

CSO CASE STUDY 4

Title: Interventions of CSOs towards the First youth Policy of Pakistan

Country: Pakistan

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Introduction

This case study highlights the process and interventions by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to motivate the Government of Pakistan to develop the first ever youth policy. CSOs working on youth development have used various means, such as research, national and international conferences and media advocacy to achieve changes at the policy level. Performance of CSOs can be evaluated by the progress made on the policy, which has been under consideration since 1989.

In October 2004, the Minister of State for Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs Mr. Muhammad Ali Durrani has stated that:

'The Government of Pakistan has declared 2005 as a Year of the Youth and wishes to celebrate the year in significantly meaningful way. We earnestly will involve CSOs, youth organizations and activists, and other members of society.'

The type and extent of policy change

The history of the National Youth Policy (NYP) is one of steps forward and backwards. So far, four drafts of the NYP have been prepared: in 1989, 1993, 2002 and 2004. The NYP draft prepared in 1989 wasn't presented to the Cabinet and was only issued to the press on 21 June 1989. The second draft of the NYP (1993) was prepared by a foreign consultant, but not presented to the Cabinet. The third draft was prepared in 2002, and was successfully presented to the Cabinet for its approval. It was considered by the Cabinet which suggested some changes. The current NYP draft was prepared in December 2004, and has yet to be presented to the Cabinet.

The key policy change came in 2001 when the government started consulting with civil society on the NYP. Between May 2001 and January 2002, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs organized consultative provincial and national workshops for the first time. In the light of these consultations, the Pakistani Ministry of Youth Affairs with the active participation of Provincial Youth Departments, CSOs and Students were able to prepare a comprehensive NYP (2002). And it is through this process that the final 2004 draft has been prepared. (For more detail, see impacts, below)

Some thoughts on explanation of policy change

a) Political context

In Pakistan, young people have been historically absent from the policy debate. It was only in the late 1980s that a Youth Affairs Division was set up by the Government of Pakistan to look after the needs and problems of the young; resources were allocated for vocational training centers, youth hostels, and sports facilities for the youth.

Between 1989 and 1999, however, Pakistan was affected by political instability –none of the appointed governments were able to complete their mandates. This relegated the NYP to a lower priority in the political agenda; and the Youth Affairs Division was reduced to be a wing of the Ministry of Minorities, Culture, Sports, Tourism and Youth Affairs.

Since President Mr. Pervaiz Musharraf came to power, and during his regime (1999 onwards), the issue of NYP has surged again. And by September 2001 the Chief Executive Office directed the Ministry that a 'revised NYP be brought before the Cabinet, immediately'.

In general, the people appointed by Musharraf's government, such as Mr. Zafar Ullah Khan Jamali (Primer Minister) and Mr. Muhammad Ali Durrani (Minister of CSYA) have been quite influential in ensuring civil society participation at the policy level. Furthermore, the role of civil society actors, such as Mr. Arshad Bhatti (Director of Civil Junction a CSO that provides a platform for the youth to express themselves through various events) for the NYP formulation and for CSOs participation, in close association with MoCSYA, can't be neglected.

Since 2003, the Royal Norwegian Embassy has provided important financial support to the Government of Pakistan to ensure that the issue remains at the top of the agenda.

b) International factors

International factors have played different roles. On the one hand they have provided a framework for action (via international agreements) and, on the other hand, they have facilitated the process (via technical assistance and financial support).

International Obligations

The government of Pakistan has ratified to the following four international legal instruments:¹

1. Medical Examination of Young Persons: Sea (ILO/1921).
2. Night Work of Young Persons: Industry (ILO/1948).
3. Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (UN/1949).
4. Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Instructions and Practices Similar to Slavery (UN/1956).

Pakistan is also a signatory of many UN Resolutions and other international instruments, commitments and bindings including the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) that provides concrete foundations and strategic directions for the development of national policy on youth.

Technical and Financial Support

Financial and technical support from external sources have been influential factors behind the progress and development of the NYP.

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The UNDP and the MoCSYA appointed an international consultant to help prepare the NYP between 1992 and 1993. Then, in 2001, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Youth Affairs on 4 provincial consultation workshops and one national workshop in Islamabad to gather different views to inform the development of the NYP.

Also the Rockefeller Foundation and the United Nations Population Fund gave their financial inputs for one of the youth surveys conducted by the Population Council of Pakistan in 2003.

Later, in September 2004, the Ministry started a fresh campaign for Pakistan Youth Policy, with the support of the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

c) Civil Society Organizations strategies for policy change

CSOs working on youth issues in Pakistan have been continuously engaged in the process of the NYP, first, by advocating the need for policy development and, later through a consultative status with the concerned government department. Currently, 28 Civil Society Organizations are enrolled with the Youth Affairs Division (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth Affairs) in Pakistan.

Formally, these CSOs started working with the government in April 2003, when the Prime Minister directed CSOs to submit their blue prints for the Youth Force at national, provincial, district and tehsil levels.

Links between the CSOs have created a strong pressure group. Currently, there are two national youth CSO umbrella organizations in Pakistan. One is the All Pakistan Youth Federation (APYF). It was established in 1985 and has a membership of 547 youth NGOs. Its structure consists of a youth cabinet, a youth parliament, an advisory council and a national youth assembly. The second umbrella organization is called the National Youth Council of Pakistan (NYCOP). It was established as a regular organization in 1987 with members from the local level.²

CSOs have organized various events to raise the profile of youth issues. For instance, in 2004, APYF celebrated the International Youth Day (12th August) and invited the Education Minister Ms. Zubaida Jalal as the chief guest to the event. She highlighted some relevant issues such as the need for technical and vocational training and economic support for the youth.

Media advocacy has also been a powerful tool for CSOs. Exposures in the local media and their links with media actors have helped them to engage with the policy process. This has translated in various media publications and meetings with media actors and development experts.

The media has also played an important role in highlighting various youth issues, such as poverty, illiteracy and, in particular, suicide rates in Pakistan.

CSOs have also been active in ensuring youth participation in the NYP by organizing youth conferences and consultations. Most of these consultations and conferences were

carried out in response to the 2002 draft of the NYP, because it had been developed with little input from youth CSOs.

CSOs were also able to take advantage of social technologies and an online youth conference was organized to review the NYP, in May 2003. It was organized by Jawan Pakistan, one of the CSOs affiliated with Youth Ministry. This online conference was another effort by a CSO to ensure the youth participation in NYP.

d) Nature of research based evidence

The data on the state of the youth in Pakistan have been taken from the population census of Pakistan 1998. This demographic data has provided information about the problems faced by about 49 million women and men between the ages of 15 to 39 years. Another source of demographic evidence is the Population Council of Pakistan's survey of Pakistani youth in 2003. The survey highlighted high levels of analphabetism and gender inequalities in education.

Other important sources of evidence are research projects such as one conducted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (Pakistan) in 2001, which highlighted the high rates of suicide among Pakistani youths.

e) Impacts

The impacts of the interventions are manifested through the actions taken by the government for the NYP of Pakistan, through Pakistan's Youth Action Plan, which was presented to CSOs on 29th January 2005. The Ministry of Youth Affairs has developed implementation and monitoring mechanisms with the following key functions:

1. *Monitoring:* The NYP implementation unit will perform vigilant role in monitoring youth development programmes and services. It will gradually include monitoring of CSOs.
2. *Research and Development:* After continuous advocacy from the CSOs to explore youth issues in Pakistan the ministry has confessed that more adequate research needs to be part of the process of policy formulation. Therefore, the government will commission a Pakistani youth survey.
3. *Advocacy:* The Ministry will coordinate with CSOs to advocate youth issues.
4. *Capacity building:* The Ministry will provide training programmes for capacity building of personnel in the government and non-government sectors.
5. *Coordination and Facilitation:* The ministry will promote the coordination of youth development services and, where possible, will facilitate the creation of youth development programmes and initiatives.

Lessons learned

The following are considered as good practices in the process of influencing the Pakistani NYP. Some could be replicated in other countries or contexts:

- For the NYP, the participation of the youth was essential. When policymakers cannot ensure this, CSOs can act as filters and amplifiers of the various issues concerning the youth throughout the country and forward the outcomes of their studies or consultations to the appropriate policy actors.

- Research needs to be confronted with policy to prove its worth. Hence researchers need to submit their research findings to policymakers and relevant government agencies. By doing this, CSOs can help policymakers by providing them with crucial information and/or facilitating their work.
- It is also sometimes important to publish shocking facts about the issue discussed to move policymakers into action (as in the case of rates of suicides among the youth).
- Collaboration with the government is crucial to make effective interventions at the policy level. Organizing conferences with the involvement of the government and international agencies is a way of engaging with them.
- Establishing networks among the CSOs working for the same cause can create a strong pressure group.
- The impact of the media cannot be neglected and must be used.
- The celebration of international events, such as International Youth Day, can offer the opportunity to invite Ministers from relevant government agencies to raise youth issues, such as education, health, poverty, unemployment etc. Other events such as book or report launches can be used as opportunities to directly inform the government by inviting relevant government officials.

Sources of Information

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<http://www.jawanpakistan.org/documents/Youth%20policy%202005%20-%20final%20draft-AB-EON.doc>

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National Consultation on Draft Youth Policy of Pakistan, website:

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A chronology of the Youth Policy formulation efforts in Pakistan: 1989-2004

Activities	Date
Youth Affairs Division was created.	12 June 1989
National Youth Policy (NYP) was hurriedly drafted and sent to the Cabinet.	18 June 1989
NYP Draft 1	21 June 1989
Youth Affairs Division redrafted NYP.	December 1990
Foreign Consultant 'Professor John Ewen' was appointed to prepare NYP.	Mid 1991
Professor John Ewen prepared the NYP, and also prepared a short version of the NYP.	February 1993.
Youth Affairs Division was merged with the Women Affairs Division, therefore no action was taken on the NYP.	1994-1997
Mr. Mushahid Hussain Syed, advisor to Prime Minister on Culture, Youth and Information, set up National Task Force to prepare NYP.	3 April 1997
Mr. Sheikh Rashid Ahmed became Minister and directed experts particularly from business sector to be included in the National Task Force on NYP.	July 1997
A summary on NYP forwarded to the Chief Executive Secretariat by National Task Force.	28 August 2000
Chief Executive Secretariat directed Ministry of Youth Affairs to revise NYP.	September 2001
Four provincial and one national consultation workshops were held to gather views to inform NYP. Supported by UNICEF.	May 2001 and January 2002
NYP Draft 2	Mid 2002
The Cabinet considered the NYP and asked to re-formulate in the light of the Cabinet decisions.	23 October 2002
Ministry in collaborations with British Council and other local organizations organized a national conference.	March 2003
In-house deliberations and meetings of Youth Ministry with CSOs and UN agencies for a funding.	July 2003-July 2004
NYP Draft 3	October 2004