Australia Awards

South and West Asia

Short Course Concept Note

Civil Society Women in Executive Leadership (Pakistan)

Course Title:

Civil Society Women in Executive Leadership Short Course (Pakistan)

Context

In Pakistan, civil society has evolved over the years with periods when the government's policy has been broadly supportive to periods like the present where we are witnessing a trend in the space for civil society being curbed. However, there is a consensus that an active civil society can effectively assist the socio-economic development of Pakistan and there is a need to build awareness among various stakeholders on the importance and positive aspects of a vibrant civil society.

Pakistan's civil society is diverse, comprising individuals, groups, organizations, networks and collaborations espousing access to rights, equality, democracy, a political system of governance, and social justice, among other ideals. Its critical role in restoration of democracy in the backdrop of successive dictatorships in the country is well documented. In recent years, there has been a change in the context, approaches and methodologies of civil society's operations. However, a rights-based approach continues to define the direction of those associated with the civil society.

The recent restrictions imposed on civil society organisations come on top of an already narrow scope for freedom of association. The restrictions set a precedent that not only restricts the activities of national and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), it also hampers the development impact created by this significant third sector in Pakistan. Civil society's response in the face of the restricting space has come in the form of protests, legal recourse, advocacy with the state and mobilisation of public opinion. Along with media, political parties, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), bar associations and academia, it is women and women rights organisations who have been specifically active in advocating for free space.

The history of Pakistani women's activism in civil society can be traced during and after the independence movement, when many female oriented voluntary organisations not only vigorously participated in the freedom struggle, but they were also at the forefront of the nation building process. Women played a key role in civil society in the early years of Pakistan's independence. Post 1947, the surge in the women organizations in Pakistan can be divided in three phases. The first phase started in 1960s due to the demand of family laws by women NGOs; second in the 1970s, against the laws which particularly affected women's social position in the society; and thirdly to the 1990s with intensification of women's organisations in Pakistan, due to the wide-spread effects of globalisation.

Since then, the women's movement in Pakistan has seen a tremendous growth with increased economic opportunities and changes in social attitudes, where women are increasingly gaining a role in household decision-making as they engage in economic activity. There has been expansion in programs that provide access to finance for small-scale female entrepreneurs; there are an increasing number of young women accessing tertiary education; and more women entering the workforce. In the democratic and political space, we see more women participating in the electoral process. Civil society in Pakistan has been playing its role in social, economic and political empowerment of women. Unfortunately, despite of the emergence of vibrant print/electronic media, wide-spread network of women related NGOs and the focus of political parties on women related issues, a large segment of female population is still struggling hard for the equal status.

The Global Gender Gap Index, which captures the gap between men and women across a wide variety of socio-economic categories, ranked Pakistan 148th out of 149 countries in 2018.[1] An unequal distribution of opportunities and resources between men and women continues to persist, despite the strengthening of legislative and legal mitigation mechanisms over the past decade. There is evidence that recent efforts by government, combined with the emergence of the civil society sector, are beginning to have an impact. Improved quality and access to education opportunities, lower barriers to workplace

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[1] http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf

participation, positive health indicators and shifts in socio-cultural dynamics, are all contributing to a reduction in inequality and increasing women's empowerment.

Expanding the representation and status of women in leadership roles across the public and private sectors is a major opportunity and challenge for Pakistan. There is evidence that progress is being made. For example, the Punjab Fair Representation of Women Act 2014, mandates that women must occupy up to 33 percent of positions in the Boards and Committees of six statutory institutions, entities, and companies,[2] but there remains many structural challenges. Evidence shows that increasing access to leadership positions for women improves organisational culture, management, considered decision making and collaboration. Women, when in leadership positions are more likely to focus on inclusion, consensus and long-term sustainability. The increase in social enterprises owned and led by womenare establishing new opportunities to demonstrate their capability to lead and govern. Currently, 43 per cent of social enterprises focus on women's empowerment in Pakistan, and 20 percent are completely led by women. These numbers demonstrate a promising trend towards women becoming a very valuable and viable source of leaders and initiators of change.

The Government of Pakistan acknowledged in its Pakistan 2025, One Nation One Vision document that if women are not included in the national discourse about their roles, empowerment, economic development and equality, then the policies and laws that follow cannot be gender sensitive.[3] Inclusivity and gender equality will not succeed if only addressed in policy and law but it must be demonstrated in practice at all levels of community and government. Women's empowerment is a primary key to gender equality. Specific interventions to ensure women's empowerment include recognising women's unpaid care and domestic work, bridging gender pay gaps and addressing gender gaps in leadership. Pakistan has some good examples of progress such as the Benazir Income Support Programme, a social cash transfer program which remains an internationally recognised example of progress in the advancement of poor women. Likewise, the Punjab Government's 'Women on Wheels' program has removed a significant barrier to women's economic and social empowerment by creating conditions where women can ride motorcycles without suffering stigma.

Pakistan's commitment to the Sustainable Development Agenda recognises that without the increased participation of women, who make up almost half of its population, Pakistan will fall short of its development targets outlined in "*People First"* the first pillar of Pakistan Vision 2025's. This highlights the significance of developing social and human capital through the empowerment of women, and that increasing women's participation in decision-making through affirmative action in all public contexts is a key objective. The Vision also commits to build a national consensus on democratic governance, strengthening of the parliament as well as the judiciary, and the emergence of vibrant civil society and print and electronic media.

The Australian Government's prioritses 'increasing gender equality' as part of its foreign policy and its aid program, requiring Australia's investments to promote women's economic empowerment; increase the representation of women at all levels of decision-making; and stop gender-based violence. continue to rise. At the same time the Australian Government recognises the demands for the vital services provided by civil society organisations in the developing countries and is committed to fostering a supportive and productive relationship between these important organisations and partner governments to ensure services continue for those who need them.

The proposed Civil Society Women in Executive Leadership short course will target emerging and existing female leaders working in civil society in Pakistan who can act as powerful agents of change and contribute to improved services, enhancement of social inclusion and government accountability.

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[2] Punjab Gender Parity Report 2018: Punjab Commission on The Status of Women
[3] Pakistan 2025, One Nation – One Vision: Ministry of Planning Development and Reform, Government of Pakistan

Purpose

This course will be a basis for strong role models and agents of change to guide and support the next generation of women in the civil society sector in Pakistan. This course will enable participants to not only clarify their leadership ambitions, recognise their leadership strengths and expand their access to leadership positions but more importantly will broaden their understanding of the role civil society can play in developing countries as an integral part of the development process and examine the relationship between civil society, state and other key stakeholders.

This proposed short course will:

- enable the participants to explore the history, concepts, and roles of civil society such as advocacy, empowerment, service delivery, social entrepreneurship, and innovation
- build the capacity of participants to become more effective and influential in achieving social change and shaping civil society
- introduce the innovative and sustainable strategies for fundraising
- enhance women leaders' negotiation and relationship building skills with various stakeholders
- build the capacity of participants to make informed choices about leadership styles and approaches appropriate to their individual contexts
- enhance their understanding of innovative ways to improve communication skills
- enhance women leaders' confidence and ability to recognise and build on existing qualities
- provide the skills needed to overcome stereotypes and achieve outcomes in professional settings
- help leverage their leadership capacity to improve the inclusion of disadvantaged and traditionally marginalised groups in decision making in their respective sectors

The course will also negate gender stereotypes, explore systemic barriers to women's advancement, consider peer coaching and mentorship and develop strong gender networks as support mechanisms to women's advancement. Contemporary leadership theory will be considered, providing practical tools for today's leaders. The course will, where applicable, consider relevant local legislation, policies, action plans and instruments that promote the behaviours, values and capabilities, participants may draw on to become future leaders in Pakistan. Participants will gain the knowledge and skills to meet current and emerging sectoral challenges, while examining different approaches to decision-making and leadership. It is expected that participants on this course will become a professional network of leaders and peers supporting each other in lifelong learning.

Recipients

This course will be open to females only. Participants will be drawn from a range of civil society organisations in various sectors, including academia, media and individuals working in advocacy space. Five positions are reserved for women working on development activities through the five current partners of the Australian NGO Cooperation Program in Pakistan. The course will target mid to senior professionals working in civil society space with the potential to influence/recommend policy changes.

Aligned Australian Counterparts

Learning and networks will be expanded through interaction with a range of Australian leadership practitioners and leading organisations. The course will emphasise a mentoring approach while also providing exposure through a series of targeted site visits to key government agencies, for example PM&C Office for Women, Ambassador for Women and Girls, Department of Communities, Child Safety & Disability Services, the Brisbane Women's Club, and private sector agencies like BHP, RMIT, CSR, and Monier.

Course Learning Outcomes

Specific skills and knowledge expected to be demonstrated by Participants upon course completion include:

- Understanding of the processes and systemic challenges facing women executives in the civil society sector

- Building personal, team, and organisational leadership capabilities

- Strategies to foster a professional environment that encourages women into leadership positions

- Understanding of current debates and strategies for valuing diversity in business leadership

- Developing practical ideas, models, and tools for effective leadership, including raising funds to achieve organisational objectives

- Developing skills in negotiation (including with governments) and conflict resolution, and influencing change management

- Promoting inclusion and diversity in government decision making, and

- Developing connections with leading academics and industry leaders who will provide inspirational ways of thinking about leadership issues relevant to female managers.

Expected Syllabus Content

The course will target mid to senior executives within civil society. Highly participative activities reflecting adult learning principles will be applied across all three components. The Provider will ensure that materials and the learning context are contextualised appropriately to Pakistan, providing a basis for acquiring and applying new knowledge and acquired skills.

The course will apply a mix of learning methods discussion-learning, short case studies, use of personal storytelling and incident debriefings by participants. Short self-diagnostic tools exploring emotional intelligence, leadership styles, coaching styles, will be applied as well as sharing of executive/ leadership coaching experiences from presenters and guest speakers.

The course design will include the following learning and development components:

Theory sessions:

Interactive sessions will be delivered by expert facilitators aligned to key learning areas. Where appropriate, the Provider will seek external expertise to support learning. Facilitators will be adjusted reflecting the final participant group and results of the pre-course needs assessment.

It is expected key topics will include but not be limited to the following topics: leadership styles, contexts and impacts; communication skills, including negotiation and influence; change management; promoting diversity in the workplace; employee and organisational development, leading teams; succession planning; disability and social inclusion; and strategic planning.

Industry Engagement:

Participants will meet with highly successful female leaders within Australian organisations outlining essential elements of success in their careers. They will also observe the application of leadership concepts through site visits aligned with the key learning outcomes of the course.

Return to Work Plan (RWP) Tutorials:

These are the main action-learning component of the course and provide the structure to guide participants to transfer and apply learning in a logical project development manner. Participants will be supported to refine their topics and define the problem and solution during the three components of the course.

Women's Leadership, Inclusion and Gender Equity

The Australian Government identifies gender equality as a critical cross-cutting theme in the Australian Aid program. One of the ten development objectives *of An Effective Aid program for Australia* is empowering women to participate in the economy, leadership and education. The *Gender Inequality Index*

shows progression for Pakistan in achieving gender parity, however there is still improvement required in relation to the indicators of *Economic Empowerment and Political Participation*.

Cross-cutting development issues to be addressed during this course include:

- empowerment of women

- disability and gender inclusion

- protection of children from exploitation and abuse.

Participants will be provided with tools to strengthen their capacity to develop resources which promote women and disadvantaged groups as participants and decision-makers in the development of the country.

Return to Work Plans

Development of a Return to Work Plan (RWP) that outlines the application of knowledge and skills acquired during the program is a key deliverable. The RWP will describe how participants will apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge to a specific project or set of activities. Participants will be expected to progressively develop and refine their RWP throughout each course component. As part of Component 1, the Provider will guide the development of initial topics, in consultation with each participant and their supervisor. Participants will substantially complete drafting their individual Plans during Component 2 (in-Australia).

Upon return to their workplace, participants will be expected to implement their RWP in conjunction with their supervisor and immediate colleagues. The Concept Note envisages that a three-day combined extended training, mentoring and RWP Workshop will be conducted in Islamabad in June 2020. The Program may also undertake selected reviews of progress of RWP implementation between Components 2 and 3

Schedule and Duration of Training

- Final day for receipt of applications: 06 January 2020
- Activity Dates: (Component 1 – Online): mid-February 2020
- Activity Dates: (Component 2 – in-Australia): first three weeks-March 2020
- Activity Dates: (Component 3 – in-Islamabad): three days-early June 2020