sustainability

The impact of the sports grounds' rehabilitation has been significant, with the facilities becoming focal points for community interaction and engagement. The refurbished grounds have transformed into vibrant spaces where individuals of all ages and backgrounds gather for physical activities, recreational events, and competitive sports. These interactions have played a crucial role in enhancing community cohesion, promoting teamwork, and strengthening social bonds.

The rehabilitated sports grounds have also contributed to peace-building efforts within the community. By providing a platform for communal activities, the grounds have facilitated interactions among different tribal groups and fostered a spirit of camaraderie and mutual respect. Sporting events held at these facilities have served as opportunities to celebrate shared interests and achievements, further strengthening the social fabric of the community.

The rehabilitation of the four sports grounds has been a pivotal achievement in promoting peace, community cohesion, and healthy lifestyles within the target communities. The project's implementation was marked by efficient use of resources, strategic community involvement, and a strong focus on sustainability. The impact of these rehabilitated facilities is evident in the enhanced social interactions, improved recreational opportunities, and strengthened community bonds that have emerged as a result.

INSPIRATION STORY

Empowering Dreams Through Cricket: Rafi Ullah's Journey

"Cricket is my dream and passion. I want to become a renowned cricketer and represent my country at the international level," Rafiullah enthusiastically shared.

Cricket is deeply embedded in the culture of Dro Ada AKA Khel, but it is also a costly sport. Young Rafiullah struggled with financial constraints that prevented him from owning a cricket kit. Nevertheless, he remained undeterred, practising tirelessly with nothing more than a tennis ball.

The project connected Rafiullah with the Malik Cricket Academy, marking a significant turning point in his cricketing journey. The academy offered professional guidance and mentorship, allowing Rafiullah to refine his skills and develop his talent.

Under the expert mentorship at Malik Academy, Rafiullah's cricketing abilities flourished. His hard work culminated in a spot on the Under-19 District Peshawar cricket team, where he represented his region at the youth level. A notable milestone in his journey was scoring a century in one of the matches, showcasing his exceptional talent and dedication.



DOCUMENTING PROJECT PRACTICES AND SENSITIZATION WORKSHOPS

Stakeholders are thematically sharing experiences and providing inclusive, age-friendly, and long-term service delivery for the rights of former TDPs in the region.

This result area focused on enhancing awareness and engagement among stakeholders regarding the critical issues related to ageing, particularly the invaluable contributions that older people make to peacebuilding and development efforts in the Khyber District. As part of these efforts, the project effectively captured and disseminated best practices, ensuring that key stakeholders, including government departments and civil society organisations, were informed, and involved in advancing the mission.

Key achievements

Government departments, and other development actors in Khyber District are incorporating proven mechanisms for inclusion of older people and people with disabilities into their development initiatives in the region

At least 100 representatives of ministries and other stakeholders, such as NGOs and civil society, have participated in workshops on political engagement, aspects of ageing and the role of older people in the development and peace process.

Table 1 Communication and Dissemination Material

Title
Bi Annual Newsletter Vol I, Issue I
Bi Annual Newsletter Vol I, Issue II
Quarterly Newsletter Vol II, Issue I
Quarterly Newsletter Vol II, Issue II
Annual Project Report 2021-2022c
Annual Project Report 2022-2023
Annual Project Report 2023-2024
Case Study Booklet (15 Case Studies)
Project Documentary

The project sought to bridge a significant gap in stakeholder understanding by documenting and communicating successful interventions that included older people and individuals with disabilities. The culmination of these efforts was marked by the production of newsletters, video documentaries, case studies, and other resources designed to sensitize stakeholders to the importance of inclusive, age-friendly policies and practices in development initiatives.

Engagement and Sensitisation Initiatives: The project engaged stakeholders through a series of workshops and sensitisation activities. Over 100 representatives from government ministries, NGOs, and civil society participated in workshops focused on political engagement, ageing issues, and the role of older people in development and peace processes.

A SCC was actively involved in discussions with civil society organisations to address the challenges faced by older people and their potential contributions to peacebuilding efforts. These discussions were further enriched by case studies presented in short video clips, which showcased the challenges and successes of older people in their communities.

Moreover, the project utilised mass media to reach a broader audience. 15 short radio messages, broadcast in Urdu and Pashto, focused on the rights and roles of older people. These messages, aired over a month, reached the Khyber District and neighbouring areas, effectively raising awareness among both government stakeholders and the wider community about the critical contributions of older people.

Impact and Sustainability

The documented best practices and the dissemination of communication materials played a crucial role in sensitizing stakeholders to the importance of including older people and individuals with disabilities in development initiatives. The project's workshops and training sessions significantly improved stakeholder understanding of ageing issues, leading to better integration of these concerns into government planning and service delivery. This enhanced focus on the needs of older people contributed to reduced violence in target areas and increased the empowerment of older individuals through information sessions and capacity-building activities.

The project's initiatives fostered stronger intergenerational relationships and social cohesion within the community, underscoring the effectiveness of the efforts in achieving sustainable peace and development outcomes. The positive feedback from government departments and civil society organisations highlighted the project's success in improving governance and management practices related to ageing.

To ensure the sustainability of the project's outcomes, the initiative established robust linkages between government departments and community members. These connections facilitated effective communication and support for ongoing and future development initiatives. Recommendations from government stakeholders, including the need for proper monitoring, community engagement, and adequate funding allocation, underscore the importance of sustainability in project planning and implementation.

The project demonstrated coherence by aligning its activities with the objectives of government departments and civil society organisations, ensuring synergy and collaboration across all stakeholders. By fostering a shared understanding of ageing issues and inclusive development, the project promoted effective communication and coordination, enhancing the overall impact and sustainability of development efforts in the Khyber District.

Policy Recommendation:

Promotion of Data-Driven Policy Making: Encourage the use of data and evidence to inform policy decisions related to ageing and disability. Investments in data collection and analysis will help identify gaps, monitor progress, and ensure that policies are based on accurate and up-to-date information.



LIVELIHOODS, NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ENTERPRISE GOVERNANCE CAPACITY BUILDING

The vocational skills component has significantly contributed to the project's overarching goals of enhancing economic opportunities and promoting sustainable development within the community. This initiative focused on providing market-specific and relevant technical training to 630 community members, including men and women from various age groups, thereby improving their chances of accessing the labour market and increasing their income. Through strategic partnerships with accredited institutions and a decentralized approach to training delivery, the project aimed to equip participants with the necessary skills to thrive in a competitive job market while also fostering self-reliance and economic independence.

Key achievements

630 community members received market-specific and relevant technical training that improved their chances of accessing the labour market and increased their income.

150 women participants were trained in improved natural resource management and agricultural practices

At least 150 older women received practical support in setting up small businesses

INSPIRATION STORY

Provision of Vocational Training - a step forward toward peaceful development

Muhammad Rafique, a 56-year-old resident of Yousaf Talab, a small village in the Sipah Tribe, Khyber District, faced numerous challenges in the aftermath of the conflict that began in 2009-10. The lack of employment opportunities in the region and financial constraints made it difficult for Mr. Rafique to meet his household's daily expenses. With limited resources and fear of leaving his village, migrating to a safer city was not an option. Mr. Rafique's lack of education or skills further hindered his ability to secure decent work, forcing him to rely on traditional sources of income such as harvesting in the fields and daily wage labour.

In response to the community's needs, various vocational trainings were organized in motorcycle repair, plumbing, and IT support to enable youth to engage in income-generating activities.

"I am very happy to have benefited from the motorcycle training. After completing this training, I will open a motorcycle repair shop in Dograh Chowk, a small market in my village." remarked Mr. Rafique.



Impact and Sustainability

The vocational training program made a transformative impact on participants, empowering them with skills that enhanced both their employability and financial independence. Participants shared stories of how the training improved their livelihoods, with many now more confident in their abilities to secure meaningful employment. The program resonated strongly within the community, reflecting local priorities and fostering a sense of ownership. While most participants felt the training aligned well with their needs, some expressed that further refinement could make the program even more responsive to specific community challenges.

The economic benefits were equally impactful. Many participants noticed an immediate difference in their income, and within just a few months, their improved skills led to tangible financial gains. The training not only helped participants earn more but also instilled a sense of economic security, helping them provide better for their families. The skills they acquired are seen as valuable, with many feelings optimistic about sustaining their livelihoods in the long term, though some felt the tools provided could be improved for greater durability and long-term success.

By creating pathways to economic growth and community well-being, the program laid the foundation for lasting change and social development.

Practical Support for Older Women for Setting Small Business

The project aimed to provide practical support to at least 150 older women, facilitating their entry into small business ventures and connecting them to established markets and value chains. This initiative sought to empower older women in Bara, a region where traditional livelihoods such as tailoring, home textile work, and livestock rearing are prevalent. By focusing on practical support for small business development, the project endeavoured to enhance the economic self-sufficiency of older women and integrate them into local and broader market systems.

INSPIRATION STORY

Empowering Resilience - Bi Jana Bibi's Journey from Hardship to Success

Bi Jana Bibi, a 68-year-old from Niaz Baran Kalay, struggled as the primary breadwinner due to her husband's disability. After fleeing due to security issues, her grocery shop was destroyed, leaving the family in a difficult situation. With support from the project, she received essential supplies to rebuild her shop, restoring her family's livelihood.

The in-kind support provided by the project had a transformative impact on Bi Jana Bibi's life. With renewed determination and the necessary infrastructure for her shop, she was able to re-establish her grocery business.

"The in-kind support from SRSP and HelpAge International enabled me to stand firm and restore my business. Without their assistance, I would not have been able to rebuild my destroyed shop," remarked Bi Jana Bibi.



In addition to economic gains, the initiative fostered collaboration and community ties among participants, creating a supportive network that encouraged collective growth. Most respondents reported increased income, with earnings ranging from PKR 5,000 to PKR 20,000 per month. Financial inclusion was also a priority, as many participants received guidance on opening bank accounts and business expansion strategies.

While the program was largely successful, some areas for improvement emerged, particularly in aligning asset provision with beneficiaries' specific needs. Despite these challenges, the initiative significantly improved the economic self-sufficiency of older women and strengthened their integration into value chains, contributing to long-term community development. The program also significantly boosted participants' confidence and mobility and enhanced their ability to engage in economic activities while improving their quality of life.

Natural Resource Management Trainings

The Natural Resource Management (NRM) training initiative aimed to bolster local capabilities for sustainable resource management and productivity enhancement by focusing on the crucial role of women. This program was designed to prevent natural resource loss, improve agricultural practices, and stimulate family economic growth through targeted training. By engaging women in activities such as livestock and poultry rearing, vegetable and crop production, and food processing, the project sought to empower female participants and foster long-term environmental and economic bene

The NRM training program successfully engaged 150 women, providing them with comprehensive education on various aspects of natural resource management. The training encompassed practical skills in kitchen gardening, animal fattening, milk production, and other agricultural practices. These skills were intended to improve the participants' income and enhance their ability to manage natural resources effectively.

The training was structured to address both immediate and long-term needs, offering hands-on experience and theoretical knowledge. Participants received toolkits and materials designed to support their learning and practical application. The program was introduced primarily through referrals from relatives and colleagues (70 percent) and school endorsements (27 percent), with 92 percent of respondents finding the provision of toolkits efficient. Despite this, 84 percent of participants preferred a cash grant over the toolkit, suggesting a preference for more flexible support options.

Impact and Sustainability

The Natural Resource Management (NRM) training program played a pivotal role in enhancing local skills for sustainable resource use, especially among women. By focusing on agricultural practices such as livestock rearing, vegetable production, and food processing, the program empowered 150 women to manage resources more effectively.

Quality assessments were largely favourable, with 86 percent of participants rating the training as good and 14 percent as excellent. The materials and tools provided also received high ratings, with 86 percent and 89 percent respectively rating them as good. These positive evaluations highlight the program's success but also indicate areas where improvements could be made.

Through training in livestock rearing, vegetable production, and food processing, the program empowered participants to better manage natural resources, improve agricultural practices, and enhance family incomes. Many participants found the training valuable, feeling more capable in their roles and frequently applying the skills they learned. The provision of materials and tools further supported their ability to implement these practices effectively.

The mentorship provided was well-received, helping participants gain a deeper understanding of resource management and fostering confidence in their abilities. Looking forward, the skills gained are seen as having lasting relevance, but there is a clear demand for ongoing learning and support to ensure long-term sustainability and growth.

ADVOCACY FOR THE RIGHTS OF OLDER PEOPLE

The interventions under Result Area 5 significantly impacted stakeholders and contributed to the project's overall success. By organizing four training events and workshops, the project surpassed its initial target of two, demonstrating efficient resource use and logistical management. The participatory and interactive nature of the training sessions enhanced awareness and understanding of ageing-related issues, as evidenced by positive feedback from participants.

The project's efforts led to a substantial shift in perceptions and actions regarding ageing issues. SRSP staff, civil society organizations, and government departments reported increased engagement with senior citizens' issues and a commitment to inclusive development practices. The growing interest from various community and administrative sectors in continuing these initiatives reflects the project's effectiveness in promoting age-inclusive development.

Impact and Sustainability

Sustainability was a key focus, with activities designed to integrate ageing-related issues into SRSP's ongoing community engagements. This approach fostered the creation of functional Community Organizations dedicated to addressing ageing challenges beyond the project's duration. By embedding these principles into SRSP's operational framework, the project contributed to the long-term resilience and capacity-building of local institutions and stakeholders.

Key achievements

Trainings in advocacy and lobbying for older people were completed by the SRSP team

Development of a comprehensive Behavioural Communication Change (BCC) strategy to counter ageist views in Khyber District

Increased engagement of SRSP staff, civil society organization, and government departments with senior citizens' issues

Policy Recommendation:

Focus on Behavioural Change: Develop and implement policies that address ageist attitudes and promote positive perceptions of older people. This includes supporting public awareness campaigns and educational programs that challenge stereotypes and encourage respectful and inclusive behaviour.



CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Throughout the project's implementation, several significant challenges and risks emerged, impacting its developmental objectives.

Project Delays and Setbacks:

- **Recalibration of Plans:** Adjustments were made to project plans and execution strategies to address delays. This included revising timelines, reallocating resources, and modifying project milestones to ensure continued progress.
- **Extended Timeline:** The project timeline was extended by four months until April 2024 to accommodate delays and ensure that interventions could be completed effectively.

Security Instability in Khyber District:

- **Coordination with Law Enforcement:** Strategic partnerships were established with local law enforcement agencies to enhance security and manage risks associated with operating in a volatile environment.
- **Local Expertise:** A data collection team with local knowledge and familiarity with regional dynamics was assembled to navigate security challenges effectively.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Fieldwork was conducted with a heightened awareness of cultural sensitivities, and precautionary measures were implemented to avoid potential conflicts and ensure the safety of both project personnel and community members.

Financial Challenges Due to Currency Devaluation:

- **Proactive Financial Management:** To address financial constraints related to currency fluctuations, the project leveraged exchange gains and adjusted its budgetary plans.
- **Timeline Extension:** Extending the project timeline allowed for additional financial flexibility, helping to mitigate the impact of currency devaluation on project funding and resource allocation.

General Risk Management

- **Quality Control and Monitoring:** Regular quality checks and monitoring were conducted to ensure that data collection and project activities adhered to the highest standards, minimizing risks associated with data accuracy and integrity.
- **Adaptive Strategies:** The project employed adaptive management strategies to respond to emerging risks and challenges dynamically, allowing for timely adjustments and ensuring the project's objectives remained achievable despite obstacles.

OUTCOMES

Immediate Outcomes

The project aimed to address critical issues related to the rights and inclusion of older people through a multifaceted approach, with a focus on advocacy, training, and community engagement. Several immediate outcomes emerged from the project's activities:

Enhanced Awareness and Capacity Building: The project conducted a series of workshops and training sessions designed to increase the knowledge and skills of stakeholders, including the SRSP team and community members. The three-day sensitization workshop in Peshawar, which included Trainer and Trainee Manuals developed by HelpAge International, significantly raised awareness about ageing, vulnerability, and disability. Participants gained insights into the challenges faced by older people and people with disabilities (PWDs), and learned practical strategies for their inclusion in development and peacebuilding initiatives. This immediate outcome led to SRSP integrating these learnings into their social mobilization practices, reflecting a shift towards a more inclusive approach.

Improved Communication Skills: A two-day training session on communication with older people and PWDs equipped SRSP team members with essential skills for interacting effectively with beneficiaries experiencing sensory changes and impairments. This training not only enhanced participants' ability to engage with older individuals but also improved their documentation of case and success stories. The training's interactive methods and practical orientation ensured that SRSP staff were better prepared to address the communication needs of older people and PWDs.

Strengthened Advocacy Efforts: The Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop on Community-led Advocacy provided SRSP team members with strategies for advocating effectively within their

communities. The workshop emphasized the inclusion of older people and PWDs in advocacy activities and culminated in the development of advocacy plans. This immediate outcome laid the groundwork for more robust community-led advocacy efforts and the integration of ageing issues into local and national discourse.

Increased Stakeholder Engagement: The national learning workshop, which brought together representatives from various government and civil society organizations, facilitated a valuable exchange of ideas and best practices regarding ageing and community development. This workshop enhanced stakeholder understanding of the role of older people in peacebuilding and development, promoting collaborative efforts across different sectors.

Development of Behavioural Communication Change (BCC) Strategy: The project devised a comprehensive BCC strategy to tackle ageist views and stereotypes. This strategy, developed through extensive consultations and workshops, provided a framework for fostering positive attitudes towards older people and addressing barriers faced by PWDs. Dissemination of the BCC strategy among key stakeholders ensured that the messaging reached relevant audiences, contributing to an immediate shift in perceptions.

Expected Long-Term Impact

The project's interventions are expected to yield significant long-term impacts on both individuals and communities:

Sustainable Inclusion of Older People: By integrating ageing and disability issues into SRSP's social mobilization practices, the project has laid a foundation for the sustained inclusion of older people in development initiatives. This long-term impact is anticipated to result in improved access to services, greater participation in community activities, and enhanced overall quality of life for older individuals.

Strengthened Advocacy and Policy Influence: The training and advocacy efforts are expected to bolster the capacity of SRSP and other stakeholders to advocate effectively for ageing-related issues. This increased capacity is likely to translate into stronger advocacy campaigns, more inclusive policies, and greater awareness among policymakers and the public. Over time, this impact will contribute to more comprehensive and supportive policy frameworks for older people and PWDs.

Enhanced Community Support Systems: The project's emphasis on communication skills and cultural sensitivity has fostered more effective interactions between service providers and beneficiaries. This improvement is likely to result in stronger community support systems, where older people and PWDs receive the assistance and respect they need to thrive. The increased community engagement and collaboration fostered by the project will support the development of sustainable support networks.

Long-Term Behavioural Change: The BCC strategy aims to instil lasting changes in attitudes and behaviours towards older people. By addressing ageist stereotypes and promoting positive perceptions, the strategy is expected to contribute to a more inclusive and respectful societal attitude towards older individuals. This shift in attitudes will support the long-term integration of older people into community and development initiatives.

Increased Resilience and Adaptability: The project's focus on adaptive management and proactive responses to challenges has enhanced the resilience of both the project and its stakeholders. This increased resilience will enable SRSP and other partners to navigate future challenges more effectively, ensuring the continued success of ageing and disability-inclusive initiatives.

Sustainability Measures

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the project's outcomes, several measures were implemented:

Integration into Local Practices: The project's training and advocacy efforts were designed to integrate ageing and disability considerations into SRSP's regular operations. By embedding these practices into existing frameworks, the project has facilitated the continuation of inclusive approaches beyond its duration. The alignment of project activities with SRSP's ongoing work ensures that the benefits of the project are sustained over the long term.

Capacity Building and Local Ownership: The project emphasized building the capacity of local stakeholders, including SRSP staff and community members. By equipping these stakeholders with the knowledge and skills needed to advocate for and support older people, the project has fostered a sense of local ownership and commitment. This capacity building contributes to the sustainability of the project's impact by ensuring that the local community can continue to address ageing-related issues independently.

Ongoing Collaboration and Partnerships: The project established partnerships with government agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders. These collaborations have created a network of support that will continue to promote ageing and disability-inclusive practices. The continued engagement of these partners will help maintain the momentum generated by the project and support the implementation of inclusive policies and practices.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The project implemented robust monitoring and evaluation processes to assess its impact and identify areas for improvement. This ongoing evaluation will help track the progress of the project's outcomes and make necessary adjustments to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness. The insights gained from monitoring and evaluation will inform future initiatives and support the sustained success of ageing and disability-inclusive efforts.

Resource Optimization and Financial Management: The project's proactive measures in financial management, including extending the timeline and leveraging exchange gains, have ensured the optimal use of resources. By addressing financial challenges effectively, the project has enhanced its ability to sustain interventions and achieve long-term impact. Continued financial oversight and strategic resource allocation will support the ongoing success of project activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of similar initiatives:

1. *Strengthen Capacity Building Programmes:* Expand capacity building efforts to include additional stakeholders such as local government officials, community leaders, and other civil society organizations. This will ensure a broader understanding of ageing and disability issues and promote more widespread adoption of inclusive practices.
2. *Enhance Communication and Outreach:* Develop and implement a comprehensive communication strategy that includes targeted outreach campaigns to raise awareness about the rights of older people and PWDs. Utilise diverse media channels, including social media, radio, and community events, to reach a wider audience and address prevalent stereotypes and misconceptions.
3. *Foster Greater Community Involvement:* Encourage the formation of community-based groups focused on ageing and disability issues. These groups should be involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects to ensure that interventions are tailored to local needs and contexts.
4. *Expand Advocacy Efforts:* Support the development of regional and national advocacy networks that can effectively lobby for policy changes and resource allocation in favour of older people and PWDs. Provide training and resources to these networks to enhance their capacity to influence policy and decision-making processes.
5. *Implement Robust Monitoring and Evaluation Systems:* Strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems to track the long-term impact of interventions and identify areas for improvement. Use data-driven insights to inform decision-making and adjust strategies as needed to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.
6. *Ensure Financial and Operational Flexibility:* Develop contingency plans to address potential financial and operational challenges. This includes setting aside reserves for unforeseen circumstances and maintaining flexibility in project timelines and resource allocation.
7. *Promote Knowledge Sharing and Best Practices:* Create platforms for sharing knowledge and best practices among stakeholders. Organize regular workshops, webinars, and conferences to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences, and to build a community of practice focused on ageing and disability issues.